



Museum as an experiential marketing channel to enhance the myth and utilise the heritage of a luxury brand. Case Salvatore Ferragamo

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Abstract: <p>Luxury brand marketing is a controversial topic due to the multiple and subjective definitions of luxury, also because luxury brand marketing differs from non-luxury brand marketing. Traditional marketing techniques are not only risky for luxury brands since they may decrease the status and exclusivity of the luxury brand, but traditional means are also outdated in today's experience-economy where offering products and services is not enough – customers seek experiences. Luxury brands should find innovative marketing methods that include inimitable resources, such as heritage and myth of a luxury brand. Limited research has been conducted concerning how luxury brand marketing could utilise the heritage, history, as well as other imitable resources. Similarly, limited research has been conducted how luxury brands could use experiential marketing.</p> <p>Moreover, the conventional organization of a museum has a relatively diffused definition and role. Therefore, this thesis aims at studying how a luxury brand museum can be used as an experiential marketing channel by offering a brand-experience that enhances the characteristic of the myth of a luxury brand. Furthermore, the museum aids the company in activating and utilising its heritage, emphasizing that the brand is a heritage brand. Consequently, the enhanced myth and the activation of heritage are suggested to strengthen the marketing of the luxury brand since the elements of myth and heritage are inimitable and thus possible sustainable competitive advantages. The topic of luxury brand marketing is relevant since the luxury market is constantly growing, but has nevertheless been hit by the economic crisis. Luxury brands need to keep up their marketing and find new ways in which to appeal to the experience-seeking contemporary consumers.</p> <p>The Italian luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo was used a case study in this research, and a qualitative research method was chosen to conduct the research. The findings suggested that the myth of the luxury brand was enhanced during the museum visit since the elements creating the myth were emphasized in the museum, such as history, rarity, etc. The enhanced myth was then suggested to strengthen the marketing of the brand since imitable resources have been used (myth, heritage, history, etc.). The museum was suggested to become an integrated part of the marketing strategy of the brand by offering a Salvatore Ferragamo experience to the visitors, who are customers or potential customers of the company.</p>	
Keywords: luxury brand marketing, experiential marketing, myth of the brand, heritage, museum.	

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1 INTRODUCTION

“Uniqueness can be evoked by stories about brand origins. Here, family businesses have an edge over the large public conglomerate. They can build their sense of exclusivity around the founder’s myth.” (Catry 2003:15)

The founder’s myth, or alternatively the myth of the brand, is a powerful concept when it comes to luxury brands with a strong heritage, such as the Italian company Salvatore Ferragamo. The myth is a resource difficult to grasp since it is intangible. However, if the myth is understood correctly and handled as an asset, it can be an efficient marketing tool and even lead to sustainable competitive advantages. The myth of the brand is strongly linked to the heritage of a company, which is as well a very valuable asset since it is difficult, if not impossible, to copy and recreate. According to Urde, Greyser and Balmer (2007), myth is one of the elements of creating and maintaining a *heritage brand*. Consequently, the myth of the brand could be used as a resource by luxury brand companies to strengthen their marketing.

The interesting question is how to utilise the myth of the brand? What can be done to enhance the myth and as a result strengthen the marketing of a luxury brand? One of the purposes of this study is to more carefully consider the *myth* and study how it can be enhanced. The questions mentioned previously are important since the marketing of luxury brands differ from the marketing of non-luxury brands. Luxury brands have to carefully plan their marketing strategies so that the prestige and status of the brands do not suffer. The myth of a luxury brand is an intangible concept that is relatively difficult to define explicitly. However, the concept of myth bears so much mystery in itself that if a luxury brand can understand *where* the myth comes from and more importantly, *how* to utilise it, the myth can possibly become a source of a sustainable competitive advantage since it cannot be copied. One way of enhancing the myth could be to emphasize the history of the brand, as well as emphasizing the other elements that create the myth. For instance, by showing heritage-rich products, such as the original creations of a fashion designer, the brand may be able to enhance the myth. This is also a way for the luxury brand to activate and utilise its heritage, becoming a *heritage brand*, which can be argued to be a further sustainable way to differentiate from competitors since heritage is imitable.

Since innovative marketing methods are sought for, and contemporary consumers seek experiences, an interesting platform where luxury brand marketing could be combined

with the evolving experiential needs of consumers would be the conventional organisation of a museum.

Since the role of museums has not been entirely clarified but it has been argued that museums are *not only* conventional public organisations (Kirezli 2011), the question arises whether a museum could be utilised as an experiential marketing channel that is at the same time suitable for a luxury brand and yet appealing for the experience-seeking consumer? This question originates a further question of *how* museums could be utilised to enhance the myth of the brand and aid the brand in becoming a *heritage brand*. Nevertheless, since the purpose of a museum is relatively vague, it leaves space for developing or extending its purpose further. If the brand's most heritage-rich products are exhibited in a museum it could possibly enhance the myth of the brand and become a potential experiential marketing channel for the luxury brand.

1.1. The case company: Salvatore Ferragamo

The case company in this study is Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A., an Italian fashion house founded by Salvatore Ferragamo in 1928. The brand Ferragamo evolved from a one-man shoemaking company to one of the most respected luxury brands in the world. The company is still today owned by the Ferragamo family, holding on to their valuable heritage. Ferragamo leather shoes have been one of the cornerstones for creating the fame for the Italian fashion style (Merlo & Polese 2006). Salvatore Ferragamo is a member of the Altgamma group, an Italian luxury brand foundation (Fondazione Altgamma).

Salvatore Ferragamo was born in 1898 in a small town called Bonito, east from Naples. Already as a young boy he showed an intriguing interest in shoemaking and showed exceptional talent in the craftsmanship already at the age of nine. He moved to the United States in 1914 as a teenage boy to pursue his career. He was soon making shoes for Hollywood movies, as well as designing extraordinary heels and shoes for famous actresses, such as Joan Crawford, Mary Pickford, Gloria Swanson and Greta Garbo. Later Ferragamo made shoes for acknowledged actresses such as Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn and Judy Garland. During his spare time, Ferragamo also studied the anatomy of the feet in order to understand how the human feet are built in order to design shoes that fit perfectly and are comfortable. Ferragamo moved back to Italy in 1927 and Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A. was established in 1928 in Florence. Ferragamo

designed over 20 000 models and he holds more than 350 patents, being a pioneer in the shoemaking industry for women. (Ferragamo 1985)

The shoemaker Salvatore Ferragamo revolutionized the history of shoemaking by designing and creating a vast amount of astonishing shoes, such as the cork wedge design (Fondazione Altagamma). Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A. reported a total revenue of 1,258 million euros for the year 2013 (Group Ferragamo). In addition to shoes, the company today produces a wide range of products, such as clothing, eyewear, fragrances, watches, bags and accessories and jewelry. Nevertheless, Salvatore Ferragamo offers a wide range of shoes for males and females, as well as an exclusive opportunity to order a pair of tailor-made shoes, as well as offering the chance to buy special replicas of the original creations made by the shoemaker. Salvatore Ferragamo received the “Business and Culture Award” in 1999, which is an annual prize given to companies that make the most considerable investments in culture. (Museo Salvatore Ferragamo -leaflet)

1.1.1. *Museum Salvatore Ferragamo*

The private museum of Salvatore Ferragamo was opened by Salvatore’s wife Wanda and her family in 1995 in Florence, Italy, as a dedication to the history of the Ferragamo company. The aim of the museum is to show the public the creations and exclusive craftsmanship skills of Salvatore Ferragamo. The museum also intends to show how Ferragamo’s studies of the feet’s anatomy revolutionized the shoemaking industry (Museo Salvatore Ferragamo -leaflet). The museum displays thousands of original shoes and lasts that the shoemaker created. The museum was re-opened in 2006 in Palazzo Spini Feroni, which has also served as the headquarters of the company since 1938 (Salvatore Ferragamo). The museum exhibits the entire footwear collection of Salvatore Ferragamo from when he returned to Italy in 1927 until he passed away in 1960. The items that are displayed in the museum are periodically selected from over 10 000 models in the archives of the museum, depending on the theme of the exhibition. The ticket sales from the museum are used annually to finance scholarships for rising footwear designers. (Museo Ferragamo –leaflet)

The curators of the museum also organize a workshop for children approximately three to four times a month where an artisan (a shoemaker from the company) comes to demonstrate to the children how to make shoes, what techniques, tools, materials, etc. are used. The children get to design and make their own sandal with the help of the

shoemaker and they can take it with them as a souvenir. The activity is free of charge and is a wonderful way to share the craftsmanship and history of shoemaking with children, at the same time as having a fun activity offered by the museum.

1.2. Definition of key concepts

There are a few key concepts in this study that are important to define for the sake of clarity. Table 1 below gives the definitions of key concepts, including *luxury brand*, *myth of the brand*, *heritage*, and *experiential marketing*.

<i>Luxury brand</i> = A brand sold at the high-end of a product category with characteristics such as exclusivity, prestige, high-price, premium image, top quality, etc. Enhanced value is important.
<i>Myth of the brand</i> = an intangible concept made of elements such as heritage, originality, authenticity, history, rarity, and nature of a specific luxury brand.
<i>Heritage</i> = A characteristic of many luxury brands. Elements such as the history, originality and authenticity of a brand create the heritage. A heritage gives a brand the opportunity to activate and utilize the heritage, and therefore become a <i>heritage brand</i> .
<i>Experiential marketing</i> = Contemporary marketing based on creating experiences for the consumer often with the use of senses.

Table 1 Definition of key concepts

1.3. Problem area

“Nowhere should luxury advertising obey the classical rules taught by Procter and Gamble. As regards luxury, the less explicit and understandable advertising is, the better it is.” (Kapferer 2012:458)

Confusion exists about the marketing of luxury products (Beverland 2004; Vickers & Renand 2003). One reason for this may be because the term luxury has multiple definitions and thus may lead to confusion (Miller & Mills 2012). Furthermore, the marketing of luxury is somewhat seen as a paradox since traditional marketing often involves mass-marketing – a tool risky for luxury brands which are characterized, among other things, as limited. Luxury brand marketing differs from non-luxury brand marketing for a few reasons. One of the reasons for this is that there is a difference between the nature of luxury and non-luxury (Kapferer & Bastien 2009). Non-luxury is often a necessity, when again luxury is, among other reasons, a hedonistic need. The difference in the nature of the two also means that the market works in different ways. According to Geerts and Veg-Sala (2011), the communication of luxury brands is possibly one of the most important difficulties to handle. Furthermore, Dubois and Paternault (1995) point out that that the challenge in the marketing strategies of luxury

brands is to develop the brand further without risking the appeal of the brand. Too often luxury brands use traditional marketing techniques when building and enhancing the brand, which may lead to serious consequences, for instance the deterioration of a luxury brand into a non-luxury brand (Kapferer & Bastien 2009). For this reason it is important to understand what strengthens and what may weaken the marketing communications of a luxury brand. Luxury brands need to incorporate “selectivity and diffusion, rarity and enlargement, elitism and increased awareness” in their communications strategy (Geerts & Veg-Sala 2011:83). This is a difficult task since the risk of over-visibility can damage the luxury brand and erode its myth. According to Moore and Doyle (2010), the strategic developments of fashion retailers need closer examination. Since marketing strategies are an essential part of overall strategic developments, the ways in which to strengthen marketing strategies are thus central.

Furthermore, existing literature addresses the problem of luxury brands using traditional marketing tools and recognizing them as inefficient and improper (Geerts & Veg-Sala 2011; Kapferer & Bastien 2009). However, there is limited literature on the possible non-traditional marketing tools for luxury brands. Even though research has been conducted concerning the concept of experiential marketing and the importance of offering customers experiences, the concept of experiential marketing has been limitedly studied in reference to the marketing strategies of luxury brands. According to Phau and Prendergast (2000:134), “in order for luxury brands to be successful, they have to be promoted through active-marketing communication”. Active-marketing could, for instance, be in the form of experiential marketing where a bond is formed between the customer and the company through an experience. According to Atwal and Williams (2009:345) many companies suggest that they are using experiential marketing strategies when in reality they are only “repeating the mantra of traditional marketing strategies”.

Furthermore, experiential marketing would be important to research since the contemporary consumers seek experiences along with the products or services bought, thus further suggesting experiential marketing as a suitable, non-traditional and active-marketing strategy for luxury brands. Moreover, little research has been done concerning which methods would enhance the myth of the brand and how the marketing strategies could be strengthened by using authenticity, originality, rarity and the myth of the brand as basic resources. Additionally, even though the heritage of luxury brands is seen as a valuable resource, it is debatable whether the heritage can be

utilised to be interesting enough for the contemporary consumer (Morley & McMahon 2011). This is a further challenge when it comes to the marketing of luxury brands using, for instance, heritage as a resource.

Furthermore, traditional marketing strategies are not only improper for luxury brands – they are also relatively outdated in today's economy. Consumers seek more than products or services when buying from a company – they seek experiences. What is more, the functional features, quality and positive brand image are taken for granted by consumers (Schmitt 1999). The economy has become experiential in nature, and traditional marketing means do not offer enough guidance for this type of experiential economy (Schmitt 1999). Therefore, more attention should be given to researching about new and innovative ways of marketing that fit the experiential needs of the contemporary consumers.

Another interesting aspect concerning luxury brands, according to Geerts and Veg-Sala (2011), is that luxury goods, fine jewellery, clothing and leather goods, such as shoes, are categorized with a large amount of “sensory” appeal. In other words, the features of these products can be evaluated through the senses that a human possesses (Geerts & Veg-Sala 2011). This implies that a marketing strategy where the customer can experience the luxury products with his/her senses may be effective. Nevertheless, research is limited concerning how to use this “sensory appeal” of luxury products in the marketing strategies of their brands.

Additionally, existing literature recognizes that many luxury brands are successful due to their story and authenticity (Catry 2003; Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Keller 2009; Urde et al. 2007). Nonetheless, there is limited literature about *how* to specifically use this value from the history, especially the heritage of the brand, as an effective tool in marketing communication. The contribution of this thesis is to try and fill this gap with suggestions to strengthen the marketing communications of a luxury brand with the help of, among other aspects, the heritage of the brand. This is important in order to understand how to develop and sustain luxury brands in the most effective ways in order for them to maintain their status (Beverland 2004).

Moreover, a final reason for the importance of rethinking luxury brand marketing is the uncertain economic situation. Even luxury brands have been hit by the economic recession (Kapferer 2010). According to Vickers and Renand (2003), luxury products that are in the fashion industry will have difficulties in the future holding on to their

status in the luxury goods market. Therefore, luxury brands need to rethink their positions and step up in their marketing strategies.

“Marketers of luxury brands face continual challenges, and being a skilled marketer is becoming a vital prerequisite for success.” (Keller 2009:290)

Even high-spending consumers have toned down their buying behaviour of luxury goods, meaning that brands have to consider how to boost their sales and keep their brand in the top-of-mind of customers. More importantly, luxury brands need to recognize their most valuable assets and turn the strengths into possible sustainable competitive advantages that cannot be copied by any competitor. According to Catry (2003), luxury brands should take every action necessary in order to sustain their uniqueness. This study will consider a museum as a tool to preserve a brand’s uniqueness and thus be one step ahead in the marketing strategies of luxury brands. Also, another argument for the importance of the topic is that luxury brands are the fastest growing and the most profitable brand segment in the fashion industry (Miller & Mills 2012) and thus deserve deeper insights.

“The future belongs to companies who understand this need for status and adopt a true luxury strategy, very different from a premium strategy.” (Kapferer 2010:42)

A final area of interest is the concept of a museum. According to Kirezli (2011), the role of a museum has not completely been clarified. Even so, museums are often associated with their traditional purposes in terms of preserving and exhibiting historical artefacts. However, limited research has been conducted concerning how a museum could serve as a possible channel to implement experiential marketing. Therefore, the gap should be filled concerning a museum as an alternative marketing channel for luxury brands. A museum could be used as a platform where the myth of the brand could be enhanced by reinforcing elements such as the heritage, the history and the rarity of the brand. This consequently may then lead to stronger marketing communication for the luxury brand.

1.4. Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to analyse how a museum will enhance the myth of the luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo. The research questions related to the aim are the following:

1. How does a visit to Salvatore Ferragamo museum enhance the myth of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo?

2. How does the enhanced myth strengthen the marketing of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo?

1.5. Limitations

A limitation of this study is that the topic concerns only luxury brands, excluding non-luxury brands. A further limitation is that even though the findings of this study may be applicable to different luxury categories, the focus in this study is merely on luxury brands in fashion clothing, excluding other luxury markets, such as luxury furniture, vehicles, etc.

Another limitation to the study is that the study analyses only the Salvatore Ferragamo museum. Since Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A. is a global company with stores around the world, and there is only one museum located in Florence, the results of the study are only relevant for the customers of the company who have had or have the opportunity to visit the Salvatore Ferragamo museum. It should be noted that the museum only displays shoes in terms of Salvatore Ferragamo products. However, the results from the study should concern the entire range of products offered by Salvatore Ferragamo. A final limitation is that the study concerns only the luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo. Other luxury brands are excluded from the study and not taken into consideration, even though certain implications of the results may apply.

1.6. Structure of the study

The research approach will be an exploratory one. Figure 1 portrays the structure that the study follows. Chapter 1 introduces the topic and the problem area, including the aim and the research questions. Additionally, the limitations as well as the research approach and the structure of the study are presented. Chapter 2 will consist of the theoretical framework, in terms of the literature overview and relevant theoretical concepts, as well as the theoretical model presented at the end of the chapter. Chapter 3 will consist of a description of the methodology used in conducting the empirical research, and consequently in chapter 4 the results from the research will be presented. Finally, chapter 5 will include a discussion section as well as conclusions, a revised theoretical model, managerial implications as well as suggestions for future research.

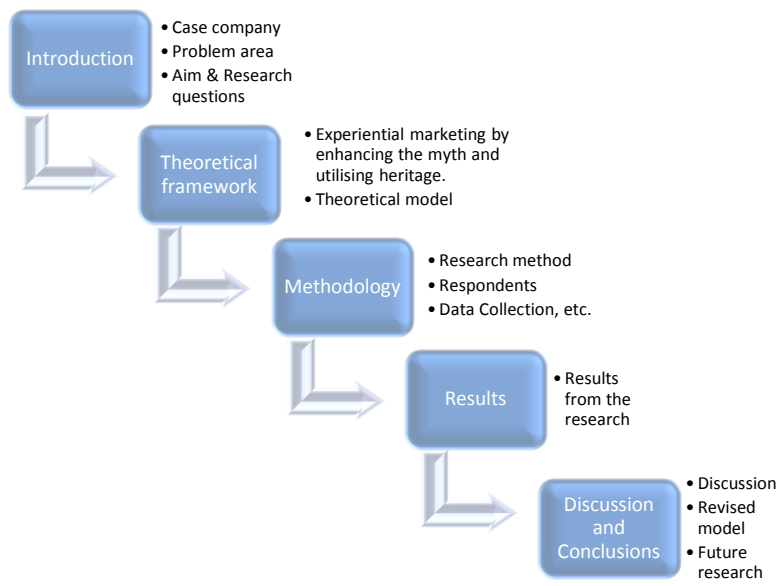


Figure 1 Structure of the study

2 EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING BY ENHANCING THE MYTH AND UTILISING HERITAGE

This section of the study concerns the theoretical framework. The theory will consist of a literature overview exploring the definitions and characteristics of brands, as well as a discussion of what luxury is, the characteristics of luxury brands, and what constitutes luxury brand marketing. The concept of the myth of the brand will also be introduced. Moreover, museums will be discussed, as well as the suggestion of a museum being a channel to implement experiential marketing for fashion luxury brands. A theoretical model will be presented at the end of the chapter which combines the most important features of the theoretical framework. Finally, the chapter will end with a summary.

2.1. Brands

“A brand is more than a name.” (Keller & Lehmann 2006:743)

Kay (2006:743) argues that the “purpose of a brand is to create meaning”. Furthermore, according to Keller and Lehmann (2006), brands have several different functions. Keller and Lehmann (2006:743) point out that “brands identify and differentiate a company’s offerings to customers and other parties”. The most basic function of a brand is to serve as a symbol of the products and services offered by companies. Additional functions of brands, from the perspective of customers, include their role as simply a choice, a promise of quality, or for instance, a reduced risk (Keller & Lehmann 2006; Popescu 2009). According to Keller and Lehmann (2006), brands build on the offerings of the company as well as the marketing activities that surround them. According to Aaker (2004:6), “the corporate brand defines the firm that will deliver and stand behind the offering that the customer will buy and use”. Furthermore Keller and Lehmann (2006) argue that brands have an important role in evaluating whether the marketing strategies implemented are effective or not. The last but not least function of a brand according to Keller and Lehmann (2006) is being an important financial asset for the company. Popescu (2009) further points out that brands are a mixture of components such as aesthetics, rationality and emotionality. Popescu (2009:175) further suggests that brands are a combination of “elements and values that the consumer associates with the product”.

“In consumer marketing, brands often provide the primary points of differentiation between competitive offerings, and as such they can be critical to the success of companies.” (Wood 2000:662)

According to Wood (2000), it is important to understand the characteristics of brands in terms of effective strategic decision making. Furthermore, according to Popescu (2009), brands have to adapt to changing society, as well as to act as a shield if something goes wrong. However, Wood (2000) points out that the attributes of brands are subjective since brands can be viewed either from a consumer's perspective or from the brand owner's perspective. Wood (2000:666) has developed the following definition of a brand:

“A brand is a mechanism for achieving competitive advantages for firms, through differentiation (purpose). The attributes that differentiate a brand provide the customer with satisfaction and benefits for which they are willing to pay (mechanism).”

Furthermore, Hung, Lin and Yang (2012:45) suggest that “branding is a field that requires dynamic thinking and the implementation of corporate strategies in response to developing trends, shifts in consumer values, and rapid technological innovation”. Interestingly, according to Keller and Lehmann (2006:744), marketers are constantly developing different kinds of “brand-building activities”. These may include activities, such as guerrilla marketing, emotion-loaded experiential marketing, online marketing, real-world communities, special-event marketing, as well as others (Keller & Lehmann 2006). This relates to the perspective of Schmitt (1999:54), who argues the following:

“In a world in which brands rule, products are no longer bundles of functional characteristics but rather are means to provide and enhance customer experiences.”

In other words, Schmitt (1999) views brands as more than products with attributes – he views them as tools to help provide experiences for customers. Kay (2006:744) suggests that “branding is about being different”. This supports Schmitt's (1999) perspective since creating experiences for the customers will always be different because experiences are subjective and different for everyone. Shukla (2011) identifies that one characteristic strongly associated with several brands is their origin. This implies that the country of origin, as an example “Made in Italy”, may be a strong characteristic of some brands, such as luxury brands in fashion. According to Wood (2000), brand image is tailored depending on the requirements of the brand's target market using the traditional marketing mix in terms of product, price, place and promotion. Kay (2006:742) suggests that “having a notably ‘strong’ brand is a considerable managerial resource – it can help establish distribution networks, enable brand extensions to aid customer acceptance of new products, and strengthen pricing flexibility”. However, Kay (2006) also points out that it is unclear how brands can be efficiently developed and utilised, and that there is no single method of developing a

powerful brand. Furthermore, branding techniques vary for each brand (Kay 2006). Branding is not merely an activity done by the company. Branding is a process where brand managers specify core values, however the interpretation and redefinition of the values is done by the customers (Kay 2006). What is more, Aaker (2004:7) further suggests that a corporate brand will have a “*rich heritage, assets and capabilities, people, values and priorities, a local or global frame of reference, citizenship programs, and a performance record*”. A further important concept associated with brands is *brand positioning*. Without clear understanding of brand positioning and what it specifically means for a certain brand in question, the other characteristics and meanings of brands themselves are relatively useless. Appropriate knowledge is needed to know what to do with the brand, and how to do it.

“Brand positioning sets the direction of marketing activities and programs – what the brand should and should not do with its marketing.” (Keller & Lehmann 2006:740)

It is crucial for companies to know what kinds of marketing activities should be used since wrong kinds of activities may not only harm but even destroy a brand. This can be argued to be especially true for luxury brands, where the difficulty lies in finding marketing techniques that do not harm the status of the brands. Keller and Lehmann (2006) mention that brand positioning includes selecting the appropriate tangible product attributes (e.g. superior design or handcrafted products), as well as incorporating brand intangibles (e.g. brand heritage) and keeping in mind the role of corporate images and reputation.

2.1.1. Brand heritage

“Having a heritage does not in itself create value, only the opportunity to do so.” (Urde et al. 2007:11)

According to Urde et al. (2007), all brands have a history but only some have a heritage. Furthermore, only a few brands have been able to utilise their heritage as a valuable asset. Leighton (2007:118) points out that “heritage may be conceptualised as a product, a marketable commodity, although in reality it is multi-faceted, embodying notions of scholarship, culture and personal identity”. In other words, heritage itself is a versatile concept and something that is rooted in culture and identity, and cannot be bought or manufactured. However, for this study the focus is on understanding the concept of brand heritage.

There are multiple definitions of brand heritage (Hakala, Lätti & Sandberg 2011) but brand heritage can be described, for instance, as an element of a brand's identity including various elements that will be introduced shortly. A brand's heritage has its roots deeply rooted in the history of the company's core product and is inimitable (Hakala et al. 2011). Wiedmann, Hennigs, Schmidt and Wuestefeld (2011) argue that during the current uncertain and turbulent economic times, consumers are likely to favor heritage brands since these brands are seen as more credible, trustworthy and reliable.

“Born and nurtured over decades or even centuries, heritage brands have had the time to build a meaningful past, and having a heritage helps to make a brand relevant to the present and prospectively to the future.” (Wiedmann et al. 2011:206)

The word heritage is often associated with legacy, in other words transferring something from one generation to the next (Hakala et al. 2011). It should be noted that a brand can have a heritage but it is not directly a *heritage brand*, i.e. one that can extract value from heritage (Urde et al. 2007). However, brands with a heritage should seek to utilise it with various actions. Hakala et al. (2011) point out that utilising brand heritage becomes more difficult when a company operates in different cultures. However, the authors suggest that brand heritage can be enhanced by continually and consistently engaging in marketing communications of a company. According to Aaker (2004:7), “any brand, especially those that are struggling, can benefit from going back to its roots and identifying what made it special in the first place”. Aaker (2004) further states that stories about early roots add authenticity and help the brand to differentiate. However, Hakala et al. (2011) point out that it is a challenge to market the brand's heritage in a manner that brings out its historical reliability but does not make it seem out of date at the same time. Brand heritage can be described as a *brand intangible*, a relevant concept that has great significance in future research of branding (Hakala et al. 2011). Even today it can be considered a trend to turn back to the past in order to be ready for the future (Hakala et al. 2011). Brand heritage is also an efficient method to build a special relationship between the consumers (as well as other stakeholders) and the company (Wiedmann et al. 2011). Since brand heritage helps to build a relationship between the consumer and the company, the brand heritage will also affect the *image heritage*, which can be described as the “customers' mental relationship with the company over time” that then affects the *image-in-use*, which is the current interpretation of the image of the company (Strandvik & Rindell 2010:12). Therefore the brand heritage is an important concept from many perspectives.

“Brands representing stability, familiarity and trust can speak to people in periods of uncertainty, helping to create an image of authenticity and integrity that is likely to appeal to today’s consumers.” (Hakala et al. 2011:448)

Hakala et al. (2011:449) view brand heritage as “a composite of the history as well as the consistency and continuity of a company’s core values, product brands and use of symbols”. The authors further argue that the elements composing brand heritage then produce an image of quality, enhanced trust, increased customer loyalty and a strong reputation, eventually leading to solid brand equity. Wiedmann et al. (2011) also argue that the heritage of a brand adds depth, authenticity and credibility to the perceived value of the brand. Wiedmann et al. (2011) remind that heritage brands are in a different brand category compared to other brands (e.g. retro brands, such as Converse) and therefore need specific management and leadership approaches.

