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The Impact of Brand Orientation on Employees` Brand Equity

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1- INTRODUCTION:

Brand is the amalgamation of all consumer impressions that lead to a unique position in their minds based on perceived emotional and functional benefits (Raj and Jyothi, 2011). As a result, it provides primary points of differentiation between competitive offerings and, as such, can be essential to the success of organizations. Over the past couple of decades, brand management has become a topic of interest in marketing literature (Noble, Rajiv, and Kumar, 2002), since brand recognition affects consumers' perceptions of an organization (Keller, 1998) and plays a key role in enhancing an organization's financial performance (Kerin and Sethuraman, 1998).

In the past decade, researchers have focused heavily on the brand equity construct, which focuses on the incremental utility or value added to a product by its brand name (Yoo and Donthu, 2001). Numerous definitions of brand equity highlight the significance of a long-term orientation within brand management. Although there is disagreement regarding the definition and foundation of brand equity, most approaches view brand equity as a strategic issue, albeit implicitly. Consequently, there have been significant efforts by businesses to manage their brands strategically (Wood, 2000). The aim of the current research is to investigate the Impact of Brand Orientation on Employees` Brand Equity.

2- Literature Review:

A research paper for (Hanaysha, J. R., & Al-Shaikh, M. E, 2022) addressed as an examination of customer relationship management dimensions and employee-based brand equity: A study on ride-hailing industry in Saudi Arabia. This research aimed to investigate how customer relationship management affects employee-based brand equity.

The findings showed that the customer orientation has a positive and statistically significant impact on employee-based brand equity. Additionally, they stated that for employees to embrace their roles as brand ambassadors, they must understand the significance and relevance of their brand. The findings confirmed that the technology-based customer relationship management has a positive impact on employee-based brand equity, Moreover, it has been demonstrated that having the ability to implement customer

relationship management technology successfully gives the brand better marketing capabilities and enables it to produce higher levels of performance.

While (Li, Zhengmin, 2022) addressed How organizations create employee-based brand equity, mediating effects of employee empowerment. This paper aimed to highlight the necessity of building employee-based brand equity within the company, offer framework for an employee- based brand equity to understand how the organization can create employee-based brand equity.

According to this research, psychological attachment, internal communication, and employee-organization fit are the three factors that determine employee-based brand equity. Behind these three determinants (psychological attachment, internal communication, and employee-organization fit) is to determine how these three beneficial characteristics contribute to the development of employee-based brand equity. Investigate the role of employee empowerment for examining the role of employee autonomy in the development of employee-based brand equity.

This research found that a beneficial relationship between psychological attachment and employee-based brand equity. According to this paper, employee-based brand equity and internal communication are positively correlated. A favorable association between employee-based brand equity and employee-organization fit.

A research for (Sepulcri, L. M. C. B., & Mainardes, E. W, 2022) addressed elements that compose the non-profit brand orientation in an emerging country. This study aimed to Organize and classify the factors that contribute to non-profit brand orientation in a developing nation, Specify the concepts reflected in non-profit brand orientation and strategy, Recognize the components before non-profit brand orientation, and To examine the consequences and barriers of non-profit brand orientation.

This research found that they recognize that the strong brand culture aligns their internal and external stakeholders with their brand identity, the non-profit brand orientation has a clear brand vision that guides their actions and decisions, and the non-profit organization may benefit from the non-profit brand orientation in terms of increasing their legitimacy, reputation, trust, loyalty, differentiation, and social value.

A research for (Ehrnrooth, J., 2021) addressed as Understanding the role and nature of brand orientation in technology startup performance. This study aimed to contribute to the

limited amount of research on startup branding, and discover how brand orientation affects the performance of technology startups, as well as to comprehend the role that brand orientation plays. This research also investigates disconnect between what research knows about branding and what technology startups do on a larger scale.

This study found that that brand orientation has a positive effect on the performance of technology startups on multiple levels, this effect is currently hampered by a lack of understanding of what startup branding looks like. While startups are doing some branding, they are not actively supporting it, and thus are missing out on the best benefits it has to offer. However, technology startups are gradually gaining an understanding of how brand orientation affects their performance.

