LOVEMARKS: The Emotional Attachment of Loving a Brand

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nowadays, consumer brand relationship centered on emotions has become more important than ever. Today, almost every buyer has a brand which he loves, called a lovemark.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore why consumers develop a deep emotional attachment towards luxury brands, since luxury brand consumers are considered to be the most loyal consumers in the world. This thesis will be developed through the concept of “love mark”, the brand love that consumers feel for a certain brand trying to offer a better understanding of this consumer-brand relationship. In this thesis will also be determined which are the elements that influence the creation of the loyalty and the emotional attachment the consumers have towards brands.

The second important purpose of this study is to find out what makes the consumer continuously go back to repurchase the same brand. Despite, they try new other substitute brands.

This study is going to be conducted in a qualitative method, centered on personal interviews face to face to get a deeper understanding. The outcome of this study will give a better framework of the consumers’ behavior towards lovemark brands, as their motives to stay loyal to them.

The conclusion of this study is that some elements that have been found such as: quality, long lasting fashion, customer experience, tradition, emotions, trust and image, made the consumers develop deep loyalty and deep emotional attachment to their lovemark brands. Also, those elements make them love the brand, and make them re-purchase the same brand over again.
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1. Introduction

In this chapter, the background, previous studies, problem statement, research question, purpose, theoretical limitations and outline are presented.

Over the past decade, emotional branding has occurred as a very significant and influential brand management paradigm (Gobe 2001; Zaltman 2003). Companies have perceived that the love for a brand is an important reason to keep a good relationship with their consumers, therefore they use emotional branding, which is a consumer-centric, relational, and story-driven approach to forging deep and enduring affective bonds between the consumers and brands (Roberts 2004).

Brands are a complex mixture of functional benefits and emotional connections, but they are also recognizable entities that make specific promises of value (Keller, 2007). Some studies have shown that strong brands generate trust as well as emotional attachment and that they share common attributes (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012).

It is the core values of a brand that originally attracts consumers nevertheless it is the nonstop determination for brands to stay loyal to their core values that makes consumers come back (Till & Heckler, 2009). To discover what aspects are necessary for an end user to fall in love with a brand, companies conduct brand audits.

Another important step is to measure brand awareness, brand image and brand equity which gives to the companies a direction to what they should do to incorporate their brand identity into the end user’s mind through relationship
marketing (Keller, 2007). Brand marketing theories regarding consumer attachment and consumer attraction have often been imprecise on the actual factors that induce the actual emotion of LOVE.

A consumer that is already in love with a brand feels that the brand in some way ignites the imagination, pleases the senses and arouses a deep relevance (Sayers & Monin, 2006; Roberts, 2006). Marketers incorporate vital elements as mystery, sensuality and intimacy in their marketing strategy to keep the attraction strong and extensive which creates love for a brand (Sayers & Monin, 2006).

Brand love is an emotional and passionate feeling of an individual for a brand. According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), satisfaction is a pre-requisite to brand love and have defined that brand love is “experienced by some, but not all, satisfied consumers”. Albert, Merunka and Valette-Florence (2007).

Emotions have great importance in the purchasing process due to the fact that nowadays, the consumption is based on feelings and emotions, which arise in the moment of consuming any product or service. Love, passion and hatred are some of those feelings that marketers try to create between their brands and consumers.

Emotion is also necessary to make important decisions as decisions are considered to be emotional, not logical according to the latest findings in neuroscience. Common emotional decisions may use some logic, but the main driving force is emotion, which either overrides logic or uses pseudo-logic to support emotional choices (this is extremely common). Whether emotions are beneficial or harmful to decisions may largely depend upon how people experience, treat, and use their feelings during decision making. This is why Emotions can play an important role.

Many researchers have investigated consumer attitude towards brand and we have got concepts like, satisfaction (Higgins, 1997) and brand loyalty (Oliver,
Satisfaction alone is not enough to keep the customers loyal (Jones and Sasser, 1995). Many satisfied customers switch to competitor’s brand (Reichheld, 1996). Hence, satisfaction may result in loyalty if it sustains for a longer period of time. Few, but not all satisfied customers tend to love a brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). The earlier authors have also stated that the nature of this brand love is very similar to the interpersonal love and attachment (Shimp and Madden, 1988; Keh et al., 2007; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Carroll and Ahuvia’s (2006) study empirically shows it that emotional and passionate love with a brand is a predictor of brand loyalty. Therefore, loving a brand (and not mere satisfaction) is a move towards loyalty. So, marketers must try to make the satisfied customers love a brand. According to Roberts (2004), in this era of intense competition between brands and customer indifference brands must be converted into lovemarks in the eyes of the consumers in order to survive.

Prior literature says that the concept of brand love has been emerged from the concept of interpersonal love and attachment (Shimp and Madden, 1988; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Keh et al., 2007). In 2013, Marketing is all about EMOTIONS, because marketers realized a simple thing: that we are all about emotions and we want to be touched at our hearts.

Studies in many areas of marketing propose that brand loyalty is an important dimension of repetitive buying of low involvement, low cost and frequently purchased products. Previous studies on consumer buying behavior include two areas (Govind, 2011). The first is the initial attraction to purchase a product, and why/what attracts consumers to purchase a product in the first place. The second is the repetitive purchasing behavior, which this dissertation is more focused on (Govind, 2011).

Earlier studies on consumers repetitive purchasing behavior (Fang, Jianyao, Dick, & Huangting, 2012; Yann, Rod, & Philip, 2010; Song & Hur, 2012), have habitually been conducted in a quantitative way, by sending out surveys to consumers online and gathering the data. Some of this studies (Jensen & Hansen, 2006; (Balester &
Munera-Aleman, 2001; Didier & Cindy, 2010), have typically been conducted on the `regular market´, focused on necessity goods such as household goods or food which do not bring up the element of loyalty.

In this thesis I will emphasis on the luxury brands using a qualitative method and collect the data by conducting in depth interviews with consumers. This method gives to the study more about the reasoning behind repetitive purchasing behavior those earlier studies on this area lack. The goal is not only to find out why consumers develop emotional attachment, but also why they stay loyal, which is missing in the regular market.

Numerous previous studies have been conducted to define the luxury products. According to previous studies, the term “luxury” brings different significances to different writers and the consumer’s perception of the term “luxury” differs from consumer to consumer. Defining luxury product is not a simple task. After all, this is a relative concept - what is luxury for some can be just ordinary for others. According to the economists, the price of the product is the crucial determinant of the quality of the luxury product. Consumers who fall in this category take only the high priced products as the luxury. Other studies (Ridgway and Netmeyer, 1993) also support this argument and viewed the perceived price as the proxy for the quality.

In a study that was conducted on luxury products (Melika & Muris, 2009), the consumers of luxury products thought that price was less of an importance than the actual quality of the product. To those consumers, price only exists as a proof of good quality. Also, luxury brands provide consumers with relatively more image and non-functional benefits rather than regular products (Melika & Muris, 2009). Other studies conducted on ‘the luxury market’ (Kuang-Peng, o.a., 2011; Cesare & Gianluigi, 2011; Song & Hur, 2011), have clarified that consumers of luxury products are certainly loyal customers. Nevertheless, studies have not been conducted on the reason as to why consumers develop loyalty and emotional
attachment towards a product. Given to this study another reason to find out why consumers develop emotional attachment and loyalty towards a luxury brand.

Luxury is lately associated with experience, authenticity and emotion; while the concept of having the best that money can buy is slowly declining (CONSUMER INSIGHT, 2006). The main concept of luxury goods is the prestige the brand name provides to its bearer. Hence these goods have a very exclusive symbolic value. Consequently, the luxury market that used to be for the wealthy is now also available for ordinary people that splurge. Luxury consumption, used to be rare, but now more people are wanting to `up´ their status and show off cars they are driving or clothes they are wearing (Nia, 2000).

The real question is if “the brands focused on transactions or interactions? Today’s reality is that consumers and people are thirsty for brands to provide something more than just a product or service. They want “relationships”,¹ especially a relationship on a more personal level. Here is when the “lovämarks” concept appears. This is because every consumer has a brand that he loves. Consequently, consumers are the ones who decide what are their lovemarks, and why they keep on repurchasing that brand over and over again. A kind of an ongoing romance between consumer and brand. Consumers of luxury goods are very loyal to their brands (Cesare & Gianluigi, 2011). Issue which is appropriate to answer in the present research question.

Since building an emotional relationship becomes the primary goal of branding, the purpose of this study is to explore why consumers develop emotional attachment and loyalty towards brands, leading to a long-lasting, devoted relationship between the consumer and the brand. This study will primary focus on the consumer aspect of lovemarks, instead of focusing on the marketers´ point of view. Thus, providing a better understanding about consumers perspective on long lasting lovemarks.

¹ http://www.forbes.com/sites/gyro/2012/05/30/four-ways-brands-can-build-better-relationships/
This study will focus on the concept of love mark which is introduced by Kevin Roberts, the CEO of the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi and the aim is to find out elements that are needed to love a luxury brand.