2.1.1.1. Heritage quotient (Urde et al. 2007)

Urde et al. (2007) argue that a brand’s heritage value can be analysed with the help of a *heritage quotient* (HQ), a framework that can help corporations utilise their heritage and turn it into a competitive advantage, as well as incorporating the heritage into marketing. According to Urde et al. (2007), a brand’s heritage quotient is composed of five elements, in addition to the central concept of *brand stewardship*. The five elements are *track record*, *longevity*, *history important to identity*, *use of symbols* and *core values*. (Urde et al. 2007)

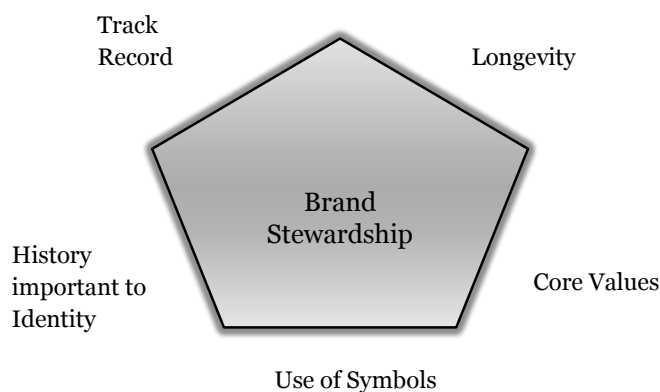


Figure 2 The elements of brand heritage according to Urde et al. (2007)

Figure 2 illustrates the dimensions composing *brand heritage*. According to Urde et al. (2007), the central concept, *brand stewardship*, is seen as the core competence in terms of developing, sustaining and protecting the brand heritage. This includes skilful leaders and managers who understand the heritage of the company completely and know how to utilise it. The *track record* refers to the company's records of previous performance and evidence of how the company has lived up to its values and kept its promises. As an example, track record could refer to how efficiently a company has delivered maintenance and service if those aspects are a part of the promises that the company makes. The authors suggest that the concept of *longevity* is further an important element of brand heritage, which refers to the aspect of having "the family name on the door". In other words, it is a demonstration of steady and reliable performance of the other heritage elements, especially the track record and the utilisation of history. Longevity is relatively difficult to pin down; however, it can be argued to be often strongly present in family-owned companies that have been operating for decades (Urde et al. 2007). Nevertheless, according to the authors, longevity can be present and built upon in younger companies as well. An example of longevity present in family-owned, older and historically interesting companies, such as in Salvatore Ferragamo, is the concept of timelessness. Furthermore, Urde et al. (2007) argue that the *core values* represent the ethics within the company that steer the policies and aid in outlining the corporate strategies. For instance, originality, high quality and professionalism are examples of core values. The authors suggest that the core values are a part of the brand identity that over time develop into the brand's heritage if the company lives up to its values. Moreover, the *use of symbols* is an important feature in communicating the message and heritage of a brand. Symbols can be, for instance, logos, a motto, a specific colour, designs, patterns, etc. (Urde et al. 2007). As an example, a symbol of Salvatore Ferragamo is the handwritten signature with a specific font, which is the logo of the company. Figure 3 illustrates the symbol of Salvatore Ferragamo. Symbols in the form of logos are powerful and strong tools in signalling the heritage of a brand (Urde et al. 2007).

The image shows the Salvatore Ferragamo logo, which is a handwritten signature in a red, cursive font. The signature reads "Salvatore Ferragamo" and is positioned at the bottom left of the page.

Figure 3 Salvatore Ferragamo logo (Inonit)

According to Urde et al. (2007), the final element of a brand's heritage is the *history of the brand important to its identity*. In other words, a history of brand is an important building block – the brand is what it is partly because of its history. Partly in this context means that the history is not the *only* aspect that has made the brand what it is since activities in the present and plans for the future are equally important. However, the history is an extremely important element of heritage and it even impacts how a heritage brand functions today (Urde et al. 2007). For instance, Salvatore Ferragamo himself made shoes by hand during the 1930's and yet today the company offers the opportunity for customers to order a pair of customised and handmade shoes.

Additionally, Urde et al. (2007) suggest that a higher heritage quotient implies a higher importance of the brand heritage both internally in the company but also externally for the customers. This means that the heritage brings more value to the company and can even be utilised as a competitive advantage if the company has a high heritage quotient. Urde et al. (2007) further state that differentiation can be successfully gained if the brand can fully understand and utilise its heritage. More specifically, the brand can gain competitive advantages through heritage and thus improve the margins and prices of products, as well as the heritage can enhance the authenticity of a brand and thus increase the credibility of the brand for the customer (Urde et al. 2007). As an example, elements of the heritage of Salvatore Ferragamo are, for instance, leather shoes made with the finest craftsmanship and using the finest materials. If this characteristic of the heritage is enhanced and communicated to the customer, it maintains and develops the credibility of the brand, also enhancing trust with the customer. Furthermore, a strong heritage can also help to maintain relationships with stakeholders as well as creating an internal pride to “be a part of a brand bigger than oneself” (Urde et al. 2007:12). A final suggestion of Urde et al. (2007) is that brands should activate their heritage and then utilise it in order to extract value from it.

“A brand with a heritage has a story to tell.” (Urde et al. 2007:17)

However, Hakala et al. (2011) point out that there are various interpretations of brand heritage but limited research exists about how to precisely measure brand heritage, despite Urde et al.'s (2007) elements of brand heritage. In spite of the discrepancies of measuring brand heritage and the multiple definitions of it, it is known that brand heritage affects the image of a brand from the consumers' perspective (Wiedmann et al.

2011) and can be a valuable inimitable asset that should to be utilised. Wiedmann et al. (2011) point out an important difficulty that heritage brands face. Namely that heritage brands are often very old brands in a certain brand category, being familiar to older generations of consumers. However, the difficulty lies in appealing to younger generations and to contemporary consumers as well. This requires attention and innovative ways of communicating the heritage of brands in a way that it appeals to the new generations of consumers who have not grown up with the heritage brands in a similar manner as the older generations. (Wiedmann et al. 2011)

2.2. Luxury

Beverland (2004) argues that limited effort has been put in order to find a marketing definition for the term “luxury”. Furthermore, according to Kapferer (2010), luxury cannot be singularly defined. According to Li, Li and Kambele (2012:1516) “luxuries are objects of desire that provide pleasure”. As can be seen from the quote below by Coco Chanel, luxury can be a confusing term.

“Luxury is the necessity that begins where necessity ends.” (Coco Chanel quoted by Husic & Cicic 2009:235)

The question concerning what luxury is yields multiple answers, depending on the person (Hung et al. 2012). This perspective is also supported by Phau and Prendergast (2000), who state that the concept of luxury is subjective. What is more, the definition of luxury is dynamic and it evolves over time. For instance, a car was seen as luxury centuries ago, not so more today in the Western world. However, according to Hung et al. (2012), the value of luxury extends beyond physical luxury.

“Luxury as a concept is defined within the scope of socio-psychology as a result of its connection to a culture, state of being and lifestyle, whether it is personal or collective.” (Okonkwo 2009:287)

Furthermore, Kapferer (2010) argues that luxury is tied up in social relationships in terms of people having the need to compare each other and compete with each other. Kapferer (2010:42) further suggests that this need to compare and compete is a result of “economic development in modern capitalism worldwide”, and conspicuousness in terms of high profile, is therefore an element of luxury behaviour. Kapferer (2010) argues, in other words, that luxury is linked to social hierarchy. Husic and Cicic (2009:242) argue that the “main purpose of luxury products is to impress others and position the owner in one specific group to which he/she wishes to belong”. Interestingly, Husic and Cicic (2009) also came to the conclusion in their research that

consumers try to delight mostly themselves with a luxury product and enjoy it, instead of buying it to impress someone else. On the other hand, purchasing luxury can be argued to be a way of expressing one's values (Nia & Zaichkowsky 2000). Furthermore, Kapferer (2010) points out that premium goods are the best; however, luxury cannot be compared to any other product category, only the consumers wearing luxury can be compared in terms of them standing out. However, Kapferer (2010:43) further points out that most definitions of luxury refer to "well crafted, hedonistic and aesthetic objects, priced excessively above their functional utility, sold in exclusive stores delivering personal service and unique consumer experience, most often from a brand with history, heritage, the whole delivering a rare feeling of exclusivity". However, Kapferer (2010), points out that this description of luxury refers to how people understand or experience luxury, not necessarily referring to the true definition of what luxury actually is. What is known, however, is that current consumers are willing to pay even higher prices for luxury products (Husic & Cicic 2009), making luxury an increasingly relevant topic.

Luxury used to be the "measure of your rank, itself being inherited" (Kapferer 2010:43). The author argues that there were no brands; there was only luxury in terms of wealthy and hedonistic lifestyles with access to the most exclusive goods and services from all over the world. During the 20th century luxury was considered, for instance, as the opportunity to go on exclusive holidays, owning a yacht or living in a castle (Kapferer 2010). Kapferer (2010) argues that today's luxury has changed - it is more than owning a yacht; it is a question of *what* brand the yacht is or *where* the holiday location is. Similarly, Husic and Cicic (2009:234) quote Twitchell (2001) about fashion in their article: "Today, you are not *what* you wear but *who* you wear". As mentioned, luxury used to be inherited. However, any consumer can nowadays buy luxury in order to boost their status and seem as "elite". Luxury today is much composed of "status loaded objects" that consumers can utilise for impression management (Kapferer 2010:43). Husic and Cicic (2009:234) further argue that "individuals communicate meaning about themselves to their reference groups" by using status symbols. Nevertheless, it should be noted that luxury also delivers fundamental pleasure to the consumer (Kapferer 2010), and therefore is not only a status symbol. It does not always mean that the more luxurious a product is, the bigger and more obvious the logo becomes. As an example, the more you pay for Hugo Boss clothing, the smaller the logo gets (Husic & Cicic 2009). Therefore, luxury is subjective because of the many definitions as well as the motivations to buy it.

The definition of luxury and the various reasons behind buying luxury depends on the consumer. The founder CEO of LVMH, the biggest luxury group in the world with over 50 brands, such as Louis Vuitton and Moët Hennessy, summarized modern luxury to be: “The ordinary of extraordinary people and the extraordinary of ordinary people” (Kapferer 2010:44). This statement also supports the notion that luxury is subjective since luxury for someone may be non-luxurious for someone else. Phau and Prendergast (2000:123) share similar thoughts by saying that “what is luxury to one may just be the ordinary to another”. Kapferer (2010) also argues that luxury exists because not everyone can afford it. Therefore the challenge for luxury brands is not only to preserve their prestige and status, but also to maintain the dream about the luxury brand in the consumers’ minds.

“Since richness is growing everywhere in the world, thanks to fast economic growth, luxury must never be made too accessible if it wants to remain the dream of those with growing revenues and wealth.” (Kapferer 2010:45)

According to Husic and Cicic (2009), people have for centuries pleased themselves with beautiful things, resulting in the discussion and arguments about luxury products, and thus luxury brands. This leads to the next sections where luxury brands are going to be discussed in more detail.

2.2.1. *Luxury brands*

“Luxury brands are perhaps one of the purest examples of branding, as the brand and its image are often key competitive advantages that create enormous value and wealth for organisations.” (Keller 2009:290)

According to Miller and Mills (2012) and Beverland (2004), there is a deficiency concerning luxury brands due to limited focus in research on the definitions, processes and measurement of luxury brands. Thus, confusion exists among researchers defining luxury brands and this confusion is strengthened due to the fact that there are multiple definitions of luxury brands (Miller & Mills 2012). However, a few aspects are agreed upon. For instance, the view that intangible components are building blocks of luxury brands is agreed upon (Keller 2009; Miller & Mills 2012). Intangible elements may include concepts such as creativity, originality, innovativeness, heritage, strong identity etc. Another aspect that is agreed upon among researchers is the notion that luxury is not a product category, but a “conceptual and symbolic dimension” (Li et al. 2012:1517).

“When linked to brands, it is characterised by a recognisable style, strong identity, high awareness, and enhanced emotional and symbolic associations. It evokes uniqueness and exclusivity, and is interpreted in products through high quality, controlled distribution and premium price.” (Okonkwo 2009:287-288)

As mentioned, strong brands can be an immense resource for companies (Kay 2006). Successful luxury brands can be characterized as strong brands since luxury brands such as Ferragamo or Chanel have enormous power within the brand names. This can be seen for instance, through the high prices of the luxury products, as well as the argument that that the products are less price-elastic. According to Kay (2006), powerful brands create customer loyalty and they are less price-sensitive. Luxury brands are often viewed as unique, which is a further characteristic of a strong brand. Kay (2006) suggests that the *story* of a brand defines a brand's strength or power. However, most interestingly Kay (2006) points out Holt's (2004) proposition of strong brands – they are associated with myths. This is relevant for this study and the myth of the brand will be discussed later in section 2.3. However, Vigneron and Johnson (2004) point out that not all luxury brands are considered as equally luxurious, and that the amount of luxury contained in a brand is dependent on the context and on the people defining it. This perspective is supported by Stegemann (2006), who states that the different perceptions on luxury brands depend on different interactions on a personal and social level. More specifically, how a luxury brand is defined depends on “combinations of motivations based on values” (Stegemann 2006:60).

2.2.2. Characteristics of luxury brands

Since luxury as a concept yields multiple definitions, there are various characteristics as well that define luxury brands. This section of the study will present the characteristics of luxury brands according to Keller (2009), as well as identifying some alternative characteristics and perspectives on luxury brands according to other researchers.

Keller (2009) argues that there are ten essential characteristics of luxury brands. The understanding of these characteristics helps marketers to plan suitable marketing strategies for luxury brands. The ten characteristics of luxury brands according to Keller (2009) are the following: *maintaining a premium image, intangible brand associations, experience of purchasing and consuming the luxury product, importance of logos and symbols, importance of secondary associations, distribution strategies, pricing strategies, brand architecture, definition of competition, and legal protection of trademarks*. The first characteristic that Keller (2009) associates with luxury brands is the *maintenance of a premium image*. He further argues that controlling the premium image is a priority. One of the reasons behind this is that a premium image, among other things, is a justification for high price. Keller (2009) further suggests that

extrinsically (i.e. from the customer's perspective) the image is built up around an aura of prestige, and intrinsically (i.e. from the company's perspective) the image is built up around innovative and exceptional elements of the product or service that is offered. Additionally, he argues that the image has to be constructed in such a way that makes it relevant globally.

“Marketers of luxury brands must be diligent in ensuring that the brand's image, especially its more intangible aspects, is strong, consistent and cohesive over time.” (Keller 2009:291)

The second characteristic of a luxury brand is for the brand to be *actively associated with various intangible brand associations*, as well as keeping up an image with a meaning. This includes aspects such as enhancing the heritage of the brand. This is especially true for luxury brands with a strong history and an interesting story to tell, such as Salvatore Ferragamo, among other traditional fashion houses. According to Keller (2009), an important part of these luxury brands is that they take on meaning and even symbolic importance due to their heritage.

“Many luxury brands have storied histories and rich heritages. They also carry symbolic value in their status and achievement.” (Keller 2009:291)

The third characteristic of luxury brands relates to *the experience of purchasing as well as consuming* a product offered by the luxury brand. Keller (2009) argues that the marketing schemes of luxury brands should be designed in such a way that they ensure an enjoyable and satisfying experience when purchasing as well as consuming the product or service. An example could be that customers of Salvatore Ferragamo are guaranteed an exclusive and personalised shopping experience in a Ferragamo store, receiving top-notch service and superior attention from the sales assistants. Hereafter, the experience of wearing the product bought, for instance a pair of high heels, should be as pleasurable. Important aspects in this context are that the design and quality of the products are superior, since a pair of high heels ought to be of high quality made with the best materials to ensure a comfortable experience wearing them. Therefore, the marketers of luxury brands need to design every aspect of the “luxury brand experience” to be as pleasurable as possible in order to maintain an image of prestige and exclusivity.

Keller (2009) continues by suggesting that the fourth characteristic of luxury brands is *the importance of brand logos, symbols, packaging, and fonts, among other visual elements*. These elements are important for the brand to enhance its trademark, since logos or symbols have vast power potential in them. As an example, the logo of Chanel

or the handwritten signature of Salvatore Ferragamo have enormous meaning engraved in them. Even packaging may add huge value to customers since it strengthens the feeling of prestige. Furthermore, the fifth characteristic of luxury brands according to Keller (2009) are “*secondary associations*” such as country of origin, personalities of employees, the use of celebrities in marketing, events, places and further associations that are directly or indirectly linked to the brand. An example of this is for instance the use of celebrities, such as actresses, in perfume or cosmetics advertisements of luxury brands. The positive images of the celebrities are then indirectly linked with the luxury brand, enhancing thus the positive images of the brand (Keller 2009). Furthermore, places such as the headquarters of Salvatore Ferragamo, located in the heart of Florence, in the historical building of Palazzo Spini Feroni adds further value to the luxury brand. The country of origin is often a further feature that adds value. “Made in Italy” is often respected and expected when it comes to the production of Italian luxury goods.

According to Keller (2009), the sixth characteristic of luxury brands is *distribution strategies*. The distribution of products and services has to carefully be planned and controlled since one of the most important aspects of luxury is limitedness and rarity. Kapferer (2012) similarly suggests that scarcity generates value. Therefore, the location of stores and retailing need to be carefully planned in order to avoid the risk of over-visibility, which may deteriorate the associations of rarity and limitedness of the luxury brand (Keller 2009). Furthermore, Kapferer (2012:458) points out that “luxury rarity is built at the retail level”. This implies that selective distribution is important for luxury brands, which is strongly linked to the pricing of luxury goods as well.

“It is a basic law of economics that when demand exceeds supply, price goes up.” (Kapferer 2012:457)

Furthermore, Keller (2009) argues that the seventh characteristic of luxury brands is therefore a careful *pricing strategy*, with limited reductions on prices. As mentioned, luxury brands need to justify their high prices through their fine brands, superior quality of products and services, beautiful packaging, personalised service, a guarantee of the quality of the products, and other elements (Keller 2009). Husic and Cicic (2009:235) mention as well that “higher quality products, fancy packaging, exclusive store locations, higher retail margins, expensive promotions, advertising campaigns, and brand names all contribute to the higher prices of luxury goods”. Luxury products are not similarly price-elastic as some of the non-luxury products are. For this reason it is crucial that the brand stands behind the high price and makes a promise of delivering

multiple levels of value as an exchange for the high price (Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Morley & McMahon 2011). Furthermore, the eighth characteristic of luxury brands according to Keller (2009) is the concept of *brand architecture*. This is an essential part of a luxury brand and needs to be carefully planned. Brand architecture refers to the number of brand components that are sold by the company. In other words, how many different components, same or different, are offered by the brand. This could include a range of different shoe designs, clothing collections, jewellery, eyewear, fragrances, etc. offered by a luxury brand. The brand architecture includes as well the aspect of having multiple lines of collection. For instance, the luxury brand Giorgio Armani has Emporio Armani and Armani Exchange which are more affordable and sportier collections compared to Giorgio Armani. What is more, decisions concerning collaborations between luxury brands and non-luxury brands need to carefully be considered and evaluated, such as Maison Martin Margiela, Isabel Marant or Versace for HM. Elements in brand architecture have to cautiously be designed and implemented not to harm the central luxury brand in question, i.e. Giorgio Armani, Isabel Marant or Maison Martin Margiela, which are high-end luxury brands. Stegemann (2006:62) points out that “if brand extensions are inconsistent, brand confidence will decrease and will lead to brand image dilution”. Therefore the brand architecture and any possible extensions to the brand need to be carefully planned in order not to harm the parent brand.

The ninth characteristic of luxury brands is the *definition of their competition* (Keller 2009). The luxury brand needs to define its competition in wide terms since a luxury brand competes with a various number of other luxury brands from other categories (Keller 2009). What this means is that a customer may consider buying a pair of heels from Ferragamo or alternatively a pair of earrings from Chanel. Hence, the luxury brand competes with other brands in the same category, but also with other brands from other categories (Keller 2009). The tenth and final characteristic of luxury brands according to the author is that luxury brands have to *legally protect their trademarks, creations and designs*, as well as battle any reproductions or imitations, for instance, the copying of designs. This is an increasing challenge and somewhat difficult to manage when it comes to, for instance the black market for fake luxury bags. However, luxury brands should do all they can in order to preserve their trademarks. (Keller 2009)

Keller (2009) suggests that the ten characteristics mentioned above define luxury brands. As mentioned, the characteristics are important for practitioners, especially for marketers, to understand in order to design effective and appropriate marketing strategies for luxury brands. However, as the definition of luxury is not definitive and yields multiple meanings, there are additional characteristics of luxury brands according to other researchers. Some characteristics are similar and some are differing. Nueno and Quelch (1998) state that luxury brands share characteristics such as *consistent delivery of premium quality, a heritage of craftsmanship, an identifiable style or design, a limited production to ensure rarity, a marketing program that supports limited distribution and premium pricing, a worldwide reputation, an association of country of origin that has a reputation as a source of excellence within the related product category, the element of uniqueness present in each product, the capability to time design shifts*, as well as having a *personality a values of the creator of the brand*. These characteristics are similar to Keller's (2009). On the other hand, Ko and Prendergast (2000) simply suggest that luxury brands are characterized by being *prestige*.

“To maintain prestige, luxury brands must sustain high levels of awareness and tightly controlled brand diffusion to enhance exclusivity.” (Ko & Prendergast 2000:124)

Furthermore, according to Li et al. (2012:1517), luxury brands share characteristics such as *“global recognition, core competence, high quality and innovation, powerful advertising, immaculate in-store presentation and superb customer service”*. Ko and Prendergast (2000) also summarize luxury brands as having the ability to *evoke exclusivity*, having a *well-known brand identity*, having the ability to *increase brand awareness and perceived quality*, as well as having the ability to *maintain sales* on a certain level and keeping the *loyalty of the customers*. On the other hand, Vigneron and Johnson (2004) have summarized luxury brands into having five dimensions that are *perceived conspicuousness, perceived uniqueness, perceived quality, perceived extended self* and *perceived hedonism*. Vigneron and Johnson (2004) argue that the dimensions are such that should be established and monitored in order to create successful luxury brands. Further characteristics of luxury brands associated with the *perceived quality* dimension may include *technology, engineering, design, sophistication* and *craftsmanship*, among others (Vigneron & Johnson 2004). As can be seen from the multiple dimensions and characteristics of luxury brands discussed in this section, there are various different perspectives of what constitutes luxury brands. The following section will describe a further intriguing element of luxury brands,

namely the *myth of the brand*, in order to gain an even deeper understanding of luxury brands.

2.3. Myth of the luxury brand

This section will consider a central concept of this study, the *myth of the brand*, in more detail. First of all, Kay (2006:746) interestingly points out Holt's (2004) argument that "strong brands are akin to myths". Luxury brands can be thought as strong brands and can therefore be argued to be associated with the concept of myth. What is more, this argument is supported by the fact that some previous research about luxury brands mentions the concept of myth. More specifically, luxury brands possess an aura of myth around them (Catry 2003; Kapferer & Bastien 2009). It is important for luxury companies to understand what constitutes the founder's myth (Catry 2003), or using an alternative term, the aura of mystery (Kapferer & Bastien 2009) in order to utilise the concept. For the sake of simplicity, the two terms will be combined to be called the *myth of the brand*. Figure 4 below illustrates the elements that are suggested to constitute the myth of the brand. The *myth of the brand* can be suggested to be a combination of various different elements, such as the *heritage, unique history, rarity, originality and authenticity, and nature of a specific luxury brand*.

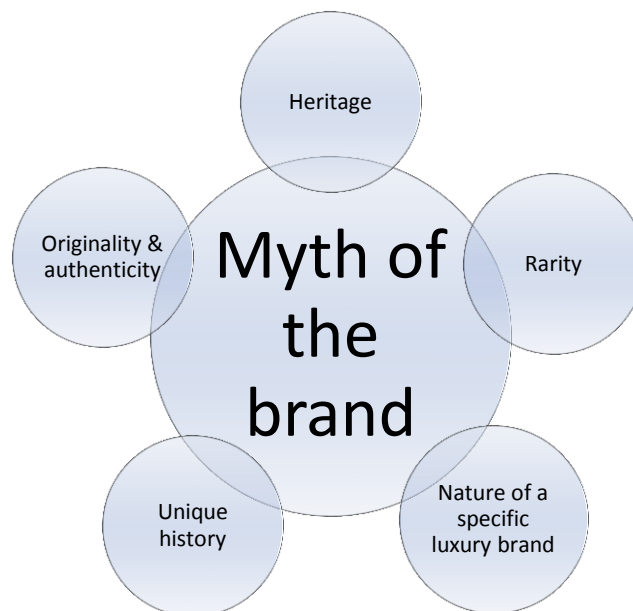


Figure 4 Elements constituting the myth of the brand

Examples of a few luxury brands that can be argued to have an aura of myth around them are Salvatore Ferragamo, Hermès, Chanel, Prada, and Louis Vuitton, among others. *Heritage* is one of the elements of the myth of the brand. Heritage is a versatile concept that is linked with a brand's legacy, history, identity, country or origin, as well as many other elements. In reference to luxury brands, having a heritage gives the opportunity to become a heritage brand. The brands previously mentioned have in common the characteristics of a strong *heritage* and an interesting story to tell. To be more specific, Salvatore Ferragamo made shoes by hand for famous film stars in Hollywood, Louis Vuitton made leather travelling trunks, Hermès made harnesses for carriages, Coco Chanel created hats – just to give a few examples. These brands have held on to their heritages, still today manufacturing the products that made them the luxury companies that they are. Louis Vuitton, for instance, has grown its sales from \$20 million to over \$1.9 billion during a period of about twenty years (Vickers & Renand 2003). It would be more or less appropriate to argue that the company's heritage is one of its most valuable assets. Nevertheless, heritage is *also* one of the key ingredients of the myth of the brand, another valuable asset to luxury brands but slightly more difficult to pin down.

Rarity is a further element of myth. When something is rare, it is limited. Rarity can be in the form of limited edition, limited distribution, etc. According to Vigneron and Johnson (2004), a luxury brand that would be difficult to find because of its uniqueness would be even more valuable compared to a luxury brand that would be easier to find.

“The notion of limited edition may be extended to special orders and series of one: indeed, offering a different product for each customer is a tradition in the upper part of the luxury market.” (Catry 2003:13)

A brand may seem rare since it is not widely available (Catry 2003). As a simple example, Chanel stores are not as frequently seen as H&M stores. This limitedness increases the rarity perception of the brand Chanel, as well as increasing the myth since the brand's rareness increases its exclusivity and superiority. On the contrary, an H&M store found frequently does not signal any type of myth - relatively the opposite. Therefore, the assumption can be made that if Chanel would increase its amount of stores, the rarity and exclusivity would most likely decrease, also diminishing the myth around the brand. As an example of rarity, Chanel N5 perfume was *only* available in the flagship store in Paris on 31 rue Cambon during the primary years (Catry 2003). Today, Chanel N5 perfume is one of the most exclusive perfumes on the perfume market. A further example of a rarity is Salvatore Ferragamo's handmade shoes. The fact that the

shoes were tailored and handmade for the customers made the handmade shoes a rarity - every pair was unique. Even today there is an exclusive possibility to order custom-made shoes from Salvatore Ferragamo or the possibility to buy replicas of a pair that were originally designed for a famous actress, for instance for Judy Garland. However, the custom-made shoes, as well as the replicas of the original designs, have such a high price that not everyone can afford them – a prerequisite for something to stay luxurious. According to Catry (2003), even the products in accessible luxury collections are often adapted in order to keep the products unique. This may help keep a sense of rarity alive, which again increases the uniqueness of the product. An example of affordable luxury would be, for instance, the relatively expensive jeans offered by the Italian brand Diesel. Some of the most custom-made jeans have handmade details, making every pair a little different from the others.

Yet a further element of myth is the *nature of a specific luxury brand*, compared to the nature of non-luxury brands. The word *specific* refers to the aspect that there are different luxury brands with slightly varying interactions with the stakeholders and clients. In other words, the nature of a luxury brand is brand specific. Nevertheless, the *nature of a specific luxury brand* can be argued to mostly appear as a *distance* that the luxury brand keeps to its clients in terms of *staying true to itself*. According to Kapferer and Bastien (2009), a distance that the luxury brand keeps to its clients sustains the “aura of mystery”. This distance can be described as being the result of the brand dominating its client instead of the client dominating the brand, as in traditional marketing.

