

MKM227 Postgraduate Dissertation

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	Comments	Max Mark	Actual Mark
<p>Introduction</p> <p><i>Identification of a valid topic, research question and objectives framed to Masters Level standard with academic rationale developed, clear industry contextualisation of the research topic</i></p>	Supervisor Comments:	10%	
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“Brand consumer relationship: How young female consumers of UK relate to their tobacco brands.”

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Royal Docks Business School, University of East London for the degree of **MSc Brand Management**

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Brand consumer relationship: How young female consumers of UK relate to their tobacco brands.

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“I dedicate this work to **“RDBS and faculty members”** who enhanced my brand management knowledge and research skills. It is their hard work that made me confident enough to go into job market and grab a career job based upon my knowledge and skills developed at RDBS”.

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Abstract

Tobacco consumption is a controversial habit in society. Govts around the world have made regulations against tobacco brands marketing so does in UK. There are different anti smoking campaigns in society to spread awareness about tobacco. But according to different research studies tobacco consumption has been increasing among young females in UK. There is mark difference in tobacco consumption from yester years. This is due to increasing awareness about health issues connected with tobacco use. Along with this increasing prices in this recession period has not affected tobacco consumption. Therefore aim of this study is to find out the actual nature of relationship between young female consumers with their tobacco brands. Despite the fact tobacco consumption causes health problems. Young females' ratio of tobacco consumption in UK is increasing then male consumers. This is the main idea of taking this research. It is very interesting to find out relationship between young females and their tobacco brands. This research will focus upon understanding the nature of relationship between young female consumers and their respective tobacco brands. It will be an exploratory study and will add value to previous studies. Qualitative research method will be used. In depth semi structured interviews will be conducted to collect data. This data will be of 8 hrs and will be interpreted and analysed very comprehensively to meet objectives of the study. Scope of the study will be based upon London and East London.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Focus

Topic chosen for this research is brand consumer relationship. Area of research regarding BCR will focus young female consumers of UK and their relationship with their tobacco brands. Consumer relationships with its brands have gone beyond their functional connection. Studies much focused on marketing practicing rather than developing relationship (Fournier, 1998). Important elements of BCR like brand personality, interpersonal relationship qualities, trust, commitment, social networking were not considered properly in explaining and understanding BCR (Ibid). Past studies emphasized upon market and business relationships but not on the consumer and product interaction and the relationship that they develop over a period of time. To explain BCR relationship, metaphors were introduced in literature to have in depth understanding of BCR (Hess and Story, 2006). For example loyalty or repurchasing is not enough to measure the actual nature of BCR (Fournier, 1998). Relationship metaphors have been introduced in literature to have in depth understanding of BCR. Like people build relationship with their brands in same way they form relationship with others (Aggarwal, 2004). Similarly different other terminologies have been used for better understanding of BCR. Some of them are personality traits, commitment, trust, brand knowledge, brand awareness, social networking, and self concept. Therefore our research will focus on these elements to understand the relationship of young females of UK with their tobacco brands.

1.2 Origin

Research question is to investigate the nature of relationship of young female consumers of UK with their tobacco brands. Origin of this research question can be divided into two parts. First one is BCR in which brands and consumers both act in an active way to form relationship (Fournier, 1998). Brands have personalities which are similar to the personalities of consumers (O'Malley and Patterson, 2006). On the basis of these similar personalities both act as relationship partners. In our lives people form and develop relationships with brands on the basis of experiences they have with them

(Fournier, 1998). Second part of BCR in context of research question is female consumers' relationship with tobacco brands. According to (Sandford, 2007) people smoke because of their relationship with other people, social interactions, attitudes. To show independence self, style, attraction, personality, females smoke (Schmidt, 2012). Hence we can see the elements of personality, social networking, independence are there in relationship with the brands. From early 1920s to till date females has been used in tobacco advertisements. Style, personality, sophistication, independence self, success, social networking has been key elements of BCR in context of female and tobacco brands (Ibid).

1.3 Industry insight

Increasing antismoking efforts and legislations in different countries barriers to entry in this industry are higher. Along with this already established big players are there in tobacco industry. Philip Morris, British American Tobacco and Japan Tobacco hold for the 40% of the worldwide tobacco industry (WARC report, 2011).

According to (*General Lifestyle Survey Overview, 2010*), smoking habits in UK between male and female has very less difference. Over the years smoking habits has declined due to strong opposition of smoking. According to survey in 2010 young female consumers in the age bracket of 20years to 24 years have the highest percentage of smoking which is 29%. This percentage is greater than any other age group (Key notes, 2012).

According to (Key notes,2012) although there are different efforts in the society to preventing smoking. But smoking is increasing in young girls. . Although it is less than previous years but it is high as compared to young men. It can be seen in the figure below.

Fig. 1

Male	1974	2000	2010
16-19	42	30	20
20-24	52	35	25
Females			
16-19	38	28	17
20-24	44	35	29

(Source: Key Notes, 2012)

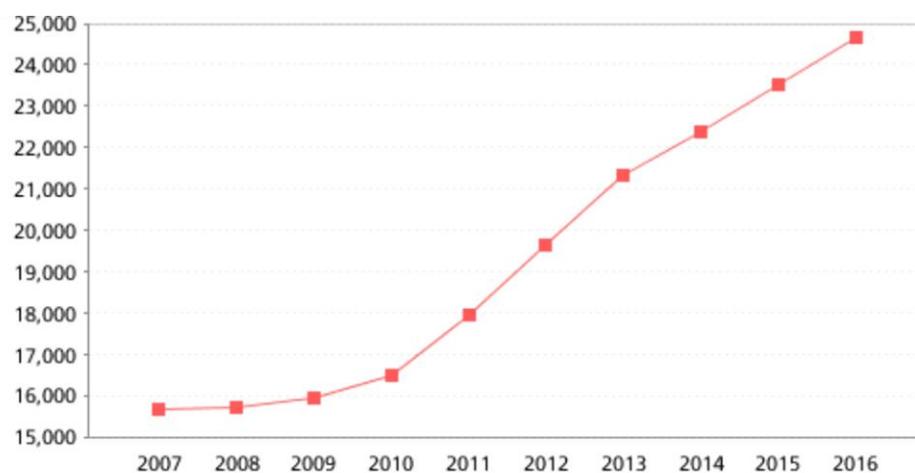
Tobacco prices are on the rise and Govt is putting more restrictions on tobacco brands. Also economic down turn has affected greatly the use of tobacco. But people still giving preference to quality tobacco brands. New alternatives like e- cigarettes are in the market now (Key Notes, 2012). According to (European Commission report, 2012) smoking rates in UK in the age bracket of 15 to 18 is on the higher side. It can be seen in the picture below.

Fig.2

	Less than 15 years old	Between 15 and 18 years old	Between 19 and 25 years old	Older than 25 years old	Refusal \ Don't know	Average
 EU27	17%	53%	24%	4%	2%	17,6
 IE	28%	52%	17%	2%	1%	16,4
 DK	33%	45%	18%	3%	1%	16,6
 MT	28%	56%	12%	3%	1%	16,8
 UK	28%	50%	18%	4%	0%	16,8
 NL	22%	57%	18%	3%	0%	16,9
 ES	22%	55%	17%	4%	2%	17,1
 DE	17%	58%	21%	2%	2%	17,2

The Forecast Total UK Market for Cigarettes and Tobacco by Value at Current Prices (£m), 2007-2016.

Fig.3



(Source: Key Notes, 2012)

1.4 Research question and its context

In context of research question “ *what is the nature of relationship of young British female consumers with their low involvement tobacco brands?*”. This report explores the nature of relationship that young female British consumers form with their tobacco brands. Females are more inclined towards sophistication and attractiveness (Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012). Since long, tobacco companies have been using woman in their ads. These ads portray woman as sophisticated, stylish, independent and powerful (Schmidt, 2012). As the time passed tobacco companies used women as the main target for their brands. Tobacco companies launch different tobacco brands that specifically target women. For example R. J. Reynolds introduced brand Camel No.9 cigarettes which directly aimed at women. Similarly Philip Morris in its dual sex brand Marlboro appeals women of all ages (Ibid). Therefore this research will help us greatly on looking into symbolic as well as functional meanings that consumers attach with the tobacco brands.

1.5 Objectives

1. *To critically analyse and evaluate crucial elements for building a strong relationship of young female consumers with their tobacco brands.*
2. *To critically analyse how the trajectory of the relationship evolve over time in the lives of consumers.*
3. *To critically investigate the emotional and functional benefits of young female consumers relationship with tobacco brands and their loyalty level.*

1.6 Rational and Justification

Different studies have done of brand consumer relationship. New metaphors have been added to BCR to find out the actual nature of brand consumer relationship. Relationship with brands is based upon similar personality traits, emotional attachment, past memories, self concept, social interactions, social groupings, trust, and commitment, love and passion (Patterson and Malley, 2006). Along with this in research context tobacco brands are under the hammer by the Govt restrictions and awareness campaigns.

But market for tobacco is expanding as well. Young female consumers for tobacco brands are increasing in UK (WARC report, 2011). Therefore this makes this research very interesting to find out why consumers form relationship with tobacco brands? What are the key elements that attach them with these brands? What sort of relationship consumers' possess with tobacco brands? Is it emotional and symbolic in nature or functional?

1.7 Research methodology

Qualitative research method will be used for data gathering. It will be based upon interpretivism research philosophy. Interpretive research will be used because researcher wants to gather observations from the personal experiences of the informants (Spiggle, 1994, p. 492). A theme sheet will be constructed. To gather data researcher will emphasize on in depth interviews of 6 to 8 young female participants. Interviews will be the best choice to get related, reliable information. Interviews will also

helpful in understanding the behaviours of the respondents. Digital recorder will be used for recording my data to make research findings reliable and trust worthy. A comprehensive transcript of data gathered will be attached at the end (See Appendix 2). In depth interviews are not easy. Researcher will request participants to provide ample time to get sufficient amount of information. Researcher will make sure to get all the relevant information from the participant.

1.8 Research content overview

This research consists of six chapters. A brief introduction of each chapter is given below.

Chapter. 1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the focus of the entire research. It will provide research question context with objectives needs to be achieved. Along with this industry insight and research methodology in brief will be describe.

Chapter. 2 Review of literature

In this chapter researcher will “ critically “ analyse the previous findings done on BCR and BCR in tobacco and its young female British consumer context. Analysis of past studies will be helpful in finding the gaps in the literature and contribution in brand consumer relationship prospective.

Chapter No. 3 Research Methodology

After critically analysing the past literature focus of the research will be further clear. Research question and objective will be mentioned again for the benefit of the reader. Research will be qualitative and interpretivism method will be used. Data will be collected through in depth interview. 8 participants and interviews will be recorded in some digital recorder. This will create trustworthiness and reliability of collected data.

Chapter No. 4 Data Analysis

This is the most important chapter of this research project. Researcher will analyse the data collected and describe the findings and patterns from the data collected. A theme sheet will be constructed and this will be helpful in analysing the gathered data. Research analysis will make sure that findings and data should address the research question and objectives.

Chapter No. 5 Conclusion

In this chapter researcher will critically explain the findings and their managerial and industrial implications. It will show that how researcher has addressed the research question and objectives.

Chapter 6. Recommendations

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 What is Brand?

According to (Keller et al. 2009) Brand is a product that includes different dimensions to product that distinguish it from other products. If we consider this definition of brand we can find two important elements in this definition. One is dimension and other is distinction from other products. Research done in brand consumer relationship (BCR) explains that brands have personalities and can act as relationship partners (Fournier, 1998). Similarly (Aggarwal, 2004) explains that consumers buy brands which have congruence to their personalities. Like humans brands have identities. They have core identity and extended identity (Aaker, 1996).

This personality and identity factor is elaborated based on brand's and consumer's identity and personality explained in literature. Brands may have personalities but they are not humans. They cannot talk or act like humans. These are only perceptions that human carry in their minds (WARC report, 2011, Fournier, 1998, Bengtsson, 2003). Therefore these perceptions add value and dimensions to brands. Along with these perceptions brand name, logo and other elements of brand distinguish it from its competitors. These perceptions and other brand elements help brand to differentiate itself from other brands.

2.2 Brand Consumer Relationship

Brands work as products that differentiate one manufacturer from other. Brands provide distinction and differentiation in let of competition in the market. Due to increase in different brands it has put consumers and their relation with brand at higher importance than before. Now literature shows that consumers not only think and experience different brands but also how they relate themselves to brands. How brand can provide them benefits beyond its functional use (Aggarwal, 2004). It shows that consumer not only looking for functional elements but also symbolic elements of brand as well.