### 1.1 Previous studies

Consumer-brand relationship has attracted attention and significance since late nineties of the 20th Century. More and more organizations are attracted in acquiring information about how consumers relate to brands, why some brands are preferred to others and even loved.

The importance of emotional attachment has been recognized by many researchers in the postmodern age such as (Schultz, Kleine and Kernan, 1989), (Swaminathan, Stilley and Ahluwalia, 2008), (Banytė, Jokšaitė, Virvilaitė, 2007) they have studied emotional attachment as the relationship of brand and consumer.

Since Fournier (1998) proposed the Brand Quality model that suggested the metaphor of human relationships, many researchers become more interested in understanding the relationship between a brand and consumers. The Brand Quality model emphases on the relationship characteristics of love/passion, brand partner quality, intimacy, interdependence, commitment, self-connection, but it does not prove how these characteristics are related to each other.

“Other several studies have been analyzing how these and other relational constructs are related (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005); also, antecedents and consequents of the relational constructs (Chang & Chieng, 2006; Stokburger-Sauer, 2010; Tsai, 2011; Loureiro, Kaufmann, & Vrontis, 2012), or how to improve the measure of each construct (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). Thus, the relationship metaphor is proposed to enhance the understanding of brand loyalty.”

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2 Correia S, Consumer-brand relationship: foundation and state of –art, pp 1
The love for a brand adapts the influence of attitude strength on loyalty (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2008). Consequently, Roberts (2004), CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi, proposes the 2 theory of "Lovemarks" and refers that brands should be about consumers and their relationship with them. For him, the products evolved to carry trademarks, and trademarks evolved into brands, today, brands should evolve into "Lovemarks". In this regards, "Lovemarks" are about building and strengthening emotional bonds between brands and consumers.

Accordingly to McEwen, a Global Practice Leader at The Gallup Organization that has launched in 2005 the book “Married to the Brand”, advocates that great brands are built upon strong customer relationships. She offers an overview of the evolution of the concept of consumer-brand relationship, providing insight about the main proposed models and major constructs. A background is also presented and aims to suggest a consecutive order from identity to outcomes in the relationship between consumers and their loved brands. The antecedents and consequents of love for a brand are not yet properly established and so the framework, based on literature review, intends to contribute for fulfill this gap.

"Fournier (1998) perceives the brand love relationship as a whole and the six facets can be regrouped in three main dimensions: attachment (love/passion and self-connection), behavioral ties (interdependence and commitment), and supportive cognitive beliefs (intimacy and brand partner quality). These dimensions are based on several theories such as interdependency theory and theories of attraction. However, love and passion are the essential concepts in attachment theory. Attachment theory is based on studies of parent-child relationships (Bowlby, 1979) and continues through adulthood to romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1994), kinships, and friendships (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997; Weiss, 1988). Several studies suggest that emotional attachment is formed between human beings and animals, places, destinations, special objects, brands
(Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Price et al., 2000; Richins, 1994; Ahuvia, 2005; Yuksel et al., 2010), and even human brands or celebrities (Thomson, 2006).”³

“In consumer research, Thomson, MacInnis, and Park (2005) identified a higher-order emotional attachment construct consisting of three factors: affection, passion, and connection. Thus, attachments reflect an emotional bond similar to love. The interpersonal triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986), adapted to the consumption contexts, is closely related to the emotional attachment construct; it considers that brand love is made up of dimensions such as: passion, intimacy, and commitment (Kamat & Parulekar 2007; Keh et al., 2007). Ahuvia (1993) suggests that consumers can have real feelings of love toward an object and conceptualizes the love as having two dimensions: real and desired integration. Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2008) propose that this love is made up of seven dimensions: perceived functional quality, self-related cognitions, positive affect, negative affect, satisfaction, attitude strength, and loyalty. Given the complexity of the construct, the interpersonal love theory alone does not allow for the discovery of specific dimensions of love. Based on the brand-consumer relationship paradigm, Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) suggest that brand love is composed of five dimensions: passion, attachment, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand, and declaration of love for the brand. More recently, Albert et al. (2008) propose two main components of brand love that are also found in the interpersonal love literature: six first order dimensions (idealization, intimacy, pleasure, dream, memories, and uniqueness) and two second order dimensions (passion and affection)”⁴

On the other hand, Susan Fournier’s studies emphasizes on the emotional attachment to an object and its meaning for the consumers. Her study mentions to the term humanization of objects while explaining the brands as the active partners in the relationship. Fournier’s supposition about brands as the active partners in

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³ Correia S, Consumer-brand relationship: foundation and state of –art, pp 4
⁴ Correia S, Consumer-brand relationship: foundation and state of –art, pp 5
the relationship is helpful in explaining the nature of relationship between consumers and brands. However, Fournier does not provide a deep investigation of love for brands in this study.

Shimp and Madden (1988) have conceptualized eight kinds of consumer-object relationship such as liking, yearning and decision/commitment which are the counterparts to intimacy, passion and decision/commitment components of interpersonal love relationship as described by Sternberg. A Conceptual Framework Based Analogously on Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love' (1986).

Another research about brand love was made by Carroll and Ahuvia with the name of ‘Some Antecedents and Outcomes of Brand Love’ (2006). According to them, brand love is an emotional and passionate relationship that predicts brand loyalty between a satisfied consumer and a brand. These authors are emphasizing on both emotion and passion while defining brand love.

Sternberg (1986), stayed that a romantic love consists of emotion or intimacy and passion. It can be inferred that brand love is romantic in nature and love is closely linked to loyalty (Sternberg, 1986; Shimp and Madden, 1988; Keh et al, 2007).

According to Keh, Pang and Peng (2007) brand love includes intimacy, passion and commitment. Whang, Allen, Sahoury and Zhang’s (2004) study has exposed that a consumer can fall in passionate and emotional love with a brand which might lead to romantic love for the brand over a period of time.

Shimp and Madden stayed that intimacy matches with the feeling of liking; thus feeling of liking becomes stronger as the relationship continues over time. However, Carroill and Ahuvia (2006) do not agree with the idea that accepts the brand love as the intense level of liking due to the conceptual difference between them. Love contains the identification of consumer’s identity with the brand. they also stayed that love for a brand preclude negative emotions.
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 a robust desire for something is the substitute of passion (Shimp and Madden, 1988).

1.2 Problem Statement

Creating emotional brand attachment is a key branding issue in today’s marketing world. For consumers is difficult to explain in a rational way their emotional attachment to a certain brand, thus price or practical benefits are not enough to clarify the reason why a certain brand evokes emotions of a consumer (Banytė, et al., 2007).

“Consumers’ love of particular possessions or activities has been widely noted, but suggestions that consumers have “love-like” feelings for brands come mainly from the research on delight, love, and consumer-brand relationships. While these feelings may not be perfectly analogous to the feelings one has for other people, the conclusion from these streams of work is that they can be considerably more intense than simple liking” 5

As previously mentioned, earlier research has mostly been about the factors needed to be a loved brand and the factors needed for a consumer to get attracted to a brand. (Simintiras, Diamantopoulos, & Ferriday, 1997, Roberts, 2006, Hwang & Kandampully, 2012; Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011, Weeler, 2012). Those studies have been focused on the consumer’s perspective about finding out consumer attraction towards brands using different models (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Nisel, 2001; Hammond, 2011; Nalty, 2012; ), also most of them, mainly focused just in the emotional attachment. And those that mentioned the concept of brand love do not explain the factors or elements that affect the love and the emotional attachment between the consumers and the brands.

5 Caroll and Ahuvia, Some antecedents and outcomes of brand love,2006,pp 80.
Furthermore I have observed that most of the previous research (Fang, Jianyao, Dick, & Huangting, 2012; Yann, Rod, & Philip, 2010; Song & Hur, 2012), have been realized by quantitative procedures. This thesis will be conducted through a qualitative method which provides information about the “human” side of the issue. One advantage of qualitative methods in exploratory research is that the use of open-ended questions and probing gives contestants the chance to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to select from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do. With no doubt at all, this method will give the study a better understanding of the complex consumer-brand relationship that earlier researches do not have. This research will be conducted through a qualitative method including open personal interviews with selected brand lovers of luxury brands from different nationalities as possible.

Recent studies have shown that most of our purchasing choices and decisions are the consequence of a careful analysis of the advantages and disadvantages and of affective and emotional aspects. Psychological literature identifies that the emotional situations are always present and influence every step of decision making in purchasing processes. Nowadays, most companies around the world ignore the emotional part of the consumers because emotions are perceived to be hard to define and difficult to measure. Therefore, it is important to be considered this exploration, since consumers are emotionally driven in decision making process.