A certain distance is preserved that is not supercilious or aloof, but nevertheless maintains an aura of mystery.” (Kapferer & Bastien 2009:318)

In other words, client is king in traditional marketing of non-luxury goods because the client can more or less set the terms. In the luxury market, on the other hand, it is more or less the other way around. (Kapferer & Bastien 2009)

“The luxury brand, on the other hand, comes from the mind of its creator, driven by a long-term vision. Yves Saint Laurent himself invented from scratch Opium, as Thierry Mugler invented Angel, two long-lasting worldwide blockbusters, not to mention of the iconic Chanel N5, invented in 1921 at the time marketing did not exist.” (Kapferer & Bastien 2009:317)

The *distance* to the client comes from the argument that the brand has stayed *true to itself*, despite consumer desires or new trends. The brand staying true to itself is related to other characteristics of luxury brands, as well as linked with the other elements of myth. To give an example, *quality* is an important characteristic of Salvatore

Ferragamo shoes, as an important characteristic for most luxury brands. During the time when Ferragamo was building his company, when he lived in the United States, he was recommended to switch into manufacturing with machines instead of making everything by hand (Ferragamo 1985). Ferragamo refused because he felt that switching into machine production during that period of time would decrease the quality of the shoes. Ferragamo stayed true to his own principles of creating shoes of the highest quality, in spite of what some stakeholders recommended him to do, and in spite of the fact that he could have produced the shoes faster and cheaper with machines. However, Ferragamo did not follow the recommendations or wishes of others since he would not risk the quality of the shoes. Ferragamo staying true to himself and his principles can be argued to be one of the reasons why the company is vastly successful today. Therefore, the distance due to the brand dominating its clients, which again is due to the brand staying true to itself, is one of the most important elements of the myth of the brand. The brand is mythical because it rules itself, not letting consumers or other actors on the market change its way of direction.

A further element that constitutes the myth of the brand is *originality*. The concept of originality is very closely related to the heritage of the brand. Luxury brands with a strong heritage have most unlikely never copied the work, designs or ideas of a competitor. Originality can thus also be argued to be a key ingredient of the company heritage.

“The man who is busy copying the work of others has no time to be original for himself.”
(Salvatore Ferragamo 1985:67)

A further common denominator of fashion houses that have started as family owned or small businesses is that they all have a *unique story to tell*, a history and heritage that cannot be copied by anyone else. Hence, originality is a part of the myth since it is one of the most important building blocks of a strong heritage. In this context, originality refers to the fact that a product has been designed and manufactured by hand, using skill and fine craftsmanship.

“Luxury being a social phenomenon, and society being composed of human beings, luxury, whether object or service, must have a strong human content and must be of human origin. --- To quality as luxury, the object or part of it must be handmade—“ (Kapferer & Bastien 2009:315)

The fact that a product is handmade is the ultimate component of *originality* and *authenticity*. Salvatore Ferragamo has evolved into a legendary fashion house by starting as a family owned company where Salvatore himself handmade the shoes. His principles were to make the shoes by hand because no machines could do the work as

well and accurately as he could do by hand. This is the ultimate reason why Ferragamo is an authentic luxury brand – the company produces shoes of superior quality and design, with the same principles as Salvatore had even though machines are a part of the production today. This valuable resource is also one of the reasons for the myth of the brand. Originality is an element of authentic luxury at its finest, difficult to copy and recreate. According to Catry (2003), the aspect of natural luxury, i.e. hand-made goods, should be a central part of marketing strategy. All in all, the elements *heritage, unique history, rarity, originality and authenticity, nature of a specific luxury brand* are tightly intertwined and relatively difficult to separate from one another. However, it is most important to recognise their share in creating the intangible concept of the *myth of the brand*, as well as trying to understand the myth's importance in luxury brand marketing.

2.4. Luxury brand marketing

“The future of luxury brands is in the making.” (Kapferer 2012:461)

Even though the luxury industry is relatively small in terms of the number of actors on the market, the influence and sales of the luxury industry exceeds far beyond its size in terms of actors (Ko & Mehegee 2012). Therefore, there is need for further developments within the theories and knowledge of marketing luxury brands (Ko & Mehegee 2012). According to Kapferer (2012:461), luxury brands should communicate their “heritage, inspiration, cultural references, and stance as an ambassador of cultural excellence”. Luxury brand marketing is a relatively unsettled phenomenon and confusion within this area exists (Miller & Mills 2012; Vickers & Renand 2003). This may be partly caused by the multiple definitions of luxury (Miller & Mills 2012) as well as the subjective nature of the concept of luxury (Geerts & Veg-Sala 2011). If the concept of luxury is unclear then the marketing schemes cannot be straightforward either. Even though the research of luxury brand marketing is limited (Beverland 2004; Fionda & Moore 2009; Miller & Mills 2012), some literature exists and research has, however, been conducted (Catry 2003; Dubois & Paternault 1995; Fionda & Moore 2009; Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Morley & McMahon 2011; Okonkwo 2009; Vickers & Renand 2003). Additionally, the element that makes the topic even more interesting is the fact that many luxury brands have a strong heritage (Keller 2009; Morley & McMahon 2011; Urde et al. 2007), as well as having historical value in fashion.

“The marketing of luxury goods has become increasingly complex, being associated not only with conveying an image of quality, performance and authenticity, but also with attempting to sell an

experience by relating it to the lifestyle construct of the consumers.” (Atwal & Williams 2009:338)

One further mystery is to figure out how effective marketing strategies can be designed and implemented with resources such as heritage for the contemporary consumer (Morley & McMahon 2011).

“It is imperative that luxury brands understand the external and internal emotions created by their heritage and brand position and use these to develop successful marketing strategies.” (Morley & McMahon 2011:5)

Brands should not view heritage as merely being equivalent with the history of the brand, but more as a resource that can be adapted in contemporary contexts (Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Morley & McMahon 2011). This is worth investigating since heritage can be a beneficial source of value if utilised (Urde et al. 2007). A paradox of luxury brand marketing lies within the argument that traditional marketing techniques, including certain mass marketing methods, are argued to be irrelevant and improper for the marketing of luxury brands, even though some luxury brands have gained mass-awareness (Beverland 2004). For instance, Calvin Klein has slowly moved out of the luxury market due to the brand’s use of traditional marketing techniques (Kapferer & Bastien 2008). Atwal and Williams (2009) further support the argument that the marketing of luxury is different from the marketing of other industries due to the differing nature and characteristics of luxury goods. Furthermore, Beverland (2004:463) argues that a brand’s development is “path dependent”, which implies that even marketing strategies have to be tailored and suited for specific luxury brands. However, Morley and McMahon (2011) argue that the brand should aim at connecting with the customers on emotional levels.

“The tension remains for the heritage brand marketer to understand the complexities and advantages that the new models offer, while maintaining a distance, a credibility or an authenticity that still creates profitable and successful marketing strategies.” (Morley & McMahon 2011:7-8)

Atwal and Williams (2009) argue that new technologies aid in implementing experiential marketing for luxury brands:

“This is of particular relevance given the increasing significance of the internet as a communication and distribution channel within the luxury sector.” (Atwal & Williams 2009:344)

Morley and McMahon (2011) similarly suggest that the Internet offers luxury brands the opportunity for interactive and contemporary marketing strategies. However, the notion of online marketing is an example of the controversy concerning luxury brand marketing since online marketing falls into the category of mass marketing – a threat

and an opportunity. However, there is an increasing interest for digital strategies among luxury brands. Ko and Megehee (2012) mention as well that there is growing interest in marketing luxury fashion brands with the help of social media. Morley and McMahon (2011) point out that brands such as Burberry, Ralph Lauren and Hermès have been able to utilise the online world and at the same time they have been able to keep their heritage as a central element. The authors give an example of an online campaign that Ralph Lauren has implemented where consumers can design a customised rugby shirt and share the design, for instance, on Facebook. Similarly, Burberry has launched an innovative opportunity for customers to design their own Burberry trench coat (Morley & McMahon 2011), which can be argued to be the most iconic product of Burberry. Furthermore, the authors point out that Hermès has designed a website where customers can share how they wear their iconic Hermès scarf. Nevertheless, with the help of these innovative online techniques, Burberry, Ralph Lauren, and Hermès have managed to emphasize their heritage through the iconic products but at the same time they have created interesting marketing techniques aimed at contemporary consumers. An additional online marketing strategy that has been implemented by luxury brands is, for instance, the live-streaming of fashion shows (Morley & McMahon 2011). Brands such as Burberry and Prada have implemented this, as well as sharing video-clips and pictures on the social media service Instagram. Additionally, Burberry has implemented the possibility for customers to purchase products directly from the runway through a system called *Moda Operandi*, which develops the availability of the product but at the same time ensures an aura of prestige and exclusiveness since the system has a members-only policy (Morley & McMahon 2011).

“Web experience models have been developed in order to guide the design of virtual experiences.” (Atwal & Williams 2009:344)

An interesting example of a virtual experience given by the luxury brand Valentino is the Valentino Garavani Virtual Museum, an innovative online marketing technique where visitors can take a virtual museum tour on the website (Valentino Garavani Museum). According to Morley and McMahon (2011), online strategies can create exclusive experiences for customers, thus strengthening their position through the heritage by provoking emotions. Another example is that Louis Vuitton has a short video clip on the company’s website where the original product of the company, the travelling trunk, is in focus (Louis Vuitton). Again, the heritage of the brand is emphasized through the video where trunks with different designs from the past years

are shown. The heritage-rich product of the trunk is the central message, yet it is shown using modern technology. Kapferer (2012) argues that the Internet allows luxury brands to capture attention and expose elements of the brand such as depth and unlimited creativity. Even though mass marketing techniques are deemed as inappropriate for luxury brands, Louis Vuitton is an example of a luxury brand that has been able to simultaneously keep up its status and mass market its products by events, mass-advertising, PR-campaigns, etc. (Husic & Cicic 2009). However, it should be noted that Louis Vuitton has exclusive VIP customers that are targeted in different ways, not known to the mass-market (Husic & Cicic 2009).

“Vuitton knows how to create exclusivity at the top, while simultaneously delivering luxury to the population at large”. (Husic & Cicic 2009:235)

As mentioned earlier, luxury brands can be defined with the help of ten characteristics in order for marketers to design effective marketing strategies for luxury brands (Keller 2009). According to Keller (2009), prestigious events are one method of emphasizing the luxury brand equity that strengthens the marketing. Examples of events like these are, for instance, Valentino Garavani's exhibition in Rome in 2007 where his finest creations and drawings were on display. The exhibition was called “Valentino a Roma. 45 years of Style” with hundreds of Valentino's haute couture creations and his original drawings for the public to see. A similar event, on a smaller scale, was an exhibition of Jean Paul Gaultier's creations in Stockholm in 2013. With a more modern approach, the Gaultier exhibition used holography as a technique to display mannequin dolls with 3D faces, wearing Gaultier's creations and at the same time appearing as real people with facial expressions, telling stories about the designer. As a further example of an experiential marketing strategy was Fendi's fashion show held on the Great Wall of China (Daily Mail). The fashion houses understand the power of prestigious events.

As previously pointed out, luxury brands should aim at finding innovative marketing techniques that utilise, for instance the brand's heritage. However, this has to be done with keeping the contemporary consumer in mind at the same time as being aware that the brand's heritage is not static and not equivalent merely to the history. The utilisation of heritage means that the heritage should not only be the past, but also be the present and the future. Furthermore, according to Kapferer and Bastien (2009), the luxury brand should tell a story, whether or not it is authentic. Therefore, a way of appealing to the senses (Geerts & Veg-Sala 2011) and telling the story of a luxury brand (Kapferer & Bastien 2009), as well as utilising the heritage (Urde et al. 2007) could be done by exhibiting the creations of the luxury brand's founder in a museum. A further

element that supports the suggestion of using museums as a marketing channel is the notion of luxury brands being pieces of art instead of products (Kapferer 2012). The suggestion of using a museum as a channel to implement experiential marketing will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.6.3. There is an argument that luxury products should be positioned as authentic pieces of art that have been “blessed by the hand of the designer” (Kapferer 2012:458). Pieces of art are often seen as luxury because of their uniqueness as well as the craftsmanship behind the creation of the piece, similarly as with iconic luxury products. Additionally, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008:214) argue that when luxury brands are associated with art, the “luxury connotations of art spill over from the art onto the brand, favourably influencing consumer evaluations of brand image”. This implies that if a luxury company’s *products* are seen as art, it should also enhance the luxury associations of the *brand* since the concept of art has luxurious connotations similarly as a shoe designer has luxurious connotations as being the creator of the designs.

Stories about brand histories can be effective ways for luxury brands to differentiate and enhance the heritages. Therefore, even visual narrative art (i.e. storytelling) could be thought as a contemporary marketing method for luxury brands (Megehee & Spake 2012) that may enhance the heritage of the brand. Nevertheless, Li et al. (2012:1518) point out Atwal’s and Williams’ (2009) relevant argument that in order for luxury brands to reach long-term success, the consumers have to be connected in some ways to the luxury brands through “brand-related experiences”.

Even though experiential marketing is a relatively new concept in luxury retailing, Atwal and Williams (2009) discuss the relevance of experiential marketing for luxury brands in their article. They suggest that since luxury goods are experiential in nature, it would seem logical to apply experiential marketing strategies for luxury brands. Atwal and Williams (2009:343) also suggest six steps developed by Smith (2003) that help luxury companies to implement experiential marketing strategies: The first step is to *conduct a customer experience audit in order to evaluate the current experience of the brand*. The second step is to *create a brand platform that includes a clear brand-positioning statement*. The third step is to *design the brand experience*. The fourth and fifth steps are to *communicate the brand internally and externally*. The final step is to *monitor the performance* (Atwal & Williams 2009). Atwal and Williams (2009) continue by arguing that experiential marketing would offer the opportunity to benefit from the exceptional nature of luxury consumption.

“Innovative experience design will become an increasingly important component of luxury marketing.” (Atwal & Williams 2009:345)

The concept of experiential marketing will be discussed in greater detail in the following section of this study.

2.5. Experiential marketing

Before exploring the term experiential marketing in more depth, its relevance is important to understand. According to Schmitt (1999), there are three main reasons why the business environment has changed its nature and experiential marketing is becoming more relevant than traditional marketing. Firstly, *information technology drives business*. Devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets, etc. allow for consumers and businesses to share experiences no matter where they are in the world in a matter of seconds. Secondly, *brands are everywhere*. The world is ruled by brands, making customer experiences more important since product features and quality are taken for granted. Thirdly, since everything is branded, everything is in the form of *entertainment or communication*. Companies provide entertainment for their customers, and communication between customers and companies is direct. (Schmitt 1999)

The three reasons above are the arguments that Schmitt (1999) present for the relevancy of experiential marketing. The author further argues that traditional marketing strategies were developed for the industrial age, when product attributes and rational decision making by the consumer were in focus. Traditional marketing strategies are still efficient, but experiential marketing is needed as well. Schmitt (1999:60) outlines four key characteristics in experiential marketing that make it distinct from traditional marketing, specifically a “*focus on consumer experiences, treating consumption as a holistic experience, recognizing both the rational and the emotional drivers of consumption and using eclectic methodologies*”.

Schmitt (1999:57) describes what consumers seeking experiences crave by stating that:

“What they want is products, communications, and marketing campaigns that dazzle their senses, touch their hearts, and stimulate their minds. They want products, communications, and campaigns that they can relate to and that they can incorporate into their lifestyles. They want products, communications, and marketing campaigns to deliver an experience”.

What is more, classical economist theories focus on the rationality of consumers in terms of finding solutions for problems when purchasing goods or services. However, recent developments on theories have taken into account the utilization of intangible

components linked to emotional value (Gentile, Spiller & Noci 2007). According to Keller and Lehmann (2006:742), “experiential marketing is an important trend in marketing thinking”. Atwal and Williams (2009) further recognize the growing trend of experiential marketing in most of the segments of the global economy.

According to Yuan & Wu (2008), customers desire experiences that they have never had instead of buying products that they do not have. Contemporary consumers seek further value in addition to the products or services when buying from a firm – they seek experiences. According to Addis and Holbrook (2001) marketing managers need to recognize the experiential perspective in order to understand consumer behaviour. Seeking experiences more than before is partly due to the evolution of the economy into an “experience economy” – customers not only pay attention to products and services but the attention is on seeking valuable experiences (Yuan & Wu 2008:389). Simply, the importance of the experience economy is increasing (Same & Larimo 2012).

“To develop marketing strategies to focus on creation of valuable experiences is becoming a key point for businesses’ success in the experience economy.” (Yuan & Wu 2008:389)

Schmitt (1999) shares similar thoughts as Yuan & Wu (2008):

“The degree to which a company is able to deliver a desirable customer experience – and to use information technology, brands, and integrated communications to do so – will largely determine its success in the global marketplace of the new millennium.” (Schmitt 1999:57)

It can be an opportunity for companies to build long-lasting relationships since positive experiences can lead to bonds between the customer and the company. In fact, creating superior customer experiences is one of the most important goals in the contemporary retailing environment (Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman, Roggeveen, Tsiros & Schlesinger 2009). Experiential marketing is a relatively new concept but has, nonetheless, been applied to retailing, branding and event marketing (Yuan & Wu 2008). According to Maghnati, Ling and Nasermodeli (2012), marketing practices have evolved from the past decades from a focus on product and brand management to creating customer relationships and building customer experiences with the help of experiential marketing strategies. In other words, creating experiences for customers has become important in all industries, especially in retailing where competition is fierce. Yuan and Wu (2008) point out that the main component of experiential marketing is the *experience*. However, the term experience can be interpreted in various ways. According to Same and Larimo (2012), the term experience can be used as a noun when it refers to something that affects feelings, knowledge or skill of doing, seeing or feeling things. On other hand, experience can be an adjective, meaning that something is based

on experience (Same & Larimo 2012). The authors also mention that experiential marketing aids in creating experiences and feelings, making experiences the central component of experiential marketing.

2.5.1. Elements of experiential marketing

According to Gentile et al. (2007), the aspect of experience is increasingly essential in determining how successful the company's offering is.

“The basis of experiential marketing is that it occurs face-to-face through a personal experience using the service or product or through a demonstration.” (Heitzler, Asbury & Kusner 2008:188)

Gentile et al. (2007) argue that there are six experiential components that create the customer experience, namely a *sensorial component*, an *emotional component*, a *cognitive component*, a *pragmatic component*, a *lifestyle component* and a *relational component* (Gentile et al. 2007). These components aid in describing how experiences can be created for customers and therefore they are important in understanding how experiential marketing can be utilised. The *sensory component* refers to an experience that affects the senses, for instance by offering the customer the chance to hear, see, touch, smell or taste. Gentile et al. (2007) give an example of the Lush stores where customers can use the sense of smelling as an experience-enhancing component. The *emotional component* refers to the production of emotions and feelings with the offering and therefore as well with the company, for instance a Happy Meal offered by McDonald's with a present inside. The *cognitive component* refers to the element of activating customers to use their creativity, for instance, in problem solving situations. The *lifestyle component*, on the other hand, refers to experiencing the values and beliefs of a company and adopting a similar lifestyle that is offered by the company. A company that offers a lifestyle is, for instance, Ralph Lauren (Husic & Cicic 2009). The final experiential component according to Gentile et al. (2007) is the *relational component* that refers to the factor of experiencing together with other people who share a similar passion, such as in Disneyworld. This may lead to the creation of communities or fan-clubs (i.e. Ferrari fan-club). Here, the previously named lifestyle component is important in order to feel a sense of belonging to a certain social group (Gentile et al. 2007).

Schmitt (1999) has also developed a similar framework (Strategic Experiential Modules – SEMs) even earlier for experiential marketing that includes five elements, specifically *sensory experiences (sense)*, *affective experiences (feel)*, *creative cognitive experiences*

(think), physical experiences, behaviours and lifestyle (act), and social-identity experiences (relate). Experiential marketing campaigns can be planned with all the elements or only using one or a few at a time. The element of *sense* refers to creating sensory experiences with the help of sight, touch, taste, smell and sound. The element of *feel* refers to creating experiences by appealing to customers' feelings and emotions, when again *think* refers to engaging customers in problem-solving experiences. *Relate* refers to experiences where the customers feel a part of some sub group, or wants to relate to a certain group. This element also includes the previous aspects of *sense, feel, think* and *act*. (Schmitt 1999)

Additionally, Schmitt (1999) further suggests that the implementation of the SEMs framework (*sense, feel, act, relate* and *think*) occurs by *experience providers* (ExPros). According to Schmitt (1999:63), these experience providers include “*communications, visual and verbal identity and signage, product presence, co-branding, spatial environments, electronic media, and people*”. What its more, the ExPros need to be managed coherently in an integrated way, consistently over time and making sure that each ExPro is used to its fullest potential for creating an experience to the customers (Schmitt 1999).

“Experiential marketing is thus about taking the essence of a product and amplifying it into a set of tangible, physical and interactive experiences that reinforce the offer.” (Atwal & Williams 2009:341)

According to Yuan and Wu (2008), businesses who adopt experiential marketing see it as a tactic where they stage the physical environment and the processes surrounding it in a manner that the customers can experience it. Experiential marketing could hypothetically be thought as a theatre, the customers being the audience, and all the people involved with the company (i.e. the stakeholders) being the cast. The experience will be different for every customer depending on the background, interests and other factors. However, Same and Larimo (2012) stress that experiential marketing is created by the experiences, not by mere activities that are experiential in nature.

“It is those companies that can deliver the right experience to customers that will succeed in the global marketplace today.” (Ixma – International Experiential Marketing Association)

To give some concrete examples, experiential marketing can also use tactics such as *giving out samples* (e.g. Red Bull car driving around and giving out free cans of Red Bull), *free trial periods* (access to Spotify for 30 days for free), *organizing events* (Red Bull City Flight) or *tours* where the customers can use the products or services that are being marketed, and interact with employees that sell and market the products

(Heitzler et al. 2008). Before discussing the suggestion of a museum being an experiential marketing channel, the term museum will shortly be defined and discussed in the following section.

2.6. Museums

According to Kirezli (2011), the role of museums has not been completely clarified but the author argues that museums are not conventional public organisations. It should be noted that there are public as well as private museums. In this context the general discussion of museum applies to both public *and* private museums. The reason for this is that the museum relevant for this study is a private museum and many of the motivations for a private museum are similar to the motivations of a public museum – to share knowledge and information about a subject, as well as to entertain, among other things.

Kirezli (2011:173) states that the purpose of a museum is for the public to “explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment”. Dirsehan and Yalcin (2011:78) argue that “museums are institutions that keep alive the cultural assets of societies.” Furthermore, Kirezli (2011) argues that the visitor is required to have an amount of education and understanding in order to enjoy the museum experience since after the tour the visitor has nothing but memories with the tangible items that were on display. In other words, the visitor enjoys the experience more when he/she has some background information on the objects that are displayed. What is more, the concept of nostalgia has become increasingly interesting, suggesting that the relevancy of museums may increase as well.

“Today, nostalgia is big business.” (Goulding 2001:565)

According to Dirsehan & Yalcin (2011), the nature of museums is such that a certain type of experience is provided for the visitor. This relates to the interesting topic of experiential marketing where the customer can experience an event with the help of senses. Experiential marketing aims at creating experiences with customers that builds emotional bonds between them (Dirsehan & Yalcin 2011). Therefore museums are organisations where the visitor can experience the surroundings with his/her senses. Dirsehan & Yalcin (2011) separate between two types of museums - museums that utilise experience as a competitive advantage, called *dynamic museums*, and museums that do not utilise experience for differentiation, called *static museums*. In other words, static museums are ones that offer the same experience to visitors at all times, but

dynamic museums change the experience they offer (Dirsehan & Yalcin 2011), for instance, by varying exhibitions or boosting the experience by new technology or marketing strategies.

Nevertheless, the function of museums should be defined. Even though there are different kinds of museums, the concept of a museum in this context refers to traditional museums, being either public or private, that preserves and exhibits historical artefacts for the public benefit. According to Kirezli (2011), museums offer a few different services to the public. First of all, museums preserve *cultural heritage*. This can be thought as the traditional task of a museum. However, Kirezli (2011) points out that the staff should not keep away historical artefacts from the visitors for the sake of preserving them. Secondly, the author argues that museums should support the research and work that archaeologists and historians conduct in terms of finding *new historical artefacts*. Thirdly, the author argues that museums need to *provide* the visitors with *information* concerning the objects that are on display by specialists, historians and researchers. Fourthly, museums should *act as educational and cultural centres* and thus educate students and children with the contents of the museum. The fifth and final role is to have *supporting services* available to enhance the museum experience, such as audio-visual devices, animations, technology, etc. (Kirezli 2011). For instance, the holography technique used at the Jean Paul Gaultier exhibition in Stockholm is an example of an audio-visual technique that enhances the experience of the visitors. Furthermore, even museum shops and cafés are important experience-enhancing elements (Kirezli 2011). The author further states that museums should maintain and increase their value with two specific elements. Firstly, museums should have a wide range of products on display in order to keep the attention of the customers but as well to draw attention to new and potential customers. The second element is to keep the displayed objects attractive. This includes evaluating the products according to their characteristics, such as maturity stage, and thus designing the exhibitions accordingly. (Kirezli 2011)

In addition, Kirezli (2011) argues that the location of the museum is an important aspect. A central location that is convenient for visitors may even be a competitive advantage for a museum. For instance, Salvatore Ferragamo Museum is located in Palazzo Spini Feroni in Florence, which is a grand and medieval building with historical value for the city of Florence. The headquarters of Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A. and a flagship store are located in the building as well. The location is not only convenient but

also historically significant, adding value to the museum experience. Visitors of the Salvatore Ferragamo museum can visit the store afterwards and even buy products directly after the museum visit if they wish to. This makes the museum visit even more memorable and adds value to the experience. Kirezli (2011) further suggests additional features that are important for museums, namely their promotion, pricing strategies, people that work there, the process of the museum experience, as well as the earlier mentioned physical support in terms of technology, design, etc. (Kirezli 2011).

What is more, there are different types of museums. According to Dirsehan and Yalcin (2011), museums can be classified according to their contents, on their civilization or on their era. For instance, museums classified according to their contents can have anthropological, historical, artistic, natural or specialized content (Dirsehan & Yalcin 2011). The museum that is analysed in this study can be described as a specialized museum since the Salvatore Ferragamo museum exhibits the original creations and designs of the shoemaker.

2.6.1. *Luxury fashion exhibitions*

Some fashion luxury brands have museums and some have exhibitions in public museums. The idea of luxury brand museums is to show the creations, designs and often decades of work of the designers. It remains unclear whether the museums are intentionally planned to be a part of the marketing strategies of the luxury brands.

As mentioned previously, the case company in this study is Salvatore Ferragamo, an Italian fashion house, with its own museum in the heart of Florence. Gucci is another luxury brand with a museum also located in Florence. Even Cartier has produced a temporary museum located within the Forbidden City in Beijing, China (Kapferer 2012). Interestingly, a substitute for a physical museum is a virtual museum, as the Valentino Garavani Virtual Museum offered by the Italian fashion house Valentino. The website offers the visitor to take a 3D-tour of the virtual museum as well as listening to an audio speaker. (Valentino Garavani Museum)

Additionally, some fashion luxury brands do not have private museums but instead organize exhibitions in different locations. For instance, the Jean Paul Gaultier exhibition, called “From the Sidewalk to the Catwalk!” was displayed at the Architecture and Design Centre in Stockholm, Sweden, for a few months. The exhibition included many of the original clothes as well as the famous corsets that

Gaultier became famous for since he designed many of them for Madonna. Furthermore, the fashion house Chanel had a collaborative project called “The Northern Women of Chanel” with two photographers, who shot pictures of Nordic and Baltic supermodels wearing Karl Lagerfeld’s creations for Chanel. A book was produced as well as photography exhibitions were held in the Nordic Countries (Laboratory). Furthermore, Valentino Garavani organized an exhibition in Rome, Italy, in 2007 to celebrate the 45th anniversary of his fashion house. Furthermore, the Comité Colbert members, such as Chanel, Dior and Lacoste, organized a four-month exhibition in New York as early as in 1989 to create awareness (Dubois & Paternault 1995).

These examples indicate that fashion luxury brand museums, exhibitions and special events are not a new phenomenon for fashion houses. Therefore, the topic of luxury brand museums is relevant. What is more, the topic is interesting from the perspective of whether the marketers of fashion houses recognize the full potential of museums and exhibitions as marketing channels in terms of enhancing their heritage, authenticity, as well as other characteristics, in order to enhance the myth of the brand. The following section will shortly introduce how a museum experience could enhance the myth of the luxury brand.

