Brand DNA's Relationship with Customer Loyalty in the Fast Fashion Market in Egypt

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Abstract

The intensity of competition has made it difficult to maintain the loyalty of current customers to business organizations; thus, brands must prioritize developing lasting relationships with customers. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand. A pre-structured and pre-prepared survey list was used to collect data from Egyptian customers of the most famous fast fashion brands in Egypt (Zara, H&M, Mango, Stradivarius, Pull & Bear, Bershka, LC Waikiki, Max, American Eagle). This was done using a non-probability quota sample with a sample size of 384 individuals. The data were then analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. The study found a statistically significant positive relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand. The findings contribute to the development of marketing knowledge in the fast fashion industry, improve marketing practices, and open new horizons for future research in this area.

Keywords: Brand DNA, Customer loyalty, Fast fashion, Egypt.

Introduction

Applying the concept of brand DNA provides the starting point for creating a solid foundation for influencing brand transactions (Soetoredjo,2019) Because it not only guides the marketer when defining his unique brand but also guides him when embedding his brand into every aspect of his business. Despite its importance, this concept is often overlooked in terms of building long-term brand success (Ekev, 2018).

Whether the marketer is a beginner or an experienced entrepreneur, the step-by-step brand identification methodology will help them uncover the unique genetic code of their brand from the inside out. Once this code is identified, the business begins to transform and becomes very focused on it, embedding brand DNA throughout the entire system. Then, through promotional efforts, brand DNA helps establish the foundation for success in the market by identifying unique brand attributes upon which a competitive advantage and consistent brand experiences can be created that win customers' life, build a strong brand, and increase its awareness and sustainability. The brand identity is similar to the concept of DNA, it is like a living organism, and the brand

develops and adapts to its surroundings. Its basic genetic structure consists of unique elements and characteristics specific to the brand's origins and its environment. The genetic code grows, develops, and is generally reflected in the brand in general (Tulien and Chapman, 2010).

Customer loyalty to a brand is an essential element, especially for brands that compete in dynamic environments. Having satisfied and loyal customers makes the organization stronger (Aydin, 2005). Maintaining a loyal customer base is an essential element of successful marketing strategies. The American Marketing Association defines customer loyalty a condition in which consumers consistently choose a particular product or service from the same brand rather than, purchasing from different suppliers in the same category each time (Aaker, 1996).

Fast fashion is considered an accelerated business model characterized by short product life cycles and imitation of the designs of well-known fashion houses at reasonable prices (Siege, 2019). Examples of the most successful brands in this sector fast fashion are the Spanish group Zara and its Swedish counterpart H&M, which can translate imitated designs into fashion within two to three weeks (Tokatli, 2008). Unlike high-end luxury fashion brands like Louis Vuitton, which produce only one or two collections per year (McKinsey, 2021).

In the 2000s, the concept of fast fashion revolutionized the fashion industry, including the luxury brands (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010), as online shopping services helped customers, especially young middle-class women, meet their growing demand for fashion. Fast fashion styles (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2009) and fast fashion manufacturers rely on a rapid response strategy that allows for a quick flow of information and accurate market forecasts, which enables brands such as Zara and H&M to arrange the sourcing and logistics services they rely on. (Fletcher, 2010). It is noted that fast fashion companies have recently made greater to offer environmentally friendly fashion lines that focus on sustainability. For example, in 2017, H&M launched the "Conscious Collection" made from sustainable materials, and Zara designed its first sustainable production line. In addition, fast fashion brands provided rich information about their sustainability work on their websites in 2016. Sustainable fashion, which is like the idea of slow fashion, is a new trend in the fast fashion industry (Marie, 2021). However, the industry's lower prices stimulate increased consumption and thus have a higher environmental and social impact (Gibson and Stanes, 2011).

A review of previous studies showed the scientific and practical importance of analyzing and discussing the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty, particularly in the context of the fast fashion market in Egypt. Available knowledge about this relationship is scarce, which limits marketers' ability to fully utilize the concept of brand DNA to support customer satisfaction and maintain their loyalty to the brand; Therefore, this study aims to identify the nature of the relationship between the brand DNA variable and customer loyalty; thereby enriching cognitive understanding, supporting studies related to these variables, and assisting marketing decision makers in developing fast fashion brands and increasing their awareness.

This study derives its theoretical importance from its contribution to addressing the scientific gap identified through the review of previous studies that dealt with the subject of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty —which will be listed later — which is highlighted by the noticeable scarcity of previous studies published, whether in The Arab world, specifically Egypt, as well as foreign studies that dealt with studying this relationship is crucial for achieving and maintaining customer satisfaction.

The practical importance of this study lies in its focus on the fast-fashion market in Egypt because of the extreme scarcity of Arabic and foreign library studies that dealt with the issue of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty in its application to the fast-fashion market in Egypt, especially with the importance and large size of the study. This market has an impact on the Egyptian economy, and this will be clarified in the section on the fast fashion market in Egypt by analyzing the opinions of the sample items under study to contribute to the development of brands in the field of the fast fashion market in general and in Egypt in particular.

