



The Relationship between Brand Authenticity and Brand Evangelism

“An Empirical Study on Athletes Sports Shoes”

Research extracted from a master's thesis

By

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The Relationship between Brand Authenticity and Brand Evangelism

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Weam Ali El-Naghi; Dr. Abdel-Aziz Hassan and Dr. Ahmed Elsetouhi

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the direct relationship between brand authenticity (BA) and brand evangelism (BE) among athletes' sports shoes. The study employed a deductive approach and a quantitative research method. An online questionnaire was used to collect data from 395 customers of sports shoes. Path analysis was employed to show the causal relationships between study variables using Smart PLS3. The research findings revealed that brand authenticity has a significant positive effect partially on brand evangelism.

Keywords: Brand Authenticity, Brand Evangelism.

1.1) Introduction

Sports products can be physical objects, then services, people, places, organizations, and ideas (Popović & Milašinović, 2016). The unusual nature of the sport increasingly separates the “industry of sports” from traditional industry, and the attraction of sports products, thus becoming a unique challenge for most marketers. In the process of expansion of the sporting goods company business, some brands cover only sport-oriented categories and items, but some other brands try to get the fashion market out of the boundary of sports performance to increase their market share (Popovic, 2017).

Authenticity is progressively recognized as an alluring brand characteristic in spite of the truth that it requires significant speculations within the advancement of brand values and steady brand behavior over time (Morhart et al., 2015). Throughout all streams of the research, it is clear that issues of authenticity continue to be inextricably linked to the market in various ways. There remains a clear need for future research that focuses on the nuanced sociopolitical and cultural processes through which consumption experiences are authenticated (Södergren, 2021). According to Brown et al. (2003), “the search for authenticity is one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing”.

Pimentel and Reynolds (2004) have shown that truly devoted consumers not only spread positive word-of-mouth but eventually engage in recruiting in order to actively convince others of their preferred brands. The term brand evangelism means to build a reputation for the company through the existing customers by the word-of-mouth method (Nobi et al., 2021). In addition, the researchers would clarify the difference between purchase intention, positive brand referral, and oppositional brand referral as dimensions of brand evangelism.

Sports shoes have especially been manufactured for professional athletes, today leading sports goods manufacturers changed that concept and have made it a common household product. For participants or athletes, sports shoe manufacturers continuously innovate and create designs that are suitable for specific activities related to various types of sports (Chew & Leng, 2016). Some examples of sports shoes brands such as Nike, Adidas, Converse, Puma, Jump, Air Jordan, Kappa, New Balance, and Reebok.

1.2) Theoretical Framework

The researchers emphasize the definitions of brand authenticity, brand evangelism, and the dimensions of each variable.

1.2.1) Brand Authenticity (BA)

Authenticity is plainly turning into a huge marketing contention for organizations, in a world where a thousand products could fit in a similar reach; authenticity can give more appeal, wealth, or singularity to a product, or even an organization. Along these lines, for an organization, authenticity needs to be reached, and aim to give worth to a product, regardless of whether globalization acts against that. Marketers must constantly work on their brand and product in order to grasp the nature of authenticity in their branded products or services, as well as its drivers and effects. It is becoming increasingly common for businesses to publicize the location of their product's manufacture.

1.2.1.1) Brand Authenticity Definition

Authenticity includes elements intrinsic to the product or production process and subjective elements created by organizational members, consumers, and other stakeholders. Authenticity is a tool to highlight an honorable set of values and distinguish a brand from its competitors (Beverland et al., 2008). Others see authenticity as “a social construction that can be attributed to an object or event that conforms to an idealized representation of reality” (Beverland, 2005b; Grazian, 2003; Peterson, 2005). Authenticity is “an evaluation and decision-making criterion that guides consumer choice, with the need for authenticity varying across consumers” (Liao & Ma, 2009).

BA is defined as the level of authenticity of an object (the brand), brand object refers to “the entity that is the target of brand identification” (Wymer, 2013). BA refers to the degree to which a brand is perceived to be the quintessential exemplar of its type (Wymer & Akbar, 2017). Morhart et al. (2015) define BA as “the extent to which consumers perceive a brand to be faithful toward itself (continuity), true to its consumers (credibility), motivated by caring and responsibility (integrity), and able to support consumers in being true to themselves (symbolism)”. The researcher relies on this study because the consumer’s support of being true to themselves is only captured by Morhart.