2.6.2. *Enhanced myth in museum*

Hede and Thyne (2012) found in their research that iconic and authentic artefacts displayed in a museum create an authentic museum experience for the visitors. In other words, the authentic feeling is strengthened during a museum visit if the museum displays iconic and authentic objects, in comparison with inauthentic replicas (Hede & Thyne 2012). This means that the visitors will gain the feeling of authenticity and originality when they take a tour in a museum displaying authentic objects. For instance, a visitor of Salvatore Ferragamo Museum will be able to examine the authentic creations of the designer. The visitor will thus gain a feeling of authenticity (Hede & Thyne 2012) and this feeling can be argued to strengthen the authenticity of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo since the museum is exclusively devoted to that brand. The strengthened feeling of authenticity, in turn, can be argued to strengthen the myth of the brand since authenticity is one of the components of myth. What is more, an enhanced feeling of authenticity even strengthens the heritage since authenticity is as well an element of heritage. This, on the other hand, is valuable for luxury brands with a heritage since as Urde et al. (2007) argues, heritage can be a method for

differentiation and therefore a source of a sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, if a museum enhances authenticity, which in turn strengthens the heritage, the brand utilises the heritage-factor as a differentiation method. Hence, luxury brands with a heritage could utilise a museum as an experiential marketing channel in order to create and maintain the heritage as a competitive advantage. Furthermore, Kapferer (2012) has suggested that luxury brands should have an aura of eternity around their iconic products. This aura of eternity can be achieved by exhibiting the iconic products in a museum that are available for the public to see.

As mentioned, museum visits are experiences. Experiences are, among other things, composed of feelings since it is difficult to experience something without feeling anything. Dirsehan and Yalcin (2011) recognize this thought in their article. In other words, a museum is a place where a luxury brand can emphasize certain elements, such as the story of the brand by making strategical decisions about what objects to display and how they are displayed in the museum. This means that the objects displayed act as stimuli for feelings and therefore experiences.

“Related with their role of service experience consumption, museums can be defined as experience-centered places that offer both emotional and cognitive stimuli.” (Dirsehan & Yalcin 2011:79)

Furthermore, the concept of rarity, as one of the ingredients of the myth of a luxury brand, can also be enhanced through museums.

“Rarity perception is also enhanced when it is materialised in museums or heritage centres.” (Catry 2003:15)

As mentioned previously, rarity is a characteristic of a luxury brand as well as being a component of myth. As Catry (2003) mentions, rarity can be enhanced through museums. Objects that are showcased bring about an aura of prestige and superiority since the objects are valuable enough to be displayed, which enhances their rarity. Additionally, according to Catry (2003), uniqueness of a brand can be induced by telling stories about brand origins. A heritage-rich brand like Salvatore Ferragamo can tell the history of the brand effectively with the help of a museum, especially when the museum is located in a heritage-rich location beside the headquarters.

2.6.3. *Museum as a channel for experiential marketing*

Since a museum may enhance the myth of the brand by offering an experience for the visitor, it should be discussed how this strengthens the marketing of the brand. The

museum can be suggested to benefit the marketing strategy from an experiential perspective since the museum visit is an experience where the visitor creates his or her own experience through hearing, seeing and feeling the heritage and history, among other elements of the brand at the museum. According to Gentile et al. (2007), a company that adopts an experiential marketing approach provides the customer with a platform and raw materials, which are then used by the customer to construct his or her own experience. A museum can be thought as the platform provided by the firm and the raw materials can be thought to be the objects displayed in the museum, as well as the audio-visual elements and other experience-enhancing components. Experiential marketing suits the concept of a museum well since experiential marketing utilises the senses to create bonds with customers, similarly as museums do since the visitors of museums use their senses during the visit to create an experience for themselves.

“It is clear that the fact that many luxury goods are almost always experiential puts luxury marketers in a unique position to apply the principles of experiential marketing to their activities.” (Atwal & Williams 2009:342)

Moreover, luxury brands could utilise their heritage in their marketing strategies, keeping the contemporary consumer, i.e. one that craves experiences, in mind. In other words, when a visitor of a museum receives a customised experience due to the fact that everyone experiences subjectively in terms of seeing, feeling and hearing (depending as well on previous knowledge of the exhibition), the brand has potential to add value to the “experience of authenticity” where iconic products are on display and make the experience as memorable as possible. This can be done with additional features, as an example with special technology such as holography or short movies, to enhance the “sensory appeal” and create even stronger emotional bonds with the visitor.

What further supports the suggestion of creating an experience with the help of a museum is the marketers’ search of “increasingly embracing alternative forms of brand building” (Keller & Lehmann 2006:744). Therefore, the suggestion of using a museum as a channel to implement experiential marketing is relevant since it can be thought as a method for brand building, for instance, by associating luxury brands to art. The connotations of luxury and art (Kapferer 2012) support the suggestion of displaying iconic objects in a museum since the luxurious connotations of art spill over to the products. Experiential marketing can be applied well to the marketing of art since the nature of art is experiential in itself (Petkus 2004). Luxury products have been associated with art since many of the handcrafted luxury products are creations of the designer, as for instance a painting is a creation of a painter. Therefore, if luxury brands

offer products that are associated with art in terms of being authentic creations of a designer, one could think that an experiential marketing method for luxury brands is a relevant approach. Petkus (2004) outlines a framework with four dimensions of experience developed by Pine and Gilmore (1999), which are *entertainment*, *education*, *aesthetic* and *escapist*. Petkus (2004) refers to the dimensions as tools that can be used to enhance the experience of art and thus function as experiential marketing. The dimensions can be applied to a museum to enhance the experiences it offers to the visitors. For instance, a museum could organize opening parties before a new exhibition, or write creative newsletters to enhance the *entertainment* aspect of the museum experience (Petkus 2004). Museums also educate the visitors by providing information about the exhibitions and by having guided tours. Museums often provide visitors with valuable information on the exhibited objects and this information can be, for instance, be culture-rich information. This dimension of *educating* the visitors further enhances the experience. The *aesthetic* dimension could refer to the authentic objects displayed in a museum, for instance the original Salvatore Ferragamo shoes. On the other hand, the *escapist* dimension in reference to a museum could be that the visitor can take part in some ways in the exhibition. These experiences in a museum could be utilised in order to enhance the myth of the brand and consequently to strengthen the marketing of the brand.

As a final positive impact on the marketing schemes of luxury brands, Dirsehan and Yalcin (2011) suggest that museums should not only create unforgettable and positive experiences for the visitors for their satisfaction, but also in order to create positive word of mouth. Hence, if a museum exhibits the creations of a fashion house, then the satisfied visitor of the museum may spread positive word of mouth about the luxury brand as well. The museum experience needs to be exceptional in order for the visitors to spread positive word of mouth and repeat their visit (Leighton 2007). Word of mouth is a powerful marketing method that is difficult to control and very valuable if it is positive. Thus, brands should keep this aspect in mind when offering a memorable museum experience – it may be a more effective marketing channel for the brand from many perspectives.

2.7. Theoretical model

This section will introduce a theoretical model that the author of the study has developed. As the aim of this thesis is to analyse how a museum will enhance the myth

of the luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo through specific elements, it is appropriate to suggest a model that illustrates this aim. As a reminder, the research questions were the following:

1. How does a visit to Salvatore Ferragamo museum enhance the myth of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo?
2. How does the enhanced myth strengthen the marketing of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo?

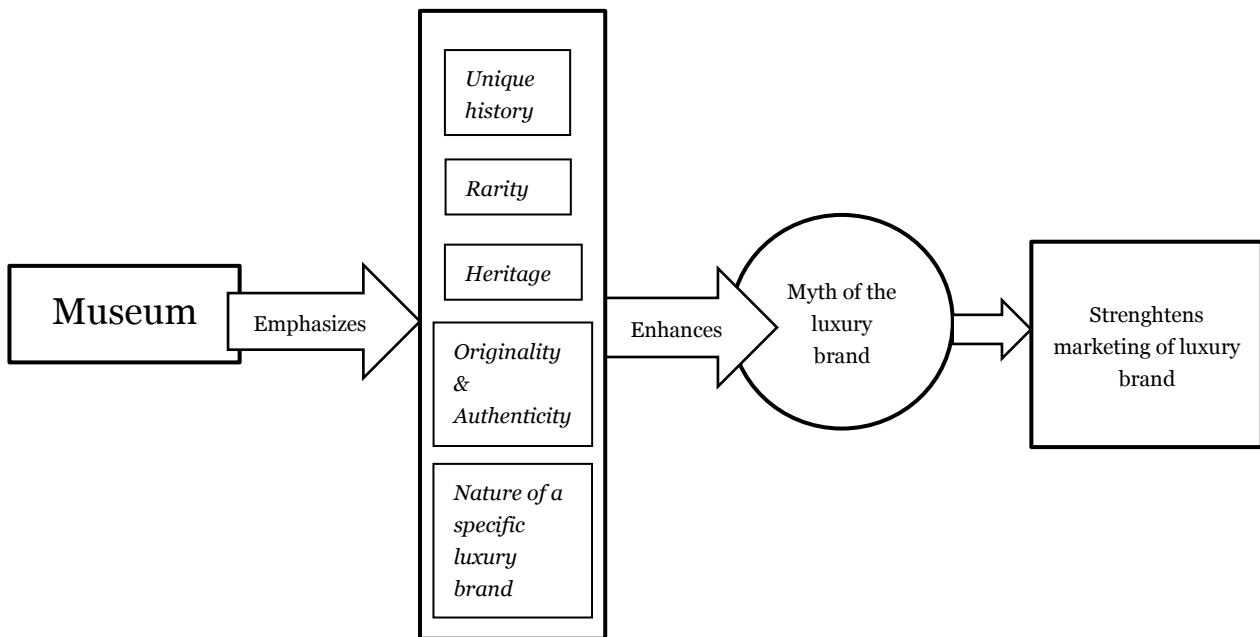


Figure 5 Theoretical model of a museum as an experiential marketing channel

As previously mentioned, luxury brands should be cautious in using traditional marketing techniques in order not to risk losing their exclusivity and status. Additionally, traditional marketing techniques are more or less outdated in the current experience-economy where customers seek more than just products and services. Therefore, the suggestion of utilising experiential marketing for luxury brands with the help of a museum is relevant and suitable for the contemporary consumer as well as for the luxury brand that needs alternative marketing techniques. Through experiential marketing implemented through a museum, the luxury brand may be able to emphasize the elements that create the myth (*heritage, unique history, rarity,*

originality and authenticity, nature of a specific luxury brand) and appeal to the museum visitors and customers of the luxury brand with senses such as seeing, hearing, smelling and even possibly with touching. This type of experiential marketing creates an experience that may create a tie (Dirsehan & Yalcin 2011) between the luxury brand and the visitor of the luxury brand museum. Bonds between the customer and the brand may increase top-of-mind or even lead to loyalty. Therefore, the marketing of the brand can be argued to be strengthened if the visitor, being a customer or potential customer of the brand, experiences the museum visit in a positive way.

The theoretical model illustrated in figure 5 will aid in answering the aim and research questions in this study. The model suggests that a museum will emphasize the elements that constitute the myth of the luxury brand (*heritage, unique history, rarity, originality and authenticity, nature of a specific luxury brand*), which will consequently enhance the myth of the brand. Finally, the enhanced myth will strengthen the marketing of the luxury brand since the brand has been able to utilise the elements of myth. Hence, a luxury brand's museum with heritage-rich objects displayed will be a platform for experiential marketing. The visitors, as well as current customers and potential customers of the luxury brand, will gain an enhanced feeling of myth of the brand through the experience of visiting the museum. Through experiencing the world of Salvatore Ferragamo, the myth of the brand will be enhanced. This, in turn, will strengthen the marketing of the luxury brand since it strengthens and activates the heritage-factor, as well as by building bonds with the help of experiences between the customers and the company.

2.8. Chapter summary

The theoretical framework has been introduced and this section will summarize the most important concepts from the chapter. The theoretical framework discussed an important concept such as brand heritage that may be a valuable resource and lead to a sustainable competitive advantage if utilised (Urde et al. 2007). Furthermore, the concept of luxury was pondered upon with its multiple definitions, with some components being agreed upon, such as luxury being context and person specific. Additionally, luxury brands were discussed and their intangible elements, such as their ten characteristics according to Keller (2009) were examined. The ten characteristics are important to understand in order to design effective marketing strategies for luxury brands. What is more, the concept about the myth of the luxury brand was discussed, as

well as the elements that compose the myth. These elements included *heritage, unique history, rarity, originality and authenticity, nature of a specific luxury brand*. The elements of myth are the core resources for luxury brands to gain sustainable competitive advantages since they are more or less impossible to copy and recreate. Luxury brand marketing was also discussed as an unsettled phenomenon, but the concept of utilising heritage and making it a part of marketing strategies for the modern consumer in contemporary contexts was identified. Also, the customers' need for experiences has awakened the discussion about the concept of experiential marketing, a way in which to awaken, for instance, feelings through experiences and consequently build a bond between the brand and the customer. A museum was suggested as an experiential marketing channel for luxury brands since it is a way for luxury brands to emphasize and activate their heritage and thus enhance the myth of the brand. This in turn will strengthen the overall marketing strategy of the luxury brand by having the museum as one channel – an experiential channel. A theoretical model was developed that illustrates the suggestion of the museum being a myth-enhancing experience that strengthens the brand's marketing.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter of the study will present the method chosen to conduct the empirical research. As a reminder, and in order to explain the appropriateness of the methodology, the aim of the study is to analyse how a museum will enhance the myth of the luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo and how does the enhanced feeling of myth strengthen the marketing of the brand. This aim will be studied by examining how the elements constituting the myth (*heritage, unique history, rarity, originality and authenticity, nature of a specific luxury brand*) are emphasized during a museum visit, and how the enhanced myth can lead to strengthened marketing of the brand. The assumption is that if the elements constituting the myth are emphasized, then consequently the myth of the brand will be enhanced.

The research is conducted with a single case study, namely the luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo. Interestingly, a case study strategy allows challenging some existing theory or even discovering new research questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012). Furthermore, a single case study allows for the inspection of a specific phenomenon that possibly has never been considered before (Saunders et al. 2012). This is more or less the purpose of this study – to understand how a museum can act as an experiential marketing channel for a luxury brand by enhancing the myth of the brand. A case study has a few advantages. A research conducted with a case study can include different research methods, from qualitative to quantitative methods or even a mixture of both, and case studies are often exploratory or explanatory in nature (Saunders et al 2012). Furthermore, a case study gives the opportunity to triangulate data collection methods. In other words, multiple techniques can be utilised to collect data, for instance by using interviews, observation, documentary analysis and questionnaires (Eisenhardt, 1989; Saunders et al. 2012).

“A case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings.” Eisenhardt 1989:534)

Since the focus in this study is on how a museum will enhance the myth of the brand, the emphasis is on the subjective experiences of visiting a museum. Thus, a qualitative approach has been chosen since studying subjective experiences requires in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The research method chosen will be described in more detail in the following section, as well as the research design, choice of respondents, interviews, and the quality of the research.

3.1. Research method

Qualitative research methods have dominated in the research process of case studies, even though quantitative methods have also been relevant (Gummesson 2000). In this study a *qualitative* method has been chosen to conduct the research. As mentioned, the aim of this study is to consider how a museum will enhance the myth of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo and how the enhanced myth can thus strengthen the marketing of the brand. Therefore the interest lies in gaining an understanding of the thoughts and reflections about the experiences of the museum visitors. Since experiences have multiple dimensions in terms of experiencing with various senses (seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and touching), a qualitative approach seemed appropriate. A qualitative approach gives the chance for an understanding of a subjective phenomenon, which in this case is a museum experience. A qualitative method is suitable since it gives the researcher the chance to gain deeper insights about a phenomenon compared to using a quantitative method. As the research includes a case study, it is suitable to triangulate research techniques in order to ensure that the data collected is actually telling what the researcher thinks it is telling (Saunders et al. 2012). Therefore, in addition to interviewing being the main method to collect primary data, observation is going to take place as an additional data collection technique at the museum and field notes are going to be taken during the observation. What is more, the researcher had access to secondary data, in the form of guest book entries. The guest book allowed gaining insights into the feelings and thoughts of previous visitors. 43 documented guest book entries were photographed and used as additional secondary data to support the primary data. The guest book entries were taken from the Salvatore Ferragamo museum guest book and the entries are dated between June 2013 and March 2014. The entries were chosen subjectively by the researcher depending on how information-rich they were, as well as the language that they were written in. All entries that were chosen were written in English except one that was written in Finnish. According to Saunders et al. (2012), collecting secondary data in addition to primary data may be useful in order to answer the research questions.

3.2. Research design

Since this study seeks to find out what specific aspects of the museum enhances the myth of the brand, deeper insights were necessary and therefore *semi-structured interviews* with open-ended questions were used as a research method to collect primary data. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a primary method to collect

data in order to grasp information about different themes that were decided upon beforehand, as well as to have the opportunity to have relatively free-flowing conversations with the respondents and use probing as a further method to gain deeper insights (Saunders et al. 2012).

An *emotionalist perspective* was taken on the data collected from the semi-structured interviews. The emotionalist perspective implies that rapport should be created with the respondents in order for them to tell about their experiences as freely as possible. Most importantly the emotionalist perspective implies that no data collected is the explicit “truth”, but instead that respondents experience things subjectively depending on their social surroundings, as opposed to a positivist perspective where the data collected is believed to be facts and the ultimate “truth”. (Silverman 2011)

Furthermore, when the semi-structured interviews were conducted, an interview-guide was used. However, the interviews were tailored when needed depending on the specific respondents. This was appropriate since the respondents were visitors of the museum who were mostly tourists of different nationalities with different ways of expressing themselves. Open-ended questions are important in order to encourage the respondents to reply with extensive answers and to have the chance to describe events freely (Saunders et al. 2012). Open-ended questions are also effective in collecting “an authentic understanding of people’s experiences” (Silverman 2011:44). According to Patton (2002:354), truly open-ended questions give respondents the chance to reply with “that person’s full repertoire of possible responses that are most salient.”

“The truly open-ended question permits those being interviewed to take whatever direction and use whatever words they want to express what they have to say.” (Patton 2002:354)

Moreover, semi-structured interviews allowed probing to take place. Probing is a method to ask follow-up questions about a specific topic during the interview or to gain a deeper explanation on a specific issue, or alternatively to rephrase a question if the answer to a previously asked question does not reveal enough information (Saunders et al. 2012). Probing was especially useful for this research since respondents were from different countries who did not all have English as their first language, which was the language that the interviews were conducted in. Therefore probing allowed the researcher to, for instance, rephrase questions if respondents did not understand them the first time. According to Patton (2002), six different types of questions can be asked during an interview, namely questions about *experiences and behaviour*, about *opinions and values*, *feelings*, *knowledge*, *sensory questions*, and *background*

questions. These different types of questions help the interviewer to be specific about what exactly is being asked and this aids the respondent as well to reply clearly (Patton 2002).

The research in this study has an *exploratory* nature since the focus of the research is to gain an understanding on how a museum enhances the myth of a brand and consequently how this enhanced myth can strengthen the marketing of the brand. When conducting an exploratory research, the aim is to find out what is happening and gain deeper insights into a specific area of interest (Saunders et al. 2012). Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2012) point out that an exploratory research often begins with a broader focus and then becomes narrower as the research progresses. In this research the focus was firstly on understanding how the museum enhances the myth of the brand and secondly to understand how the enhanced myth can strengthen the marketing of the brand. In other words, as the research progressed, the focus became narrower in terms of first answering how the museum can enhance the myth and then to answering how the marketing of the brand is strengthened. Moreover, the time horizon of this research can be described as *cross-sectional*. A cross-sectional perspective implies that the research involves studying a specific phenomenon at a specific time, as opposed to a longitudinal perspective when a phenomenon is studied during a longer period of time (Saunders et al. 2012).

During the actual data collection process, the interviewer was present at the museum and asked whether visitors of the museum were interested in taking part in the interview after they had taken a tour of the museum. The research was conducted in the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum in Palazzo Spini Feroni in Florence, Italy, during March 2014 during a time period of 3 weeks. The interviews were conducted in the museum directly after the visitors had finished their museum tour in order to grasp fresh reflections about the museum experiences. The question concerning whether they would like to participate was mostly asked after the tour had been taken, however sometimes the question was asked before the tour was taken while the visitors were buying entrance tickets. The interviews were recorded and notes were taken to highlight points that the respondents emphasized.

3.3. Interview guide

According to Patton (2002:343), an interview guide is necessary to ensure that the “same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed. The interview

guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject". A further important advantage of having an interview guide is that it allows the interviewer to evaluate how to use the limited amount of time with the respondents (Patton 2002).

The interview guide was designed in accordance with the aspect that the interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. More importantly, the interview guide was designed by keeping the aim of the study in mind. Furthermore, the questions in the interview guide were designed with Patton's (2002) six different types of questions in mind in order for the respondents to understand the questions clearly and for the interviewer to understand the answers clearly. Using Patton's (2002) guidelines also helped the process of analysing the data. As a reminder, the different types of questions are about *experiences and behaviour*, about *opinions and values, feelings, knowledge, sensory questions*, and *background questions* (Patton 2002). Patton (2002) suggests that the questions are sequenced in a certain manner in order for the interview to fit the chosen format, in this case the open-ended interview with predetermined topics. Patton (2002) suggests that the interview begins with a question about, for instance, an experience, which is relatively easy to answer. Therefore the interview guide begins with a question asking about the experience of taking a tour at the museum. This question can be categorized further as an *experience* question. Other types of questions are included as well, such as *opinion, feelings, sensory* and *background* questions. The interview guide was not shown to the respondents in order for them to not see the main themes. The incentive behind not showing them the interview guide was that the answers may have been affected if the themes were known to them.

The interview guide was designed according to three main themes, specifically *museum as an experience, myth of the brand*, and *experiential marketing*. The complete interview guide can be found as appendix 1. The incentives for choosing the three main themes are shortly described below. Simply put, *museum as an experience, myth of the brand* and *experiential marketing* are the three concepts that are the main foci of the study that will aid in answering the aim.

Museum as an experience – To gain an understanding of how the museum is experienced and what are the most impressive elements of the museum.

Myth of the brand – To gain an understanding of whether the elements that constitute the myth of the brand are emphasized, and how they are emphasized.

Experiential marketing – To gain an understanding if the museum can be a channel for experiential marketing by offering a Salvatore Ferragamo experience, and whether the experience and the messages conveyed by the museum affect the opinions toward the brand.

3.3.1. Pilot interviews

Pilot interviews were conducted on Tuesday, 19.11.2013, in the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum in Palazzo Spini Feroni, in Florence, during one day. The idea of the pilot interviews was to gain an understanding of whether it was possible to gain enough respondents with the sampling method that was chosen, i.e. self-selection sampling, how well the data obtained from the questions in the interview guide answered the aim and research questions, and what measures could be taken to improve the actual research process. It was also important to try different ways in which to express the interest to gain respondents and how to formulate the question of whether visitors would like to take part in the research.

3.3.1.1. Pilot interview results

The pilot interviews conducted during Tuesday, 19.11.2013, revealed that self-selection sampling is a possible method to conduct the research, assuming that there are visitors of the museum. The researcher stood by the museum reception and after visitors had taken the tour, asked whether they wanted to take part in the research. A few visitors did not speak English and could not be interviewed, and a few left in a hurry so that it did not seem appropriate to ask whether they wanted to participate. Nevertheless, during the day, five pilot interviews were conducted in the museum after the visitors had finished the tour. Four females and one male were interviewed, implying that it was more difficult to get male respondents since during that specific day there were fewer male visitors than female visitors. However, respondents from different ages were interviewed, being between the ages of 23 and 48 years. Even the range of different nationalities was evident, not one respondent was from the same country as someone else.

The interviews lasted between 6-15 minutes, implying that many respondents were in a hurry and were not willing to be interviewed for more than 10 minutes. Another reason for the short duration of the interviews was that many respondents had a friend who waited beside the respondent when she/he was interviewed. This made the interviewer feel as if she was in a hurry, and at times the respondent seemed to be answering in a hurry since the friend was waiting. However, one of the museum guides helped and kept company for the waiting friends during the interview, which was very helpful.

However, all the questions in the interview guide were asked during all of the pilot interviews. Some questions were left unanswered; mostly the questions about the movie shown in the last room of the exhibition as well as the question concerning the comic about Ferragamo's life since some of the visitors did not watch the movie and some were not interested in the comic. This implied that an adjustment to the interview guide was necessary, for instance asking about the movie and the comic at the end of the interview. Therefore the questions concerning the comic and the movie were moved to the end of the interview guide. This was done in order not to waste time asking questions about the comic and the movie if there was a risk that attention has not been paid to them. Moving the questions towards the end of the interview guide allowed more time for the previous questions that all visitors could answer. This was important since the time spent with respondents was extremely limited. Furthermore, the respondents were given a free copy of the "Making of a Dream" -comic by Frank Espinosa about Salvatore Ferragamo's life as a thank you for participating in the interview.

<i>Respondent #:</i>	<i>Gender:</i>	<i>Age:</i>	<i>Nationality:</i>
1	Female	27 years	Israeli
2	Female	23 years	Spanish
3	Female	48 years	Indian
4	Female	35 years	Italian
5	Male	26 years	Finnish

Table 2 Pilot interview respondents

3.4. Choice of respondents

In order to collect data, the choice of respondents, or the sample, has to be decided upon. The reason for this is firstly because there is a limit on resources, such as time and money, and secondly it is merely impossible to study the whole population (Saunders et al. 2012). According to Saunders et al. (2012), the data collected is more detailed when it is collected from fewer cases. The sample in this study was chosen according to *non-probability sampling*, which means that the respondents were selected using the *subjective judgement* of the researcher (Saunders et al. 2012). In other words, the respondents were gathered with a *volunteer sampling* - technique, where the respondents volunteered to take part in the research rather than the researcher explicitly choosing them to participate, notwithstanding that the researcher asked only certain visitors to participate. The researcher intentionally selected who she would ask whether they would like to participate in the research. For instance, people who seemed to leave in a hurry or did not seem attentive were not approached. People who came alone were often approached so that no accompanying person would have to wait while the other was interviewed. The space where the interviews were conducted was relatively small so many respondents could not be interviewed at the same time. What is more, since individual experiences were the main focus of the interviews, the effect of an accompanying person's answers to one's own answers were removed by interviewing one person at a time.

The reason for the selection of the sampling technique was based on the aspect that it was difficult to reach the respondents with alternative techniques since the visitors of the museum were mostly tourists and they often came as groups with a hurry to proceed with their guided tours around Florence. Therefore, a *self-selection sampling* technique was implemented, where the researcher expressed her desire to acquire certain respondents for the research and respondents then volunteered for the interview. Data was then collected from those who volunteered as respondents. (Saunders et al. 2012)

Table 3 shows the participants who volunteered to be interviewed and thus became respondents. The respondents were offered Finnish chocolates during and after the interviews as a thank you for participating. As the table shows, 21 interviews were conducted that lasted from 7 to 25 minutes each. Interestingly, the range of different ages is also apparent since the youngest respondent is 19 years and the oldest is 72 years. What is more, many of the respondents were Americans, but other nationalities

occurred as well amongst the respondents. Similarly as in the pilot interviews, most of the respondents are females.

Respondent #:	Gender:	Age in Years:	Nationality:
1	Male	50	Italian
2	Female	56	Danish
3	Female	23	Italian
4	Female	19	American
5	Female	26	American
6	Female	20	American
7	Female	21	American
8	Female	25	American
9	Female	26	American
10	Male	23	American
11	Male	23	American
12	Female	55	Italian
13	Female	59	American
14	Female	72	British
15	Female	28	Azerbaijani
16	Male	70	German
17	Female	25	Hongkonger
18	Male	28	Italian
19	Female	27	Croatian
20	Female	24	Italian
21	Male	23	Italian

Table 3 Respondents

3.5. Data analysis

According to Patton (2002), data interpretation and analysis involves making sense of what the respondents said, finding patterns and integrating what other people have said. The data in this research was obtained from 21 semi-structured interviews that were analysed keeping the aim and research questions in mind. Also, observation of museum visitors, and the analysis of museum guest book entries were used as additional methods to collect data. When choosing how to analyse the data, it was important to make sure that the data analysis method was consistent with the research approach of the study. Furthermore, it is important to consider the research strategy, the research philosophy and the methods chosen to collect data when the data is analysed (Saunders et al. 2012).

