

## **“Brand Credibility and Brand Value Congruence as Antecedents for Brand Advocacy and Brand Attachment: The Moderating Effect of Brand Engagement an Applied Study on Humanized Brands”**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose** – The primary objective of this study is to explore the influence of brand credibility and brand value congruence on two crucial outcomes: brand advocacy and brand attachment, specifically within the context of humanized brands, such as handmade or artisan brands. Additionally, this research aims to analyze the moderating role of brand engagement in shaping these relationships. By investigating these factors, the study seeks to uncover how the credibility and alignment of brand values with consumer expectations can foster deeper emotional connections, loyalty, and advocacy behaviors among customers.

**Design/methodology** – To achieve this, the study employed an online survey methodology, targeting a sample of Egyptian consumers. Each participant was provided with a unique, one-time access link to complete the online questionnaire. Through this approach, the study successfully collected 300 valid responses, offering a reliable and robust data set for analysis.

**Findings** – The results indicate that the independent variables, namely brand credibility and brand value congruence, significantly influence the dependent variables of brand advocacy and brand attachment. Moreover, customer engagement, functioning as a moderator variable, further amplifies the impact of these relationships, highlighting its critical role in enhancing both advocacy and attachment towards the brand. This demonstrates the importance of active consumer involvement.

### **KEYWORDS**

*Brand credibility, Brand value congruence, Brand advocacy, Brand attachment, Brand engagement, Humanized Brands*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Brands are important in developing customer/company relationships; we have brand factors that enhance the brand. Customers consider brand credibility to be an important factor in advancing feelings of connection with that brand and developing better relationships with consumers of that particular brand (Molinillo, Japutra, Ekinci 2022). Customers will go to the impact of brand advocacy when they take credibility information about the brand. Brand advocacy has frequently been defined as a consumer's voluntary recommendation of a brand, in addition to other positive brand behaviors such as active promotion of the brand, defense of the brand against critics, and/or willingness to forgive the brand for wrongdoing (Wilk et al., 2020). Furthermore, consumer trust is the foundation of brand advocacy, brand advocacy is based on consumer trust and emotional attachments to the brand (Jillapalli and Wilcox, 2010). According to (Assiouras, I., Liapati, G., Kouletsis, G., and Koniordos, M. (2015), "brand attachment is a psychological variable that reveals itself in a lasting and unchangeable affective relationship (separation is painful) towards the brand and expresses a psychological closeness towards it; the study also discusses brand value congruence and its effects on brand advocacy, brand attachment. Brand value congruence demonstrates a brand's ability to conduct business activities in a way that allows managers to achieve a company's business objectives (Suraksha & Galliar & Rudd & Foroudi (2020)). The study focuses on humanized brands. Humanized brands are at the heart of the study. Humanizing your brand means adopting a more relatable and personable communication style when interacting with customers, as well as cultivating your brand's personality and values through meaningful connections with your audience. Humanized brands can be achieved through handicrafts (handmade) products, storytelling, video shows, face-to-face brands, employees behind the products, and a variety of other means. In this study, we will focus on handicrafts (handmade) brands. Handmade denotes a product "that is presented to consumers as being made by hand or hand process and not by a machine or a mechanical process" (Fuchs et al., 2015). Additionally, the study will consider customer engagement as a moderator, with customer engagement defined as "consumers' brand-related cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity related to focal brand interactions" (Hollebeek et al., 2014, p. 149). Cogut et al. (2020) suggest that highly (vs. low) engaged consumers tend to shop more often, revealing the concept's moderating role, the study will investigate how brand credibility and value congruence impact brand advocacy, and attachment, and measure customer engagement plays an important role in each of them. The study will apply all of that to humanized brands (handmade brands) as efficient brands have different kinds of customers.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Brand Credibility: -

A brand is an important source that is recognized by its name, style, logo, and symbol (Kotler and Keller, 2016). (Spry et al 2015.). Brand credibility is defined by Erdem and Swait (2004) as the consumer's opinion that the claims are realistic; in other words, the consumer has faith in the brand's willingness, expertise, and capacity to consistently deliver the things they expect. Consumers can write conclusions about a company's qualities and positioning with the help of brand credibility. Better consumer trust and perception of the product and service are directly correlated with brand credibility (Mandler et al., 2020). Credibility can be defined as the extent of trustworthy and believed sources of information (Bernd F. Alexandra B 2021). Consumers will feel more easily when interacting with other brand users if they have faith in the brand's credibility. Brand credibility is a strong base for people when dealing with values, and the symbolic identity of a brand (An et al., 2018). For brands to succeed, credibility is important. Determine a customer's level of trust in a brand based on how credible they perceive its information, promises, and actions. This definition of brand credibility is based on signaling theory (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Molinillo et al., 2022). The likelihood that a customer would identify with a brand increases when it has established a positive social identity (Molinillo & Arnold 2022 ). In other words, consumers should identify more with companies they believe to be trustworthy (vs. unreliable; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019), which will help them define who they are (Raza et al., 2020; Tuskej et al., 2013). To drive the individual's brand identity, brand confidence is intended to increase customer perception of brand trustworthiness (Ahearne et al., 2005; Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013). So, we anticipate that as consumers' perceptions of a brand increase, so will their brand identification. Customers believe that shopping for cheap goods is riskier than doing so for well-known brands (Kotler and Keller, 2016). A brand should also have a strong commitment to following through on its promises (Erdem and Swait, 2004). According to Del Barrio-Garca, Prados-Pena, and Swait (2004, 2019), a brand's ability and willingness to consistently deliver on its promises is what is meant by credibility. Credibility is created by reliability and experience. To put it simply, reliable brands assist