1.2.1.2) Dimensions of Brand Authenticity

BA is built around different dimensions. However, each researcher has identified and developed in his study just a few dimensions, especially the ones they believed to result more coherent with their definition of authenticity and more impressive to measure BA itself (Napoli et al., 2016). Morhart et al. (2015) see authenticity as a consumer-related construct, which in its essence is based on identity-related consumption, supported by four Brand Authenticity dimensions called continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism. Morhart et al.’s (2015) aspects of BA will be applied to the current study. Initially, they are some of the newest dimensions created. Second, these measurements are ideal for sports shoes. The dimensions are explained in the following paragraphs:

1) Continuity

‘Continuity’ refers to “core brand attributes remaining stable over a longer period” (Morhart et al., 2015). Hence, the consumer judges continuity to be high if the present brand promise reflects past brand behavior. It refers to “a brand’s stability, endurance, and consistency” (Bruhn et al., 2012). On the other hand, Schallehn et al. (2014) talk about continuity as the stability of a brand’s core attributes. It reflects a brand’s timelessness, historicity, and its ability to transcend trends (Morhart et al., 2015), to establish a bigger reach for the brand, Adidas uses a multi-brand strategy that includes Adidas, Reebok, TaylorMade, Rockport, and wide range of ice hockey equipment (CCM). Regarding the past-related aspect, the continuity dimension resembles the concept of pedigree (Beverland, 2006).

2) Credibility

Consumers associate authentic brands with a high level of credibility “the brands' willingness and ability to deliver on their promises”. Participants stressed the importance of authentic brands to deliver what they say they will (Morhart et al., 2015). Credibility is broadly defined as the believability of an entity's intentions at a particular time and is posited to have two main components; trustworthiness and expertise. Thus, brand credibility is defined as the believability of the product information contained in a brand, which requires that consumers perceive that the brand has the ability (i.e., expertise) and willingness (i.e., trustworthiness) to continuously deliver what has been promised (in fact, brands can function as signals since—if and when they do not deliver what is promised—their brand equity will erode). Both the expertise and trustworthiness of a brand reflect the cumulative impacts of associated past and present marketing strategies and activities (Swait & Erden, 2004).

3) Integrity

Authenticity perceptions further involve a sense of integrity based on virtue reflected in the brand's intentions and in the values it communicates. The integrity dimension signifies “the moral purity and responsibility of the brand (i.e., its adherence to good values and sincere care about the consumer)” (Morhart et al., 2015). This dimension parallels the commercial disinterestedness of authentic brands put forward by Holt (2002) and the virtuousness described by Beverland and Farrelly (2010). To be authentic, brands must be without an instrumental economic agenda and be disseminated by people who are intrinsically motivated by deeply held values (Holt, 2002). Beverland and Farrelly (2010) argue that virtuousness arises from staying true to one's morals.

4) Symbolism

Morhart et al. (2015) conceptualize symbolism as “a brand's potential to serve as a resource for identity construction by providing self-referential cues representing values, roles, and relationships”. In other words, symbolism reflects the symbolic quality of the brand that consumers can use to define who they are or who they are not. Moreover, brands in sports product categories have been shown to have a significant symbolic value for consumers (Del Rio et al., 2001).

1.2.2) Brand Evangelism (BE)

Indeed, BE has evoked a strong interest for marketing researchers and practitioners to comprehend the nature and results of brand evangelism since it gives numerous advantages to the firm, with the critical part of having the particular ability to impact buyer conduct and give commercial center points of interest to firms outside the association's control (Cestare & Ray, 2019), Evangelism marketing means creating a mission and brand experience that are so inspiring to consumers that they become committed to a company and share their enthusiasm with others (Meiners et al., 2010).

1.2.2.1) Brand Evangelism Definition

BE is a strong consumer-brand relationship that manifests itself as an extension of positive consumer-to-consumer WOM communication and other brand-related behaviors (Doss, 2014; McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Pimentel & Reynolds, 2004; Riiivits-arkonsuo & Leppiman, 2014) where the corporation develops customers that have a strong belief in a certain product or service and strive to persuade others to buy or use it (Mamesah et al., 2020; Riorini & Widayati, 2015; Saravanan & Saraswathi, 2017), while Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2002) and Scarpi (2010) defined BE as a highly admired customer who has a psychological and emotional attachment with a brand and has intension to purchase that brand.

Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) see BE as “the active behavioral and vocal support of a brand including actions such as purchasing the brand, disseminating positive brand referrals, and convincing others about a focal brand by disparaging competing brands”, the researcher relies on this definition in her study because this definition includes all sides of intention and actions of evangelism. The concept of BE is communicating positive information, ideas, and feelings concerning a specific brand freely, and oftentimes fervently, to others in a desire to influence consumption behavior (Doss, 2014). Although word-of-mouth communication is not necessarily founded on a persuasive viewpoint, BE is a mode of persuasion as the evangelist acts as an unpaid spokesperson on behalf of the brand. The communication by the evangelists may even be considered “preaching” in an attempt to convert others to consume the brand (Doss, 2014).

1.2.2.2) Dimensions of Brand Evangelism

BE is represented by three important behaviors which include purchase intentions, positive brand referrals, and oppositional brand referrals. The selection of dimensions was based on the extension of the work of Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013).

1) Purchase intention

Purchase intentions are the likelihood that a buyer will buy products from a certain brand, (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). purchase intention represents “the possibility that consumers will plan to purchase a certain product or service in the future” (Wu et al., 2011), and also refers to “the consumer tendency to purchase a brand routinely” (Diallo, 2012). Likewise, consumers’ purchase intentions arise when they perceive the value of a product or brand (Collins-Dodd & Lindley, 2003), while Che et al. (2017) defined purchase intention as the great desire to buy a product in the very near future.

2) Positive brand referral

Referral marketing portrays the essential strategy for expanding WOM in order to promote products or services to potential buyers. To accomplish that, marketers encourage, inform and reward customers (with financial or non-financial incentives) (Buttle, 1998), while Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) defined brand referrals as denote their propensity to engage in consumer-to-consumer communications about a specific brand. Matzler et al. (2007) said that, when consumers actively uses the product, they will have emotional relationship with the brand, and indirectly reference the brand positively (Positive brand referrals), verbally or visually to other consumers. Thus, positive brand referrals are the propensity to provide positive statements about a brand (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

3) Oppositional brand referral

Consumer evangelist tends to show dis-likeness to another brand, even though they have the same product which mean oppositional brand referral (Park et al., 2013). Oppositional brand referral tends to show reference to avoidance of another brand (Schmitt, 2012), even though it has the same product. Consumer shows anti-brand behavior because they are reluctant toward the brand (Park et al., 2013). Oppositional brand referrals are the propensity to provide unfavorable statements about competing brands (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

Many studies discussed brand authenticity (Akbar, 2016; Alexander, 2009; Beverland, 2005b; Sidali & Hemmerling, 2014; Spielmann & Charters, 2013; Wymer & Akbar, 2017). Additionally, it has lately received considerable attention in brand authenticity dimensions with a relationship to brand trust (Coary, 2013; Moulard et al., 2016; Napoli et al., 2016; Schallehn et al., 2014); purchase intentions (Assiouras et al., 2015; Fritz et al., 2017; Ilicic & Webster, 2014; Park et al., 2016); word-of-mouth (Yildiz & Ülker-Demirel, 2017); Price premium and forgiveness (Fritz et al., 2017); Emotional brand attachment and positive (WOM) (Morhart et al., 2015); Brand attitude (Coary, 2013; Ilicic & Webster, 2014); Expected quality (Moulard et al., 2016).

Eventually, few studies discussed brand evangelism in general and how to turn consumers to be evangelist consumers (Anggarini, 2018), but Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) adopted three dimensions to brand evangelism (purchase intention, positive brand referral, and oppositional brand referral). There is no direct study that addressed the influence of brand authenticity on brand evangelism. So, the contribution of this study presents in relating those brand authenticity dimensions (continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism) on brand evangelism.

Based on the relations between variables in previous studies and other relations mentioned in the literature review, by using sports shoes as a case study, this study fills a gap in the knowledge of brand authenticity, and brand evangelism. The following question is being to be asked:

- What is the direct effect of brand authenticity dimensions (continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism) on brand evangelism dimensions?