3- Research Problem

The brand orientation concept appeared in the marketing literature as an important strategic orientation with significant effects on business success, all organizations have a brand, and most of them engage in some form of brand management, but not all are brand oriented, so researchers define brand orientation as a deliberate approach to brand building in which brand equity is created through interactions with internal and external stakeholders. Many researchers defined employee-based brand equity as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee's response to the work environment. Research Problem can be defined by answering this question: “What is the impact of brand orientation on employee brand equity with empirical study on sports store sectors?”

4- Proposed Research Model and Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, the current study aims to test the following main hypothesis:

“Brand orientation has a significant positive impact on employees’ brand equity.”

This hypothesis has been divided into the following three sub-hypotheses:

- H1: Brand orientation– (a) Brand importance, (b) Brand consistency, (c) Brand differentiation, and (d) Brand intelligence– has a significant impact on brand consistent behavior.
- H2: Brand orientation– (a) Brand importance, (b) Brand consistency, (c) Brand differentiation, and (d) Brand intelligence– has a significant impact on brand endorsement.
- H2: Brand orientation– (a) Brand importance, (b) Brand consistency, (c) Brand differentiation, and (d) Brand intelligence– has a significant impact on brand allegiance.

Based on these hypotheses, Figure 1 presents the research conceptual framework.

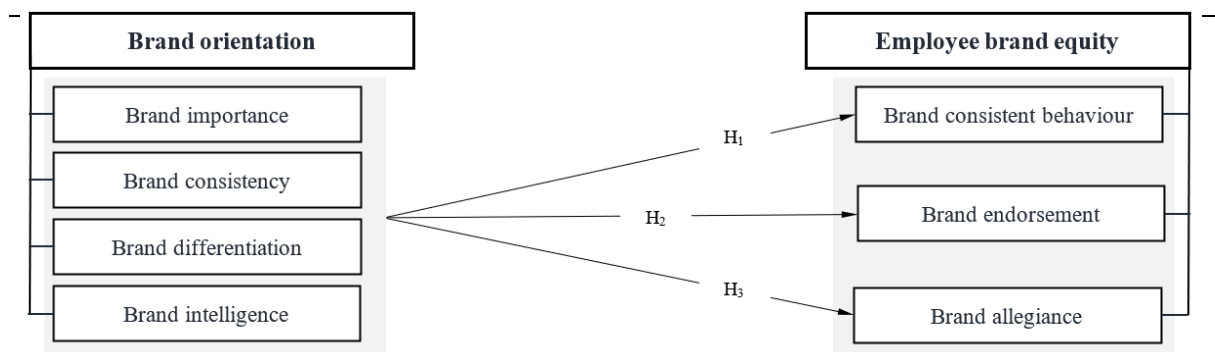


Figure 1: Research conceptual framework

5- Research Methodology

This section describes, in detail, the methodology followed in the current study regarding the sampling design process, research design, measurement of research variables, data collection procedures, and finally, statistical methods and techniques.

Data and Sample

The current study's target population consists of all employees of sports stores in the Egyptian context. Therefore, the sampling unit of the current study represents the sports store employee in the Egyptian context.

Given the research population's large size and indefinite nature, a sample of 384 units (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016) was selected from sports stores' employees using the non-probability convenient sampling technique.

Research Design

The current study has relied on conclusive descriptive research based on a single cross-sectional design using a structured questionnaire-based survey. Such a design was conducted to empirically investigate the implications of sports stores' brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) on employees' brand equity (i.e., brand consistent behaviour, brand endorsement, and brand allegiance) in the Egyptian context.

Measurement

To measure research constructs, the researcher drew on well-established scales extracted from relevant literature to ensure the content validity of the measures and adapted them to the research context. These scales were scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Brand orientation (i.e., the independent variable) consists of four dimensions adapted from (Piha *et al.*, 2021). A seven-item scale was utilized to measure *brand consistency*. Both the scale of the *brand orientation* and *brand differentiation* constructs are composed of five items. In addition, the *brand intelligence* dimension was measured by four items.

Whereas the *employees' brand equity* (i.e., the dependent variable) includes three constructs and 11 items adapted from King *et al.* (2013): the *brand consistent behaviour* dimension comprises three items. Finally, both the *brand endorsement* and *brand allegiance* dimensions include four items. Appendix A presents the operationalization of all research constructs.

