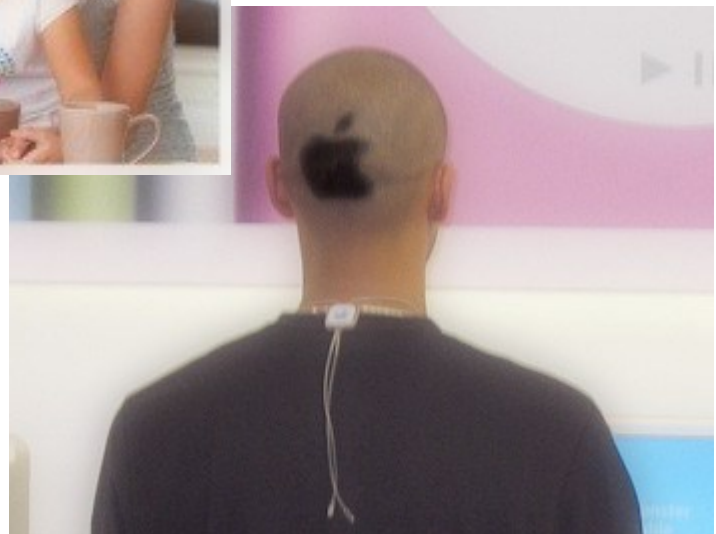# Brand Loyalty

A Consumer Perspective

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Mia Darshana Hansen

Resumé

Dette speciale bygger på en nysgerrighed og undren over hvorfor flere og flere forbrugere bliver loyale overfor ét bestemt Brand. Denne undren er udformet i følgende problemformulering:

Why are consumers loyal towards one brand? And how cans this loyalty defines as consumer behaviour?

Denne problemformuleringen bliver understøttet af tre forskningsspørgsmål omkring forbrugeradfærd og loyalitetsbegrebet:

- Is there a consumer behaviour term called brand Evangelism?
- Why do Apple users support the brand?
- How important is brand experience in the process of developing brand loyalty?

Specialet bygger over en kvalitativ metodisk tilgang af fire interviews med mænd i alderen 25-30 år via en Facebook forespørgsel. To af de fire deltagere er ikke indehavere af et Apple produkter, mens de resterende deltagere har et eller flere Apple produkter. Begrundelsen for at benytte Apple som inspirerende case i specialet har været dels at de har mange tilhængere internationalt, dels at mange gør en stor indsats for at anskaffe sig de nyeste Apple produkter. De fire deltagere blev interviewede om deres forhold til Apple, og eventuelt støtte til andre Brands.

Den teoretiske del af opgaven indeholder teorier omhandlende Experiential Marketing og Social Identity som sammen med teorien om Brand Relationship bliver det bærende fundament for forståelsen af loyal forbrugeradfærd. Detet teoretiske perspektiv definerer loyal forbrugeradfærd som en kompleks forståelse, hvor der vil være flere elementer der påvirker graden af loyalitet.

To af deltagerne viste tegn på påtvunget loyalitet, idet de pga. studiekrav og specifikke opgaver var nødt til at benytte et bestemt Brand. For et par af deltagerne var fravalget af et Apple produkt begrundet i prisen i forhold til konkurrenternes produkter.

En anden afgørende faktor for loyaliteten til et bestemt Brand viste sig at være den gode oplevelse. Tre af deltagerne baserede deres købsbeslutning pga. den gode oplevelse de havde med Brandet. Den gode oplevelse får dem til at undersøge, besøge eller købe produkter fra dette Brand.

Analysen konkluderede flere former for loyalitet til et Brand ud fra forskellige faktorer som både er selvbestemmende og defineret af andre.

Loyal forbrugeradfærd kan stige i niveau afhængig af det forhold der er opstår mellem en forbrugeren og et Brand. Er forholdet stærkt kan der drages paralleller til private forhold fx mellem to mennesker. Det gode forhold afhænger, dels af graden af det engagement de to parter lægger i forholdet, dels graden af den intimitet der er mellem parterne, og ud fra disse kan forholdet fremstille forskellige typer loyalitet. Dette kan variere fra udelt loyalitet for kun et specifikt Brand til ingen loyalitet, hvor forbrugeren er fokuseret på de gode tilbud. Den sociale identitet har stor betydning for hvilke brands der støttes, idet forbrugeren viser sin identitet via de brands og produkter der forbruges. Men forbrugerne kan ydermere være påvirket af de sociale grupper de er en del af, påvirkning fra andre har indflydelse på, hvilke Brands den enkelte forbruger har interesse i. Vanemæssigt forbrug er også en faktor for den loyalitet, som en forbruger har. En af interview deltagerne køber fx bestemte brands, fordi det er et Brand, han kender og som han ved, opfylder de forventninger og krav, han har til det enkelte produkt.

Ud fra ovenstående definition konkluderes det, at skabelsen af loyal forbruger har mange facetter i forhold til den enkelte forbrugers krav og behov. Centralt er imidlertidig det forhold som etablere mellem forbrugeren og det enkelte Brand, samt den måde produktet præsenteres på.

Derudover afhænger forholdene mellem forbruger og Brandet af hvilket marked der er tale om, idet Brandt oplevelser gennem events og guerilla marketing ikke har vundet fuldt indpas på det danske marked endnu, og stadig er under udvikling. Men der kommer flere og flere tiltag som skal give den danske forbruger unikke Brand oplevelser og skabe loyale forbrugere.

Endeligt kan det konkluderes at begrebet Brand Evangelism anvendes som en loyal forbrugertype på et højere niveau end loyalitet. En Brand evangelist lader sig ikke begrænse af tydeligWord-Of-Mouth effekt, men vil også være aktiv i processen af rekruttering om nye Brand evangelister. Brand evangelister kan yderligere skabe negativ omtale mod et andet Brand gennem begrebet Trash Talk, som vil skabe et "os mod dem" forhold til andre Brands fan grupper.

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Introduction

A couple of years ago I took a semester abroad in Carlisle at University of Cumbria. Here I studied the subject of Service Marketing. During one of our weekly classes our lecture told us that it costs more to chase new customers than to retain the ones the brand already have. This phrase stuck with me during the years, and it came back to me during my internship at a marketing agency in London. The agency was talking about the importance of brand advocates and evangelists, who will support the brand like a marriage (consumer behaviour). I have experienced loyalty myself, since I am a fan of the music group Nik & Jay, and have been a fan for many years. My original thoughts about this thesis were to research the comparison between a fan of a music brand and a fan of a commercial brand. I believe there are similarities between the two, because a music brand or artist sells music, and maybe they have their own branded clothing collection such as Nik & Jay has. They not only sell music both only and as a CD, but they are also selling a brand name that has existed in more than 12 years. Nik & Jay has divided the Danish population and every Danish person has made a choice; either you like their music and what the brand represent or you are against what they are standing for. In 2013 they even went to promote their brand through a live brand experience in cooperation with Samsung Denmark and promoted their new album United number seven in the line of albums the 12 years. The campaign gave the duo an award at Danish Music Award last year as innovator of the year (Gaffa, 2014). There are similarities between the duo and the most valuable brand in 2013 Apple Inc. Apple is also a well discussed brand that has millions of fans all over the world. Consumers are queuing when a new Apple product is launched (Neistat, 2014).

These people want to be the first in line to own an IPhone, but they have no reason other than love to the brand (Neistat, 2014). This act of passion to a brand is similar to the passion fans show to a music artist or brand or a sport such as football. I find the passion for a brand fascinated, which is the reason why this thesis is focusing on understanding why consumers becomes loyal to a brand. Going beyond brand loyalty and it gets at bit more complex, but at the marketing agency in London they used the term brand evangelists; "A person who will do the advertising for the brand" (Future, 2013). Their focus was to help companies reach these brand evangelists through live brand experiences and social media.

The link between a unique experience and loyal consumers are interesting, and previous studies show that there is a link between the two, but it is furthermore interesting to know why the two are linked together and which elements are important to develop loyalty among consumers. Another interesting element to research is the social interaction between the consumers, because we are often sharing and recommending content from a brand or product on social media sites such as Facebook. It is interesting to know how the interaction with other consumers affect our purchase-decision of a brand, but also to research, if there is a link between the interaction and the development of loyalty to a specific brand.

The above themes and topic about brand loyalty has made me wonder how the consumers show their affection to a specific brand, and what makes them support one brand from another, and I have hereby created the following problem statement:

Why are consumers loyal towards one brand? And how can this loyalty defines as Consumer Behaviour?

This problem statement will furthermore be answered through research questions about social identity, consumer behaviour and brand loyalty measurements.

- Is there a consumer behaviour term called Brand Evangelism?
- Why do Apple-users support the brand?
- How important is brand experience in the process of reaching brand loyalty?

In the last couple of years there has been conducted many surveys and research studies about how to create loyal consumers. One of the surveys is: *The Role of*

Brand Experience and Effective Commitment in Determining Brand Loyalty (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Fouget, The Role of Brand Experience and Affective Commitment in Determining Brand Loyalty, 2011). The article discusses the importance of brand commitment to reach brand loyalty through brand experience. The importance of brand experience is further discussed in another article "*Brand Experience. What Is It? How Is It Measured? Does It Affect Loyalty?*" (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009).The two articles have similar approaches, where they argue the importance creating unique brand experiences to reach brand loyalty. In both articles they have conducted surveys to stimulate their interpretations on the topic, and this illustrates that this topic has been debated in the last couple of years, and it can be stipulated that brand experience affect brand loyalty. But is it what the consumer's experience as well, or are the image of brand loyalty and brand experience going in a different direction? The two articles further, argues that the brand experience is an internal consumer response, which is evoked by brand-related stimuli from the whole package of the brand from design to communication (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Fouget, The Role of Brand Experience and Affective Commitment in Determining Brand Loyalty, 2011).

The articles provide us with one part of the understanding of the phenomenon from a business approach, but this thesis is looking at how consumers experience a brand such as Apple, and what makes them buy product from a specific brand during a longer time period. The articles are supported by scholar theory of brand loyalty and social identity to understand why consumers develop loyalty through a variety of factors. Loyalty is a term used both in the private and public sphere, and this thesis will furthermore research the relationship between the consumer and the brand, in the attempt to understand the term brand loyalty through a qualitative research and Apple as the inspirational case. The following chapter will present you with a guide to this thesis from theoretical approach to discussion about the findings.

Chapter 1

Methodology

The chapter will describe the methodological approach for this master thesis. This thesis will be inspired by the theory of Case Study Research (hereafter CSR) by Robert Yin, since the thesis will be inspired by the case of the Apple Inc. brand. The second source for this chapter will be in regards to the qualitative interview, which again is used as inspiration to how to conduct a strong qualitative interview from collecting the data to analyse the results found in the interview. The aim for this chapter is to present a clear strategy of thesis' structure, and a discussion of why a qualitative research has been chosen as methodological approach through CSR and qualitative interviewing.

Primary goal:

The market has realised that they need to shift focus from one time buyers to fully developed brand loyalists, who support the brand through not only purchasing goods and services, but also through devotion to the brand and positive WOM (Future, 2013, s. 9). Theorists have even named the method for achieving loyal consumers to Relationship Marketing (Kotler, 2006, s. 161), (Smilansky, 2009, s. 10), because the overall purpose is to create long-term relationships with the consumers through a variation of practical methods which will benefit the consumers and gain loyalty to the brand (Fournier, 1998, s. 343). The new focus on brand loyalty and relationship marketing is an interesting and relevant topic, as it will grow even larger with new initiative such as members club cost benefit to the consumers (Kotler, 2006, s. 162). The primary goal is to understand why consumers become brand loyal to a brand through the consumer's experiences with brands in their life world (Brinkmann, Qualitative Interviewing, 2013, s. 22). The phenomenon will be researched from a consumer perspective in a first person perspective, to uncover the consumer experience from their life worlds, and let the phenomenon speak without pre-interpretations. It is important to say that the reference system for this thesis is APA style and sixth edition.

Theoretical Approach

The theoretical approach will involve two major theories;

- ▪ Experiential Marketing

- Social Identity

The experiential marketing theory will be defined from the pioneers of the Experience Economy; Pine & Gilmore (1999) and from Shaz Smilansky (2009). Pine & Gilmore was the first to define brand experience through an understanding of the upbringing of experience economy and the definition of an experience. Shaz Smilansky supplement their definition through an understanding of experiential marketing and the term live brand experience, which will be used later on in this thesis.

Word of Mouth is an important element in many marketing strategies, and this is the reason why Word of Mouth will be defined in the theoretical approach to understand what it is and how it can be used. The definition will come from the article Negative versus Positive Word of Mouth: An Exception to the Rule by Gillian Naylor and Susan Kleiser (2000). The article stipulates that consumers engage frequently more in spreading negative word of mouth than positive.

The relationship between the consumer and the brand is furthermore relevant to analyse, and this is the reason why it will be part of the theoretical approach. From a research by Fournier (1998) a description of the relationship between the brand and the consumer will be defined, with the purpose to understand why the relationship is an important factor to gain loyal consumers.

The social identity theory is the last theoretical approach by theory from Richard Jenkins (2004) and John Turner (2010), and its relevance to this thesis lies in the understanding the complexity of our social identity and interaction in social groups. Our social identity is important to understand why some consumers develop loyalty to a brand, because we are influenced by other consumers in our interaction in the human world.