consumers in distinguishing between identical services or goods that are provided by various brands. Building loyalty is made easier for businesses by brand credibility. The primary means of fending off negative word-of-mouth is brand credibility (Erdem and Swait, 2004). Consumers choose trustworthy brands or goods (Erdem and Swait, 2004). It is concluded that a credible brand provides more advantages to customers. Brand credibility significantly boosts brand loyalty (Alam and Noor, 2020). Thusyanthy (2018) argues that brands are credible when they deliver on their promises (Erdem and Swait, 2004). One of the key characteristics of a brand is its credibility (Drton and Maathuis, 2017; Spry et al., 2011). Brand loyalty and brand credibility are positively correlated (Sweeney and Swait, 2004; Alam and Noor, 2020). Moreover, brand credibility influences attitudes toward brands favorably (Sheeraz et al., 2016). According to a prior study, the amount of money a company invests in its brand and its clear, ongoing marketing mix plans over time impact its brand credibility (Erdem and Swait, 2004). Brand credibility, according to Özsoy and Altaras (2008), may be affected by perceived worldwide association, perceived global reach, and embedded cultural capital. A potential pillar for building brand credibility has also been explored as the degree to which the brand is seen as sincere and honest (Morhart et al., 2015). These factors reflect a brand's strategic positioning and can be used as signals to convey a brand's standing in the market. The past study, which is based on prior research, has taken into account and examined the roles of three brand qualities as drivers of brand credibility in consumers' evaluations of domestic and international brands: perceived brand globalization, perceived brand authenticity, and local icons. Brand attitudes serve as a summary of the appraisal, whilst intents serve as the driver of conduct (Srivastava, A., Dey, D.K., and M.S., B., 2020). The past study takes into account purchase intention because it is a type of consumer decision to buy a brand. Brand credibility is thought to affect consumers' intention to buy. As an illustration, Kemp and Bui (2011) demonstrated how brand credibility affects brand selection and consideration. Brand credibility has been shown to positively impact purchase intention more recently by Wang and Scheinbaum (2018). Additionally, perceived brand globalness, perceived local icons, and perceived brand authenticity may affect a brand's perceptions of credibility, according to a literature review by Srivastava, A., Dey, D.K., and M.S., B. (2020). As a result of the discussion above, it is anticipated that brand credibility will act as a mediator between brand qualities and purchase intentions. In previous studies, the researcher figured that a brand's credibility could help people engage with the brand more successfully. The requirements of the brand in cultivating relationships with consumers are crucial. This is required for customers to identify personally with the brand and also to adopt a favourable attitude or preferred behavior; in other words, this activity is required customers to identify with the brand (Ferreira et al., 2019). A brand-self link is a key component of brand engagement; it appears in customers' emotional and cognitive ties with companies (Rosli et al., 2019). It is at times like these when multiple brands make claims to offer the greatest goods or services that a credible source is required. If customers think a brand can be trusted to deliver on its promises, positive consumer dependency might result (Jeng, 2016). Hence, trustworthiness and competence are the two key elements that make up brand credibility (Erdem et al., 2006; Sweeney and Swait, 2008; Takaya, 2019). Although the term "trustworthiness" refers to the degree of information's dependability and is connected to a company's readiness to provide what it promised, the term "expertise" relates to a company's capacity to generate and deliver what it promised. It follows that a brand's dependability and experience are based on the effects of all marketing actions and strategies that have previously been used, so it is not surprising that brand credibility reflects the degree of clarity and consistency of the marketing-mix strategies used and implemented in the brand's construction and development (Baek et al., 2010). According to research on information clarity, brands with high investment levels in consistent marketing-mix strategies also have the highest credibility rates (Srivastava, A., Dey, D.K., and M.S., B. (2020)). Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

- H1: Brand Credibility has significant effect on Brand Advocacy
- H2: Brand Credibility has significant effect on Brand Attachment

## ***2.2 Brand Value Congruence: -***

We presume that brand value congruence, a useful metric of business performance that takes into account consumer demand, brand strength (loyalty, reputation, market position), and financial income, is a reliable indicator of a company's performance. Instead of giving lower value "but with more immediate and verifiable financial outcomes,"

brand value congruence is a crucial strategic concern for companies trying to increase long-term profits (Melewar and Nguyen, 2014). Unrelated to the degree of GIS, a notable additional observation is that brand value congruence is stronger at all stages when R&D intensity is high. This result supports the research theoretical model's assertion that innovation maximizes brand value congruence. A manufacturer's brand value congruence offers consumers emotional value, and rational value for their business clients, and represents operational efficiency as a key component of the value it offers to both consumers and business customers (Parment 2008). Brand value congruence shows a brand's capacity to conduct business operations in a manner that enables it to meet its objectives (Suraksha, Gallear, Rudd&Pantea 2020). The creation of brand value for business clients encourages the fusion of two different and crucial business functions, namely marketing and strategic planning, and points them in the direction of brand competitiveness. Thus, the evaluation questionnaires included a reference to the IT retail industry (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001). Brand value conveys how well a brand can support the operations of its client companies and how effectively it can go up against rival brands (Suraksha, Gallear, Rudd&Pantea 2020). Business customers' assessments of brand value demonstrate the brand's capacity for market competition (Suraksha, Gallear, Rudd&Pantea 2020) According to the macro or micro requirements of their business clients, the brand value offered may be logical, sentimental, or practical. Additionally, according to academic literature, information about clients, rivals, products, and/or processes can be used to control the strategic orientation of the operations construct at the macro level (Voss & Voss, 2000). Consumer and brand value According to the self-congruity theory, congruence refers to how closely a customer's values match those of the brand that is seen by that customer (Edwards & Cable, 2009). (Sirgy et al., 1991). Because it enables them to expand to new heights, business clients view such a capability as adding value to the brand. Business clients can emotionally connect with a brand thanks to consistency in the emotional value it offers (Suraksha, Gallear, Rudd&Pantea 2020). Operational brand value connected to a brand enables business customers to participate in various brand activities. Interacting with a brand enables company customers to comprehend the manufacturer brand's efficiency-oriented business operations (Schau, Muniz, & Arnould, 2009). As a result of learning effective business techniques, managers of business client companies are motivated to use similar procedures in their own companies to enhance the operations of those companies (Payne et al., 2008). The operational efficiency of the business customer firm improves as a result of the learning and adoption brought about by association with the brand, which is what business customers classify as operational brand value (Gummesson, 2004). When these three various value categories are combined, it is considered to be brand differentiation, which increases demand in the consumer and business-to-business sectors (Gummesson, 2004). Brand managers must concentrate on the internal and external environments of the brand to consistently provide such distinctiveness (Suraksha, Gallear, Rudd&Pantea 2020). We predict that brand managers will position all business activities of the brand as marketing-oriented activities and pinpoint the location of operational activities of the brand towards a strategic orientation as a result of the internal focus. We also suppose that the external focus enhances the business customers' intelligence and motivates them to distinguish between competing brands. Management of competition and brand value: Miles and Darroch (2006) described the management of competition as an entrepreneurial ability necessary to manage competition by comprehending and producing greater value for consumers and company customers. Business consumers use brand value to promote the brand and to compete in local markets, according to Snoj, Milfelner, and Gabrijan's study of business marketplaces. A thorough grasp of the brand value can help brand managers successfully manage the competition by allowing them to creatively build marketing-oriented promotional programs to counter competitors' promotional endeavours (Snoj et al., 2007). Brand value and dispute resolution Given that it is normal for different departments to have their own specific and varied worries and preferences regarding their particular performance, managing friction in the cross-functional integration of organizational functions become crucial for pleasing customers (Randel & Jaussi, 2003). Cross-functional teams should be encouraged to collaborate and avoid circumstances that can result in conflict and dysfunctionality so that they do not adversely affect the brand value (Rouzies et al., 2005). The marketing and sales literature emphasizes the importance of developing conflict management skills for each department to operate effectively (Rouzies et al., 2005). In a similar vein, Song, Xie, and Dyer (2000) emphasize the importance of marketing in managing friction between the organisation's many divisions to build brand value and transform the company into a marketing-focused one. Relationship management and brand value. According to Duncan and Moriarty's (1998) communication-based relationship marketing model, communication may build relationships by instilling customers' brains with brand-oriented value and facilitating comparisons with rivals. The assistance of strategic relationship management with company clients is necessary for the face of fierce competition (Suraksha, Gallear, Rudd&Pantea 2020). A brand that contributes value to the business client firm in a variety of ways