Firstly, the 21 semi-structured interviews were carefully transcribed into written documents in order to efficiently analyse not only *what* the respondents said but *how* they said things during the interviews (Saunders et al. 2012). Transcribing is a time-consuming task where the audio-recordings have to be written precisely as recorded (Saunders et al. 2012). What is more, the researcher should try to capture as well the tone of the respondents (Saunders et al. 2012). The primary data, in terms of transcriptions, as well as the secondary data in terms of the guest book entries, were interpreted using *content analysis*. The idea of a content analysis is to find reappearing themes or patterns. In this study the raw data (transcriptions) was firstly content analysed, and secondly the results from the analysis were fitted with the theoretical framework, specifically fitted with the theoretical model that was introduced in section 2.7. According to Patton (2002:463) content analysis “involves identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labelling the primary patterns in the data”. The raw data was initially organized by finding themes and emerging patterns from the transcriptions, as well as exploring the guest book entries and the notes taken during the observation of museum visitors. The data was organised and analysed with the help of Spiggle’s (1994) suggestions. According to Spiggle (1994), data can be organized through a few operations, which helps the researcher in analysing, interpreting and arriving at conclusions. The procedures that Spiggle (1994) suggest are *categorization*, *abstraction*, *comparison*, *dimensionalization*, *integration*, *iteration* and *refutation*.

According to Spiggle (1994), *categorization* refers to the procedure of classifying or labelling the data. More specifically, Spiggle (1994:493) describes categorization as “identifying a chunk or unit of data (e.g. a passage of text of any length) as belonging to, representing, or being an example of some more general phenomenon”. When categorizing chunks of data, names or labels can be given to different phenomenon found in the data. *Abstraction*, on the other hand, builds on the process of categorization. More specifically, in abstraction the previously categorized chunks of data are grouped into more general classes. In other words, the categories are decreased into fewer, more general ones. During the process of *comparison*, differences and similarities are discovered within the data. This helps to guide the researcher in collecting further data, as well as helping the interpretation process of the data collected. *Dimensionalization* refers to the evaluation of the characteristics and properties of a certain category (that has been defined in the previous stages). *Integration*, on the other hand, refers to the integration of theory into the findings from the data. This requires that relationships between conceptual elements in the data need

to be defined. The process of *iteration* means that the researcher moves back and forth between the data collection process and the process of analysing the data. In other words, iteration means that the researcher does not systematically collect the data and then analyse it, but more or less integrates the processes, for instance by collecting data and interpreting data at the same time. Eisenhardt (1989) further suggests that interlinking data analysis with data collection allows flexible data collection as well as a head start in the process of analysing. The final process of *refutation*, on the other hand, refers to intentionally disproving conclusions that can be drawn from the data by, for instance using techniques such as negative case analysis, purposive sampling or testing by context. Spiggle (1994) points out Strauss' and Corbin's (1990) reasoning for refuting one's own interpretations - to be sceptic towards own ideas. With the help of Spiggle's (1994) seven procedures, data can be organized, analysed and interpreted efficiently. Spiggle (1994) further suggests that the procedures should be taken on systematically, and they should be recorded and subsequently reported. (Spiggle 1994)

In reference to the research conducted in this study, the procedures of *abstraction* and *categorization* were used when finding patterns and themes from especially the transcriptions as well as the guest book entries. For instance, when finding patterns on what was seen as the most impressive elements of the museum, what words were used when describing the experience of seeing the authentic shoes, what was seen as the most important messages of the museum and the movie, as well as in other parts of the data analysis, *categorization* was used firstly to see what patterns emerged and *abstraction* was secondly used to sort the similarities into bigger classes.

Comparison, in terms of finding similarities and differences, was also used during the data analysis process. Especially finding similarities was in focus. This procedure was done simultaneously with categorization and abstraction. *Dimensionalization* and *integration* were used at a slightly later phase when the findings from the data were fitted in with the theoretical framework and model. More specifically, how the results from the study, for instance how the elements of myth were emphasized, fits in with the theoretical model and what this implies for the conclusions.

Iteration, on the other hand, was a technique that was used during the entire phase from collecting the first interview to analysing the last bit of data. In other words, the researcher started to analyse the data already during the data collection process. This helped the data analysis process since the analysis already started when the interviews were freshly in the mind of the researcher. On the other hand, *refutation* was used to

a lesser extent, however it was used in terms of the non-probability sampling technique chosen since the researcher used her own judgement when asking volunteers to participate. This was done to leave out certain potential respondents who, for instance, spent only a few minutes in the museum and would probably not be information rich respondents.

3.6. Quality of data

Data obtained from research needs to be of high quality in order for it to be relevant and meaningful for the academic community, luxury brand marketing practitioners, the company and museum of Salvatore Ferragamo, and as well for any others stakeholders. According to Silverman (2011), the two main concepts when discussing the quality of data are *reliability* and *validity*. What is more, according to Wallendorf and Belk (1989) *trustworthiness* is a further relevant concept in academic research. This section will consider the three concepts, as well *generalizability*, in reference to the research conducted in this study.

3.6.1. Reliability and validity

Reliability refers to the replicability of the study, in other words, whether the research could be repeated in the future, or by another researcher, and whether the results and conclusions would be similar as the ones in this study (Saunders et al. 2012; Silverman 2011). In qualitative studies where an emotionalist perspective is taken, it is important to note the subjective nature of experiencing any phenomenon. Therefore the results and conclusions are hardly precisely the same as when or if the research would be repeated since all respondents experience things differently. However, the *reliability* of a qualitative study can be increased by making the research process as transparent as possible (Silverman 2011). This means that the research processes, i.e. the research design and data analysis, should be described by the researcher in the most detailed manner as possible, as well as taking a clear theoretical stance in terms of how the research yields the specific interpretations it does (Silverman 2011). Furthermore, Silverman (2011) points out that when assessing the reliability of the data obtained from interviewing, it is necessary to consider how well the interviewer has succeeded in asking the questions clearly and in a similar manner compared to the other interviews. Also, the pre-testing of interviews, as the pilot interviews conducted in this study, increases the reliability, as well as tape-recording and carefully transcribing the

interviews. What is more, reliability can further be increased by having multiple researchers comparing their analysis of the same data. (Silverman 2011)

The *reliability* of this study can be described as relatively high for a few reasons. First of all, pilot interviews were conducted. Secondly, the interviews conducted were recorded and carefully transcribed. What is more, the research process was made as transparent as possible in terms of describing carefully how the research, as well as the data analysis was conducted. Moreover, the transparency was emphasized by the careful explanations of how the findings were related and fitted in with the theoretical model. A further factor that increased the reliability of the study was that the researcher asked the questions in a clear way and as similarly as possible to all the respondents. However, reliability may have been decreased slightly due to the fact that some of the respondents did not sometimes understand everything asked or could not express their thoughts as they may have wanted due to lack of skills in the English language. A further factor that may decrease the reliability of the study is that if the study would be repeated, the results might be slightly different since the focus of the study was museum experiences, which are subjective. Since the respondents were tourists from various countries of different ages, there is an increased risk of differing results since the diversity of affecting factors, such as background, age, mood, nationalities, culture, as well as others, are evident. In other words, there is an increased risk of gaining different results since the factors that influence experiences are emphasized because most of the visitors are tourists possessing a wide range of factors that affect the experiences. A final factor that decreased the reliability of the study was that it was not possible to have many researchers conducting the study and then comparing the analysis of the same data. There was only one researcher conducting the study and therefore the analysis of the results could not be compared.

The concept of *validity*, on the other hand, refers to whether the findings from the research actually represent what was intended to study (Silverman 2011). There are a few ways in which to increase the validity of a research, for instance, by the triangulation of research methods. According to Silverman (2011:369), “the most common application of triangulation in qualitative research is the use of multiple methods”. Examples of triangulation include, for instance, conducting semi-structured interviews, observation, collecting secondary data, etc. According to Silverman (2011:369), triangulation produces “a more accurate, comprehensive and objective representation of the object of the study”. However, Silverman (2011) points out a

criticism towards the triangulation of methods in qualitative research. The author suggests that triangulation does not necessarily increase the validity of qualitative research due to the fact that the context is not taken into consideration.

The *validity* of this study is relatively high mostly due to the fact that triangulation of research methods is allowed in a case study. Even though the main method to collect data in this research was by semi-structured interviews, additional methods to collect data were used as well. These additional data collection methods were observation of museum visitors and collecting secondary data by photographing guest book entries and analysing them. The additional data collection methods supported the findings from the interviews, as well as giving some additional insights, increasing the validity of the study. However, as Silverman (2011) pointed out, the context is not taken into consideration when multiple research methods are used. This means that even though observation and guest book entries were used as additional data collection methods, one should be sceptic towards the increase in validity since especially the guest book entries reveal little about the context. However, a factor that decreases the validity of this study is that the respondents of the research are not necessarily luxury brand customers. Many of the respondents were in their twenties, and most likely they are not customers of the brand due to, for instance, the high price of the products offered by the brand or due to the fact that the collections are not targeted towards young adults. The study aims, among other things, to study how the marketing of the brand can be strengthened. If the results are based on data obtained from respondents that are not current customers of the brand, it decreases the validity of the study. However, even though some of the respondents may not be a part of the current customer base, they are potential future customers.

According to Silverman (2011), a further element of the quality of data is *generalizability*. The concept refers to whether the results from the data can be generalizable to other cases. However, the author points out that in case study research it is difficult to make claims about the representativeness of the sample since the research is done merely concerning a single case. Therefore the generalizability of this research is difficult to pin down since a case study is in question. However, it may be possible to generalise on some level from the findings for other fashion luxury brands that have a myth and heritage.

3.6.2. *Trustworthiness*

According to Wallendorf and Belk (1989) whichever research approach is chosen there is a need to assess the *trustworthiness* of the study, which is an important element of a good research. It should be noted that trustworthiness does not directly guarantee a high quality of data since trustworthiness can be ensured by following certain guidelines (Wallendorf & Belk 1989). However, overall quality of data is more complex and requires more than fulfilling a set of guidelines (Wallendorf & Belk 1989). Wallendorf and Belk (1989) point out four criteria of trustworthiness that have been introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1986), specifically *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*. Wallendorf and Belk (1989) also suggest a fifth criterion, namely *integrity*, to be a part of assessing trustworthiness. Some of the concepts, such as transferability, are similar to the previously mentioned element of reliability. *Credibility* can be enhanced by extended engagement in the research project, for instance collecting data over a longer period of time. However, the credibility can also be enhanced by a triangulation of methods, sources and researchers, as well as on-site interaction. (Wallendorf & Belk 1989)

The credibility of this research is reasonably high since triangulation of methods and sources was employed, as well as on-site interaction. The researcher was on-site in the museum during the data collection period of 3 weeks and data was collected from different sources, from both males and females of different ages with diverse nationalities, using various methods. However, this study lacks in credibility in terms of extended engagement in the research project due to limitations of time and budget, as well as by having only one researcher.

Transferability refers to applying the findings of the research into other contexts (Wallendorf & Belk 1989). Similarly as with the concept of generalizability, it is difficult to transfer the findings of a specific case study into another context. However, this can be done to a certain extent by applying the findings of the research to other fashion luxury heritage brands who seek for alternative ways to market their brands.

Dependability, on the other hand is similar to reliability in terms of whether the results would be the same if the research would be done several times, with different respondents in a similar (or exactly the same) context. This would also be possible with more resources such as time and budget, since the empirical research in this study was

conducted in Florence, Italy. As with the concept of reliability, the results may differ due to the subjective nature of experiences.

The concept of *confirmability* refers to the aspect of minimizing bias, or interest of the researcher, and ensuring that the data collected is merely the perspectives, thoughts and reflections of the respondents. Triangulation of researchers ensures minimizes bias, especially if the researchers are of different genders since they may find different discoveries from the same respondent. Since triangulation of researchers was not possible, the bias was minimized by asking questions in an objective manner so that the researcher's perspectives would not appear in any ways. Also, the clothing of the researcher, as well as the way to approach and interview the respondents were taken into consideration in order to be as objective as possible not to influence the answers or attitudes of the respondents.

According to Wallendorf and Belk (1989), the fifth criterion of trustworthiness is *integrity*, which refers to the relationship between the researcher and the respondents. For instance, a respondent may be afraid of the researcher, or simply try to express him/herself in an attractive way, not necessarily genuinely. To ensure minimal conflict between the researcher and the respondent, many of the measures mentioned earlier to minimize bias can be taken. Therefore integrity was reached by similar actions as when reaching confirmability – by behaving objectively and dressing politely, but at the same time showing genuine interest in the respondents and ensuring complete anonymity. Additionally, it is important to have good interviewing techniques and build rapport with the respondents. This was especially important in this research since most of the respondents were tourists in Florence from all over the world and may have differing ways of expressing themselves and may have differing customs of sharing personal thoughts with a stranger.

3.7. Chapter summary

This chapter of the study discussed methodology and what kind of research approach was chosen, what methods were used, as well as assessing the quality of the research. As a recap, a qualitative approach was chosen, using a method of semi-structured interviews, as well as observing museum visitors and analysing guest book entries for additional data for deeper insights into the experiences of the museum visitors, as well as to gain support for the findings from the interviews. The triangulation of research methods increased the *reliability*, *validity* and *trustworthiness*, thus influencing the

overall quality of the research. The chapter also introduced the themes in the interview guide, as well as discussing shortly how the data was analysed after it had been collected. The quality of the research was assessed, coming to the conclusion that the overall quality is relatively high, but lacking due to limited resources such as time and money, and due to the fact that the findings from a case study are often case-specific. The following section of the study will present the results from the empirical research.

4 RESULTS

This chapter of the study presents the results from the qualitative research that was conducted in Florence in the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum. The results are mostly based on the analysis of the data obtained from interviewing 21 respondents who were visitors of the museum. The results from the study are discussed following the themes from the interview guide, specifically *museum as an experience*, *myth of the brand* and *experiential marketing*. Additional methods of data collection included analysing guest book entries as well as observing respondents. Results from these additional data collection methods are also presented. The chapter ends with a summary of the results before moving on to chapter 5 where a discussion of the results takes place.

4.1. Museum as an experience

As the aim of the study is to analyse how a museum will enhance the myth of the brand, the museum experience plays a central role in reaching the aim. Therefore the interview guide started with questions concerning *how* the visitors experienced the museum tour. Some similar words occurred when respondents were asked to describe their museum visit. Table 4 shows the words used twice or more by different respondents in an order from most reoccurring words to occurring twice.

Descriptive word:	Word used by number of respondents:
Historical	6
Fairytales	5
Inspiring	4
Amazing	3
Fantasy	3
Dreams	3
Unexpected	3
Beautiful	2
Surprising	2
Creative	2
Elegant	2
Magical	2

Table 4 Words used to describe the museum visit

The words *historical* and *fairytale*s occurred most often during the interviews as table 4 shows, when again *inspiring* was the third most often reoccurring word. The museum visit was described as *amazing*, *a fantasy*, *dreams*, and *unexpected* by three respondents. The words *beautiful*, *surprising*, *creative*, *elegant* and *magical* were mentioned by two different respondents. Words that occurred only once (mentioned by one respondent) were *different*, *breath-taking*, *fascinating*, *interesting*, *surreal*, *bizarre*, *eye-opening*, *romantic*, *descriptive*, *unrepeatable*, *innovative*, *wonderful*, *emotional*, *perfect*, *informative*, *impressive*, *unusual*, *funny*, *fashion*, *genius*, *new*, *authentic*, *excellent*, *lovely* and *a divertissement*. An aspect that was similar with all the different words that were mentioned was that they all had positive connotations. A conclusion can be drawn from this that the museum was experienced positively by all of the respondents. As the word *historical* occurred several times, a conclusion can be drawn that the museum is experienced by many from a historical point of view in terms of learning about Salvatore Ferragamo's life. One respondent also described the museum being more than merely about shoes.

"You can tell from the movie and from all the different shoes he produced for different people that it was not only about shoes. It was more like his soul coming out in his products." (R11, 8.3.2014)

Furthermore, when asked about the most impressive elements of the museum, similarities occurred as well. However, a greater amount of individual answers occurred possibly due to the fact that experiences are subjective and therefore also what is experienced as most impressive in the museum is also subjective due to interests, taste, background, and other factors. Figure 6 shows all the different elements that occurred when asked about what was most impressive in the museum.

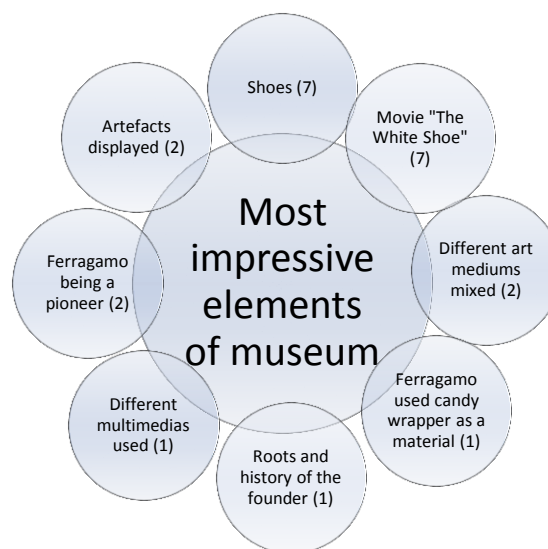


Figure 6 Most impressive elements of the museum

As figure 6 shows, the most impressive elements according to seven respondents were the *shoes* displayed. Especially the shoes that Ferragamo had made for specific people awakened interest.

“The Judy Garland ones are cool and those he made for Marilyn Monroe...I think that was really neat. A lot of these are interpretations of what he did whereas those are actual shoes that he designed and made for people and have actually been worn.” (R7, 7.3.2014)

A further reason for shoes being the most impressive element of the museum according to one respondent was the fact that it was a tangible way to relate with the history of the founder and that the shoes were unique.

“Actually I think the original prototypes that were made by him were most impressive, especially, you see, because you can get in touch with...on one hand the original work of him, his job and his perception about shoes. And each shoe has a different story.” (R21, 19.3.2014)

A further impressive element linked with the shoes was *the artefacts displayed*. This element included not only shoes and other artefacts but also *how* they were presented in the museum. According to one respondent, the presentation of shoes highlighted their importance, and therefore the conclusion can be made that presentation of artefacts added to the fact why the shoes were seen as one of the most impressive elements in the museum.

“I think the way the actual artefacts are presented, hanging them as bird cages...each of them are like a masterpiece by themselves...but the way they are presented highlights their importance, their history and background.” (R15, 14.3.2014)

An equally impressive element to the shoes was the 22-minute movie “*The White Shoe*” that was in the last room of the exhibition. Many respondents pointed out that the movie was incredibly well done and was therefore impressive. Other impressive elements were the realisation that *Ferragamo was a pioneer* in the women’s shoe industry (i.e. he created designs already in the 40’s and the 50’s that are fashionable today), the *different art mediums* mixed, the *different multimedia’s* used in the museum, the *roots and history of the brand founder* and the fact the *Ferragamo used candy wrapper as a material* to make shoes during the difficult times when materials such as leather were scarce (the original pair of shoes made of candy wrapper is displayed in the museum).

“Most amazing is the candy shoe because it’s wonderful that during the time when Salvatore Ferragamo had problems to find materials to create shoes, he chose something that he saw every day in front of him.” (R19, 16.3.2014)

As the candy wrapper shoe was seen as one of the most impressive elements of the museum, the assumption can be made that Ferragamo's competence for innovation and creation is seen as impressive since these features are the key ingredients of the candy wrapper shoe.

4.2. Myth of the brand

As the aim of the study was to find out how the museum can enhance the myth of the brand, it was important to find out how the museum visit affected the perception of the brand. This was important in order to know specifically *how* the museum visit brings value, or does not bring value. The results show that the museum affected the perception of the brand for all respondents except two who were unfamiliar with the brand Salvatore Ferragamo before visiting the museum. Table 5 shows the different answers given by the respondents when asked how the museum visit affected their perception of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo.

Museum affects the perception of the brand by:	Answer given by # of respondents
Greater appreciation for the brand because of enriched understanding of history.	15
Greater appreciation for the brand because of enriched understanding of craftsmanship.	4
Stronger connection to the brand.	4
Guarantee of quality of the shoes.	3
Gives a personality to the brand by learning who Salvatore Ferragamo was.	2
A desire to buy products from the brand.	2
A desire to be a part of the fairytale.	1
Makes the brand more likeable.	1
Sets is apart from all other brands.	1
A realization that the brand has a cultural advantage.	1
The brand cannot be compared to other luxury brands due to its history/heritage.	1
Brings perspective to the brand and its modern products.	1
A sense of proudness to be an owner of a Ferragamo product.	1
Did not know the brand before.	2

Table 5 How the museum affected the perception of the brand

For most of the respondents the museum visit affected the perception of the brand in a way that the respondents had a *greater appreciation* for the brand after visiting the museum because of an *enriched understanding of the history* of the brand.

“This is something that creates value and understanding of the brand history, and therefore appreciation of the brand.” (R15, 14.3.2014)

“The different facts of the life of this man enrich the value of the work he produced.” (R1, 5.3.2014)

Another reason for a greater appreciation was an enriched understanding of the *craftsmanship*.

“When you understand something better you have a better appreciation for it I think. And to see the craftsmanship and how he started and how he made the white shoes for his sister’s communion...it just makes me like the brand more.” (R9, 7.3.2014)

“You just get this whole new appreciation after seeing how much work is behind it that you didn’t know, it really changes your perception of the company....you have a whole grown appreciation for it and I think that’s really cool.” (R4, 5.3.2014)

A further reflection of a few respondents related to craftsmanship was that the museum visit and the history that was learned was a *guarantee of quality* of the Ferragamo products, especially of shoes.

“The history is also a synonym for quality. You can see the perfection from the beginning. Ferragamo started with the white shoes and he continued for 50 or 60 years, he kept going. That means that the quality is very good because the company is so successful. This is a security of quality that I am going to find with the products.” (R19, 16.3.2014)

Another respondent had similar thoughts:

“I consider the production and shoes more seriously now. Now I know the story, I know that they focus on research, they care about the materials. The founder was in search for the perfect shoe so he studied...that is much more than just a pair of expensive luxury shoes.” (R20, 19.3.2014)

A further response to how the museum affected the perception of the brand was that the museum gave a *personality to the brand* by showing who Salvatore Ferragamo was.

“It adds value to the brand because you know more. You get to know Ferragamo as the original shoemaker rather than just a brand so it gives more of a personality to the brand.” (R7, 7.3.2014)

Many respondents also mentioned that the museum visit *connected them to the brand*.

“I felt that the brand was much closer to me. Even though the shoes and ties are supposed to be for rich people...but the museum is reality which comes close to you and you can get in touch with the story of the brand without buying anything.” (R21, 19.3.2014)

By having this museum people feel like they know the product better because they have had this special experience. And that the product has history...the museum adds to the appreciation of the shoes.” (R13, 11.3.2014)

The museum affected the perception of the brand in the following ways as well: *A desire to buy a product from the brand, a desire to be part of the fairytale, makes the brand more likeable, sets it apart from other all other brands, a realization that the brand has a cultural advantage, the brand cannot be compared to other luxury brands due to its history/heritage, brings perspective to the brand and its modern products, and originating a sense of proudness to be an owner of a Ferragamo product.* As mentioned, two respondents did not know the brand before so the museum visit did not affect their perception of the brand since they did not have an initial

perception. However, the respondents pointed out that now they now became *familiar* with the brand, which was different than before visiting the museum. This is also an important point to bear in mind when considering the museum as a marketing channel in terms of making the brand known to people who are not familiar with it. All in all, the museum affected in positive ways, no respondent felt that that museum visit affected the perception of the brand negatively.

Some of the respondents were also asked about their thoughts about the historical location of the museum, Palazzo Spini Feroni, where Salvatore Ferragamo lived and worked. Most of the respondents did not know this fact but they seemed fascinated by the background of the location when they were told. However, a few respondents knew that the museum was located in the original building where Ferragamo worked and many felt that it added value to the museum experience since the location is an important part of Ferragamo's history, and therefore the location helped to get in touch with the brand on a deeper level. The fact that Palazzo Spini Feroni is an important historical building for Florence from an architectural point of view was also mentioned as a factor that added value to the museum experience.

"I'm inspired...it's just another nice element to actually have the museum here. I just think it adds value to your museum experience." (R9, 7.3.2014)

"It's a part of the history and it's a part of the experience and understanding of belonging. Belonging to a history of the city, history of the architecture of Florence, and this craftsmanship and culture." (R15, 14.3.2014)

When the respondents were asked to describe their experiences of seeing the authentic shoes (as well as prototypes and replicas) of Salvatore Ferragamo, the range of answers was wide. Figure 7 illustrates the answers that occurred twice or more. The number illustrates how many respondents gave this answer.

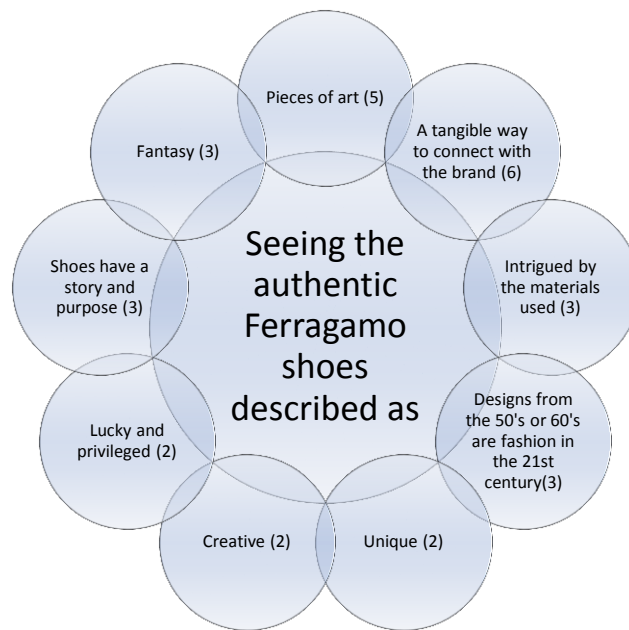


Figure 7 The experience of seeing original and authentic Ferragamo shoes in the museum.

Two of the most often occurring answers to the question of how the respondents would describe seeing the authentic shoes were that they were *like pieces of art* and that they were a *tangible way to connect with the brand*. It seemed as if the unique details and the special designs made the shoes seem as art, as well as the way that the shoes were displayed in glass vitrines and cages.

“It’s a fanciful feel that they are hanging from the ceiling at our eye-level so it keeps you engaged more. It makes it more special and it kind of separates each one as a work of art.” (R5, 5.3.2014)

“These aren’t the kind of shoes you walk around Florence...these are rather pieces of art than just something you put on every day. It looks like so much work and every detail is so thought out. There’s a purpose for every stitch.” (R4, 5.3.2014)

The fact that the shoes were considered as *a tangible element that helps to connect with the brand* seemed to enhance the museum experience and helped to understand the history of the brand.

“Whenever you go and see authentic things in a museum it just gives you a more realistic or a more tangible way to relate to the historical element of the shoemaker.” (R7, 7.3.2014)

“It’s just like visiting any museum where you can see any great artist’s art: a painter, anything. It’s really amazing to see the original. You kind of feel connected to the brand when you’re standing a foot away from the piece that the guy actually created. It makes the experience far more genuine and authentic...you feel *there*.” (R10, 8.3.2014)

“It’s like touching the history. Being very close to it and kind of experiencing and understanding that, oh, maybe the Hollywood actresses were wearing those shoes and talking to the designer and giving him feedback.” (R15, 14.3.2014)

As an example, a few of the respondents pointed out that it was great to see the high heels that belonged to Marilyn Monroe and the ones made for Judy Garland. It seemed as if it made the experience more enjoyable to find shoes that were designed for celebrities that respondents were familiar with.

“They’re all very unique and it was cool to see each of the designs and it was cool to see the shoes that were designed for specific people, I liked that. The Wizard of Oz...Judy Garland...it was fun to see the rainbow shoes that I’ve seen everywhere. They are actually designed for her, I had no idea. It’s cool to see shoes for personalities that you recognize, and you see them kind of in shoe-form.” (R8, 7.3.2014)

Another interesting aspect that a few respondents pointed out was that they were surprised to see that the museum included certain shoe designs that *Ferragamo had already created in the 1950’s and 1960’s that are fashionable in the 21st century*. In other words, these respondents were surprised and seemed impressed to learn that Ferragamo was a pioneer in the women’s shoe industry. As previously mentioned, this was also something that was seen as one of the most impressive elements of the museum.