Furthermore, this study will emphasize on luxury brands to make the research more specific, rather than focusing on general brands; in order to come to more clear and concrete answers. Luxury brands were also chosen mainly because luxury consumers are considered to be the most loyal consumers in the world. The final goal will be to investigate why consumers keep repurchasing certain luxury brands all over again and again.
1.3 Research Question

The goal of this study is to investigate through the concept of “love mark”, the brand love that consumers own for a specific brand trying to offer a better understanding of this consumer-brand relationship. It will also be considered the elements that influence the creation of brand love amongst consumers, the loyalty and the emotional attachments consumers create regarding those brands. For this reason, the research question will be:

WHAT ELEMENTS INFLUENCE THE CONSUMERS´ EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS TOWARDS THE CONSUMPTION OF LUXURY GOODS AND BRANDS?

I strongly believe that Kevin Robert´s definition and description of love mark and its components (mystery, sensuality and intimacy) need additional investigation. This is so, in order for us to understand better this and other existing investigations about brand love. In my opinion, understanding the reasons that create a significant relationship between consumer and brand based on love, will help companies to create better future strategies.

The objectives will be:

1.3.1 Objetives

- Identify the elements that influence the creation of brand love amongst consumers
- Analyze the consumer’s behavior when the consumers purchase and repurchase the same lovemark and stay loyal to their brand of preference.
Classify the key essentials that are needed for a product or service to become a lovemark

1.4 Purpose

The primary purpose of this thesis is to find out what main components are required for a consumer to develop strong emotional attachments and loyalty for a brand. Secondly, it is equally important to find out what makes the consumer continuously go back to repurchase certain brands; since, despite consuming and trying new other brands, the repurchasing process for the initial brand repeats all over again.

It is very important to find out what affects love, loyalty and emotional attachments between the brand and customer by making use of Lovemarks. The outcome of this study will give us a better framework of the consumers’ behavior towards lovemark brands, as well as knowing their motives to stay loyal to them.

1.5 Limitations

The first limitation of this study is associated with the description of love in general, since this expression is very subjective. This study is also limited to examining the consumer’s viewpoint on lovemark brands and why they repurchase that brand over again, preserving a close relationship with the brand over a long period of time. Finally, this study is limited to some established models and theories in the field of study such as The Brand Attachment Theory; in which I’ll analyze how the consumer gets emotionally attached to a brand, and also in which manner the brand is perceived in the customer’s minds. The use of this type of models will be used to support the final results of the interviews with the respondents.
1.6 Disposition

Chapter 1
Introduction

• Background, previous studies, problem statement, research question, purpose, theoretical limitations and outline is presented.

Chapter 2
Research Method

• Research philosophy, research approach and research design is presented.

Chapter 3
Literature

• Theories on consumer buying behavior and lovemarks theory are discussed.

Chapter 4
Empirical Method

• The research technique, primary data collection, selection of respondents, interviews and lastly credibility, transferability and conformability are discussed.

Chapter 5
Results

• Results from the interviews are being presented and analyzed.

Chapter 6
Conclusions

• Conclusion, summary of results, practical limitations and suggestions for additional research.

Figure 1. Disposition figure
2. Research Method

In this chapter, the research philosophy, research approach and research design will be presented.

2.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is defined as “the development of knowledge and the nature of knowledge”. (Saunders, et al., 2009). Each researcher follows important views on how they perceived the world. Also, research philosophy can be defined as a belief about the way in which data about a phenomenon should be collected, examined and used.

Research methods can be defined and categorized into different levels (Clark, 1998). In addition, Saunders, et al, also found out that “The stages of research methods a researcher should adopt will contain his or her views about the world. These views will actually support the researcher’s judgment on which research method the researcher should choose as a part of its strategy” (Saunders, et al., 2009).

There exist four views on research philosophy that are; positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism.

2.1.1 Positivism

The positivist view is resulting from that of natural science and is characterized by the testing of hypothesis developed from existing theory through measurement of observable social realities. The goal of positivism is to create general rules to forecast behavior with a lowest margin of uncertainty. Nevertheless, there are some difficulties with this philosophy, one is that it can only forecast average behavior of people in a group and not the behavior of each individual (Fisher,
The positivism philosophical approach is primarily connected with the observations and experiments to collect numeric data.

On the other hand, positivists consider that reality is constant and can be detected and defined from an objective viewpoint (Levin, 1988). "Positivism has a long and rich historical tradition. It is so embedded in our society that knowledge claims not grounded in positivist thought are simply dismissed as a scientific and therefore invalid" (Hirschheim, 1985, p.33). This interpretation is indirectly supported by Alavi and Carlson (1992) which in a review of 902, found out that all the empirical studies were positivist in approach. Positivism has also had a particularly positive association with the physical and natural sciences.

### 2.1.2 Realism

The view of *realism* can be defined as the reality and beliefs that already exist in the environment. Realists tend to consider that whatever we believe now is just an estimate of reality and that every new observation brings us closer to understanding reality.

### 2.1.3 Interpretivism

An *interpretive* method of research is about that “our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors and that this applies equally to researchers. Thus there is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science”. (Walsham 1993).

Interpretivists staged that only through the subjective interpretation of and intervention in reality can that reality be entirely understood. They admit that there may be numerous explanations of reality, but preserve that these explanations are in themselves a part of the scientific knowledge they are pursuing.
2.1.4 Pragmatism

The pragmatic view does not take emotions and ideas into consideration, but focuses on the truth and results. It focuses on practical research and integrating different perspectives to help interpret the results (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007).

The primary concern, following a pragmatist position, in the empirical world is actions. This does not mean that a pragmatist is only concerned with actions and disregards other issues. A pragmatist researcher lets actions appear as something significant and fundamental to study. Other matters may also be important to study but these other matters are centered on actions as the primary unit of analysis. (Goldkuhl, 2004)

In this study I will emphasis on the philosophy of interpretivism. The purpose of this philosophy is to get a deeper understanding in human behavior (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006), therefore, I will interview a group of people based in their individual memories, tastes and preferences, experiences, etc. This standpoint is beneficial and suitable to the research question on consumers buying behavior concerning lovemarks, also is important and proper in the field of human behavior.

2.2 Research Approach

As we can see in the Figure 2, deductive reasoning, in the first phase, is centered on theory and then formed into hypotheses. Subsequently the data gets collected through observations (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The hypothesis is tested, and the data that result are examined to determine whether there is
a confirmation of the original theory. Also to further be able to get a picture of the reality (Jacobsen, 2002).

Inductive reasoning works in the opposite manner. It initiates by making an observation. Observations are classified, and when one sees regular occurrences over time, one moves from those precise observations by noticing broader patterns. On this way, a tentative hypothesis is formulated that one can explore. In consideration of the previous data collecting process, the investigator finally gets a general conclusion or a theory.

We can see how these two ways of thinking and establishing conclusions might lead to confusion or misunderstanding. Inductive reasoning, by its very nature, is more open-ended and exploratory, particularly in the beginning. Stories used to be inductive at the beginning. The inductive reasoning 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). Deductive reasoning, on the other hand, is narrower in scope and is concerned with testing and confirming hypotheses.

The approach that I find most suitable to the research is an abductive reasoning which is a combination of both inductive and deductive approach. The objective of an abductive approach is to discover new things, other elements and other relationships (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). The present study has mixed the theory with the empirical data collection to make the final interpretations. Primarily starting with a deductive approach with the concept of Lovemarks, and then finalizing with the inductive approach where the theories are shown. I have also centered the study in a subjective way.

2.2.1 Abductive Approach

Abduction is a method of reasoning in which one selects the hypothesis that would, if true, best explain the significant evidence. Abductive reasoning begins from a set of accepted facts and infers most likely, or best, explanations. The term “abduction”
also sometimes only refers to the generation of hypotheses that explain observations or conclusions, but the former definition is more common both in philosophy and computing.\(^6\)

This study cannot generalize the final results given there, since I will conduct interviews on a selective group of individuals in which each one has lived unique experiences and have different preferences. For that motive is that the abductive approach fits for this study.

Abduction starts with consideration of facts, which are specific observations. These observations then provide a hypothesis which relates them to several other facts or rules which will account for them. This includes correlating and integrating the facts into a more general description, which relates them to a wider context (Givón 1989).

### 2.2.2 Subjectivism

“A subjectivist view of epistemology renounces the probability of a theory neutral observational language (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Burr, 1995). The subjectivist epistemology is of the certainty that there is nothing like “ultimate true knowledge” out there but whatever we perceive as “truth” is as a result of our intersubjective socio-cultural consensus of views, which is perceived as “reality” or “objectivity” in terms of knowledge. In short, the subjectivist epistemological stance is of the idea that we socially construct versions of reality through language games (Wittgenstein, 1975), or discourses (Foucault, 1977), or interests (Habermas, 1972), or traditions (Gadamer, 1975), or world views (Geertz, 1989). “(Kamil, 2011)

### 2.2.3 Qualitative Method

Qualitative research is measured by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which generate words, rather than numbers,
as data for analysis. One of the most useful qualitative techniques is interviewing, which is the method that this study will use. Contrary to what many individuals believe, interviewing is not easy, because the interviewer needs to be very careful not to listen to the interviewed person through any prejudiced ideas they might have. Also, the interviewer has to make sure he/she don’t misinterpret what people say. Qualitative research tends to involve in a much more dialectic procedure between the questions asked and data observed. New questions and evidence gathered in the process of research shape the questions as the research is being done. And in place of reproducible outcomes, qualitative researchers usually aim at accuracy. The actual research part of a qualitative study usually relies on a mixture of participant observation, interviews, and historical research.