The final part of the chapter is defining brand loyalty from a merge of the above mentioned theories, but in combination of theories of brand loyalty from the scholar book of Consumer behaviour by Evans et al. (2009). Brand Evangelism will furthermore be defined in this part, as it is used by scholars and professionals as a term for consumers who are more than just loyal to the brand. These two definitions will be relevant in the discussion chapter in comparison to how the

theoretical approach can be seen in practice in the hope of finding parallels but also differences between the two approaches.

The Interview guide

The life world focus encourages a use of qualitative research method, where the qualitative interview is in focus. This thesis will focus on the semi-structured interview to receive detailed description about the phenomenon brand loyalty and to interpret, if there are different levels of brand loyalty e.g. from no brand loyalty to brand evangelists. There will be conducted four different interviews, where two of these are with informants who own one or more Apple products, and the other two who don't own an Apple product, but might support a competitive brand. The informants will all be men in the age of 25 to 30. The age and gender is the demographic criteria for selecting informants, who will engage in the four interviews. The interviews were designed to open up to the experiences from the participants life worlds (Brinkmann, Qualitative Interviewing, 2013, s. 22), because I wanted to understand their consumer behaviour and possible support to a brand.

The four informants were chosen based on their own willingness to participate, after I made a Facebook status asking for participants to my four interviews.

The four guys who volunteered are all interesting, because the age and gender are the only demographic elements they all have in common;

- Christoffer is a student at Aalborg University, and he studies Technology at his fourth semester. Christoffer is an interesting consumer, because he has an interest regarding technology. He was chosen as the first of the two non-Apple users, who might be brand loyal towards another brand or not brand loyal at all.
- Michael has tried a lot of things through his 30 years of life. He is right now taking a full HF, because he wants to study Design Technology when he is finished. Michael is interesting because not only does he own several Apple products, but he also owns his own brand Hold Fast, and an online shop which sells BMX equipment and branded clothes. I have followed the brand the last 5 years, and it has grown to include the shop and brand clothes as well. He is not only a student, but also understands the importance of selling and designing products that followers demand.

- The third guy is Daniel. Daniel I know from Aalborg University Shakespeare Company, a theatre group I joined in 2011. Daniel lives with his fiancé Christinna, and the two of them have a 1 year old daughter together. Daniel has studied English, and he is now working in a shoe store. Daniel has an IPod Nano, but never uses it, which was the reason for interviewing him as the second one who doesn't own Apple products. In the interview with Daniel his fiancé Christinna has been included, since she participated in the interview with Daniel, and at the same time gave insight to how Daniel's consumption looks like, and what type of person he is.
- The last guy is Jon. Jon I know back from my elementary school time, where he was a year ahead of me, in the same class as my older brother. Jon now working in the Danish Military, but he has just joined the sergeant academy, and he has already been deployed twice to Afghanistan, and wants to take a third tour in another country, if the opportunity shows itself. Jon is interesting, because he, like Michael, owns several Apple products.

The four participants are also interesting, because three of them are students with low income, and the fourth works fulltime and has a higher income than the rest of the participants.

As an interview type the semi-structured interview is often used, because it allows open questions, but with structured questions to guide the open questions, and ensure a specific structure and direction for the interview (Brinkmann, Qualitative Interviewing, 2013, s. 21). The semi-structured interview was chosen, because of the possibilities to let the participants speak freely about their experiences and follow up with relevant questions to their answers. This also meant that the interview took place in a safe and open atmosphere for the interview person, because this can make them willing to open up about the experience with the phenomenon (Brinkmann & Kjærgaard, Kvalitative Metoder: En Grundbog, 2010, s. 29-42). This is the reason why the interviews took place at a location chosen by the interview person, and for three of them it was in their own homes, whereas the last one Christoffer, the interview took place at the university in Aalborg East.

The language is an important factor to conduct a strong interview (Brinkmann & Kjærgaard, Kvalitative Metoder: En Grundbog, 2010), which was the reason why

the four interviews was conducted in Danish, even though this thesis is in English, because it would make sure that the interview persons understood the interview question clearly, and didn't got nervous when replying a question. The context f the interview would have been different, if the interviews were conducted in English. It might have made the interviews more structured due to short answers to the questions, and a lot of valuable information might have been missed out. It can be an overwhelming factor to be interviewed in English, if it isn't the native language, and it can further be a crucial factor for a negative experience during the interview. This also allowed me to understand the interview person's answer better, because he would not be limited in his answers by language barriers and searching for the right translation of what he was thinking as a response to the question.

The thesis focused on the interaction between the consumer and the brand, and how the consumers talked about a brand such as Apple (Brinkmann, Qualitative Interviewing, 2013, s. 95). The questions were divided into three groups (Enclosure 1);

1. Apple users
2. Not Apple user, but support another brand
3. Don't support any brands

The three groups were designed from the pre-talk with each participant, and should secure that I had questions to ask the participants, who didn't support Apple, no matter what their response to the first question was; *Do you support a specific brand?* All the participants were asked questions regarding their opinion about Apple, as to determinate why or why not they support Apple compared to other electronic brands. The focus was specifically on electronic brands, but it was not to say that the talk involved around other product groups such as clothing and food, as seen in the interview with Daniel or tools as seen in the interview with Jon.

Each interview was audiotaped and afterwards a transcription for each interview was conducted to use in the analysis of the experience with the brands. The interviews varied in time from 24 minutes to one hour and four minutes. There was a clear development from the first interview to the last interview, but it was also

evident that the interviewer (myself) didn't have virtuous qualities as an interviewer, but still are in the learning process.

The quality of the recordings were good, but there was a bit of noise at different points during the interview as I was fumbling with the paper or we were eating the cake I have brought each participant as a thank you for participating. The transcription was hereafter added to a table (Enclosure 6), where I used phenomenological reduction in the form of meaning condensing the questions and answers to; what was relevant to answer the problem statement and the research questions (Brinkmann & Kjærgaard, Kvalitative Metoder: En Grundbog, 2010, s. 47).

Questions and answers:	Condensing of meaning:	Discussion and Comparison:

The first column is where the question and answers are listed. The middle column is the answers transformed into meaning, because some of the questions are placed within the same space, because they are linked together from question to answers, and some of the questions are follow ups to the answers provided in the beginning of the space (Enclosure 6). The last column is a rendition to the meaning from the middle column in comparison to theory and the other interviews. The middle column was used in in-depth analysis of the four interviews, and the last column was used for the discussion chapter, which will be described more in detail after the description of the phenomenological approach of the analysis.

Analysis:

The analysis described an in-depth consumer experience with the brands from the four participants through a phenomenological approach, where I sat aside my own interpretations of the phenomenon brand loyalty, to let the participants tell their brand stories and experiences (Brinkmann & Kjærgaard, Kvalitative Metoder: En Grundbog, 2010). I used the empirical material table, mentioned above, to analyse the meaning of the answers from the participants. The four interviews were handled separate to retract as many relevant details as possible from each interview.

The main analytical aim was to understand the consumers' life world through their experiences with a brand (Brinkmann, Qualitative Interviewing, 2013, s. 22). The

analysis was conducted by the author of this thesis through a detailed categorisation of the findings from the interviews.

The four interviews was analysed separately, because it made it easier to keep a sense of the findings and draw as much relevant information as possible into the analysis.

The phenomenological approach was used as a method to analyse the empirical material from the interviews. In the analysis, I looked at the phenomena Brand loyalty with new eyes, and I sat aside my own interpretations of the phenomena .

I looked at the phenomena through the perspective of the consumers' (Brinkmann, Qualitative Interviewing, 2013, s. 116-117). Consumers were added to different segments depending on their consumption habits, but how would they see themselves as consumers through their brand experiences?

The last part combined the findings from the interviews with the theoretical approach to analyse the consumer types of the four participants, and determinate, if they can be defined as brand loyal consumer.

The Discussion

The discussion was the chapter where the analysed personality types for the four participants was compared to a research report from the Danish chamber of Commerce about the modern Danish consumer and their development in the future as well (Commerce, 2011). The purpose was to discuss, if the characteristics from the report met the consumer types analysed in the analysis, and to discuss the differences that were presented from the analysis.

The two perspectives will afterwards be compared and analysed in a reflection chapter, where I will look at the findings from critical view, and define my understanding of the phenomenon of brand loyalty and brand evangelism.

The discussion was also used as an opportunity to discuss and reflect the theories used in this thesis, because it was based on analysis of other markets than they Danish, which could have an impact on how the findings of this thesis turned out.

The discussion was furthermore used as a reflection on the process of the thesis as a whole and conflicts between findings and pre-interpretations of the for interviews.

Apple the Inspirational Case

CSR focuses on describing, understanding and predicting the individual (Woodside, 2010, s. 16), the purpose is to investigate a phenomenon as the case is seen in this thesis. Apple is the inspirational case for this thesis, because as mention previous Apple fans seems to go far to get their Apple products and be the first to say they got the new model of the IPhone or the IPad. Apple has more than 1 million fans around the world, and these are active online as well as offline in loving and discussing their brand, as evident from the example in the introduction about the fans lying in queues to buy the newest Apple product. A quick search on Youtube creates an image that either you like Apple and its product or you are against it by supporting a competitive brand (Youtube, Apple vs. Samsung, 2014).

Apple was founded in 1976 by Steven Wozniak and Steven Jobs. The brand has undergone large changes to what it is today. Steve Jobs was the front figure to the 20th century era of Apple (Apple.com/AboutApple), and Apple was awarded as the most valuable brand in 2013 by Forbes (Badenhausen, 2014), because of the number of fans they have gained around the world. We see the Apple success especially when a new product is launched to the market as the pictures below illustrates.

(Source: Image 1:http://www.b.dk/tech/; Image 2:http://appleinsider.com/articles/, 2014)

Apple had a brand evangelist in the 80'ties that promoted the brand and made sure the consumers new about it. His name was Guy Kawasaki, and he has since wrote books about evangelism marketing and how other brands and companies gain consumers who show their passion for the brand.

Apple is branding themselves through various channels and marketing method, but in Denmark it is limited to online communication on Youtube and branding through their product design, and for example the names of their products are simple and provides the consumers with exact information on what product they are looking at; MacBook Pro, IPhone, IPod etc. Do these factors play a role in the decision to buy Apple products, or are there other factors more important to the consumer?

The Apple Inc.'s (Facebook; Apple Inc., April 2014) Facebook page has more than 10 million likes, but the information on the page is lacking, and there are only comments from users, who rate the company. The Apple Store (Facebook; Apple Store, April 2014) has above 1 million likes, but again there is no information on the page visible to me, which either can mean that they have recently opened these pages, and there is no information yet to the fans, or that Facebook has changed its settings, so that I cannot see the information listed on the page. This is a different view when I enter the Danish Apple Help Denmark Facebook page, where there is full of information and help to the Danish users of Apple (Facebook; Apple Help Denmark, April 2014). The page has just above 2.000 likes, and it is a guy named Jonas, who is the administrator of this page. He provides help to the consumer, but also maintains the interaction with the users through question regarding their Apple products and their use with these. Why is Apple a suitable case for this thesis, when the Danish smartphone market is dominated by Android brands? This is a good question, because an article states that Android has a best market position in Denmark (Breinstrup, 2014), but the reason why this thesis is focusing on Apple is the fact that everybody know what the Apple brand is, and what it stands for.

I would like to research factors such as branding, price and functionality, to determine how important these are when it comes to brand loyalty towards Apple, because Apple is at a higher price level than many of their competitors, whether it is computers or tablets (Knerl, 2014).

The Apple success has yet to be researched, but this thesis will try to understand why consumers either buy or support Apple or why they don't.

Reasons for using CSR

The problem statement for the thesis leads up to the use of CSR, as it asks why consumers become brand loyal and how it can be defined as Consumer Behaviour. Following the problem statement are four research questions I wish to answer through the use of CSR and interviews with consumers about their behaviour towards certain brands compared to other brands and factors important to create this specific behaviour i.e. brand loyalty. The fact that my research questions uses why or how, is another factor for using CSR as a method, because I want to research experiences and situations I have no control over for the interview person (Yin, 2014), but instead have the opportunity to ask the consumer how he or she felt and experienced a brand and why this experience might have changed them to become more loyal towards a specific brand. Furthermore, the experiences mentioned in the interviews are all contemporary, which answers another criterion for using CSR as a research method (Yin, 2014, s. 3-5).

CSR have been chosen as a method, because I would like to get a deeper understanding of why some consumers become brand loyal to Apple, or why some consumers don't support any brands (Yin, 2014, s. 4). It is furthermore a relevant method, because I would like to understand the phenomenon from several cases, but without a generalizing the results found from the real life experience the consumers present during the interview.

Compared to doing surveys and experiments I have found CSR the most suitable methods, because it allows me to dig deeper into the minds of the consumers and really understand the essence of the phenomenon as from how it is representing itself to me through the qualitative method of interview.

There have been misunderstandings about CSR according to Bent Flyvbjerg (2006), but this thesis can dismiss these misunderstandings:

- Firstly there is the misunderstanding that theoretical data are more liable than empirical data. The use of qualitative interviews, will provide a deeper understanding of why consumers behave as they do, because the knowledge presented comes from the consumers' own experiences with a brand.
- Secondly there is the misunderstanding that case study is most useful in the beginning of a project, but this thesis have used the Apple case

throughout the entire thesis from theoretical approach to analysis and discussion of the findings.

CSR is important to secure a line through this thesis, from the theoretical approach to the empirical approach and discussion, where the case has been an explanation to definitions and behaviours from the four participants.

