Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This section is divided into two major parts. In the first part, literature pertaining to sports marketing, sports consumers and the concept of sports products are discussed. This is followed by an overview of the concepts of fan, fandom and the consequences of fandom. The second section gives an overview of the literature related to Brand Image, Image Congruency, Brand Association, Brand Love and Brand Loyalty. In short, an attempt is also made to bring together the two realms of Sports marketing and brands.

2.1 Sports Marketing

Traditionally sport marketing has been viewed as: “the application of marketing concepts to sport products and services also encompassing the marketing of non-sport related products through some association with sport” (Moore and Till, 1994; Gray and McEvoy, 2005). Interestingly, the concept of “sports marketing” is still vague for both the practitioners as well as the academicians (Fullerton and Merz, 2008). Shannon (1999) identifies that the concept of sports marketing consists of various categories which range from selling of match tickets to betting on sport-related matters in legal gambling institutions. However, existing literature prefer to narrow down the boundaries of “sports marketing” concept. The primary task of sports marketing has been identified as that of selling tickets for the sporting events and ensuring that the fans are properly seated as per the arrangements (Sports Marketing Surveys, 2002); thus narrowing down the “sports product” offering only to the match tickets spectators have bought. This conceptualization cannot be accepted as it narrows down the scope of sports marketing. In today’s world, it is absolutely vital that marketing of non-sports products through sports events
be acknowledged as one of the essential components of sports marketing. Many marketers use sports events as platforms to appeal to consumers to sell a large variety of products. Most of these products have either very little or no relationship at all with sports. This strategy undertaken by the sport marketers to market products which are not associated with sports is known as “marketing through sports” (Gray and McEvoy, 2005).

Schlossberg (1996) states that “sports has become a marketing medium in and of itself with the ability to target, segment, promote, and cast products and services in heroic lights.” He also opines that quite a large number of companies, which are not associated with sports in any manner, use sports as one of the vital ingredients of their promotional mix.

On the other hand, focusing on the sports related products Pitts and Stotlar (1996) recommend a completely different outlook towards sports marketing. They conceptualize sports marketing as a process to design and implement various activities to produce, to finalize the price, to promote and to distribute different sports products for satisfying the needs and requirements of sports consumers and to attain the managerial goals. This explanation finds support in Stotlar's (2001) work, which emphasizes the process of developing successful plans pertaining to sport marketing. Pitts and Stotlar’s study (1996) is the first study where the impact of price, place (i.e. distribution) and promotion— the traditional three P-s of marketing mix are explored in the domain of sports marketing. The addition of these three elements of marketing mix provides a logical tool to Gladden and Sutton (2005) who claim the promotional efforts undertaken by the marketer as the sole basis of sports marketing.

From the promotional perspective, some organizations market sport products to a particular customer segment while others market a range of non-sports products. By linking these non-sports related products with players, sporting events and teams, marketers cater to the needs of
customer segments that have “personal investment” in these sports bodies (Merz and Fullerton, 2005). Mullin et al. (2000) differentiate sports marketing into two dimensions and these dimensions are termed as “thrusts”. They argue that the domain of sports marketing includes all activities which satisfy the requirements of sports consumers in every possible way. Taking cue from the studies of Moore and Till (1994), Schlossberg (1996) and Pitts and Stotlar (1996); Mullin et al. (2000) propose that Sport Marketing can be divided into two major “thrusts”, namely: a) promoting sport related products and services and b) use of sport or a sporting event as a promotional tool to promote other products or services (both consumer as well as industrial) which are no way related to the sport. This conceptualization is later accepted by Gladden and Sutton (2005) with some modifications made by Gray and McEvoy (2005). Gladden and Sutton (2005) term these two thrusts or dimensions as: “marketing through sports” and “marketing of sports”. Fullerton (2007) in his study tried to identify new dimensions of Sports marketing but had to finally agree to the previous classifications i.e. “marketing through sports” and “marketing of sports” proposed by Gladden and Sutton (2005). This classification is valid even today.

A related area of sports marketing is “sports promotions”. Blann and Armstrong (2003) investigate whether the applicability of “sports promotion” to sponsorship deals and questions whether it is limited to an advertisement with a generic sport theme. They explore the exclusivity of the domain of “sports promotion” and argue whether promotion can be considered as useful to create sports coverage that fits the context of “marketing through sports”. They also cite that the concept of sports marketing not only integrates the dimensions of “thrusts” as proposed by Mullin et al. (2000) but cover issues apart from advertising and public relations also.
Shank (2005) gives an alternate view of Sports marketing. He defines Sports marketing as the “specific application of marketing principles and processes to sports products and to the marketing of non-sports products through association with sports” (p.3).

Summarizing it can be said that “Marketing through sports” is related to the products or services which have no relation with sports whatsoever (non-sports products). On the other hand, “marketing of sports” is related to the products or services which are associated with a sport in some way or the other (sports products) (Fullerton and Merz, 2008). In the next section we present literature on Sports products and Non-sports products.

2.1.1 Sports Products

In order to understand the sports marketing environment three categories of Sports products stand out: a) Spectator Sports, b) Participation Sports and c) Miscellaneous (includes apparels and various other products related to sports) (Fullerton and Merz, 2008).

2.1.1.a) Spectator Sports

Fullerton and Merz (2008) identify spectator sports as those sporting activities which people go to watch by purchasing tickets. Football, cricket and tennis are some of the examples of the recognized spectator sports (Fullerton, 2007). One key marketing objective for any sport marketer across any level of sports is that of selling tickets for the sporting events. However, in the eyes of a sport marketer, individuals who buy tickets to attend a sporting event are equally important as the followers of the sports event through various media. Hence, sports marketers must try to ensure an increased audience of the sporting event using a variety of broadcasting media as well (Fullerton, 2007). This set of various broadcasting media includes television, radio, internet streaming (audio/video), mobile technology and podcasts.
Fullerton (2007) opines that the access to a sporting event should be considered to be a “product” but, access to a sporting event has no value without the on-field competition. Thus in case of Spectator sports, irrespective of a live spectator or a media-based spectator, it is the on-field action that symbolizes the “sports product” (Fullerton and Merz, 2008).

2.1.1.b) Participation Sports

Participation sports include a range of activities that normally may not be considered as sports. Physical activities that are undertaken on a day to day basis by a person are mostly not recognized as sports. The lack of any competitiveness in these activities may be the reason for the existing unwillingness to consider these activities as sports. Individuals who participate in physical activities such as physical exercises at home or at the gym are generally not considered as athletes (Fullerton, 2007). There is yet another set of physical actions that includes highly competitive level of participation by the individuals (e.g. chess, poker, fishing, competitive eating, to name a few) but only the broadest of classifications can classify these activities as sports. However, because of the popularity of games such as darts and billiards various sports networks have begun to telecast events associated with these “sports” (Fullerton, 2007).

In certain cases, the role of a sports marketer is to ensure a steady flow of revenue by attracting a large number of contestants and by increasing the frequency of their participation in specific physical activities. The primary advantage of ensuring this large and frequent participation is that this enhanced participation from the individuals help to generate revenues that are required to maintain various amenities like golf courses, tennis courts and swimming pools. A secondary benefit is that this enhanced participation ensures an increased demand for various sports gears (e.g. golf clubs, tennis racquets) and sports apparels (e.g. swimming costumes) (Fullerton and Merz, 2008).
2.1.1.c) Sports Related Products

The third classification of “sports products” is difficult to comprehend because of its complexity in nature. While the reason behind classifying snowboards, ski-wears and sports shoes as sports goods is easy to understand, the range of this final component of sports goods i.e. Sports-related products is extremely diverse and in some cases no direct relationship exists between such products and the sport itself (Fullerton and Merz, 2008). This category of sports products consists of souvenirs, brochures and magazines; various courses related to sports (e.g. coaching course or refereeing course) and a wide array of products that can be purchased at the venues where the sports event is taking place (e.g. fast food, beverages).