makes it easier for brand managers and business customers to interact. Effectively managed brand value-based connections between brand managers and business customers promote intentional interactions and speed up the internal co-creation of customized marketing-oriented initiatives as activities adopted by the brand (London & Hart, 2004). Members of an online brand community can actively participate as both providers and recipients, creating value for each person, the community, and the business (Alexis Chapman, Athina Dilmeri 2022). Actors actively participate in these brand communities by posting. A network of actors is seen to be engaging and co-creating when a brand publishes a social media post with its followers, who subsequently "share" or "like" it (Belk, 2007). Finding the factors that influence customer engagement is crucial for both research and practice because many organizations are currently investing in developing their brand communities to involve customers in the process of value co-creation (Shen et al., 2018). Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

H3: Brand Value congruence has a significant effect on Brand Advocacy

H4: Brand Value congruence has a significant effect on Brand Attachment

### **2.3 Brand Advocacy: -**

Researchers have pointed out that one of the most significant attributes of the relationship between a customer and the brand is the concept of brand advocacy (Kumar and Kaushik, 2018; Bilro et al., 2018; Schepers and Nijssen, 2018; Tassawa and Banjongprasert, 2019). Brand advocates may be important assets for a company/brand as these individuals are deeply motivated to spread positive messages about the brand, often through social networks and without expecting anything in return (Mee et al., 2020). Researchers have examined the concept of brand advocacy in influencing customer satisfaction (Schepers and Nijssen, 2018), and in strengthening the level of trust and purchase intentions of consumers. Concerning tourism, studies have assessed the association between brand advocacy and other consumer-related constructs like word-of-mouth (WOM) advocacy [Arndt (1967) conventionally described WOM as direct communication between consumers about any product, brand or service], for place branding (Sahin and Baloglu, 2014), DA (Tassawa and Banjongprasert, 2019) and influence of brand engagement on DA in tourist destinations (Kumar and Kaushik, 2020). Online brand advocacy involves an individual's willingness to exert energy to aggressively applaud and sustain a brand through conversations with others online. As online brand advocacy is initiated voluntarily by consumers based on their brand experience, it is distinct from non-volitional, incentivized efforts by paid influencers, celebrity endorsers, or other viral marketing activities planned and supported by a sponsored brand. (Wilk et al. (2020)) identify four dimensions of online brand advocacy, namely, brand defense, brand positivity, brand information sharing, and virtual positive expression. Brand defense refers to the preemptive and responsive defenses of the brand. Brand positivity pertains to the favorable expression of the brand, while brand information sharing concerns the communication of detailed explanations or promotions about the brand. Finally, virtual positive expression entails the online visual embodiment in support of the brand. The different dimensions of online brand advocacy are evident in a sports OBC setting. For example, (Pongsakornrungsilp and Schroeder (2011)) examined the value co-creation process, whereby members adopted different roles. Experienced members play the role of brand warriors to protect and co-create the tradition of the fan community. They passionately defend the team spirit against external threats, such as unfriendly news reports and rival clubs, as well as internal threats, such as fake and fair-weather fans (i.e. brand defense). Active members undertake the moderator role by contributing information, thoughtful analysis, or legends about players (i.e. brand information sharing). They voluntarily answer questions about athletes, post schedules, or create entertaining content that includes visual symbols (i.e. virtual positive expression). These members say positive things about the team (i.e. brand positivity) and display a dedication to the OBC, which drives them to spend time managing daily tasks such as enforcing community standards and mediating member conflicts. Brand advocacy has often been seen as a form of a consumer's voluntary recommendation of a brand, along with other positive behaviors about the brand including an active promotion of the brand, a defense of the brand against critics, and/or a willingness to forgive the brand for wrongdoing (Wilk et al., 2018). Brand advocacy is based on consumers' trust in and emotional attachments to the brand (Choi, Y., Kroff, M.W. and Kim, J. (2021).