In recent times there is an increase in literature regarding brand and consumer relationship. Term BCR is gaining popularity day by day. This is

not without foundation (O' Malley and Patterson, 2006). There are different academics and practitioners explaining the developing nature of brands and consumers relationship. They have investigated in depth and came out with crucial findings of this BCR. But this BCR is still needs further discoveries. There are other researchers that have critical analysis of BCR findings. Further research work needs to be done to understand the actual nature of brand consumer relationship (O' Malley and Patterson, 2006).

According to (Fournier, 1998) work done before on BCR was mainly about manufacturer and the end service provider relationship. Manufacturer and the person that delivers the product to end consumer was the main player of relationship. This was concern more about the marketing practices and selling of products and less with developing relationship. Major participant of BCR "Consumers" was missing. Brand loyalty was the only important element that was using for BCR (ibid). But this brand loyalty element did not portray the actual and true BCR.

Repeat purchase was the main measuring element of brand loyalty and BCR. Basic questions like why consumers form relationship? How these relationships develop? What are the important factors for developing this relationship? How can this relationship be stronger? All these important questions were missing. To give answers to these questions and explain the behaviour of the consumers with their brands researchers use relationship metaphors (Fournier, 1998).

These metaphors like animism, personification and personality traits congruence has changed the concept of BCR beyond the boundaries of loyalty (Story and Hess, 2006). Literature included different important elements and aspect of BCR like satisfaction, commitment, self concept, love and passion, brand personality, consumer personality and trust. Along with these elements literature talked about strength of BCR (Papista and Dimittiadis, 2012).

This was explained to put foundation of brand consumer relationship from loyalty to in-depth developed analysis. As mentioned above to explain this

relationship personal relationship metaphors were used (Story and Hess, 2006). Reason of using relationship metaphor is to understand the actual nature of brand consumer relationship. It helped researchers as well as audience to provide answers to above mentioned questions. According to (Fournier, 1998) interpersonal relationship literature was a key factor for explaining this BCR but this area of knowledge was not used completely.

People have personalities and consumers buy brands which sought or according to their personalities. Therefore they form a sort of relationship with brands as they do with humans (Aggarwal, 2004). This was written in a social context on the basis of personality traits that human shares with others in interpersonal relationship. But this argument was criticised by other researchers. For a relationship to exist both parties should act actively. Both sides should contribute equally in interaction. A relationship cannot build between active and passive member (Fournier, 1998).

Human beings are always in need of interaction with different brands. They fulfil their daily necessities. From using these brands consumers complete their daily tasks as well as life projects. Therefore with a series of interactions consumers attach different personalities to brands (ibid). This was written in relationship with brands on personality congruence and active relationship participation. But on the other hand there is an important point needs to be address that brands are non material objects. How can they act as an active member of this relationship dyad?

According to (Fournier, 1998) foundation of this interpersonal relationship is provided to brands through different sources like marketing agencies, celebrities in different advertisements, past emotional relationship and animism of brands themselves. For a brand to work as a relationship partner these personification attributes are used. Fournier admits that this BCR is not entirely like human to human relationship. According to (Bengtsson, 2003) element of reciprocity calls for further research on BCR. A relationship cannot exist in absence of reciprocity. Brands cannot act and do not act on

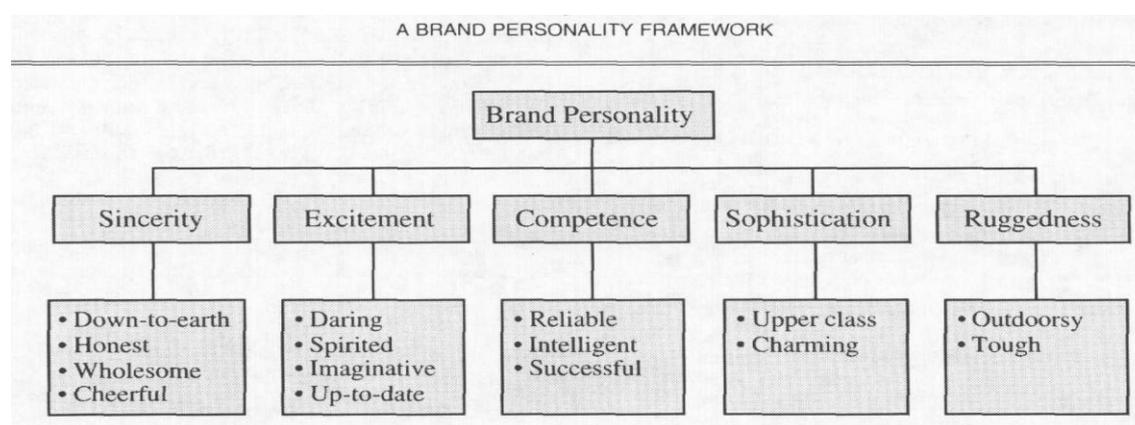
their own. They cannot act as humans do. Therefore it makes this relationship less trustworthy.

Brand consumer relationship is established after a series of interactions. Meanings attached by humans through experiencing the brands over a period of time (Fournier, 1998). People are so much attach to the brands they use and they go crazy and passionate about their brands. With the passage of time consumers go beyond the functional use of the brands. Attach different personality traits to their brands (Aggarwal, 2004).

Through humanized way consumers think that brands have personalities and they attach themselves with brands posses' similar personality traits (O' Malley and Patterson, 2006). As mentioned before brands are non lived objects therefore marketing strategies and advertisements act on behalf of consumers (Fournier, 1998). Below mentioned personality framework demonstrates the relationship between functional as well as symbolic use of brands. This shows how consumers attach different symbolic meaning to brands beyond their functional attributes.

Brand contains all the elements which are also the part of human personality. Humans are sincere, excited, sophisticated and rugged . It can be explained by an example of Harley Davidson. People with rebellion personality traits will choose for Harley Davidson's bike (Swaminathan et al., 2007). Therefore personality is an important element of BCR.

Fig.4



(Dimensions of Brand Personality, Aaker, 1996)

Consumers deal with different life projects, Life theme and goals. Human beings set different goals and objectives in their lives. To complete these tasks consumers interact with different brands and life events. They attain different meanings from these interactions. From series of interactions consumers develop their self concept and identity (Fournier, 1998). This self concept plays an important role in building once identity.

Self concept is developed through a meaningful relationship with the brand over a period of time. This self concept helps an individual to express different aspects of his/her identity (Hwang and Kandampully, 2012). This self concept is attached to self autonomy and showing independent self to the social circle. High self concept develops strong consumer identity. High self respect disregards negative information about the brand. It Proves strength of BCR (Swaminathan et al. 2007).

This was explained for self concept and identity. Researchers took this concept little further for the purpose of further clearance and understanding. According to (Wattanasuwan and Elliot, 1998) post modern consumer give importance to identity because of increasing social interactions. This also makes identity and self an important part of BCR. More you are emotionally attach with a product stronger relationship will be developed. Reasons behind consumer attach themselves with those brands which provide them with identity in the social network which they belong to (Hwang and Kandampully, 2012).

As we previously talked about self identity and social identity to give identity and independence to one's self in her/his own eyes as well as to show others respectively. (Fournier, 1998) explained that people form identities from completion of their daily life tasks to life projects. People (consumers) do this by use of brands. These brands through their use help consumers to form different identities for themselves as well as for others to praise and follow them.

This was written in identity context. Another important element of BCR is self. Self concept plays an important role in expressing individual identity. It

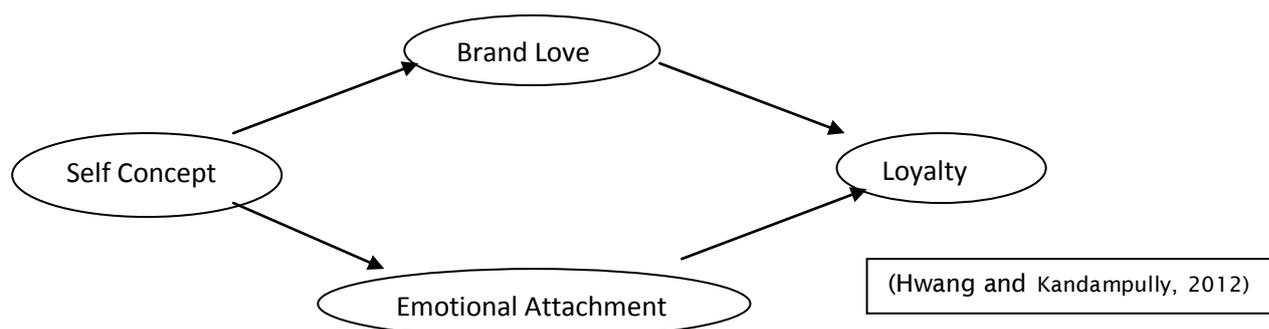
is connected with consumer's own self and what brand symbolizes for the consumer in her/ him social settings (Swaminathan, 2005). This argument can be explained with the following example. A consumer thinks about herself/himself as a classic image. He/she will go for a brand that contains classic image. If consumer has exciting nature then he will choose exciting brand (Hwang and Kandampully, 2012).

Self concept is connected as emotional, symbolic, love and passion elements from consumer to brand. In past studies brand loyalty was the main element of BCR. This was based upon the repeat purchases only. No other important elements like identity, interpersonal relationship, love, passion; commitment was explained in literature (Fournier, 1998). Research done in recent years in BCR has opened new doors of BCR and added new dimensions for understanding. Loyalty is based upon two important aspects. One is behavioral and other is attitudinal (Hwang and Kandampully, 2012).

Behavioral is connected with repurchase and attitude tells about commitment of consumer with the brand. Now the question arises how we can gain this commitment. Because loyalty based upon repeat purchase cannot be a true determinant of strong BCR (Fournier, 1998). This commitment with the brand comes from identity that consumer develops with the brand over a period of time. Through experience and trust over the passage of time. As the time passes relationship between brand and consumer termed as emotional relationship backed up by love (Hwang and Kandampully, 2012).

Therefore loyalty based upon self concept makes this BCR stronger and adds other important dimensions to it (ibid).

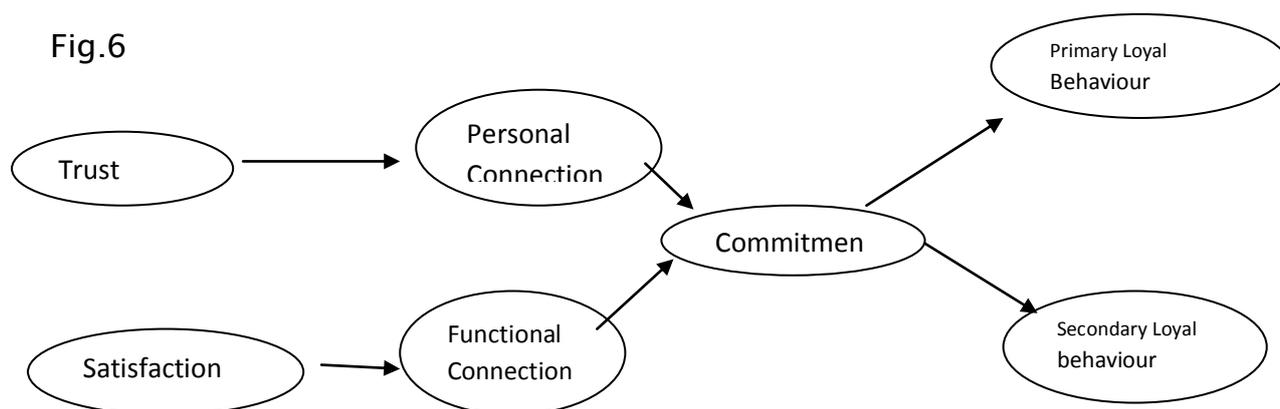
Fig.5



This concept of love and emotional attachment was criticised by (Bengtsson, 2003). According to him Love can only be exist between humans. Object human love is a one sided love. It is not identical of human love. Relationship between brand and consumer is always based on exchanges (Aggarwal, 2004). But human to human relationship when involves love and emotions not necessary ask for exchange.

This was explained in the symbolic and emotional context. But question arises how can this commitment is obtained for BCR. According to (Story and Hess, 2006) satisfied consumer does not guarantee for loyalty and commitment. Satisfaction is attached with functional use of the brand. Emotional attachment is not present. To bring emotional factor into relationship "trust" plays an important role. More trust consumers portray for the brand more personally they are attach with the brand. It Increases their level of commitment.

Fig.6



Commitment process model (Story and Hess, 2006)

According to (Bengtsson, 2003) commitment can only be between living objects (humans). Lack of reciprocity is an important factor for commitment. Also relationship between consumer and brand is more of a commercial type. This is also an important point for BCR to be fully committed. Brand cannot act as humans do. Therefore lack of commitment is present in BCR (ibid). According to (Bengtsson, 2003) brands cannot act in a similar way like humans.