Theoretical background and hypotheses

The main goal at this stage is to present the results of the previous literature review, which determined the study's problem and guided the design of the model. This addresses the scientific gap in the literature, which was then developed into hypotheses that could be tested. The literature review is explained in the following points:

Brand DNA

Peng (2016) refers to brand DNA as the essence of a brand, encompassing its unique value, personality, and promise conveyed to consumers through its products and services. Ford (2008) defined it as the reference source for the brand and for all its internal and external marketing activities. This DNA must be present in All brands and includes rational benefits, emotional benefits, brand proposition, and brand personality. Ellwood (2000) also refers to brand DNA as the essence of a brand, from which the brand theme, brand name and brand identity. In this order in this school of thought, the term identity represents the external appearance of a brand. By reviewing successful brands throughout the past century, such as: CocaCola, Colgate, Gillette, and Heinz, we find that many maintain their leadership by upholding a consistent brand DNA (de Chernatony, 2001). The brand DNA model defines the brand's purpose, personality, and positioning to answer 3 questions linked to three important elements (Aaker, 1996): What is the company's belief (Purpose – Why)? What is the value-added positioning? What do you tell outsiders about you? (Personality – How)? The brand DNA is the foundation that drives the creation of a comprehensive brand experience, through which we can create a competitive advantage and build an original brand. (Tulien and Chapman, 2010), it is increasingly clear that a brand must be consistent with its DNA, as a cannot produce products that align with its DNA (Roszko, Moskowitz, and Moskowitz, 2018). The sustainability of a brand also depends on Its competitive strength, which is influenced by the compatibility of its policies, procedures, and business behavior with the brand DNA. Imbalances between actions and behaviors with the brand's visual aspects can cause confusion or mistrust, weakening the impact of messages and actions reaching the audience and directly harming the brand and its image (Karjalainen, 2007). Organizations should also use celebrities to endorse their products and increase customer relations with their brands, because these aligns with the DNA of the advertised brand. (Aaker,1996). "Good" DNA leads to "good" interactive marketing activities, thus leading to sustainability.
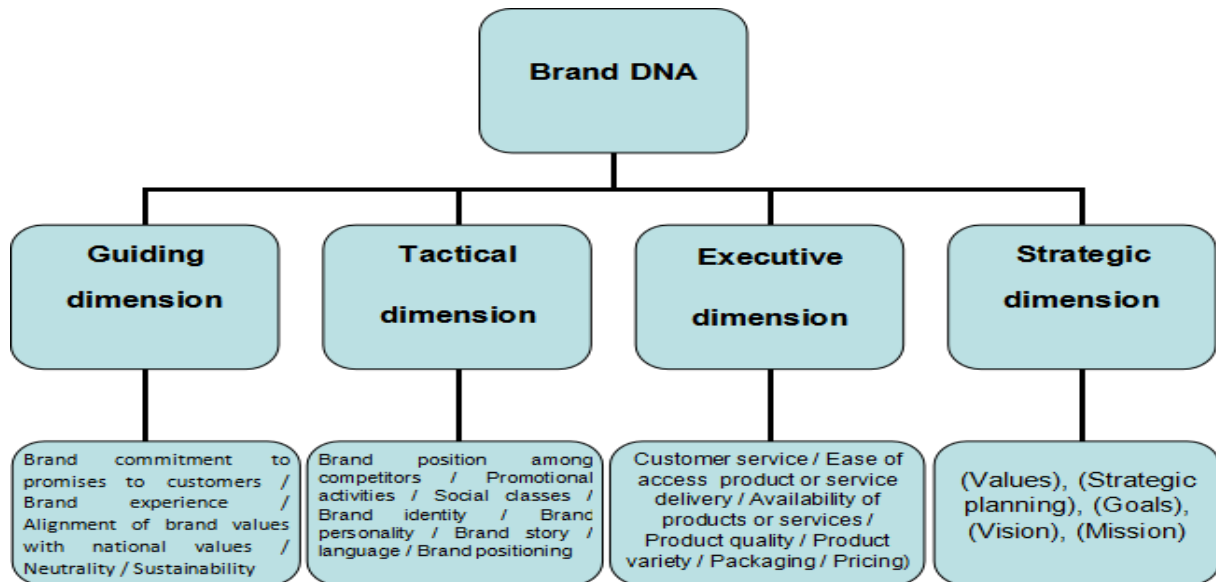
Brand DNA Model

Figure 1: Brand DNA Model

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on (Mogahed, 2024)

Customer loyalty

The interest of researchers and practitioners in the concept of customer loyalty has grown over the past several decades. It represents an intangible strategic asset that generates and supports the organization's competitive advantage(Runyan and Droge, 2008).In addition, it is a fundamental determinant of the value of the brand and works, to develop lasting relationships with the customer, which can significantly increase organization's profits (Ishaq, 2012) .It results in increased sales, revenues and supports the ability to retain current customer and makes current customers less sensitive to price (Chinomona, 2016).The multiplicity and diversity of attempts to define customer loyalty can, be classified within the framework of three approaches as follows:

Behavioral approach

This entry focuses on the concept of behavioral loyalty, which refers to the behavior of a customer's repeated purchases or transactions with a specific brand over a specific period. There have been many attempts to define loyalty in this context, including the following definition: loyalty is a logical, recurring purchasing behavior for a specific brand, evidenced through actual spending behavior (Hammond and East,1996) , It is known as the narrow approach; As

it may not be intentional and therefore may lack commitment. This behavior can result from satisfaction, a lack of available alternatives, or mere habit; thus, it may reflect false loyalty or even disloyalty, and it can occur even if the perceived mental image of the brand is negative (Dick and Basu, 1994).Therefore, repeat purchase behavior alone is not sufficient to achieve customer loyalty (Fung et al.,2013).It is based on measures of purchase frequency, which may take several forms, including: quantity of purchase, frequency of purchase, sequence of purchase, and actual spending (Chao, 2008).

Directional approach

This approach focuses on directional loyalty, which pertains to a customer's preferences and intentions, reflecting the positive evaluation and emotional connection between the customer and the brand. This, in turn, generates true or at least latent loyalty (Martínez and del Bosque, 2013). Several attempts have been made to define loyalty in this context, including the following definition: loyalty refers to the tendency or willingness of a customer to buy the same brand over a certain period of time (Morrison and Crane, 2007). Psychological commitment is also known as commitment that generates the intention to choose a specific brand as a primary option and recommend it to others. This approach does not necessarily include repeat purchase behavior (Hapsari et al., 2017)and, is known as the broad approach. This approach allows us to distinguish between customer loyalty and repeat purchases but focuses on customer statements rather than actual purchases, which may not accurately represent reality (Nikhashemi et al., 2015). It is based on attitude measures reflecting the emotional and psychological dimensions of loyalty, represented by the degree of commitment toward a particular brand, thus providing insights into how loyalty develops (Mittal et al., 2002).