6- Results

Respondents

A total of 206 employees of sports stores in the Egyptian context participated in the survey. The dataset has no missing values because of using an online self-administered questionnaire that was restricted by complete answer submission. Moreover, data cleaning of suspicious response patterns (i.e., straight-lining) reduced the sample size to 184 observations (Hair *et al.*, 2014). So, the researcher ran the statistical analysis using the 184 valid observations as a sample size.

The demographic characteristics of participants can be described as follows: slightly more respondents are male (52.2%). Surveyed employees less than 30 years old were the most represented in the sample at 42.4%, followed by those aged 30 to 40 years at 32.1%, while employees more than 50 years were the least represented at 10.9%. In addition, the research sample distribution confirms the management hierarchy concept with 45.1% of those surveyed belonging to first-line management, 37.5% of them are members of the middle management level, and only 17.4% are top managers.

Assessment of the Internal Consistency Reliability

This section considers the internal consistency reliability of the four dimensions of sports stores' brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) and the three dimensions of sports stores' employees' brand equity dimensions (i.e., brand consistent behaviour, brand endorsement, and brand allegiance). This form of reliability is used to judge the consistency of results across items on the same test. It determines whether the items measuring a construct are similar in their scores, i.e., if the correlations between them are large (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The traditional criterion for internal consistency is *Cronbach's alpha*, which estimates the reliability based on the inter-correlations of the observed variables. Table 1 presents the evaluation results of the internal consistency reliability of the seven research constructs.

Table 1: Assessment results of the internal consistency reliability

The corrected item-total correlations for all constructs' items were above 0.30, which

<i>Constructs</i>	<i>Number of items</i>		<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	
	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
X Brand orientation				
X1 Brand importance		5		0.861
X2 Brand consistency	7	6	0.800	0.811
X3 Brand differentiation		5		0.836
X4 Brand intelligence		4		0.767
Y Employee brand equity				
Y1 Brand consistent behaviour		3		0.753
Y2 Brand endorsement		4		0.831
Y3 Brand allegiance		4		0.868

means that each item is internally consistent with the others for each construct (Cohen, 1988). The only exception is item X2_7, which has a corrected item-total correlation of 0.273,

indicating the brand consistency construct's lack of internal consistency reliability. Therefore, item X2_7 has been dropped from the brand consistency construct's final scale, which increases Cronbach's alpha value of such construct from 0.800 to 0.811.

The results shown in Table 1 support the internal consistency reliability of all measures, as Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.70 for all constructs (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

While the brand consistent behaviour construct has the lowest level of internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.753, the brand allegiance construct has established the highest internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.868.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 describes the research sample's attitudes toward the underlying dimensions of brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) and those of employees' brand equity (i.e., brand consistent behaviour, brand endorsement, and brand allegiance).

Research variables	One-Sample Statistics		One-Sample Test (Test value = 3)			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Brand orientation	4.123	0.596	1.123**	0.044	25.587	< 0.001
Brand importance	4.205	0.765	1.205**	0.056	21.360	< 0.001
Brand consistency	3.994	0.783	0.994**	0.058	17.206	< 0.001
Brand differentiation	4.217	0.622	1.217**	0.046	26.544	< 0.001
Brand intelligence	4.077	0.681	1.077**	0.050	21.466	< 0.001
Employee brand equity	4.100	0.645	1.100**	0.048	23.152	< 0.001
Brand consistent behaviour	4.147	0.718	1.147**	0.053	21.661	< 0.001
Brand endorsement	4.125	0.670	1.125**	0.049	22.762	< 0.001
Brand allegiance	4.029	0.885	1.029**	0.065	15.760	< 0.001

Note: ** Mean difference is significant at $p < 0.01$

Table 2: Research sample attitudes toward variables under consideration

The results shown in Table 2 reveal that participants have positive attitudes toward the overall sports stores' brand orientation with a mean value of 4.123 and also toward its four dimensions (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence), with mean values of 4.205, 3.994, 4.217, and 4.077, respectively. Furthermore, these results show the positive attitudes of the research sample toward the overall sports stores' employees' brand equity with a mean value of 4.100 and also toward its three dimensions (i.e., brand consistent behaviour, brand endorsement, and brand allegiance), with mean values of 4.147, 4.125, and 4.029, respectively. All these mean values significantly differ from the neutral option of the 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 3) at $p < 0.001$. Table 3 describes the correlations among all constructs under study (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, brand intelligence, brand consistent behaviour, brand endorsement, and brand allegiance).