“Sporting goods” consist of physical goods that are specific to a particular sport (e.g. swimming costume for swimming) but these products attract both casual and professional participants thus enhancing these products’ acceptability amongst the sports consumers (Fullerton and Merz, 2008).

One of highest selling Sports good is “Apparel”. Apparel is defined as outfits that can be classified into two categories. The first category of outfits is purchased to facilitate participation. The next element under apparels is sports shoes. While during the earlier times these sports shoes have specially been manufactured for the professional athletes, today leading sports good manufacturers changed that concept and have made it a common household product (Fullerton, 2007). For participants or for athletes, the sports shoe manufacturers continuously innovate and create designs that are suitable for specific activities related to various types of sports. But the widest range of products in sports related product category is “venue-specific products”. The products that fall in this category include official souvenirs available at event venues or any other
outlets, sports magazines which may focus on the world of sports or may emphasize on a specific sport or on a particular team (Fullerton, 2007).

2.1.2 Non-Sports Products

For marketers of non-sports products sports is considered as an alternative platform to promote their offerings. The list of non-sports products that have used sports as the basis for promoting includes automobiles, fast food, consumer durables and all types of beverages. Yet, the debate goes on. The question that whether a beer or any fast food that are sold at a stadium can be considered as a sports product or not remains unanswered (Fullerton, 2007). In the next section a brief review on “sports consumers” or “fan(s)” is presented.

2.1.3 Sports Consumers

Guttmann (1986) defines sports consumers or “fans” as “the emotionally committed consumers of sporting events” (P.6). Fans have been observed to exhibit emotional, behavioral and attitudinal commitment towards the sport (Shank, 2002; Westerbeek and Smith, 2003). Ferrand and Pages (1999) define a “sport consumer” as an individual who uses sport products or services personally. In another study, Redden and Steiner (2000) opine that it is not necessary that all the fans will be passionate about their favorite teams and nor will they allow their identities as fans of a particular team to be used as means of their personal identity. On a similar note, Shank (2005) proposes that not all the fans have full loyalty to their teams and a certain fraction of the fans do not bother about the values or benefits that can be experienced by being closely associated with a team. Stewart et al. (2003) on the basis of their findings opine that sports consumers or fans can be categorized into two groups. The first group of fans prefers to show
attitudinal loyalty towards their favorite team while the second group of fans prefers to show behavioral loyalty by paying money to watch their favorite team play.

From a sport marketer’s perspective, it is absolutely vital to categorize the fans in clear distinctive groups. It is also extremely crucial to identify and target the most effective fan segment to ensure the success of the sport offering. Various categorizations of sport consumers can be seen in the literature. These categorizations have been done on the basis of: a) “Dualistic Approach” i.e. on the basis of the transformations that revolutionized European sports scenario in the 1970’s and 1980’s (Clarke, 1978; Boyle and Haynes, 2000); b) “Tiered Typology” or on the basis of the degree of team association (Wann and Branscombe, 1993; Mullin et al. 1993) and c) “Multidimensional Typology” (a modified version of Tiered Typology) (Holt, 1995; McDonald and Milne, 1997). The following sub-sections give overviews on each of these approaches.

2.1.3.a) Categorization of Fans on the basis of Dualistic Approach: Clarke (1978) categorizes sports consumers or fans into two different categories, namely: a) “genuine fans” or the fans who prefer to get associated with the local team just to have a feeling of togetherness with the local community and b) “the others” or those fans who consider sport as a mean of entertainment. Similar type of categorization of the fans can be seen in the study of Boyle and Haynes (2000) who categorize the fans into “traditional” (a group of fans having a strong sense of passion as well as having knowledge about the history and culture of the British football) and “modern” (a group of fans who consider British football as one of the ways to get entertained) fans. This division of fans into two different categories is known as Dualistic Approach. Other proponents of this school of thought such as Nash (2000) (categorized fans into “core” and “corporate”), Ferrand and Pages (1996) and Quick (2000) (categorized fans into “rational” and “irrational”). In
another study Lewis (2001) categorizes fans as “civic” (i.e. the fans who support a team because of the city to which the team belongs to) and “symbolic” (fans who support the team itself). Hughson (1999) describe the fans as “expressive” and “submissive” fans while Bristow and Sebastian (2001) referred the fans as “die hard” and “less-loyal”.

The major advantage of the categorization done by Lewis (2001), Hughson (1999) and Bristow and Sebastian (2001) indicate that the Dualistic Approach is independent of the type of sport.

2.1.3.b) Categorization of Fans on the basis of Tiered Typology: In a study of the North American fans, Wann and Branscombe (1993) categorize fans on the basis of the degree of relationship with their favorite teams. They call these fans “highly identified” and “lowly identified” fans. Mullin et al. (1993) categorize of fans into “highly committed”, “moderately committed” and “lowly committed”. Kahle et al. (1996) referred the fans as “internalized or highly involved”, “self expressive” and “camaraderies”. Sutton et al. (1997) categorize the sports consumers into different groups namely: a) vested fans; b) focused fans and c) social fans. Vested fans are those fans who have a high feeling of ownership and profound level of emotional attachment with a team; “focused fans” are the fans whose support and association with a team depend on the success of the team while “social fans” are fans who view sport as one of the means to get entertained. Following the path of Sutton et al. (1997), Clowes and Tapp (1999) also categorize sport fans into “fanatics”, “committed casuals” and “carefree casuals”.

The above mentioned studies help the sport marketers to categorize the fans on the basis of various psychological factors and it is up to the sport marketers to decide how to categorize the fans depending upon their product offerings.
2.1.3.c) **Categorization of Fans on the basis of Multidimensional Typologies:** Holt (1995) in his study considers Chicago Cub baseball team as the team to be studied and categorizes fans on the basis of: a) personal experience and the emotional attachment of the individual fans and how experience and emotional attachment affect hedonic and utilitarian behaviors; b) the merger of the team’s identity onto the fans’ identity; c) the way the fans express the relationship with their favorite team in the society and d) the extent of enjoyment a fan can get from a sport experience. McDonald and Milne (1997) in their study use two basic criteria, i.e. lifetime value (high vs. low) to the club and the level of commitment (high vs. low) to categorize the fans into four different groups. They also opine that as a sports marketer, the fans that are high in lifetime value as well as high in commitment should be given the highest priority. Smith and Stewart (1999) propose a five layer classification of fans using the attitudes and behaviors of Australian sports fans. These five categories are: “passionate partisans” (high on both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty and have a high degree of identification with the tradition, history of the team as well as with the current team), “champ followers” (less passionate than the passionate partisans and are committed only when the team performs well), “reclusive partisans” (high in attitudinal loyalty but low in behavioral loyalty), “theatergoers” (behavioral loyalty depends on the various factors such as presence of star players, easy access to transportation, distance of the venue, the opposition team strength to name a few) and “aficionados” (those who are only bothered about the entertainment aspects associated with the match and the tactical and strategic aspects of the game). On a similar note, Mahony et al. (2000) classify sport fans into four categories namely: “truly loyal”, “spuriously loyal”, “latently loyal” and “lowly loyal”.

Hunt et al. (2000) categorize the fans into: “temporary fans” (i.e. the fans who support the team only when the team is performing well), “local fans” (fans who support a team just because the
team is based in their locality), “devoted fans” (a highly committed group of fans), “fanatical fans” (a group of fans who prefer to express their relationship with a team publicly) and “dysfunctional fans”. Dysfunctional fanship is an extreme case of fanship where it reaches the level of fanaticism. This group of fans take the wins and losses of their favorite team personally and even gets involved into unsocial activities to express their anguish (if the team loses) or happiness (if the team wins).