The reason for a qualitative approach

Qualitative research shows interest in how something is done, said or experienced, and there is an interest in describing, understanding, interpreting or deconstruct the human experience qualities (Brinkmann & Kjærgaard, Kvalitative Metoder: En Grundbog, 2010),. The research is not based on statistical data, generalisation or specific personal types, but instead there is a focus on the individual person's experience about a phenomenon e.g. how people feel, think, and act and develop. This is the opposite of quantitative researcher, where the focus is on statistical measurable data, which can draw an image of how the population consume or acts, through a sample of the population. Here survey is a suitable method (Yin, 2014, s. 9-11), as it can provide empirical data about who and what is consumed for a specific population, region or country. This is a second reason to apply CSR, because surveys don't provide deeper understanding on why consumers feel, think and act in a certain way (Brinkmann & Kjærgaard, Kvalitative Metoder: En Grundbog, 2010), and how important different elements such as price and functionality are to the individual consumer.

Qualitative research is involved around the human world through meaning and value, and is focusing on how the informants' life world is. There is an interest to understand the human life from itself, in the atmosphere where it is experienced and from an objective perspective (Brinkmann & Kjærgaard, Kvalitative Metoder: En Grundbog, 2010, s. 31).

This is further the essential goal for this thesis to understand the consumers' life world through their experiences with a specific brand or the missing of this experience. The phenomenon brand loyalty will be researched at it essence, through creating knowledge of why consumers becomes brand loyal to a brand such as Apple. I will look at the phenomenon from the consumers' perspective and not let my own understanding of the phenomenon affect the conducted

interviews, and the analysis, because I will let the participants speak their mind about the phenomenon and their considerations regarding the support to one specific brand. This will give me a unique insight into the participants mind I might not have had access to through quantitative research and another theory of science approach. This is furthermore a reason why the interview has been the preferred method for this thesis, because it brings in depth knowledge where the participant have the opportunity to reflect upon previous experiences and answer whatever they think the question takes them. But there is also the risk of untruthful answers, as some participants can get nervous in the face-to-face interaction with the interview, and hereby answer what they believe the interviewer would like to know, instead what they actually think or believe. This is of course, an important factor in the consideration for using interview as a methodological approach. The interview situation will always be constructed to the interview situation and the interaction between the interviewer and the interview person (Brinkmann & Kjærgaard, Kvalitative Metoder: En Grundbog, 2010, s. 34-35). But a goal for using interview is to get as close as possible to the experience from the interview person, which in the end can create a coherent and theoretical third-person perspective about the experience in writing.

The four interviews were a sufficient number, because it has given the opportunity to conduct in-depth analysis and discussion about Danish consumer behaviour.

This research is important, because there are not conducted any qualitative research; of why consumers are loyal, and how it meets the theory of brand loyalty and brand evangelism.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Approach

This chapter process the theoretical understanding of brand loyalty and brand evangelism through interlinking the definitions to experiential marketing and social identity, since these are part of the understanding of consumer brand loyalty. The definitions will be discussed in comparison to existing research papers regarding the topics consumer affection and loyalty. The first part will be an introduction to experiential marketing, because it seems there is a link between unique consumer experiences and brand loyalty, where the unique experiences are the driving force in creating brand loyal consumer. This introduction will be from the theories of Experience Economy from Pine & Gilmore (1999), because they are the pioneers of experience economy and, and they have laid the ground work to the next theory of experiential marketing. The theories of experiential marketing will present one part of the definition of brand loyalty, and the second part will look at the identities the consumer have through interaction with other individuals and brands. The theory of social identity is important because it is through interaction with other individuals that we can identify our own identity through categorisation and social groups. These aspects are an equal encounter to experiential marketing, as marketing strategy in creating brand loyal consumers.

The last part combines the theories of experiential marketing and social identity to present a final definition from a theoretical approach which will be compared to the results from the empirical material in the discussion chapter. It is important to stress that this thesis will use the term consumers instead of customers throughout the entire thesis, because the thesis is based on the relationship between the buyer of goods and services, where this buyer creates his or her identity through the consumption of the goods and services (Ordbogen, 2014; forbruger).

Experiential marketing

Experiential marketing is emerged from the downfall of the service Economy era (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, s. 2). Experiences has always been around, but in the last decade, brands have started to see the potential of creating unique brand experiences based on memorable events (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, s. 2)

> "A experience occur when a company intentionally uses services as a stage and goods as props to engage an individual. (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, s. 11)"

The main focus for experiential marketing is to entertain its consumers through a variety of options. The consumers no longer want to just purchase goods and services; they want the full experience from designing unique products and services e.g. designing their own shoes at Nike shoe lab to designing their own travel (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, s. 12).

The experiential marketing is further shifting from the good to how the consumers use those goods, and hereby the shift to the consumer and not the brand (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, s. 15). The experience is taking place in the atmosphere of the consumer from public areas to the private space in front of the TV (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, s. 16).

Experiential marketing can be defined as a two-way interaction methodology focussing on real time live experience campaigns i.e. live brand experience that will in the end create deeper long-term relationships with the consumers (Smilansky, 2009, s. 10). The live brand experience is a brand campaign, usually in the form of an event, but not necessarily a requirement - taking place at the consumers own environment as an direct or indirect interaction which serves the purpose of creating unique experiences (Smilansky, 2009, s. 3).

Source: www.hotcow.co.uk

The key is that live brand experience is the actual live experience the consumers receive, whereas experiential marketing is the method used to create this unique experience. The live brand experience can take form on different media platforms from virtual events to events taking place outside the viral world, as seen in the image above (Ibid.). Experiential marketing can also pursue indirect interaction with the consumer through a variety of methods such as stencil cleans:

Source: Google Images: Stencil cleans

"Experiential marketing is the process of identifying and satisfying customer needs and aspirations profitably, engaging them through two-way communications that bring brand personalities to life and add value to the target audience. (Smilansky, 2009, p. 5)"

The effects of experiential marketing is visible in the relationship the consumer have with the brand, and this relationship can turn into a long-term relationship, through a combination to Customer Relation marketing (CRM), that build on sustaining the relationship with the consumer through loyalty programs and awards (Smilansky, 2009, s. 10) – evident from the many loyalty card programs Danish consumers can engage in. The relationship between the brand and its consumers are essential to gain loyalty, and Susan Fournier (1998) conducted a paper on how development of relationships with the consumer could lead to brand loyalty. Her paper was based on qualitative research through interviews with three women in different ages, and with different backgrounds. She found out that each woman had established some form of brand loyalty to the brands they consumed, through the quality of the relationship. She listed six brand qualities important to establish a strong relationship leading to brand loyalty (Fournier, 1998, s. 367):

- Love/passion is where the consumer shows emotional attachment with the brand, and the consumer will fell anxiety if the brand is not available. It can further be said that it is here the consumer is feeling more than just loyal to the brand, but feel that they will do whatever they can to be let the brand know their affection. An interesting question can arise when talking about love or passion towards one brand, because can we speak about love in the same way we speak about love to a human partner, parent or child? Can a brand-consumer relationship show the same emotions as a marriage or a long-term friendship? Fournier (1998) asks her

interview persons the same question, and the three women all provided answers suggests that a consumer can experience the same feelings of deep love to someone as to a brand they cannot live without.

"Is loyalty the same as a deep love for something? I don't want to bring the 'L' word into things but I guess I really do love a lot of brands that I use. Opium, Intimate Musk. I can't imagine not having them. I love them, I do. " (Fournier, 1998, p. 364)

The statement above is clear, consumers' feelings towards a brand can be seen as the same they have towards another human, and brings up the same feelings in people as falling in love and being in a committed relationship.

- Self-concept connection is where brands provide a mechanism for connecting to the self and to the notion of identifying oneself. It is here the consumer can identify themselves in the brands values and norms, and where the values and norms of oneself are merged with the values and norms of the brand into one set of norms and values (Fournier, 1998). An example could be if the Apple consumers use the different products to create their identity e.g. a musicians uses the MacBook to create songs and post them on Youtube.
- Interdependence is where the brand plays a central role in the consumer's day-to-day life and routines. The consumers interlink the daily routines with the use of the brand, and an example of this could be the use of one's MacBook or IPhone to do the weekly shopping or reading the daily emails in the morning. The consumers can create rituals for consumption, for instant through purchasing a new product every 2 year e.g. a new IPhone, because of the mobile phone's limited product lifecycle and constantly new entries of models to the market.
- Commitment is where the consumer is loyal to the brands while they pass through their life cycle, both in good and bad times of the brand and the consumer. It is here the consumer realize the loyalty towards the brand, but there can be a negative side to this commitment, as it can be based on peer pressure from the surroundings to continue using the product. An Apple user might keep purchasing and use Apple products, because they are afraid to give into the pressure of

following the critic of Apple vs. Samsung and switch to the competitive brand. This can be a sign of weakness which the consumer tries to hide.

- Intimacy is where the consumer stories about the brand shows deeper level of reflection and the closeness to the brand is shown through the degree of intimacy there is between the consumer and the brand.
- Brand partner quality is where the consumer evaluates the relationship to the brand through several criteria such as reliability and credibility.

A strong relationship will show levels of passion and love towards the brand that can lead to brand loyalty, because the consumer, as mentioned above, has difficulties living without the brand. But the establishment of the relationship cannot happen before there is an interaction between the consumer and the brand, and this, can be through a live brand campaign or other experiential marketing approaches. To attract consumers to these experiences the brands uses the sensory system and emotions which create the unique experiences consumers have (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Fouget, The Role of Brand Experience and Affective Commitment in Determining Brand Loyalty, 2011). Brands delivering unique experiences can generate brand loyalty or perhaps brand evangelism, since the use of emotions and the sensory system will evoke different stimuli from the consumer during the interaction with the brand, whether it is direct or indirect (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Fouget, The Role of Brand Experience and Affective Commitment in Determining Brand Loyalty, 2011).

Experiential marketing is further a marketing method that combines different marketing strategies from advertising to guerrilla marketing and ambient media, where the aim is to provocatively attract consumers to talk about the brand and its products.

Source: Lene Flitenborg Buhl

This combination of several media platforms allows the awareness of the campaign and the brand to spread to a wider target audience, such as the goal was with traditional marketing methods, but the difference here, is that the consumers will receive a unique experience from the different platforms, whether it is viral or real life experiences (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Fouget, The Role of Brand Experience and Affective Commitment in Determining Brand Loyalty, 2011). The image above is from a live brand experience in Aalborg in May.

The core essence of experiential marketing is the live brand experience which will lead to another central element of experiential marketing; Word Of Mouth (hereafter WOM).

WOM:

WOM is a central objective for all marketing strategies, because marketers are eyeing the strong effect that WOM has on the individual brand. WOM is the term for the communicative evaluation consumers have about a brand with friends, family and other people inside and outside their network (Naylor & Kleiser, 2000, s. 27). WOM can exist in different types from conversations about a brand and its products to recommendations about a specific brand or product (Smilansky, 2009). WOM is furthermore an important factor for consumer motivation and purchase-decision, because consumers talking about a brand to their network can double the reach for any campaign.

"Word-of-mouth is priceless, and leads us to the all-important question: which marketing communication channel or approach drives consumers to spread word-of-mouth? (Smilansky, 2009, p. 5) "

WOM can be either negative or positive, but the negative WOM can be just as effective as positive WOM, because it will spread the message of the brand. An example is from the Dutch beer Baravia guerrilla marketing campaign during the World Cup in South Africa 2010 (BBC, 2014). It is against the rules to advertise for any other beer brand than the main sponsor, which was Budweiser. Baravia did it any way in an act of provocation. They dressed up several women in bright orange, which is the colour associated with the brand, and they made them cheer during the match between Holland and Denmark. The women was arrested during the

game, when it came about, but shortly after released, and Baravia got a fine for the stunt. But the most important factor was that it drove WOM to the brand and it was not only through consumer talk, but also the media was all over the clever stunt. The campaign was said to be very successful, even though it was against the rules. It is strong evidence that WOM is an important goal to the brands, as it is extremely effective and can increase target audience visibly.

Studies have also shown that consumers who engage with negative WOM talk to more people than people engaging with positive WOM (Naylor & Kleiser, 2000, s. 17). There have been conflicted results in these areas, but there is agreement that highly dissatisfied and satisfied consumers engage more in WOM. There are other factors than satisfaction that influence WOM such as price, because expensive products are talked about more than inexpensive products (Naylor & Kleiser, 2000, s. 18).

Brand loyalty is created through a relationship between the consumer and the brand, but this relationship is based on the social identities the consumer portrays through the consumption of goods and services.

Social Identity

Identity is the fundamental meaning of how we live and define ourselves. The identity can come inform of look, social security number and passport. The second is how we see ourselves compared to others (Ordbogen.com - identitet, 2014). Creating an identity is a great part of our needs as mentioned above, but people also have a social identity depending on demographic and social choices we make. A man who works as an architect and use Apple products at work and at home has several social identities. Firstly his gender is one social identity; his work a second and his use of Apple products place him with a social identity as Apple user (Turner, 2010, s. 18). We create our social identity in our interaction with other people, but it is not only our social identity which is created through interaction with others, it is also our personal identity, because as mentioned under motivation we rely on other peoples appreciation and respect, which also means that they like our identity through our personality (Turner, 2010, s. 18).

Identity is important, because we can't make meaning of our lives without an identification of whom we are and who others are. We interact with other through the social categorisations we belong to, and the social groups we are part of.

Group Identity:

We shape our identity through interaction in the human world. This interaction can take place in social gatherings such as social groups. We are all belonging to at least a few social groups, one being the family we are part of or the friendship group we belong to. But an individual can further belong to a variety of social groups depending on what social identity and interests an individual have. A student will belong to the social student groups depending on their study and perhaps a social group of specific study-groups as seen at many universities.