Based on the main question mentioned, the researchers intent to accomplish this objective as follows:

- Examining the effect of brand authenticity (continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism) on brand evangelism.

1.3) Hypotheses Formulation

The relationships between study variables were clarified as shown in the following figure (1) after discussing the relationship between the study variables.

1.5.1) The Relationship between BA and BE

Consumers seek authenticity in consumption acts (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Boyle, 2004; Holt, 2002), they likely respond positively to brands that they perceive as authentic (Rose & Wood, 2005). Authentic brands provide meaning and identity-related advantages that elicit good customer responses. Consumers are more likely to make a public commitment to an authentic brand by engaging in good word-of-mouth in addition to such a privately held response to the brand (Brand Evangelism) (Morhart et al., 2015).

First, after a customer has recognized a certain brand, they will develop a psychological relationship with the brand and display a preference toward it (Halliday & Kuenzel, 2008). Identification of a brand is positively connected to the amount to which consumers engage in three types of brand evangelism behaviors: Brand purchase intention (Gladden & Funk, 2002), Positive brand referral, and Oppositional brand referral (Underwood et al., 2001).

Second, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) developed the theory of reasoned actions, which proposes that an individual's beliefs about an object influence his/her attitudes toward the object, that attitudes influence behavioral intention toward the object, and that behavioral intention influences the individual's behavior. "A person's beliefs as a whole serve as the informational foundation that ultimately defines his attitudes, intents, and acts" (Feldman & Lynch, 1988). Therefore, supporting customers in being true to themselves as follows:

H₁: Brand authenticity (continuity, credibility, integrity, and symbolism) has a significant direct effect on brand evangelism. This hypothesis raises the following sub-hypotheses:

H_{1.1}: Continuity has a significant direct effect on purchase intention.

H_{1.2}: Credibility has a significant direct effect on purchase intention.

H_{1.3}: Integrity has a significant direct effect on purchase intention.

H_{1.4}: Symbolism has a significant direct effect on purchase intention.

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- H_{1.5}: Continuity has a significant direct effect on positive brand referral.*
 - H_{1.6}: Credibility has a significant direct effect on positive brand referral.*
 - H_{1.7}: Integrity has a significant direct effect on positive brand referral.*
 - H_{1.8}: Symbolism has a significant direct effect on positive brand referral.*
 - H_{1.9}: Continuity has a significant direct effect on oppositional brand referral.*
 - H_{1.10}: Credibility has a significant direct effect on oppositional brand referral.*
 - H_{1.11}: Integrity has a significant direct effect on oppositional brand referral.*
 - H_{1.12}: Symbolism has a significant direct effect on oppositional brand referral.*

This study adopts the following conceptual framework in figure (1):