In a study, Funk and James (2001) propose four different levels of psychological commitment that a fan has towards a team. On the basis of the increasing level of commitment these four categories have been graded as: awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance. On similar lines, Gladden and Funk (2002) propose that the sport fans can be categorized on the basis of the level of association they have with their favorite team. These categories are: a) product related attributes of a team (e.g. presence of star players and team logo); b) benefits (e.g. nostalgia) a fan can get by being associated with the team and c) importance of the team in a fan’s life.

The above discussion indicates the importance of identifying the relationship which a fan has with a team he/she supports and suggests that the sport marketers should take proper steps to identify their target customer segment(s). To attract fans proper marketing mix strategies should be made related to the sports products keeping in mind the needs of the target customer group. If this can be achieved, only then a sports marketer will be able to take full advantage of the existing prospects (Fullerton and Merz, 2008).

From a sports marketing perspective, the target customer group happens to be the “fans” who needs to be identified, cultivated and created to provide competitive advantage. In other words, sports marketers should keep in mind that selling a team related product to a sports consumer who is a “fan” of a team is much easier than to sell it to a sports consumer who is not a “fan” of
that particular team. Hence, from a sport marketer perspective, one of the most important jobs is to identify a “fan”. The following section discusses about these sports fans.

2.1.4 Sports Fan
Past studies carried out to understand the behavior of sports fans have identified various reasons behind an individual’s association with a team. The range of reasons is quite wide and includes social benefits such as “self esteem”, a way to distance oneself from monotonous daily routine, entertainment, financial issues, group affiliation, to name a few. However, why a fan decides to support a particular team over another and how this association is formed, still remains unanswered (Reysen and Branscombe, 2010). The following sections indicate a stepwise approach to explore the creation of a “loyal fan” and the first step in that direction is to identify oneself with a team.

2.1.5 Team Identification
Literature related to sports has considered fans as a group. When dealing with the concept of fans’ identification with a team, Reysen and Branscombe (2010) state that a fan’s association with a team and his/her association with the other fans of the team are different. The personal relation between a fan and his/her favorite team has been identified as “fanship” (Wann, 1997) and a fan’s connection with other supporters of the same team has been identified as “fandom” (Branscombe and Wann, 1991a). In other words, Fanship deals with the association with a sports team at an individual level whereas Fandom characterizes the association of a group of individuals (i.e. fans) with a team. Hence, Fanship can be expected to be similar to the concept of “team identification”. Wann (1997) conceptualizes Team Identification as the psychological attachment a fan feels with a particular team. An alternate explanation of the concept of fanship
is given by Hirt et al. (1992) who claim that Fanship is the association with any team which causes great deal of emotional satisfaction in an individual’s mind as well as creates values for that individual. Madrigal (1995) suggests Fanship as an association that provides an individual with significant emotional values.

The concept of Fandom is found to be very similar to the concept of “social identity” (Branscombe and Wann, 1991a). Tajfel (1978) conceptualizes Social Identity as the self actualization of an individual which is generated because of the individual’s membership of a social group. Individuals always try to express themselves to others by means of membership of a social community or group because this membership generates a feeling of togetherness amongst the group members through the exchange of value and emotions (Tajfel, 1978). This tendency finds support in Social Identity Theory (SIT), which suggests individuals try to create their self identity by associating themselves with different social groups. These social identities can be achieved by being a member of a social organization or by getting affiliated to a religious group or on the basis of various demographic factors (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggest that this classification of an individual into different social groups equips the individual with a point of view to classify and differentiate other individuals from himself or herself. This individual will be viewed as having the same set of characteristics that of the social group of which he or she is a member (Tajfel, 1978). He also opines that such type of classification into different social categories helps an individual to create his or her own identity in a social setting.

A well-known way by which the fans achieve social identity is by identifying themselves with teams and individual players. In the context of sports, identification is said to have occurred when an individual reacts at a personal level to the events that happen to a sports team or to a
player (Madrigal, 1995). A highly identified fan will assume himself/herself as an extension of a team or a player and will show similar kinds of attitudes and behaviors. By doing so, these fans will create a perceived image of the team which is very close to his/her own self image (Boen et al., 2008). In certain exceptional circumstances fans may not have a high level of identification with a team or with a player.

Fandom, similar to the concept of membership of a social group, helps an individual to feel a sense of togetherness with other fans. Branscombe and Wann (1991a) identify fandom as a means that allows individuals to be a part of the game without actually actively participating in it. In addition, fandom is found to offer social benefits such as feelings of being one of the society members, as well as providing social status and prestige to a fan (Zillmann et al. 1989). They opine that fandom has the ability to unite individuals from different socio economic backgrounds and provides a sense of togetherness which benefits both the individuals as well as the societal environment. The bottom line is that in order to get more number of fans, sports organizations should be able to promote an “identity” of the team that is beneficial to the fans and also builds the fans’ self-esteem and social identity (Wakefield, 2007).

Interestingly, in many circumstances sport fans are portrayed in a negative manner. Fans have been criticized for being inactive or lethargic (Zillmann et al. 1989) and for getting involved in hooliganism (Levy, 1989) although recent statistics indicate that this trend is waning.

Since the performance of the team affects the egos of the fans, they react psychologically, physiologically and behaviorally in ways to protect their self egos (Boen et al. 2008). This is because of the fan’s identification with a team or Fanship. If the team wins, the fans attribute the team’s success as their own and when it loses, the fans try to justify the loss by making lame
excuses (Wakefield, 2007). He identifies seven major factors behind identification of a fan with a team. These factors are:

2.1.5.a) Attractiveness of players in the team: The fans may get attracted towards a team due to the players’ success and/or similarity of some kind between the player(s) and themselves. When the team performs poorly, the presence of star players in the team offer a basis by which the fans can identify with the team and still protect their self-esteem.

2.1.5.b) Success: Success of a team or an individual player normally attracts fans and vice versa.

2.1.5.c) Personal contact: If a fan is an acquaintance of a professional player at a personal level, he/she may continue to follow that player and his team. The more familiar a fan becomes with the player, the higher will be the chances that the fan will want to watch the player on TV or attend a game featuring that player. However, the reverse is also true. One can think of some players who have been successful in competition but are unattractive in some other way. Presence of these individuals may reduce identification with the team among the fans who value positive traits such as fair play and integrity with the team.

2.1.5.d) Similarity: Individuals find those who are similar to them as attractive (Byrne and Nelson, 1965). The same holds true in case of sports fans also. The fans prefer to associate themselves with a team which has some kind of similarity with their own characteristics.

2.1.5.e) Social Acceptance: Social acceptance gets derived basically from three sources i.e. family, friends and the local community (i.e. the city, state and national level) (Wakefield, 2007). Smaller sports teams often try to improve community acceptance by fulfilling the entertainment needs of the local community. One of the major reasons why every sports organization invests so much in facilities is that people like to go to places where they feel comfortable and happy. If a sports facility or venue gets a bad reputation as being “unfriendly” to the fans it may have a
negative impact on the image of the sports organization. Views related to social acceptability are also linked with the level of perceived ownership of the team the fans have.

2.1.5.f) Variety Seeking: While attractiveness and social acceptance are means to boost fan’s identification with a team, variety seeking behaviors have a negative impact on identification with the team. “Variety seekers” may be present at a game because of various reasons (e.g. to pass time or to experience something new). These variety seeking fans may go to the game once never to return again for the remainder of the season.

2.1.5.g) Involvement with the sport: In the context of sports, the fans may either follow the sport from a long time (enduring involvement) or may get involved on a situational basis during a particular event. Enduring involvement is basically the involvement with a particular sport on a regular basis and,

2.1.5.h) Performance and style of play: Performance from a team most of the time ensures an increased attendance in the stadium. But it is to be kept in mind that it is the fans’ perceived performance (and not the actual performance) that is found to influence attendance. Sport marketers have the ability to influence this perception by using the feats and performances of individual players, isolated successes (e.g., winning derby matches versus its bitterest rival) or by changing the reference point from a teams’ poor performance to some other attributes on which the team is performing satisfactorily.