Groups are created, because individuals find something they have in common with other individuals, and hereby feel as part of a collective where others understand who they are (Turner, 2010, s. 16). A group is where the members have entered themselves and all the members are aware of their participation of this group. But a group also need recognition from the others to be recognised as a group.

There are different types of groups depending on how an individual uses its membership of the group or non-membership to a specific group. A reference group is a group where its values and norms are being used by outside individuals to justify his or her behaviour (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2013). A reference group can be anything from a brand group to a friendship groups who the individual admire. There are four different criteria for a reference group, and the first one is membership where a person is either a member of the particular group or not. The second is social ties and refers to the intimacy and closeness an individual can experience in group linkages. There are two different types of groups under here determining the closeness and intimacy. Primary groups are where an individual experience intimacy and clones from a close counter. This could be from friends and families where there is a frequent interaction. Secondary groups are where the closeness and intimacy is further away such as professional and student associations (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2013). Type of contact is the third criteria

and refers to how the interaction is for the individual. It can either be direct, if the individual has face-to-face contact with the other members of the group, and indirect if the members don't talk face-to-face such as in online communication. Attraction is the final criteria and refers to how desirable the membership is to a specific for the individual.

A group can furthermore be based on the common interest in a specific product or brand. These are called consumption subcultures, where brand communities can be a part of this group. The group is functioning as any other group with a social structure shared beliefs and values (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2013). Brand communities can both exists online or in the real world, but are mostly seen online, because it allows members from all over the world to be a member of the community. The Harley Davidson brand community is a well-known online community, where the consumers not only discuss Harley Davidson motorcycles, but also share their experiences and stories with each other (Harley-davidson.com, 2014). These motorcycles enthusiasts are not only spreading positive WOM about Harley Davidson, but they are also shown their passion to the brand through riding the motorcycles and wearing the wests and clothes with the brand logo. Harley Davidson is taking it one step further by arranging events for their members to meet share stories from their life world. Harley Davidson are here sustaining the relationship balance to its enthusiasts by giving back new unique experiences that the enthusiasts can share online afterwards with each other.

The group and the community will be an important part in the development of the social identity to the consumer, as he or she will look to the opinion leaders in the group for guidance and advice about products and values from the brand. The consumer will benefit from participation in a brand group or community, because the consumer will find other people with the same passion for a brand or a product, as seen with the Apple Newton Community (Muñiz & Schau, 2005). This community originated from a group of consumers, who were against the decision to remove Apple Newton from the market. Apple Newton was a PDA machine produced by Apple as their response to the Personal Digital Assistant.

Google images: Apple Newton

The Apple newton was removed from the market, due to failure in sales and market share (Muñiz & Schau, 2005). The article researches the effects of membership in a brand community, and the use of religious aspects in order to create meaning to the membership. Brand community cultures are enriched with rituals and traditions that are expressed through behavioural expectations from the brand community (Muñiz & Schau, 2005). The members will be encouraged to share brand experiences with other members, and the members will benefit from the sharing through a strong bond to people with the same interest. The members will furthermore manipulate the original brand story to suit their own lives to build a community suiting the lives of its members (Muñiz & Schau, 2005). The brand narrative might not be recognisable to members outside the community, as it has been modified to a new narrative of the brand community. Brand community members can be compared to the fans of a music group or a TV show, because the behaviour similar and the members will devote themselves to the cause of the brand community, which often is spreading awareness to the brand and its products (Muñiz & Schau, 2005). But there is further the downside that brand community members will trash talk about rival brands to protect their own brand and brand community (Hickman & Ward, 2007). This will create us versus them relationship to other brand groups as seen from the viral fights between Apple users and Samsung users (Youtube, 2014, Apple vs. Samsung). This trash talk about competing brands will help the brand community differentiate themselves from other brand communities, and Hickman & Ward, 2007 predicts that consumers are members in brand communities will engage in trash talk about out-groups and competing brands. There is furthermore the opinion that consumers in brand communities will engage in preaching and conversion of the outsiders to become

part of the brand community and the worship of the brand (Muñiz & Schau, 2005). They will 'lure' the outsiders to the brand through magic of wonders i.e. new never seen before technology or design (Muñiz & Schau, 2005). Samsung's new NFC (Near Field Communication) technology is an example of this magic of wonders, because the technology was never seen before. The technology allows different devices to share data between them from close distance (Egan, 2013).

A brand community is not bound geographically, and there are certain rituals and norms the members share together, but there is also a hierarchal structure, which can be visible to the members or an unspoken hierarchy between the members. The hierarchal structure of the brand community can create opinion leaders, who the other members follow when it comes to purchasing a specific brand. These opinion leaders will provide the rest of the members with new trends and new rituals and knows the latest news from the brand. The opinion leaders are a link between the members and the brand, and it is therefore crucial that the brand knows who the opinion leaders are, because these are the window to the loyal consumers and advocates that brands are seeking.

We cannot control how others are looking at us, like we can with ourselves in some length. We might present ourselves as a certain type of individual, but we cannot be sure that others are seeing the same individual as we think of ourselves (Jenkins, 2004). This could explain why we use role models to portray a safe image; we can lean up against, to make others see us as a certain type. Brands will also use role models as ambassadors to the brand, and these ambassadors will try to create brand loyal consumers from members of social groups or brand communities.

We are all placed in categories by others who use the categories to identify others based on specific characteristics that separate one from the others. A categorisation could be people from Denmark categorised as Danish or young people in black clothes and eyeliners are categorised as Goth (Turner, 2010, s. 16). Categorisation is part of the social identity, because we use the categorisation to create order to the human world and differentiate us from each other. Categorisation is furthermore being used by individuals to identify social identity through including or excluding from others (Turner, 2010, s. 18).

Our consumption is based on habits and we use certain products at certain times of the day, because these habits helps us organise our behaviours, but also understand our life world better (Jenkins, 2004). An example of this is a family who always have purchased Colgate and use it every morning or evening, or a woman who purchase a certain brand of tea for her afternoon tea.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty stems from the brand approach through the use of various marketing strategies, and this could be through a live brand experience, where the brand creates an event or another approach that not only create awareness, but also involves the consumer. The consumer is here an active part on creating their own unique experience through the use of services as stage and goods as props (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, s. 11). A good example comes from the Apple competitor Samsung Denmark and their NFC campaign in cooperation with the music duo Nik & Jay:
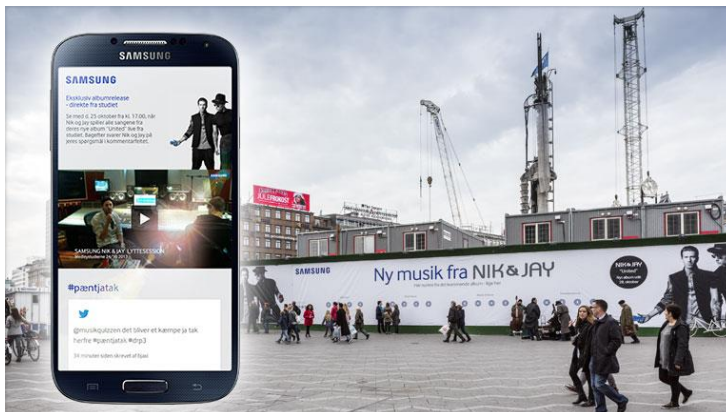
 Source:

www.universal.dk

Samsung made in October last year a campaign, where they launched their new NFC technology through cooperation with the music duo of Nik & Jay. The campaign started with a countdown to the release of the new album by Nik & Jay, and fans had the opportunity to speed up the countdown, by liking and sharing it on their own Facebook wall. The next part gave the consumers the opportunity to listen to a musical number from the new album, before anyone else by holding up their mobile phone to one of the digital posters by Samsung that was placed at bus stops.

The last step was a live streaming online on Samsung's Facebook page, where Nik & Jay presented songs from the new album and explained how they originated. The

live streaming was viewed by more than 3000 people, when it happened, and the campaign was shared and liked more than 1000 times (Samsung's Facebook Page, 2014). The consumers discussed the campaign online on the Facebook page of Samsung and the interaction led the consumers to the Facebook page of the actual audio session, where Nik & Jay fans could share their passion for the duo together and enjoy the content from the duo to their fans. The relationship between the duo and the fans was kept intact.

The campaign was mainly visible in Copenhagen with a giant wall where the blue circles were placed, as seen from the image above, but it was said to take place all over Denmark, but without visible evidence in for instant Aalborg. The effect of the campaign can be discussed, because it has mainly been Nik & Jay fans that liked and shared the content of the campaign, but it can be said that it drove attention to the album release from the duo, but there are no evidence that it had an impact on the Samsung page.

The campaign shows that consumers engaged in the brand experience both offline and online on the designed Facebook page and it linked the brand experience to the use of social media (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Fouget, The Role of Brand Experience and Affective Commitment in Determining Brand Loyalty, 2011). This has proven to be an effective method to gain loyal consumers by the Live Brand Social survey. The example was chosen, because there are no visible Apple live brand experience campaigns. But it can be argued that Apple create unique experiences through their stores and the use of the products, which fits with the definition that the focus is now on the use of the product than the actual product, and how it is presented (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, s. 15).

In 2013 a survey regarding the effects of live brand experience and the combination of social media was conducted, by a marketing agency and a social media agency. 1000 participants was asked about how, why and what live brand experience and social media work together (Future, 2013, s. 2). The participants was chosen based on previous experience with live brand experiences, and the purpose with the survey was to answer the question; *by combining social and live experience what more can we do to deliver better value for brands?* The survey discovered the strength of combining live brand experience and social media, because the live brand experience creates the attention to the campaign and the

social media make sure the attention is continuing online through spreading of WOM and sharing of the live brand experience content (Future, 2013, s. 3,8). The survey shows interesting results on how consumers don't have an interest in the format of the campaign, but instead in the content of the actual campaign:

"The largest motivating factors within a live brand experience that drive sharing of content are being unusual, entertaining and relevant to a consumer's interest". (Future, 2013, s. 7)

The Samsung campaign did drive Nik & Jay fans to the Samsung campaign page, but it is not to say, if any of these were consumers who liked Samsung or the duo.

There is not a lot of live brand experience from Apple in Denmark, but an international example is the launch campaigns they have in for example New York, where people are queuing for weeks to be the first in line for the new product (Neistat, 2014). This shows that Apple fans are dedicated to the brand, and not only are they part of a social categorisation as Apple fans, they furthermore engage in online discussion about Apple products. Apple even encourages their fans to participate in the online discussion with other consumers (Apple Support, 2014), and take an active part in the interaction with others. Apple furthermore demonstrates the delimitation of geographic limitations, because their fans are communicating with each other from all over the world (Apple Support Communities, 2014). The Apple consumers have established a strong relationship with the brand, and they commit through the conversation and spreading of WOM, whereas Apple commits to the relationship through the benefits such as Apple Care and the support they provide their fans. But they also commit through consumer generated products from functionality and design (Apple Support Communities, 2014).

Loyalty can be divided into four categories depending on the type of loyalty (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2009, chapter 10);

1. Undivided loyalty; the consumer is only loyal to one brand for example a consumer who support Apple both in mobile phones, computers and tablets.
2. Divided loyalty; the consumer has divided the loyalty to more than one brand. A consumer can here have a favourite brand in different product categories, for example a food brand, an electronic brand and a clothes brand. It is furthermore

here the consumer can be loyal to a product category, such as PC compared to Apple Mac systems or Android compared to IOS system.

3. Unstable loyalty; the consumer will only be loyal to a brand until a better offer enters the market, and the consumer can be affected by a variety of factors such as price, availability and functionality.

4. No loyalty; the consumer don't show loyalty to any brands, because the brands cannot fulfil the consumer's needs, or it can be other factors which has affected the consumer to show no loyalty.

In comparison the four steps are interlinked with Fournier and her six quality facets, as the six quality facets describe the elements important to obtain brand loyalty. The love/passion quality secures a deeper relationship between the consumer and the brand, which can be long-termed, as the balance between the two parts in the relationship is equal (Fournier, 1998, s. 344).

It is only brand communities that have an effect on the social identity, but also social groups are affecting the consumer in a certain direction when it comes to consumption. Social groups such as family and friends are powerful contributors to why we support specific brands as we spread WOM and recommendations to others. This is furthermore evidence that consumer recommendations and WOM are effective tools to create loyal consumers and be part of the consumer identities.

Brand loyalty can be affected by a variety of factors; price, availability, enhancement of self-concept and perceived risk. These factors can be either self-introduced or introduced by the market such as low availability for a specific product and therefore the selection is at a minimum level (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2009, chapter 10),. This can result in repeating purchase for the particular brand which can be one definition of brand loyalty. I have experienced myself such a brand loyalty to a brand, because I have limited access to heels for women with small feet. The market for women with small feet are limited and based on this I have become loyal to Pretty Small Shoes an online shop in UK , that have a wide selection of shoes from ballerinas to boots and ankle boots. It is furthermore possible to be forced to buy a specific or a specific brand, because of requirements from the social groups we belong to such as a from the studies, where there is

requirements to which programs or computers to buy to meet the requirements from the individual subjects, (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2009, chapter 10).

There are also, those consumers who purchase a brand because it is cheaper than the other products/services on the market i.e. price sensitive consumer, and will keep purchasing a brand until a cheaper product enters the market (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2009, chapter 10). The third group is the ones who can identify themselves in the brand, and therefore repeat supporting the brand. These are furthermore the ones who are seen as more than just loyal consumer, but more as brand evangelists.