According to (Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012) BCR has been divided into two parts. Love, commitment and satisfaction part is more about relationship marketing. While branding part contains different other elements like, loyalty, intimacy, interdependence, identity and self connection. Self concept is related to identity. Quality and strength of BCR depends upon integration of these all factors.

As we can see that previous literature on BCR was merely based upon loyalty. Loyalty means repeat purchase. This factor was not explained properly as well. Here we can see that loyalty is derived by different factors like satisfaction, love, commitment, emotion and identity. BCR contains different important elements to consider and to understand relationship between consumers and their brands.

2.3 Young female consumers and tobacco brands

Tobacco smoking is the single biggest cause of ill health and death in UK. It is not only problem of UK but also different other developed nations. In UK more than 100,000 deaths are caused by smoking. Also younger a person starts smoking more danger he/she faces for life (Sanford, 2008). A paper published by (ASH Society, 2013) 150,000 children start smoking every year in UK and 80% are under 20 years of age. Reasons for smoking are attached to social interactions, identity, and parents (ibid).

As we have noticed in our previous section that BCR is developed from repeat purchase to different other crucial elements. Consumers attach different sacred meaning to brands. Brands become icons for them. This scared and iconic label becomes life style and fashion for consumers (O'Malley and Patterson, 2006). Young consumers have risen as an important segment. This segment of society gives preference to iconic, symbolic, emotional attachment, social networks and fashion (Hwang and Kandampully, 2012). For their purchasing decisions above mentioned criteria is most important (ibid).

According to (Hamilton and Hassan, 2008) young people emphasize upon symbolic meanings of the product. That gives them identity and social

acceptance. They do not give much importance to functional use of the product. Young people are more tilt towards emotional benefits attached to the brand. They are more concerned with the social identity they gain through use of the brand.

This is written in the context of symbolic meanings that younger consumers attach with their brands. On the basis of these elements tobacco companies targets young consumers. They not only target but tailor their brands according to the needs of that target group (MacFadyen et al. 2002). For targeting young female consumers tobacco companies tailor their brands according to needs of this target group. For example low tar is used because young females may feel uncomfortable with high amount of tor and nicotine (ibid).

Relationship between young female consumers and tobacco has long history. Tobacco industries from extensive research understood the behaviour of women toward tobacco consumption. From their research they found different social factors, aspiration factors. On the basis of this research they target young women as target market. Along with this develop cigarette brands that appeal to women (Schmidt, 2012).

In early 1900s woman was a non smoker admirer of smoking men. In 1927 woman smoking started appearing in newspapers. Main themes at that time for targeting female were fashion, sophistication, independent self and beauty. This is also theme of today as well. In 1970s tobacco companies started producing brands which directly target female with sense of independence theme was given by companies (ibid).

In early part of 19th century tobacco consumption was restricted to males only. With the passage of time from 1920s onwards gap between male and female declined. Although number of male smokers has the highest numbers but recent studies has shown that proportion of smoking in women has increased specially in young girls (Buber, et al, 2010).

Self identity, social acceptance, independence self are the most important factors of establishing young female consumer's relationship with tobacco brands. As market is not homogenous one therefore these factors equally important to both the genders. Pricing is not an important factor for their relationship with tobacco brands (MacFadyen et al. 2002).

Loyalty to cigarette brands is also an important part of this BCR. Consumers with low income group do not go for low price cigarette brands because of social interactions and more health issues. This show the loyalty younger consumers have with their cigarette brands. Along with this companies use different loyalty programmes to attract more consumers. These include loyalty coupons (ibid).

According to (Townsend, 2013) young female tobacco consumers are price sensitive. Their consumption of tobacco brands is largely effected by the price. Young consumers when they buy some expensive tobacco brand or some famous tobacco brand they buy in small numbers like one cigarette or more. But not the wholes pack of cigarette. It shows young female consumers on one side prefer iconic or famous brands but on the other side they are price sensitive as well (MacFadyen et al. 2002).

Relationship between brand and consumer is interdependent. Brands are humanised to act as relationship partners. It is accomplished by celebrity spokes person or relation with the past (Fournier, 1998). If we apply this concept of BCR to tobacco brands and consumers we find that young people start smoking because their parents smoke (Sandford, 2008). Personal factors like peer pressure, bad life experiences, social interactions and creation of social identity plays an important part establishing relationship with tobacco brands (ibid).

According to (Eftychia and Strong, 2005) family and peer pressure are the important elements of smoking in youth. Reference groups influence for consuming products that can be consumed publically. This identity

expresses behaviour in social circle effect self concept (ibid). Smokers know that smoking is bad for health. They are well aware that it is risk to them as well as to environment. But to maintain and to remain part of social group young people smokes (Hamilton and Hassan, 2008). Parents are an important reference group as well. Youth understand the buying habits from their parents.

This was explained with respect to the reference group effect on tobacco consumers. Young females want to portray an image of independent self to the social group they belong to. Also to attract opposite sex tobacco consumption keeps strong roots for younger females. Connect of identity and self concept plays important role in establishing this relationship.

Use of cigarettes in movies by popular film stars plays an important role in building this relationship. Movie stars play a role of celebrity spokes persons for the audience. Teenagers are the major audience of movies. On average teenagers visit cinema once in a month and twice a week watch movies at home. Consumers form a self image in their minds. Teen agers or young in this age are in a process of making and establishing a self image. Audience follow famous actress and actors. If the smoking people they watch are successful and attractive then they will start smoking as well (Rossiter and Jones, 2008).

According to (Thompson et al. 2012) young users use brands not for self image but also beyond self image to define themselves. For example a person smoking Benson & Hedges portrays himself or herself as a rich person. This is written in relation to symbolic consumption of tobacco brands by young female consumers. It has some functional uses as well. Although smoking is ill habit and bad for health yet it contains some functional ingredients as well. Smoking contains tar and nicotine which help in relaxing mind. Therefore females consume tobacco to releases stress. It also helpful in maintain body weight (Buber et al. 2010)

2.4 Literature review summary

Above mentioned review of literature regarding consumer and their relationship with their brands demonstrate that consumers form relationship with their brands beyond the functional use of their brands. Loyalty as a repeat purchases is miss guiding principle of understanding the relationship between consumers and their brands. There are different other elements like symbolic meanings, personality traits, emotional attachment, life experiences and life attachments etc. Our research will take this past study review as a guideline and look into it more deeply in context of female consumers and their tobacco brands. From this literature we can understand that relationship between consumer and brands is not only on the basis of functionality but also includes emotional element as well. According to (O'Malley and Patterson, 2006) there is lots of space still available to understand this BCR. Emotional benefits are an important element of consumer buying behaviour in context of tobacco. Tobacco usage has been on decline in recent years. This is due to increase in anti smoking efforts in the society. But tobacco use has increased in young females and its ratio is higher as compared to male consumers of tobacco.

Chapter3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the blue print of whole research method used for this research. How this research method will help in achieving objectives and answer the research question? This chapter highlights the research philosophy used and the methods of research used for gathering data. It explains in detail about the best research strategy sought for this research. It explains the interpretation and analysis techniques for collected data. It tells about the sampling plan used for carrying out this research and reliability and trustworthiness of this data.

Aim

According to (Sandford, 2008) smoking has been the largest cause of ill health and deaths in UK especially for girls. Smoking used to be connected with masculinity but not this gap has been declining with the passage of time (Buber et al. 2010). Issues of ill health are clear to people but still smoking among young females is great and gap is less than the past (Ash report, 2013).

Percentage of 15 year old regular smokers, England ⁴

Years	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2008	2010	2011
Boys	24	18	25	26	19	20	16	11	10	11
Girls	25	27	25	30	29	26	24	17	14	11
Total	25	22	25	28	24	23	20	14	12	11

Therefore aim of this study is to find out actual reasons for relationship of female consumers with their tobacco brands. This research methodology is carried out with an emphasize on exploring the nature of this relationship. On the basis of methodology snapshot given above research question and objectives are set.

3.2 Research Question and Objectives

“ what is the nature of relationship of young British female consumers with their low involvement tobacco brands?”.

Objectives: 1

To critically analyse and evaluate crucial elements for building a strong relationship of young female consumers with their tobacco brands.

Objectives: 2

To critically analyse how the trajectory of the relationship evolve over time in the lives of consumers.

Objectives: 3

To critically investigate relationship of young female consumers with tobacco brands emotional or functional?

3.3 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy will be based upon interpretive epistemology. Reason behind using interpretive epistemology is to have understanding human behaviours. Study about understanding human behaviours is always different from study of natural sciences. Aim of the study is to have in depth understanding of brand consumer relationship. Therefore Hermeneutics method will be used. Reason is we not only want explanation of our research findings also want to develop understanding of our findings (Bell and Bryman, 2007).

According to (Schutz, 1962) people attach different meanings to themselves and to the world in which they interact with others. Therefore interpretive epistemology will be useful for understanding these meanings. It helps in understanding the consumer behaviour. Along with this phenomenology philosophy will be helpful for understanding the consumer relationship with their tobacco brands from their point of view.

Another interpretive epistemological approach is symbolic interactionism. As we grasped an idea from the literature review that symbolic relationship of

young female consumers with their tobacco brands has greater importance. Therefore this symbolic interactionism along with Hermeneutics method will be helpful research philosophies (Bell and Bryman, 2007). This will be helpful in understanding consumer behaviours along with emergence of self in the social context and appreciation gained by tobacco consumers.

According to (Cooper and Schindler, 2004) interpretism deals with those meanings which are constructed and given meanings by people. In addition to this observing behaviour is a good way of conducting research and analysing and interpret them. From objectives we can see that this research concerns about the impact of social network on the brand consuming. Therefore constructionist is also an important element. Constructionist ontology is implementing in this research. Therefore we can say that our research is a combination of interpretism epistemology and constructionist ontology (Bell and Bryman, 2007).

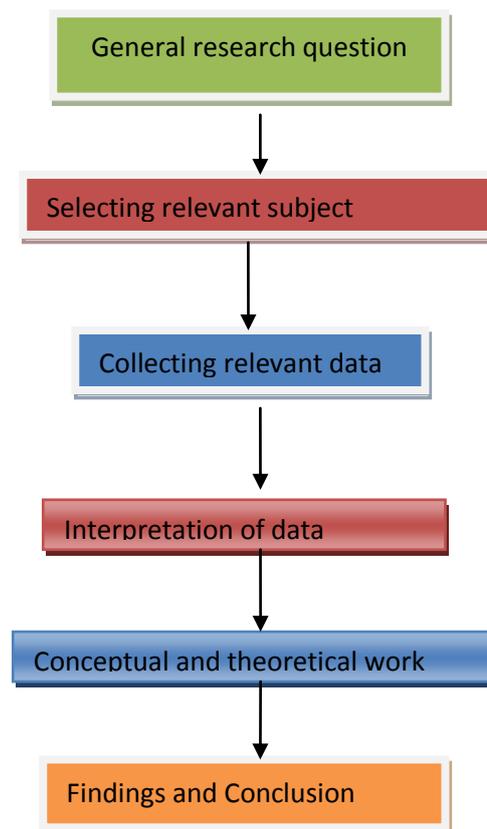
3.4 Research Strategy

According to (Webb, 2002) nature of research methodology to be chosen depends upon the research question. No research method is more appropriate or stronger than the other one. All depends upon the research question and research approach that produces best results. Our research method approach will be qualitative. According to (Cian, 2011) qualitative research characterised by smaller sample and more depends upon the insightful interpretation and analysis. On the other hand quantitative research takes large population sample more statistical in nature.

On the basis of this explanation our research question is about the understanding the consumer relationship with their brands. Our aim of the research is to find out the actual nature of relationship between consumers and their brands. We want to understand the actual meaning they attach with their brands and how it affects them personally and in social settings. Therefore researcher wants to give an in depth analysis of BCR. Therefore qualitative research is best sought for this research question.

As discussed above about research philosophy is to understand the nature of relationship of young female consumers with their tobacco brands also elaborated the impact of social settings in literature review. Our epistemological position in philosophy and ontological position is constructionism as explained in detail above. Therefore qualitative research method will be used for data collection. Six steps will be followed as shown in figure below.

Fig.7



Bell and Bryman, 2007

Quantitative data collection method is based upon positivism and objectivism. Also it is questionnaire based. Therefore it will be less helpful in observing the actual behaviours of the respondents. Qualitative research method consists of different approaches like interviews, focus groups, ethnography. This research will focus upon semi structured interview technique. Reason behind using semi structured interview is getting more relevant information. Semi structured interviews are helpful in probing more deeply for collecting data and allow interviewee to tell more about her own thoughts (Cooper and Schindler, 2004).

3.5 Research Paradigm

According to (Gummesson, 2000) paradigm is a perception of a researcher of how he or she will conduct research. What methodological approach should be implemented for carrying out research? Paradigm is discussed between positivists and hermeneutics schools of thoughts (ibid).As explained above that this qualitative research will adopt upon interpretative, constructionism and hermeneutics research approach. Therefore paradigm of research will be focus upon these mentioned elements.