#### **2.4 Brand Attachment: -**

The brand attachment construct encapsulates the concept of customer attachment to brands. Recent research has identified two related concepts: emotional attachment (Chieng, Fayrene, and Sharma, Piyush, Kingshott, Russel, and Roy, Rajat. 2022) and brand attachment (Park et al., 2010). Distinguish. An emotional connection is a positive emotional bond that exists between a person and a brand and is defined by feelings of connection, affection, and passion. Brand loyalty (Park et al. 2010) "The strength of the relationship that connects the brand and the self" (p. 2) has two aspects: the connection between the brand and the self and the excellence of the brand. Also (Ugalde, C., Vila-Lopez, N. and Kuster-Boluda, I. 2022) coined the term "attachment" (in the interpersonal context). It brings great pleasure when the object of attachment is present, and pain when distanced or rejected (Ugalde, C., Vila-Lopez, N. and Kuster-Boluda, I. 2022) According to several authors, strong emotional attachment is usually associated with strong feelings of affection, love, and passion (Ugalde, C., Vila-Lopez, N., and Kuster-Boluda, I., 2022). "Brand attachment is a psychological entity that expresses itself in a lasting and unchanging affective relationship (separation is painful) to the brand and expresses a relationship of psychological familiarity towards it." "In the same vein, (Park et al. (2006)) proposed a conceptual model of brand attachment, where there are three types of brand self-connectedness concerning brand attachment: (1) functional benefits, which provide an efficient performance; (2) self-gratifying benefits, which give people pleasure through hedonic elements and (3) self-enrichment benefits, which satisfy symbolic needs through the ideal image people have of themselves. Following this reasoning, the author makes a theoretical proposal. According to these authors, brand attachment has two dimensions: self-connectedness and significance. Years later, the same author (Park et al., 2010) highlight two key factors for defining attachment: (1) the relationship between the company and its consumers, and (2) the cognitive and emotional bond. Attachment, in this context, refers to a psychological state of mind in which strong cognitive and affective linkages connect the brand to an individual in such a way that the brand is perceived as an extension of the self (Park et al., (2008)). While there are many similarities between brand attachment and brand attitude, they are not the same, Brand attachment entails a "hot" effect as a result of the brand's linkage with the self, whereas brand attitudes include judgment and a 'cold' effect (Park et al., (2010)). As a result, attachment-related emotions and consumer responses are greater. Moreover, the formation of brand attachment is not independent of the brand's positioning approach. There are three major Brand positioning mainly has three tactics. First, functional brands are those that give consumers a sense of self-efficacy and enable them to pursue their goals and objectives (Park et al., (2006)), such as Tropicana fruit drinks. Second, hedonic brands satisfy individuals through pleasurable experiences (Ugalde, C., Vila-Lopez, N., and Kuster-Boluda, I. (2022)). This satisfaction is provided by any combination of sensory stimuli, including B. POS or excellent Service Environment (Vlachos et al., (2010)), Like hedonistic restaurant brands like Starbucks. Finally, iconic brands enhance individuals by connecting them to their ideal selves, whether past, present, or future (Ugalde, C., Vila-Lopez, N., and Kuster-Boluda, I. (2022)), like Rolex. Newer brands tend to be stronger in one of these options, although some brands do well in all three dimensions (Park et al., 2006; Schuitema et al., 2013). (Park et al., 2006; Shuitema et al., 2013). Moreover, in the three scenarios he outlines, the effects of history and brand attachment do not occur with equal intensity.

#### **2.5 Customer Engagement: -**

CE is described as a customer's resource investment in his or her brand interactions by Hollebeek et al. (2019). Hence, a customer's level of brand engagement increases with their level of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement in a destination brand (such as learning about, talking about, or recommending the brand to others) (Kumar & Pansari, 2016; So et al., 2021). The individual's involvement has also been demonstrated to have a significant impact on consumer behavior, such as the likelihood of a repeat purchase (e.g., Kumar et al., 2019; Munaro et al., 2021; Naeem & Ozuem, 2021). Although it has received some attention (Rather, R. & Hollebeek, Linda & Vo-Thanh, Tan & Ramkissoon, Haywantee & Leppiman, 2020), CE is frequently noted as a driver or mediator of the consumer experience, brand identity, and/or loyalty. Dale Smith and Anu (2022). For instance, (Thakur (2019)) investigates the moderating effect of engagement on the link between customer happiness and loyalty in the context of mobile app-based buying. The author claims that highly engaged consumers (vs. low engaged consumers) tend to shop more frequently, revealing the concept's moderating role, similar to (Rather, R. & Hollebeek, Linda & Vo-Thanh, Tan &

