



Lovemarks influence on Luxury Brands Emotional Attachment in Egypt

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Lovemarks theory on emotional attachment to luxury brands in the Egyptian market, an emerging economy with distinct cultural dynamics. Despite the global importance of luxury brands, there is a significant research gap in understanding how Lovemarks theory applies outside Western contexts. The research focuses on 440 consumers of luxury fashion brands in Egypt, using a quantitative methodology based on a cross-sectional survey. The study aims to explore the impact of brand love and brand respect on emotional attachment within this unique market. The results reveal that brand love has a stronger influence on emotional attachment compared to brand respect, highlighting the critical role of emotional connections in driving consumer loyalty. These findings provide valuable insights for luxury brand managers and contribute to the broader understanding of consumer behavior in non-Western markets.

Keywords: Lovemarks, love, respect, luxury brands emotional attachment.

seeks to fill this need by presenting empirical data from the Egyptian luxury brands business, thus expanding the utilization of Lovemarks theory beyond its conventional Western scope. This research aims to provide useful insights into the emotional foundations of consumer loyalty in the Egyptian context, thereby enhancing our understanding of worldwide consumer-brand interactions.

Moreover, the current body of research does not provide empirical evidence that specifically examines the relative influence of brand love and respect on emotional ties in the luxury industry, particularly in emerging markets such as Egypt.

This study aims to fill the knowledge gaps by examining the influence of Lovemarks, specifically brand love and respect, on the emotional attachment that Egyptian consumers have to luxury products. It is essential to analyze these dynamics in order to comprehend consumer behavior in the Egyptian market, considering its distinct cultural and economic environment. The study will employ a quantitative methodology to examine these connections, with the goal of offering a thorough comprehension of the determinants that influence customer loyalty in the Egyptian luxury industry.

The main goals of this research are: 1) to determine the crucial components of Lovemarks, specifically brand love, that have the greatest influence on emotional attachment ; 2) to evaluate the role of brand respect in strengthening this attachment; and 3) to analyze the interaction between brand love and respect in predicting consumer loyalty. The study aims to enhance the current body of knowledge by providing a more comprehensive insight into consumer-brand interactions inside the Egyptian luxury sector.

This research is significant not only due to its scholarly contributions but also because of the practical insights it can offer to luxury brand managers seeking to improve consumer engagement and loyalty in Egypt. The study seeks to provide strategic recommendations that have the potential to greatly influence brand management practices, therefore promoting stronger and more enduring consumer interactions in the luxury market of Egypt.

2. Literature Review

Luxury Brands in Egypt

The historical documentation of the elite members of society reveals the hereditary basis of wealth and privilege. According to Okonkwo (2007) , Historically, luxury was commonly found in religious temples, cathedrals, pagodas, and Egyptian pyramidal tombs. It was used as offerings to the all-powerful deity, as people sought to gain favor by sacrificing their money.

Customers in Egypt purchase luxury brands from around the world in order to attain social and psychological benefits. They seek branded objects and experiences that go beyond the basic practical qualities of the products. Moreover, Egyptian consumers place significance on the acknowledgment of prominent figures, asserting oneself, according to societal standards, attaining a certain social

Luxury Brands Emotional Attachment

Attachment pertains to the interpersonal bond between individuals, where humans form emotional connections with each other, leading to different sorts of attachments. When a consumer integrates an attachment item into their self-concept, it becomes linked to their sense of self. This viewpoint on relationships contrasts significantly with a trait approach to attachment, which views bonding as a personal characteristic that defines one's constant pattern of connection across relationships over time. (Ulag, et al., 2023).

Deeper attachments are directly linked to heightened feelings of connection, desire, love, and intensity. Bowlby (1979) proposed that the innate and fundamental need for people is to have strong emotional connections with certain persons. (Thomson et al., 2005).

According to Shimul et al. (2019), luxury brand attachment is the formation of an emotional bond between a customer and a luxury brand, leading to intense sentiments towards the brand.

Dubois et al. (2001) identify six distinct attributes that constitute exceptional quality, high price, exclusivity, design, personal history, and superfluity. Keller (2009) outlines eleven distinct attributes that delineate the notion of luxury. These factors include maintaining a reputable image, establishing intangible associations with the brand, upholding high quality standards, utilizing logos, symbols, and packaging to enhance brand worth, affiliating with personalities, events, countries, and other entities, managing distribution channels, implementing a premium pricing strategy, effectively organizing brand hierarchy, recognizing a diverse range of competitors, and securing legal protection for the brand.