Based on the correlation matrix shown in Table 3, the researcher has identified the following relationships among the constructs under study:

- Strong positive and significant relationships at $p < 0.01$ between the four dimensions of sports stores' brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) on the one hand and the brand consistent behaviour dimension on the other, $r > 0.49$ (Cohen, 1988).
- Moderate positive and significant relationships at $p < 0.01$ between both brand importance and consistency on the one hand and the brand endorsement dimension on the other hand, $0.49 > r > 0.30$ (Cohen, 1988).
- Strong positive and significant relationships at $p < 0.01$ between both brand differentiation and intelligence on the one hand and the brand endorsement dimension on the other hand.
- Strong positive and significant relationships at $p < 0.01$ between each of brand importance, consistency, and intelligence on the one hand and the brand allegiance dimension on the other hand.
- Moderate positive and significant relationship at $p < 0.01$ between differentiation and the brand allegiance dimension.

These significant relationships provide a rough indication of the hypothesised impact of brand orientation on employees' brand equity.

It can also be seen that of all the independent variables, "Brand intelligence" correlates best with the brand consistent behaviour dimension ($r = 0.729$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, it is likely that this variable will best predict the brand's consistent behaviour. Moreover, it can be noticed that of the four dimensions of sports stores' brand orientation, "Brand differentiation" correlates best with brand endorsement ($r = 0.679$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, it is likely that this dimension will best predict the brand endorsement. In addition, the correlation matrix shown in Table (4.6) reveals that of all the four independent variables, "Brand importance" correlates best with the brand allegiance dimension ($r = 0.573$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, it is likely that this variable will best predict the brand allegiance.

Finally, regarding the independent variables, the highest correlation is between "Brand differentiation" and "Brand Intelligence," which is significant at a 0.01 level ($r = 0.720$, $p < 0.001$). Despite the significance of this correlation, the coefficient is not large (less than 0.90), so it looks as though research predictors are measuring different things, and thus there is no collinearity (Field, 2013).

Table 3: Correlation matrix of research variables

Research variables	Brand importance	Brand consistency	Brand differentiation	Brand Intelligence	Brand consistent behaviour	Brand endorsement	Brand allegiance
Brand importance	1						
Brand consistency	0.698**	1					
Brand differentiation	0.608**	0.469**	1				
Brand Intelligence	0.563**	0.521**	0.720**	1			
Brand consistent behaviour	0.557**	0.543**	0.700**	0.729**	1		
Brand endorsement	0.466**	0.344**	0.679**	0.520**	0.588**	1	
Brand allegiance	0.573**	0.566**	0.474**	0.510**	0.588**	0.570**	1

Note: ** Correlation coefficient is significant at $p < 0.001$

Hypotheses Testing Results

To test the research hypotheses, the researcher has relied on three ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression analyses. Data requirements for such analysis have been confirmed regarding acceptable sample size, research variables variation, and finally, scale type of dependent variable. Thus, the researcher proceeded to estimate the regression models using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method to test research hypotheses, and the results are as follows:

The first research hypothesis (H₁) testing results:

To test the first research hypothesis (H₁), the first regression model has been estimated; precisely, the researcher regressed the brand consistent behaviour dimension of the employees' brand equity as a dependent variable on the four dimensions of brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) as independent variables.

First, the researcher has ensured that the first regression model is not biased by unusual cases (i.e., outliers and influential cases) by examining a set of case wise diagnostics measures such as standardized residuals, Cook's distance, and leverage or hat values. Thus, the researcher proceeded to interpret the regression analysis results regarding the assessment of overall model fit and the interpretation of individual variables' effects. Figure 2 illustrates the research conceptual model with unstandardized regression coefficients of brand orientation dimensions impacts on brand consistent behaviour and the coefficient of determination value (R^2) of the brand consistent behaviour dimension. In addition, Table 4 presents the results of multiple regression analysis regarding the first research hypothesis.