Teams have standardized team colors, home grounds and distinguishable symbols. These symbols equip them with unique identities through which intensive association with a society occurs (Merz and Fullerton, 2005). Hence it can be argued that teams build team identification by acquiring, retaining and featuring attractive players and by maintaining similar characteristics with their fan base. A team with which fans can identify strongly will create a set of highly identified fans.
Highly identified fans are likely to get involved into “Basking in Reflected Glory” (BIRG) activities (Cialdini et al. 1976). The desire of the supporters to get associated with a successful sports team and making this association public is known as BIRG. Cialdini et al. (1976) find out that people like to get involved into activities that help them to get associated with a successful entity. Fans of a successful team perceive that supporters of other teams will view them as more successful because of their association with a successful entity (Balance Theory; Heider, 1958).

Ortony et al. (1988) demonstrate that successful (unsuccessful) behavior of a group reinforces positive (negative) emotions in the minds of the people who associate themselves with the group. Since people are keener on experiencing positive rather than negative emotions, they tend to get associated with groups which are more successful. Madrigal (1995) conceptualizes BIRG as a transient affective state specific to a sporting event. He shows that even though BIRG and enjoyment both represented of positive affection, they are not identical as BIRG is associated more with pride. On a similar line of BIRG, Snyder et al. (1986) propose a new concept known as Cutting Off Reflected Failure (CORF). They propose that because people value success more than failure, it’s a natural tendency for them to create a distance between themselves and the unsuccessful entities/groups. Thus, individuals try to get associated with successful groups so that they can BIRG and try to create a distance between themselves and the unsuccessful groups so that they can experience CORF and protect the damage to their images which can occur with their association with an unsuccessful group/entity. Disposition Theory of Sports Fanship proposed by Zillman et al. (1989), claims that people also get involved in BIRG when their hated rivals face failure.

Past literature suggests that team performance is not the only criteria of supporters getting involved in BIRG or CORF (Madrigal, 1995; Wann and Branscombe, 1990). Wann and
Branscombe (1990) propose that the level of identification of the supporters with the team acts as a moderating variable to the reactions of spectators towards winning and losing and hence impacted the BIRG and CORF behaviors as well. As per the modified version of the Social Identity Theory (Hogg et al., 1995) individuals tend to get attached with some groups or associations to create an identity for themselves in the society so that they can share the success and failures of that group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Similarly in case of a die-hard fan, the team becomes a part of one’s extended self (Belk, 1988) and the fan defines his or her identity in relation to the team itself.

From the perspective of Fandom, Kahle et al. (1996) opine that attending a sports event does not depend solely on supporting a team rather it is primarily motivated by one’s eagerness to experience the atmosphere of the arena, to internalize the experience and the desire for feeling togetherness with a group. On the similar lines, Fisher and Wakefield (1998) propose that similarity and the shared values between a team and its supporters play a big role in making a certain team more attractive to the supporters than others regardless of its performance on the field.

Funk and James (2004) propose that the internalization of a (sport) identity equals the examination of attitude development based on the property ‘importance’. Hence, sport identity corresponds to an individual’s internalization of a particular social group into the self-concept. This ‘internalization process’ is guided by the interplay of dispositional needs, which represent a person’s motives “that directly influence the adoption of a particular Sport Identity” (Funk and James, 2004, p.7) and the emergence/presence of endearing features. Rooney (1975) identifies geographic proximity as one of the features that is said to influence the decision whether dispositional needs could be satisfied or not. If sport identity satisfies these dispositional needs
now, the person sets his/her responses in relation to sport identity due to the integration into the self-concept. Consequently, and as finally argued by Funk and James (2004), “the more importance an individual places on his/her sport identity, the more likely subsequent evaluations and responses elicited by the team will persist over time, resist counter information and preference for alternative teams, bias the types of thoughts generated about the team, and be more consistent with past behavior and behavioral intent” (p.8).

Identifying oneself with a team is the first step of developing Team Brand Loyalty. In fact it is one of the most important antecedents of Team Brand Loyalty. The next section puts forward literature in the area of Team Brand Loyalty.

2.1.6 Developing Team Brand Loyalty

To understand the concept of Team Brand Loyalty it is important to understand what Brand Loyalty is. Brand loyalty has been defined as: “(1) The biased (i.e., non random), (2) behavioral response (i.e., purchase), (3) expressed over time, (4) by some decision making unit, (5) with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (6) is a function of psychological (decision making, evaluative) processes.” (Jacoby and Kyner, 1973, p. 2). Brand loyalty has two aspects, namely: “attitudinal loyalty” and “behavioral loyalty” (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; East et al. 2005). While attitudinal loyalty is considered as the emotional facet of loyalty and includes actions such as recommending a brand; behavioral loyalty has been classified as a set of actions which can be observed and includes actions such as repeat purchase behavior (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; East et al. 2005).

Marketing literature considers loyalty as one of the crucial constructs in its domain. Solomon (1992) provides the notion that loyal consumers find it much easier to make a purchase decision
in comparison to consumers who are not loyal to any particular brand. Uncles and Dowling (1998) put forward loyalty as one of the major reasons why consumers prefer not to opt for an extensive search for alternatives and go for repeat purchase of the same brand. This may be due to getting habituated with a particular brand and/or having a feeling of satisfaction with the brand a consumer uses. Dekampe et al. (1997) indicate the benefits of having loyal customers to any firm. They opine that having loyal customers ensures a reduced promotional budget hence providing additional budget for other areas. Apart from this, Dekampe et al. (1997) also point out the additional benefits a firm can have by having a loyal customer base. These benefits include wide acceptance of brand extension and diversification. Additionally, loyal customers can be considered as an asset to a firm and has been found to play a crucial role to create brand equity (Dekampe et al. 1997).

A debate between researchers such as Jacoby (1975), Jacoby and Kyner (1973) and Tarpey (1974, 1975) broke out regarding the definition of brand loyalty. In the common parlance brand loyalty is divided into behavioral and attitudinal components (Jacoby, 1971; Mellens et al., 1996; Javalgi and Moberg, 1997). Researchers till date have not been able to come to a consensus on measuring the construct and have provided different opinions (e.g. Baldinger and Rubinson, 1996, 1997; Ehrenberg, 1997a, 1997b; Farr and Hollis, 1997). Measuring loyalty differs on the basis of the product categories. This difference is because of the diversity of consumers on issues such as purchase frequency, importance of the product category in the consumer’s life, decision makers, purchase intentions of the consumers, perceived risk associated with brand switching behavior, the extents of habituation and satisfaction one gets with the usage of the brand and finally the emotional involvement with the brand.
2.1.6.1) **Classifying brand loyalty measures**

In product and services markets brand loyalty can be classified into three categories: “FMCG”, “consumer durables” and “services”. In the context of this study, the closest match of sports goods are consumable goods and services. The next section provides literature on brand loyalty pertaining to these two product categories.

**a) Brand Loyalty towards Consumable Goods**

Literature is replete with examples of brand loyalty in the consumable goods market. There is no dearth of research to identify the sources of brand loyalty and to point out the most efficient means to create loyalty in the consumable goods market (Cunningham, 1956; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978; Tranberg and Hansen, 1986). In these studies the focus is mostly on have on behavioral loyalty and not on attitudinal loyalty (Ehrenberg, 1988; East, 1997).

A unique feature of consumable goods markets relates to loyalty towards multiple brands (East, 1997) exhibited in terms of: a) variety seeking behavior (Currim and Schneider, 1991; East, 1997), b) influence of sales promotion on purchase decisions (Blattberg and Neslin, 1989; East, 1997; Chandon, 1995), c) non-availability of the desired brand (East, 1997; Chandon, 1995), d) varying purchase motive (for personal use or for family use or for gifting purpose) (East, 1997), e) less search cost to identify alternatives (Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968) and f) unavailability of required volume package for their preferred brand (especially for low volume) (Kotler, 2000).