Brand evangelism

The next level from brand loyalty is brand evangelism according to several studies and scholars (Marzler, Pichler, & Hemetsberger, 2007). Evangelist brings religious associations, because it defines a person who preaches about a brand. According to the Live Brand Social survey the consumer will recommend a brand or product from a live brand experience to people inside his network, but will eventually talk about the brand to people outside the network (Future, 2013, s. 10).

Brand evangelists have furthermore extravert personalities, because they will interact with other consumers, to further the cause of the brand. These interactions can take place online in online brand communities, where consumers who has an interest in the same brand meets and discuss brand products and values. Brand community members are encouraged to share their experiences with the other members, and it is through these experiences the members are developing their social identity (Muñiz & Schau, 2005, s. 740) and becoming brand evangelists. The difference between brand loyalty and brand evangelism is that the consumer is not only engaging in positive WOM, but the consumer will furthermore engage in the activity of recruiting new brand loyal consumers, who eventually will become brand evangelists to the consumer (Muñiz & Schau, 2005, s. 740). The consumer will 'preach' the passion for the brand to non-believers, but he or she will furthermore become a member of a brand community. The membership to the brand community will give the consumer the feeling of belonging to a social

group, where everybody else shares the same passion to the brand (Hickman & Ward, 2007, s. 314).The negative view is that members of a brand community not only preaches to the outsiders in the attempt to convert them to take part in the community, but they will also engage in trash talk about out-groups and create stereotypes from people outside the community (Hickman & Ward, 2007, s. 315).

Apple had a chief evangelist in the 80'ties, and his name was Guy Kawasaki, a world known brand evangelist, who created awareness and loyal consumers to the Apple brand. He furthermore created the term evangelism marketing and he has written books on how to build brand evangelism. He is now evangelising for Canva and their online graphic tools, which can be used by amateurs and professionals (Isaacson, 2014), and Guy is going to help build the brand internationally.

Evangelists are the true devoted fans that brands are seeking, since brand evangelists are devoted to the brand through a passion similar to a relationship between two people or a relationship between a fan and an artist. Brand evangelists will defend their brand against outsiders, but they are also dedicated to the job of converting outsiders to become not only brad loyal, but also brand evangelists. There are many evidence only where consumers show their passion to a brand through a tattoo as illustrated in the following image;

 Source: www.emprendedoresnews.com

Brand evangelists are seen as a benefit to the brand, because the successful brand evangelism creates evangelists who will promote the brand (Future, 2013), as long as the relationship is balanced and the commitment is strong from both parts (Fournier, 1998, s. 365).

Chapter 3

The Analysis

The analysis will analyse the results from the four interviews through meaning condensing based on experiences from their life world.

The four participants were asked about supporting specific brands or why they don't support ay brands. Apple has been a central topic for the interviews, as many consumers have an opinion about where they stand in the Apple vs. competitor talks. Apple is a brand many either hate for various reasons or like, for other various reasons.

Christoffer:

I went to interview Christoffer in the cantina of his studies at the university. He met me downstairs, and we found a corner upstairs where we could sit without getting disturbed. I had prepared questions to him, and I went on with the first question: *Do you support any brands?* He replied that he didn't support any particular brand, because he doesn't want to bind himself to a specific brand, but he doesn't have any other explanations to why he isn't loyal to any brands (Enclosure 2, line 6-7). We talked about his motivation factors of becoming brand loyal to a brand, and he told me that the openness and functionality was important to him, because it gave him the opportunity to modify and use the product as he wished compared to how the product was delivered (Enclosure 2, line 12-13). The technology was important to him, but mostly because he had requirements from his studies, and the functionality was important, since he otherwise bought a product he could not use to the fullest (Enclosure 2, line 15-17).He even told that he didn't mind spending money on a product where the functionality fulfilled his requirements, not just from his studies but also from his own interests (Enclosure 2, line 19-12).

I asked him, if he had had a unique experience with a brand, and he told me about a good experience he had with the Apple touch function not long ago;

"Ja, det har jeg, Øh Apples touch funktion, den har været uovertruffen i rigtig mange år, og er det stadig i forhold til mange andre med dens touch funktioner, andre producenters touch. " (Enclosure 2, line 26-27)

The unique experience happened on an IPod Nano, and took place in a store, where he got tested the product. The touch function on the IPod Nano was the reason why this product experience was unique;

"Jamen børingen fungerede bare, og den reagerede på hvordan jeg berørte den, øh og var i bund og grund meget nem at bruge, øh det er også det der kendertegner Apple produkter, at de er super nemme at bruge, men i min verden så kan de godt virke lukkede i modifikationer, og man skal bruge dem på en bestemt måde, og bruge forskellige bestemte programmer. " (Enclosure2, line 29-30)

His experience with the functionality of the product was unique, because the product had great usability, but he experienced the Apple system as closed to modifications of the products, where the product needs specific programs to fully functioning compared to the strong touch functionality that he believes is unsurpassed compared to competitive products on the market and has been for years.

We talked about the Apple branding He doesn't believe branding has an effect on him, because the functionality is the important factor when he is considering buying a new electronic product such as mobile phone or computer (Enclosure 2, line 40-43). He likes the opportunity to install new functionality, as it is rarely there when buying a new product, and he goes on to explain that the name is not an important factor to him, because the functionality is the most important factor to meet his needs and his purpose with the product (Enclosure 2, line 48-49).

He had no experience with buying a product based on a unique experience with it (Enclosure 2, line 52-53), but it was not said that he had not considered buying a product based on the unique experience.

"Ja, jamen jeg overvejede så sent som for to uger siden (M: Okay, hvad var det for et produkt?) Jeg overvejede at købe en mini tablet. " (Enclosure 2, line 56-57)

He considered buying an IPad Mini due to the right size, but the competitor product Google Nexus had the same functions and quality, but at a lower price range compared to the IPad Mini (Enclosure 2, line 59-63, line 65). The functionality

was not the problem here, but instead the fact that Christoffer believes we pay for the brand name, when we buy Apple products (Enclosure 2, line 59-63, line 65). This has been one of the reasons why he now wants to buy the Google Nexus instead, because he will secure he is paying for the actual product and not the brand name (Enclosure 2, line 70). He has nothing personal against Apple and their products, but his experiences with the brand and the products are the limited options to modify their products and that you are paying a higher cost, because of the brand name (Enclosure 2, line 74-76). The price is not a factor that will hinder him from buying an Apple product in the future, as long as Apple delivers the functionality he needs (Enclosure 2, line 80-81).

Apple has recently been criticised, because they use the toxic chemical n-hexane in their products that makes the workers at their production facilities exposed to leukaemia (Gibbs, 2014). I asked Christoffer, if the ethical values had a meaning to his purchase-decision, but he told me that it didn't have any effects on his purchase decision, because he see himself as an uncritical consumer (Enclosure 2, line 84).

We went on talking about the effects of the live brand experience, and I asked him if it had any effect on him, if Apple or Samsung had an event, where he could try the products and get information about the product. He told it would have no effect on his choice of products, but it would give him the opportunity to try the product, but he considers the experience similar to visiting an actual store like Fona (Enclosure 2, line 92-98), where he looked at the IPad Mini and the Google Nexus.

Christoffer will not discuss electronic products online, but he has participated in a discussion about do-it-yourself HiFI on an online music forum, where the topic was sound quality, and a guy explained how he had changed a cable in his computer that didn't have anything to do with sound quality (Enclosure 2, line 112-113). He don't reject that he will participate in an online discussion about technology in the future, but only if he has an interest in the topic and a broad enough knowledge (Enclosure 2, line 114-116). But the people at such forums should also be serious regarding the topic, and don't believe in magic.

Christoffer has not seen or search for any Apple branding, from visiting one of their IStores (Enclosure 2, line 100-102) and knows about Apple branding through their Facebook pages and commercials. But he likes that there is a place where

consumers can get help and answers about their products (Enclosure 2, line 126-127). His opinion about brand communities is that they are not relevant, because the products are simple to use, and he furthermore thinks that Android brands also has a page like this, as in believes the products are using consumer generated software (Enclosure 2, line 132-134).

Christoffer would recommend a product to a friend or a person inside his network (Enclosure 2, line 146), but only if there is a need for the recommendation. He will on the other hand not engage in trash talk about a brand (Enclosure 2, line 142). He us using his network greatly to receive knowledge about a product, because the possibility that someone inside his network has the product he is seeking is high (Enclosure 2, line 158-162). He both benefit from information and actual contact with the product, where he can test, if it is what he is looking for (Ibid.). This is part of the thorough decision process he is going through, when he is buying an electronic product such as an mobile phone or computer, because as a student his income is limited, and 3000kr. is an extensive amount (Enclosure 2, line 165-167).

Christoffer answered very direct to the questions in the beginning, but his answers got more in-depth as the interview went on, and by the end of it, he had given me a deeper understanding of his consumer experiences with electronic brands such as Apple.

Michael:

Michael is an Apple user, and he owns an IPhone, MacBook Pro, IPod and Apple TV (Enclosure 3, line 5-8). Apple TV is similar to Netflix and other online net streaming services, where he pays for the services he wants and not a fixed amount every month (Enclosure 3, line 16-17). But he is not done, and he consider buying an IMac, because it he needs a computer that can handle larger files when he is editing videos from his BMX hobby (Enclosure 3, line 27-29). I have knowledge that Michael is a BMX rider, because we have been friends for the last 4 years. Michael bought his MacBook Pro because he has plans on studying Graphic Design Technology;

"Ja. Jeg har købt min MacBook, fordi den altså, jeg har planer om at skal i gang med grafisk design teknolog, og de anbefaler, at man har Apple, og udover kan jeg

godt lide at redigere videoer og rode lidt med nogle billeder og sådan (Enclosure 3, line 32-34). "

Michael also draws in his spare time in a social group that meets every week, and he would like to be a tattooist when he has finished his university degree.

Source: Facebook: Michael

This is information I know from my friendship with him, and from the conversation that continued after the actual interview had stopped. His own experience with the Apple products is that they are better at fulfilling creative needs (Enclosure 3, line 36).

The simplicity is a factor Michael likes about the Apple products, because his experience is that you don't have to do anything to make it start up (Enclosure 3, line 58-59) and he also likes that the different Apple products easily finds each other, when starting a new product (Enclosure 3, line 61-62). He gives an example with his Apple TV;

"Ja, ja, lige nøjagtig. For eksempel da jeg satte mit Apple TV til, der spurgte den

bare om jeg havde andre Appel produkter (Enclosure 3, line 64-65). "

He can sit and watch a movie on his IPhone, and then movie it to Apple TV to watch it on the television or on the computer (Enclosure 3, line 67-80). The most important to Michael is that the products are functioning from the second he starts

it up, because he don't believe he has the expertise to modify the product to make it work (Enclosure 3, line 67-80).

He not only supports Apple through buying their products, but he also uses their music service ITunes to buy the music he likes, because he likes to support the artists he listen to, and the product is easy to use (Enclosure 3, line 83-86).

He talks Apple products with his family, because they all got IPhones (Enclosure 3, line 88-98), and he bought his IPhone, because his brother Morten had one, and Michael was jealous of him (Enclosure 3, line 197). He has hereafter influenced his parents to buy one themselves, and they are furthermore considering buying a MacBook, because Michael had showed them how easy it was to use (Enclosure 3, line 213-219). He uses his network a lot, because it is a good way to get the tips and the latest updates on apps and software (Enclosure 3, line 104-110). But he is furthermore discussing Apple with friends inside his network, who don't own an Apple product, and finds the brand corruptive (Enclosure 3, line 112-116).

Michael believes he is getting what he is paying for, but he will admit that the Apple products can seem expensive, but he thinks the design is nice (Enclosure 3, line 120-121). He knows that the MacBook has less capacity compared to the PC, and he thought that the price was too expensive, but he have been happy about his decision to buy it, because he has not had any bad experiences with the product (Enclosure 3, line 125-131).

He don't believe he will engage in online discussion about Apple to support them, because he see the discussion forums as a place where people are gossiping about what is coming next (Enclosure 3, line 134-137). He likes to not know what is coming next, and that Apple is not launching a new product every month (Ibid.). He will not be a member of a brand community, as he only approaches help when there is a problem with his products (Enclosure 3, line 164-171).

Michael believes we all spread negative WOM, since we use our own experiences with the product or brand (Enclosure 3, line 175-184). His experiences with Android mobile phones have been negative; because they haven't lasted long, and this problem has he not had with his IPhone (Enclosure 3, line 175-184). He likes that the Apple products last for at least two years, even though there are newer models on the market (Enclosure 3, line 186-189). He only buys new products if there is a

need for it, and not just to have the newest product (Enclosure 3, line 342-346). He has considered buying and IPad, but there is no need for it right now, so he will wait on that purchase (Enclosure 3, line 352-358).

He has seen a commercial for the Apple IPhone 5C, because we was considering buying it, but he thought it was a bit cheap (Enclosure 3, line 248-254), which he says they are mentioning in the commercial (Enclosure 3, line 263-264). He likes the design of the commercials that are minimalistic, but he also thinks Apple is good at informing what kind of product you buy (Ibid.). The product name has an effect in our unconsciousness according to Michael, because when he thinks about it, he can see that the Apple product names are simple, and that it may have an effect on his purchase of the IMac (Enclosure 3, line 232-235). He has furthermore visited a Humac store in Aalborg, when he bought his MacBook (Enclosure 3, line 275-279), and he got a good service and advice from the salesman, who not only advised him to postpone his purchase of the MacBook until he was sure he had got into the Graphic Design Technology, but also a discount. He received the discount when he later on bought the MacBook Pro (Enclosure 3, line 288-294). The salesman talked English, which Michael didn't expect, but it didn't influence the unique experience at all (Enclosure 3, line 281-286).