On the other hand, this approach will not see what is expected, but demonstrate what the data material shows (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Therefore, the study is exploratory, and emphases on the content of the interviews in a subjective technique, as well as looking at the general picture with an interpretive examination, while prioritizing the validity. That’s why I will focus the research through deep personal interviews.

Qualitative research shares the theoretical expectations of the explanatory paradigm, which is based on the notion that social reality is shaped, created and sustained through the subjective experience of people involved in communication (Morgan, 1980)

Some of the advantages of a qualitative approach are:

- **Realistic feel:** Obtain a more realistic feel of the world that cannot be experienced in the numerical data and statistical analysis used in quantitative research.
- **Flexible ways:** to perform data collection, subsequent analysis, and interpretation of collected information.
- **Provide a holistic view**: of the phenomena under investigation (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Patton, 1980).
- **Interaction**: Ability to interact with the research subjects in their own language and on their own terms (Kirk & Miller, 1986).
- **Descriptive capability**: based on primary and unstructured data
- **Give depth and detail**: looks deeper than analyzing ranks and counts by recording attitudes, feelings and behaviors of a group of individuals
- **Creates openness**: It generates more flexibility for changes during the investigation, encouraging people to expand and develop in a deeper way their responses where they can open up new topic areas not firstly considered.
- **Simulates people's experiences**: a complete and detailed picture can be built up about why individuals act in certain ways and their feelings about these actions.

The qualitative method generates a greater understanding and clarity in a particular subject on a specific group of people through further development of answers to obtain a better understanding and a better perspective, or even find the intensity of attitudes (McGivern, 2006).

### 2.3 Research Design

The three key research designs are; exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007).

*Exploratory* research is defined as the initial research into a hypothetical or theoretical idea. The researcher has an idea and pursues to understand deeper about it. An exploratory research assignment is an effort to lay the groundwork that will lead to future studies, or to determine if what is being observed might be explained by a currently existing theory. One of the main advantages of the exploratory research design is that this type of research is very flexible when investigating a new area of research or a topic from a new angle.
The **descriptive** research design is often used when accurately describing a situation, event or person. The descriptive research is defined as tries to discover and clarify while providing additional information about a topic. The research attempt to describe what is happening in more detail, filling in the absent parts and increasing our understanding. This is also where as much information is gathered as possible instead of making estimates or make models to forecast the future, the 'what' and 'how,' rather than the 'why.'

Lastly, it is the **explanatory** research, which attempts to connect ideas to understand cause and effect. This happens when researchers are starting to comprehend what they are observing at and trying to generate models of cause and effect.

### 2.3.1 Exploratory

Exploratory research design investigates a new area of research and does not follow straight from an existing study (Robson, 2002; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). This study will be focused on an exploratory research design; the study will also be creative and not structured to a specific theory. The aim of the research is to increase the understanding of why consumers develop emotional attachment towards luxury brands.

While conducting an exploratory research design, one must be willing to change direction as a result of new information and new insight that occurs (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). Through depth interviews with luxury brand consumers, the end result will be to analyze, interpret, and understand the responses, exploring their repetitive buying behavior regarding some luxury brands.
3. Literature

In this chapter, brand and luxury brands are analyzed. Theories on consumer buying behavior and the lovemark concept are explained. Finally, a summary of the chapter is presented.

3.1 Brand

A brand is the sum of all the associations, feelings, attitudes and perceptions that people have related to the tangible and intangible characteristics of a company, product or service. \(^7\) The American Marketing Association defines ‘brand’ as “a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. A brand may identify one item, a family of items, or all items of that seller.”\(^8\)

A marketer could produce a brand by emerging a name, sign and symbol. But it is not that way. All of these are demonstrations of brand essence. For instance, a name, sign, and symbol help recognize for example the brand Starbucks. But what exactly is represented by all of these characteristics is the brand. Starbucks represents the notion of quality, fast service, and value. Thus, we can conclude that a brand is a promise of value.

A brand promises a mixture of benefits, attributes and values to its customers. These promises could be done by any brand but what differentiates a good brand from the other is the delivery because it delivers what it promises allowing the creation of customer loyalty. According to [Nigel Hollis](http://www.brandeo.com/content/brand), “A brand consists of a set of enduring and shared perceptions in the minds of customer. The stronger, more coherent and motivating those perceptions are, the more likely they will be to influence purchase decisions and add value to a business.” (Hollis, 2008)

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\(^7\) [http://www.brandeo.com/content/brand](http://www.brandeo.com/content/brand)  
\(^8\) [https://www.ama.org/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.ama.org/Pages/default.aspx)
To have a better understanding about the behavior of the group of individuals regarding some luxury brands, the love that they develop for those brands, and as brands are the central element of any marketing strategy; it is essential and important to be aware of the descriptive dimensions of brand equity which influences the end consumers such as: loyalty, awareness, perceived quality, personality, identity, image, associations, core, equity, and preference.

*Brand Loyalty* can be defined as “how likely a customer will be to switch to another brand, especially when that brand makes a change in price, product features, communication, or distribution programs” (Aaker, 1991). The perception of brand loyalty represents a general concept which defines a consumer’s overall buying behavior patterns within a product class. Loyalty can induce a higher perceived quality, stronger associations, or increase awareness. In other words, brand loyalty is both an input and an output of brand equity. Brand loyalty is conditioned by previous purchase and use experience, while awareness, associations, or perceived quality may be present even in the case of a brand that hasn’t been used yet.

*Brand awareness* refers to the degree of importance a brand has in the consumers’ memory, being positioned on numerous levels: brand recognition, brand recall, brand leadership or top of mind, brand dominance, brand knowledge and brand opinion. Even though, at the lowest level of recognition, brand awareness can provide the brand with a competitive benefit through the familiarity level perceived by consumers. Also, awareness is the base around which brand associations are being created. Without a high awareness level, specific brand associations cannot be generated into consumers’ minds. (Gica, 2007)

A brand’s *perceived quality* is a consequence of a global assessment made by the consumers founded on their perception about aspects and dimensions considered relevant for the quality of the products represented by the brand. The main
dimensions in which the quality is perceived refer to performance, features, conformance, reliability, durability, style and design. (Keller L. 1998). A high perceived quality appeals interest from wholesale and retail channels, creates premises for brand extensions to other product categories or industries, and provides the basis for a high price strategy, the price premium thus obtained being subject to reinvestment in future developments. Also the quality level of a brand can be a significant factor in differentiating and positioning a company’s offer in the market. (Gica, 2007)

*Brand personality* can be defined as a set of human characteristics linked to a brand. A long term relationship between brands and loyal customers is based upon a clear and strong brand personality. Some researchers propose that a strong, positive brand personality may reveal numerous benefits, such as increase consumer preference and usage, increase emotions in consumers, increase levels of trust and loyalty, encourage active processing on the part of the consumer, and provide a basis for product differentiation.

*Brand identity* can be defined as consumers’ perception of a brand that reflects a set of associations that consumers hold in their minds when thinking of a brand (Didier & Cindy, 2010). According to Jean-Noel Kapferer (Kapferer, 2008 p, 104) brand identity contains:

1. Personality- Features of brand, if it was a person
2. Physique- Product features, symbols & attributes
3. Culture- Set of values and principles
4. Relationship- The way the brand connect to its consumers
5. Reflection- Image of the brands consumers
6. Self-Image- Internal mirror of consumers as users of the brand
The Kapferer Prism of Brand Identity presented on figure # 3, is a model to understand what a brand is and all of its attributes. You can see in Figure 2, the prism to better understand the concept of brand.

This model is a useful tool to better understand the consumers, regarding their brand of preference. It classifies six aspects of brand identity: Physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. He states that these aspects can only come to life when the brand communicates with the consumer. This model tries to give a better understanding on why consumers are attracted to a specific brand in the first place.

Brand Image relates to the consumer’s perception of the brand being define as a set of beliefs held about a particular brand (Kotler, 2000) or as a set of associations, usually organized in some meaningful way. (Aaker, 1996). A brand image is a consumer constructed idea of the brand. Consumers create an image of the brand based on the associations that they have remembered with respect to that brand.
Brand associations are characterized by diversity. According to David A. Aaker, brand associations are the category of a brand's assets and liabilities that include anything linked in memory to a brand (Aaker 1991). Brand associations can be seen as a combination of brand image, brand attitude and perceived quality. (Low, George S., Lamb Jr., Charles W, 2000)

The Brand Central Core represents the essence of the brand and contains the associations that must need to be constant over time. At the brand core certain characteristics are consolidated to form an impression of the brand which is usually emotionally deep seated. Here is where those core values and associations lie which are most closely associated with the brand and which determine the brand image. Recognizing these associations is very important, as these core values and core associations are used to formulate the brand's promise to the consumer. (Hoffmann & Forcher, 2009)

Brand Equity can be defined as the value of a brand to the consumer. According to Aaeker, brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand name and symbol, which add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service. Brand equity has four dimensions; brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations, and perceived quality, each providing value in numerous ways. Once a brand identifies the value of brand equity, they can follow a brand equity roadmap to manage that potential value (Aaker,2013).