East (1997) is of the opinion that in consumable goods market, behavioral loyalty is predominant because the consumers have to make low involvement purchase decisions.

Similar types of behaviors are observed in case of sports consumers as well (Bauer et al. 2008; Gladden and Funk, 2001). Brand loyalty in the context of sports is defined as: “enduring allegiance to a particular team” (Wakefield and Sloan, 1995). Gladden and Funk (2001) identify
that fans of a particular team on the basis of different sub-dimensions of brand association such as identification with the team and nostalgia to name a few. Once this association between a team and a fan is established, the fan’s likelihood to purchase any consumable good linked with the team he/she supports, increases (Gladden and Funk, 2001; Bauer et al. 2008). On the other hand, non loyal fans or the fair weather fans portray brand switching behaviors (Snyder et al., 1986).

**b) Brand Loyalty towards Service Brands**

Though there exist a number of studies that have dealt with brand loyalty in consumable goods market, not many studies exist on Brand Loyalty in the services market (Javalgi and Moberg, 1997).

The risks associated with service markets have forced the consumers to display more brand loyalty (Javalgi and Moberg, 1997). The outcome of their study only consolidates our belief of higher perceived risk associated with their loyalty towards a brand (Bauer, 1960; Cunningham, 1956; Roselius, 1971; Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968). Building a relationship of association and trust with the customers is a major challenge for service providers (Caldow, 1998). But once this relationship has been established, the consumers are most likely to remain loyal with the service provider. The complexity associated with assessing the service quality makes consumers less prone to brand switching and makes them loyal to a service brand which is familiar to them (Javalgi and Moberg, 1997). Rundle-Thiele (1999) opines brand loyalty as a lack of interest on the consumer front to explore new things. The role of satisfaction to create loyalty towards a brand is extremely crucial (Gremler and Brown, 1998; Dick and Basu, 1994) and plays a major role in influencing the re-purchase decisions of a service.
Loyalty towards a service can be observed in the context of sports marketing as well. As the findings of Gladden and Funk (2001) suggest, intangible factors associated with a team brand such as the nostalgia associated with a team, the arena where the team plays, the style of play a team follows as well as the tradition of the team play major roles in creating loyalty towards the team. Other hedonic benefits a fan may get by being associated with a team include a social identity and pride of being associated with the team.

2.1.6.2) Consequences of Brand Loyalty

Business firms consider loyal customers as an assured source of revenue. It is therefore beneficial to achieve complete customer satisfaction. It is a common psychological tendency for people not to switch brands when they are satisfied with the brand they are using to avoid any kind of dissatisfaction or risk associated with the switching of brands. The more is the number of loyal customers more is the competitive advantage a brand has over its competitors. A set of loyal customers also play a crucial role to improve the brand equity and make the brand a stronger one (Brodie et al. 2006). Kotler (2003) points out another importance of having loyal customers. He opines that the retention cost of an old customer is significantly lower than the costs associated with attracting a new customer. He also proposes that these loyal customers actively participate in spreading positive WOM about the brands and hence perform as a promotional tool to acquire new customers, and that too without any cost to the firm. Jacoby and Kyner (1973) have identified repeat purchase behavior or Purchase Intention as a vital consequence of Brand Loyalty. Hence, it can be expected that revisit intentions to a stadium or purchase of official merchandise will also be influenced by Team Brand Loyalty. Linton (1993) identifies the non economic benefits associated with a group of loyal customers. He points out
that active participation from the customer’s front help the firms to improve their long term performance via customer feedbacks, influence and provide various product development and innovation ideas. It can be expected that by taking care of the above mentioned issues a firm will be able to satisfy its existing customers. In another study, Reichheld (1996) identifies the economic benefits associated with brand loyalty as: a) savings in costs related to acquisition of new customers and replacement of old customers, b) assured source of revenue generation, c) free of cost promotional activities via positive WOM behavior and d) opportunity to extract price premiums from these loyal customers. Sports marketing also shows similar trends. Bristow and Sebastian (2001) in their study on the fans of Chicago Cubs baseball team identifies similar effects of loyalty towards a team on re-purchase and revisit intentions, WOM activities and creation of nostalgia amongst the fans.

Wakefield and Sloan (1995) define “team loyalty” as: “enduring allegiance to a particular team”. They identified this loyalty towards a team as the single most crucial aspect in determining fans’ intentions to purchase tickets to visit the stadium to watch their favorite team play. According to James et al. (2002) loyal fans are those individuals who will follow the team over the next few years. This loyalty is expected to influence the repeat patronage behavior by the fans; thus indicating the importance of loyal fans has for the sports teams to achieve their financial targets. Funk and James (2001) have shown that the loyal fans also get involved with the team from psychologically resulting in a consistent behaviors and positive attitude towards the team.

Literature in sports marketing has taken the help of various brand related constructs to explain how Team Brand Loyalty can be created. The following sections present brief overview of the literature on Brand Image, Brand Association, Image Congruency and Brand Love; which influence the creation of Team Brand Loyalty.
2.2 Brand Related Constructs Influencing Team Brand Loyalty

2.2.1 Brand Image

Gardner and Levy (1955) are the first to propose the term “brand image”. They explain brand image as the emotional bonds consumers build with a brand as well as the attitudes consumers show towards a brand. In other words Gardner and Levy (1955) define brand image as the perception or “image” consumers have in their minds about a brand. These brand images play important roles to influence consumers’ purchase decisions. Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) after a detailed review of literature identify that brand image does not have a generalized definition and it has been presented by different ways in different studies. Brand image has been viewed from different perspectives and has been defined distinctly by various researchers. Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) opine that there exist considerable differences in the opinions of various researchers on five different but interrelated features of “brand image”. These different facets of brand image include: a) the different names by which this phenomenon is known, b) the formal definitions offered by these authors, c) the constituents which help to create brand image, d) the instruments to measure “brand image” and e) the views on brand image related to the source of origin along with the creation and formulation of it. Dobni and Zinkahn (1990) classify the various definitions of brand image into five broad categories on the basis of the recent developments as well as on the different approaches. The categories they propose are classified as: a) blanket definitions (Herzog 1963; Newman, 1957), b) definitions which emphasize symbolism (Levy, 1958; Frazer, 1983), c) definitions which focus on meanings or messages (Durgee and Stuart, 1987; Sommers, 1963), d) definitions which personify a brand (Sirgy, 1985; Hendon and Williams, 1985) and e) definitions focusing on cognitive or psychological dimensions (Gardner and Levy, 1955; Bullmore, 1984). Literature indicates the truth of Dobni and Zinkhan’s (1990) opinion as brand
image has been found to be measured as: “symbolic utility” (Pohlman and Mudd, 1973), “the symbols by which we buy” (Levy, 1958) and “perceived product symbolism” (Sommers, 1963). Some of the researchers even try to compare brands with human beings and try to find similarities between human personality and brand image, thus measuring brand image as “brand personality” (Hendon and Williams, 1985), “brand character” (Hendon and Williams, 1985), “personality image” (Sirgy, 1985) and “the social and psychological nature of products” (Gardner and Levy, 1955). The debate surrounding the definition of brand image still continues. Neal and Strauss (2008) define brand image in the context of sports as: “an organisation’s promise and its ability to deliver this promise over time in the minds of the consumer.” Farquhar (1989) proposes a brand as a status symbol for the consumers to express their core values in the eyes of the society. In other words, consumers perceive these brands as individuals with specific personality characteristics which help the consumers to express their own personalities through these brands (Guzman and Paswan, 2009, Davies, et al. 2001).