According to Feather et al. (2013), individuals who have an attachment to luxury brands are inclined to exhibit attitudes of respect and love towards competitors within the same brand category. In the realm of the fashion business, individuals who exhibit a strong affinity for specific labels, such as Prada, may experience a change in their sentiments towards direct rivals like Gucci after the introduction of their opulent handbag collections. Furthermore, this feeling of admiration arises from the conduct of a rival company that establishes a superior level of quality. Consequently, clients who are loyal to a particular brand anticipate that the company will react by launching its own collection of handbags (Shimu et al., 2021).

Lovemarks Theory and Brand Attachment

Kevin Roberts, the chief executive officer of Saatchi and Saatchi, proposed the theory of "Lovemarks" to emphasize the importance of emotions in comprehending the emotional bond between luxury brands and their clientele. The notion of Lovemarks is based on the theory that the psychological attachment of consumers to brands, driven by love and respect, plays a crucial role. Lovemarks are characterized as the combined connections that cultivate emotional bonding with specific businesses. Consumers are currently motivated by lovemarks rather than brand loyalty, as per his rationale. Lovemarks denote the profound emotional

Fournier (1998) addresses the inquiry into whether consumers are capable of experiencing affection towards a brand; she affirms the existence of such an emotion and the potential for consumers to develop strong connections with corporations (Ahmed et al., 2012).

Brand Respect

In order to be considered lovemarks, brands must initially gain the respect of their intended consumers, as well as the love of their customers. Roberts (2004) asserts that a long-term partnership cannot exist without respect. Due to the absence of a clear axial framework, our notions of love were prone to drifting away into abstract emotions without any practical direction. Respect, as identified by numerous sociologists and psychologists, is the fundamental element that drives successful company operations and fosters a robust connection between consumers and a brand. It is also a vital component that forms the basis of lovemarks (Roberts, 2005).

Brand respect is the favorable perception that customers hold towards a specific brand or product based on their evaluation of the brand's performance. Pawle & Cooper (2006) determined that respect is mostly influenced by one's performance, reputation, and trust. These components are intricately interconnected, as the brand earns respect through effective performance, which in turn cultivates trust and contributes to the ongoing growth of its reputation (Pawle & Cooper, 2006; Cho et al., 2015; Jahanvi & Sharma, 2021).

According to Robert (2005), respect alone is insufficient in today's corporate environment because of the heightened degree of competitiveness. Meeting this condition alone is inadequate to qualify for participation in the tournament. Respect is based on the reliability of the service or product. Therefore, it is necessary for the qualities of the service or product to maintain a high standard, as well as trust and reputation. These components must be consistently maintained at the same level, even after each purchase (Montoya-Restrepo et al., 2020; Jahanvi & Sharma, 2021).

In their 2010 study, Esmailzadeh et al. examined the notion of brand love and its fundamental attributes, taking inspiration from Kevin Roberts' concept of "Lovemarks". The research on brand loyalty included characteristics like mystery, sensuality, intimacy, and respect. Research suggests that respect, when combined with these elements, greatly enhances brand attachment. The study also illustrates the emotional attachment that customers have toward the opinions of others, emphasizing the substantial impact of word-of-mouth on brand connections.

Bernal's (2014) study seeks to analyze the factors that contribute to the formation of a strong emotional connection between consumers and luxury brands. The rationale for this inquiry arises from the finding that consumers who buy luxury goods exhibit exceptional levels of loyalty. This thesis investigates the concept of "lovemarks" and seeks to improve understanding of the relationship between customers and brands by analyzing the emotional bond and affection that people develop towards particular brands. This thesis examines the factors that

influence the formation of customer loyalty and emotional connection to premium companies after implementing Lovemarks drivers.

Song et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the connections between mystery, sensuality, intimacy, trust, reputation, and performance within the framework of lovemarks. The study also analyzed Lovemarks, which encompass both brand love and brand respect, as well as emotional bonding, within the setting of a well-known coffee shop. The study demonstrated a favorable correlation between emotional attachment to a brand and both brand love and brand respect. The emotional connection to a brand was also influenced by lovemark attributes such as sensuality, intimacy, and trust. This suggests that the concept of lovemarks is beneficial for understanding the process of forming a strong dedication to it. Furthermore, the study revealed that brand affection can be mostly attributed to the existence of enigma, allure, and closeness.

Following the previous research, the subsequent hypothesis was formulated:

H1: Lovemarks (Love and Respect) has a significant influence on Luxury Brands Emotional Attachment.

H1a : Love as a part of Lovemarks has a significant influence on Luxury Brands Emotional Attachment.

H1b: Respect as a part of Lovemarks has a significant influence on Luxury Brands Emotional Attachment.

3.1 Proposed Development

Studies and scholarly experience suggest that lovemarks have a significant role in fostering customer loyalty and emotional connection to brands. A conceptual model was created to examine the influence of lovemarks on emotional attachment between luxury clientele and luxury brands.