3.6 Research Design

Research design provides a blue print for the whole research that is being carried out. It is always based upon the research question. It takes all the important elements of research like sampling, research techniques what constraints it may encounter. It is a formal study which will try to contribute to the literature regarding BCR. This study will add information to previous research done in BCR field and answer the research question along with aim to meet the objectives of study.

This will be an exploratory study because an important element of BCR needs to be explored and understand. As research has been done on BCR but limited research has been done in context of young female consumers and their relationship with tobacco brands. Research question is established and objectives have been set. But still we need to develop this concept more clearly and answer the research question. Therefore to learn something about the topic an exploration is necessary. Therefore it will be an exploratory study.

A theme sheet will be constructed based upon different categories explained in next section. A good rapport will be established with the respondent before the interview. Digital recording device will be used to make the results more reliable and for better analysis. Objectives of this exploratory study will be accomplished through in depth interviews of 6 to 8 young female consumers of tobacco brands.

Along with this observing their behaviours and understanding their life projects will be helpful in analysing the findings. Secondary data will be used for comparison and interpretation of data collected. As according to (Cooper and Schindler, 2004) it is inefficient to rely only on primary data. Therefore secondary data along with primary data collection and comparison will provide more reliability for credible interpretation and conclusion.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

According to (Spiggle, 1994) to study consumer experiences and their behaviours interpretive research is essential. Our research is based upon interpretative approach because researcher is interested in understanding the experiences of people they have with their tobacco brands. Along with this how they give meanings to their relation with the tobacco brand which they consume. Interpretive approach provides rich and in depth description of different issues under consideration.

It usually relies on qualitative research approach and provides insightful description of experiences, issues and problems in social context (Hackley, 2005). This approach consists of two parts, analysis and interpretation. Researcher will use these two parts for analyse and interpretation of collected data. Both will helpful in establishing well grasped and explained conclusion (Spiggle, 1994). For making analysis more understandable and simple analysis phase will be divided into different parts. Categorization is a method of classifying data into different categories (ibid).

Categorization will be used in labelling and classifying data that researcher will get through in depth semi structured interviews (see appendix 2). To give more in depth and conceptual construct abstraction will be used. This will help in identification of patterns of consumer in its life based upon the brand she uses. It will bring more concrete and higher conceptual conclusion for our research question.

Next stage in analysis phase will be comparison of data. According to (Spiggle, 1994) comparison of data helps researcher in making categories in a more refined form. This will help us in comparing different chunks of

information and put them in same category. According to (Fournier, 1998) people form relationships with their brand over a period of time and fulfil their daily life themes and life projects. Therefore dimensions of categories will be helpful in understanding the life themes of people. How their brand helps them in accomplishing their life themes. Dimensions provide in depth insight for understanding and exploring the relationships across different defined categories (Spiggle, 1994). Integration of all the data which is being analysed through categorization, comparison, abstraction and dimensionalization is necessary. Hence analysis part will consist of categorization, comparison, abstraction and integration as explained above. Interpretation is final stage of our data analysis.

According to (Spiggle, 1994) data interpretation provides more abstract conceptualization of analysed data. Through this approach researcher grasps meanings by comparison between new findings with the previously understood texts. In providing more abstract conceptual frame of ideas researcher uses different metaphors for better understanding (Ibid). Interpretation will help us to understand the hidden meanings behind the BCR. We will be able to identify pattern of these meanings whether they are backed by cultural values or social context or family oriented.

3.8 Sampling

Sampling is used to draw results for whole population. Some units are selected from population and measure the results for whole population (Book). Sampling provides economic benefit for researcher, data is collected on a fast track and accuracy of results is obtained (Cooper and Schindler, 2004). A sample must be reliable and valid so that it could provide accuracy and precision in collecting data (ibid).

Sample design strategy for this exploratory study will consist of a population of young female consumers of UK who use tobacco brands. Parameter of interest for this research is those young female consumers of UK who smoke and their relationship with their tobacco brands. According to (Cooper and Schindler, 2004) sampling frame is very close to population from which elements of sample are chosen.

In this research our target is young female tobacco brands consumers. Our sampling frame is UK's young female consumers. Sample size consists of 6 to 8 young females to gather 8 hours reliable data. It is a relevant population sample because it takes into consideration only young female consumers. 8 hours data and sample size of 6 to 8 females makes our sample size valid and reliable.

Sampling design will be based upon probability sampling because by using it researcher will get representatives from the population deserved. Random selection will reduce the element of biasness from research. As according to (Cooper and Schindler, 2004) probability sampling will reduce sampling errors as well because we know the units of population which are 6 to 8 young females of UK.

3.9 Reliability and trustworthiness

Conclusion from this research will be drawn on the basis of in depth interviews and insightful rigorous interpretation. Individual interviews provide better control more information and provide an opportunity to observe respondents behaviour from face to face interaction (Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012). It would be a reliable research because data gathered from face to face interviews cannot be replicate. A theme sheet will be constructed and information will be recorded in an audio device. A calm n silent place will be chosen so that interview can be accomplished without any distortion. Validity of the findings depends upon the information u gather should be according to the research question you want to answer and objectives you want to meet. About validity measures explanation has been provided in analysis and interpretation section. As according to (Saunders et al. 2007) valid data is one that is close to the required findings. Therefore degree of closeness to the nature of research question and the measures taken to meet objectives explained above provides validity for this research.

3.10 Limitations

According to (Lowe et al. 1991) in interviews there is a question present that information respondent is providing is accurate information or not. Whether respondent is motivated enough to provide all the relevant information? As

our research is qualitative and based upon in depth interviews therefore respondents may b hesitate in providing all the relevant information or may be having some time constraints. Therefore it is a limitation for our research. According to (Cooper and Schindler, 2004) respondent may provide less information then the desired on e because of incomplete information available with the respondent. This is another limitation that researcher can face in gathering data.

Chapter4: Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter of research brings analysis of data gathered from in depth, semi structured interviews of 7 young female consumers of tobacco brands. Complete description has been given about the respondents in following table. All the respondents are from London. Scope of this study is restricted to the area of London and East London.

Fig. 8

Name	Occupation	Life themes & Projects	Brand
Amanda	Master's Student	Wants to be successful person	Marlboro Lights
Kaz	Law Student	She is young mother and wants to be Solicitor after graduation	Silk Cut
Katie	Finished College	Interest in art, music, film direction	Marlboro Lights
Jenna	Job in an NGO	Higher position, own house, get married to a sincere person	Mayfair Smooth
Bettina	Just graduated in fashion designing	Wants to be stylist, fashion designer	Marlboro Silver
Marie	College student	Graduation, Job	L & M
Shumaila	University Student	Job, Comfortable life	Silk cut

All the respondents are in the age range of 18 to 25 years. For understanding and analysis a theme sheet is constructed. It consist of 4 themes Brand Knowledge, Brand experience, Tobacco brand and relationship (See Appendix). As mentioned in chapter 3 about interpretive epistemology approach. Therefore theme sheet is further divided into 4 categories loyalty, Brand image, benefits and dependence (See Appendix 2).

This chapter comprises analysis and interpretation of the findings. Analysis part contains categories, subcategories, abstraction and comparison in the data. This will help in understanding the themes beyond their actual meanings (Spiggle, 1994). Interpretation will help in understanding and elaboration of metaphors collected in the data. Comparison and contrasting with previous studies will also enhance readers understanding (ibid).

4.2 Theme 1: Brand Knowledge

According to attribution theory interpersonal relationships are important in explaining relationship between two objects. Self perception is about understanding self and person perception is about understanding other's behaviour. Interpersonal relationships are the way of our interactions with other. These interactions cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction of us (Johnston, 1992). This interpersonal relationship was further explained in context of consumer and their brands by (Fournier, 1998) in her seminal work. Interpersonal relationship is a key of understanding relationship between consumers and their brands.

If we consider brands as an active member of this relationship then in depth and actual relationship between consumers and brands can be understand. This brings true nature of brand loyalty which was not obtained before (ibid). Therefore first researcher understood respondents' knowledge about their relationship with their brands other than tobacco brand. When all respondents were inquired about their relationship with their brands they choose. All respondents gave importance to quality, well known brand and value for money.

1. *Amenda: "A brand should be of best quality and whom I can rely on"*
2. *Kaz: " Brand should be of good quality and well known"*
3. *Bettina: "I prefer Style and quality"*

These respondents clearly mentioned the foundation of relationship they prefer when buy any brand. Relationship between consumers and their brands are interdependent. They attach different meanings with their brands over a period of time (Fournier, 1998). Consumers use their brand knowledge based upon physical attributes to express their identities to others (Hock et al. 2013). Based upon responses categories are created which are further divided into different subcategories.

4.3 Category: Loyalty

Repeat purchasing of a brand or product does not indicate true loyalty of consumers with their brands (Fournier, 1998). Loyalty comes from commitment, trust quality and satisfaction. Alone loyalty has no meaning (Story and Hess, 2006). This aspect of BCR presents different face of loyalty. Previous studies did not explain these important elements for brand loyalty they only rely upon repeat purchases (Fournier, 1998).

Researcher: What a brand means to you?

*Amenda: "Brand is something on which you can rely, trust and that lasts long. I am **branded myself**, hahahahhh. My mulberry hand bag, clothing, shoes all are from mulberry because they are **always original**".*

*Jenna: "Brand is something that is well known and gives value of your money through **quality and expectations**".*

*Bettina: "I am a **genuine person** therefore I prefer **original, valuable and famous brands**".*

These respondents show their interest for brands which are well known, original and possess high quality. They will be satisfied with brands which possess these mentioned qualities. Consumers seek different varieties among brands to reduce boredom and to meet expectations to their senses (Hansen and Jensen, 2006). Variety seeking consumers does not take into account low or high involvement level. For such consumers attitude and behaviour plays an important role in building strong brand consumer relationship (ibid).

As first respondent mentioned she is branded herself. She believes in original brands. Second respondent mentioned quality and expectations from the brand. Third mentioned that she is a genuine person therefore her preference is always original brands. These metaphors used by respondents have hidden meanings for their relationship with their brands. This represents their attitude and behaviour towards their purchasing habits. According to (Lehman and Keller, 2006) brand is a choice of quality, trust

and equal expectations that it promises. It increases the credibility of the brand and firm. Therefore brand loyalty is obtained when attitude and behaviour of consumers gets positive response from the brand in the shape of benefits that consumer expects (Quester and Lim 2003).

Participants possess choice of their brands based upon quality, trust and equal expectations and this will make their attitude and behaviour to purchase different brands. This congruence between values they expect from the brand and in response brand gives them expected value in shape of quality, originality and reliability creates a strong BCR. If we compare this loyalty metaphor we see it as two way thing. Consumer perceptions of getting expected value and brands reply to their expectation. Explains the (Fournier, 1998) consumers and brands are active member of BCR.

4.4 Category: Brand image

Brand image is used as a form of self expression and form different associations with the brands. These associations affect the consumer's choice of building relationship (Kuksov, 2007). These associations are based upon functional and emotional benefits that consumer received from the use of brand (Knadampully and Hwang, 2012). Credible brands possess strong brand image. Credibility of brand is based upon trustworthiness and attractiveness (Wang and Young, 2010). Therefore this theme has further divided into trust, well known and iconic brand image.

Shumaila: "Brand image for me is something well known and long lasting like a marriage."

*Jenna: "I want something **materialistic** and well known."*

*Katie: "For me brand image is one that helps me in **identifying myself** in world outside".*

These respondents are clearly giving importance to trustworthiness, popular and having iconic image. Respondents using different metaphors to express their understanding about brand image which they carry in their mind.

Respondent used “marriage” as a metaphor to show the credibility of her brands that she chooses. She is willing to build a relationship with a brand which is trustworthy and last longer. She is using this metaphor to show the value of trust and credibility the brands she uses in her life. According to (Kuksov, 2007) marriage is a relationship which is formed between two people after a series of meetings and a common understanding and fit between two different people. Therefore this explains the strength of relationship and loyalty of the consumer with her brands.

According to (Ling and Severi, 2013) brand associations are created thorough attributes, attitudes and benefits. These associations formed a strong brand image and loyalty in the minds of the consumers (ibid). One of the respondent used term “materialistic and well known”. Here respondent is connecting her attitude towards brands she uses. Materialistic thing is one that provides you with the happiness and progress in life. It is an importance that human beings attach to worldly possessions.

It is divided into 3 parts one is Certainty, second is happiness and third is success (Parker et al.). By using this metaphor to explain her relationship with her brands she conveys her meanings to herself. She wants to get happiness and success in life and her brands possession should portray her image to the world in which she interacts. Third respondent used word of “identification”. She prefers those brands which provide her with the identity. Her behaviour is more tilted towards brands which provide her with identity in her social settings. Iconic, materialistic value of the brand is important for her as well.