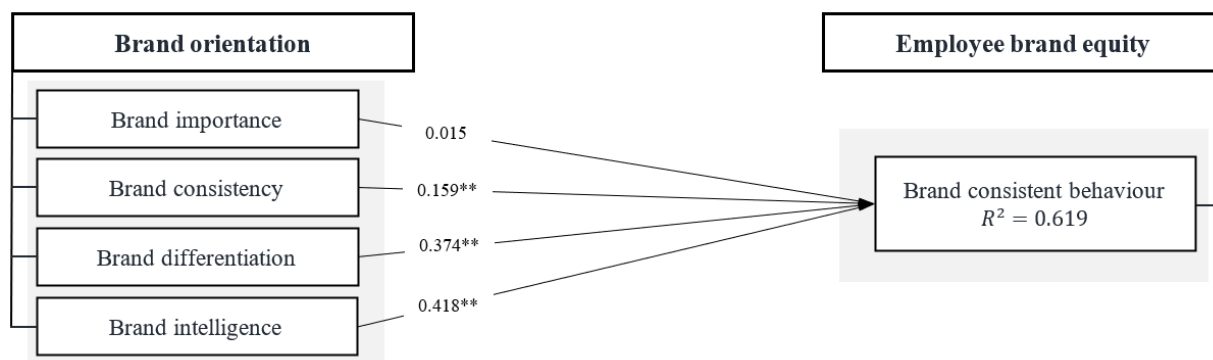


Figure 2: Research conceptual model with unstandardized regression coefficients of brand orientation dimensions impacts on brand consistent behaviour

The results shown in Table 4 revealed that the first regression model is significant at the 1% level ($F\text{-value} = 72.736, p < 0.001$), which leads to rejecting the null hypothesis and, consequently, accepting the alternative hypothesis that at least one regression coefficient is likely significant. Also, the results presented in Table 4 illustrate a strong correlation between the observed values of brand consistent behaviour as a dependent variable and the values of such variable predicted by the model with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.787. This correlation indicates the consistency of the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable by the first regression model and then assuming the overall model fit (Field, 2013).

Table 4: Results of multiple regression analysis regarding the first research hypothesis (H_1)

Dependent variable		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t -value	p -value	Rank	Hypotheses testing results
		B	S.E.	Beta				
Brand consistent behaviour	(Y)							
Constant	α	0.166	0.241		0.691	0.491		
Brand importance	(X_1)	0.015	0.068	0.016	0.224	0.823	----	Not Supported
Brand consistency	(X_2)	0.159**	0.061	0.173	2.619	0.0096	3	Supported
Brand differentiation	(X_3)	0.374**	0.082	0.324	4.555	< 0.001	2	Supported
Brand intelligence	(X_4)	0.418**	0.074	0.397	5.679	< 0.001	1	Supported
R value		0.787						
R^2 value		0.619						
F -test	F -value	72.736**						
	p -value	< 0.001						

Note: ** Significant at $p < 0.01$

The R^2 value of brand consistent behaviour (0.619) provided in Table 4 seems satisfactory and is above the recommended value of 0.10 (Falk & Miller, 1992). This value indicates that the

four dimensions of sports stores' brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) explain 61.9% of the observed variation in brand consistent behaviour. Thus, it can be said that 38.1% of such variation is due to factors other than brand orientation. According to the rule of thumb suggested by Sarstedt and Mooi (2019), the R^2 value of brand consistent behaviour can be considered substantial.

Moreover, the results presented in Table 4 reveal that brand consistency (*unstandardised coef.*=0.159, $t=2.619$, $p<0.01$) has a significant positive impact on brand consistent behaviour. Likewise, brand differentiation (*unstandardised coef.*=0.374, $t=4.555$, $p<0.001$) and brand intelligence (*unstandardised coef.*=0.418, $t=5.679$, $p<0.001$) significantly and positively impact brand consistent behaviour dimension.