Compound approach

This approach integrates both behavioral and directional dimensions of loyalty, where loyalty is carefully evaluated (Kwong et al., 2015). Oliver (1999) defined loyalty as commitment or pledge to repurchase a brand regardless of attitudinal influences and marketing efforts, which may lead to switching behavior. Dick and Basu (1994) identified several types of customer loyalty: spurious loyalty, latent loyalty, and disloyalty. This study adopts the compound approach.

To achieve the objectives of this study, the results of previous research linking the brand DNA variable with customer loyalty are reviewed. Consequently, numerous hypotheses were formulated, and their testing explored the relationship between these two variables. This involves reviewing the results of previous studies that linked the independent variable (brand DNA) with the dependent variable (customer loyalty) and developing the following hypotheses:

According to a study (Mogahed, 2024), no research has yet examined the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty because of the novelty of the brand DNA measure. **So:**

The research gap lies in the limited studies exploring the relationship between Brand DNA and customer loyalty to brands in the fast fashion industry in Egypt.

However, this study adopts Ellwood's perspective (2000), which posits that the essence of a brand is Brand DNA. Therefore, previous studies were reviewed to explore the relationship between brand identity and customer loyalty, as well as the relationship between the dimensions and elements of brand DNA and customer loyalty. The study by Dehdashti, Kenari, and Bakhshizadeh (2012) confirmed a positive relationship between brand identity and customer loyalty, suggesting that a strong brand can help establish long-term relationship between customer and brand. Based on the findings presented, the basic hypothesis of the study was formulated as follows:

H1. There is a positive, significant relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

Brand essence includes the brand's vision and values, which includes strong feelings about the brand and determines the customer's attitude when making a purchasing decision. (Kegoro and Justus, 2020). From this, we conclude the sub-hypothesis of the study, which states:

H1.1: There is a positive, significant relationship between strategic dimension and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

Kursunluoglu (2011) showed that various factors affect customer loyalty to brand, including service and product quality, product diversity, and customer service. Many studies have confirmed that improving product quality benefits companies by increasing customer loyalty and building long-term relationships with customers. To stand out in today's competitive market, companies must

pay a lot of attention to product quality. As it is the starting point for gaining customer loyalty. (Bruhn, and Grund, 2000). A study by Adjei, Mensah, and Adu-Boahen, (2014) also confirmed that packaging positively affects customer loyalty to a brand, and the study of Kuncoro, and Sutomo, (2018) found that pricing has an impact on increasing customer loyalty and is the most influential element on customer loyalty to brand (Assegaff, and Pranoto, 2020). From this, we deduce the following hypothesis:

H1.2: There is a positive, significant relationship between executive dimension and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

Alhadid (2015) found a strong relationship between brand personality and customer loyalty to a brand. Furthermore, the study of Bilgili and Ozkul (2015) confirmed the existence of a positive relationship between brand personality and customer loyalty, as confirmed by the study of Pratiwi, Rosmawati, and Usman,((2019) and the study of Kuncoro, and Sutomo, (2018) that promotional activities have a significant impact on customer loyalty, and the study of Adjei, Mensah, and Adu-Boahen (2014) showed that visual identity has an impact on customer loyalty to brands, as indicated El-OMARI's (2002) study indicated that members of the upper and middle class have loyalty to certain brands in the fast fashion market, while members of the lower class do not have loyalty to specific brands. From this, we deduce the following hypothesis:

H1.3: There is a positive, significant relationship between the tactical dimension and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

According to the Audi study (2024), brand sustainability has a positive impact on customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion industry. As for the Konečný and Kolouchová study (2013), showed that commitment to a brand's promises to its customers leads to customer loyalty to the brand and building long-term relationships, and positive customer experiences when using products and services increase customer loyalty to the brand (Holbrook and Chaudhuri, 2001). From this, we deduce the following hypothesis:

H1.4: There is a positive, significant relationship between the directional dimension and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

Considering the study hypotheses mentioned above, the relationships to be tested are illustrated in the following model:
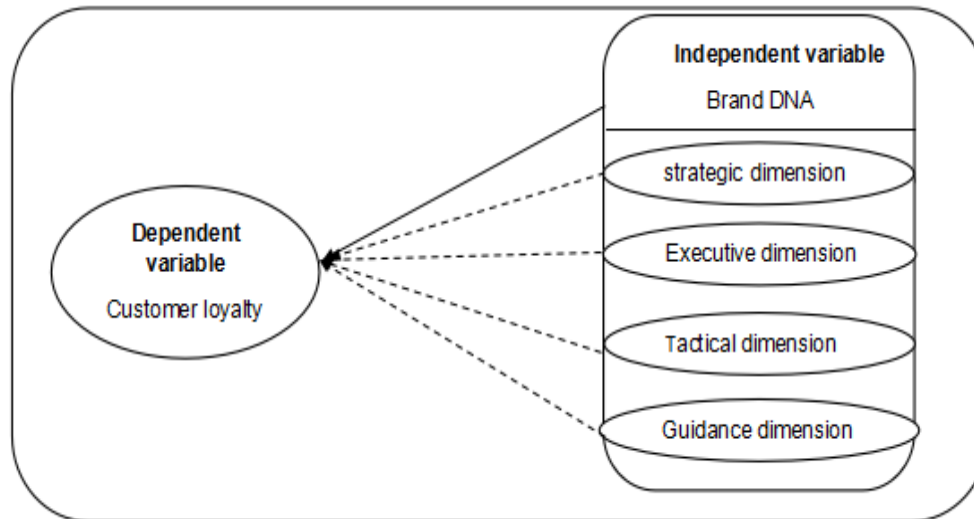

Figure No. (1): Study model

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on a review of previous studies

The fast fashion industry market

One of the distinctive features of the fast fashion industry is that it does not remain confined to a specific fashion, and the time element is of great importance in this industry because, it feeds on and responds to current trends; therefore, it changes constantly. It is also a method of retailing that constantly places new stock throughout the year, and its price is much lower than other sectors of the fashion industry, while this market enjoys an intense degree of competition not only from retailers but from individual companies (Cline, 2012).