4.5 Theme 2: Brand Experience

According to (Fournier, 1998) interpersonal relationships, emotional and functional attachments with brands and interdependence play an important role in building strong BCR. Human beings have to fulfil different life themes and life projects. All these life themes and projects occur in social context (Zekhan et al. 2005). Therefore we can say that BCR in any form is based upon social interactions.

In this theme researcher explains the respondents approach towards their experiences with their brands and how this helps in attaining strong BCR. Whatever we consume define ourselves. It is impossible to have social without consuming brands (Blythe, 2008). Therefore using different brands provide consumers recognition in their social settings.

4.6 Category: Benefits

Brands provide consumers emotional and functional benefits. From building self identity to social indent brands plays an important role. Consumers pass through five different experiences through use of their brands, sense, feel, think, and act and relate. This can be further understood from Maslow's hierarchy that consumers need depends upon functional and symbolic attachments with their relevant products (Solmon, 2006). For meeting their needs consumer experiences different brands and products. Consumer gets benefits from their brands and builds relationship with their brands (Fournier, 1998).

Marie: "My friends influence me a lot. I listen to others opinion and recommendations."

*Jenna: "I buy brands what I want to buy. But sometimes **people around you do make a difference**. Like my Nike trainers. I buy them because of my brother. Now I always buy Nike trainers"*

*Katie: "I am using Mack since long. I even do not know when I started using it. **My mother used to have it"**.*

Reference groups put great impression on individual's behaviour. Families and friends play an important role in consumer's choice (Blythe. 2008). Brand choices are influenced by primary as well as secondary reference groups (Seidman et al. 2013). All the respondents clearly demonstrated above that they are influenced by the social network. Reference groups in which they belong affect their purchasing behaviour.

According to (Seidman et al. 2013) socially distant groups do influence brand choices. Groups in which consumers do not interact regularly or directly influence their behaviour as well.

Bettina: I like others opinion. I watch on YouTube. I read blogs. Then I go to shop and want to touch with my own hands.

This respondent not only emphasizes on primary reference groups but also secondary reference groups. She builds relationship with their brands through a complete research by listening to opinions, reading blogs and watching YouTube videos. These all respondents clearly demonstrated that their experience with the brand is attached with their social settings. They depend upon their respective reference groups.

Individuals who are aspired by social groups to which they belong form purchase behaviours based on the influences families and friends exert upon them (Rao and Childer, 1992). One of respondent said that she likes “Nike” trainers because her brother used to have them. From this relationship she developed her interest towards Nike trainers. Second respondent said she uses Mack brand because she saw her mother from childhood to use Mack brand for makeup.

Here we can see that consumers obtain emotional, functional and social benefits from the brand they use. Reference groups play an important role for them to make a choice. Their brand experiences are greatly influenced by their families and friends.

4.7 Category: Interdependence

Human beings are always in need of interaction with different brands to fulfil their functional as well as symbolic needs. Therefore they attach different human qualities to non material objects. By doing this brand and consumers act as an active member of this relationship and depend on each other (Fournier, 1998). Although (Beggesston, 2003) criticise this approach and explained that brands do not possess human qualities and cannot act in a same way as human do.

Researcher: Do you think that you depend a lot on your brands?

*Jenna: "Yes: I do depend a lot on my brands. **If I do not depend then what will I do**"???*

*Amenda: "if a **relationship is good why change?** If you say you can live without your brands you are just lying".*

*Marie: "I do not depend on my brands. **But if I like it I will stick to it**".*

Strength of a relationship depends upon partner's quality. This quality from partners brings passion and strength in a relationship and makes it an instrumental relationship over a period of time (Nobre, 2011). Respondents show their passion and dependence on quality of their partners that makes their relationship strong. As one of the respondents expressed her commitment and love with her brands by saying that if she does not depend upon her brands what will she do then??? She depends a lot on her brands that she feels incomplete without her brands.

Other respondent expressed the level of satisfaction and involvement with the brands she uses. She explains this relationship metaphor by saying that if brand is fulfilling her expectations and providing her satisfaction then why she should change her brand. This shows the strength of relationship and interdependence of consumers on the brands and brands fulfilling the expectations of the consumers.

Respondent 3 does not show any concrete relationship with her brands. She does not depend a lot on her brands. But if a brand is equal to her expectations she will stick to it. As according to (En hang et al. 2012) strength of a relationship depends upon the intentions of values and benefits consumer gets from the brands. She is willing to build relationship with those brands which are equal to her expectations.

In these two theme respondents clearly demonstrated their relationship with their brands. Their relationship has all the important elements of building strong brands and consumer relationship. Respondents are quality

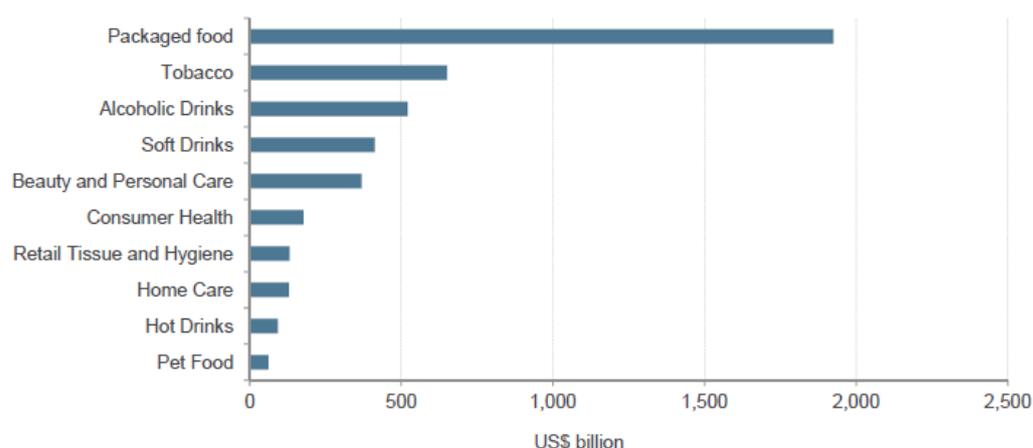
conscious, listen to people opinion, posses' symbolic as well as functional relationship with their brands. They build a meaning full and trustworthy relationship with their brands after a period of time. In our next section we will find out participants relationship with their tobacco brands. We will find out resemblance between their tobacco brands and their relationship with other brands in life. After comparison we will be able to find dimensions of their relationship and objectives of this s

4.8 Theme 3: Tobacco Brands

According to (Euromonitor International, 2010) tobacco industry has been resistant to ongoing recession. Despite the tobacco restrictions and campaign it is on the second position in FMCG global market sales.

Fig.8

FMCG Markets: Global Sales 2010



(Euromonitor, 2010)

There are many campaigns against smoking. In UK different societies and Govt is making efforts to create a smoke free society. Media is also making effort to create awareness among people about ill consequences of tobacco use (key Notes, 2012).

Smoking trend has been increasing in young people. It has been leading cause of ill health not only for smokers but also environment and other people around (Zion and David, 2009). Peer pressure has been the major cause of this smoking among young females (Keynotes, 2012).

4.9 Category: Loyalty

During interviews it was observed by the researcher that young female tobacco users shown great level of loyalty with their respective tobacco brands.

Researcher: "Are you not aware of health issues related to tobacco use?"

Amenda: "I just ignore it"

*Bettina: "I am aware of it completely but If I concentrate on this **how will I smoke?"***

*Jenna: "I just **simply ignore it**"*

All the respondents are aware of the health issues related to use of tobacco. But they have developed a strong relationship with their tobacco brands that they are addicted to it. Therefore it is very hard for them to take themselves away from their brand.

*Amenda: "I have been smoking Marlboro lights for many years. I am just addicted to this brand. When I have any other cigarette I feel that I do not have cigarette. No other brand satisfies me. **You cannot run away from the brand you are addicted to.**"*

*Katie: "I am smoking Mayfair smooth for at least 2 years. I am a heavy smoker and I am completely addicted to it. **My addiction has made me loyal to this brand.**"*

According to (Alsop, 1989) consumers who use tobacco brands do not change to other brands. This change is very slow and wants to stick to only one brand which they addicted to. Brand image plays an important role in this loyal BCR (ibid). Addiction with a certain brand is also an important factor. If they use different brand they do not get same addiction and taste they are habitual of and got depressed (Guaddia, 2011).

From our respondents responses we can find that level of addiction they have developed over a period of time has made them loyal to their brands. One of the factor in building strong BCR with tobacco brands. As one of the

respondents said you cannot run away from your tobacco brand. This addiction makes her loyal to her brand. If we compare it with the past research explained above and respondent's behaviour we find a clear link between addiction and Loyalty with tobacco brand. A one of the respondents describe her relation with tobacco brand in terms of addiction and taste.

Increase awareness among people by anti smoking societies and Govt has made clear cut impact on smoking. Smoking rates have declined in recent years. But smokers have not left smoking they have started trading down. They have become more quality conscious (Key Notes, 2012). Companies have started developing brands which are lighter and not harmful at a greater extent but smoking is harmful (ibid). This development not only stopped quit smoking but also brining ex smokers back to smoking (Shiffman, 2006).

Kaz: "I just like the taste of Silk cut. It is very light".

Shumaila: "It has good taste not very harsh"

Marie: "I have been smoking L&M for 5 years. It has good taste and not very strong".

According to (Aaker, 1996) perceived quality is most important factor for earning profit. If consumer does not get quality as she/he has perceived. Brand will not be able to get loyalty and positive brand image. Therefore all the respondents are giving quality of their brand preference. They think that good taste is a key for them. Not only taste but they prefer brand which is not very strong for them to smoke. Therefore they show more loyalty for their brands. A study carried out by (European Commission report, 2012) about tobacco described that taste of tobacco is the most crucial element for tobacco consumers.

Although smoking campaigns and awareness about harms of tobacco has greatly influence tobacco users (Buber, et al. 2010). As companies has been targeting young females specially. They have developed light cigarettes with low tar. These brands are less harmful (Callard et al. 2006). Tobacco

industry is positioning its brands as safer, lighter and less risky for consumers. Counter acting to the anti smoking campaigns (Shiffman et al. 2006).

Our respondents have shown their level of interest, commitment and trust on their brands because of their quality and their taste. They feel that light taste of their brand makes it less risky for their health. This reliability of their brand and trust worthiness has developed a loyal and strong BCR with their tobacco brands. Positive image of their brand in terms of not being strong keep them loyal to their respective brands. They feel satisfied in terms of functional as well as emotional attributes of their brands.

4.10 Category: Brand Image

Brand image represents the perceptions that an individual carries in his/her memory through functional and emotional attributes. These perceptions create associations with the brands and impact BCR.

*Bettina: "I like Marlboro Silver. **It is an iconic brand.** It has iconic position in the world. It is stylish like me. **I just love this brand.**"*

*Amenda: " When I went to University **everyone was smoking Marlboro.** If this brand does not exists I will rather quit smoking*

Brand image also plays an important role in building strong relationship with tobacco brand. As described above in the past research. One of the respondent mentioned about her brand that it has an iconic image in the smoking world. He smokes this brand because of its iconic position in the world. Hence brand image plays an important role in loyalty with cigarette brands (Alsop, 1989).

According to (Holt, 1992) iconic brands provide consumers with a sense of identity that is more of an imaginative type. Consumers express themselves in social settings by using iconic brands. Iconic brands represent symbolic meanings for consumers. Respondent use "iconic" metaphor to express her relationship with tobacco brand she uses. She is establishing a strong iconic relationship with her brand. It provides her with a sense of symbolic identity.

Second respondent also demonstrated the iconic nature of her brand. When she described that everyone was smoking same brand when she went to university. This provides her with a sense of identity in her social circle. One respondent showed her love and passion for her brand. She is in love with her brand. Her tobacco brand has developed such a strong relationship with her brands that she feels like in love with her brand. As according to (Fournier, 1998) love for brand is a core of strong BCR.

4.11 Category: Benefits

Brands offer two types of benefits functional and emotional (Aaker, 1996). As tobacco is considered as harmful for health therefore this category is most important to consider. During interviews it was revealed by the consumers that they obtain functional as well as emotional benefits from their respective brands.

Jenna: "It brings calmness and relaxation to my mind"

Kaz: "It helps me in releasing stress after so much mental work"

Katie: "It takes away boredom and stress"

Amenda: "When no one is with me, my Marlboro is with me."

Smoking trend among young women is on higher side as compared to young men. This is because of higher rates of stress and depression in women. Use of tobacco is a response from women to release stress and depression (DSSSPS report, 2004). Smoking is more common among those people who are in stressful situation like work, family situation or financial conditions (Reinhant and Byrne, 1994).