Michael is supports Apple, since he cannot live without his products such as the IPhone and the MacBook Pro (Enclosure 3, line 299-305). The products give him joy when he is using them, and the simplicity makes it easy for him to use the products (Enclosure 3, line 311-314).

Daniel:

Daniel doesn't support Apple, but he is seeing himself as brand loyal, because he has a favourite brand in a variety of product groups (Enclosure 4, line 6-18). He is uses Bertoni for suits, Fossil for watches and HTC for mobile phones (Ibid.). He is a loyal consumer to HTC, because he knows their mobile phone works, and he doesn't want to buy an expensive product and regret it afterwards (Enclosure 4, line 6-18). In other words Daniel supports HTC, because he knows that the brand is liable, and he knows he won't be disappointed if he buys a new model of his HTC mobile phone (Enclosure 4, line 21-28). He would like to experience other brands such as IOS, but he doesn't want to buy the products. Instead, he is suggesting that

mobile network providers such as Three and Telenor loan him an IPhone for two weeks so he test it before he makes a decision to buy a new mobile phone (Enclosure 4, line 30-36). Christinna explains that Daniel is doing a lot of research as part of his decision process (Enclosure 4, line 21-28). He talked to his father in law about the HTC mobile phone he had, and Daniel liked it, so he did research to find out which model he should buy. His first smartphone was a HTC Desire, which he found most suitable to his needs (Enclosure 4, line 79-82).

He explains several times that he doesn't want to be disappointed, and this is a reason why he is loyal to the existing brands (Enclosure 4, line 30-36).

He talks mobile phones within his network, but he tries to be objective, because he doesn't want to express which one he thinks they should buy, and he doesn't feel he is preaching about HTC like a missionary (Enclosure 4, line 39-45).

Christinna tells that her family got HTC mobile phones after Daniel had talked about the phones, and he has hereby had an influential role on his family in laws (Enclosure 4, line 47-58). But within his network of friends, at the university, the types of mobile phones are different, and his talks with them about mobile phones are superficial. He thinks they are good at not highlighting one brand compared to the others, but instead they compare their experiences with each brand and model (Enclosure 4, line 47-58). He doesn't mind telling about the negative sides of a product, but only if he feels it is at the right place to do it, like when they discuss Android vs. IOS, but he will also highlight the flaws from his own brand and model (Enclosure 4, line 61-66). He has never participated online in a discussion about mobile phones as far as he can remember (Enclosure 4, line 69-75).

 The need is important to Daniel, since it is the main drive force in his purchase-decision together with the research he conducts during the decision process (Enclosure 4, line 84-91). Christinna describes Daniel as a type that like to go against the stream and see what other products that are more appealing to him (Enclosure 4, line 84-91). Daniel says;

"I like the underdog. Men ikke en egentlig IPhone modstand, men en modstand til blive shepherded, ledt af en fårehyrde. Øhm, men så vidt jeg husker, undersøgte

jeg også IPhone, fordi den er man nødt til at undersøge, hvis man er ny på markedet (Enclosure 4, line 84-91). "

He is mainly doing it for himself, and his critical mind on the products leads him to question other people's opinion about a product or a brand (Enclosure 4, line 94-98).

The unique experience is mean a lot to Daniel, and gives an example with his purple blazer from Bertoni that he bought for 100kr.;

"Øhm, så det var, der følte jeg bare at jeg var nødt til at gå ind og undersøge mærket her, fordi det var en positiv oplevelse. Jeg tror det var det sådan, det bedste aha brand oplevelse jeg har haft (Enclosure 4, line 103-116). "

But he has also had a negative experience with another suit he had bought from a salesman who had told him it looked good on him, which was untruth, and he therefore went to another place to find a new one, where the salesman said that he didn't understand who could have told Daniel it looked good on him. They went home with a new suit that fitted better than the one they brought in (Enclosure 4, line 103-116). Daniel continues and explains that the Bertoni store in Aalborg offers good service to its consumers, and he bought his grey suit in the store, where he afterwards researched the brand, because it had been such a unique experience (Enclosure 4, line 119-137). The good experience has made them revisit the Bertoni store, and he has more than one suit from that store Enclosure 4, line 139-145). Daniel gives an example of this from his job in a shoe store, where consumers are coming in and ask for a specific salesman; because they want the salesman they have had the last five years (Enclosure 4, line 139-145). Daniel believes that, if you have a unique experience, then you want to experience it again, and an event might be a solution to that (Enclosure 4, line 164-175). But he is not sure Apple is the brand for him, since he is not part of the Apple hype, but if it was a different brand, then he believes the experience from a live brand experience would have an effect on him (Enclosure 4, line 164-175).

Daniel buys and supports brands to obtain personal gain, and not to show the brand that he supports them, and the case is the same with his likes on their Facebook pages. He does it because he wishes to receive information about new

products and offers (Enclosure 4, line 180-194). He will hereby describe his relationship with the brand as one-way communication from the brand to him, and if the brand is successful, he will response with support to them (Enclosure 4, line 196-200).

His identity and brand choices are linked together. But he buys and supports brands because they fit to his personality and not the other way around (Enclosure 4, line 203-221). He has a colourful blazer, but his shoes are practical Ecco shoes, and it is not so much the brand but the quality of what he wears that is important (Enclosure 4, line 203-221). He describes himself as quality loyal than brand loyal, because the he looks for the quality in each brand, and if it matches a reasonable price, than he will buy that product (Enclosure 4, line 226-232), (Enclosure 4, line 300-310). The price is important to him, because he doesn't want to pay for a product that is too expensive compared to the quality, and he thinks Apple products are too expenses compared to the alternatives on the market (Enclosure 4, line 313-333). On the other hand, if we were talking about low-end products, then he would like to see what the hype was about, but not for high-end products such as mobile phones and computers (Enclosure 4, line 313-333).Christinna describes them as consumers of habit, because they buy products they have always known, and rarely chance it (Enclosure 4, line 514-520). Daniel follows up by saying that the price level is too high to make any mistakes.

Ethical values are important to them, especially to Christinna that wrote to H&M to ask them about the case, where H&M used the fur from mistreated rabbits. She stopped buying clothes with rabbit fur from H&M (Enclosure 4, line 577-593). They buy barn egg instead of cage egg, and Daniel would like some sort of system, where the consumer can see which brand is ethical correct or not (Enclosure 4, line 577-593). They buy ecological goods, but they don't want to show their surroundings that they are ethical correct consumers, and they don't know how they can show it as well. They do it mainly for their own and their daughters purpose (Enclosure 4, line 618-639).

Jon:

Jon is the other Apple user, since he owns several Apple products as well; an IPhone 5, a MacBook Pro, an IPod, an IPad and Apple TV, but he is not using his

IPod anymore (Enclosure 5, line 6-7). He was against Apple products in the beginning, but he changed his mind after he bought his first IPhone (Enclosure 5, line 12-15). He had seen the smartphone before he bought it through a friend, who he talked to about the product and tried it as well (Enclosure 5, line 17-20). His experience with the Apple products is that they are simple to use, which is evident from the images of children using an IPad (Enclosure 5, line 23-28). But the simplicity has no visible effect on Jon, because he had to get used to working with Apple pro after the use of Microsoft Windows (Enclosure 5, line 30-33), but he discovered that the different platforms worked well together, which made it easier for him to use them. He likes that the different platforms talk together, which has enabled him to print wireless through his IPhone or via the computer (Enclosure 5, line 35-39). He does underline that it works best of the consumer owns more than one Apple product, but it's not a negative thing for him, because he likes the platforms he got (Enclosure 5, line 44-47).

The price is not a factor to him, but he furthermore tells that it depends on what the purpose is for the product, since he is not using his MacBook Pro the intended, as he is using it for surfing online (Enclosure 5, line 56-60). He bought the MacBook due to the long lasting battery time, where he can charge it, and it will have battery for eight hours (Ibid.). The design is an important factor to him, and was one of the reasons why he bought the product in the first place (Enclosure 5, line 62-63), (Enclosure 5, line 196-198).

He has not participated in an online discussion about Apple, but he has discussed Apple with his colleagues, and he tells that there are two sides; those who are positive towards Apple and those who are negative towards the brand (Enclosure 5, line 68-71). He has many times defended his use of Apple against those who doesn't use them, but it is often just teasing from his colleagues, where he is teasing them with the size of their smartphones (Enclosure 5, line 297-303). He has a friend who works in an electronic store, who participate in online discussion about Apple, but Jon would recommend Apple products to his network, since he is happy about his products (Enclosure 5, line 73-78). He had some problems with the IPhone 4 that broke when he accidently dropped it. But he has not experienced the same problem with the IPhone 5 (Ibid.). He has furthermore influenced his father to buy an IPad, even though his father is a Samsung user, but his father could see

the benefits for the IPad compared to the Samsung tablet, especially when he is travelling (Enclosure 5, line 80-88). He was on the other hand unable to convince his father to switch his Samsung smartphone to an IPhone. His father has also influenced him when it comes to tools, because his father has shared his experience with him (Enclosure 5, line 93-95).

Jon has experienced a variety of Apple branding, since he has seen a commercial from Superbowl, where Samsung is making fun of Apple (Enclosure 5, line 126-129), but he has also visited Apple IStores, when he has been on vacation. He likes how the stores are designed;

"Jamen jeg kan godt lide at de er forholdsvis store og åben, og der er ikke sådan for mange produkter, der bliver kastet i hovedet der (Enclosure 5, line 144-148). "

He thinks it is in in line with the simplicity they are trying to show, because it makes it easy to enter and there are not too many products in the stores which can be overwhelming (Enclosure 5, line 144-148). He misses a physical store where the consumers can get help instead of sending it to another country to be repaired (Enclosure 5, line 151-157). He doesn't understand why Apple is on the market, when there is no actual IStore, since the closest one is in Malmö. He believes that Apple dictates how the stores should be design, and he doesn't see the Humac stores as actual Apple stores (Enclosure 5, line 159-167). It will make it easier for him, if there was an actual store, where he could get his products repaired instead of going through a collaborator, where it takes time to repair the product (Enclosure 5, line 170-174).

He buys most of his products online, where the availability is good, but he can also see that the European market is behind compared to the American market, and he gives an example with Phillips LED light bulbs that only are available only (Enclosure 5, line 177-186). These light bulbs can be controlled through an IPhone.

Source: www.engadget.com

He has not experienced any live brand events from Apple while he has been travelling, and the only events he can think of in Denmark is the midnight sale hosted by mobile network providers such as Telenor and Telia (Enclosure 5, line 215-222).

He buys products when there is a need for it, which is typically after two years, and he is right now waiting to see what the IPhone 6 will look like, since he hopes it doesn't get larger than the IPhone 5 (Enclosure 5, line 205-212). He is considering changing his MacBook Pro to a MacBook Air, since the battery time is longer on this model (Enclosure 5, line 285-291). He considers himself brand loyal to Apple, because he likes their design, but he don't buy any products just to have them, there needs to be a need for it (Enclosure 5, line 189-193). He bought his IPad, when he was touring in Afghanistan, because it was easy to watch movies on when they were at the base camp (Enclosure 5, line 265-283). He don't use it as much now, since he has an IPhone and a MacBook Pro. He uses his computer for work use, and his IPhone is furthermore used for work to take pictures of the day. But he also used it when he was on vacation in Thailand, where he used the camera on the phone instead of an actual camera (Enclosure 5, line 259-263).

In comparison to theory of brand loyalty

The analysis above shows three categories that the responses can be divided into:

- The product, hereunder is; functionality, need and price
- Good experience
- Social identity

The analysis has shown similarities between the four participants that draws parallels to the theory of social identity and brand loyalty. The four participants have personal factors that are important to them in form of functionality and personal needs (Chapter 2, p. 21).

The need for a product is important, because it drives the participants towards a potential purchase of a product. The four interview persons were all agreeing that without the need, they wouldn't buy a product or support a brand through purchase.

The functionality is another important factor to the four participants, because functionality is how the product is used by the four personalities, and they have each bought products based on the functionality.

The good experience is another important factor, as the good experience has been one of the reasons why the participants purchased a product from the specific brand or considered purchasing a specific product (Chapter 2, p. 29-30). The experience has taken place both in the public and private environment, and involved both interaction with a salesman or a friend. The experiences from the stores have been valuable, because the salesmen have been interested in the participants' lives and needs. Michael met a salesman in the Humac store, who recommended him to hold on his purchase of the MacBook Pro, until he knew he if got into the Design Technology study, but he got the discount promised by the salesman, when he bought the MacBook Pro later on (Enclosure 3, line 288-294). Daniel gives an example of the Bertoni store in Aalborg, where he purchases his suits. He experienced good service from the same salesman more than one time, which asks about their lives and their daughter, and shows he knows who they are (Enclosure 4, line 131-137). Daniel stresses the importance of this service, as it made him re-visit the store, and he has afterwards made two other purchases to that store. Christoffer and Jon agree that the good experience is important (Enclosure 2, line23-24; Enclosure 5, line144-148). Jon has experienced different Apple stores at different cities around the world, and he finds the simplicity and service a strong point for a re-visit. The four participants haven't experienced any live brand campaigns, both in Denmark and at an international scale. The lack of experience a live brand campaign, can furthermore be a lack of knowledge about

what it is, but it can also be an expression of the lack of live brand experience campaigns in Denmark large enough to draw attention to the brand.