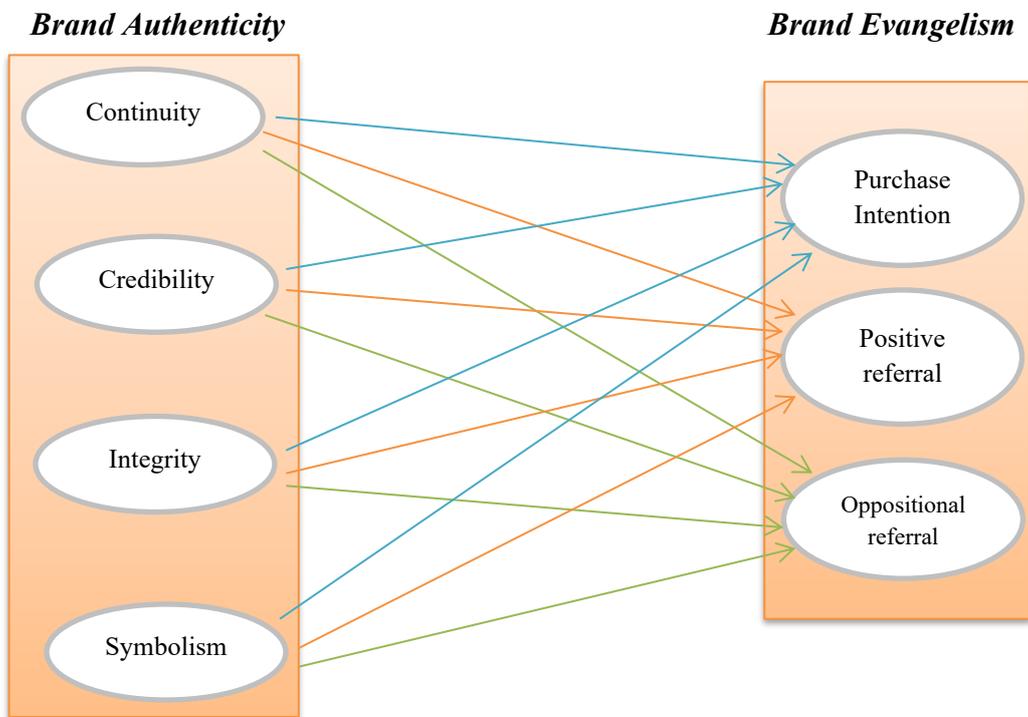


Figure (1)

Conceptual Framework

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on literature review

1.4) Research Methods

This section aims to sum up briefly research method and sampling issues related to population and the sample of this study as follows in this section; also, it provides a description of measures as follow:

1.4.1) Sample and Data Collection

This study adopted deductive approaches with a quantitative research method to confirm the proposed framework. Primary and Secondary data were used during this study. In this study, the primary data were collected from sports shoes consumers in Egypt, especially the youth because of their impact on the sport-marketing industry as they are a population of youth, their wide usage of sports shoes that make them more comfortable in walking and running, and their ability to show their love for a brand and creative thinking to signal more comfortable adjustments for sports shoes. These data was collected by using a questionnaire, the secondary data includes the number of the population used in this study. The population consists of more than 100,000,000 in Egypt¹.

According to Saunders et al. (2009), the needed sample size falls between 383 and 384 if the margin of error is set to be 5% and the population size is between 100000 and 1000000. The researchers collected only 434 distributed questionnaires by Google Drive form via the internet. There are 395 questionnaires out of mistakes or missing data and 39 questionnaires are refused because there are not required in this study and not using any sports shoes ever.

1.4.2) Measures

Brand authenticity constructs were measured with a 5-point Likert type scale (5 = strongly agree, 1= strongly disagree). Brand evangelism constructs were measured with a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from (5 = strongly agree) to (1 = strongly disagree).

First, the independent variable scale was developed by Morhart et al. (2015) to assess four dimensions of brand authenticity (BA), depending on the (Swait & Erden, 2004) scale to asses brand credibility. This scale included 16 items (4 items for continuity, 5 items for credibility, 3 items for integrity, and 4 items for symbolism).

¹(Source: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics)

Second, the dependent variable has three dimensions: A four-item scale was used to assess brand purchase intentions (e.g., "in the near future, I would probably buy the brand") (Becerra & Korgaonkar, 2011). Positive brand referrals were measured using a three-item scale (e.g., "I shared positive word-of-mouth about this brand"), while oppositional brand referrals were measured using a three-item scale (e.g., "I disseminated bad word-of-mouth about other brands") (Grégoire & Fisher, 2006; Power et al., 2008).

1.4.3) Data Analysis and Results

The following statistical techniques used in this research to draw the results:

1.4.3.1) Descriptive statistics:

The results indicated 63.59 % (276) female, followed by 36.41% (158) males. Additionally, there are 73.04% (317) residents in Rural, and 26.96% (117) residents in Urban.

In terms of age, the majority of sample is concentrated in the two categories (From 20 years to less than 30 years) and (From 30 years to less than 40 years) by 200 (46.08%) and 148 (34.10%) consequently. In regard to education, the Post graduated is the first one with 219 (50.46%) followed by the Bachelor degree 191 (44.01%) and a diploma is the final category in education with 24 (5.53%).

Finally, the income category the lowest two categories in the majority of my sample were 135 (31.11%) in the category of (From 2400 Pounds to less than 4800 pounds) and 108 (24.88%) in the category of (Less than 2400 pounds).

1.4.3.2) Assessing the Measurement Model

Structural equation model is a statistical methodology employed to analyze a structural theory based on some phenomena (Byrne, 2010). Additionally, this technique uses a confirmatory approach that depends on factor analysis and implies hypothesis testing. Therefore, the Structural equation model requires conducting two steps the measurement model and the structural model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Investigating the significance of the relationships in the structural model requires testing the validity and reliability of the measurement model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In this context, testing the validity of the measurement model depends on two factors: the level of model goodness of fit and the construct validity (Blunch, 2012).