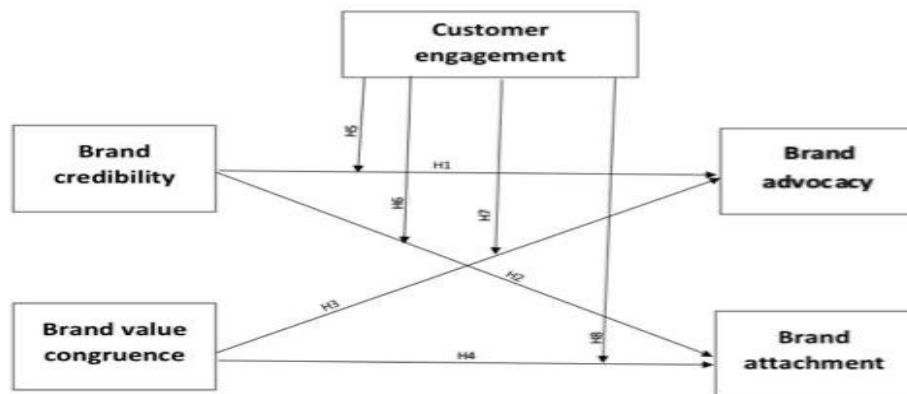
Ramkissoon, Haywantee & Leppiman, Anu & Smith, Dale. (2022)) who confirm engagement's moderating role in the association of consumers' sustainability awareness and behavior. Additionally, CE has been demonstrated to moderate the association between customer coercion and their intent to recommend the brand, even though Saleem et al. (2020) establish CE's moderating role in the association of customers' brand attitudes and their environmentally responsible (sustainable) consumption behaviors (Rather et al., 2022). The mental state is the customer involvement of clients who are developing relationships with a business in a certain service capacity (Brodie et al., 2011). Consumer involvement has been operationalised as an organism, WOM as a stimulus (Emir et al., 2016), and purchasing behavior as a reaction (Mollen and Wilson, 2010). (Zhang et al., 2014; Zheng et al., 2019). Many other scholars in the area of consumer behavior have also employed the S-O-R theory to comprehend consumer responses. Internet and digital technologies that connect customers with businesses and other customers can increase customer engagement (Chepurina and Criado, 2018). These technologies promote interoperability and user-friendly, user-generated content (DiNucci, 1999). User thoughts, feelings, suggestions, and other contextual data that serve as useful resources can be included in user-generated content. For businesses (Moe and Schweidel, 2011). Customers' favorably valence brand-based emotional, cognitive, and behavioral activity during [or connected to] certain customer-brand encounters is known as CBE (Hollebeek et al., 2014, 2019). The idea of brand co-creation is similar to CBE in that it refers to a joint (co)creation of value between a company/brand and the customer to let the customer (co)construct the service experiences (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Consumer brand-related cognitive, emotional, and behavioral (CBE) activity is described as "connected to focal brand encounters" (Hollebeek et al., 2014, p. 149). Yet, despite the consensus that scholars have always focused on and considered the topic of customer engagement in the marketing industry (Leckie et al., 2016), how CBE is applied within social media platforms differs. demands more thorough research and practical proof to support its final place in the marketing industry (Islam and Rahman, 2016). (Islam & Rahman, 2017; Islam, Rahman, & Hollebeek, 2018; Kaur, Paruthi, Islam, & Hollebeek, 2020; revealed that customer engagement mediates the relationship between brand involvement and self-brand connection and brand usage intent in social media settings.) Although brand loyalty is a concept achieved beyond purchasing, customer engagement was found to strongly affect customer loyalty to specific brands. In a similar vein, Hollebeek and Macky (2019) discovered that engagement mediates the links between brand loyalty and digital content marketing activities. Customer involvement was found to be a mediator in the relationship between the service setting and loyalty behaviors (Fernandes and Esteves, 2016). Xi and Hamari (2020) discovered recently that consumer engagement modulates the connection between gamification elements and brand equity (i.e. brand awareness and loyalty). The tenth hypothesis is created as a result. Additionally, it has been claimed in marketing studies (see Hollebeek, 2011; Taheri and Jafari, 2012) that context is frequently what determines engagement. Consumers' attachment, emotional ties, and loyalty to a particular context are referred to as engagement (Taheri et al., 2014). Thus, the following hypothesis is developed:

- H5: Brand credibility exerts a stronger effect on brand advocacy for highly (vs. low) engaged customer
- H6: Brand credibility exerts a stronger effect on brand attachment for highly (vs. low) engaged customer
- H7: Brand value congruence exerts a stronger effect on brand advocacy for highly (vs. low) engaged customer
- H8: Brand value congruence exerts a stronger effect on brand attachment for highly (vs. low) engaged customer

**2.6 Handicrafts (Handmade) Brands: -**

Handmade signifies a product “that is presented to consumers as being made by hand or hand process and not by a machine or a mechanical process” (Fuchs et al., 2015). Of course, crafts are “predominantly handmade” (Gupta, 2011) as they involve “manual contribution” (UNESCO and ITC, 1997) and “manual labor” (Liebl and Roy, 2003). But the concept of handmade has become fuzzy. In 2013,). Also, Handicrafts are normally considered a lifestyle activity enjoyed in one’s leisure time (Wherry, 2006). This has meant that they have been viewed more as a social activity rather than economic activity. However, with increased interest in arts and crafts, the role of handicrafts in the global economy is increasingly being recognized (Ghadge, Er Kara, Mogale, Choudhary, & Dani, 2020). Researchers have also explored the handicraft industry (which is highly related to culture and creativity) in terms of the mentioned premises of culture, creativity, and innovation. While there has been significant interest in the handicraft industry in terms of the barriers and challenges (Subhadip Roy, Subhalaxmi Mohapatra 2023), researchers have focused on the concepts of culture, creativity, and innovation in separate silos. They have explored the role of innovation in handicrafts (e.g., Subhadip Roy, Subhalaxmi Mohapatra 2023), culture in handicrafts ( Subhadip Roy, Subhalaxmi Mohapatra 2023 ), and creativity in the same sector (e.g., Wu et al., 2017). Researchers have also studied the consumer side of craft consumption (Elliot, 2016). In the mentioned triadic culture–creativity–innovation relationship, scholars have paid less attention to creativity. In addition, we lack studies that integrate the role of culture in the creativity of handicrafts and its effect on innovation in the handicraft industry. The handicraft industry is facing several challenges because of multiple social and business-related factors. The major social challenge is related to the non-participation of young people in continuing the craft forms for the following reasons: (a) because they are not the first career choice and do not lead to higher monetary rewards compared with the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines (Subhadip Roy, Subhalaxmi Mohapatra 2023), and (b) they are considered “old-fashioned” and/or “difficult to learn”; thus, they are not interesting enough as career options (Subhadip Roy, Subhalaxmi Mohapatra 2023). issues lead to the inheritance crisis that is hampering the overall culture of handicrafts (Ciftci and Walker, 2017)

**3. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS**



- H1: Brand Credibility has a significant effect on Brand Advocacy
- H2: Brand Credibility has a significant effect on Brand Attachment
- H3: Brand Value congruence has a significant effect on Brand Advocacy
- H4: Brand Value congruence has a significant effect on Brand Attachment



- H5: Brand credibility exerts a stronger effect on Brand advocacy for highly (vs. low) Engaged Customers  
H6: Brand Credibility exerts a stronger effect on Brand Attachment For highly (vs. low) Engaged Customer  
H7: Brand value congruence exerts a stronger effect on Brand Advocacy For highly (vs. low) Engaged Customers  
H8: Brand Value congruence exerts a stronger effect on Brand Attachment For highly (vs. low) Engaged Customers

## 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### *4.1 Methodology: -*

#### *Sampling and Data Collection: -*

This study uses an online survey with a sample of Egyptian consumers. All the participants received a once-only usage link to the online questionnaire to help eliminate duplicate responses from the same IP address. Potential respondents were chosen to participate in this study based on two criteria, they should be in the 15–30 age group consumer population and they must have purchased or used at least one of the handmade brands selected for the survey. A total of 300 usable responses were collected with more than half of women (69.1%) and (52.3%) aged 20-25 years old. About (32.6%) of the sample has a personal income between 3000-5000, and more than half have a university degree (76%).