More specifically, brand intelligence has the strongest significant positive impact on brand consistent behaviour (*standardised coef.*=0.397), followed by brand differentiation (*standardised coef.*=0.324). Moreover, brand consistency exhibits the lowest impact on the brand consistent behaviour dimension (*standardised coef.*=0.173). Conversely, the results show that the relationship between brand importance and brand consistent behaviour dimension of the sports stores' employees' brand equity is insignificant at the 5% level.

Based on previous results, the first research hypothesis (H_1) which states that "Brand orientation– (a) Brand importance, (b) Brand consistency, (c) Brand differentiation, and (d) Brand intelligence– has a significant impact on brand consistent behaviour" was partially supported regarding brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence, and it was rejected regarding brand importance.

The second research hypothesis (H_2) testing results:

To test the second research hypothesis (H_2), the second regression model has been estimated; precisely, the researcher regressed the brand endorsement dimension of the employees' brand equity as a dependent variable on the four dimensions of brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) as independent variables.

First, the researcher has ensured that the second regression model is not biased by unusual cases (i.e., outliers and influential cases) by examining a set of casewise diagnostics measures such as standardised residuals, Cook's distance, and leverage or hat values. Thus, the researcher proceeded to interpret the regression analysis results regarding the assessment of overall model fit and the interpretation of individual variables' effects. Figure 3 illustrates the research conceptual model with unstandardised regression coefficients of brand orientation dimensions impacts on brand endorsement and the coefficient of determination value (R^2) of the brand endorsement dimension. In addition, Table 5 presents the results of multiple regression analysis regarding the second research hypothesis.

Results shown in Table 5 revealed that the second regression model is significant at the 1% level (F -value = 39.238, $p < 0.001$), which leads to rejecting the null hypothesis and, consequently, accepting the alternative hypothesis that at least one regression coefficient is likely significant. Also, the results presented in Table 5 illustrate a strong correlation between the observed values of brand endorsement as a dependent variable and the values of such variable predicted by the model with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.684. This correlation indicates the consistency of the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable by the second regression model and then assuming the overall model fit (Field, 2013).

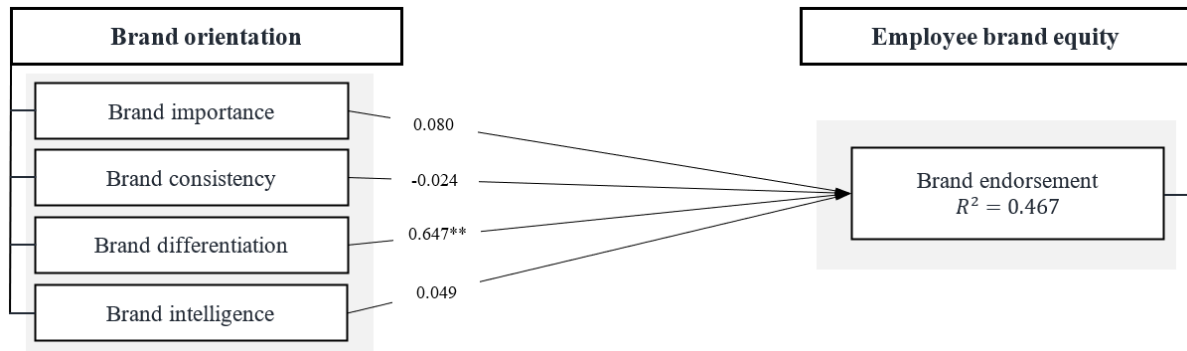


Figure 3: Research conceptual model with unstandardised regression coefficients of brand orientation dimensions impacts on brand endorsement

The R^2 value of brand endorsement (0.467) provided in Table 5 seems satisfactory and is above the recommended value of 0.10 (Falk & Miller, 1992). This value indicates that the four dimensions of sports stores' brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) explain 46.7% of the observed variation in brand endorsement. Thus, it can be said that 53.3% of such variation is due to factors other than brand orientation. According to the rule of thumb suggested by Sarstedt and Mooi (2019), the R^2 value of brand endorsement can be considered moderate.

