

Craving connection: Can Nando's ignite love and respect amongst their consumers?



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It is relatively easy to love and respect a high-end luxury brand such as Ferrari or Cartier. However, can consumers possibly love and respect fast-food brands as they do their favourite luxury brand? The aim of this study was to determine whether consumers could have an emotional connection with fast-food brands, in particular Nando's, and to investigate to what extent these emotional connections could influence brand loyalty and positive word of mouth actions amongst their consumers. Nando's is not only known for their flame-grilled peri-peri chicken dishes and their satirical, often confrontational advertisements, but also their strong brand identity anchored in their rich South African heritage, vibrant atmosphere, and unique flavours.

In literature, brand love and brand respect are combined to form a concept called "Brand Lovemarks". Lovemarks are essentially brands who have moved beyond an ordinary consumer liking or degree of satisfaction, to a brand that has developed an emotional connection with their consumers, and who are supported by passionate brand advocates willing to go the extra mile for the brands they love. Lovemarks have the ability to extend far beyond inanimate products or brands and create a relationship that is saturated in great experiences, celebrated memories, inspiring emotions, and powerful consumer connections.

Consumers are bombarded with a flurry of advertisements every day, whilst brands are left to compete with everything they have to stand out amongst the crowd. This study was therefore motivated by the increasing need for brands to establish and harness fruitful consumer relationships to create passionate brand advocates through powerful emotional connections with their target consumers.

The majority of published research to date has mostly focused on brand love and loyalty, offering minimal insights into the role of brand respect and word of mouth actions on consumer brand relationships. Therefore, to investigate the relationships between brand lovemarks and loyalty as well as word of mouth, a study was conducted by Kiara Louw, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#) using Lovemark theory

as underpinning and by means of an online Qualtrics hosted questionnaire with 350 Nando's customers as respondents.

The study found that lovemarks were indeed capable of fostering brand loyalty and word of mouth actions. In particular, brand respect was a crucial pillar in the Lovemark pair and had a significant positive effect on word of mouth compared to brand love. Whilst brand love exhibited the strongest influence on brand loyalty, in relation to brand respect. The study additionally found that consumers could love and respect fast food brands, with Nando's being a prime example of a fast-food chain that had successfully established a Lovemark connection.

Overall, the study highlighted the importance of powerful emotional connections for brands (inside and outside of the fast-food industry) to create passionate advocates through brand love and brand respect, as well as provide industry professionals with insights into the power of Lovemarks in enhancing brand loyalty and word of mouth.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Masters degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2023 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Kiara Louw under the supervision of [Prof Melanie Wiese](#).