ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“Let your mind start a journey through a strange new world. Leave all thoughts of the world you knew before. Let your soul take you where you long to be...Close your eyes let your spirit start to soar, and you'll live as you've never lived before.”

This quote by American Philosopher Erich Fromm is a clear reflection of the journey I have experienced in the last few years in pursuit of my passion, my thirst for newer avenues in my field of study and to put it simply a challenge to unearth that which is still lying in the depths of the unknown.

I always knew that one day I would be doing a Ph.D. in management not because it was just something I wanted to add to my list of achievements but because there was a lot I wanted to explore and unearth in my chosen field and doing a Ph.D. was the right choice.

Even as a little girl it would surprise me that how certain commercials and products would make me dance or laugh and how these products became a part of who me and my peers were. It was a part of our milieu defining our generation and this stands true till today. This thought of course was of a little girl but it stayed with me and kept me in awe that how psychologically we were attached to certain products and how they affected our daily lives whether as part of jokes or as humming tunes while taking a walk. This very thought amplified itself into my passion and now has culminated into my Ph.D. thesis after burning many a mid night oil.

I would thank all those people who made this journey possible to shape my labor of love into a reality.

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I would like to end by thanking the One without whom nothing can even begin.
Thank you God.
ABSTRACT

This thesis aims at identifying attributes of the identity of a brand and then proceeds to study the functions a brand performs for a consumer. The entire research focuses on the Consumer-Brand relationship and identifies the six strategic brand functions of Emotional Connection, My Life style and Image, My Perception, Consumer Brand Knowledge, Trust and Responsible towards the Customer. The study has explored the effect of two focal functions of Consumer Brand Knowledge (CBK) and Consumer Brand Emotion (CBE) on Consumer-Brand relationship.

The dynamics of customer centricity are complex and need an integrated approach rather than thinking in silos. The brand functions are used to create a brand customer centricity calculator which is subsequently used to calculate the level of customer centricity of 50 brands.

Customization of the marketing messages to get good ROI (return on investment) is a function of how well an organization can develop a targeting strategy for each specific market segment. Customization or tailoring products to generate greater product acceptance by consumers requires a very incisive understanding of one’s target audience. Understanding the diversity in the interest groups and then targeting them with the right marketing message is the obvious challenge. In this context I use the level of customer centricity as a premise to help organizations group consumers into different target segments and then create strategies accordingly.

The research also devises an experiment where I use 20 corporate blogs and explore the dimension of the consumer-brand relationship. By tabulating consumer responses pre and post exposure to a corporate blog, the experimental findings demonstrate that brand knowledge has an impact on the consumer-brand association and how organizations can improve consumer brand knowledge and subsequently the consumer’s emotional connection with a brand.