Brand Preference can be defined as a measure of brand loyalty in which a consumer will select a particular brand in presence of competing brands, but will accept substitutes if that brand is not available. The most recent literature (Mallik, 2009; Kotler, Armstrong, & Wong, 2010; Keller, 2007; Kapferer, 2008), suggest that brand preference results of consumers when they know the brand, understand the uniqueness of the brand and that the brand is superior comparing to other brands.
Previous researchers such as Weeler (2012), Keller (2007), Aaker (2003) and Kapferer (2008), among others do not analyze loyalty for brands, making harder to understand why consumers get emotionally attached to a specific brand. Therefore, I won’t use these brand theories as a model to develop this study. In fact, those theories are important to understand the concept of brand and how consumer relates to its dimensions mentioned before.

3.2 Luxury

“Luxury” can be defined as the state of great comfort and extravagant living or an inessential but desirable item. (Oxford, 2009) Kapferer and Bastien (2009) stated that the concept of luxury is very old as the age of humanity. Luxury might seem a simple concept but it is not because the word “Luxury” is not the same for everyone. People have their own definition of luxury, it would be a never ending discussion. It takes different forms for many different people and is dependent on the mood and experience of the consumer (Wiedmann, Henngs and Siebels 2009).

Luxury is very selective and exclusive which there is almost the only brand in its product category. The unique attribute of each product category belongs to one brand which specializes in one product category, for example, Brioni for men’s suits, Hermès for leather bags, Valentino for women’s dress, and Guerlain for cosmetics. (Chevalier and Mazzalovo, 2008). Also, luxury goods must have high quality durable. Luxury is of lately associated with experience, authenticity and emotion while the concept of having the best that money can buy slowly declining (CONSUMER INSIGHT, 2006).

Luxury goods are often associated with high-end products such as cars, diamonds, jewelries, or massive square foot of properties (Fennel, 1978). That is one way of measuring luxury. Dubois, Laurent and Czellar (2001) and Survanasuddhi (2007) stated a definition of the nature and characteristics of the concept of luxury. The six facets are excellent quality, very high price, scarcity and uniqueness, aesthetics and polysensuality, ancestral heritage and personal history.
and superfluousness.

3.2.1 Luxury Goods

According to the Oxford American Dictionary, luxury is the state of great comfort and extravagant living. In general luxury goods are highly priced products in the niche market of goods. The main concept of luxury goods is the prestige the brand name provides to its carrier. The appeal of luxury goods can be a result of their perceived premium quality, recognizable style, reputation, and limited accessibility. In the perceptions of the owners, these characteristics signify emotional and symbolic values (Kuang-peng, o.a., 011). Therefore, people believe that price, perceived quality, societal status and brand loyalty are the elements that influences consumer behaviour in the consumptions of luxury branded goods with income level as the moderator factor.

3.2.2 Luxury brands

Luxury brands are regarded as images in the minds of consumers that comprise associations about a high level of price, quality, aesthetics, rarity, extraordinariness and a high degree of non-functional associations.⁹

Luxury brands are well known and have a well-established prestige. Usually those brands have been around for many years, and with time have built a strong brand identity, equity and loyalty. Luxury brands represents exclusivity, and have well-known brand identity, enjoy high brand awareness, perceived quality and retain sales levels, as well as customer loyalty (Melika & Muris, 2009). Those strong and popular luxury brands tend to have a stable central core and have been around for many years (Bott, 2007). Luxury brands have a heightened status that affords an opportunity for their owners to charge premium prices (Jackson & Haid, 2002). Any possible luxury brand should be evaluated by the characteristics of luxury:

⁹http://www.conceptofluxurybrands.com/concept/luxury-brands-definition
• **Price**: The brand offers products which belong to the most expensive products of their category.

• **Quality**: The brand offers everlasting top-of-the-line products, which often even gain in value over time.

• **Aesthetics**: Related to the world of beauty and elegance.

• **Rarity**: The brand items are not available at all times or places.

• **Extraordinariness**: The brand has a mind and style of its own and its products offer a "kick" and surprise with the "expected unexpected."

• **Symbolism**: The brand stands for "the best from the best for the best"; its charisma fills the room, and regardless of whether it is of a conspicuous or understated nature, deep inside, it is swollen with pride.¹⁰

### 3.3 Consumer Buying Behavior

Consumer behaviour has been permanently of great interest to marketers. The knowledge of consumer behavior helps to understand how consumers think, feel and select from a multitude of products and brands. Consumer behavior means more than just how a person buys products or brands. It involves understanding the set of decisions (what, why, when, how much and how often) that consumer makes over the time (Hoyer 2004). It is significant to know how consumer reacts towards different product features, price, and advertisement, in order to ensure strong competitive advantage. The understanding of the manner in which consumer buys, is extremely important to develop this study.

### 3.3.1 Lovemarks

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

Kevin Roberts

“Lovemarks” is a fascinating and interesting concept introduced by Kevin Roberts, the CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Company. He stated that the Lovemarks of this new

century will be the brands and businesses that create genuine emotional connections with the communities and networks” (Roberts, 2004).

Is important to mention that he was not the first person to discuss about emotional connections in consumer-brand relationship, since Ahuvia (1993) implement an empirical study mentioned before, about love relationship between a person and products and Fournier (1998) carry out a study to understand the different kinds of relationships between consumers and brands. In this context, Kevin Roberts studied the relationship between consumer and brands adding to the study a name, a structure and an intensely explanation of its characteristics. For Roberts, a Lovemark can be anything, a city, a product, a person, a service. He assumes that Lovemarks concept “is the secret pathway to create loyalty beyond reason”. The key factor to be a loved brand goes through making the brand irreplaceable, irresistible, respected and loved.

In the book, “Lovemarks- the future beyond brands”, he emphasizes that what makes Lovemarks stand out is their mystery, their sensuality and their intimacy.

*Mystery* is something that draws the consumers in, and discloses a story they can connect with. *Sensuality* is about that the product is not just a visual or its logo it has to attach through a deeper level than just the visuals (Roberts, 2006).

Packaging, colors, smell among others are very important in branding, since almost all brands do not consider all of the senses to engage consumers but the reallovemark brands include these senses in their branding strategy. Lastly, the element of *intimacy* is that consumers expect to be influenced in a personal level by brands.

These three senses combined clarify why consumers develop deep emotional attachment towards a brand. Roberts explain that consumers are driven by emotion and not by reason and that including all of human different senses are vital to form a lovemark.
There are important differences between a brand and a lovemark. Firstly, the type of relationship between the consumer and a brand. Lovemarks effect changes the consumption routine from rational to irrational. A brand provides information to consumers through statements while lovemarks create a relationship with them by telling stories, love stories. Secondly, in a brand, there are always defined attributes like quality, while a Lovemark is surrounded by mystery, sensuality and intimacy. For a Lovemark, quality is not an added value it’s just necessary in order to compete in the market. What makes the difference between a brand and a Lovemark is that 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).

Kevin Roberts also states that consumers make 80% of their decisions based on emotion and that those emotions develop strong brand loyalty, as well as brand attachment (Roberts, 2006).

However, this theory don´t give a better understanding on why consumers keep repurchasing the same brand throughout the time. Therefore, the main focus of this study is the emotional attachment between consumers and brands, and in a more deeply view, the finding out of the long-lasting relationship with the brand, that sense of consistency of loyalty and emotional attachment over time. Taking a look to Roberts’s theory, he only mentions what kind of senses need to be fulfilled in order for consumers to love a brand. His theory gives to this study an insight to the initial attraction to a brand, and how a brand can become a lovemark.

### 3.3.2 Self Expansion Theory

The theory has been used in previous research, to study the consumer buying behavior (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Hwang & Kandampully, 2012; Didier & Cindy, 2010). This theory emphasizes a central motive in which individuals expand their selves to be more than they are, by acquiring perspective, resources
and identities to improve their capacity to achieve goals (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011). Also, it is stated that a consumer can recognize himself in a relationship with a brand based on adequacy between his own personality (Didier & Cindy, 2010). On the other hand, Hwang & Kandampully stated that consumer’s purchases are partly driven by a wish to construct self-concepts and communicate them through wearing and using branded products (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012).

The self-expansion model is a conceptual framework that attempt to describe how people think, feel and act in the context of close relationships. It was originally proposed by Aron and Aron (1986) and integrates Eastern psychology’s interpretation on the evolution of the self and the nature of love.