This part will examine the moderating effect of customer engagement on the relationship between brand credibility, brand value, brand attachment, and brand advocacy.

The study consists of five variables which are: (customer engagement, brand credibility, brand value congruence, brand attachment, and brand advocacy).

After presenting the study variables, the researcher follows the following steps in the analysis to test the study hypotheses:

- Demographic analysis.
- Descriptive analysis.
- Test of normality for variables.
- Test of response reliability.
- Test of responses validity.
- The correlation matrix.
- The Linear regression models.

### *4.2 Sample Size: -*

The researcher has succeeded to collect 300 valid responses to be an appropriate sample size to be analyzed and depends on it to test hypotheses and obtain research models results of tests depending on such sample.

### *4.3 Demographic Analysis: -*

The researcher analyzes the sample demographic characteristics as each characteristic is classified into classes and the sample is frequently distributed among these classes by using frequency distribution technique, then the researcher presents these frequencies by using an appropriate chart. It is found that 69% of the total sample are females and 31% of the total sample are males, and it found that about 10.3% of the sample 31 person they're ranged between 15 and 20 years old, 158 person their age ranges from 20 to 25 years old, 46 people their age ranged from 25 to 30 years old and finally there are 66 persons one of them his or her age more than 30 years. Also, that 229 persons of the sample have University degree sample presenting 76.1% and 72 persons have Postgraduate degree presenting 23.9%. And it is concluded that 98 persons their income level ranges from 3000 to 5000, and there are 60 persons their income level

ranges from 5000 to 10000, there are 21 persons their income level ranges from 15000 to 20000 and there are 66 persons their income level more than 20000, and finally there are 22 persons in others

## 5. RESEARCH RESULTS

There is a significant effect of Brand Credibility on Brand Advocacy, as their coefficient p-values are less than 0.05. And a significant effect of Brand Credibility on Brand Attachment, as their coefficient p-values are less than 0.05. There is a significant effect of Brand Value on brand Advocacy, as their coefficients, p values are less than 0.05. Also, is a significant effect of Brand Value on brand Attachment, as their coefficient p-values are less than 0.05. The independent variable Brand credibility and the moderator variable Engaged Customer have a significant effect on the dependent variable Brand advocacy because their coefficients have a p-value less than 0.05. The independent variable Brand value and the moderator variable Engaged Customer have a significant effect on the dependent variable Brand Advocacy because their coefficients have a p-value less than 0.05. The independent variable Brand credibility and the moderator variable Engaged Customer have a significant effect on the dependent variable Brand Attachment because their coefficients have a p-value less than 0.05. The independent variable Brand value and the moderator variable Engaged Customer have a significant effect on the dependent variable Brand Attachment because their coefficients have a p-value less than 0.05.

### *5.1 Descriptive Analysis: -*

The main study variables will be analyzed to determine measures of location like mean, maximum, and minimum values, and their measures of dispersion, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation for each variable

### *5.2 Test of Normality: -*

The researcher applied the Shapiro-Wilk test to determine whether the main variables of the study follow the normal distribution or not, Shapiro-Wilk test is a Chi-squared test of normality which its null hypothesis states that variables are not normally distributed if the test p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, while its alternative hypothesis states that variables are normally distributed if the test p-value is more than 0.05. And from the test of normality, it is concluded that all the independent, dependent, and moderator variables are not normally distributed as their p-value of Chi-square statistic is less than 0.05, so the alternative hypothesis will be accepted that the variables do not follow the normal distribution.

### *5.3 Test of Responses Reliability: -*

The term reliability generally refers to the consistency of a measure. The statistical approach to estimating reliability varies depending upon the purpose of the measure. Cronbach's Alpha test to measure the degree of study variables stability and the stability factor for the sample responsiveness is 90% which means that the responses were very high and stable in that questionnaire. And the reliability test concluded that there is a high level of reliability for the responses for each variable as the Cronbach's Alpha test shows the high level of stability as its values for each variable are more than 90%.

### *5.4 Test of Responses Validity: -*

Validity is the extent to which a concept, conclusion or measurement is well-founded and likely corresponds accurately to the real world based on probability. The validity of a measurement tool is considered to be the degree of probability to which the tool measures what it claims to measure, in this case, the validity is equivalent to a percent of how accurately the claim corresponds to reality. Validation t-test was used to measure the extent of statements consistent with the responses in the questionnaire, it found that t-test values are all positive and significant as all p-value is equal to 0.0000 and this presents a high level of consistency.

### 5.5 Correlation Matrix: -

After applying the test of normality for the main dimensions of the independent, control, and dependent variables of the study and found that the study variables don't follow the normal distribution, So Spearman correlation coefficient will be the most appropriate coefficient for determining the relation strength and direction between every two variables, then the correlation coefficient is tested by a t-test which its null hypothesis states that correlation does not exist if the test p-value is greater than 0.05.