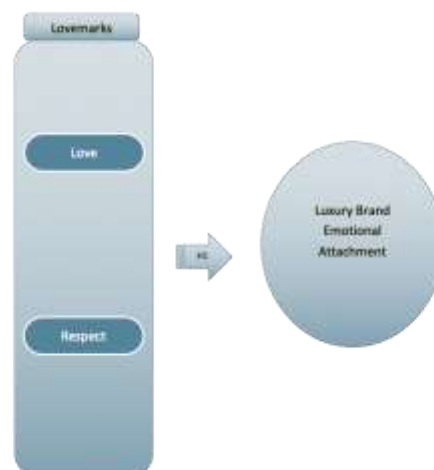


Figure 2, Source: Prepared by the researcher

4.1 Methodology

The adoption of the Positivism research philosophy in this study is driven by the conviction that social processes can be understood through an objective perspective. Moreover, it is imperative to meticulously examine the mechanisms and structures that impact the correlation between Lovemarks and emotional attachment within the realm of luxury brands. The process of interpreting observations involves the examination and analysis of empirical or quantitative data. This study paradigm employs deductive reasoning, hypothesis formulation, empirical experimentation, definition establishment, equation use, computation, extrapolation, and articulation discovery. Positivism is a very effective method for investigating and studying the chosen subject of study.

The study aims to employ the research philosophy of Positivism and the deductive methodology, utilizing highly structured processes, large sample numbers, and exact measuring techniques. The analysis will mostly employ quantitative approaches, while considering various types of data. The objective is to uncover significant insights regarding the influence of Lovemarks on emotional attachment within the luxury industry. This approach enhances the theoretical precision and practical relevance of my work, facilitating the incorporation of valuable perspectives into the subject matter.

A cross-sectional study is a research design that aims to capture a static representation of a population at a certain point in time. It is a methodical way to acquiring knowledge. The study employs a research strategy that gives priority to the utilization of descriptive and cross-sectional methodologies. The primary objective of this phase is to assist decision-makers in evaluating and choosing the most efficient strategies to address specific difficulties, as highlighted by Malhotra et al. (2013). The study involves conducting an online survey specifically aimed at a sample of 440 individuals who are consumers of luxury products. This study employs a quantitative methodology to examine customer perceptions, providing unique insights into the complex dynamics of Lovemarks in the high-end fashion sector.

To assess the study hypotheses, a five-point scale was utilized. The scale used in this study ranged from "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree" (5). It was employed to evaluate the items related to the definitions and measures of the research.

The scale was selected based on its efficacy in measuring different levels of agreement or disagreement, which aligns with the goals of the study. The survey items were meticulously crafted by consulting proven measures from prior research, guaranteeing their reliability and validity. In order to customize the scale for the particular setting of the Egyptian luxury market, the goods were modified to accurately represent cultural and contextual subtleties.

The survey underwent a meticulous pre-testing process, during which it was thoroughly examined by subject matter specialists and tested with a small, representative sample. The feedback received from this procedure was used to

make required adjustments in order to improve the clarity and relevancy. In addition, statistical validation approaches, such as the application of Cronbach's alpha, were used to verify the internal consistency and reliability of the scale. These endeavors guaranteed that the survey was conducted using a rigorous and appropriate methodology that aligned with the study's specific context and goals.

Following the validation of the model through qualitative analysis in this study, the model is further evaluated by administering a questionnaire to consumers who purchase luxury brands. The data was gathered from a wide range of individuals of different genders and ages, specifically eliminating those who are not customers of premium brands.

The study employed the non-probability judgmental sampling technique to carefully choose particular respondents. Non-probability sampling method, also known as judgemental, selective, subjective, directed, or authoritative sampling (Reddy, L. S., & Ramasamy, D. K. (2016). The purposeful use of non-probability judgmental sampling was employed in this study to ensure the careful selection of respondents who accurately represent the luxury brand consumer segment in Egypt.

According to (Wright, E. O. (1979), social class is best described in terms of income. Individuals with low income are considered part of the lower class, while those with middle income are classified as middle class, and those with high income are categorized as upper class. However, sociologists often consider additional factors when analyzing social class, such as social status, lifestyle, and the ability of dominant class members to consume without producing.

The use of non-probability judgmental sampling was chosen for this research due to the limitations in the available data, which primarily focuses on money as the sole criterion for identifying luxury brand buyers. Nevertheless, within the framework of Egyptian culture, social hierarchy and consumer conduct are shaped by a wider array of elements, such as financial status, professional involvement, educational achievement, and overall quality of life. Due to the lack of a comprehensive demographic framework that includes all these variables, judgmental sampling was selected to enable a more detailed selection based on socioeconomic and lifestyle factors. This ensures that the sample accurately represents the diversity and complexity of luxury brand consumers in Egypt.