Also, the results presented in Table 5 reveal that brand differentiation has a significant positive impact on brand endorsement (*unstandardised coef.* =0.159, $t=2.619$, $p<0.01$). By contrast, the results show that the relationships between brand importance, brand consistency, and brand intelligence on the one hand, and the brand endorsement dimension of the sports stores' employees' brand equity on the other hand, are insignificant at the 5% level.

Based on previous results, the second research hypothesis (H_2) which states that "Brand orientation– (a) Brand importance, (b) Brand consistency, (c) Brand differentiation, and (d) Brand intelligence– has a significant impact on brand endorsement" was partially supported only regarding brand differentiation, and it was rejected regarding brand importance, brand consistency, and brand intelligence.

Table 5: Results of multiple regression analysis regarding the second research hypothesis (H₂)

Dependent variable		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	p-value	Hypotheses testing results
		B	S.E.	Beta			
Brand endorsement	(Y)						
Constant	α	0.951**	0.266		3.575	< 0.001	
Brand importance	(X ₁)	0.080	0.075	0.092	1.078	0.282	Not Supported
Brand consistency	(X ₂)	-0.024	0.067	-0.028	0.352	0.725	Not Supported
Brand differentiation	(X ₃)	0.647**	0.091	0.600	7.137	< 0.001	Supported
Brand intelligence	(X ₄)	0.049	0.081	0.050	0.605	0.546	Not Supported
R value		0.684					
R ² value		0.467					
F-test	F-value	39.238**					
	p-value	< 0.001					

Note: ** Significant at $p < 0.01$

The third research hypothesis (H₃) testing results:

To test the third research hypothesis (H₃), the third regression model has been estimated; precisely, the researcher regressed the brand allegiance dimension of the employees' brand equity as a dependent variable on the four dimensions of brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) as independent variables.

First, the researcher has ensured that the third regression model is not biased by unusual cases (i.e., outliers and influential cases) by examining a set of casewise diagnostics measures such as standardised residuals, Cook's distance, and leverage or hat values. Thus, the researcher proceeded to interpret the regression analysis results regarding the assessment of overall model fit and the interpretation of individual variables' effects. Figure 3 illustrates the research conceptual model with unstandardised regression coefficients of brand orientation dimensions impacts on brand allegiance and the coefficient of determination value (R^2) of the brand allegiance dimension. In addition, Table 6 presents the results of multiple regression analysis regarding the third research hypothesis.

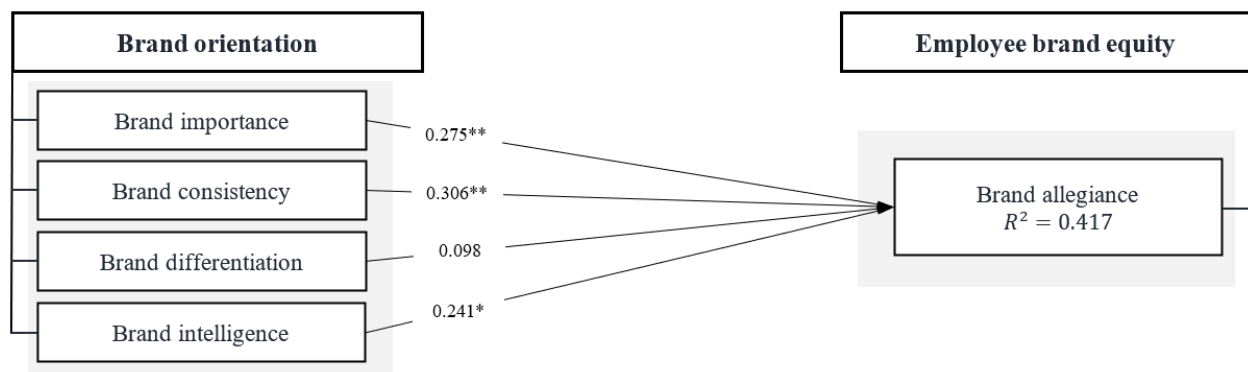


Figure 3: Research conceptual model with unstandardized regression coefficients of brand orientation dimensions impacts on brand allegiance

Results shown in Table 6 revealed that the third regression model is significant at the 1% level ($F\text{-value} = 31.971$, $p < 0.001$), which leads to rejecting the null hypothesis and, consequently, accepting the alternative hypothesis that at least one regression coefficient is likely significant. Also, the results presented in Table 6 illustrate a strong correlation between the observed values of brand allegiance as a dependent variable and the values of such variable predicted by the model with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.646. This correlation indicates the consistency of the observed and predicted values of the dependent variable by the third regression model and then assuming the overall model fit (Field, 2013).