Today technology allows consumers to access large amounts of information about the latest trends. Consumers are interested in celebrity culture and what they wear and want to buy similar things, but the difficulty lies in the consumer's inability to afford high-end fashion from fashion houses, so the importance of fast fashion and imitation of high-end fashion appears (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2006).Fast fashion consumption reflects social aspirations through the identity that people try to convey (Joy et al, 2012),and therefore brands and retailers can use the value of hedonic motives by focusing on sensory pleasures to increase sales (Miller, (2013) Therefore, fast fashion consumers continue to purchase this fashion due to their surprise that they will receive fashionable fashion and enjoy the pleasure value, yet at a low price value (Cline, 2012).

Reasons for choosing the fast fashion market as an application sector:

The role of the Internet in enhancing the growth of fast fashion in Egypt

The youth sector has been attracted to fast fashion in Egypt, including Zara, Mango and others (Ramzy, James, and Ogden, 2011). The Internet and the use of social media have helped female consumers, specifically from the middle class, to increase their demand for fast fashion (Morgan, and Birtwistle, 2009). With more Egyptian consumers accessing the Internet and using smartphones, the fast fashion e-commerce market has become a profitable space for companies, and these companies have reached a larger base of consumers and interacted with them (El Ahmar, Oatley, and Tantawi, 2016), especially since the Corona pandemic (Sabri, Lim, and Goh, 2022), as the fast fashion market share of e-commerce reached 8.6% and will increase by an average of 12.7% to 13.8% by 2028 (statista,2022**)**

Size of the Egyptian market

According to a report issued by Statista (2022), industry revenues increased by 20% annually from 2017 to 2021. It is expected that revenues of the clothing market by the end of 2024 will reach approximately US$ 17.48 billion, and it is also expected to witness an annual growth rate of 6.28%. From 2024 to 2028, as the largest share in this market is women's clothing, the market is expected to reach 7.74 billion US dollars in 2024, and it is also expected that the share of non-luxury clothing will be 99% of the Egyptian market (Mordor Intelligence, 2023).

The interest of some groups in fast fashion

The spread of fashion among some social groups, such as the youth group, because of this group's movement and love for change and innovation, which is what distinguishes the fast fashion industry. We also find that the upper classes of society are interested in fashion because of its economic potential, and this is what distinguishes the fast fashion industry as it, spreads among social groups. In particular those that have social and economic influence. Individuals who are more interested in fashion are those living in urban areas rather than in rural areas. Fast fashion is also characterized by its association with appearances and formality, which attracts attention and admiration of segments of society, especially young people. (Rashid, 2007).

From the above, we conclude the following sub-hypothesis:

H1.5: There are significant differences between the opinions of respondents according to demographic factor (gender) in terms of perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

H1.6: There are significant differences between the opinions of the respondents according to demographic factor (age) in terms of perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

H1.7: There are significant differences between the opinions of the respondents according to demographic factor (income level) in terms of perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

H1.8: There are significant differences between the opinions of the respondents according to demographic factor (level of education) in terms of perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

H1.9: There are significant differences between the opinions of the respondents according to demographic factor (social status) in their perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

Method

The mixed approach was used to conduct the research, which combines the two approaches: the quantitative approach and the qualitative approach, as it works to strengthen confidence in the results as well as provide an accurate and clear understanding of the study problem rather than relying on a single approach. (Malhotra, 2010); where the qualitative approach was used to define the study problem and form hypotheses through the exploratory study, and the quantitative approach was used after the end of the exploratory study with the aim of testing the validity of the hypotheses and reaching final conclusions.

The study population consists of all fast fashion brand customers in Egypt, and this population falls under the non-specific research communities, which exceed one million individuals. Due to the lack of a specific sampling frame for the population's vocabulary, a non-probability quota sample was relied upon to, apply the conditions for its use to the subject of the study. Its objectives and to reduce the degree of confidence in the final statistical results to deal with the non-probabilistic nature of the quota sample and, to take into account demographic factors (gender, age, income level, education level, marital status) of the community under study, which must be similar, 384 valid questionnaires were collected.

A non-probability quota sample was used for the following reasons:

1. The proposed method achieves an optimal representation in the final sample of respondents.

2. Quotas truly reflect the population's characteristics, leading to more accurate estimates.

3. This expedited the data collection process because, the sample mirrored the population.

4. The survey tracks the diversity of participants.

Data were collected using a structured survey list prepared in advance using a five-point Likert scale. The survey list questions were designed based on the scales available in previous studies to measure brand DNA variable and customer loyalty variable to the brand. The list included 38 questions, 25 of which were placed at the beginning of the list to measure the brand DNA variable using the Mogahed (2024) scale, followed by 7 questions to measure the concept of customer loyalty to the brand using the Oliver (1999) scale, and finally 6. Questions to determine the demographic factors of the respondents (age, gender, education level, income level, nationality); After initially designing the list, it was presented to a number of academic experts and, 15 respondents to ensure the ease of understanding and clarity of the questions. To evaluate the validity of the content, the list was distributed to respondents via the internet.

Results

Testing the reliability and validity of the data collection tool:

The researcher conducted a validity and reliability test for the survey list after the initial design process, Table No. (1) Shows the reliability and validity coefficients for the brand DNA variable, its dimensions, and the customer loyalty variable:

Table No. (1)

The reliability and validity coefficients of the study variables

Statement		Number of Statements	Reliability Coefficient	Validity Coefficient
Dimensions of the independent variable	The first dimension (strategic)	5	0.789	0.888
	The second dimension (executive)	7	0.786	0.887
	The third dimension (tactical)	8	0.767	0.876
	The fourth dimension (guidance)	5	0.813	0.902
Independent variable	Brand DNA variable	25	0.755	0.869
Dependent variable	Customer loyalty variable	7	0.779	0.883

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

It is clear from Table No. (1) that:

- The values of the reliability coefficients for the four dimensions of the brand DNA variable ranged from (0.767: 0.813), confirming the stability of the field study tool. In contrast, the values of the reliability coefficients for the four dimensions of the brand DNA variable ranged from (0.876: 0.902). Confirming the reliability of the field study tool.