Table (1): Spearman correlation coefficient matrix

			Correlations				
			x_1	x_2	M_1	y_1	y_2
Spearman's rho	x_1	Correlation Coefficient	<b>1.000</b>	.532**	.583**	.594**	.495**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	x_2	Correlation Coefficient	.532**	<b>1.000</b>	.693**	.707**	.714**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	M_1	Correlation Coefficient	.583**	.693**	<b>1.000</b>	.767**	.722**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	y_1	Correlation Coefficient	.594**	.707**	.767**	<b>1.000</b>	.816**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	y_2	Correlation Coefficient	.495**	.714**	.722**	.816**	<b>1.000</b>
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### **From Matrix (1) it is concluded that:**

- There is significant, direct and medium relation between Brand credibility Value and Customer engagement of correlation value 0.583 and P-value 0.000.
- There is a significant, direct and medium relation between Brand credibility Value and Brand advocacy of correlation value 0.594 and P-value 0.000.

- There is a significant, direct and weak relation between Brand credibility Value and Brand Attachment of correlation value 0.495 and P-value 0.000.
- There is significant, direct and medium relation between Brand Value Value and Customer engagement of correlation value 0.69 and P-value 0.000.
- There is a significant, direct and strong relation between Brand Value Value and Brand advocacy of correlation value 0.70 and P-value 0.000.
- There is a significant, direct and strong relation between Brand Value Value and Brand Attachment of correlation value 0.71 and P-value 0.000.
- There is a significant, direct and strong relation between Customer engagement and Brand advocacy of correlation value .767 and P-value 0.000.
- There is a significant, direct and strong relation between Customer engagement and Brand Attachment of correlation value .722 and P-value 0.000.

**5.6 The Linear OLS Regression Analysis: -**

Table (2): simple regression model for the hypothesis  $H_1$

Model	<i>OLS Simple</i>	Dependent variable	Brand Advocacy
Variables	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Significance
constant	0.206902	0.3810	Insignificant
Brand Credibility	0.926403	<0.0001	Significant

From table (2) it is concluded that:

The significance of the model as a whole according to the (F) test has been proven, at the level of significance (5%), and the value of coefficient of multiple determination of the model has reached approximately (41.03%). There is a significant effect from Brand Credibility on Brand Advocacy, as their coefficients p-values is less than 0.05. The model final forecasting equation will be:

$$\text{Brand Advocacy } Y_1 = 0.2069 + 0.926403 \text{ Brand Credibility } X_1$$

Therefore; Brand Advocacy varies with 0.926 when Brand Credibility varies with one unit.

Table (3): simple regression model for the hypothesis  $H_2$

Model	<i>OLS Simple</i>	Dependent variable	<b>Brand Attachment</b>
Variables	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Significance
constant	0.553551	0.0350	Significant
Brand Credibility	0.791464	<0.0001	Significant

Adjusted R-squared	29.18%
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From table (3) it is concluded that:

The significance of the model as a whole according to the (F) test has been proven, at the level of significance (5%), and the value of coefficient of multiple determination of the model has reached approximately (29.18%). There is a significant effect from Brand Credibility on Brand Attachment, as their coefficients p-values is less than 0.05. The model final forecasting equation will be:

$$\text{Brand Attachment } Y_2 = 0.55351 + 0.791464 \text{ Brand Credibility } X_1$$

Therefore; Brand Attachment varies with 0.791 when Brand Credibility  $X_1$  varies with one unit

Table (4): simple regression model for the hypothesis  $H_3$

Model	<i>OLS Simple</i>	Dependent variable	Brand Advocacy
Variables	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Significance
constant	0.896268	<0.0001	significant
Brand Value	0.709741	<0.0001	significant
Adjusted R-squared		57.07	

From table (4) it is concluded that:

The significance of the model as a whole according to the (F) test has been proven, at the level of significance (5%), and the value of coefficient of multiple determination of the model has reached approximately (57.07%). There is a significant effect from Brand Value on Brand Advocacy, as their coefficients p-values is less than 0.05.

The model final forecasting equation will be:

$$\text{Brand Advocacy } Y_1 = 0.896 + 0.7097 \text{ Brand Value } X_2$$

Therefore; Brand Advocacy varies with 0.7097 when Brand Credibility varies with one unit

Table (5): simple regression model for the hypothesis  $H_4$

Model	<i>OLS Simple</i>	Dependent variable	Brand Attachment
Variables	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Significance
constant	0.779752	<0.0001	Significant
Brand Value	0.703030	<0.0001	Significant
Adjusted R-squared		54.7	

From table (5) it is concluded that

The significance of the model as a whole according to the (F) test has been proven, at the level of significance (5%), and the value of coefficient of multiple determination of the model has reached approximately (54.7 %). There is a significant effect from Brand Value on Brand Attachment, as their coefficients p-values is less than 0.05.

The model final forecasting equation will be:

$$\text{Brand Attachment } Y_2 = 0.779 + 0.703 \text{ Brand Value } X_2$$

Therefore; Brand Attachment varies with 0.703 when Brand Value varies with one unit.

Table (6): Multiple regression model for the hypothesis  $H_5$

Model	<i>OLS Simple</i>	Dependent variable	Brand advocacy
Variables	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Significance
constant	-0.0678772	0.7154	insignificant
Brand credibility	0.313446	<0.0001	Significant
Engaged Customer	0.688930	<0.0001	Significant
Adjusted R-squared		63.7%	

From table (6) it is concluded that the overall model is significant as the p-value of both Brand credibility, and the Engaged Customer is less than 0.05, and the model adjusted R-squared is 63.7% which means that 0.637 change in the dependent variable Brand advocacy is due to change in Brand credibility, and the Engaged Customer by 1, and the model final equation will be:

$$\text{Brand advocacy } Y_1 = 0.313446X_1 + 0.688930M_1$$

Table (7): Multiple regression model for the hypothesis  $H_6$

Model	<i>OLS Simple</i>	Dependent variable	Brand Attachment
Variables	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Significance
constant	0.257374	0.2205	Insignificant
Brand credibility	0.130773	0.0851	Significant
Engaged Customer	0.742579	<0.0001	Significant
Adjusted R-squared		54.9%	