Davies et al. (2001) in their study used experimental design to explore the influence of characterization of a brand as a human being on brand image. The results indicate that the responses do not have significant differences across the brand personality dimensions proposed by Aaker in 1997 (i.e. sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness). On similar lines, Guzman and Paswan (2009) in the US context study the effect of culture on the brand image of local brands. With the help of two samples- a) Mexicans based in Dallas and b) Mexicans based in Mexico City; Guzman and Paswan (2009) were able to show that human traits associated with TV ads have a greater influence on the creation of brand image amongst the Mexicans living in USA compared to Mexicans living in their own country. This result shows that the brands which help the consumers feel and express their true identities are preferred over
other brands. The closer one can identify with a brand, higher is the congruency between the individual and the brand. Image congruency thus has the ability to influence brand association.

### 2.2.2 Image Congruency

The concept of congruency originates from Psychology (Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955). Image congruency proposes that the attitude of a recipient becomes more favorable to the sender when a perceived similarity between the sender and the message exists. In the context of marketing ‘Congruence’ signifies the similarity or closeness between two (or more) entities. In an empirical study, Dolich (1969) observes that brand choice is significantly influenced by the self image-brand image congruency of the consumers. She identifies image congruency as one of the vital reasons behind rejection of a particular brand. Congruence between two entities can be observed in various ways (Fleck and Maille, 2010). Congruency can take place through: brand alliance, celebrity endorsements, sponsorship deals, brand extensions, product placements in movies, to name a few. Perceived congruence between two or more entities and the impact congruence can have on human psychology have been studied at great length and is considered as one of the most crucial area of research in the fields of psychology and consumer behavior (Loken, 2006). Perceived congruence has been found to influence brand recall (Misra and Beatty, 1990) and brand attitudes (Mittelstaedt et al. 2000) in a positive way.

While conducting a study on the sports sponsorship issues Close et al. (2006) opine that the knowledge about the advertised product, the image congruency between the advertised product and the event and the enthusiasm a consumer has for the sporting event, all play significant roles to influence a fan’s attitude towards the sponsoring brand. Additionally, these factors also have the ability to create and to manipulate the sponsor’s image in the minds of the fans. The results
of the study indicate that the involvement with a brand at an emotional level has the ability to influence the association between a consumer and a brand. It can be expected that the brand association between a fan and a team he or she supports is enhanced when Image Congruency takes place. In another study Kwak and Kang (2008) prove the influence of Image Congruency on the creation of Team Brand Loyalty.

2.2.3 Brand Association

Keller (1993) defines brand association as “the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand to the consumers” (p. 3). To restate, a consumer’s perception regarding the strength of emotional bond he/she shares with a brand determines the level of association of the consumer with the brand. Keller (1993) opines that these consumer-brand emotional bonds get influenced by the past experiences about the brand, the attributes of the actual product, availability and transparency of price related issues, positioning of the brand, quality packaging the WOM activities undertaken by the regular users and the occasion of product usage. Keller (1998) redefines brand association as: “information related to the brand in the consumer’s memory containing the meaning of the brand.” He identifies brand association as a consequence of brand image. Aaker (1991) has also identified brand association as an important tool to marketers. He proposes that while marketers use brand association as a weapon to achieve competitive advantage over competitions and to create positive feelings and vibes about their own brands. Keller (1998) proposes brand association to be the consequence of brand image.

Rio et al.’s (2001) study in the context of Spanish shoe market investigates whether and how positive Word of Mouth (WOM) behaviour and brand loyalty get influenced by brand
association. The results of their study indicate the role brand association plays to influence the WOM behaviour and brand loyalty of the fans. In another study Low and Lamb Jr. (2000) successfully propose and validate a theoretical model of brand association where they identify brand image, attitude towards a brand and the consumers’ perception of the quality of a brand as the probable components that create brand association. To put differently, Low and Lamb Jr. (2000)’s study supports Keller (1998)’s findings.

Since the dawn of 21st century sports marketers have realized the importance of investing in brands to create favorable Team Brand Image in order to build strong associations with fans. However, the methods in which Team Brand Associations are identified and measured are very much in their infancy. From a sports team perspective the need to create a positive Team Brand Image and Team Brand Association is very important (Gladden and Funk, 2002). Literature relevant to relationship between brand association and brand image suggests that brand image helps in the creation of brand association (Faircloth et al. 2001). When consumers perceive a brand in a specific way, an image of the brand is created. Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995) opine that consumers form perceptions about the tangible and intangible aspects of a brand through various information sources such as advertising and personal experience. These perceptions create an image about the brand in the minds of the consumers. These images, in turn reinstate the association between the brand and the consumers. Given the importance of this relationship, a more complete understanding of Team Brand Association can contribute to the enhancement of the awareness and revenues of a team. More specifically, if a sport marketer is able to identify the kind of association(s) the fans have with the team, then marketing activities can be controlled and manipulated more efficiently to create favorable brand images and to control the brand associations that already exist between a fan and the team.
Aaker (1991) opines that anything related to a brand that gets registered in a consumer’s mind can be considered as Brand Association. The brand related information that gets registered in a consumer’s mind over a period of time helps to slowly create an image about the brands, in other words the Brand Image gets created (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). In case of team sports a range of associations can be formed. These associations include: association with the team, association with the home venue of the team, association with certain players in the team and in some extreme cases association with the local community. Most of these associations are intangible and needs to be experienced in person (Mullin et al. 2000). Historically it has been found that while some fans are very keen on social experience, other fans are more interested in the actual on-field game related activities. Therefore, it is absolutely vital for sports marketers to identify and comprehend the type of fans they are targeting as well as the type of associations the selected set of fans possess while consuming a sports product.

If a sports marketer is able to comprehend the means of creating brand association, then it becomes easier to create new promotional strategies so that a strong association between the sports brand and the new fans is created. Additionally this helps to enhance the association between the existing fans and the sports brand.

Gladden and Funk’s (2001) study is a pioneering work which explores the role of Brand Association in the context of team sport. Aaker (1991) proposes that the presence of Brand Association is mandatory and it is not the presence but the strength of this relationship that is of importance. Keller (1993) supports the findings of Aaker (1991) and proposes that Brand Associations include degrees of favorability and distinctiveness. This analogy can easily be transferred to the context of sport. Bauer et al. (2008) gives the example of the Dallas Cowboys

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1 Dallas Cowboys is a franchise in National Football League (NFL), USA. It was established in the year 1960 and is considered as one of the most popular franchises in NFL.
to show the validity of Aaker’s (1991) analogy that the strength of the relationship is what matters. Dallas Cowboys have done well in developing strong and unique associations with their fans by projecting themselves as “America's Team”. This image was projected during the 70’s and 80’s when the team consisted of players who were well-admired and who played the game in a fair way and won championships as well. This brand image has helped Dallas Cowboys to gain a fan following across USA and also has ensured a strong association with its fans. However, with the recent decline in the moral principles amongst the Dallas Cowboys players lead to filing of charges against them for breaking the law, it has been observed that the association between the Dallas Cowboys and its fans has diminished (Bauer et al., 2008).

Keller (1993) suggests three different forms of brand associations, namely: “attributes, benefits and attitudes”. Taking cue from Keller’s (1993) work and after undergoing an extensive review of literature, Gladden and Funk (2001) have been successful in differentiating the different dimensions of brand association in the context of sports. Gladden and Funk (2001) give a detailed impression of the three types of associations as proposed by Keller (1993) in the context of sports and then identify the appropriate association dimensions related to sports that are most applicable.