- The reliability coefficients for brand DNA variable's four dimensions ranged from (0.767: 0.813), confirming the stability of the field study tool, whereas the reliability coefficients for the four dimensions of the brand DNA variable ranged from (0.876: 0.902), confirming the reliability of the field study tool.
- The reliability coefficient for the brand DNA variable was (0.755) and for the customer loyalty variable was (0.779), confirming the reliability of the field study tool. Furthermore, the reliability coefficient for the brand DNA variable was (0.869) and for the customer loyalty variable was (0.883), confirming the credibility of the field study tool. An alpha coefficient of up to 80% indicates excellent confidence and stability.

Descriptive statistics for study variables:

Several measures were used to describe the variable related to the study, including the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation for each survey statement. These statistics are displayed in Table No.(2) as follows :

Table No. (2)

Descriptive statistics of the independent variable data (brand DNA) and its dimensions

#	Dimension	Arithmetic Mean	standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Sorting according to the arithmetic mean
	Dimensions of the independent variable	3.62	0.936	0.708	
1	The first dimension (strategic)	3.72	0.895	0.807	2
2	The second-dimension (executive)	3.78	0.884	0.785	1
3	The third dimension (tactical)	3.58	0.923	0.855	3
4	The fourth dimension (guidance)	3.38	1.045	1.095	4

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

It is clear from Table No. (2) That:

- The second dimension (executive) was ranked first, with an arithmetic mean value of (3.78), and a standard deviation of (0.884), and a coefficient of variation of (0.785). The first dimension (strategic) was ranked second, with an arithmetic mean value reached (3.72), a standard deviation of (0.895), and a coefficient of variation of (0.807). These values indicate a high degree of awareness among respondents regarding the importance of these dimensions when measuring the brand DNA variable.
- The third dimension (tactical) was ranked third, with an arithmetic mean value of (3.58), a standard deviation of (0.923), and a coefficient of variation of (0.885). The fourth dimension (directive) was ranked fourth, with an arithmetic mean. (3.38) with a standard deviation of (1.045) and a coefficient of variation of (1.095), These values indicate a moderate degree of awareness among respondents regarding the importance of these dimensions in measuring the brand DNA variable. (Wan, Wang, Liu, and Tong, 2014)

Table No. (3) shows the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation for the customer loyalty variable statements as follows:

Table No. (3)

Descriptive statistics for the independent variable data (brand DNA) and its expression levels

#	Statement	Arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Ranking	#	Statement	Arithmetic mean	standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Ranking
1	Q26	2.97	1.037	1.075	5	5	Q30	3.56	0.956	0.913	3
2	Q27	2.96	1.040	1.082	6	6	Q31	3.66	0.898	0.806	2
3	Q28	3.69	0.922	0.850	1	7	Q32	3.69	0.907	0.822	1
4	Q29	3.42	0.937	0.878	4						
Customer loyalty variable				3.42			0.957		0.918		

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

It is clear from Table No. (3) That:

- The two expressions (Q28, Q32) ranked first, as their arithmetic mean reached (3.69), with a standard deviation of (0.922, 0.907), respectively, and a coefficient of variation of (0.850, 0.822), respectively, which is an average that indicates a high degree. The respondents' awareness of the importance of these two statements in measuring the customer loyalty variable.

- The phrase (Q31) ranked second, with its arithmetic mean reaching (3.66), with a standard deviation of (0.898), and a coefficient of variation of (0.806). Then, the phrase (Q30) was ranked third, with an arithmetic mean value of (3.56), a standard deviation of (0.956), and a coefficient of variation of (0.913). The phrase (Q29) was ranked fourth, with an arithmetic mean of (3.42), a standard deviation of (0.937), and a coefficient of variation of (0.878). The phrase (Q26) was ranked fifth, with an arithmetic mean value of (2.97), a standard deviation of (1.037), and a coefficient of variation of (1.075). Finally, phrase (Q27) ranked sixth, with an arithmetic mean value of (2.96), a standard deviation of (1.075). and a standard value of (1.040), and a coefficient of variation of (1.082) indicating a moderate degree of awareness among respondents regarding the importance of these phrases in measuring customer loyalty.

Testing the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty:

The researcher relied on correlation analysis using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient to determine the degree of correlation between the four dimensions of brand DNA and customer loyalty. The following table no. (4) Shows the test results as follows:

Table No. (4)

Correlation matrix between variables and study dimensions

Dimension or Variable	The first dimension (strategic)	The second dimension (executive)	The third dimension (tactical)	The fourth dimension (guidance)	Brand DNA	Customer loyalty
The first dimension (strategic)	1					
The second dimension (executive)	** 0.761 0.000	1				
The third dimension (tactical)	**0.702 0.000	**0.759 0.000	1			
The fourth dimension (guidance)	**0.459 0.000	**0.519 0.000	**0.652 0.000	1		
Brand DNA	**0.831 0.000	**0.890 0.000	**0.921 0.000	**0.776 0.000	1	
Customer loyalty	**0.853 0.000	**0.831 0.000	**0.685 0.000	**0.706 0.000	*0.738 0.000	1

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

The following is clear from Table No. (4)that there is a statistically significant correlation between the brand DNA variable and its dimensions (the first dimension, the second dimension, the third dimension, and the fourth dimension) and the customer loyalty variable, as the correlation coefficients respectively for all the dimensions mentioned above were (0.853),(0.831), (0.685), (0.706) at a significance level of (0.000), which is less than 0.01. The correlation coefficient between brand DNA and customer loyalty reached (0.738), at a significance level of (0.000), which is Less than 0.01, indicating that there is a statistically significant correlation between both brand DNA and customer loyalty (Schober, Boer, and Schwarte, 2018)