“People seek to expand themselves by enhancing their aptitude to accomplish goals, leading to ever greater goals or life purposes. The self-expansion model emphasizes the central human motive of the desire to expand the self by acquiring resources, perspectives and identities that enhance one’s ability or accomplish goals. Expanding the self is usually not a conscious goal. Further, rapid expansion of the self as often occurs when forming a new romantic relationship is posited to result in high levels of excited positive affect, consistent with prior findings about the impact on affective state of rapid movement toward a goal” (Carver and Scheier 1990).

To understand the relationship between the brands and consumer is relevant to study the self-expansion theory, which explores the reasoning for consumers to purchase brands.

3.3.3 Brand Attachment Theory

Brand Attachment is viewed as a long-lasting, commitment inducing bond between the brand and the consumer. Brand attachment can be defined as the strength of
the bond connecting the brand with the self. Consistent with attachment theory (Mikulincer and Shaver 2007), this bond is exemplified by a rich and accessible memory network that involves thoughts and feelings about the brand and the brand’s relationship to the self.

Research proposes that attachments can extend beyond the person-person relationship context. That research shows that consumers can develop attachments to gift (Mick and DeMoss, 1990), collectibles (Slater, 2001), places of residence (Hill and Stamey, 1990), brands (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) and other types of special or favorite objects (Babad, 1987; Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988, Ball and Tasaki, 1992; Richins, 1994). Attachment symbolizes a psychological state of mind in which a strong cognitive and affective bond connects a brand with an individual in such a way that the brand is viewed as an extension of the self.

A previous research done by Chaudhuri & Holbrook, (2001), show that commitment to a brand saves a customer the cost of seeking new relations with other brands. Thus, brand attachments with the brand can forecast how often the brand was purchased previously and how often will be purchased in the future (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koening, 2002; Esch, Lagner, Schmitt, & Geus, 2006).

3.3.3.1 Brand Loyalty

The American Marketing Association defines brand loyalty as “the degree to which a consumer consistently purchases the same brand within a product class”. Trying to define the term, Aaker considers that brand loyalty reflects “how likely a customer will be switch to another brand, especially when that brand makes a change in price, product features, and communication or distribution programs” In addition, consumers that are emotionally driven to a brand exhibit greater commitment to it, and intense emotions such as love toward a brand promote long-term relationship with that brand (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012).
There are many reasons why customers keep buying the same brands. However, brand loyalty is more than simple repurchasing the same product/brand over and over again. Repurchasing does not yet make a customer loyal. True brand loyalty occurs when customers have a high relative attitude toward the brand of preference which is exhibited through repurchase behavior and customers are willing to pay higher prices.

Brand-loyal consumers are confident in their brand judgments, committed to the value and price appeal and not price sensitive, so that the same brand is purchased repeatedly (Day 1969:34). Strong consumer-brand relationships improve consumers brand loyalty, durability of brands, and consumer’s willingness to pay a premium price (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012). Therefore, there is a link between brand attachment and how it leads consumers to be loyal to a specific brand.

Trust is an important element in the field of consumer-brand relationship, and stems from loyalty and attachment, and without trust there is no stable and lasting relationship (Didier & Cindy, 2010; Louis & Lombart, 2010).

3.4 Summary

The purpose of this study is to discover what elements are required for a consumer to develop emotional attachment and loyalty towards a brand from a consumer’s point of view, and not from a marketer’s point of view. Therefore, in order to understand this topic, it is a priority to look which theories mentioned in this chapter, fit the respondent’s answers in order to explore, analyze, interpret and understand the respondents thoughts and feelings in the moment of repurchasing their lovemark brand, and figure out why they are loyal to their brand of preference. The previous mentioned theories are used only as a guideline for the study; as the main important factor is in the respondent’s answers which will be analyzed.

The theory of senses will give an insight to the elements of sensuality, mystery and intimacy. The theory of self-expansion will give a perception of the consumers
need to expand their identity. And the theory of brand attachment will give a better understanding, on how consumers develop strong brand attachment that leads to be loyal to their lovemark brand.
4. Empirical Method

This chapter presents the empirical method. Research technique, primary data collection, selection of respondents, interviews and lastly credibility, transferability and conformability are discussed.

4.1 Research Technique

This study is going to be conducted in a qualitative technique, centered on personal interviews face to face. I will be focus on questions such as why, where, when and how, to get a deeper understanding, rather than numerical or statistical information.

It is probable to create greater understanding through further development of answers to get a better insight and a better perspective, or even find the intensity of attitudes. (McGivern, 2006). In this study I will focus on the luxury market, particularly luxury brands that sell luxury goods, this is because luxury brands used to have a loyal customer base (in Knowledge at Wharton, 2008; Song & Hur, 2012; Roumeliotis, 2012),

The aim of these interviews is to discover the strong emotional attachment that leads customers to be loyal for their lovemark brands.

4.2 Primary Data Collection

Primary data is the information that the researcher collects using a range of tools such as interviews, observations and questionnaires, rather than simply replaying on existing data sources. In other words, the data are unique to this particular study.
This research and method will give the present study a better understanding, instead of carrying out questionnaires; since one can interpret the consumer’s verbal responses, including their tone of voice.

Some advantages of doing interviews are as follows:

- Investigate the loyalty consumers have for their lovemark in an in depth way. It means that the interviews will achieve a more depth answers in the respondent's including their thoughts and interpretations. The interviews lead the respondents to give an honest response about what they really think and feel about the topic.

- Discover how respondents think and feel about this topic and why they hold certain opinions
- Sensitive topics which people may feel uncomfortable discussing in a focus group
- Add human dimension to impersonal data

There will also be the chance and opportunity in the present project to ask about additional questions depending on the previous answers, to keep up the conversation in which the discussion can become more fluent and more thoughts arrive. In this study, there have been conducted fourteen interviews, offering a better understanding of respondents’ thoughts about their loyalty and emotional attachment to lovemarks.

### 4.3 Selection of respondents

For the sake of the respondents to give the most reliable answers as possible, a list of very close friends and close friends of them were chosen as respondents. Knowing personally all the respondents, an easy and on going environment was created in order to obtain straight and direct answers to all the questions asked in the interviews for the study. One important factor in the pursuing of the interviews, was the fact that each respondent had a different nationality in order to try to give the present study a more “global” result.
In the selection of the sample that is presented in table #1, fourteen people were selected. There were not taking into consideration the gender, nor the age of the respondents, since what is really important here is the answers as individuals, regardless of how old they are, or their sex. Furthermore, before the selection of the respondents was carried out, there was taken into account their relations with the luxury brands, bearing in mind the ones who had a deeper emotional connection and loyalty with their lovemarks. One possible limitation of the selective sample is that only fourteen people were interviewed. Thus, it cannot represent the overall public opinion. However, what one can come to conclude in this study is what kind of emotional attachment and loyalty there exist between the consumer and his brand.

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*Table 1. Selection of respondents*
4.3.1 Interviews

An advantage of the interviews is that they can be conducted in an open way and this of course leads to interesting discussions and at the same time, contributes to better understanding of the respondents’ thinking.

Before interviewing, I informed the respondents about Lovemarks term; so during the interview this term was used instead of using the brand term,

An interview can be structured, semi structured or unstructured. The structured means that the questions and answering options are predetermined and have a sequence. A semi-structured interview is somewhat open, what differs with a structured interview is that one does not have predetermined answers, and finally an unstructured interview is completely open.

The respondents were interviewed between May and July in Barcelona-Spain. In the interviews, I started initially with structured questions. Then I proceeded with semi-structured questions which became more detailed and concrete. The questions were about topics of emotional attachment, brand loyalty, trust and identity, which I consider were useful in order to understand why consumers develop loyalty and emotional attachment towards a brand. One important factor is that all the interviews were recorded on tape to avoid losing important information.

(The interview guide is presented in Appendix 1).

4.4 Credibility, Transferability and Conformability

It is important to highlight that the major aim of these interviews was to take note of their specific and unique quotations by listening the respondents’ experiences, attitudes, and insight of their lovemark brands. This method also helped the
understanding of the reasons for the respondents’ to stay loyal, and develop strong emotional attachment to their lovemark brand.

As it was mentioned before, because of the proximity and close relationship with the respondents, the answers were most reliable. The information received was recorded, so in the next chapter I will show some accurate quotes of the respondents.
5. Results

In this chapter the results are presented and analyzed. Elements as image, quality, trust, tradition, emotions, long lasting fashion and customer experience are discussed. Finally, a summary of the results will be presented.

This study is going to be conducted in a qualitative technique, centered on personal interviews with fourteen people face to face.

5.1 Image

The results show that all of the respondents mentioned the element of image as an influence element for them to acquire their lovemark brand. It could be perceived that when they purchase certain luxury goods, they acquire at the same time a certain and unique image. Nowadays, people care more about themselves, in the way how people look at them and the image they can show. The respondents show a high degree of importance about image when they purchase a specific good. People think constantly how they look, so they are willing to invest on their own image with the help of the brand.