2.2.3.1) Attributes: Keller (1993) defines attributes as “the physical features associated with a particular brand”. Gladden and Funk (2001) opine that the same holds true in case of sports consumers or fans also. They propose that a fan may decide to purchase season ticket for an array of reasons including presence of a star player/players in the team or because of excellent performances by the team he/she supports or because of the satisfaction one gets by visiting the playing arena. Gladden and Funk (2001) also propose that the players in a team, the team success and the home venue, all represent various sub-categories of a team and each of these sub-
categories can be considered as the features of a “sport product”. Keller (1993) further categorizes attributes of any product into two sub-categories:

2.2.3.1.a) Product related - factors that are crucial to fulfill the activities expected by consumers from a product;

2.2.3.1.b) Non-product related - factors that have an effect on consumption but do not directly impact the overall performance of a product.

With the help of the above categorization, Gladden and Funk (2001) have been able to distinguish “product-related” and “non-product-related” attributes of a sports team successfully. While they identify recent on-field success of the team, the crowd pulling capacity of the star athletes present in the team and the team management as the features of “product-related attributes”; the team's logo, the home venue, the quality of the sport product on the whole (which includes the promotional aspects as well) and the team history and tradition have been categorized as the “non-product related” attributes.

2.2.3.2) Benefits: Keller (1993) identifies that in comparison to the physical characteristics of attributes, benefits represent the emotional importance and significance consumers associate with a product. He also proposes that benefits can alternatively be viewed as means to satisfy consumption motives of consumers. This outcome finds support in the context of sports also. Wann (1995) observes that a fan may decide to buy apparel with a particular team's logo with an intention to feel associated with that team and also to get socially accepted as a fan of the team he supports. Hence, it can be expected that the capacity of a team to offer a social identity to a fan represents a kind of benefit which is normally put forward by any social entity to its members. This capacity of a team to provide a social identity helps the fans with an opportunity
to break away from the stressful daily routine (Smith, 1988). Finally, a fan may decide to support a team because of some nostalgia one can associate with the team (Holbrook, 1993). This benefit helps the fans to relive feelings of happiness and joy by associating with the team. Park et al. (1986) identify three forms of benefits:

2.2.3.2.a) Functional – This fulfills the need of basic motivational issues such as unraveling and/or evading the problems one may face;

2.2.3.2.b) Symbolic – This fulfills the need of social acceptance and self-ego maintenance and

2.2.3.2.c) Experiential – This provides symbolic meaning towards a product or service (i.e. hedonism).

Taking a cue from Park et al. (1986)’s study, Gladden and Funk (2001) relate the typology to a sports context. They identify the ability of a sports team to offer a brief getaway from the daily routine as “functional” benefit. Gladden and Funk (2001) have been successful in identifying two “symbolic” benefits related to a sports team. In terms of Symbolic benefits a team can provide a fan a social identity and an affiliation to some successful societal entity. Second, acceptability by the members of a desirable group as a fan of a particular team has also been perceived as a symbolic benefit. In the final benefit form, the ability of a team to make fans nostalgic and to make a community proud is viewed as “experiential” benefits.

2.2.3.2.d) Attitudes: Consumer researchers have found the nature of consumer “attitude” to be very abstract in nature. In the brand management domain Attitude has been defined as the “consumer's overall evaluation of the brand” and is found to depend on the strength of the features and advantages associated with a brand (Keller, 1998). In the context of sports, Funk and Pastore (2000) observe similar behavior amongst fans and tend to associate with the teams which the fans consider as one of the crucial parts of their lives.
Recent literature in sports marketing suggests that loyal fans possess very powerful and positive attitudes toward the teams they support (Funk et al. 2000) and the magnitude of awareness a fan possesses about a sports team also acts as an indicator of their attitude towards that team. A sport fan who keeps himself/herself updated with all the information related to his/her favorite team and/or team’s players on a regular basis will be considered as a fan with a very high and significant attitude towards that team (Funk et al. 2000). This positive attitude will lead to some emotional feelings (such as love or passion) towards a team. In the next section a brief description of literature related to the construct of Brand Love is presented.

2.2.4 Brand Love

According to Blau’s (1964) Social Exchange Theory ‘love’ is a development process which requires a “balanced degree of mutual and consistent exchange of rewards between two partners”. Foa and Foa’s (1980) Resource Theory considers ‘love’ as one of the six resources that gets exchanged in a social relationship. Foa and Foa (1980) identify these six resources as “love”, “status”, “information”, “money”, “goods” and “services”. Rubin (1970) proposes that loving relationships are characterized by two aspects i.e. ‘loving’ and ‘liking’. He defines love “as an attitude held by a person toward a particular other person, involving predispositions to think, feel, and behave in certain ways toward that other person” (p.265) and proposed “love” as a combination of: affiliate and dependent need, helping tendency, exclusiveness and inclusion. Rubin (1970) also proposes that “liking” consists of the following factors: favorable evaluation, respect and perception of similarity. Fehr (1994) considers that Rubin (1970) primarily
dichotomized love into ‘romantic love’ and ‘friendship’ but Sternberg (1986) emphasizes that Rubin’s (1970) theory doesn’t highlight the romantic love between partners.

Berscheid and Walster (1974) and Hatfield and Walster (1978) propose an approach to conceptualize love in terms of romantic and passionate loves which consists of physical as well as the psychological arousal along with the relevant cognitive signals. In another study Walster and Walster (1978) propose two types of love, namely: “passionate love” and “companionate love”. Passionate love always evolves into the latter in a continuing close relationship: passionate love (intense emotion, tenderness and sexuality) and companionate love (friendly affection and deep attachment).

Sternberg and Grajek (1984) argue in favor of the presence of a “general factor” associated with love that is observed across the various types of “love” relationships e.g. romantic relationship, familial relationship and friendly relationship. They also highlight that even though the different love experiences may seem to be quite similar, these experiences can be very different.

Kelley (1983) introduces a model of “pragmatic love” distinguishing it from “passionate love” (Berscheid and Walster, 1978) and “altruistic love” (Clark and Mills, 1979). Kelly (1983) argues that “pragmatic love” focuses on the trust between two objects and also depends on the level of tolerance the objects have towards each other. She also argues that this type of love gets developed with better forethought and discipline as compared to the other types of love. Kelley (1983, p. 186) states that “love is typically a blend of the different forms described by the preceding models”. He identifies four constituents of love and proposes them as: “needing”, “caring”, “trust” and “tolerance”. Despite the presence of such a huge literature on love, a comprehensive model relating and integrating the different forms of love does not exist. Though
most of the research related to “love” has taken place in US context, Beall and Sternberg (1995) and Deschamps et al. (1997) not only found out that culture has an impact on the way people conceptualize the construct “love” but also identified that its dimensions differ across different cultures.

The term “love” has found a wide application in the marketing literature over the years. While extending the Resource Exchange Theory (Foa and Foa 1980), Brinberg and Wood (1983) put forward six resource categories which consist of “love”, “status”, “information”, “money”, “goods” and “services”. On a similar line, a framework has been proposed by Fournier (1998) to explore the relationship between the brands and the consumers. This framework has identified different categories of relationship between a brand and its consumers. Fournier (1998) christens these different types of relationships as: “love” or “passion”, “commitment” and “intimacy”. A similar categorization of interpersonal love can be seen in Sternberg (1987)’s paper which is popularly known as Triangular Theory of Interpersonal Love.

Concepts similar to “love” such as “individual self-expression” (McCracken, 1986) and “identity development” (Kleine et al., 1995) have also been the focus of marketing literature. These relationships based constructs have been found to play important roles to generate emotional connection between a consumer and an entity. An ethnographic study on the customers of Harley-Davidson bikes (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995) and on the ardent viewers of Star Trek, a popular TV series of yesteryears (Kozinets, 2001) have given the concept of “brand communities” (McAlexander et al., 2002). Brand community refers to a group of consumers “based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (Muniz Jr. and O’Guinn, 2001, p. 412). These aforementioned as well as various other studies have tried to
investigate consumption phenomena from the consumers perspective which may be influenced by “being in love” with a product or a brand.