From table (7) it is concluded that the overall model is significant as the p-value of both Brand credibility , and the Engaged Customer is less than 0.05, and the model adjusted R-squared is 54.9% which means that 0.549 change in the dependent variable Brand Attachment is due to change in Brand credibility , and the Engaged Customer by 1, and the model final equation will be:

$$\text{Brand Attachment } Y_2 = 0.130X_1 + 0.7425M_1$$

Table (8): Multiple regression model for the hypothesis  $H_7$

Model	<i>OLS Simple</i>	Dependent variable	Brand Advocacy
Variables	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Significance
constant	0.216189	0.1079	Insignificant
Brand value	0.534541	<0.0001	Significant
Engaged Customer	0.375482	<0.0001	Significant
Adjusted R-squared		68.9%	

From table (8) it is concluded that the overall model is significant as the p-value of both Brand value , and the Engaged Customer is less than 0.05, and the model adjusted R-squared is 68.9% which means that 0.689 change in the dependent variable Brand advocacy is due to change in Brand value, and the Engaged Customer by 1, and the model final equation will be:

$$\text{Brand advocacy } Y_1 = 0.534541X_2 + 0.375482M_1$$

Table (9): Multiple regression model for the hypothesis  $H_8$

Model	<i>OLS Simple</i>	Dependent variable	Brand Attachment
Variables	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>p-value</i>	Significance
constant	0.182970	0.0041	Insignificant
Brand value	0.469070	<0.0001	Significant
Engaged Customer	0.409712	<0.0001	Significant
Adjusted R-squared		63.5%	

From table (9) it is concluded that the overall model is significant as the p-value of both Brand value, and the Engaged Customer is less than 0.05, and the model adjusted R-squared is 63.5% which means that 0.635 change in the dependent variable Brand Attachment is due to change in Brand value, and the Engaged Customer M\_1 by 1, and the model final equation will be:

$$\text{Brand Attachment } Y_2 = 0.469070X_2 + 0.409712M_1$$

## 6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### **6.1 Managerial Implications: -**

The current study provides insights for handmade brands, and marketing companies

Study results suggest that brands marketers need to build marketing strategies which highlight the role of brand credibility and brand value congruence on brand advocacy and brand attachment, also highlights the moderator role of customer engagement. The extent of engagement can be influenced by various factors, including knowledge (Hollebeek, 2012), motivation (Brodie et al., 2013) and social media (Sashi, 2012), so marketers need to offer both online and (offline) tools, Destination marketers may also require to encourage customer engagement at destinations to obtain a competitive advantage. Marketers can try to understand the visitor's behavioral data and that can help to foster site/destination services, promotions for target clients, and handmade packages. Handmade brands can use video sharing and storytelling techniques to display their products and that will help to decrease perceived risks for customers because they will be attached to the brand and trust it. The result corroborates the moderation effects of customers engagement, which illustrated the effect of brand credibility and brand value congruence on brand advocacy and brand attachment Thus,

marketers, and managers of handmade marketing organizations need to furnish relevance in their conveying risk reduction tactics, marketing strategies and/or advertising initiatives to strengthen customer's brand engagement, which, – in turn – cultivates visitor's attachment and advocacy. From the research survey, Researchers found that men were a small percentage of the survey, so that can help handmade brands to start lunch new lines and new categories for men to be more spread.

### **6.2 Theoretical Implications: -**

The study also provides insights to the coming researchers to start focusing on the importance of brand credibility and brand value congruence and their significant effect on brand advocacy and brand attachment and the moderating role of customer engagement to enhance the quality of the brands and enhance their image.

### **6.3 Limitations and Future Research: -**

Despite its contribution, this study is subject to several limitations, opening up further research opportunities. First, researchers can use the model of this study to discuss the importance of all this research variables on brand identification. Second, we adopted quantitative examination to investigate the causal associations between the study's constructs, future research can be adapted to qualitative analysis or mix-method to increase the framework's explanations in different contexts, nations, or cultures. Third, this study, due to lack of time, collected 300 responses, the following studies can collect more than 300 responses and reach 500 responses. Forth, this study applied on the humanised brands researchers can apply in any other filed. Finally, the research applied on Egypt following researchers can applied on any countries and any other cultures.



#### 6.4 Recommendations

Researchers recommend to (the Federation of Egypt industries) create more handmade academies to train people to start building their small businesses in handmade goods and start to enhance the academies that already build. Researchers recommend allocating places for handicrafts in any event or museums, and ancient houses to display their products. Humanized brands should spread more through different ways not only social media and not only offline stores they must use Omni-channel marketing. They can start to create more events and workshops to increase customer engagement and start sharing credible information about the brand and which will increase the attachment to the brand and will enhance the image of the handmade brand through WOM, defined by customers.

### 7. CONCLUSION

The study findings that brands play an important role in developing customer/Company relationships, study found factors that enhance the brand like brand credibility and brand value congruence and its positive effect on brand advocacy and brand attachment and all of that be effective with customer engagement as moderator the study applied all of that on Humanized Brands (handmade brands). The past researcher discusses that The stronger the brand credibility, the greater the consumer trust and the broader the image of the product and service (Mandler et al., 2020) also The brand value congruence offered by a manufacturer provides emotional value to consumers, rational value to its business customers and reflects its operational efficiency as an important element of the value it provides to both consumers and business customers (Parment 2008),and that lead us to brand attachment ( Park et al. (2010)) describe brand attachment as “the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self” and it will enhance brand Advocacy Brand advocates may be important assets for a company/brand as these individuals are deeply motivated to spread positive messages about the brand, often through social networks and without expecting anything in return (Mee et al., 2020),the study found that customer engagement act as moderator between all of this factors, customer engagement has been defined as customer’s positively valence brand-based emotional, cognitive and behavioral activity during [or related] t o specific customer-brand interactions (Hollebeek et al., 2014, 2019),the study focuses on humanized brands (handmade brands) and uses an online survey with a sample of Egyptian consumers and found that a total of 300 usable responses were collected with more than half women (69.1%) and (52.3%) from the age with 20-25 years old, about (32.6%) of the sample has a personal income between 3000-5000, and more than half have a university degree (76%).

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