“What is something really weird is that now in 2014 you can say that something like that is normal for Dolce & Gabbana to create but this in the 1950’s...it’s really fantastic.” (R19, 16.3.2014)

“It was new knowledge to me to see these quite modern shoes from many years ago.” (R2, 5.3.2014)

A further element that intrigued some of the respondents was to learn about *the materials* that Ferragamo used for some of the shoes during rough times when materials, such as leather, were scarce. Especially the shoe made partly of candy wrapper (cellophane) awakened interest. This was also seen as an impressive element of the museum.

“The shoe I appreciate the most was the candy shoe which was made in 1942 by using cellophane. It was a cheap material compared to expensive leathers. He came up with creating a new shoe that was innovative at the time and would be even today.” (R21, 19.3.2014)

Further answers on how seeing the authentic shoes were experienced included *creative, like a fantasy, the shoes have a story and purpose, lucky and privileged to see original creations, unique, different from the shoes you are used to see, a look inside a genius’ mind, surreal, very interesting, very rich and a reminder to never stop believing in your dreams*.

“It’s not something that’s mass-produced. Someone has been soulfully working on shoes and it’s not just something you wear on your feet...it implies something so much more.” (R6, 7.3.2014)

“It just gives you a sense of pleasure to see someone starting from zero to build a company from one’s creation and thought. And you see the inspiration and the finished product, and it’s kind of like you get to look inside of a genius’ mind.” (R9, 7.3.2014)

All in all, most of the respondents felt that seeing the authentic shoes, as well as some prototypes and replicas, was experienced as something *more* than just seeing ordinary shoes. A few respondents mentioned that they were expecting to see even more shoes, and felt a little disappointed to only find one room of original Ferragamo designs.

4.3. Experiential marketing

As the second research question is how the enhanced myth can strengthen the marketing of the brand, it was important to consider how the respondent’s opinions towards the brand was affected by the museum visit, as well as finding out what the respondents thought the message of the museum was to its visitors. Additionally, the comic and the movie were asked about to find out how these two special elements that enhanced the story of Salvatore Ferragamo were experienced, as well as intentions to visit the flagship store which was in the same building as the museum. To be clear, the question about how the museum visit affected the perception of the brand is similar to the question of whether the museum visit affects the opinion of the brand. However, the difference is that by asking how the museum affects the opinion, it becomes clear whether the museum affects the opinion in a positive or in a negative manner; whereas the perception of the brand can remain constant or it may change. For instance, one may have a perception of the brand that it is a luxury brand as any other, however, after learning the story it becomes clearer that there is a long history behind the brand. The perception may become something else than before and the opinion may or may not become more favourable. The concepts or perception and opinion are tightly correlated, but slightly different.

When asked whether the respondents’ opinions toward the brand became more or less favourable after visiting the museum, all respondents except two said that their opinion became more favourable. Two of the respondents said that they did not have an opinion of the brand in the first place because they were not familiar with the brand before visiting the museum, and therefore they could not answer the question. The respondents whose opinions toward the brand became *more favourable* after visiting the museum were mostly due to the fact that they *learned more about the history of the brand*.

“I just think this is a really high-quality exhibit. It was nice to learn about the history and how everything started. Having a story behind it makes it better value. You understand where everything is coming from and how everything came to be.” (R8, 7.3.2014)

A few respondents mentioned also that the brand is also more *memorable* due to learning more about the history. Another respondent gave his reason for the more favourable opinion in the following way:

“Firstly, the company itself took the time and effort to gather all the items and to show the history of this man and let the visitors evaluate and appreciate it. And secondly, because you understand that behind the products that the company sells is a path of experience of cut and shape of art.” (R1, 5.3.2014)

In other words, the museum visit was a way to show the *experience* and *creativity in craftsmanship* to the visitors. This is similar to the fact that a few respondents felt that the museum gave them a guarantee that Ferragamo produces high quality products, especially shoes. Further reasons for a more favourable opinion towards the brand after the museum visit included a *deeper understanding of how shoes are made as well as seeing how much work is behind the brand, a high quality exhibition, a greater appreciation for a brand when you see who is behind the brand, the company provides artistic work for people, openness of the company to people* and a final reason for a more favourable opinion was to *see the quality that has been present in the company for already 60-70 years*. One respondent even mentioned that she *now looks at shoes from a different perspective than before*. This added to her increased favourable opinion of the brand since the museum had given her a new perspective on shoes. All in all, the museum had a positive effect on the opinions of the brand.

“I have kind of a new lens to look through when I look at shoes. A lens to see where they came from.” (R6, 7.3.2014)

When the respondents were asked what the most valuable message of the museum was, a relatively wide range of answers were given. However, some patterns emerged.



Figure 8 Most valuable messages of the museum

Figure 8 shows most of the answers when asking the question about the most valuable message of the museum. *Follow your dreams* was the most valuable message for four respondents. It seemed as if the museum was evidence for these respondents that dreams can come true, as the dream to become a shoemaker became true for a little boy called Salvatore Ferragamo from a small town called Bonito.

“The work of a shoemaker was not seen as very prestigious...he started from nothing, just putting effort in what his passion was. The most important message is to follow you dreams.” (R20, 19.3.2014)

“Follow your own vision. He saw it in a certain way and he wasn’t afraid to do it. Some of these designs are quite crazy...to be able to do that and not be afraid to put it out there. Keep doing what you are doing and keep at it.” (R10, 8.3.2014)

Respondents reflected upon the fact that Ferragamo had managed many struggles during his career and never given up in what he believed in. Respondents thought that this was one of the reasons why he managed to build a successful company. Another message of the museum that was related to following your dreams was that *passion and inspiration lead to great things*. One respondent also pointed out that the museum is a reminder that the *brand is not going anywhere*. This suggestion of a museum being a reminder is relevant in terms of the museum being a marketing channel for the brand, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

“Passion and dedication would be the most valuable messages of the museum to me...and the fact that the museum is here makes you feel that the brand isn’t going anywhere. And that shoes are what Ferragamo was passionate about.” (R5, 5.3.2014)

On the other hand, some respondents mentioned that the most valuable message for them was the *importance of history and heritage*.

“The company is not just something that was made overnight. It’s a long history that he and his company have gone through to get to where the company is today. The history puts everything else in context.” (R6, 7.3.2014)

One respondent also mentioned that the importance of the history helps to *connect the brand with the modern collection*, as well as being a reminder that the brand still today’s cherishes and *follows* Ferragamo’s heritage.

“The most important message is that this brand has a history and a heritage. And that they follow the heritage of the creator, of the founder. And when buying a piece of the contemporary collection you kind of still feel the link with the whole history that is behind it.” (R15, 14.3.2014)

Further important messages of the museum to the respondents included that the brand and the products are *high quality*, that *Ferragamo was a pioneer* in shoemaking for women, the message that an *industry that is dominated by a vain attitude in a materialistic world was built from something that was the complete opposite* (i.e. love and passion for shoemaking as a craftsmanship), *shoemaking is art in a big way*, *original products*, and *the history of Ferragamo being culturally important for Italy*. One respondent had an alternative view in what the most important message of the museum was:

“I think that every brand, such as Gucci, Salvatore Ferragamo, Dior, Prada and so on, *have to have* a museum because it’s a visit card for this brand since it introduces you to the products and to the brand. So it’s a visit card.” (R19, 16.3.2014)

This respondent experienced the museum as a *visit card* to the brand and mentioned that it becomes clearer what the brand offers when she has visited the museum in terms of, for instance, the products, the brand, quality, etc. Even though the museum does not show the contemporary collection of the brand, the museum signals the values, experience and quality of the brand and therefore makes the offering of the brand clearer for the visitors. This has high relevance for the suggestion of utilising a museum as a marketing channel, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

When the visitors were asked whether they were planning on going to the flagship store after the museum, most of the respondents replied that they were planning on going or that they might go. Three respondents said that they were not going to go because they were in a hurry. One respondent mentioned that she had already visited the store, and

another respondent replied that she was going to go but not to buy anything, just to see. Most of the respondents that took part in the research were young adults and therefore they may not be current customers of the brand since the brand is very expensive and possibly targeted to a slightly older customer base. However, it should be noted that the respondents may become future customers so even though there would have been no intentions to buy products after the museum visit, it may have increased the possibility that they would buy in the future after having visited the flagship store and becoming familiar with the contemporary collection. A few respondents mentioned during the interviews that seeing the original and beautiful creations of Ferragamo awakened a desire in them to buy or possess a pair of Ferragamo shoes. This supports the possibility of them becoming future customers. The desire of owning Ferragamo shoes may have been awakened or strengthened due to the museum and flagship store visits.

Some respondents were also asked about the possibility to buy replicas of the original designs of Ferragamo. For instance, if a person desires to own a pair of the rainbow sandals that were originally designed for Judy Garland after she appeared in *The Wizard of Oz*, it is possible. Most of the respondents that were asked about the option to buy replicas of the original shoes thought it was *unusual* but yet a very *clever* and *smart idea*. It was unusual because it is an opportunity that is not offered by many luxury brands. One respondent mentioned that it is similar as going to an art gallery, seeing the paintings and then being able to buy them. Similarly, shoes are displayed in the museum and there is a possibility to buy replicas of some of the designs. Other reflections on the opportunity to buy replicas were that it is something *new* and *different, it is a good thing because someone who is interested in the designs from the 50's can buy them, very special to be able to buy limited edition shoes* (for instance, the rainbow sandal was explicitly made for Judy Garland so this opportunity to buy a pair of replicas is the only way to own a pair of them) and that it is an *interesting opportunity*.

“It’s a smart idea because if you see the museum and if you like something you can have it for yourself. It is also very nice that they have these limited editions – it’s not for everybody so it’s very, very special.” (R20, 19.3.2014)

One respondent said that being able to buy replicas is a way to *crystallize* (materialize) *emotions that are felt during the museum tour*. Furthermore, he felt that when *reproducing the same shoes as Salvatore did when he was alive is a way of giving the shoemaker another birth*.

When asked how respondents experienced the comic that Frank Espinosa had created about Salvatore Ferragamo's life, it was evident that several respondents had not paid enough attention to the comic in order to reflect upon it. Relatively many respondents also mentioned that they had not realised that the comic was about Ferragamo's life, which further meant that these respondents could not reflect on the comic. Some also felt that the comic was confusing, hard to follow and a few wished it had text. Some respondents did not know which way to go around the room where the comic was, and so they missed the idea of the comic when they walked the opposite direction as meant. However, there were respondents who had paid attention to the comic (some had received a guided tour with explanations) and understood that it was about Ferragamo's life. Their reflections of the comic included several different points of view. Most of the respondents who had paid attention and understood the comic said that it was a *great idea of showing Ferragamo's life with the help of a comic*. A few respondents pointed out that it was *really well done* and a *nice element of the museum*. One respondent mentioned that it was a *modern twist to present a historical figure as a superhero in a comic*.

“I thought it was really well done especially because you could see the pencil and the painting drawings of the comic. It was cool because there was a modern twist on a historical figure...so it was a nice element.” (R9, 7.3.2014)

Another respondent mentioned that it was *modern* and *great since it is both for children but also for adults*. One respondent felt that it was *surprising to find a comic in a museum dedicated to a brand*. Other reflections on the comic were: *cool to see Ferragamo's thought process, a good way to introduce the protagonist to the visitors, an original point of view of the story, enriched the museum experience, cool to see someone's life in pictures, and favourite thing apart from the shoes*. One respondent pointed out that the comic represented *Ferragamo's powerful impact since another artist had wanted to express Ferragamo's life*. Those respondents who understood the comic and its message experienced that it was a positive aspect and enriched the museum experience.

The 22-minute movie “The White Shoe” was similarly experienced as the comic. Relatively many respondents said that they did not see the movie or only saw a part of it. Some also said that it was difficult to understand or hard to link with Ferragamo. Hence, these respondents could not reflect upon their experiences of the movie. On the other hand, those respondents who watched the movie from the beginning to the end

experienced the movie positively, even though some said that it was *strange* and *surreal*.

“I thought it was nice, another multimedia way to kind of change up the museum. Most museums have displays like this but to have a short film just about him and his life...it added to your experience.” (R9, 7.3.2014)

Most of them felt that the movie *summarized the history well and added value to the understanding of the brand history*. Many also simply *liked the movie a lot*. Other thoughts about the movie were that the movie was *happy, very beautiful, touching, impressive, cool, piece of cinema that has a history of its own, best thing in the museum after shoes, and something that helped to experience Ferragamo’s fantasy and feelings during his path to make his dreams come true*.

“I found the movie very close to the history of Ferragamo because I could live and embody similar emotions that probably Salvatore Ferragamo felt as a child when working for that shoemaker.” (R21, 19.3.2014)

In other words, the movie helped the respondents to experience the world of Salvatore Ferragamo by, for instance, by awakening emotions and seeing his story visually.

The respondents were also asked what they thought a theme or a central message of the movie was. Figure 9 shows what themes were mentioned.

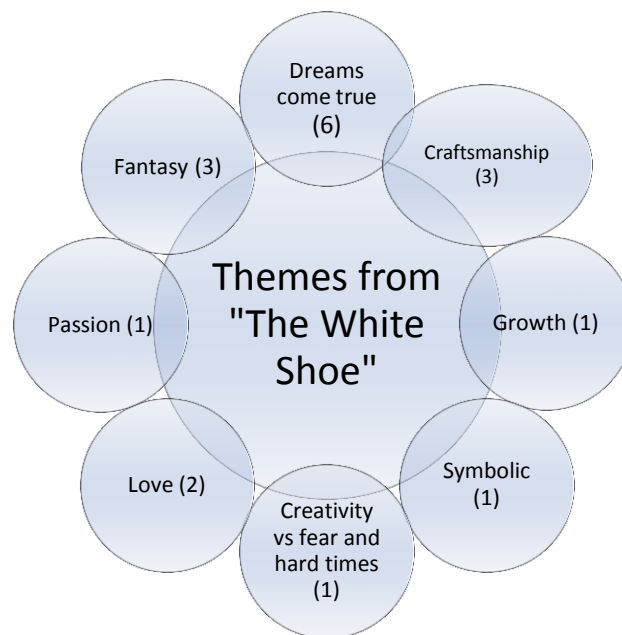


Figure 9 Themes from the movie “The White Shoe”

As figure 9 shows, the themes that emerged from the movie were relatively similar as the answers to the question about the museum's most valuable message. *Dreams come true* was a central theme mentioned by six respondents. Both *craftsmanship* and *fantasy* were also reoccurring themes, as well as *love*. Other themes that were mentioned only once included *passion*, *growth*, and *creativity against fear and hard times* (i.e. never give up).

“The key in the movie is that you have to keep on going with your dreams and also with your work because life will bring you easy times but also very difficult times. And as Salvatore Ferragamo did, never give up, always keep on going.” (R19, 16.3.2014)

One respondent also mentioned that the movie was *symbolic* because the white shoes were a central element of the movie and in reality the first shoes Ferragamo ever made were white shoes for his sister. One respondent also mentioned that it enriched the experience of seeing the movie to have properties, such as clothes, the white shoes, masks, and other things that occurred in the movie in the actual room where the movie was watched. All in all, the movie seemed to be an interesting element that added value to the museum experience, even though it was considered hard to follow by some respondents. For those respondents who watched the movie, it seemed to be a way to bring all the bits and pieces together from the tour and was a memorable ending for the museum tour as the movie was shown in the last room.

The respondents were given a chance at the end of the interview to further reflect upon their experiences in the museum or to add something that they had not yet said. Most of the respondents did not have anything to add but relatively many respondents wanted to further point out how great their experience of the museum was. One respondent mentioned that he is grateful to the company and to the man behind all the work, as well as being grateful to have the opportunity to appreciate Ferragamo's work in the museum. Three respondents said they would recommend the museum to others and a few mentioned that they would have wanted to see more shoes and some modern Ferragamo products as well. A few respondents mentioned that they would have also wanted to know even more about the history of Salvatore Ferragamo in a chronological order. One respondent had an alternative concluding remark by saying that she did not have anything to add but she had a wish: to get a pair of Ferragamo shoes.

4.4. Guest book entries

As a second additional method to collect data, 43 guest book entries from the Salvatore Ferragamo museum guest book were photographed and analysed. The entries were from a time range of approximately June 2013 to March 2014. The guest book entries show that the museum has been described with words such as *amazing, great experience, wonderful, fantastic, inspiring, superb, beautiful, magical, interesting, enchanting, one of the best exhibitions, so special, impressive storytelling, informative, fabulous, absolutely incredible, and feels like being in a fairytale*. One respondent mentioned that the museum shows the quality behind shoemaking:

“Very informative, interesting and a good history of quality shoemaking. Well done! 20.8.2013, xxx” (Guest book entry #25)

The analysis of the guest book entries show that most of the entries are about how *impressed* the visitors were of the exhibition, specifically of the *shoes*. Many also comment on how *amazing the story* of the shoemaker was, as well as the museum being *inspiring* since you are able to see how *dreams can come true*.

“This museum was so much more than a collection of shoes, it’s a representation of the life of an artist, creation, and the progress of becoming something great. Truly inspiring. xxx.” (Guest book entry #1)

A few entries mention that the museum visit will *never be forgotten*. One reason was because the exhibit was of *high quality* and another reason was that the museum visit was *touching*. One respondent simply wrote that the museum was amazing and therefore memorable.

“I will always remember this amazing museum. Thank you, 25.7.2013, xxx” (Guest book entry #15)

Similarly as the results from the interviews, some had written that they have a *new perception of shoes* after the museum visit and some wrote that they *want or need to buy shoes immediately*. One guest had written:

“After visiting your museum, we love your shoes more than we ever had... 5.7.2013, xxx” (Guest book entry #20)

Again as in the interviews, some guests had described the shoes as *pieces of art* or as *treasures*.

“What an amazing place to feature all of Ferragamo’s works of art! Thank you! From California, xxx” (Guest book entry #22)

“We love Ferragamo! Thank you for displaying these treasures! 30.6.2013, xxx, USA” (Guest book entry #23)

One entry depicted that the museum is *loved as much as Salvatore Ferragamo is loved*, another wrote how *enchanting the experience was*. One respondent described the museum in the following manner:

“Living shoes! Good mixture of modern visual technology and a history of a visionary shoemaker. 7.29.2013 xxx Hungary” (Guest book entry #14)

“What an interesting and beautiful idea to make such a museum. Beautiful indeed. I am deeply impressed. Amazing design, amazing artist, beautiful shoes. 3.10.2013, xxx” (Guest book entry #12)

All in all, the guest book entries were positive and they revealed similar results as the interviews did, as well as revealing additional reflections on the museum experiences. *Being impressed by the story of the shoemaker* and the *shoes* seemed to be the most common messages of the entries. To some extent the guest book entries were more expressive than some results from the interviews. It seemed as if the respondents were somewhat reserved when they were interviewed but the entries seemed more open and expressive in how the museum visit was described. In other words, the guest book entries helped to gain additional insights on how the museum was experienced by visitors, as well as gaining support to the findings from the interviews.

4.5. Observation of museum visitors

As a third and final method to collect additional data was the observation of museum visitors. The observation of museum visitors was conducted by observing visitors in general for a period of a few hours during 19.3.2014, as well as following one female respondent on her tour during 20.3.2014 to see how long was spent in each room, which rooms awakened most interest, etc. The general observation took mostly place in the first room of the exhibition since the first room displayed the Ferragamo shoes and was most interesting and relevant for this research. It should be noted that the results from the observation yielded limited results due to the fact that many visitors walked in silence through the exhibition while listening to audio guides or a guided tour and other visitors talked with whomever they came often in foreign languages which the researcher could not understand. Nevertheless, some results were obtained.

Firstly, the entrance fee to the museum was six euros for visitors above ten and below 65 years. Relatively many visitors decided not to enter the museum when they found out that there was a fee. The museum does not communicate clearly that the revenues

from the museum go to charity in terms of supporting upcoming shoe designers. It would be interesting to know whether this knowledge would have changed the minds' of the people who left because there was an entrance fee.

Many visitors were *impressed by the shoes* displayed in the first room of the exhibition. Especially certain shoes seemed to be impressive, such as the jewelled shoes displayed in a glass cage filled with other glittery elements, the candy wrapper shoe, the sandal made of fishing line, and the sandal made of 18-karat gold. Other shoes that awakened a great deal of interest were the shoes designed for Marilyn Monroe and ones designed for Judy Garland. This suggests that the unique shoes that are special in some way awaken most interest, similarly as the findings from the interviews indicate. Many of the visitors also wanted to take pictures of the shoes even though it was forbidden. Some still took pictures of the shoes, suggesting that they possibly wanted memories of their visit. Visitors read the information boards, suggesting that they were interested in knowing more about the shoes, about the materials, to who they may have been designed for, as well as any other information. The visitors also spent a relatively long time in the first room looking at the shoes. A museum guide said that visitors should reserve at least one hour to take the museum tour since there are nine rooms all together, a few short films and the 22-minute movie "The White Shoe" in the last room. However, most of the visitors spent approximately 15-25 minutes in the first room looking at shoes and many of them even continued looking at them *after* seeing the movie in the last room. This suggests that the shoes were one of the main elements in the museum that awakened interest since many of the visitors did not spend more than one hour totally in the museum (giving less time to spend in the other rooms).

Most of the visitors that were observed came together with someone or in small groups. A few came alone. However, none of the observed visitors wanted guided tours. Most of them asked for audio guides that were included in the entrance fee. Some respondents did not take audio guides even though they were offered them. This may suggest that some visitors did not receive as much background information as others, and may have therefore missed some necessary information to understand the symbolism of certain elements in the museum. Many visitors walked around the museum following the correct route but some wandered around and went the opposite direction. This meant that they saw the movie directly after the shoes which necessarily as such did not matter; however the tour might have made more sense and been more memorable if the tour would have been taken following the planned route. What is more, a few

visitors ate the candies that were part of the candy wrapper shoe -installation even though there was a sign that they are only decoration. It seemed also that some visitors wanted to touch the displayed products. These observations may suggest that the respondents possibly may have wanted to *feel* the materials and have an even more *tangible* way of experiencing the Ferragamo world by touching and tasting the candies that were part of the installation.

One female visitor was followed through her tour around the museum and the findings were relatively similar as the findings from the general observation of visitors. The visitor had a guided tour only of the first room where the shoes were displayed since she wished to walk through the rest of the museum alone. The visitor spent the longest time in the first room of the museum, approximately 25 minutes, returning to it even later when waiting for the movie to start. The time spent in the other rooms was 2-10 minutes, except in the last room where 22 minutes was spent to watch the movie. This suggests that the first room with the shoes awakened most interest. What is more, the female observant waited patiently for “The White Shoe” movie to end so that she would see it from the beginning (the movie took 22 minutes and it took a few minutes before it started again from the beginning). This is an important point to take note of since many of the other visitors that were observed did not wait to see the movie from the beginning or did not see it at all if the movie did not happen to start from the beginning exactly at the time when they entered the room. Similarly as with the visitors who were generally observed, the female observant seemed to be mostly impressed by the unique shoes, especially the 18-karat golden sandal. She was awed by it, gasping a little when she realised how much of it is gold. She mentioned to the guide that it is amazing that someone has actually walked in them, and she also seemed utterly impressed by the heel that had engravings. When the observant went to the other rooms where other artefacts were displayed, she looked at everything carefully but did not spend more than a few minutes in the rooms. When she came to the room with the comic about Ferragamo’s life, she seemed to be relatively interested in it since she spent about 10 minutes in the room, looking carefully at the comic.

All in all, the observation of visitors yielded limited results but possibly the most important result was that it seemed as if the visitors who were observed seemed mostly impressed by the Ferragamo shoes and that the first room with the shoes awakened most interest, supporting the findings from the interviews, as well as from the analysis of guest book entries.

4.6. Summary of results

This chapter has presented the results from the empirical research conducted in the Salvatore Ferragamo museum. Before moving to the discussion of the results and their implications, the results are summarized.

The museum visit was described with words such as historical, fairytales and inspiring by many respondents. This suggests that the experience for most respondents was about *learning the inspiring history of Salvatore Ferragamo* in a fairytale-like atmosphere. What is more, the most impressive elements of the museum were the shoes displayed. Specifically the unique shoes that were either designed for famous actresses or shoes that had unique details, for instance an unusual material or decorations with jewels, were seen as most impressive. The movie “The White Shoe” was also seen as impressive mostly due to the fact that the movie was well made and it summarized effectively Ferragamo’s history. Furthermore, the museum affected the perception of the brand mostly in a way that respondents had a *greater appreciation for the brand due to an enriched understanding of the history*, as well as the museum giving *a personality to the brand by learning who the founder was*. The historical location of the museum also added value to the experience if this was a known fact. Moreover, the authentic shoes and original designs of Ferragamo were mostly described as *pieces of art*. Seeing the shoes was also a *tangible* way to connect with the brand. A surprising element for a few respondents was that they learned that Ferragamo had already created designs and models in the 1950’s and 1960’s that are fashionable in the 21st century, in other words he was a *pioneer*. Furthermore, most of the respondents said that the museum visit influenced their opinion towards the brand in such a way that their opinions became more favourable after visiting the museum due to learning more about the history. This suggests *that learning about the history of a brand increases the appreciation towards the brand as well as having a more positive opinion towards it*.

Furthermore, the most valuable messages of the museum were to *follow your dreams, passion and inspiration leads to success*, and to *cherish the history and heritage of a brand*. The museum was also suggested as a *visit card* for the company in terms of introducing the brand, its values and experience of shoemaking to visitors who are customers or potential customers. Unfortunately the comic and the movie somewhat lost their meaning for many due to difficulties in understanding the contents or due to not having enough background information. Nevertheless, they were both seen as

interesting and special elements of the museum that *added value to the experience*. The guest book entries supported the findings from the interviews mostly in terms of how the museum was experienced and that the unique shoes were the element that had impressed the visitors most. The observation of respondents also supported the finding that shoes were the main interest. However, the observation also revealed that visitors possibly may wanted to have some tangible elements that they could have touched or tasted in order to gain an even deeper experience the magical world of Ferragamo.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter of the study, the results from the research will be discussed and the aim as well as research questions will be answered. Managerial implications as well as suggestions for future research will also be reflected upon at the end of the chapter. The aim of this thesis was to analyse how a museum will enhance the myth of the luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo. The research questions related to the aim were the following:

1. How does a visit to Salvatore Ferragamo museum enhance the myth of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo?
2. How does the enhanced myth strengthen the marketing of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo?

The theoretical model was introduced in chapter 2.7 that summarized the suggestion of a museum being an experiential marketing channel by emphasizing the elements that constitute the myth of the brand, specifically *unique history*, *rarity*, *heritage*, *originality and authenticity*, as well as the *nature of a specific luxury brand*. The emphasized myth was then suggested to strengthen the marketing of the brand. The assumption is that if the specific elements that create the myth of the brand are emphasized, then the myth will be enhanced as a result. The theoretical model will be used in order to answer the aim and the research questions. Figure 10 portrays the theoretical model and at the end of this chapter in section 5.5 a revised theoretical model will be presented. As a note, some of citations that have appeared in chapter 4 will be repeated in chapter 5 due to their suitability for supporting specific conclusions.