The factors of need, functionality and quality is the elements for creating loyalty to the four participants, but there are other criteria that have affected the choice of brands for the four participants. Christoffer and Michael have educational criteria, where the study determines which brand and products they will purchase (Enclosure 2, line 15-18; Enclosure 3, line 311-314). Daniel is affected by his limited earnings and fears of disappointment (Enclosure 4, line30-36), whereas Jon is the only one where there are no visible criteria for his choice as Apple user (Enclosure 5). His loyalty has not been affected by the market, but by his own opinion and evaluation of the products.

The four participants can be described as individuals with several social identities (Chapter 2 p. 25), because of who they are. They are all men, and they are all in the age category of 25-30. Christoffer is not only part of a social group at his studies, but he is also part of the categorisation of students, and the same goes for Daniel and Michael. Michael can be defined as a member of the social group of BMX riders in Aalborg under the name of Hold fast, but he can furthermore be classified as a BMX rider. He is also exposed to stereotyping from others, because of his many tattoos and the skater clothes he is wearing. Daniel is exposed to classification (Chapter 2, p. 29), because he is wearing band related t-shirts and sweatshirts. Jon can be classified as a soldier, because he is working in the military, but he can furthermore be classified as an Apple user, because he owns several Apple products, which is also the case with Michael. They have all primary reference groups, because they use their family and friends to find our which products are relevant to meet their needs (Chapter 2, p. 26). Christoffer uses his network well, when he is looking for a new product (Enclosure 2, line 158-162), and the same can be said about Michael, Daniel and Jon. Daniel though see himself as a critical consumer, because he don't believe other people can be objective when they discuss a brand, so he conducts researches to find out which products most suitable.

Michael and Jon have established a relationship with the Apple brand, and Michael says he cannot live without his products (Enclosure 3, line 299-305), which draws parallels to Fournier (1998), and the passion quality, because the relationship

between Michael and Apple is strong, due to the fact that Apple not only meet Michael's needs, but also bring meaning to his life through their products such as designing computers with high quality video and picture editing programs (Enclosure 3, line 27-29). Jon has established a relationship with Apple where he is satisfied with the products and like the design of them. He likes the simplicity of the products, and the fact that they complement each other well from watching movies to printing wireless from his IPhone. Daniel has established a relationship with Bertoni, because of the good service he receives every time he visits the store in Aalborg. The common to the three participants is the fact that their relationship is mainly through buying the products, but Daniel also likes the Bertoni Facebook page, as the only one who actually likes a Facebook page from the brand that they support (Enclosure 4, line 180-194). They will recommend a product to friends and family, if they find it relevant, but they will not preach about the brand to consumers who don't use the brand.

Daniel is furthermore the only one showing clear signs of habit behaviour, because he literally buys specific brands because he knows them, and know what to expect from them (Enclosure 4, line 526-536). He is afraid of trying something new, and this is a main reason why he sticks to brands such as Bertoni and HTC.

The effects of Apple branding:

All four participants can see the advantages in the Apple branding through the simple names, but they show no visible signs that it have affected them. Michael states that it can have had an effect on a subconscious level (Enclosure 3, line 232-235), when he has bought an Apple product, bit it is not something he has thought about before.

Apple branding through commercials don't seem to have had an effect on them too. Michael looked at a commercial for the IPhone 5C, but he decided not to buy it based on the commercial (Enclosure 3, line 248-254). Jon has only seen a commercial, but cannot remember the content of it (Enclosure 5, line 126-129). It can be argued that in the situation of Apple and the four participants, it is the Apple users who have watched actual Apple commercials. Apple commercials are not shown on Television in Denmark, which means that the participants need to

search for them themselves, if they want to see them compared to countries such as USA and England.

It can further be discussed that the two Apple users are the only ones who has visited an Apple IStore or Humac store. The reason for this can be the lack of an actual IStore in Denmark, and the fact that you can buy Apple products online or in an electronic store such as Fona. Jon doesn't count the Humac stores as actual Apple stores, because they are not called an IStore. The reason why Michael is the only one who has visited the Humac store is the lack of unique experiences that draws attention to the store, or it can be the reason Daniel gives that he is just not on the Apple trend.

The branding through the products has shown to be a success for Apple, because three of the four participants find the design and functionality strong compared to their competitors from for instant Samsung. Jon explain the effects on the strengths of the design of his Apple products, and it has also been a reason to why they buy Apple products, and don't mind paying extra for the design:

"jeg kan godt lide deres produkter, og jeg er glad for deres produkter også design, men jeg kan så også godt se fordele ved nogen af deres konkurrenter, nogle af deres ting, øh som deres telefoner kan, men jeg så også sige, smartphones som de er blevet nu, som slev styre programmerne, de er så ens, så det er nok næsten, ja jeg tror mange de vælger det pga. designet og udseendet." (Enclosure 5, line 189-193)

Jon is not blinded by the Apple brand to understand that Apple products are very similar to their competitors, which means that the design has been a main reason for his purchase choices.

The functionality such as long lasting products is also important to both Michael and Jon, and they both highlight the long lifetime of the products compared to the competitors:

"Det er jo det, der er så fedt ved Apple, det er at det. At når du køber et produkt, som så'rn jeg købt IPhone 4 dengang, den holdt jo i to år, så kunne jeg godt mærke den var ved at blive langsom. Men den var også to år gammel og tre telefoner

ældre, der var kommet tre nye telefoner siden, så det, det synes jeg er super fedt.
" (Enclosure 3, line 186-189)

The simplicity in Apple products have proven to be a strong sales point to the two Apple users, who are certain that they will buy Apple products in the future. Christoffer would buy an Apple product in the future if the price is lowered by 1000kr. otherwise he would continue to buy products from the competitors (Enclosure 2, line 80-81).

The price have proved to be an important factor as well, because we are talking a price range seen as expensive to two of the four participants, as they are students with limited earnings. They all place Apple in a higher price range than PC brands, and Daniel and Christoffer also explains that the price for an Apple product does not match the quality and functionality of the product (Chapter 3, pp. 2,). Christoffer and Daniel can be seen as price-sensitive consumers (Evans, Jamal & Foxall, 2009, chapter 10), who buy products and services based on the relation between price and quality. Daniel would like to see what the hype is about, but he won't do it with products in the price range which Apple products are in (Enclosure 4, line 313-333). Daniel furthermore defines himself as quality loyal consumer, because the quality and the price should balance together, before a product is profitable (Enclosure 4, line 300-310).

Michael and Jon can seem similar in their consumer behaviour, as they both have a social identity as Apple users (Chapter 2, p.), and price is not an important factor, because Apple designs products fulfilling their needs. The difference between the two non-Apple users and the Apple users is that Michael and Jon have both worked for many years, and have later on taken an education, whereas Daniel and Christoffer are still studying. I possess this knowledge, because the four participants all are my friends, and I talk to them from time to time.

Chapter 4

Discussion

This chapter compares the theoretical definition of brand loyalty and brand evangelism with the experience from the life world of the four participants. The discussion will reflect upon the understanding of these phenomenons from a critical angle.

The theoretical chapter provide us with a definition of brand loyalty and brand evangelism through a combination of research papers and textbooks about consumer behaviour. It is though important to understand that these definitions are based on consumer markets such as the American and the British. The Danish market is different, because we don't have access to all the brands in America, and there is a delay in the launch of new products on the Danish market, especially when it involves electronic products such as smartphones and computers (Guldager, 2014). The discussion will be based on a research from the Danish Chamber of Commerce, and their definition of the Danish consumer. This research is from 2011, but it will be hold against the theory of brand loyalty and the analysis of the four participants to discuss how the definitions about the Danish consumer and brand loyalty fits the actual consumer behaviour from the four participants.

The research from the Danish Chamber of Commerce conducted a report about the consumer changes the Danish consumer is undergoing now and in the future. It is a portrait of the modern Danish consumer (Commerce, 2011, s. 3). The report is a guide for brands and companies, but it is interesting to see how the Danish consumer can be defined.

The report confirm the importance of creating a strong relationship with the consumer, as it can strengthen the market position and create a growth to the brand (Commerce, 2011, s. 3). The report also stresses that it is important that the market meets consumer expectations and needs (Chapter 2, p.21), and that the power of the consumption should lie in the hands of the consumer and not the brands. The effort to create loyal consumers starts with the effort to create satisfied consumers, because satisfied consumers can lead to growth for the brand and potential loyalty (Commerce, 2011, s. 3) (Iglesias, Singh, & Batista-Fouget, The Role of Brand Experience and Affective Commitment in Determining Brand Loyalty, 2011, s. 572). The Internet has made it easy for the consumer to communicate across country borders, and the a third of our consumption is used on

communication with other people. The report categorise the consumer into six categorisations:

- The first concerns the development of the online consumption and usage (Commerce, 2011, s. 5). The consumer is more online than ever, and we use the Internet to search information about the product or brand from prices, offers, to recommendations from other consumer (Commerce, 2011, s. 8) before a purchase is made.

- But the consumer will furthermore shop online, when they have search and found a product that suits their needs. The shopping is not only happening in Denmark, but also across borders, because the Internet has opened up to a broader selection of goods and services from around the world (Commerce, 2011, s. 7-8).

- The consumer is living a busy life, where the consumption needs to be easy and convenient to the consumer through solutions with high quality that meet the needs and goals from the individual consumer (Commerce, 2011, s. 9).

- The consumer search after great offers, which is evident in the amount of discount stores seen all over Denmark, especially in Aalborg. But it is not only seen for grocery product, but also electronic products and services, as evident from the many online deal shops, where the Danish consumer can score great deals on product such as computers and restaurant visits such as Sushi (Dealhunter, 2014).

- The report defines the Danish consumer as disloyal to brand and companies, due to the research a consumer will do before a purchase-decision is made (Commerce, 2011, s. 10).

- The consumer is furthermore engaging in social responsibility and sustainability of the environment through consumption of Fairtrade and second-hand products, but a large portion of the consumption is still coming from conventional consumption, and the financial crisis can have an effect on this, because ccological products are still at a higher price level than discount products (Commerce, 2011, s. 11).

The ability to maintain a relationship with the consumer has shown to be effective, and it should hereby be the main concern from the brands, as loyal consumers provides growth to the brand at a stronger market position as well (Commerce, 2011, s. 13). The consumer seeks furthermore experiences, according to an online definition of the modern consumer from the Danish Chamber of Commerce (Rasmussen, 2014). The focus has shifted from the product functionality to how it is

sold and presented by the brand, whether it is happening in a physical or online store (Rasmussen, 2014). The atmosphere and the decoration of the store are elements that attracts consumer, and they will visit specialty stores because of the unique atmosphere where the sensory apparatus are used greatly (Rasmussen, 2014).

The report is based on a business perspective and not a consumer perspective, and it is furthermore from a quantitative research approach through statistical data and research that illustrate how large a portion of the Danish population shops online or search information online. The report points this out as well, because they believe that a clear image of the Danish consumer behaviour only can be shown through qualitative research (Commerce, 2011, s. 22).

In comparison with the four participants from the thesis it can be drawn parallels to their assumption about the online usability, because all four participants are using Facebook to communicate with their friends. Daniel explain how he use the Internet to search for information about a brand or product through price comparison and consumer ratings of products (Chapter 3, p. 44), but he also use the Internet to like Facebook pages of the brands he buys such as Bertoni.

Source: Facebook: Daniel, 2014

Daniel only likes Facebook brand pages for personal reasons, and not to show his support to the brand, and he hereby shows levels of individualism (Commerce, 2011, s. 11), because he don't want the brands to decide how his consumption should look like, but he wants to buy product that suits his identity (Chapter 3, p. 45). The usage of the Internet is further an indication that four participants show levels of extravert personalities, because they communicate greatly with other consumer (Chapter 2, p. 34). But he is not the only one that shows levels of

individualism, because the other three also have factors that need to be met before a purchase is made. Michael has a creative personality, and he needs products that can help him develop his creativity, but furthermore show it to others (Chapter 3 p. 4).

The simplicity of the Apple products has been important to Michael and Jon, because they want products that make it easy for them to use (Commerce, 2011, s. 9), when they start up the product, and they both like that Apple products easily finds each other, and makes it easier in their everyday life to go from media device to another without spending time on connecting the two devices together:

"Ja bl.a. fx når jeg er inde på, ja herhjemme så kører jeg alt mit musik trådløst enten igennem computeren eller telefonen, og jeg kan printe trådløst også via min telefon og sådan noget, så det er meget lækkert." (Enclosure 5, line 35-39)

It can therefore be said that Apple meet the requirements from the consumers, which have created a relationship between them and the two participants (Chapter 2, p. 21).

The analysis has showed signs of importance in functionality for all four participants, but functionality has proven to mean many things to all four participants, and there have furthermore been signs of diversity in their response about functionality. Christoffer defines functionality as how the technology works from the beginning of the purchase to the modification options while he is using the product (Chapter 3, p. 38).

"Altså det jeg gerne vil bruge penge på, er det som giver mig en funktionalitet, som jeg har behov for, ellers, så køber jeg noget som jeg ikke kan bruge fuldt ud, og det er dumt. " (Enclosure 2, line 19-12)

Michael talks about the simplicity of the product, as mentioned above, and Jon defines it as the functionality of how long a battery time a product has or how the product are interlinked to expand the media platform to several devices. Common to all the responses is that functionality leads to brand loyalty, because it is part of which needs and goals the four participants have for their products (Chapter 2, p. 21).