Testing the effect of the brand DNA variable on the customer loyalty variable:

The researcher relied on simple regression analysis to determine the degree of association between brand DNA and customer loyalty. Table No. (5) Presents the test results as follows:

Table No. (5)

Effect of brand DNA variable on customer loyalty variable

Independent variable	Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R^2)	F Test	SIG.	Dependent variable	Regression coefficients		
						B	T Test	Sig.
Brand DNA	0.738	0.544	440.592	0.000	customer loyalty	0.738	20.990	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

It is clear from Table No. (5) that:

- The level of significance of the regression model to determine the effect of the independent variable, brand DNA, on the dependent variable, customer loyalty, reached (0.000). This confirms that there is a statistically significant effect of the brand DNA variable on customer loyalty. The change in the brand DNA variable explains 54.4% of the changes in the customer loyalty variable according to the coefficient of determination (R^2) (0.544). The remaining percentage is due to other factors that are not present in the model (Schroeder, Sjoquist, and Stephan , 2016)

To determine the effect of each dimension of the brand DNA variable on customer loyalty, using the same analysis method (Simple Analysis Regression), the following results were obtained:

A- The effect of the first (strategic) dimension of the brand DNA on the customer loyalty, Table No. (6) As follows:

Table No. (6)

Effect of the first dimension of brand DNA on customer loyalty

The first dimension of the Independent variable	Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R^2)	F Test	SIG.	Dependent variable	Regression coefficients		
						B	T Test	Sig.
(Strategic)	0.853	0.287	149.516	0.000	customer loyalty	0.853	12.228	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

It is clear from Table No. (6) that the significance of the regression model to determine the effect of the first dimension of the brand DNA on the customer loyalty variable reached (0.000), This confirms that there is a statistically significant effect of the first dimension of the brand DNA variable on customer loyalty, as The change in the first dimension of the brand DNA variable explains 28.7% of the changes in the customer loyalty variable, with the coefficient of determination being (0.287). The remaining percentage is due to other factors that are not present in the model.

B- The effect of the second dimension (executive) of the brand DNA variable on the customer loyalty variable, Table No. (7) As follows:

Table No. (7)

Effect of the second dimension of brand DNA variable on customer loyalty variable

The second dimension of the Independent variable	Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R²)	F Test	SIG.	Dependent variable	Regression coefficients		
						B	T Test	Sig.
(Executive)	0.831	0.336	187.935	0.000	customer loyalty	0.831	13.709	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

It is clear from Table No. (7) that the significance of the regression model to determine the effect of the independent variable, the second dimension of the brand DNA on customer loyalty reached (0.000), which confirms that there is a statistically significant effect of the second dimension of the brand DNA variable on customer loyalty. The change in the second dimension of the brand DNA variable explains 33.6% of the changes in customer loyalty, with the coefficient of determination reached (0.336). The remaining percentage is due to other factors that are not present in the model.

c- The effect of the third (tactical) dimension of the brand DNA variable on the customer loyalty variable, Table No. (8) presents the test results as follows:

Table No. (8)

Effect of the third dimension of brand DNA variable on customer loyalty variable

The third dimension of the independent variable	Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R²)	F Test	SIG.	Dependent variable	Regression coefficients		
						B	T Test	Sig.
(Tactical)	0.685	0.468	325.293	0.000	customer loyalty	0.685	18.036	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

It is clear from Table No. (8) that the significance of the regression model to determine the effect of the independent variable, the third dimension of the brand DNA on the customer loyalty variable reached (0.000). This confirms that there is a statistically significant effect of the third dimension of the brand DNA on customer loyalty. The change in the third dimension of the brand DNA variable explains 46.8% of the changes in the customer loyalty variable, with a coefficient of determination reached (0.468), The remaining percentage is due to other factors not included in the model.

D- The effect of the fourth (guiding) dimension of the brand DNA variable on the customer loyalty variable, Table No. (9) as follows:

Table No. (9)

Effect of fourth dimension of brand DNA variable on customer loyalty variable

Fourth dimension of the independent variable	Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R²)	F Test	SIG.	Dependent variable	Regression coefficients		
						B	T Test	Sig.
(Guiding)	0.706	0.497	365.584	0.000	customer loyalty	0.706	19.120	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

It is clear from Table No. (9) that the significance of the regression model to determine the effect of the independent variable, specifically the fourth dimension of brand DNA on customer loyalty, reached (0.000), confirming a statistically significant effect of the fourth dimension of the brand DNA variable on customer loyalty. The change in the fourth dimension of the brand DNA variable explains 49.7% of the changes in customer loyalty, with the

coefficient of determination reaching (0.497). The remaining percentage is attributed to other factors that are not included in the model. Thus, it has a statistically significant effect on the customer loyalty variable.

5-Testing the moral differences between respondents' opinions according to demographic factors:

The researcher relied on the T-Test and ne-Way ANOVA methods to clarify the significant differences between the respondents' opinions on the variables of brand DNA and customer loyalty, according to demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, income levels, and education level. The following table No. (10) shows the results. The test results are as follows:

Table No. (10)

Results of evaluating respondents' opinions on the study variables according to demographic factors

	F Test	Sig.
According to the demographic factor of gender		
Brand DNA	3.234	0.073
customer loyalty	7189	0.008
According to the demographic factor of age		
Brand DNA	0.269	0.764
customer loyalty	1.401	0.248
According to the demographic factor of marital status		
Brand DNA	1.120	0.342
customer loyalty	0.817	0.485
According to the demographic factor of income levels		
Brand DNA	12.126	0.000
customer loyalty	10.783	0.000
According to the demographic factor of education		
Brand DNA	1.561	0.212
customer loyalty	1.545	0.215

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of statistical analysis using SPSS v. 25

The following is evident from Table No. (10):

1. Regarding the demographic factor of gender:

• The significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions about the brand DNA variable was (0.073), which is greater than 0.05, indicating that there were no statistically significant differences between the respondents' opinions about the brand DNA variable according to gender.