All the respondents used term calmness or stress. If we compare these responses with the theoretical background presented above we can see that tobacco consumption is a source of releasing stress they face from their live events.

KAZ, She is a young mother of a 1 years baby also studying Law in university. She has family as well as study responsibilities. She uses her tobacco brand

to release stress on the mean time she keeps an eye on her health by saying that it is a light brand. Katie is young girl working with an NGO. She uses her tobacco brand whenever she feels stressful from work. Amenda has just graduated from University and she uses her brand when she feels alone to calm her mind. These were the functional benefits that respondents are getting. Beyond this there are some emotional benefits as well for respondents.

Bettina: "Smoking brings me some memorable moments of my life"

Amenda: "It provides me a chance to get social and reminds me about my husband."

Katie: "It provides a chance of social interaction"

Jenna: "It gives me a chance to know people".

According to (Ruth, 2001) from consumer prospective emotional experiences include feelings of the consumers for product or brand, fantasies they attach with their brands and fun they obtain from experiencing their brands. This is an important element of emotional consumer behaviour. Along with this reference groups also plays an emotional role in selection of certain brands (Rao and Childer, 1992). From responses we can assess that their emotional relationship with their social networks makes a strong BCR.

One of the respondents expressed her relationship with her brand in terms of some good memories she has. Whenever she smokes her tobacco brand she remembers good memories of her life that she had with her boyfriend in the past. Other respondents also expressed her relationship with her tobacco brand that it reminds her beloved husband. Peer pressure is the most critical factor in tobacco consumption. Peer pressure, social interactions are the major causes of smoking (WARC report, 2010, Keynotes, 2012, ASH report, 2013).

Other respondents used their tobacco brand as a source of social interaction with their peers and to know each other. Also most of the respondents said

that they started smoking because of social interaction. Therefore use of their tobacco brand provides them a chance to interact with people around in their free time. As according to (European Commission report, 2012) 77% people in UK start smoking because of friends and 24% by family interaction.

4.12 Category: Interdependence

According to (Fournier, 1998) human beings form meaningful relationship with their brands in a similar way they form relationship among themselves. Therefore a relationship to truly exist brands should act in a similar way as do humans. He argues that people humanised non material objects and advertising firms act on the behalf of brands to response to humans for building BCR (ibid). Here it means marketing strategies, marketing mix, positioning of the brands to act in response of human for building BCR.

As we have seen that our participants depend a lot on their brands because of functional as well as emotional attributes mentioned above. But how tobacco brands act to build this relationship? Companies position their brands specially to target young female (Shiffman, 2006). This positioning strategy attracts young females. This is an initiative from tobacco brands to humans. Brand personality plays an important role in building a strong BCR.

According to (Aggarwal, 2004) people are more interested in brands which they think posses similar personality traits. As one of the respondents said she likes iconic personality. Brand that has developed iconic status in brands would appeal to such human beings. Along with this when tobacco brand meets expectations of the consumers by providing them good quality, taste, satisfaction, increases its dependency upon consumers. By providing all these elements to consumer brand contribute as an active member. According to (Fournier, 1998) brands act in BCR when they are attached with the past experiences or past emotional attachments. Our respondent said that her tobacco brand reminds about her friends or family. This past emotional relationship is an action by the brand in building relationship with consumer.

Chapter: 5 Conclusion

This research is regarding how female consumers are related to their tobacco brands. This research brings core element of building consumer relationship with their tobacco brands. As explained from past studies that tobacco consumption is injurious to health but still tobacco consumption is increasing in young female consumers (ASH report, 2012). Researcher main aim was to find out crucial elements of building this relationship. How trajectories of relationship evolve over a period of time? What types of benefits are associated with this relationship? These all objectives are met by in depth interviews, observing behaviours and in depth interpretative analysis of findings. Interpretative epistemology helped to find out actual meanings of this relationship and understanding beyond the apparent meanings. All these objectives are mentioned below.

Objective 1: Consumer relationship with tobacco brand: Crucial Elements

During data analysis and interpretation of data researcher come up with the following crucial elements BCR in context of tobacco consumption.

Addiction: During data analysis it was observed that young female tobacco consumers are very loyal and committed to their tobacco brands. They have been using their brands for many years and not ready to switch to any other brand. This is not because the price is low in this recession period or they are in love with their brands. Main reason for their loyal relationship is tobacco taste they have been addicted to. They do not feel same taste when they use a different brand. According to (ASH report, 2012) power of addiction is so strong that it is very difficult for consumers to leave smoking. Therefore addiction to certain brands makes consumers used to their taste. Hence it is a crucial element in building BCR in context of tobacco consumption.

Functional benefit: According to (ASH report, 2012) tobacco brands contain a certain level of nicotine which brings calmness to mind and release stress. It brings pleasure to mind. All the respondents demonstrated that they use tobacco brand because it brings them calmness and release stress. This

functional attribute also plays an important role in building consumer relationship with their tobacco brand. Hence stress release and mind calmness is a functional attribute associated with tobacco consumption.

Taste: Health issues are attached with tobacco consumption and societies are making efforts to spread awareness (Keynotes, 2012). But on the other hand tobacco companies have positioned their brands according to the needs and demands of their target consumers. They have introduced brands with low tar and nicotine and with different flavours as well. Therefore participants elaborated that they like taste of their brands because it is not very harsh. Therefore taste is also an important element in building relationship with tobacco brands.

Quality: Quality is also important contributor towards building strong consumer relationship with their tobacco brands. Participants emphasized on the originality of their brands. According to (00000) price does not matter for young tobacco consumers. They emphasize on the quality and originality of the brand. Our respondents also gave preference to originality and quality of the brand. They are much more interested in original and reliable tobacco brand on which they can rely on.

Brand Image: Data analysis explained in previous chapter provides a clear picture of importance of brand image for respondents. Some said iconic image of the brand and other explained in terms of taste. Therefore this is also an important element for building strong BRC. Iconic brand image provide them identity in their social settings.

Emotional benefits: Analysis presented above with the comparison of past studies provides a clear foundation emotional meanings consumer attach with their tobacco brands. Our respondents also explained that they are emotionally attached with their brands. Some are emotionally attached because of friends and family and others are emotionally attached because of functional attributes. Therefore it is an important element of tobacco consumption for young females.

Social Interaction: we have seen from the analysis the previous studies regarding tobacco that social interaction is also a major element of tobacco consumption. Our respondents said that they started tobacco because of their friends. Also it provides them a chance of social interaction and knowing each other. Therefore it is another important element found in tobacco consumption by young female consumers.

Love and Passion: Respondents showed their love and commitment with their tobacco brands in different ways. One respondents expressed her by saying that *“she feels having no cigarette when she is smoking other than her own tobacco brand”*. Other informants expressed their love and passion in terms of light taste and iconic image.

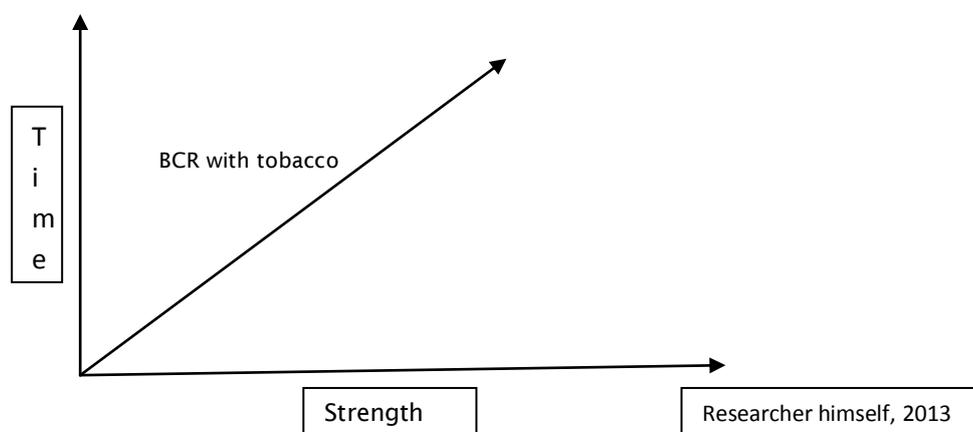
Objective: Trajectory of relationship with tobacco brands over a period of time.

All the respondents mentioned that they started smoking because of their friends. They also mentioned that they started using their specific tobacco brand through social interaction. In the begging they used it as a source of social interaction. As the time passes their relationship with their tobacco brands strengthen based upon different benefits mentioned above in objective one. As according to (Fournier, 1998) meaningful relationships are developed over a period of time through reciprocal exchanges. Informants developed their relationship with their tobacco brands over a period of time.

Trajectory of their relationship has risen slowly and smoothly over a period of time. Now they have developed such a strong relationship that they do not want to switch to any other brand. If they try they are unable to get same level of satisfaction and taste. They have developed a strong and close relationship with their brands over the period of time. There is no decline in their relationships with their respective tobacco brands. Informants have been using same tobacco brands for years. Therefore we can say that respondents have developed a close loyal relationship with their tobacco

brands. Fig.9 below shows the trajectory of respondents relationship which has risen to stronger and stronger with the passage of time.

Fig. 9



Objective: Relationship: Emotional or Functional?

According to (Aaggarwal, 2004) consumers form relationship with their brands beyond functional use of their brands. The way they perceive a brand is different from how they relate to it. It means that people may buy a brand to fulfil their functional needs but with the passage of time they develop an emotional bond with their brands. Post modern consumer relies on functional as well as emotional attributes of a brand (Elliot et al. 2011).

Our respondents showed emotional as well as functional interest in their tobacco brands. On the functional side it is concluded that all the participants use tobacco brands to release stress and calmness of mind. On the emotional side it represents more concrete relationship. Consumers use their brands for symbolic brand image, social identity, interaction with peers and past memories. Their tobacco brand is a source of company when they feel alone. Therefore we can say that consumers have developed functional relationship with brands but emotional element is more in this relationship.

Limitations:

Although interpretative epistemology has been used for analysing and interpretation of data collected. But still there may be some limitations attached to this study. Firstly due to controversial brand use consumers may be hesitating in providing all the relevant information. According to (Moodie et al. 2010) qualitative research has some limitations like small sample size. Sample size is small which may affect the findings of this study. Scope of the study is confined to London city and East London. Therefore scope of the study may affect the findings. Only in depth interviews were used in this qualitative research.

According to (Holt and Li, 2002) to reach at more logical results mixed method approach is best sought. Therefore using only one method may affect the rigour of findings. But for such exploratory research qualitative method is best sought because we want to get in depth relationship between female consumers with their tobacco brand. In this short period of time researcher is able to get enough data and interpret it in detail to reach at objectives outlined in the beginning.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

Research findings and comparison with past studies suggested that female consumers of tobacco are only interested in tobacco brands which have light taste. They do not prefer strong or harsh taste tobacco. Increasing health awareness campaigns in society related to tobacco have made smokers careful as well. Therefore companies are coming towards smokeless or low tar and light cigarettes. Therefore emphasize should be on making efforts to produce less harmful tobaccos with light taste.

Although there is an increase in anti smoking campaigns and awareness is much more than before. Companies can tackle this by providing different other tastes like menthol in their tobacco brands. This will help in attracting more consumers. This research demonstrates that emotional attributes are more important than the functional one. Functional benefits only deals with releasing stress and mental calmness. Therefore managers can enhance their brand positioning on the emotional attributes. They can target their market more efficiently.

As elaborated in this study by comparing it with past studies and current research analysis that consumers have developed a strong relationship with their respective brands. Consumer ignores health warnings and issues related to tobacco. As according to (Alsop, 1989) brand loyalty is higher in consumer and their tobacco brands and brand switching is low. There are intense anti smoking campaigns. Therefore question arises whether these anti smoking campaigns will effect this strong brand consumer relationship or no? Answer is Yes and NO. Consumers are addicted to the taste of their brand. They are used to it. It is very hard for them to switch to any other brand or quit smoking.

This addiction keeps them loyal to their brands. Along with this there are other elements as well which has been identified in the previous chapter. Young female tobacco consumers justify health issues by saying that they are using light brand. It is not harsh and less harmful. All the other elements identified presents a concrete picture of young female consumers

relationship with their tobacco brands. But on the other hand anti smoking campaigns are spreading awareness among people about the health issues Smoking habits among people is declining and it is less than the previous years (Key Notes, 2012). Therefore there is a possibility that this strong brand consumer relationship in context of young females will change in near future due to increase awareness and tobacco regulations.

Another important reason of tobacco consumption identified in this research is social interaction. If people get aware it will change the attitude of peers as well. Therefore future research should be regarding how this relationship has changed from anti smoking campaigns. Young girls do not consider price very much while purchasing tobacco brands (0000). But recession may affect this strong BCR. Increasing prices may disturb this strong BCR.