The analysis draws parallels to the statement that the Danish consumers are seeking experiences when they shop for new products, such as electronic products presented in this thesis. All four participants have a unique experience that has been related to a purchase-decision, and maybe they didn't buy the product at first hand, but they will buy the product later on. This argues the importance of the staged performance the brands use, as a method to attract consumers to their brand and the products (Chapter 2 p. 19). Christoffer focus on a unique product experience (Chapter 3, p. 37-38) which underlines the shift in the focus from the actual brand and its products to how it is used by the consumers (Chapter 2, p. 20). Daniel and Michael both give example from a visit to a store, where the service was more than their expectations, and in both their cases the unique experience led to a product purchase (Future, 2013, s. 3):

> "Mit grå jakkesæt købte jeg som en julegave, øh for, sidste år. Ikke den jul vi lige har haft, men året før, så det er øh, fem måneder siden, og så var vi inde her for et par uger siden, og da kom han hen og spurgte. Hey hvordan går det med dig og jakkesættet, får du det, får du det vist frem. Jaja, hvordan går det med den lille, og han huskede barnet. Altså, det var, det er sådan, så er man stamgæst, og bliver husket, og det havde jeg ikke regnet med over hovedet."
>
> (Enclosure 4, line 119-137)

Daniel shows how a unique experience is routed in the presentation of the products through personal relation with the consumer. The personal relation can here be defined as a stage where the clothes from Bertoni were the props used to create a unique experience to Daniel. The same experience was given the next time he visited the store, and through these experiences it can be said that Daniel has established a relationship with Bertoni (Chapter 2, p. 19). The personal relations can be seen as an element for establishing a relationship between the consumer and the brand and develop a long-term relationship (Commerce, 2011, s. 13).

Social responsibility is important to Daniel and Christinna, because they get a 'feel good' feeling, when they buy ethical and responsibly correct (Chapter 3, p. 46), but they only do it to satisfy their own needs to feel good, and they don't want to intentionally show that they take social responsibility through their consumption of goods and services (Commerce, 2011). Daniel and Christinna are here placed in the

category of social responsible consumers, who are looking after other people, animals and the environment (Chapter 2, p. 29). Social responsibility and ethical values have no visible effects on the three other participants, and they will not exclude one product based on ethical values. This conflict with the statement from the Danish Consumer report, but it is not to say that they show social responsibility through other aspects of their lives.

The theories have shown signs of different types of brand loyalty; from undivided loyalty to no loyalty at all, and from price sensitive consumers to, what this thesis defines as forced loyalty, because of requirements from the social groups the participants are part of (Chapter 2, p. 26). It can be argued that Michael is forced to be loyal to Apple, because his studies require Apple products, and his social encounters in the BMX and drawing groups requires products that provide the right programs (Chapter 3, p. 41), which according to himself Apple provides. It is an interpretation based on the definition from the theory of brand loyalty (Chapter 2, p. 33), but based on the response from Michael it can be said that he is loyal because Apple meet his needs as the Danish consumer report points out to be essential in gaining loyal consumers (Commerce, 2011, s. 3). Christoffer shows also aspects of forced loyalty, because he buys products that meet requirements from his studies as well, but it can further be argued that he shows no level of loyalty to a specific brand. Christoffer is instead loyal to a product group, than an actual brand, since he is support Android instead of IOS, due to a more open system, where modifications can develop be made to fit his needs (Chapter 3, p. 37). These two participants also confirm the influence social groups have on the consumer, because we buy products to fit the requirements for the group we are part of (Chapter 2, p. 27).

Michael shows that he has established love or passion to the Apple brand, because he simply cannot live without them, but he is not part of the Apple brand community online, but instead he is part of social groups, where most of the members have IPhones, and they are naturally discussing Apple news together (Chapter 3, p.). Michael is also the only one of the participants that will admit his affection to Apple products. Jon on the other hand says he is both loyal and not loyal to Apple, because he don't buy the newest product, when it is launched, but instead wait until his products show signs of usability damage (Chapter 3, p.).

Daniel presents another kind of loyalty that is routed in the fear of disappointment (Chapter 3, p.), which has created habits of buying the same product (Chapter 2, p. 29). The fear is overshadowing his factors for buying a product, and he therefore sticks to the brands he already knows. He though shows signs of curiosity of trying a new brand, but it can be argued that his fear will play a central role in his attempt to try a new brand. It has to be stressed here that his fear is mainly visible, when it comes to high-end products, as the price is the second factor interfering with his attempt to try a new brand or to see what the hype is about (Chapter 3. 44). Daniel is furthermore the only one who doesn't believe Apple is a product he will buy in the future, but his statements conflicts, and it is to be believed that, if Apple created cheaper products, he would consider buying one, even though it conflicts with his statement of going against the stream (Chapter 3, p. 44).

The four participants fall under the interpretation of the modern consumer more or less, because it is not all of the six characteristics that fit to all four participants. Christoffer conduct research before a purchase, and he use his network to get consumer recommendation and discussions about a brand. Daniel also uses his network as a source for liable recommendation and to test the product before an eventual buy. Michael uses his social group of BMX friends to receive news about new products or apps on the market. This social group can be seen as consisting of opinion leaders that share news with the rest of the group. Jon talks to his colleagues about Apple products, but they also tease each other, when they talk Samsung vs. Apple products.

Apple branding through the name has showed no visible effect on the four participants, but might have an effect on the subconscious level (Chapter 3 p.) On the other hand branding through the functionality and design have proven very effective to both Michael and Jon (Chapter 3, p.), but there it has not yet affected Daniel yet to buy the products. It did however affect Christoffer through the touch functionality, and he would have bought the IPad if the price had been lower.

In comparison with Samsung the Apple the position on the market is small, and in 2013 Samsung sold a higher amount of smartphones than Apple, and the Danish consumer prefers Android instead of IOS, because it is difficult to cooperate with Apple according to an article from Business.dk (2013). The article confirms the scepticism that Christoffer has about the IOS system (Chapter 3, p.).

The term brand evangelism shows similarities to the fan culture seen in the entertainment business, because fans show the same characteristics, as seen in theory of brand relationship (Chapter 2, p. 21). The fans are dedicated to the artist(s) or actor/actress, and they show great levels of passion for this artist through purchasing music albums and merchandise. The term furthermore, shows similarities to the fan culture seen in the sports-fan such as soccer fans. Soccer fans show same levels of passion to their football club, but they are also an image of the trash talk between fan groups and the more negative side of the fan culture. Brand evangelists can have the negative effect of pushing potential consumers away, due to the preaching about the brand (Chapter 2. p.), which is important from a consumer perspective, because no one of the four participants want people to feel pushed into buying a product from other consumers.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis is created on a curiosity and a wondering about why more and more consumers become loyal to a specific brand.

This thesis researched at why consumers become loyalty to specific products and how this loyalty could be defined, through a qualitative research of four men in the age of 25 to 30. Two of the participants had shown no loyalty from the beginning of the thesis process, and the other two showed loyalty through their support to Apple. Apple was the link between the four interviews, and all four participants were asked about their relationship to Apple, and their support to any other brands. Apple was chosen as inspirational case, because everybody knows Apple, and people usually have a meaning or opinion about the brand and their products, as evident from the four interviews.

The theoretical approach showed theory about experiential marketing and social identity, because these theories can be seen as fundamental in the understanding of brand loyalty, and in combination with the theory of brand relationships between the consumer and the brand. The relationship has shown to be essential in the development of brand loyalty from a theoretical perspective. This perspective defined consumer loyalty as a complex meaning, where several elements have an influential factor to the degree of loyalty.

The analysis concluded several types of loyalty depending on different factors created by the individual and the collective group. Christoffer and Michael showed evidence of forced loyalty, due to requirements from their studies and interests. Daniel illustrated that the price was an important factor, especially for electronic products such as Apple produces.

The unique experience has furthermore shown to be an important element in the creating of brand loyalty, because three of the participants based a purchase-decision on the success level of the unique experience, and it can hereby be concluded that the unique experience is an important element in the understanding and shaping of brand loyalty, because the unique experience will make the consumer research, visit or buy the products and the brand. It can therefore be concluded that brand experience is an important element to create loyal consumers, because the unique experiences will drive the consumers to the brand again and again.

This thesis concludes that brand loyalty depends on the relationship between the consumer and the brand. A strong relationship will show parallels to a relationship between to individuals such as a married couple. The relationship level depends on the degree of commitment and intimacy there is between the consumer and the brand. The relationship is also a factor in defining the type of loyalty the consumer shows from undivided loyalty to no loyalty at all, where the consumer will search for great deals and discounts in the price level. The consumer can furthermore be affected by the social groups he or she belongs to, because these social groups can set requirements of which brand or products to buy, as seen in the example with Christoffer and Michael. The habits are another influential factor, because the consumer can choose products based on their habits, and their familiarities with the brand. Daniel buys specific brands, because he knows them well and has created a habit to buy these specific products, since they meet his expectations and needs.

The price has proven to be a factor to two of the participants, and they have been defined as price-sensitive consumers, that will show loyalty to the brand until a cheaper offer is presented by the market. These price sensitive consumers can hereby be defined as showing unstable loyalty or no loyalty at all, because they will keep buying the cheapest option, but the quality has to suit the price as Daniel mention.

It can from the above definitions be concluded that the answer to problem statement of; why consumers are loyal to a specific brand is depended on several factors defined by them and by the social groups they interact in. but a central element to the answer; why consumers are loyal is the relationship between the brand and the consumer. But also by the degree of loyalty the consumer shows through commitment and the relationship between the brand and the consumer. It can therefore be concluded that the relationship quality is an important element to establish brand loyalty.

Brand loyalty can be divided into four types from undivided loyalty, where the consumer shows loyalty to one specific brand to no loyalty, where the consumer is shopping the cheapest offer and don't show loyalty to any brands at all.

It can furthermore be concluded that Michael and Jon are loyal to Apple, because they design products that meets their requirements of programs and long battery lifetime, but the design has also had a significantly influence to their loyalty to Apple, as well as the cooperation between the different Apple devices, which makes their everyday life easier.

Finally it can be concluded that the term brand evangelist is a loyal consumer type at a higher level than loyalty. A brand evangelist will not only spread WOM, but also take part in the recruiting process of new brand evangelists. Brand evangelists can on the other hand create trash talk about another brand community, which creates an us versus them feeling, because brand evangelists will defend the brand to outsiders who talks negative about the brand.

Reflection

Critical reflection of thesis

The thesis showed complexity in the understanding of brand loyalty, because the definition are different and consists of different elements. Pine & Gilmore don't concentrate on how to create loyal consumers, which is the reason why they have been used as to define what an experience is. They gave strong example on how the brand experience is the theatre that the brands perform to create awareness about the brand. Shaz Smilansky to it as step further and defined what a live brand experience is, and how it can affect consumer loyalty. She even mentioned the WOM effective, which was not mentioned by Pine & Gilmore as far as I know. WOM has proven to be essential to make consumers buy products, and this was the reason why it was included in this thesis, because the four participants show evidence of positive WOM through their talks and recommendation about a product or a brand.

The relationship theory also showed significant importance to this thesis, because the participants had established relationships with the brands that they supported. The theory is relevant to understand why consumers become loyal, and should not be taken for granted in future research about brand loyalty.

The social science theory seemed complex at the beginning, but the theories seemed to agree on all aspects of what can be defined as social identities and categorisation of individuals to understand the human world better. It even proved important to this thesis, because our consumption is based on influenced by the social identities we have and the social groups we are engaging in.

The qualitative interviews proved to be a more difficult process than I thought, I used a phenomenological approach for the first time, and I have had difficulties to completely understand the method, but this thesis illustrates my interpretation of the qualitative method, and I have found it interesting to use it and learn more about how to use it. I have been used to work with hermeneutic methods, but I believe I have described and interpreted the experiences from the life worlds of the four participants well, and have got in-depth details on why they show loyalty or lack of it, which was the purpose of the analysis and this thesis.

My understanding of brand loyalty has been clearer, and I now understand that there are different elements important to the consumer, before they show loyalty to a brand. The brand needs to meet these elements through use of different methods to brand them. Apple has showed the effectiveness of branding through functionality and design, whereas other brands have showed success in using live brand experience. I now understand that the relationship between the consumer and the brand is essential and cannot be taken for granted, if the brand wants to gain loyal consumers.

Finally the understanding of the term brand evangelism has proven to be easier than I thought, even though the theories are limited as far as know. I have through late in the correction phase found theoretical books about evangelism marketing, and prove that it is a term taken very serious by many large brands such as Apple. The term seem negative from a consumer perspective, but the definition are extremely precise of what an evangelist does. But the separation brand loyalty and brand evangelism has not been clear, and I have therefore not tried to explain the differences.

This thesis is relevant because it not only gives information about consumer behaviour from a consumer perspective, but it is also leading up to new research about brand loyalty and brand evangelism, especially on the Danish market, since the research here is limited. An interest research would be to analyse the effect of a live brand experience of the Danish consumers, to modify how far we are compared to countries like England and USA, where this is used more frequently. Another research could be how similar fans cultures are to the definitions of brand evangelism, and if these two are the same.

I can use this thesis as a guideline to how brand loyalty is defined, and which elements are important to gain loyal consumer both on the Danish market and any other markets. I would like to work for an experiential marketing agency in the future, and the information found in this thesis has provided me with valuable knowledge about consumer behaviour the development of brand loyalty.

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