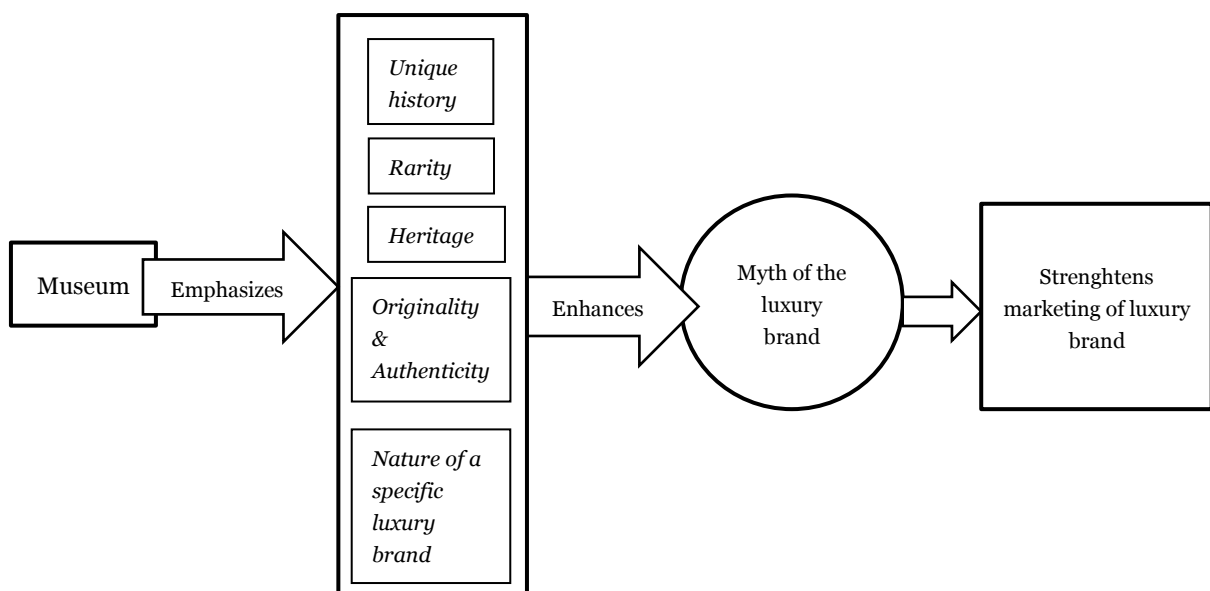


Figure 10 Theoretical model of museum as an experiential marketing channel

5.1. Core findings – Elements of myth emphasized

The core findings from the research suggest that the museum visit emphasized the *different elements that constitute the myth* of the brand and *consequently* the myth was enhanced. The following sections will discuss the findings in reference to the theoretical model, going through the different elements that constitute the myth and subsequently concluding how the museum enhances the myth and finally strengthens the marketing of the brand. Figure 11 displays the first part of the theoretical model, which will be discussed first.

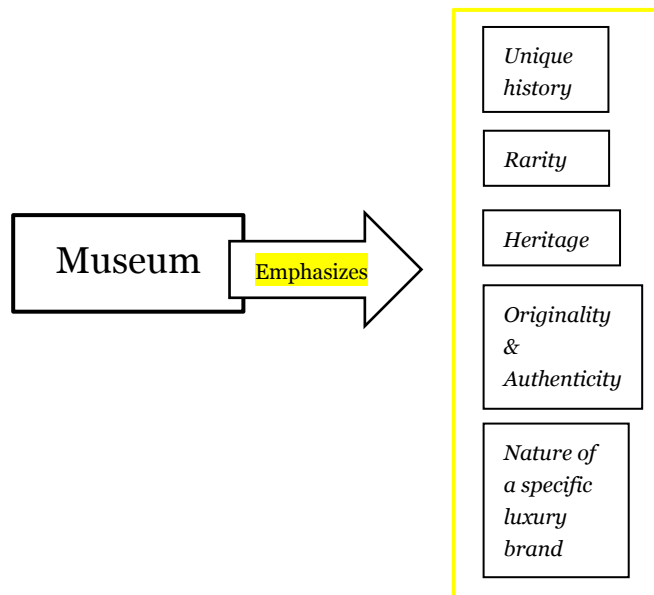


Figure 11 Elements of myth emphasized

5.1.1. *Unique history*

Catry (2003) suggests that “uniqueness can also be evoked by stories about brand origins. Here, family businesses have an edge over large public conglomerates. They can build their exclusivity around the founder’s myth” (Catry 2003:15). The brand Salvatore Ferragamo is both, it is a family-owned business but yet a global company on the stock market. Because of the history that the company has, the company can utilise Catry’s (2003) suggestion. The findings from the research support Catry’s (2003) suggestion that uniqueness can be evoked by stories about brand origins. This is also

highly relevant since uniqueness is a differentiation method and a unique history in itself may be an even strong resource – it is inimitable and may be utilised as a sustainable competitive advantage.

“I understand that other brands have history and legacies and their empires...but to see the immense detail and history behind this, it really sets it apart from everything else.” (R10, 8.3.2014)

The findings from the research suggest that the museum visit was generally experienced mostly in terms of learning about the *history* of Ferragamo. One respondent even used the word *authentic* when describing the museum visit:

“Very authentic because I could get in touch with the history of this man who came from the South of Italy, and his work and the passion he had for it was very interesting for me.” (R21, 19.3.2014)

The long history and having roots was an element that was appreciated by many respondents, suggesting that the elements add value also to the brand.

“I already knew that it was a Florence-based company and that it had a lot of roots here...It’s not just a pop-up...it’s rooted.” (R5, 5.3.2014)

Furthermore, the finding that the museum visit increased the appreciation of the brand because of enriched understanding of the history, as well as the finding that most of respondents felt that their opinion became more favourable towards the brand after the museum visit due to increased knowledge of the history support the conclusion that the element of *history* was emphasized during the museum visit. What is more, many respondents reflected upon the fact that the company was not something made overnight and were impressed to learn that Salvatore started to make shoes at the age of nine. This suggests that even though the historical element of the brand was recognised, the history was also seen as *unique* since the history of the brand is to a great extent the story of Salvatore Ferragamo’s life who built the company from nothing to something extremely successful. In other words, not only the history is emphasized, but a *unique history* that impressed the visitors was emphasized.

“The company is not just something that was made overnight. It’s a long history that he and his company have gone through to get to where the company is today. The history puts everything else in context.” (R6, 7.3.2014)

Therefore, the finding that the museum visit was experienced by many as a journey into the world of Salvatore Ferragamo and his unique story emphasized one of the key ingredients of the myth - the historical element.

5.1.2. *Rarity*

Rarity was also an element that was emphasized in the museum mostly by the display of shoes. Firstly, According to Catry (2003:15), “rarity perception is also enhanced when it is materialised in museums or ‘heritage centres’”. The Salvatore Ferragamo museum is a private museum dedicated to the brand, and since Catry (2003) argues that the rarity perception is enhanced in museums, it may be assumed that the rarity of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo is somewhat enhanced by merely having the museum. More importantly, the brand’s rarity is *materialized* in the museum in the form of shoes. The unique Ferragamo shoes emphasize the rarity of the brand because the findings from the research imply that the shoes in the museum were seen as much more than ordinary shoes. Furthermore, when something is rare, it is often limited and not mass-produced. It was mentioned that the shoes in the museum are not mass-produced. In other words, they are seen as rare. The rarity of the products in the museum can be suggested to spill over to the perception of rarity of the products in the contemporary collection and even to the brand. This will be discussed in more detail shortly.

Additionally, the shoes were mostly seen as *pieces of art*. The materials used, such as fishing line, 18-karat gold and candy wrapper also awakened a great deal of interest, as well as the shoes that had belonged to famous actresses.

“What struck me was the fact that during the war he used untypical materials to make shoes, for instance candy wrappers or things like that.” (R13, 11.3.2014)”

“These designs he’s come out with, some of them are quite crazy, like the fish on a shoe! First time you have fish on a shoe.” (R10, 8.3.2014)

Even though the company does not sell these rarities in the contemporary collection on a regular basis, the company has sent a message to the visitors of the museum that they are capable of producing these sorts of rarities since they are the historical treasures of the company. However, the company emphasizes the element of rarity by offering the option to buy replicas of some of the original and rare designs, such as the rainbow sandal that was originally designed for Judy Garland. In a sense, this opportunity does support the notion of rarity in the contemporary collection since some designs can be bought even though they are not a part of the contemporary collection, but are sold separately. It should be noted that rarity often decreases when more of a product is more available, suggesting that the rarity of the original designs could possibly decrease if they would constantly be available for customers to buy as a part of the contemporary collection. However, the exclusive opportunity to buy a replica of a specific pair can be

suggested to enhance the element of rarity since the prices are exclusively high and the original designs are available only to a limited amount.

“It is also very nice that they have these limited editions – it’s not for everybody so it’s very, very special.” (R20, 19.3.2014)

The shoes were one of the most impressive elements of the museum and many described them as *pieces of art*. This was because of the immense detailing of shoes as well as the ways they were displayed in the museum in glass cages and vitrines, some hanging from the ceiling. The craftsmanship behind the shoes seemed to also add to the notion of them being seen as pieces of art in terms of how much thought and work has been put into them.

“These aren’t the kind of shoes you walk around Florence...these are rather pieces of art than just something you put on every day. It looks like so much work and every detail is so thought out.” (R4, 5.3.2014)

It was an interesting finding to learn that the shoes in the museum were often seen as pieces of art since the notion of luxury brands being viewed as art rather than products (Kapferer 2012) has been recognized. Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008:214) argue further that the “luxurious connotations of art spill over from the art onto the brand, favourably influencing consumer evaluations of brand image”. This links to rarity in the sense that when art is seen as luxurious it probably is so because of different elements such as a famous painter, high price, etc. but also because of *rarity*, for instance there is only *one original* painting of Leonardo da Vinci’s “Mona Lisa” and only one of Sandro Botticelli’s “The Birth of Venus”. In a similar way, when *one pair of the original* 18-karat golden sandals or high heels made exclusively to Marilyn Monroe is displayed at the museum, the luxurious connotations of it include various elements, such as its famous designer Salvatore Ferragamo, the famous owner of the shoe, the beautiful design, etc. and *also* the fact that the pair of shoes are *rare*. Therefore, following Hagtvedt’s and Patrick’s (2008) logic of the luxurious connotations of art spilling over to the brand, the conclusion can be made that if rarity is one element of art similarly as rarity is an element of the shoes (since the shoes *are seen* as art but also because they are rare *solely as shoes* as well), then the element of rarity should spill over to the brand Salvatore Ferragamo as well. Hence, a further key ingredient of the myth was emphasized - the element of *rarity* was emphasized via the shoes because they were seen as pieces of art.

5.2. Heritage

The element of *heritage* was emphasized during the museum visit mostly together with the element of *unique history*. It should be noted that the concepts of myth, heritage and history are intertwined. This is because history is an important part of heritage and both concepts are elements of myth. However, heritage as a concept is different from a *heritage brand* and therefore it is important to carefully consider the conclusions done about heritage in this research. The findings suggest that the brand Salvatore Ferragamo is seen as having a rich heritage, and the museum is a way for the brand to utilise and activate its heritage. Therefore, Salvatore Ferragamo is a *heritage brand*.

“The most important message (of the museum) is that this brand has a history and a heritage. And that they follow the heritage of the creator, of the founder. And when buying a piece of the contemporary collection you kind of still feel the link with the whole history that is behind it.” (R15, 14.3.2014)

As mentioned in the introduction of the study, myth is one of the elements of creating a *heritage brand* (Urde et al. 2007). However, heritage *alone* is an ingredient of myth. So the conclusion can be made that since the museum emphasized the heritage of the brand, the myth of the brand is enhanced. Therefore, the assumption can thus be made that the brand is also *heritage brand* since it has been able to activate and utilise its heritage, as well as to enhance its myth, which is a prerequisite for heritage brands. This has implications for the marketing of the brand that will be discussed in section 5.6.

5.3. Originality and authenticity

Originality and *authenticity* were elements that were emphasized during the museum visit mostly by the display of shoes, similarly as the element of *rarity*. The museum also displayed a book with the original sketches and notes of Ferragamo when designing models. Many of the shoes displayed in the museum were the original ones created by Ferragamo but some of them were prototypes or replicas. Seeing the original shoes was experienced more positively than seeing replicas or prototypes.

“When you see the prototypes it’s OK but you notice that it’s not original. But when you have the original, you have 50 or 60 years in front of you. That’s really great.” (R19, 16.3.2014)

According to Hede and Thyne (2012), seeing authentic artefacts create an authentic museum experience. Therefore, in order to emphasize *originality* and *authenticity*, it is important to have *real* authentic artefacts displayed. Similarly, a replica of a painting is not as impressive as the original one, neither are the replicas of shoes.

The original shoes, such as the 18-karat golden sandals, the candy wrapper shoes, the shoes made with fishing line, as well as others, were for many visitors impressive to get to see the original creations of the founder of the brand. This element, as well as other artefact such as the sketch book, added value to the museum experience by making it more authentic. To see the original was also experienced as a tangible way to connect with the *history*.

“It’s really amazing to see the original. You kind of feel connected to the brand when you’re standing a foot away from the piece that the guy actually created. It makes the experience far more genuine and authentic...you feel *there*.” (R10, 8.3.2014)

This suggests that the shoes are not only an element that adds to the museum experience, but they are *tangible objects* that remind the visitors of the history and heritage that is behind the brand. What is more, the findings suggest that seeing the original was a way to *connect* with the *brand* as well. Seeing the original shoes signalled to the visitors that there is long experience in shoemaking, which is a combination of fine craftsmanship, a lot of work, fine detailing, creativity, innovation, love and passion for the trade. Without the original creations, this message would not be as strongly signalled by the museum. *Therefore, the display of shoes is crucial for the museum, not only because they were seen as one of the most impressive elements of the museum, but also because they are tangible evidence of the history and heritage of the Salvatore Ferragamo brand.* The findings also suggest that the museum visit functioned as a *guarantee of quality* of Ferragamo products, specifically of shoes, since the visitors could see how much work, craftsmanship and effort has been put into the brand. This, again, would be more difficult to portray without the original and authentic creations since they are an effective way to signal a long experience of shoemaking. The conclusion can thus be made that the elements of *originality* and *authenticity* were emphasized in the museum, mostly through the original shoes that were displayed. What is more, the argument has been made that natural luxury (hand-made luxury goods) should be a part of the marketing policies of a brand (Catry 2003). The authentic and original shoes of Ferragamo are suitable objects that should be used to emphasize the aspect of natural luxury and thus make the aspect of natural luxury an integrated part of the marketing implemented through the museum.

5.4. Nature of a specific luxury brand

The *nature of a specific luxury brand* was mainly described as the brand *staying true to itself*, and well as essentially following an ideology of “company is king” instead of

“client is king” (Kapferer & Bastien 2009). In other words, it can be argued to be a characteristic of luxury brands not to cave in with customer wishes or upcoming trends but basically be the trendsetter and follow the original vision of the brand founder.

The findings from the research suggest that the nature of Salvatore Ferragamo as a luxury brand is emphasized mostly with the help of the movie “The White Shoe” as well as through the museum visit in general (most valuable message of the museum). The messages of the museum and the themes from the movie were to *follow your dreams* and *never give up*. This is partially what the nature of a luxury brand means, to never stop pursuing your dreams no matter how difficult the times are. Salvatore Ferragamo experienced extremely rough times during the time when he built his company into what it is today. He suffered for instance from poverty, abuse from his mentor, war, bankruptcy, doubts from shareholders, debts and many other setbacks that no one can possibly imagine. However, he never gave up and he managed to build one of the most successful luxury brands in the world. This message is signalled to the respondents through the movie “The White Shoe” as well as through the museum experience in general.

“The most important message I got is that you cannot be detached or discouraged from your dreams. *You have to remain the same as you are*. You have to be courageous in your life because some people are going to try to bring you down.” (R21, 19.3.2014)

Remaining the same as you are can be thought to be a synonym for the brand *staying true to itself*. This is the other part of what makes up the nature of a luxury brand. The findings imply that the museum visit emphasizes the characteristic of the *brand staying true to itself*. The brand staying true to itself was evident in the findings through elements such as being unique, specifically with the original Ferragamo designs since many of them are special in terms of the materials used. The findings imply that the brand staying true to itself was a matter of not only following your dreams (i.e. Ferragamo’s dream to become a shoemaker), but also to be brave enough create shoes that no one had ever believed could exist. Many respondents were surprised to learn that Ferragamo was a pioneer in women’s shoemaking, which further supports that he made shoes according to his own desires. He made shoes as a painter makes a painting, following his own vision without listening to those who tried to convince him into doing something that he did not believe in.

“I would say that people are usually reserved in what they buy, so to be able to do what you want, for instance, to put fish-skin on a shoe, and not be afraid to put it out there...whatever your dream is, you should not be afraid to be yourself and do your own thing.” (R10, 19.3.2014)

What is more, the brand staying true to itself is not only about pursuing dreams passionately and following your vision, but it is also a matter of *quality* of the products. The findings imply that quality was one of the messages of the museum. This suggests that the museum was experienced as a place that shows the high quality of shoemaking that has been present in the Ferragamo company from the very beginning and still is today. Hence, the museum visit was experienced as a guarantee of quality of Ferragamo products, specifically of shoes. Therefore, the final key ingredient that constitutes the myth, *the nature of Salvatore Ferragamo as a luxury brand*, was emphasized in the museum through the messages of following your dreams, staying true to your own vision and a guarantee of the quality through the years.

5.5. Myth of the brand

As a conclusion, the findings from the research imply that all elements that constitute the myth of the brand, *unique history, rarity, heritage, originality and authenticity*, as well as the *nature of a Salvatore Ferragamo as a luxury brand*, have been emphasized during the museum visit. Therefore the conclusion can be made that the *myth of the brand has been enhanced* since all the elements that create the myth have been emphasized. Figure 12 portrays the second part of the theoretical model where the myth of the brand is enhanced.

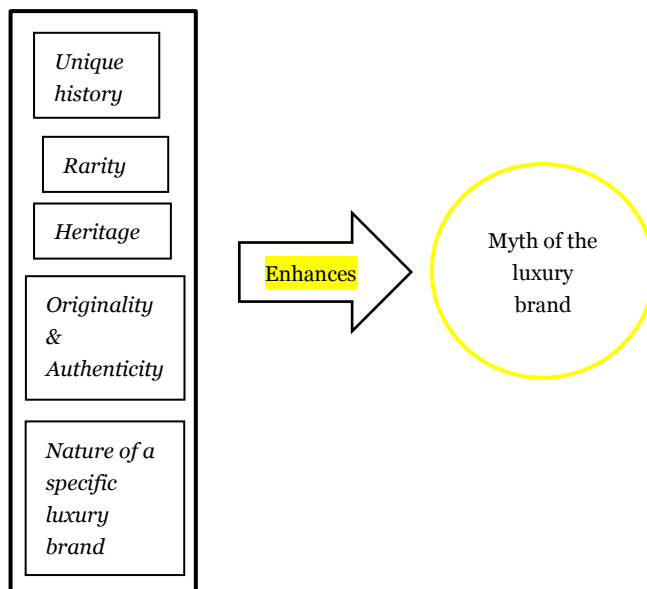


Figure 12 Enhanced myth

In other words, the aim of the thesis has been answered by stating that the findings from the research suggest that the elements that constitute the myth around the brand have been emphasized and therefore as a consequence the myth around the luxury brand Salvatore Ferragamo has been enhanced. This is also the answer to the first research question.

5.6. Strengthened marketing

This section of the study will discuss the last part of the theoretical model - how the enhanced myth can strengthen the marketing. The myth of the brand is an intangible concept made of different elements. The elements that create the myth are central for understanding why the myth strengthens the marketing. In order to answer *how* the enhanced myth can strengthen the marketing of the brand, the theoretical model has been revised. Figure 12 represents the revised theoretical model, taking into consideration the *activation* and *utilisation* of the heritage, the *museum experience*, as well as the fact that the brand is a *heritage brand* due to the effective activation and utilisation of its heritage.

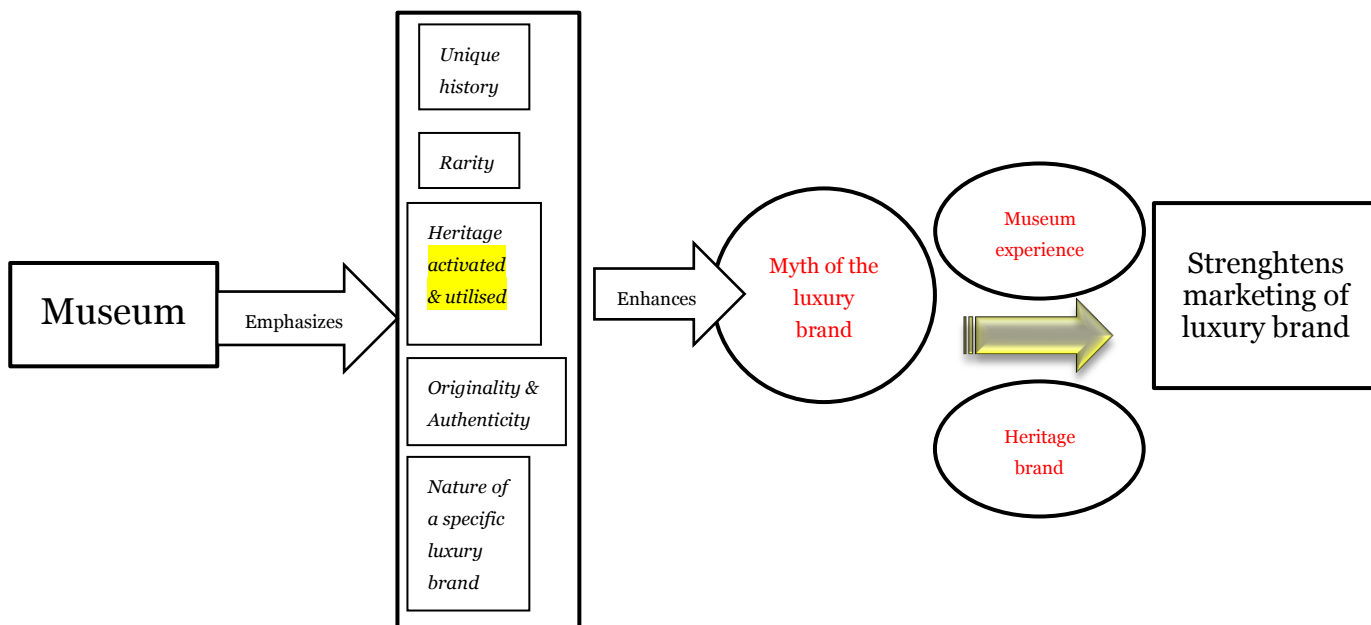


Figure 13 Revised theoretical model

The marketing of the brand is strengthened for a few different reasons. First of all, as mentioned in the introduction, myth of a brand is one of the elements that create a *heritage brand* (Urde et al. 2007). On the other hand, heritage as a *single* element is an

element of myth. Since the myth of the brand has been enhanced by emphasizing the elements that constitute the myth, the element of heritage has been activated and utilised, making Salvatore Ferragamo a *heritage brand*. Therefore, the marketing of the brand has been strengthened since the heritage has been *activated* and *utilised*, and the *myth has been enhanced* by using the museum as a channel to implement experiential marketing by offering visitors of the museum a Salvatore Ferragamo experience. Enhanced myth may be a *sustainable competitive advantage* since it is *inimitable* and therefore the *enhanced myth strengthens* the marketing of the brand, as well as supporting the brand to be a *heritage brand*, which gives it advantages since heritage is also inimitable. What is more, craftsmanship (i.e. natural luxury) has been argued to be an element that should be included in the marketing of luxury brands (Catry 2003). The findings from the research support this argument since the craftsmanship in terms of the displayed shoes in the Salvatore Ferragamo museum were experienced as signalling high quality, experience in the craftsmanship, innovativeness, and creativeness, among other things. Therefore the museum experience strengthens the marketing of the brand since the aspect of natural luxury is incorporated into the museum experience.

The findings also showed that many felt that the museum experience was a way to connect with the brand and seeing the shoes was a *tangible* way to connect with the history. This finding has implications since this was something experienced as *positive* to have an experience that connects the visitor with the brand and the history, which implies that an *experience with the brand* is something visitors or the museum *want*. Interestingly, some respondents seemed to even want to touch and taste things at the museum, implying that they may want to *experience* the museum *even* more. And since experiences are the core of experiential marketing, the experiences offered by the museum could be developed even further. This is discussed in section 5.7. Moreover, the marketing of the brand is strengthened also because the museum is like a visit card of the brand offered by the company, and a reminder of the existence and relevancy of the brand, as the research suggested. *Being a visit card and a reminder of existence and relevancy are marketing means. If the museum experience is memorable to visitors, then the marketing is strengthened since it more people know about the brand more after having visited the museum.*

The challenge lies in developing effective marketing strategies for luxury brands that utilise the myth of the brand but also the heritage, as well as making it appealing to the

contemporary consumers. As consumers seek more experiences and luxury brands need to continue marketing their brands in innovative and effective ways, the suggestion of using a museum as a channel to offer a “brand experience” is relevant. Atwal’s and Williams’ (2009) argument pointed out by Li et al. (2012) was that *brand-related experiences* that connect the consumers to luxury brands are the core of long-term success for the companies. This is precisely what the museum does and can do even to a greater degree – offer a brand experience and emphasize elements of the brand that are imitable. The brand experience should involve the elements that create the myth of the brand since the specific elements help to maintain the status and prestige image of the luxury brand.

Experiential marketing includes creating the experience with six different components that are the sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle and relational component (Gentile et al. 2007). The findings from the research imply that the museum can be used as a platform to offer an experience of entering the world of a luxury brand with the help these different components since it meets the requirements of experiential marketing. To give a few examples, the findings suggest that the respondents enjoyed *seeing* the shoes and the movie (*sensory*), and that the movie *awakened emotions* (*emotional*). The museum offers a workshop for children where a sandal can be *made* (*cognitive*), but lacks in offering this to adults. The museum shows the *experience, values and quality* of the Ferragamo products, and offers to be a part of that world by offering the chance to buy the products in the flagship store (*lifestyle*). Finally, the museum offers tours for *groups, students*, and shows support for upcoming *shoemakers* and contributes to *charity* (*relational*). In other words, the findings support the suggestions of utilising a museum as an experiential marketing channel since all the different components to offer an experience exists. This opportunity should be considered and develop it even further. Atwal and Williams (2009:341) pointed out that experiential marketing is about taking “the essence of a product and amplifying it into a set of tangible, physical and interactive experiences that reinforce the offer”. The marketing of the brand Salvatore Ferragamo is not only about marketing the products in the contemporary collection, but marketing the *experience, heritage, and quality of the brand*. This can be only limitedly done with traditional marketing means, such as advertisements, but a museum gives the chance to market the *heritage brand* since the visitors get to experience the world around the luxury brand.

It is no easy task to find innovative marketing techniques for luxury brands that are experiential in nature, to combine the history and heritage, as well as to make sure that the exclusivity and status of a luxury brand does not suffer. Since the company already possesses the elements of history, heritage and myth, as well as already having a museum, the suggestion to design a marketing strategy for the brand that *includes the museum as an experiential marketing channel* is in place. The findings support this suggestion since the museum visit enhanced the myth and signalled that Salvatore Ferragamo is truly a heritage brand. The findings have managerial implications that are discussed in the following section.

5.7. Managerial implications

The findings from the research have some managerial implications, mostly of interest to the marketing directors and other marketers of luxury brands, and for coordinators of luxury brand museums. Possibly the most important implication from this research is the vast potential that a museum has in being an experiential marketing channel for the brand. When a museum is taken seriously as a marketing channel, the museum can explicitly be designed even to a greater degree to be a platform for experiencing the brand heritage and the myth of the brand. For instance, it seemed as if some visitors would have wanted to experience the world of Ferragamo more tangibly, for instance, by touching the products. This could be made possible and therefore an even more memorable Ferragamo experience could be offered. Another way to tangibly experience the Ferragamo world could be to offer something similar as is offered to the children who get hear about the details of shoemaking and then get to create their own shoe. In this way the craftsmanship of shoemaking could tangibly be experienced not only by the children but also by the adults.

The point is that it could be possible to design a museum experience that visitors would never forget and make them truly want to be customers of the brand, as the findings suggested that many desired Ferragamo shoes after the museum visit. This desire could be enhanced to an even greater degree. In other words, the museum can be designed even more in a way that enhances the myth as well as emphasizes the aspects of the brand that are the inimitable resources, as well as designing an experience that includes the aspects that the visitors enjoy the most since they are the customer or potential customers of the brand. The brand can utilise the museum to its fullest potential, keeping at the same time in mind the heritage and history of the brand, and the

contemporary consumer. *The museum could be a strong, individual part of the marketing strategy of the brand.*

5.8. Suggestions for future research

Suggestions for future research includes researching how different groups experience the museum or what kinds of experiences they would like to have when coming to a luxury brand museum. The exhibitions could be designed accordingly for specific customer bases (for instance for customers belonging to an older customer base or alternatively for a younger customer base). As an example, a research could be conducted where the emotions of museum visitors would be in focus. This could aid in designing a museum experience that could awaken such feelings that benefit the brand the most in terms of gaining new customers or making current customers loyal. Motivations to visit the museum could also be researched in order to make sure that expectations of visitors are fulfilled.