Iconic image attached with tobacco brands also plays an important role. Young people see their favourite movie stars smoking in movies. It also makes young female consumers to adopt that life style as well. Although Govts in different countries has posed restrictions on tobacco but movies are also playing an influencing role in building consumer relationship with their tobacco brands. Colourful displays on shops also play an important role in attracting young female consumers towards tobacco brands. Quality and reliability is also an important factor determined in this research. These consumers are also aware of the health issues. Therefore companies should further enhance level of quality of their brands. So that people can feel more reliable on their tobacco brands. This will create more favourable and positive attitude towards tobacco brands.

Due to restrictions on tobacco advertisements it is very hard for companies to promote their tobacco brands. Better quality, good taste according to target group, awareness about harms of underage use of the brand can create positive word of mouth for the company and enhance its corporate social responsibility. Increase value of its brand among users. It will also create a strong BCR. Brand image is also an important part discovered in this

research. Tobacco companies by taking part in social responsibilities. It will enhance their brand image and will have more strong relationship with their consumers. Although there are lots of anti smoking campaigns are underway. Tobacco companies are making efforts to counter these anti smoking efforts by different means. For example companies are providing smokeless or electronic cigarettes. Adding different flavours to tobacco and taking part in CSR.

Word Count excluding abstract, references, appendices, (13800)

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

Theme 1: Brand Knowledge

1. What do you know about the brands?
2. What a brand means to you?
3. What type of brands you prefer to use?
4. Are you always satisfied with brands you use and develop long term loyal relationship with them?

Theme2: Experiences

1. You prefer brand because your parents, siblings or friends use them?
2. How do you become loyal to different brands you use?
3. Do you depend a lot on brands you use?
4. Can you live without brands you use?
5. What you expect from a brand when you purchase it?

Theme 3: Tobacco Brand and relationship

1. Which brand do you use?
2. How long you have been smoking
3. How long you have been using this brand?
4. How did you start using this brand?
5. What do you like about this brand?
6. Why did you start using this specific brand?
7. What sort of benefits you drive from your tobacco brand
8. What is change in relationship from now to then with this brand?
9. What role it plays in your daily life?
10. Does it provide a chance of social interaction?
11. Do you have any emotional attachment with the brand

Categories:

- **Loyalty**
- Quality, Satisfaction, reliability
- **Brand Image**
- , Iconic, Lighter, Trust, well known
- **Benefits**
- Social, Functional, emotional, addiction
- **Dependence**
- Commitment, Price, love, Personality

Appendix 2

Interview 1:

Interviewee: Amenda

Q. What type of person?

Answer: I am very outgoing, excited, wherever I go I try to get other people attention. I am attention getter. Whenever I go in party or friends I just find myself a pivot of attention.
hahahahahah

What are your life projects?

I want to finish my Masters. Having family business but sadly closed in 2006. Wish to be at the top of success. Husband died and I was very much attaching to him and fell down on my ambitions. I did undergradadute in business and doing my masters. Interested In media, brands, and events and again want to at the top of the tree. She has regained herself after big shock of her life and going to complete her masters soon.

What is brand to you? What a brand means to you?

Brand is something that you can **trust**, you can **rely**. It gives you same **quality** every time. Quality should be consisted. Whether it is high, average or low. I give preference to **originality** of the brands. *She explains proudly, my mulberry hand bags, I always use mulberry because they are always original.* If they become fake I will switch to another good quality original brand.

Do you develop a long term relationship with your brands?

O yes for makeup I always use lancon brand. I do switch brands every one Inspirational. But it depends upon what is trendy in time. I am loyal to some brands. I develop a long term relationship with some brands like my makeup. I have been using lancon I do not remember for how many years I have been using it. *I AM A QUALITY CONCIIOUS, TRENDY, and ready to pay price for quality brands.*

You prefer brands because of parents, siblings, and friends?

Yes these do Influence you whatever you do in life. Whether they are friends, parents. They do Influence you. But I like to stand out from the crowd. I like to look different. But friends, siblings do effect your buying decisions. It may be happen that I will buy the same brand that my friend is using but may be of different product. For example my range rover It is not a big one It is a small one. Because it is trendy.

How do you become loyal to different brands?

It serves me well and **equal to my expectations** and do the job that I expect from my brands. I am not in love with my brands like my makeup. But it serves me well so I keep it as long AS I AM satisfied with my brand. *So if this relationship is good y change?* I think I am quite branded as well.

My hand bag, my dress, my make up, my car. My shampoo for example I have been using it for years. It does not really mean that I am in love with my brand but it is doing the job for me.

You depend a lot on your brands?

Yes and no actually. Everything now a day is branded. Brands give you satisfaction and symbolise you. I do depend a lot on my brands actually. But not because I am in love but they are doing job for me. That provides me satisfaction. Everything is branded and if you going to say that you *can live without a brand u r lying. U cannot live without a brand.*

What u expect from a brand when you purchase it?

It delivers what it promises and if it does not I will not buy it again. *A brand is promised by its own trust.*

What a relationship means to you?

Friendship, trust, caring, love

What is a valuable relationship?

My mother is valuable relationship; my husband is a valuable relationship. I am very emotional person. Mutual respect I expect. It is give and take for me. When I give respect to someone I expect to receive same respect from other person as well.

Which tobacco brand do you use?

Marlboro lights

Is it specific for ladies?

It is very famous brand. I **started because of one of my friends**. She was very clever; Intelligent always got An in College. I started with silk cut when she offered me. Then I went to Cambridge for my A levels. It was cool and trendy to smoke. So that is when I started smoking regularly. Then I went to oxford Brooks University where I found **everyone was smoking Marlboro lights**. Because of where I start smoking Marlboro and become regular smoker with the peer group.

My husband used to smoke Benson and I quit smoking when he was Ill and did not smoke for 18 months then again I started smoking and started with Benson and Hedges. Because I was **emotionally attach** to my husband. Also to **handle mental stress** I stated smoking after 18 months. These two important factors inclined me towards smoking. I stated with Benson but then switch to Marlboro lights because it was too strong.

Also it was my trusted brand and I have been smoking for many years as well. Therefore I switch to my trusted brand Marlboro. **Taste I prefer**. I smoke because my friends smoke It People around me smoke it. But it does not really mean that I prefer to smoke because of my friends. It just happens that my friends smoke it. **I am addicted** to smoking. *IF I HAVE ANY OTHER CIGRETTE I FEEL THAT I DNT HAVE CIGRETTE. I am physically addicted to my brand.* No other tobacco brand can satisfy you.

Therefore you have a strong relationship with the brand. You cannot run away from the brand you are addicted to.

I am the taste maker. Hahahhahaahahaha

What role it plays in daily life?

If everything good happens you need a cigarette. If anything bad happens you need a cigarette. What ever happen It Is your constant friend? I always keep it with me. It is your constant companion.

Does it provide you a chance of social Interaction?

Yes it provides you chance of social Interaction. You start to talk with people. It gives you time to know each other. Smoking ban made it more necessary. When smoking ban came people cannot smoke inside the buildings. Now people go out and smoke and Interact with others.

What benefits you get from your tobacco brand?

It satisfies my addiction. That I need have to have. It gives me emotional benefit. It reminds me about my husband. It satisfied my need. Emotional side is trust. It delivers what it promised. What I need it delivers. It brings me comfort.

Have you ever thought to change your tobacco brand?

No I will not. Reliance is very strong. I have a strong **relationship. *If this brand does not exist I will rather quit smoking.*** I have got emotional as well functional benefit. I don't consider price at al. I never buy fake brand.

What is the difference then to now in your relationship with your tobacco brand?

Passionate to dependence

How do you handle negative Information?

I Just Ignore It.

Do you think about personality traits congruence?

Cool and trendy, trust worthy, always delivers,

Interview description 2:

Interviewee: Kaz

Tell me something about yourself and life projects?

I am doing Low graduation and want to be a solicitor. I am very talkative person. I like to enjoy the company of friends and family.

What do you think about a brand?

A **brand should be good. Want to stick to one brand.** I **depend** a lot on brands. Choice is different for different brands. I like **clothing that lives long.** My Jewellery should be expensive. I **like to buy well known brands.** For example I always buy max factor in makeup.

What do you expect from brand you buy?

If the brand is equal to my expectations and it satisfies me I will purchase that brand for a long time. I prefer brands because of my personal choice. I don't follow others for buying my things. If the brand **satisfies** me and fulfil my expectations I will be loyal to that brand.

Do you depend a lot on your brands?

50-50 I depend upon my brands. If I don't find brand of my liking I will buy another brand. I am **not dependent a lot** on my brands. There are so many different brands so I WILL switch different brands. I consider price as well as quality. **But quality** more I consider but price also matters for me.

What is a relationship means to you?

Relationship means to me is **trust and loyalty.** Care concerns, unconditional care n love.

Which tobacco brand do you use?

I like silk cut because it is light cigarette and it is not strong like others. I am not a regular smoker therefore I prefer It as a light brand.

Why do you prefer to smoke this particular brand?

I prefer to smoke when I am **STRESSED or with friends** I prefer smoking. I started smoking because of my friend offer me. Then I feel it helpful for overcome stress and whenever we go out on break from class it gives us chance to have social Interaction.

How do you express your relationship with this brand?

I **trust** this brand because it is trustworthy and have consistent taste. It gives me a menthol taste and I **ma addicted to it**. I will not change this brand. It has a tip that gives a menthol taste.

Does It give you chance of social Interaction?

People In the age of 16 and plus use tobacco brands to attract opposite sex. To get social Interaction. Whenever I go out with friends or after the class we friends together smoke and talk. Therefore I think it gives me chance to get social. Along with this it helps me in **relieving stress and it helps in controlling my body weight as well**.

Interview 3:

Interviewee: Katie

Tell me something about yourself and your life projects?

Katie is a young girl. She is interested in music, art and film direction. She does not speak much with unfamiliar people but very excited and outgoing with friends. She is not very emotional person. Want to pursue career in event management, film direction and arts.

What do you think about brand?

For me brand is a design and product that helped me in identifying above other products. That helps me to stand out from others. I prefer brands which I like.

What type of brands do you prefer?

Well I buy brands not because of brand name or something. I buy brands because I like those products. I will buy a brand because of **good quality** not because of good brand name. I am not particular brand conscious. If I want to buy something I will go to different places. Not just on one brand. I will prefer what I like, what my eyes like. But for some brands I do prefer to develop a long **relationship** and stick to them. For example my makeup I like Mack. I am a loyal Mack customer. I like Mack as my make up since long.

Do you think your relationship with brands is inspired from any one?

Not exactly but probably my mom shows me Mack. But I prefer recommendation from others as well. I like what I like but I follow other people as well. I think parents and friends make impression. But I also say that I use brands which I appreciate myself.

How do you become loyal to brands?

If I like something I buy it and I will go back again. Along with this loyalty schemes also helpful in making me a loyal consumer. I like to go to boots because it gives me loyalty cards as well. I prefer because it is near to my house. Product should be of good quality. Value it gives equal to my expectation. **If I don't get value for my money I will never use this brand any more.**

Do you depend a lot on brands?

No I don't depend a lot on my brand. If I don't get a brand of my liking I will buy another brand. If I do not find Mack brand I will switch to another brand. Prefer to fulfil my needs more rather than brand. There are so many brands in the market. You cannot develop strong relationship with one brand. There is competition in the market. There are so many good brands available in the market.

What is a relationship to you?

Relationship is something that is reciprocated. Give and take. Something which is mutually enjoyable. Love, care, respect are the Important factor for me to develop a relationship.

How do you develop strong relationship?

Understanding, give n take, expectation. Partners should understand feelings of each other. If I expect from someone from my partner I meet expectations. If my partner does not meet expectations then it is not possible to build a strong relationship. **Quality** Is Important. Trust and spending time and understanding each other.

Which tobacco brand you prefer?

I prefer Marlboro lights. But if someone offers me any other brand I will take. But I will take it only from a friend. I am not loyal customer. I can use any other brand but if I buy any brand I will prefer Marlboro lights.

How long u been smoking?

5 years

How long u have using Marlboro?

5 years. I am used to it. It is not very strong. I don't smoke much so I prefer this brand because It Is **light brand**. So I feel comfortable in using this brand. It plays no role in my daily life. It plays a role of **social Interaction** in my daily life. Otherwise it plays no other role in my daily life. Only it gives me a chance of social Interaction. MY FREIND USED IT SO DID I STARTED USING IT. Just because my friend used it so I stared using this brand.

What sort of benefits u get?

It is readily available. You can easily access this brand. Friends use it and have it. It tastes good. No emotional attachment with Marlboro light. I consider price while purchasing because I am a price conscious girl. But as I am not a regular smoker so price does not matter. I prefer this brand because of my friends. It is trustworthy and I am quite satisfied with it.