This element of image is related with the theory of self expansion, in which Hwang & Kandampully stated that consumer’s purchases are partly driven by a wish to construct self-concepts and communicate them through wearing and using branded products. This theory also stated that consumers are more loyal to brands that they feel commonalities to, and to brands that express important aspects of their identity (Hwang & Kandampully, 2012).

The brand more than selling physical goods, the brand also sells something unique in which includes the consumer identity, personality, work ethic, goals, aspirations, fears and more.
“I purchase this brand because it represents who I am, that’s one of the reasons that I feel more connected with the brand.” Ricky, 35 - Ermenegildo Zegna

The respondents place high significance on the brand attachment and self concept constructs through brand personality. In other words, this means that consumers with a strong self concept will also have strong attachment to brands.

The respondents said in the interview that it is important to them to feel identified with the brand, one brand that represents who they truly are, including their personality and image. This is one of the reasons on why they repurchase their lovemark brand.

“I consider myself to be an elegant and sophisticated person. That’s why I feel identified with Channel “Jessica, 26 - Channel

“So many people judge because of the way you look. That is why is really important to me to give a good impression externally and then people can get to know me as a person.” Alisa, 22 – Stella McCartney

“I love how the design of the cloths looks on me, it is very representative of the person I am” Heloise, 34 - Balmain

“I really work hard to get my own image” Spenser 31 - Tod’s

“I buy these products because I feel it is an opportunity to become unique, refined, and joyful” Lauren. 20 - Jimmy Choo

Consumers that are truthfully attached to their lovemarks offer their loyalty to their trusted brands to such an extent that the relationship with the brand departs from functionality to symbolism, this is how luxury brands help consumers project a “self-image” as a result of the “prestige” and high status features with which the
brands are linked. Therefore, luxury goods help as a communication tool that consumers use to express to others and even to themselves of the kind of person they are or would like to be.

Brand prestige is defined as a relatively high status product/service positioning associated with a brand (Steenkamp, Batra, & Alden, 2003).

“I buy this brand because it makes me feel confident and the brand fits my day to day lifestyle” Sophia, 43 - Trussardi

“My social environment is very related with luxury brands, that’s why I feel very influenced by all of this brands” Heidy, 32 - Cartier

Fourteen out of the fourteen respondents mentioned in the interviews the element of image as the essential element for them to purchase and repurchase the brand again.

5.2 Quality

Most people who purchase luxury goods believe that they are paying for quality. Consumers think that quality includes two main things; excellent nature of materials or components used and the delicacy and skill involved in the manufacturing and delivery processes.

Consumers assumed that the elaboration of luxury goods and services calls for significant expertise with every detail being important. Consumers expect perfection, refinement and the product to perform perfectly during extended time.

Fourteen out of the fourteen respondents mentioned in the interviews the element of quality as the essential element for them to purchase and repurchase the brand again. The quality is a very important factor for them, as they gained trust for the quality of the brand. They explained that the longer they had the brand the more
they trust the quality of the products in general. The quality is one of the main reasons on why they trust the brand, kept repurchasing and stayed loyal to their lovemark brand.

“I keep repurchasing this brand because is not a secret that the quality is almost perfect” Yujeong, 26-Burberry

Theories mentioned in previous chapters don’t mention the quality factor. Those theories just argued that trust leads to loyalty in which loyal consumers that repurchase the same brand over again, develop positive attitudes towards it. True loyalty involves the customer to create an emotional bond with the brand (Patwardhan & Balasubramanian, 2011; Olivier, 1999).

As the element that leads consumers to develop an emotional bond and loyalty to brands is not mentioned in previous theories, the element of quality is very important as all the respondents interviewed mentioned quality as a reason to stay loyal to their brand. They believe that is worth the price they pay for those items because they trust that the products will last a long time.

“I´m sure I won’t find this kind of quality in other brands” Manuela, 22-Gucci

“I believe that the more it costs the better quality it is” Susana, 23-Louis Vuitton

“I would rather prefer to purchase a expensive product that will last years, than few cheap products that last just for a couple of months” Alisa, 22 - Stella McCartney

5.3 Trust

Consumers need to trust that the brand will deliver on its promise in every interaction, or they’ll turn away from the brand in search of another that does meet their expectations and delivers on its promise over again. Brand trust can be
defined as “consumer’s willingness to rely on a brand in the face of risk because of expectations that the brand will cause positive outcomes (Lau and Lee, 2,000)

All brands must earn and preserve the trust of their customers to ensure loyalty.

“I feel safe when I buy this brand because I know that it will never let me down” Spenser, 31 – Tod’s

“Everyone could completely trust this brand.” Ricky, 35 - Ermenegildo Zegna

“This brand is truly trustworthy” Eugenie, 29 - Givenchy

“Trusting this brand has been very helpful for me as it saved me from looking for a new relationship with another brand” Olivia, 23 – Ralph Lauren

Trust is the vital element when it comes to consumer-brand relationship. That comes from loyalty and attachment, and without trust there is not lasting relationship to build on (Didier & Cindy, 2010; Louis & Lombart, 2010). The interviewers mentioned that they start repurchasing one certain brand in the moment when they start to trust in that specific brand. Trust is pretty much related to the quality of the product, because of the quality of the product, consumers start to trust in the brand. Trust is related to the brand attachment theory in which it is explained how trust is needed for a consumer to be loyal to a certain brand.

A positive purchase experience tends to produce a positive emotional response (Affect) and improve perceptions of the reliability of the brand (trust) in the view of the customer.

When customers are fulfilled with a brand, they develop emotional bonds with that brand. At the same time, customers strengthen their belief that the brand will remain to meet its obligations and stated performance (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Trusting the brand makes the consumer re-purchase the brand.
5.4 Emotions

Purchasing luxury goods is an emotional phenomenon for numerous consumers. Nowadays, one important element is the relationship that the consumer creates with the brand and the emotions that the product or service communicates. In luxury goods, the emotional aspects as brand, exclusivity and prestige, are more important than rational aspects such as technical, functional or price. Customer tends to be happy after purchasing a product, even though this product may be expensive.

“Feels that I get an exceptional product and I am happy to pay for it” Jessica, 26 - Channel

“I feel nice, I feel like I’m investing” Yujeong, 26 - Burberry

Consumers purchase products based not only on product features (price, quality, functionality and so on), they also purchase or use products based on emotions, that is affection, enjoyment, impressions, intuition, sensations, and so on. (Nagamachi, 2002)

The interviewees stated that one of the motives of buying their lovemarks is because they experience different feelings and emotions. The interviewees mentioned feelings as happiness, beauty, satisfaction, and the feeling of being powerful among other feelings in the moment of purchase a certain brand. Interviewees stated to be driven by their emotions. Most of the them said to feel better after the buy their lovemark brand.

“When I purchase these awesome handbags, I feel, happy, chic, and satisfied with the purchase” Heidy, 32 - Cartier

“I feel special and pretty when wearing a Burberry item” Yujeong, 26 - Burberry
The situation that they can afford luxury brands made them feel powerful, unique and successful, among other feelings and emotions.

“I buy this brand because I love to feel elegant and classic” Sophia, 42 - Trussardi

The emotions can be related with the theory of Roberts (2006) Lovemarks- the future beyond brands. Coming down with three qualities that gave Lovemarks their special emotional appeal: mystery, sensuality and intimacy. In our interviews, we can relate the interviews with the last two qualities: sensuality and intimacy.

Kevin Roberts stated that mystery is the main condition that influences brand love. Nevertheless, the respondents stated that not all of the components of mystery influence their love towards brands. Therefore one can deduce that Roberts’s description of a Lovemark is doubtful, since loving a brand does not always involve all the components of mystery dimension. However, the combination of the three qualities should clarify the emotional attachment towards brands.

“I basically repurchase the same brand because I simple love their handbags, for me no other element matters” Susana, 23 – Louis Vuitton

This theory of senses is important as the emotional connections are vitally significant in creating brand loyalty. Nowadays, consumers want an emotional connection. They want to be able to connect with what’s behind the brand and its promise.

“I really love to feel stylish and special most of the time, that’s why I repurchase this brand over again” Alisa, 22 - Stella McCartney

All of the respondents felt some type of emotion when purchasing their lovemark. Feelings of enjoyment and affection are really common between each respondent. They stated to be chic, sexy, happy, excited, elegant, luxurious, successful and
satisfied, among other feelings. They clarify that emotions are a significant element for them to love a brand and stay loyal and developing deep emotional attachment towards it. At the same time emotions are one of the reasons to repurchase the same brand.

### 5.5 Long Lasting Fashion

Fashion wear trends always exist through various cycles. Today, fashion changes much more speedily and is deeply influenced by movies, music and famous people. Some of the respondents stated that the clothes that they bought are long lasting in time. So that they can use those items in the next season without this item going out of fashion.

They also have responded some questions telling that they are really willing to pay more for products that last longer, than paying less for items that maybe last less, both talking in terms of quality and fashion.