A comparison between different luxury brand museums could be conducted or a research of whether there is a desire for specific luxury brand museums for brands that do not have a museum. Moreover, another suggestion for future research is to study what could be done in terms of marketing a luxury brand with using the association of luxury products and art.

A final suggestion for future research would be to study how to combine the historical aspects and heritage of the brand with the future of the brand, and how this combination of the past, present and the future could be exhibited in the museum. In other words, how to offer a museum experience that enhances the history and heritage of the brand, but is at the same time a modern experience, as well as being interesting to the contemporary consumers and highly relevant in the fashion world.

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

Museet som en kanal att bedriva
upplevelsemarknadsföring via betonande av myten och
utnyttjande av ett lyxvarumärkets arv. Fallet Salvatore
Ferragamo.

Inledning

“Uniqueness can be evoked by stories about brand origins. Here, family businesses have an edge over the large public conglomerate. They can build their sense of exclusivity around the founder’s myth.” (Catry 2003:15)

Myten kring varumärket är svårgripbar när det gäller lyxvarumärken med ett arv (*heritage*), som till exempel det italienska lyxvarumärket Salvatore Ferragamo. Myten kan vara en möjlig tillgång till en hållbar konkurrensfördel eftersom den inte kan kopieras av någon konkurrent. Urde, Greyser och Balmer (2007) påpekar att myten även är ett element i ett varumärke med arv (*heritage brand*). Således skulle företagen som agerar på lyxmarknaden kunna utnyttja myten för att förstärka marknadsföringen av varumärken i allmänhet.

Marknadsföringen av lyxvarumärken avviker från marknadsföringen av icke-lyxvarumärken. Lyxvarumärken måste se till att marknadsföringsmetoderna inte skadar lyxvarumärkets status och exklusivitet. Myten om varumärket är ett relativt svårt koncept att definiera, men om företagen kan förstå konceptet och veta källan till myten, och därpå lyckas utnyttja konceptet, kan det leda till konkurrensfördelar. Frågan är dock, hur kan myten aktiveras och utnyttjas? Ett sätt skulle vara att betona varumärkets historia samt de andra element som skapar myten om varumärket. Ett sätt att lyfta fram historien bakom varumärket skulle kunna vara att visa produkter med rikligt arv, som till exempel kreationer av en modedesigner, och därmed betona myten om varumärket.

Eftersom innovativa marknadsföringsmetoder eftersträvas och nutida konsumenter strävar efter upplevelser, är det en intressant idé att kombinera marknadsföring av ett lyxvarumärke med moderna konsumenters behov av upplevelser, för att utveckla den konventionella organisationen av ett museum. Därmed uppstår frågan *hur* ett museum kunde betona myten av ett lyxvarumärke. Eftersom ett museums funktion är relativt otydlig, finns det en möjlighet att använda museet och utveckla funktionen vidare. Om produkter med rikligt arv är utställda i ett museum, kan det möjligtvis betona myten av

varumärket och därmed kan själva museet bli en kanal att bedriva upplevelsemarknadsföring (*experiential marketing*) för lyxvarumärket.

Fallstudie

I denna avhandling görs en fallstudie av det italienska lyxföretaget Salvatore Ferragamo S.p.A. som grundades år 1928. Företaget äger ett privat museum, Museo Salvatore Ferragamo i Florens, där grundarens (Salvatore Ferragamos) originella kreationer är utställda. Ferragamo var en skomakare som revolutionerade skoindustrin för kvinnor genom att hitta på extravaganta modeller och designer, för bland annat högklackade skor. (Museo Ferragamo - leaflet)

Definitoner av nyckelbegrepp

Vissa begrepp är viktiga att definiera för denna studie.

Lyxvarumärke – Kan definieras som ett varumärke som oftast har egenskaper som exklusivitet, en hög status, ett högt pris, hög kvalitet osv.

Myten om ett varumärke – Myten är ett svårgripbart koncept. Myten byggs av element som arv, originalitet, autenticitet, raritet, lyxvarumärkets karaktär och dess unika historia.

Arv – En egenskap som många lyxvarumärken har. Element som historia, originalitet och autenticitet utgör varumärkets arv. Att ha arv ger möjligheten att bli ett varumärke med arv (*heritage brand*).

Upplevelsemarknadsföring – Ett modernt marknadsföringssynsätt där konsumentens upplevelser är centrala.

Problemområde

Marknadsföring av lyxvarumärken är ett forskningsfält under utveckling (Beverland 2004; Vickers & Renand 2003). Dessutom har lyxvarumärken ofta använt traditionella marknadsföringsmetoder som är avsedda för icke-lyxvarumärken. Risken med att utnyttja traditionella marknadsföringsmetoder för lyxvarumärken är att det minskar på statusen och exklusiviteten av varumärket. Att använda massmarknadsföring minskar till exempel på rariteten av ett lyxvarumärke, vilket påverkar märket negativt eftersom rariteten är karakteristiskt för ett lyxvarumärke. Därutom är traditionella

marknadsföringsmetoder föråldrade från denna synvinkel, för att konsumenterna strävar nuförtiden efter mera än produkter och tjänster – de vill ha erfarenheter. Forskningen är begränsad när det gäller innovativa och icke-traditionella marknadsföringsmetoder för lyxvarumärken, speciellt att utnyttja upplevelsemarknadsföring. Dessutom har tidigare forskning bevisat att historien och autenticiteten av lyxvarumärken är källor till företagets framgång (Catry 2003; Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Keller 2009; Urde et al. 2007). Emellertid är forskningen begränsad när det kommer specifikt till *hur* företag kan utnyttja dessa element i marknadsföringen. En vidare orsak till varför det är viktigt att undersöka marknadsföring av lyxvarumärken är den osäkra ekonomiska situationen. Även lyxindustrin har påverkats av den ekonomiska recessionen (Kapferer 2010) och marknadsförare av lyxvarumärken måste jobba hårt och tänka noggrant igenom marknadsföringsstrategierna för att uppehålla lyxvarumärkenas höga status.

Syfte och forskningsfrågor

Syftet med denna studie är att undersöka hur ett museum kan betona myten om lyxvarumärket Salvatore Ferragamo. Forskningsfrågorna är följande:

1. Hur kan ett besök på Salvatore Ferragamo-museet betona myten om varumärket Salvatore Ferragamo?
2. Hur kan den betonade myten förstärka marknadsföringen av varumärket Salvatore Ferragamo?

Begränsningar

Denna studie har några begränsningar som är viktiga att nämna. För det första gäller ämnet för denna studie enbart lyxvarumärken och tar inte hänsyn till icke-lyxvarumärken. För det andra fokuserar denna studie på lyx inom modebranschen. Det vill säga att denna undersökning exkluderar andra lyxmarknader, såsom lyxmöbler, lyxbilar, osv.

UPPLEVELSEMARKNADSFÖRING GENOM ATT BETONA MYTEN OCH UTNYTTJA VARUMÄRKETS ARV

Varumärken

Varumärken har många olika funktioner. Varumärkets funktion är att skapa mening (Kay 2006). Bland annat är varumärket en symbol för de produkter och tjänster som företaget erbjuder. Från ett kundperspektiv är varumärkets funktion att vara ett alternativ, ett löfte om kvalitet eller en minskad risk (Keller & Lehmann 2006; Popescu; 2009). Varumärken är viktiga finansiella tillgångar för företag (Keller & Lehmann 2006). Man måste förstå vad som är karakteristiskt för varumärken för att kunna fatta effektiva strategiska beslut (Wood 2000). Dessutom borde varumärken lyckas med att anpassa sig till samhället som förändras, samt fungera som ett skydd för företaget ifall något går fel (Popescu 2009). Emellertid påpekar Wood (2000) att varumärkens attribut är subjektiva eftersom varumärken kan tolkas från ett kundperspektiv eller från ett företagsperspektiv.

Varumärken med arv

Urde et al. (2007) påpekar att alla varumärken har en historia men bara vissa har ett arv. Dessutom har bara vissa varumärken lyckats utnyttja sitt arv och använda det som en värdefull tillgång. Arvet i varumärket har många definitioner (Hakala, Lätti & Sandberg 2011). Wiedmann, Hennings, Schmidt och Wuestefeld (2011) argumenterar att under turbulenta ekonomiska tider tenderar konsumenterna att föredra varumärken med arv eftersom de oftast ses som trovärdiga och pålitliga. Enligt Urde et al. (2007), kan varumärkets arkvot analyseras med en modell. Denna modell kan hjälpa företag att utnyttja arvet till en konkurrenskraftig fördel och integrera konceptet arv i marknadsföringsstrategierna. Modellen består av fem element, samt ett sjätte element som förenar de fem, dvs. *styrning av varumärket (brand stewardship)*. De olika elementen är *meriter (track record)*, *historien som är viktig för identiteten (history important to identity)*, *livslängd (longevity)*, *användning av symboler (use of symbols)* och *centrala värden (core values)*.

Lyx

Beverland (2004) påpekar att man inte har lyckats hitta en definition av ordet *lyx* i ett marknadsföringsperspektiv. Kapferer (2010) påpekar att *lyx* inte kan definieras. Lyx är subjektivt, dessutom är konceptet dynamiskt och därmed förändras det genom tiderna. Hung, Lin och Yang (2012) framhäver att definitionen på lyx beror på vem man frågar. Emellertid argumenterar Kapferer (2010) att lyx är bundet till sociala relationer eftersom människor har ett behov av att jämföra och konkurrera med varandra.

Lyxvarumärken

Definitionen av lyxvarumärken är relativt oklar eftersom det finns en brist på forskning om definitioner, processer och mätning när det gäller dem (Beverland 2004; Miller & Mills 2004). Dock finns det särdrag i dem, som till exempel kreativitet, originalitet, innovativitet, en stark identitet, osv. som forskningen är mer eller mindre enig om när det gäller lyxvarumärken. Enligt Keller (2009) finns det tio karakteristiska drag som definierar lyxvarumärken. Dessa är *upprätthållning av en premiumbild, immateriella associationer med varumärket, erfarenheten av att köpa samt konsumera lyxprodukten, betydelsen av sekundära associationer, distributionsstrategier, prissättningsstrategier, varumärkets arkitektur, definition av konkurrens, och juridiskt skydd av varumärken*. Emellertid finns det annat som är karakteristiskt för lyxvarumärken, som till exempel konsekvent leverans av hög kvalitet, ett arv av hantverk, ett identifierbart mönster eller design, ett globalt rykte, osv. (Nueno & Quelch 1998). Eftersom det finns många dimensioner av lyxvarumärken, finns det även många perspektiv på vad det är som gör ett varumärke till lyx.

Myten om ett lyxvarumärke

Myten är karakteristisk för starka varumärken (Kay 2006). Eftersom lyxvarumärken kan anses vara starka varumärken, kan man argumentera att en myt även är karakteristisk för lyxvarumärken. Emellertid finns det forskning som visar att lyxvarumärken behärskar en myt kring varumärket (Catry 2003; Kapferer & Bastien 2009). Figur 1 nedanför visar vilka element som utgör myten om ett lyxvarumärke.



Figur 1 Element som utgör myten om ett lyxvarumärke

Figur 1 visar vilka olika element som utgör myten kring ett lyxvarumärke. *Arvet* (heritage) av varumärket och en *unik historia* bakom varumärket är centrala element. *Originalitet och autenticitet* är viktiga element, eftersom det i grund och botten är viktigt att lyxvarumärken har originell design och inte en som är kopierad från en konkurrent. Dessutom är *raretet* ett viktigt element, på liknande sätt som det överlag är ett viktigt element i lyxvarumärken. *Karaktären av ett specifikt lyxvarumärke* är också centralt. Med detta koncept menas att en distans mellan företaget och konsumenten hålls (Kapferer & Bastien 2009). Med andra ord, företaget bakom ett lyxvarumärke låter inte konsumenternas önskemål påverka hur det agerar eller vad det producerar. Företaget producerar vad det vill, utan att desto mera lyssna på konsumenten. Istället för att tänka att ”kunden är kung”, som i branschen med icke-lyxvarumärken, kan man med lyxvarumärken tänka att det är tvärtom, ”företaget är kung” (Kapferer & Bastien 2009). Distansen mellan företaget och kunden beror också på en ytterligare faktor. Denna är att lyxvarumärket har varit troget mot sina värden oberoende av vad kunderna eller någon annan intressent har önskat. För att ta ett exempel: när Salvatore Ferragamo höll på att bygga sitt företag, ville en intressent att han i ett skede byter till maskinproduktion av skor. Ferragamo vägrade eftersom han insåg att kvaliteten på skorna skulle sjunka, även om effektiviteten skulle ha ökat och priset sjunkit. Trots detta höll han fast vid sina egna principer och värden, och nuförtiden är företaget ett av de mest kända lyxvarumärkena i lyxbranschen inom mode. (Salvatore Ferragamo 1985)

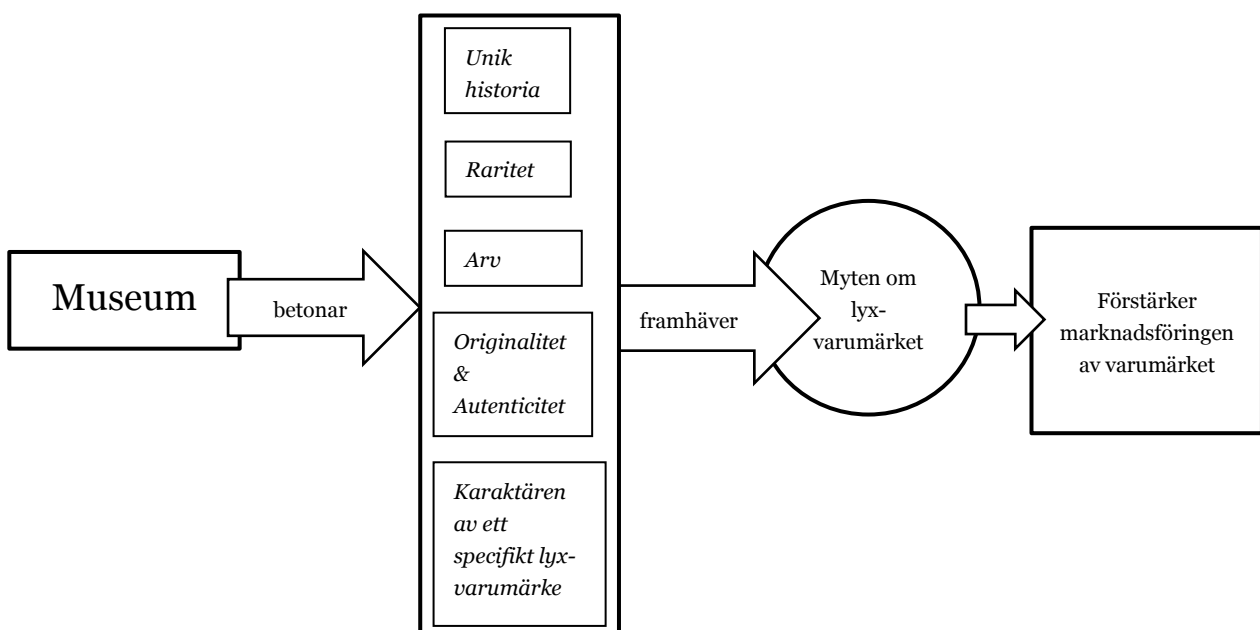
Marknadsföring av lyxvarumärken

Marknadsföring av lyxvarumärken är ett komplext fenomen (Miller & Mills 2012; Vickers & Renand 2003). Detta beror bland annat på oklarheten i konceptet lyx. Det finns ett behov av utveckling av teorier och kunskap om marknadsföring av lyxvarumärken (Ko & Megehee 2012). Morley och McMahon (2011) påpekar att det är viktigt att hitta effektiva marknadsföringsstrategier för lyxvarumärken som innehåller resurser, som till exempel varumärkets arv, men så att metoderna är på samma gång relevanta för nutida konsumenter. Varumärken torde inte se arvet som enbart ekvivalent med företagets historia, utan hellre som en resurs som kan anpassas till moderna kontexter (Kapferer & Bastien 2009; Morley & McMahon 2011). Paradoxen inom lyxmarknadsföring är att traditionella marknadsföringsmetoder är irrelevanta för lyxvarumärken, och kan även skada dem, men de har ändå använts. Till exempel massmarknadsföring orsakar en risk att rareteten av lyxvarumärket minskar. Som ett exempel har Calvin Klein sakta men säkert rört sig ut ur lyxbranschen (Kapferer &

Bastien 2009) och kan ha tappat det som är karakteristiskt för lyxvarumärken, som hög status och exklusivitet. Emellertid kan massmarknadsföringskanaler, som Internet, öppna nya möjligheter som är interaktiva och lämpliga för nutida konsumenter (Morley & McMahon 2011). Utmaningen ligger i att hitta moderna och innovativa marknadsföringsmetoder för lyxvarumärken som använder arv, myt och varumärkets historia som resurser, och som tilltalar moderna kunder. Ett förslag skulle kunna vara användningen av upplevelsemarknadsföring (*experiential marketing*).

Ett museum som en kanal att bedriva upplevelsemarknadsföring

Eftersom nya och innovativa marknadsföringsmetoder eftersträvas, sådana som passar moderna kunder som söker upplevelser, är det nödvändigt att hitta nya sätt att marknadsföra lyxvarumärket. Ett förslag är att använda ett museum för att bedriva upplevelsemarknadsföring, där museibesökaren får en varumärkesupplevelse som betonar myten om varumärket samt historien om och arvet i varumärket. Figur 2 visar den teoretiska modellen som jag skapade för att sammanfatta hur ett museum kan betona myten om varumärket och därmed förstärka marknadsföringen av varumärket. Modellen föreslår att ett besök på museet betonar de olika element som utgör myten om lyxvarumärket eftersom museet utställer historiska objekt samt visar historien bakom varumärket. Eftersom elementen har betonats, understryker de myten om lyxvarumärket. Sedan förstärks marknadsföringen av varumärket eftersom resurser som inte kan kopieras och leda till konkurrensfördelar har använts.



Figur 2 Teoretisk modell över museet som en kanal för att bedriva upplevelsemarknadsföring

Metod

En kvalitativ forskningsmetod valdes för denna studie för att bäst kunna besvara syftet och forskningsfrågorna. 21 stycken semi-strukturerade intervjuer gjordes under en period av tre veckor i Salvatore Ferragamo-museet i Florens, Italien. Dessutom användes poster från museets gästbok som sekundärdata och besökare observerades. Urvalsmetoden var icke-slumpmässig, där jag som forskare subjektivt valde vem jag skulle fråga om att delta, och sedan kunde de som blev tillfrågade frivilligt vara med (*volunteer sampling*) (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012). Undersökningen hade därmed en explorativ karaktär. En intervjuguide användes som hade fyra centrala teman: *museum som en upplevelse, varumärkets arv, myten om varumärket och upplevelsemarknadsföring*. Dessa teman hjälpte dataanalysen, som gjordes med hjälp av Spiggle's (1994) förslag.

Reliabiliteten och validiteten av undersökningen var relativt höga eftersom flera datainsamlingsmetoder användes och pilotintervjuer gjordes. Dock minskade validiteten eftersom många av respondenterna var unga fullvuxna, och därmed inte är nödvändigtvis nutida kunder av företaget. Reliabiliteten av undersökningen minskade på grund av att subjektiva erfarenheter undersöks i denna studie och därmed skulle resultaten högst antagligen vara annorlunda om undersökningen skulle göras på nytt. Dessutom är det i denna undersökning frågan om en fallstudie och därmed är det svårt att generalisera resultaten.

Resultat från den empiriska undersökningen

Resultaten från den empiriska undersökningen visar att många respondenter upplevde att besöket gav dem en bättre *förståelse av företagets historia*. Ferragamos originella och utställda skor väckte mest intresse och var det mest imponerande elementet i museet, speciellt de unika skor som var gjorda av ett specialmaterial, som till exempel godispapper eller guld. Därutöver väckte de skor som hade hört till någon känd person, som till exempel Marilyn Monroe eller Judy Garland, intresse. Dessutom visar resultaten att skorna ansågs vara utställda som konst. Enligt några respondenter gav även museets historiska läge vid Palazzo Spini Feroni museiupplevelsen ett mervärde.

Många respondenter lyfte fram att de blev överraskade av lärdomen att Ferragamo var en pionjär inom kvinnors skomode, eftersom han redan hade formgett skor på 50- och 60-talet som anses vara toppmode idag på 2000-talet. Med andra ord, Ferragamo var en av de första som redan under hans tid formgav vissa skomodeller som nuförtiden är moderna.

Dessutom visade resultaten att respondenternas uppfattningar om varumärket blev positivare eftersom den ökade kunskapen om historien fick dem att uppskatta varumärket mera. Därtill gav museibesöket en personlighet till varumärket eftersom respondenterna fick veta vem grundaren till företaget är. Besöket var även ett sätt att skapa koppling med varumärket. Utställningens budskap ansågs vara att följa sina drömmar, samt att passion och inspiration leder till ett gott resultat. Även att bevara företagets arv ansågs som ett budskap. Enligt en besökare var museet också ett visitkort för företaget. Observation av museibesökare samt analys av gästboksposterna stödde resultaten från intervjuerna. Ett ytterligare resultat från observationen var, att besökare möjligtvis skulle vilja uppleva museet på ett mera fysiskt sätt.

Diskussion och konklusioner

Resultatet från undersökningen tyder på att de olika element som utgör myten om varumärket betonades under museibesöket. *Unik historia*, samt varumärkets *arv* betonades i och med att grundarens historia berättades i museet. *Rariteten* betonades genom de unika skorna som var utställda och vilka även uppfattades som konst. Även *originalitet och autenticitet* betonades främst genom de originella Ferragamoskorna i museet. *Karaktären av ett specifikt lyxvarumärke* betonades via museets budskap, samt filmens budskap. Dessa budskap var att följa sina drömmar och aldrig ge upp, även under svåra tider. Med andra ord betonade museibesöket alla de olika element som utgör myten om lyxvarumärket. Därmed kan man dra slutsatsen att varumärkets myt betonades eftersom de element som bildar myten blev betonade.

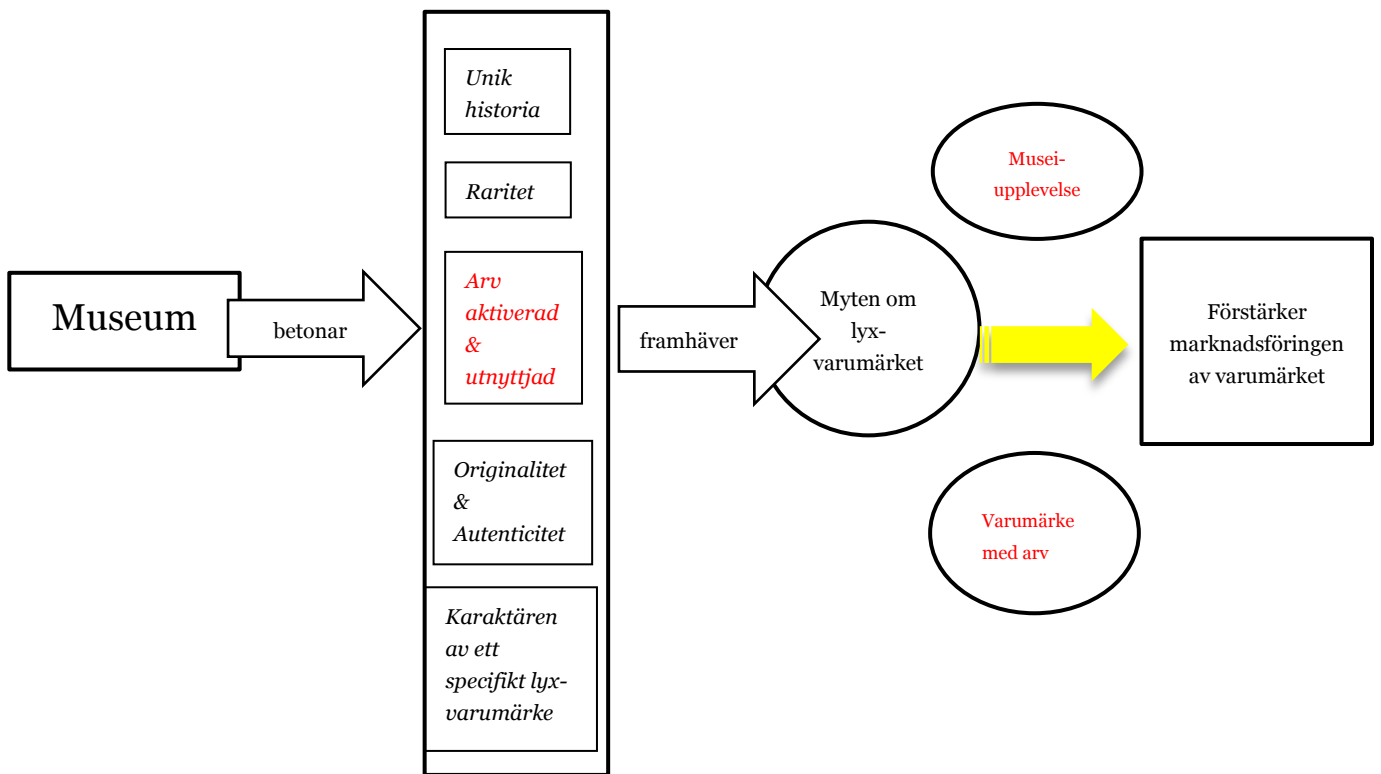


Figure 3 Reviderad teoretisk modell

Figur 3 demonstrerar den reviderade teoretiska modellen som hjälper att besvara studiens syfte och forskningsfrågor. Figur 3 visar att museet betonade de olika element som skapar myten, och därmed betonades myten om lyxvarumärket. Den betonade myten förstärkte sedan marknadsföringen av varumärket via att myten blev betonad och varumärkets arv blev aktiverat och utnyttjat, vilket betyder att lyxvarumärket Salvatore Ferragamo är ett *varumärke med arv* (*heritage brand*). Eftersom ett museum dessutom är en plattform för upplevelser, kan man utvidga museets betydelse till att vara en kanal för upplevelsemarknadsföring eftersom besökare i lyxmuseet får en Salvatore Ferragamo-upplevelse. Således är förslaget att museet blir en del av lyxvarumärkets marknadsföringsstrategi genom att erbjuda en lyxvarumärkesupplevelse, och därmed förstärks marknadsföringen av varumärket överlag.

För marknadsförare av lyxvarumärken kan vissa slutsatser göras. Museiupplevelsen skulle kunna göras så att de konkurrenskraftiga elementen, som arv, historia och myt, skulle betonas ännu starkare. Vissa besökare ville ha mera information om grundarens

historia. Dessutom skulle museibesöket kunna innehålla mera fysiska element, som till exempel en möjlighet för besökaren att göra sin egen sko. Fortsatt forskning kunde undersöka vad för motivationer det finns bakom att besöka museet och vad som förväntas av ett besök till ett lyxvarumärkesmuseum. Därtill kunde fortsatt forskning undersöka hur museet kunde länka historia och arv med nutiden och framtiden för att kunna erbjuda en relevant upplevelse åt moderna kunder.

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APPENDIX 1 INTERVIEW GUIDE*Museum as an experience*

1. How would you describe the museum visit with three words?
2. What was the most impressive element of the museum? Why?

Myth of the brand

3. How did the museum visit and the history you learned about the shoemaker affect your perception about the brand Salvatore Ferragamo?
4. Come up with three words that best describe your experience of seeing the *authentic shoes* of Salvatore Ferragamo.

Experiential marketing

5. Is your opinion more or less favorable towards the brand after visiting the museum? Why/why not?
6. In your opinion, what is the most valuable message that the Ferragamo museum signals to you as a visitor?
7. Are you planning to go to the Ferragamo flagship store upstairs after this?
8. What do you think about the comic done about Salvatore Ferragamo's life?
9. Did you see the movie? If so, can you describe in a few words how you experienced the movie.
10. What themes or values emerged from the movie?
11. Would you like to add something more or would you like to further reflect on something that I haven't asked?
12. Finally, for some background information, would you like to tell me your name, age, nationality and your reason for visiting the Ferragamo museum.