Whang et al. (2004) identify that although the above mentioned studies tried to investigate how a romantic relationship between a product/brand and its consumers can be formed, none of the studies have tried to find the applicability of the theories related to interpersonal love on a one directional love e.g. love towards a brand/product. Past literature in the field of psychology dealing with the interpersonal romantic relationships have put forward different theories explaining the various types of love and have proposed a diversified range of scales to empirically test these theories. There are broadly five theories related to brand love, namely: “Love Attitude Scale” (Lee, 1977), “Relationship Rating Form” (Davis and Todd, 1982, 1985), “Triangular Theory of Love” (Sternberg, 1986), “Passionate Love Scale” (Hatfield and Sprecher, 1986) and “Attachment Styles” (Shaver and Hazan, 1987; Hazan and Shaver, 1987).

As is visible from the above discussion, most of the research in the area of love has dealt with interpersonal love. It is only at the dawn of the 21st century that researchers decided to explore the concept of “brand love”. The concept of “brand love” advocates that love may exist from the consumers’ point of view towards a possession or a product. Albert et al. (2008) are of the view that the relationship between a consumer and a brand/product is largely uni-directional in nature as compared to inter personal relationships which are bi-directional in nature. This bi-directionality is a bit far-fetched as per the authors in the context of brands. Supporting Albert et al. (2008)’s view, Batra et al. (2012) contend that brand love is not similar to interpersonal love because: a) brand love is uni-directional in nature compared to interpersonal love which is reciprocal in nature and b) unlike brand love, which is only of one type, interpersonal love can be categorized into different types of love depending upon various aspects of psychology (e.g.
intimacy, infatuation, compassion). Batra et al. (2012) also opine that interpersonal love is “philanthropic” in nature (as suggested by Lee, 1977) which is not the case for brand love. Consumers are expected to fall in love with a particular brand because they get the benefits they are concerned about out of that brand.

Whang et al. (2004) opine that the brand love is nothing but an interpersonal love with a brand that people are passionate about, possessive and selfless in nature. They also propose that except “passion”, the other two components of brand love i.e. “commitment” and “intimacy” do not have any impact on the creation of brand loyalty. Walsh (1991) contends that “falling in love is something that happens to us, not something we make happen” (p.186), indicating that the marketers by themselves cannot persuade the customers to get involved in a romantic relationship with products. Simultaneously, established theories in psychology explaining bi-directional love provide an understanding about the creation of strong interpersonal relationships of romantic nature (Sternberg, 1987).

The earlier paragraphs covered the basic differences between interpersonal love and brand love but an important facet in this domain is the creation of love. These facets are described in brief in the following sub-sections.

2.2.4.a) Feeling of Love

Aron and Aron (1986) propose love as an emotional phenomenon. They propose that when two people are in love, those two people: a) extend themselves and include the other person within himself/herself and b) seek situations and opportunities when they can express their feelings to each other. They therefore define love as: “the constellation of behaviors, cognitions and emotions associated with the desire to enter or maintain a close relationship with a specific other person.” They further add that love should not necessarily be romantic in nature and could well
be amongst family members, friends, etc. Rubin (1970) and Sternberg (1986) on the other hand view love in a different perspective and opine that love is nothing but an improved and more closely knit form of friendship. While Rubin (1970) defines love as: “an attitude held by a person toward a particular other person, involving pre-dispositions to think, feel and behave in certain ways toward that other person,” Sternberg’s (1986) Triangular Theory of Love preaches love as a combination of three components namely: “passion”, “intimacy” and “decision/commitment”. Sternberg (1986) proposes that the combination of these three components of love give rise to eight types of love (e.g. “non-love”, “liking”, “infatuated love”, “empty love”, “romantic love”, “companionate love”, “fatuous love” and “consummate love”). This Triangular Theory of Love finds support in the study undertaken by Aron and Westbay in 1996.

2.2.4.b) Feeling of Love towards an Object

To find out the love towards objects, Shimp and Madden (1988) presents a modified version of the Triangular Theory of Love proposed by Sternberg (1986) and also put forward a conceptual model of “consumer-object relationships” where they replace the first two original components of interpersonal love (i.e. intimacy and passion) by “liking” and “yearning” while not making any changes in the “commitment” component. Ahuvia (1993), after testing the model proposed by Shimp and Madden (1988) opines that when the intensity of association and desire for a particular object achieves a certain threshold level, an individual may feel a sense of love towards that product.

2.2.4.c) Feeling of Love towards a brand

Fournier (1998) is one of the earliest researchers to claim that consumers grow and sustain a strong relationship with brands but it was Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) who define brand love as, “the degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied customer has for a particular trade
name” (p. 81). They propose that brand love consists of: passion for a brand, strength of association with a brand, brand equity, positive attitudes towards a brand and finally, the assertion of love towards the brand.

The study of love towards a brand in marketing consists of two theoretical frameworks as proposed by Ahuvia (1993) and Whang et al. (2004). The first framework is known as “the interpersonal theory of love applied to consumer situations” and the other one is an empirical approach which focuses on understanding consumers’ declaration of “love” towards a brand (Fournier, 1998). Past literature dealing with the concept of brand love has shown that unlike the bi-directional romantic relationships that can be observed amongst humans, this consumer-brand romantic relationship is unidirectional (Albert et al., 2008). Fournier’s (1998) integrated framework classifies the customer-brand romantic relationship as “love”, “commitment”, and “intimacy”. This categorization is very similar to the categorization proposed by Stemberg (1986) in his Triangular Theory of Interpersonal Love. Whang et al. (2004) are the first group of researchers who identify a major gap in the consumer-brand romantic relationships. They identify that there is a lack of application of theories related to interpersonal romantic relationships on the consumer-brand romantic relationships. In their study Whang et al. (2004) advocate that the love consumers show towards a product/brand is very similar to the interpersonal love which can be described as “passionate, possessive and selfless in nature”.

Aron et al. (1998, p. 787) define the concept of “unreciprocated love” taking the cue from motivation theory to explain the relationship between a consumer and a brand. This concept fits fine for the concept of love towards an object or a brand. Aron et al. (1998) propose a mini-theory of “unreciprocated love” and suggests that intensity of “unreciprocated love” is dependent upon three motivational factors:
- **Perceived desirability**: benefits one can get by being closely associated with an object. Perceived desirability is positively correlated with the intensity of unreciprocated love.

- **Perceived probability**: likelihood that one will have a close relationship with an object. Perceived probability is also positively correlated with the intensity of unreciprocated love.

- **Desirability of the state**: benefits associated with loving an object. The state of desirability is also positively correlated with the intensity of unreciprocated love.

Whang et al. (2004, p. 320) opine that “although love is an outcome of bi-directional interaction between two partners, when the target of love is replaced with an object (e.g., product or brand), love becomes uni-directional”. This statement can be used to conclude that a brand or a product does not have the ability to reciprocate the feeling of love originating from the consumers.

Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) propose that brand love consists of: obsession for a brand, attachment with the brand, brand equity, positive attitudes towards a brand and expression of love towards the brand. They also show that though the respondents have not spoken about any relationship of hatred with a brand, they have mentioned a lack of love towards a brand. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) have been successful in proving the significant role brand love plays in the creation of romantic behaviors displayed by the customers. This result finds support in the study of Roy et al. (2012). They identify brand love as the antecedent of WOM and most of the studies related to brand love have identified brand loyalty as the most logical consequence of love towards a brand (Whang et al., 2004; Roy et al. 2012).
Summarizing:

The chapter of literature review covered the basic constructs and their origins and current usage in a generic sense and also in the realm of Sports marketing. The theoretical framework which will be discussed in chapter three proposes a relationship between Team Brand Image and Team Brand Loyalty mediated by Team Brand Association. To conclude, the broader dimensions of branding and their applications to a unique specific context, i.e. sports marketing, forms the crux of the next chapter.