Check over earlier theories, none has debated the element of long-lasting or timeless, as an important element for consumers to purchase and re-purchase a brand. Fourteen out of the fourteen respondents mentioned in the interviews the element of long lasting fashion as the essential element for them to pay such a high price, and stay loyal to the brand. Also to purchase and repurchase the brand again.

“That’s why I love to purchase this brand again and again. Louis Vuitton stylishness is very classic that you can never go mistaken with a timeless handbag” Susana, 23. Louis Vuitton

“They products are never out of fashion, the brand has kept their old design with them which I love it.” Jessica, 26 - Channel

### 5.6 Tradition
Some of the respondents had the first contact with their lovemark at a young age and at the present time they still buy the brand feeling some kind of strong affection to it. All respondents have remembered their first purchase or first experience with the brand. the respondents can identify their lovemark and their style because they have purchased them almost all of their lives.

“I will always remember the first purchase I did” Tony, 27 – Marc Jabocs

“I remember the first purchase of my favorite sunglasses like it was yesterday” Lauren, 20 – Jimmy Choo

Esch, Lagner, Schmitt and Geus (2006) stated that attachment relations are created first early in childhood and that the developments process continues throughout lifetime.

Most of the respondents have had a past experience with the brand. They know the brand since they were young because they grew up with family who tends to use luxury brands. They stated that when they have memories about the brand they feel more emotionally attached to their lovemark.

Brand awareness refers to the consumer’s capability to recall and recognize the brand. It is more than just consumers knowing the brand name and having previously seen the brand, perhaps even many times. Brand awareness also involves concerning the brand name, logo and symbol to certain associations in memory. (Aaker, 1991)

5.7 The Customer Experience

The “Customer Experience” concept has aroused interest amongst researchers around the world, but its definition and measurement is currently a source of controversy. Those shopping experiences have become the most important differentiating element for a brand.
Researchers stated that 75% of consumers who have enjoyed an awesome experience with a specific brand certainly intend to return back to the same brand. When consumers encounter "standard" experiences at a store, their probability to return drops by over 65%.

Nearly 80% of consumers who enjoy a great shopping experience will talk about it with their friends and relatives. The higher the number of elements in a shopper’s great shopping experience, the more people they tell about the experience.

“One of the most things I love when I purchase Cartier products is when I’m just in silence admiring their store design, their architecture and scenography” Heidy, 32 - Cartier

“For me luxury is not only based on luxury products, it is more about the service the brand offers to the customers” Manuela, 22 - Gucci

The consumer experience is very important in order to create brand long term loyalty. Fourteen out of the fourteen respondents mentioned in the interviews this factor as the essential element for them to pay such a high price, and stay loyal to the brand. Also to purchase and repurchase the brand again.

“I’m just in love with the Burberry interactive digital stores” Yujeong, 26 - Burberry

"A personalized experience with the brand is the ultimate in luxury. When I go to the store, I usually get dressed by the styling professional team; I definitely love that kind of service” Eugenie, 29 - Givenchy

5.8 Analysis of the results

During the 20 minutes in-depth interviews with each respondent, I could see that their responses were very similar to each other with regards to emotional attachment and loyalty towards their lovemark brand. Almost the fourteen respondents have mentioned the same elements of image, quality, trust, emotions,
long lasting fashion, tradition and customer experience. We can see the results more clearly in the following color diagram in which each element is represented by a specific color;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Elements</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heloise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alisa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manuela</td>
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<td>Jessica</td>
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<td>Spencer</td>
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<td>Olivia</td>
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<td>Heidy</td>
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</table>
**Diagram 1. Results**

The results show that only two respondents of fourteen interfered with the final outcome. Spencer and Ricky didn’t mentioned the element of long lasting fashion. The results of the rest of the respondents were exactly the same in which each one brings up the seven elements as being very important to them to develop emotional attachment.

The second important result is that of seven elements discovered in the interviews, only three of them are mentioned in previous theories of repetitive buying behavior which are: Image, emotions and trust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Self Expansion Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Theory of Senses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Brand Attachment Theory</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Diagram 2. Elements mentioned in previous theories**

Image is related with the theory of self-expansion, in which is stated that consumer’s purchases are partly driven by a wish to construct self-concepts and communicate them through wearing and using branded products. Emotions could be related to the theory of senses in which the emotional connections are the key factor to create brand loyalty to a certain brand. Trust is related to the brand attachment theory in which is explained how trust is needed for a consumer to develop loyalty to a certain brand. As this theory doesn’t explain the reasons to trust brands, we can determine from the interviews that the new elements
discovered such as quality, and long lasting fashion are key elements to consumers in order to trust brands.

Furthermore, the results have revealed that elements as image, emotions and trust were already revealed on previous theories; while quality, tradition, long lasting fashion and customer experience were not mentioned.

These four new elements are very important to customers in order to develop loyalty and emotional attachment to the brand. These elements also improved or affected the loyalty and attachment the respondents have for their lovemarks.

The new elements, quality, long lasting fashion, customer experience and tradition, combined with the existing elements, emotions, trust and image, made the respondents develop deep loyalty and deep emotional attachment to their lovemark brands. Also, make them love the brand, and makes them re-purchased the same brand over again.
By using a qualitative approach, this study has revealed us additional data that previous studies did not have. In other words, if the research had been conducted in a quantitative method, most probably the end results would not have shown us the information found here.

The second important information this study has shown us, is that all of the respondents had re-purchased their lovemarks for more than 5 years. But they started to develop deeply attachment and loyalty towards their lovemarks only after some period of time of their first purchase.

Nevertheless, it is important to clarify that the conclusions in the present study were collected from a small sample size. Although the respondents had a lot of elements in common with each other and at the same time the people chose for the sample were multicultural with different nationalities all; the results, however, cannot be generalized at all. The study, did not completely answer why precisely consumers are committed to brands over a long period of time; but it does contribute to the subject as to recognize a deeper insight on repetitive buying behavior.
6. Conclusion

This chapter contains a summary of the study and general results obtained from the analysis. The study ends with suggestions for future research.

Nowadays, building strong connections between consumers and brands are the keys to develop deeper, long-lasting, and strong brand attachments. Given the purpose of this study to discover what is needed for consumers to develop emotional attachment towards brands, it was very significant to look at previous studies on consumer behavior in which most of them have been conducted in a quantitative way. For this reason is why the present study was conducted on a qualitative method, in order to find out in a consumer perspective the elements that are needed to consumers to be loyal and emotionally attached.

The aim of this study was to discover answers to the research question and objectives:

WHAT ELEMENTS INFLUENCE THE CONSUMERS’ EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS TOWARDS THE CONSUMPTION OF LUXURY GOODS AND BRANDS?

- Identify the elements that influence the creation of brand love amongst consumers.
- Analyze the consumer’s behavior when the consumers purchase and repurchase the same lovemark and stay loyal to their brand of preference.
• Classify the key essentials that are needed for a product or service to become a lovemark.

To reach the aim, I have interviewed fourteen selected brand lovers that have been loyal to luxury brands for a long time and expecting to discover new information different than Robert’s Theory of Senses, The Theory of Self Expansion and The Theory of Brand Attachment.

Four new elements and three existing elements were found in the deep interviews. Elements such as Image, quality, emotions, trust, long lasting fashion, customer experience and tradition, are the key elements to love the brand, develop emotional attachment towards a brand and makes them re-purchased the same brand over again.

The elements of emotion, trust and image, could be related to the theories mention as follows; Robert’s Theory of Senses, the Theory of Brand Attachment and The Theory of Self Expansion respectively. And in the other hand four new elements were discovered such as: quality, long lasting fashion, customer experience and tradition.

This study can also conclude that the repetitive buying behavior of the consumers improved throughout time and made the emotional attachment and loyalty stronger. The longer they love the brand, the stronger the relationship will be.

6.1 Suggestions for Further Research

It would be motivating to conduct another study with more respondents in order to be able to come to more precise results. It would also be interesting to conduct a study with regular brands, to look the main loyalty differences between the luxury market and the regular market.
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1- Questions in-depth interviews

Introductory questions
Approximately how many times have you bought for that specific lovemark brand?
Have you bought other substitute brand besides your lovemark brand?
Is price a concern for you when purchasing goods for your lovemark brand?
And have you gone back to your lovemark brand after purchasing other substitute brands?

Brand Identity Questions
Why do you buy that brand? Why do you buy luxury products?
What do you think about your lovemark brand?
Since when do you purchase this brand and how often?

Trust and loyalty Questions
Why do you start to purchase your lovemark?
Do you remember the first purchase you did?
Have you bought other brands substitute? If yes, why have you come back to your lovemark?
Do you trust the brand? Why?
What means to you stay loyal to the brand?
Why do you purchase the same brand instead of looking for others?
What kind of trust does this brand generate to you?
Why this brand and no others?

Emotional Attachment Questions
What feelings do you experience when you purchase products from that brand?
Why do you love your brand?
What do you feel when you wear or use your lovemark?
How do you get to know this brand?
Explain your experience purchasing this brand?
What elements do you consider to be important in the purchasing process?