• The significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions about the customer loyalty variable reached (0.008), which is less than 0.05, this indicating that there are statistically significant differences between the respondents' opinions about the customer loyalty variable according to the demographic factor of gender.

2. Regarding the demographic factor of age:

• The significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions on the brand DNA variable reached (0.764), which is greater than 0.05, and the significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions on the customer loyalty variable reached (0.248), which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between the respondents' opinions about the brand DNA variable and the customer loyalty variable according to age.

3. Regarding the demographic factor of marital status:

• The significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions on the brand DNA variable reached (0.342), which is greater than 0.05, and the significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions on the customer loyalty variable reached (0.485), which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between the respondents' opinions on brand DNA and customer loyalty according to the demographic factor of marital status.

4. Regarding the demographic factor of income level:

• The significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions on the brand DNA variable reached (0.000), which is less than 0.05, and the significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions on the customer loyalty variable reached (0.000), which is less than 0.05. This indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the respondents' opinions on brand DNA and customer loyalty according to the demographic factor of income level.

5. Regarding the demographic factor of education:

• The significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions on the brand DNA variable reached (0.212), which is greater than 0.05, and the significance value of the differences between the respondents' opinions on the customer loyalty variable reached (0.215), which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between the opinions of respondents about brand DNA and customer loyalty according to the demographic factor of education.

Discussion

This study adopted Ellwood's (2000) perspective on the term brand DNA, which is the essence of a brand and and stems from it the brand theme, brand name, and brand identity, in that order. In this school of thought, the term "identity" is used to represent the external appearance of the brand. A combined approach was used to study the loyalty variable and its relationship to the concept of brand DNA. The concept of loyalty was studied in terms of its behavioral and directional dimensions so that loyalty could be assessed accurately, which appeared through the items in the survey list. The scales used were the Mogahed scale (2024) to measure brand DNA, and the Oliver scale (1999) to measure customer loyalty.

The study achieved its objectives, which are (Theoretical implications):

Contribution to Marketing Knowledge

1. Enriching the cognitive aspect and supporting studies related to the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty. This was accomplished by testing the study hypotheses and extracting the statistical analysis results.

- The main hypothesis is accepted, which states: There is a positive, significant relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt. This highlights the importance of carefully crafting and maintaining brand DNA to foster long-term customer loyalty in a highly competitive market.

 -Accept the sub-hypotheses related to the dimensions of the independent variable (brand DNA) and the dependent variable (customer loyalty to the brand) , which stipulate that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the four dimensions of brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt.

Exploration of Demographic Variables

-Rejecting the sub-hypotheses on demographic factors, which state that:
There were significant differences between respondents' opinions based on demographic factors (age, marital status, education) in perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt, which explains why the results of this study differed from those of the pervious study (Rashid , 2007).

- Accepting the sub-hypothesis on demographic factors, which states that:
There are significant differences between the opinions of the respondents according to the demographic factor (income) in the perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt. This explains why the results of this study agreed with the results of the study (Rashid, 2007).

The sub-hypothesis related to the gender demographic factor, which states that:
There are significant differences between the respondents' opinions according to the demographic factor (gender) in perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt, which indicates that there are no statistically significant differences between the respondents' opinions about the brand DNA variable according to the demographic factor gender, but there are statistically significant differences between the respondents' opinions about the customer loyalty variable to a brand according to the demographic factor gender.

Moreover, the gender differences observed in customer loyalty despite, the absence of differences in brand DNA perception, highlight the need for brands to tailor their loyalty strategies to the diverse genders. The results emphasize that while brand DNA is universally perceived; the way it translates into loyalty may vary, necessitating gender-specific approaches.

Managerial implications

Assisting decision makers in fast fashion brands in developing relationships between customers and the brand by developing or rebuilding the brand through its DNA, which is determined through its aforementioned dimensions and elements and, focusing, on the following :

Strategic Focus on Brand DNA Dimensions

According to the results of the study, it was clarified how brand DNA can have an impact on customer loyalty to a brand, and this was explained by(R^2) with a percentage of (0.544), and that the fourth dimension of the brand DNA variable in particular has the highest percentage of influence (49.7%). Regarding the dimensions influencing customer loyalty variable, which stipulates that the brand must be committed to its promises to customers, that the brand must have experience in the field of industry, it must also have compatibility between the values of the brand and the values of the country, and finally that the brand must have contributions to issues Sustainability, followed by the third dimension, which had an influence rate of (46.8%) on the loyalty variable, which is called the tactical dimension, which stipulates that the brand should have a place among its competitors, direct its messages and promotional activities to specific social classes, and be concerned with having a story that reflects the identity and personality of the brand, this is followed by the second dimension, which is the executive dimension, which came with a percentage of (33.6%), which is concerned with customer service, diversity, availability, and speed of access to products, and attention to pricing and appropriate packaging of the product, and finally the first dimension, which came with a percentage of (28.7%), which is called the strategic dimension. This is concerned with the values and long-term planning of the brand and has its own vision and message. This last ranking can be attributed to this dimension since it is a recessive dimension that customers cannot evaluate directly, but decision makers in brands must pay close attention to this dimension because it is what determines the road map for the other dimensions and is what shows the brand's identity because it is the cornerstone of a brand .