1) Exploratory Factor Analysis

EFA assumes that any indicator/measured variable may be associated with any factor. When developing a scale, researchers should use EFA first before moving on to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). EFA is essential to determine underlying factors/constructs for a set of measured variables; while CFA allows the researcher to test the hypothesis that a relationship between the observed variables and their underlying latent factor(s)/construct(s) exists. EFA requires the researcher to make a number of important decisions about how to conduct the analysis because there is no one set method. The study used EFA for conducting Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) scale as it is shown in table (1) as follows:

**Table (1)
KMO & Bartlett's test for all variables**

Variables	Dimensions	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
			Chi-Square	Sig.
Independent Variable: Brand Authenticity	Continuity	0.731	346.594	0.000
	Credibility	0.847	883.783	0.000
	Integrity	0.635	319.660	0.000
	Symbolism	0.745	518.563	0.000
Independent Variable: Brand Authenticity		0.924	3209.116	0.000
Dependent Variable: Brand Evangelism	Purchase intention	0.791	802.689	0.000
	Positive brand referral	0.726	557.032	0.000
	oppositional brand referral	0.576	298.798	0.000
Dependent Variable: Brand Evangelism		0.900	3526.462	0.000

2) The Construct Validity of the Measurement Model

To measure construct validity, both convergent and discriminant validity should be investigated. Convergent validity was first tested using the factor loadings in which the values of loadings can be considered to be

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significant if they are equal to or greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). Furthermore, convergent validity is also measured by (AVE) in which the value can be accepted if it was higher than 0.5. Further, The reliability of the measurement model was measured using both Cronbach’s alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Table (2) summarizes all the factors used to assess model validity:

Table (2)
The validity and reliability of the measurement model

Dimensions	Factor Loading and Reliability			Convergent Validity	
	Ques	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
Continuity	Q1	0.594	0.725	0.634	0.523
	Q2	0.679			
	Q3	0.582			
	Q4	0.681			
Credibility	Q5	0.691	0.852	0.733	0.759
	Q6	0.720			
	Q7	0.768			
	Q8	0.752			
	Q9	0.736			
Integrity	Q10	0.746	0.730	0.706	0.606
	Q11	0.608			
	Q12	0.765			
Symbolism	Q13	0.691	0.789	0.699	0.653
	Q14	0.759			
	Q15	0.654			
	Q16	0.691			
Purchase intention	Q17	0.756	0.859	0.781	0.793
	Q18	0.804			
	Q19	0.781			
	Q20	0.783			
Positive brand referral	Q21	0.816	0.849	0.809	0.788
	Q22	0.823			
	Q23	0.787			
Oppositional brand referral	Q24	0.812	0.706	0.597	0.415
	Q25	0.558			
	Q26	0.420			

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According to the table (2), the values of Cronbach’s alpha are higher than 0.6 which is accepted. Further, the values of AVE are greater than 0.5 composite reliability values are higher than 0.6 which can be accepted according to Fornell and Larcker (1981). Furthermore, discriminant validity is assessed in the table (3). This table presents the Correlations between the factors and the square roots of AVEs and also shows that the values of the square root of AVE are higher than the inter-constructs correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, discriminant validity is achieved. Finally, the measurement model has satisfied all factors used to assess validity and reliability.

Table (3)
Construct correlations and square root of average variance extracted

	Cont.	Cred.	Integ.	Symb.	Pur. Int.	Pos. Ref.	Oppo. Ref.
Cont.	0.796						
Cred.	0.743	0.856					
Integ.	0.588	0.691	0.840				
Symb.	0.672	0.608	0.604	0.836			
Pur. Int.	0.676	0.633	0.768	0.770	0.884		
Pos. Ref.	0.678	0.603	0.715	0.799	0.688	0.899	
Oppo. Ref.	0.691	0.776	0.683	0.672	0.614	0.739	0.772

1.7.3) The Results of Testing Hypotheses

The results of testing the research hypothesis among study constructs are presented. Such hypotheses were tested using SEM with Smart PLS3. Hypothesis H1 (a-b-c-d-e-f-g-h-i-j-k-l) proposed that Brand Authenticity has a direct impact on Brand Evangelism. Table (4) illustrates the results of testing these direct research hypotheses as follows:

Table (4)
The results of testing hypotheses

H	Hypothesis direction		β	Sig.	H Result	
H1	H _{1.1}	Continuity	Purchase Intention	0.227	0.000	Accept
	H _{1.2}	Credibility	Purchase Intention	0.183	0.002	Accept
	H _{1.3}	Integrity	Purchase Intention	0.058	0.387	Reject
	H _{1.4}	Symbolism	Purchase Intention	0.296	0.000	Accept
	H _{1.5}	Continuity	Positive Brand Referral	0.214	0.000	Accept
	H _{1.6}	Credibility	Positive Brand Referral	0.192	0.000	Accept
	H _{1.7}	Integrity	Positive Brand Referral	0.181	0.001	Accept
	H _{1.8}	Symbolism	Positive Brand Referral	0.270	0.000	Accept
	H _{1.9}	Continuity	Oppositional Brand Referral	0.313	0.000	Accept
	H _{1.10}	Credibility	Oppositional Brand Referral	-0.065	0.356	Reject
	H _{1.11}	Integrity	Oppositional Brand Referral	0.187	0.014	Accept
	H _{1.12}	Symbolism	Oppositional Brand Referral	0.078	0.224	Reject

1.5) Discussion and Conclusion

The findings revealed that brand authenticity has a partial significant positive effect on brand evangelism. Athletes' sports shoes will have a positive attitude towards their sports shoes which lead them to have a purchasing intention to these sports shoes in the future, talk positively about these brands, and refer to the rival brands with a negative attitude. Those attitudes are oriented by the availability of authenticity to their brands which leads them to spread positive speech about their preferred brands and warn their acquaintances about rivals' products.

The results of Al-Meshal et al.'s (2020) research revealed that brand authenticity has a positive effect on purchase intention and that agree with the researchers' result. Also, Pratomo and Magetsari (2020) has proven that purchase intention is a consequence of Brand Authenticity. Additionally, Brand credibility has a positive effect on purchase intention as the result of this study (Kemp & Bui, 2011). According to the result of the current study, it is clear that the dimensions of Brand Authenticity have a significant direct positive impact on Purchase intention as one dimension of Brand Evangelism ($\beta = 0.227, 0.183, 0.296$ Sig. < 0.05) respectively for the Continuity, Credibility, and Symbolism dimensions except for the Integrity dimension where ($\beta = 0.058$ Sig. < 0.05).

Moreover, this result is consistent with the findings of Sallam & Sefnedi's (2017) result, brand credibility has a positive effect on WOM and that could be connected to a positive brand referral and oppositional brand referral. As the dimensions of Brand Authenticity have a significant direct positive impact on Positive brand referral as one dimension of Brand Evangelism where ($\beta = 0.214, 0.192, 0.181, 0.270$ Sig. < 0.05) respectively for the Continuity, Credibility, Integrity, and Symbolism dimensions.

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the brands that stand out from competitors, can offer reliable promises and remain faithful to them and which are perceived as authentic by consumers form the consumers' purchasing preferences considerably as the result of Yildiz and Ülker-Demirel, which stated that brand authenticity has a positive effect on purchasing intentions and WOM (Yildiz & Ülker-Demirel, 2017). Also, there is a study that revealed that green brand authenticity has a positive impact on electronic WOM like the result of this research (Xu et al., 2021).

The result of this study revealed that continuity dimension and integrity dimension for BA are the dimensions that have a significant direct positive impact on the oppositional brand referral as one dimension of Brand Evangelism where ($\beta = 0.313, 0.187$ Sig. < 0.05) respectively for the Continuity, and Integrity dimensions, and ($\beta = -0.065, 0.078$ Sig. < 0.05) respectively for the Credibility, and Symbolism dimensions, but the study of (Haider) 2018 had revealed that brand authenticity dimensions had a positive effect on positive and negative WOM and that result is inconsistent with the result of this research for the credibility and symbolism dimensions with oppositional brand referral.