How do see your relationship with your brand?

I just smoke more now from the past. In the beginning I used it as passion but now It Is just a smoking as habit. But main thing is friend used it so did I.

How do you consider negative Information?

I handle it very sensitively. I think about health things very much. In the begging I prefer to follow my friends. **I follow the crowd**. I am very excited. People show Marlboro lights in movies. It is well known brand. Famous movie stars use this brand. It has very excited personality. Film makers smoke so they look very awesome but it does not really matter in my case. But it is true.

Interview 4:

Interviewee: Jenna

Kindly tell me something about yourself? Your life projects?

I am very outgoing person, excited person. I like to make friends' like to talk to people. I am not shy. I choose friends carefully. It is more about quality then quantity. I like to have a good time. Friend who can give me good time.

I want to go on a higher position in my job. I want to be successful in my life and at workplace. Want to have my own home, car and eventually get married and have children. Not a big house but own house.

How do you define a brand in your life?

A brand is like something that is a product. *More materlistic.some thing that is well known*. There are so many different brands. I choose a brand because It Is a good brand among other brands. Quality and popularity and good brand. I LIKE APPLE.

What sort of brands you prefer?

It depends upon my need. If I don't need it I will not buy it buy apple because It Is a good brand. In makeup I use L'Oreal because It Is good value of money and it sought me. I am satisfied with the brands that I buy. They give me value for my money. **THEY ARE RELIABLE**. They have not change since long. Like L'Oreal I am buying for 3 years. I am buying my trainers from the same shop. My clothing I am buying from the same shop since long time. Like Nike brands I have been using since long time.

Do you use your brands because your family or friends use them?

I am using because I want them. I buy trainers because of my brother. He uses Nike trainers so do I? But as far as my makeup and other stuff is concerned it is my own choice.

How do you become loyal with your brands?

I do not trust once. I like to Investigate, experiment with my brands. I will face It twice, I will do some research. Try it, if I like It I will stick to it. But before that I will prefer to use other similar products from other brands. This will make my relationship with that brand more loyal and strong.

Do you depend a lot on your brands?

Yes I do depends upon my brand. If I don't depend upon my brands then what will I have. Something not good, something cheaper? If I do not depend upon my brands what I will have. If I could not find

brand which I am looking I will not buy any other brand at all. I get upset when I will not buy brand of my liking. I WILL Not waste money on anything which I don't want to buy or what I don't like. Quality, long term use, reliability, and good brand I expect when I buy a brand.

What is relationship to you?

There are different types of relationship. Relationship should be strong. Like relationship with parents. Loving, caring, trusting, support, mutual care n love, understanding. Give n take. I develop relationship on basis of guanine care, love, support, and good people.

Which brand you smoke and why?

Mayfair smooth I use. I have been using this brand for 2 years and I have been smoking for 8 years. It is not so expensive, not very strong. I am not price conscious because I buy cigarettes daily and It Is not mean that am price conscious because It Is cheaper. I like to smoke this brand. It has good taste. It is not harsh.

What role it plays in your life?

It takes away boredom, stress, I enjoy cigarette. I am addicted to it. I like cigarette with my cup of tea.

Does it play any role in social interaction?

Yes it gives me a chance of social Interaction. Because when you go for smoking somebody will come and join you. You get a chance to know each other If he or she Isa stranger or with friends it develops relationship. Or my friends go outside and smoke together. So yes It Is source of social Interaction. I started using this brand through a friend. I did not have a cigarette and I ask a friend he gave me this brand and I like the taste and I realise that It Is not harsh and then I decided to change it.

How would you describe your relationship with this brand?

Slightly emotional bond I guess. If I do not get this brand I will get upset because **I am addicted to this brand. If I don't have it then what will I have? I ignore health Issues and warning. No I am loyal to this brand I have not thought about changing this brand.** From my first day I feel I **depend** upon this brand. It satisfies me and I trust on this brand. It is smooth. I ignore because if I consider health warning I will not able to smoke. I am committed to this brand. I try to communicate good word of mouth about this brand. If someone asks me about what brand I smoke I recommend this brand because it is smooth and not harsh.

Interview 5:

Interviewee: Bettina

Tell me something about yourself please?

I love music graduated in fashion designing. **I AM A STYLIST.** I like to go out I like to observe people. Going to different places and living in London means keep inspire.

What are your life projects that you want to achieve?

I want to do something related to arts. I want to work in music industry. Have plans for working in fashion. I want to start a company. There is a lot of things to do in my life.hahaaaahaaa.

What a brand means to you?

In clothes I like H & M. I choose from different brands which I like. I always rely on quality and style. I always buy what I like. More important thing for me is the like of the product. If it is a famous and well known brand but I do not like it I will not buy. Brand whatever it would be does not matter. **Thing that matter is what I like. It can be cheaper it can be expensive. I rely on my instincts. I prefer originality. Guanine things.** If I hate one brand in one season but if it comes with something better next season which is different from others as well I will buy that brand. If I don't like the commercial, image or message of the brand but in reality I like that product I will go and I will buy that brand.

Do you develop a long term relationship with your brands?

I not only develop a long term relationship but also I like to find other products in a similar brand if it satisfy my need and if it is a good brand. If I love my jeans I will go and buy other colour from the same jeans brand.

Do you consider opinions of your family or friends?

I really depend upon the opinions of the others. If someone recommends me or I see someone using that particular brand I will go and buy it. I want to go myself and want to touch with my own hands. If it is not good it's ok I will go for another brand but I will try it definitely once. If I want to use something I will see it on YouTube, blogs, what people say about it and then I will try it.

Are you loyal with brands you buy?

If the brand image is good. Like body shop is against animal testing. Organic, animal friendly. If the brand image is good it will make me loyal to that brand.

Do you depend a lot on your brands?

50-50 I depend upon my brand. I like particular things that I want to stick to but this is not like If I don't get them I will not get panic. There is always something better and alternative in life. If something is not very critical to my life I will but an alternate brand. If I don't get something that is important to my life I will get little sad.

Can you love without your brands?

I suppose yes. But if I am attached to one brand for a long time. I love it already, trust it so it will be difficult for me to get same level of satisfaction, love and trust from another brand. When I buy a brand I expect that it last for a long time. It should be equal to my expectations. Complete the purpose for which I bought. This is how I become loyal to my brands. **I just need to please myself.** It's just me. I do not care about others.

What is a relationship meaning to you?

Loyalty, trust, these two are the biggest things. If these two are there you can enjoy relationship with everything. I believe in compromising in relationship. I believe in love at first sight. If you are a good judge of character then you can go for a long term relationship. Trust is important if you don't show trust at first instant you can't develop a relationship.

What tobacco brand you prefer and why?

Marlboro Silver. I have been smoking for ten years. I have been smoking this brand for 4 years. I like the taste. It got style. It is not strong. I like the taste. I love this brand. ***It has iconic position in the smoking world. It is really a iconic brand.***

What role it plays in your life?

It gives me 5 mins joy and freedom/ little bit of rock n roll, music. It helps me to overcome frustration and stress. I don't really smoke much. Other brands are too strong for me. It has a super facial image among smokers. I like to smoke. My friends they all like to smoke light cigarettes.

How did you start this brand?

I started smoking this brand when my best friend and me went to a music festival. He uses Marlboro Gold. I did not have a cigarette there and I use his once. But it was Marlboro gold and it was too strong for me. But in one week I got addicted to it and I like the taste and choose silver because it was lighter. It was summer, it was music festival and with my best friend so there all things together attracted me towards using that brand.

What benefits you get by using this brand?

Trustworthy, I can depend upon. Good memories, consistent taste. It is iconic stylish. It gives me emotional feeling. Remind me about my past when I was with my best friend, festivals all those good memories it gives me. I tried different other brands but I was not satisfied with other tobacco

brands. I am price conscious in all other brands. But not with my tobacco brand. Because I am In loving relationship with this brand. I can find cheaper brands but I will not find brand with which I have develop a strong relationship.

How would you define your relationship with your brand from past to present?

I have a constant relationship with this brand since I started using it. It has been constant with me. Relationship is still the same and loyal because it reminds me a good time I spent with my friends. **I just ignore the health warnings.** But I am aware of it. But there is much more to do then just to scare. It Is a constant companion of my life so I am not ready to leave. I am very loyal person so I will stick to this brand.

How would you define your personality and your tobacco brands Personality?

I am a stylist. I want style in my life. In everything I want style. My brand is iconic, stylish. I am a honest person therefore I like honest things. My brand is an honest brand. Everyone trusts on Marlboro. So do I.

Interview 6:

Interviewee: Marie

Tell me something about yourself?

She likes to go with friends. She likes a small circle of her friends. Otherwise she is not that type of person. She just likes to enjoy company of close friends. She likes photography, music, She has an excited personality. She is not open to strangers but open to friends.

What are your objectives in life?

I want to graduate from college. Then I would look to find some job. Earn some good money. Just to live comfortable life not a rich life.

What do you know about brands?

It is important to me. I can use between good brands and not good one. I will prefer some well known brands. I will prefer well known brands. I prefer Zara and some online shopping. It also depends upon financial conditions.

How do you develop a long term relationship with your brands

If I am satisfied I will keep it for a long relationship. Garnier brand of makeup I have been using for 4 years and it satisfied me. It is equal to my expectations and full fill my beauty needs.

Your family, friends affect this relationship?

I prefer brands from opinions of other and recommendations from others.

Do you depend a lot on your brands?

No I do not depend a lot on her brands. I will buy from other brands if I does not find brand of her liking. I prefer her brand but I do not depend so much on her brands. I will choose alternate brands. **Quality** and price both I consider while purchasing. But more price conscious but try to find a balance between quality and price. But as a student I is a price conscious. If brand is not equal to her expectations I will switch to another brand.

How do you consider relationship in your life?

Trust is important for her in developing a relationship for saying intimate things. I take advice from others as well. Faithful relationship is a key for me. Sincere relationship is important as well. She takes a lot of time to trust on others and develop relationship. After using different products over a period of time she develops a loyal and trustworthy relationship with a specific brand out of other used.

Which tobacco brand you prefer and why?

L&M I use. I am smoking for 5 years and 3 years for L&M. It is not so strong and price is reasonable as well. It tastes good. Yes I use this brand to overcome stress and frustration. In some stressful situations I use it to calm myself. I started smoking because I saw my parents to smoke and people around me.

What role it plays in your daily life?

It is a routine to me. I am addicted to it. It is not a means of social interaction for me. It is routine thing for me. I just bought this brand and I like the taste. It was a coincidence I did not have specific brand and I can use any brand. So I bought it once and I like the taste and this is how I started using this brand. Develop a strong relationship since then.

What benefits you obtain from this brand?

I have emotional relationship as well. It reminds me of good time. Like when I went to a school trip with friends. It reminds me that time as well when I smoke this brand.

Will you change to other brand in future?

I can change to other brand if price goes up. But still I have not still decided to change this brand because I have not found any other tobacco brand of good taste.

How do you handle negative information?

I ignore the negative information.

Interview 7:

Interviewee: Shumaila

Tell me something about yourself?

I am very excited person. I just like to enjoy things. Going to parties with my friends. I like to make friends. I just live life as one should live with lots of fun and enjoyment.

What are your life projects?

After completing my under graduation I want to start my own business. I want to get recognition in society. I wish to become a successful person. I want to have my own identity.

What is a brand to you?

Brand for me is something that gives me a chance to stand out from others. I want to be different from others. It provides me an identity, recognition. People understand my choice that I know about the actual use of the brand. I use those brands which provide me satisfaction and are of good quality.

What do you consider most important in your brand choice?

I do not compromise on quality. I buy brands of best quality. I am not price conscious at all. How high would be the price I will pay but want good quality. I like about the brands that I choose is quality and durability. Because it is better to buy brand that lasts long instead of keep on purchasing. I am always loyal to brands that I use. My shampoo from L'Oreal, My shoes from Aldo, my Gucci bag. Whatever I buy provides me satisfaction and most important identity in my peer groups and social circul.

How do you define your relationship with your tobacco brand?

I use silk cut. I have been smoking since long time. For 3 years i guess so. I have not changed to any other brand. It is not a very strong brand as like others. I am completely addicted to this brand. It has a menthol taste as well. This keeps me fresh. Other brand that i tried before are very strong. I can not take them at all.

How did you start using this brand?

I started because of my friends. My social circle. My friends used to have it so I started as well. I stated with other brand. But that was very strong. One day i tried Silk cut and now it is a part of my daily life. After the lecture, going out with friends, alone, all the time my Silk cut is with me.

What role it plays in your life?

it provides me company all the time. When I am sad or stressed it gives me calmness and relax my mind. When I am with friends and in happy mood it is always with me.