 -The hypotheses regarding the existence of significant differences between the respondents regarding the perception of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty to a brand in the fast fashion market in Egypt were rejected based on demographic factors (age, marital status, level of education) and gender with regard to the brand DNA variable: Accordingly, marketers and decision makers in fashion brands are advised to:
Income and Gender Strategies

1.   Focus on other demographic factors, such as income and gender —the results of statistical analysis proved relevant to their hypotheses —in building and developing customer loyalty to the brand. whereas the study's findings suggest that income and gender significantly influence the perception of brand DNA and its impact on loyalty. Therefore, brands should, adapt their strategies to account for these demographic variables and ensure that marketing activities resonate with diverse income groups and gender segments. This approach will helps build a loyal customer base by addressing the specific needs and expectations of different demographic segments.

2.   Adapting to market variables that affect customers' income levels because of their impact on customer loyalty to a brand.

3.   Directing marketers and decision makers toward a more in-depth understanding of demographic factors (gender and income) because they have a significant impact on customer loyalty to a brand and, directing marketing activities and strategies to be based on these factors.

Long-Term Brand Planning

This research underscores the importance of the strategic dimension of brand DNA, which, although less directly observable by customers, plays a critical role in shaping a brand's identity and long-term success. Decision-makers should recognize the strategic dimension as the foundation upon which other brand DNA dimensions are built, guiding the brand's overall direction and ensuring consistency in its identity and messaging.

Accepting the main hypothesis, which confirms the positive link between brand DNA and customer loyalty, suggests that fast fashion brands must prioritize consistent and authentic brand identities to maintain and grow their customer base.

Limitations

Although this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty in the fast fashion market, its scope is limited in several ways. These findings are based solely on a sample drawn from the Egyptian market, which may limit their applicability to other cultural and economic contexts. Future research should include more diverse samples, both geographically and industrially, to explore whether the observed relationships

hold true in different settings. Additionally, the study's focus on the fast-fashion industry excludes potential insights from other sectors, such as technology, luxury goods, and financial services. Moreover, the study did not account for significant social phenomena, such as brand boycotts, which could impact customer loyalty. Enhancing measurement tools and incorporating qualitative research methods could also provide a more comprehensive understanding of brand DNA and its influence across various customer segments. Accordingly, there is a need for a group of future studies that include:

Future recommendations

To address the limitations identified in this study and build upon its findings, future research should make the following recommendations:

Broaden Sample Diversity: To enhance the generalizability of the findings, future studies should include samples from various geographical regions and cultural backgrounds. This could involve conducting research in different countries or across diverse demographic groups to examine whether the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty holds true in different cultural and economic contexts.

Mediating variables: such as customer satisfaction can be introduced to study the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty. This approach can clarify how these factors influence the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty, providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play and analyzing how satisfaction may strengthen or weaken this relationship.

Expand Industry Scope: While this study focused on the fast fashion industry, extending research to other sectors, such as technology, luxury goods, and financial services, could provide valuable insights. Investigating how brand DNA affects customer loyalty in these various industries can help determine whether the observed results are specific to the fast-fashion market or applicable more broadly.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons: Expanding the research to include different cultural contexts could reveal how cultural factors interact with brand DNA and customer loyalty.

Consider Social Phenomena: Future research should incorporate significant social factors that are not addressed in this study. For instance, examining the impact of brand boycotts could reveal additional dimensions of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty.

Enhance Measurement Tools: To improve the accuracy and reliability of the findings, future studies should focus on refining measurement tools and

methodologies. This includes developing more precise and validated instruments for assessing brand DNA and customer loyalty.

Sampling Methods: Future studies should consider probability sampling methods to ensure a more representative sample of the population. This approach helps in minimizes biases and improves the accuracy of the findings.

Incorporate Qualitative Methods: Integrating qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, can provide a deeper understanding of the nuances of brand DNA and its impact on customer loyalty. Qualitative insights can complement quantitative data and offer a richer perspective on consumer attitudes and behaviors.

Longitudinal Studies: We recommend conducting longitudinal studies to observe how changes in brand DNA over time influence customer loyalty, especially in the dynamic fast-fashion industry.

Explore Cultural and Social Dynamics: Investigating how cultural and social factors influence brand DNA and customer loyalty is crucial. Future research should examine how cultural differences and social contexts shape customer responses to brand attributes and loyalty.

Examine Demographic Factors in Detail: Further studies should explore how demographic factors, such as income and gender influence brand loyalty. Understanding these factors can help tailor marketing strategies to better address the needs and preferences of different customer segments.

By addressing these areas, future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between brand DNA and customer loyalty and contribute to more robust and generalizable findings**.**

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علاقة الحمض النووي للعلامة التجارية بولاء العملاء في سوق الزياء السريعة في مصر

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ملخص الدراسة

أدت حده المنافسة إلى صعوبة الحفاظ على ولاء العملاء الحاليين لمنظمات الأعمال ، وحتى تتطور هذه المنظمات بشكل فعال؛ وجب على العلامات التجارية إعطاء الأولوية لتطوير ورعاية علاقات دائمة مع العملاء، ولذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة الى معرفة العلاقة بين الحمض النووي للعلامة التجارية وولاء العميل للعلامة، حيث تم استخدام قائمة استقصاء مهيكلة ومعده مسبقاً لجمع البيانات من العملاء المصريين للعلامات التجارية الأشهر للأزياء السريعة في مصر Zara , H&M, Mango) American Eagel, Max, Lc Waikiki , Bershka, Pull & Bear , Stradivarius)وذلك اعتمادا على عينة غير احتمالية حصصيه لمراعاة العوامل الديموغرافية بلغ قوامها بـ ٣٨٤ مفردة ، ثم تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام الأساليب الإحصائية المناسبة، ومن ثم توصلت الدراسة إلى وجود علاقة إيجابية ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الحمض النووي للعلامة التجارية وولاء العميل للعلامة ،حيث تُمكن النتائج التي تم التوصل إليها من تطوير ا لمعرفه التسويقية في مجال الازياء السريعة وتحسين الممارسات التسويقية لها، وفتح أفاق لبحوث مستقبليه في هذا المجال.

كلمات مفتاحية: الحمض النووي للعلامة التجارية، الولاء للعلامة التجارية، الأزياء السريعة، مصر.