All hypotheses are accepted expect $H_{1.3}$, $H_{1.10}$, and $H_{1.12}$ are rejected, and revealed that integrity has no effect on purchase intention, but the researchers see that when a brand cares about its customers and achieve their moral values and principles connect to the brand and gives back to its customers, the brand will achieve high rate of purchase intention. Also when a brand has a high rate of credibility, and symbolism; the customers will denigrate the rivals' brands. These rejected hypotheses could be accepted in another area or apply on another field away of sports shoes. **Therefore, H1 which represents the effect of Brand Authenticity on Brand Evangelism was partially accepted.**

1.5.1) Theoretical and Practical Implications

The researchers emphasize here the theoretical and practical recommendations in the following paragraphs:

1) Theoretical Implication

The current research aims to contribute to the body of knowledge of the existing literature on brand authenticity, and brand evangelism. It is the first study that investigated the direct impact of brand authenticity on brand evangelism being the first study to explore this relationship type. Firstly, the current research is the first study that examined the direct effect of brand authenticity on brand evangelism. There are no previous studies that investigated this relationship before, this research outlined that the perceived value consumers get from their authentic brands makes them evangelists to support or defend this brand.

2) Practical Implication

The researchers summarize the practical recommendations in the following table; table (5).

Table (5)
Practical Recommendations of the study

Practical Recommendations	Mechanism for application
1. Sticking to brand values commitments rather than comparing to short-term marketing trends.	By set SMART goals. SMART is the acronym for specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. The SMART goals are a set of guidelines that help you to achieve your marketing goal. The marketing team needs to consider website optimization, SEO, keyword research, analyze links, create backlinks, etc.
2. Develop brands that fulfill their customers' promises to enhance their authenticity in consumers' minds.	By updating their products in the sporting goods industry.

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3. Presenting new sports shoe brand trends as they are and refrain from displaying them differently.	By attaining high specialization in the sports shoe industry
4. Managers should develop brands that fulfill their customers' promises	Through quality commitment, trust and reflect integrity to enhance their authenticity in consumers' minds.
5. Keep the customers of sports shoes engaged with Email marketing	By adding prospects to your email list and engaging with them regularly, you make sure that they still remember you until they decide to buy your product.
6. Marketers should put offers that convince customers to buy	By create a sales pitch that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explains your unique value proposition• Highlights the benefits more than features• Has a clear call to action to prompt users to buy• Shows what the leads will miss if they don't buy your product
7. Create Facebook events	By give members an opportunity to invite their family and friends to the event by sharing. People are also motivated when they see who responded to attend! Facebook Events allows invitees to see who plans to be present. Facebook will even send reminders to those who indicate they will attend your church or ministry event, which is an added benefit.

1.5.2) Limitations and Future Research

This research has some limitations that guide to exploration of new avenues for research. First, this research has explained that brand authenticity has a partial significant influence on brand evangelism from the Egyptian perspective. Future researchers have to orientate their research on such variables with another dimension and new fields of application. Second, this research not presented any mediating variable between the relationships of brand authenticity and brand evangelism. This research did not use any moderator to check the strength of relationships under the presence of a moderator. Future researchers may extend this model by adding a moderator like a consumer involvement and a mediator like brand attachment. Finally, in this research, respondents were asked to nominate any sports shoes brand they considered to be authentic, irrespective of product category. Therefore, the researcher suggested that further research focuses on the nature of brand authenticity as it also relates to services, given that the human aspect of service delivery may elicit a different factor structure for brand authenticity to that which emerged in this research.

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العلاقة بين أصالة العلامة وتأيد العلامة: دراسة تطبيقية على عملاء الأحذية الرياضية

ونام علي الناغي؛ د. عبد العزيز علي حسن؛ د. أحمد محمد السطوح

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد الأثر المباشر للعلاقة بين أصالة العلامة وتأيد العلامة على العملاء المقتنين للأحذية الرياضية. كما اعتمدت الدراسة على قائمة الاستقصاء لجمع البيانات المطلوبة لدراسة هذه العلاقة، حيث بلغ عدد القوائم الصحيحة ٣٩٥ قائمة، وقد تم استخدام أسلوب تحليل المسار لاختبار فروض الدراسة من خلال برنامج Smart pls3. وأشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى وجود تأثير معنوي إيجابي جزئي لأبعاد أصالة العلامة (استمرارية العلامة، مصداقة العلامة، نزاهة العلامة، الهوية الرمزية للعلامة) على تأيد العلامة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: أصالة العلامة، تأيد العلامة.