The R^2 value of brand allegiance (0.417) provided in Table (4.12) seems satisfactory and is above the recommended value of 0.10 (Falk & Miller, 1992). This value indicates that the four dimensions of sports stores' brand orientation (i.e., brand importance, brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence) explain 41.7% of the observed variation in brand allegiance. Thus, it can be said that 58.3% of such variation is due to factors other than brand orientation. According to the rule of thumb suggested by Sarstedt and Mooi (2019), the R^2 value of brand allegiance can be considered moderate.

Table 6: Results of multiple regression analysis regarding the third research hypothesis (H₃)

Dependent variable		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	p-value	Rank	Hypotheses testing results
		B	S.E.	Beta				
Brand allegiance	(Y)							
Constant	α	0.253	0.368		0.688	0.492		
Brand importance	(X ₁)	0.275**	0.103	0.238	2.667	0.008	2	Supported
Brand consistency	(X ₂)	0.306**	0.092	0.271	3.308	0.001	1	Supported
Brand differentiation	(X ₃)	0.098	0.125	0.069	0.785	0.433	----	Not Supported
Brand intelligence	(X ₄)	0.241*	0.112	0.186	2.147	0.033	3	Supported
R value		0.646						
R ² value		0.417						
F-test	F-value	31.971**						
	p-value	< 0.001						

Note: ** Significant at $p < 0.01$, * Significant at $p < 0.05$

Furthermore, the results presented in Table (4.12) reveal that brand importance (*unstandardised coef.*=0.275, $t=2.667$, $p<0.01$) has a significant positive impact on brand allegiance. Likewise, brand consistency (*unstandardised coef.*=0.306, $t=3.308$, $p<0.01$) and brand intelligence (*unstandardised coef.*=0.241, $t=2.147$, $p<0.05$) significantly and positively impact the brand allegiance dimension.

More specifically, brand consistency has the strongest significant positive impact on brand allegiance (*standardised coef.*=0.271), followed by brand importance (*standardised coef.*=0.238). Moreover, brand intelligence exhibits the lowest impact on the brand allegiance dimension (*standardised coef.*=0.186). Conversely, the results show that the relationship between brand differentiation and the brand allegiance dimension of the sports stores' employees' brand equity is insignificant at the 5% level.

Based on previous results, the third research hypothesis (H₃) which states that "Brand orientation– (a) Brand importance, (b) Brand consistency, (c) Brand differentiation, and (d) Brand intelligence– has a significant impact on brand allegiance" was partially supported regarding brand importance, brand consistency, and brand intelligence, and it was rejected regarding brand differentiation.

Conclusion

Based on the previous results, the main research hypothesis, which states that "Brand orientation has a significant positive impact on employees' brand equity", was partially supported regarding the following, and it was rejected otherwise:

- The impact of brand consistency, brand differentiation, and brand intelligence on the brand consistent behaviour dimension of the sports stores' employees' brand equity.
- The impact of brand differentiation on the brand endorsement dimension of the sports stores' employees' brand equity.
- The impact of brand importance, brand consistency, and brand intelligence on the brand allegiance dimension of the sports stores' employees' brand equity.

7- Limitations and Future Researches:

The study has some limitations that may provide future research opportunities. First, cross-sectional data was used for the study. So testing the proposed model using a longitudinal study design may be required.

Second, the proposed model was not intended to test all of antecedents and consequences of brand orientation. Therefore, other factors contribute to the development of brand orientation and brand equity should be included in future research. Third, similar studies could be conducted that include other regions of Egypt with different subcultures, social classes and lifestyles.

A further recommendation would be to conduct a qualitative study which would use interviews to gain an understanding of the degree to which brand orientation can affect brand equity. Finally, other suggested point is to study different dimensions of brand orientation and its effect on brand equity.

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