Although this approach has some limits, it is considered suitable for achieving the study's aims within the specific setting in which it is being conducted. It enables a more focused examination of the behaviors and attitudes of a certain subset of the population that would be challenging to capture using random sampling techniques. The profile of the respondent is displayed in Table 1:

	Frequency	Percent	Total
Gender			
Male	180	40.9%	440
Female	260	59.1%	
Age			
Under 20	9	2.0%	440
20 - Under 25	58	13.2%	
25 - Under 30	66	15.0%	
30 - Under 40	162	36.8%	
40 - Under 50	82	18.6%	
Over 50	63	16.4%	
Educational Background			
High School or Equivalent	57	13.0%	440
Bachelor’s Degree	208	47.3%	
Postgraduate studies	131	29.8%	
Others	44	10.0%	
Employment Status			
Student	28	6.4%	440
Unemployed	24	5.5%	
Self-Employed	149	33.9%	
Employed Part-time	54	12.3%	
Employed Full-time	153	34.8%	
Retired	32	7.3%	
Monthly Income			
Less Than 20,000 EGP	45	10.2%	440
20,000 EGP Less than 50,000 EGP	95	21.6%	
50,000 EGP Less than 100,000 EGP	79	18.0%	
More Than 100,000 EGP	221	50.2%	

Prepared by the authors using SPSS version 26

5.1 Results and Discussion

The objective of this section is to conduct an analysis of the replies gathered from the questionnaire. This analysis encompasses a comprehensive evaluation of data validation methodologies, along with a thorough examination of the variables under study and the rigorous testing of the research hypotheses. The analysis was conducted utilizing SPSS version 26 and AMOS version 25. The aforementioned software tools are utilized to examine the data gathered from the questionnaire that has been specifically tailored for the present study topic.

Reliability testing involves evaluating the consistency of responses to a series of statements that form a particular concept. The Cronbach alpha coefficient is computed to evaluate reliability, on a scale ranging from 0 to 1. A Cronbach alpha score of 0.7 or higher signifies that the reliability of a specific construct is deemed satisfactory (Ali & Enaba, 2023).

Table 2: Reliability and Validity Table

Variables	KMO	AVE %	Cronbach's α	Factor Loading
Brand Love	.926	91.502	.977	.917
				.903
				.922
				.923
				.910
Brand Respect	.916	91.054	.975	.920
				.917
				.909
				.899
				.908
Luxury Brands Emotional Attachment	.978	94.242	.996	.907
				.908
				.973
				.984
				.950
				.954
				.921
				.952
				.894
				.966
				.973
				.910
				.919
				.983
				.982
.902				
.941				

Table 2 provides factual information that allows for a concise scientific evaluation of the dependability and accuracy of various concepts.

The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure consistently above the threshold of 0.5 for all constructs, suggesting that the sample numbers were sufficient for conducting factor analysis. Factor analysis is an essential process for evaluating the construct validity.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructions were found to be significantly higher than the 50% guideline. The percentages mentioned above demonstrate a significant level of variation accounted for by the constructs, thereby providing further validation of their legitimacy.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each construct were found to exceed the minimum requirement of 0.7. The aforementioned high scores serve as proof of the robust internal consistency and trustworthiness of the structures.

H1b: Respect as a part of Lovemarks has a significant influence on Luxury Brands Emotional Attachment.

The second objective aimed to assess the role of brand respect in fostering emotional attachment to luxury brands. The findings confirm that brand respect indeed plays a significant role, albeit less impactful than brand love. The estimate for brand respect's effect on emotional attachment is .320, with a p-value of .000, highlighting its statistical significance. However, the standardized estimate of .302 indicates that while brand respect contributes positively, its influence is moderate compared to that of brand love. This outcome underscores the importance of brand respect in the overall brand relationship framework, suggesting that while respect for a brand's performance and reliability is vital, it is the emotional connection (brand love) that holds greater sway over consumer attachment.

The third objective sought to compare the relative impact of brand love and brand respect on emotional attachment to luxury brands. The analysis reveals a clear distinction between the two factors: brand love emerges as the more influential component, with a stronger effect on emotional attachment than brand respect. While both elements are significant, the standardized estimates (.617 for brand love and .302 for brand respect) indicate that brand love is the dominant driver of emotional attachment. This comparison not only highlights the relative strengths of these components but also provides actionable insights for luxury brand managers. To maximize emotional attachment and consumer loyalty, brand strategies should prioritize fostering deep emotional bonds (brand love) while maintaining a solid foundation of respect through consistent quality and trustworthiness.

Analyzing research findings in context with previous studies offers a comprehensive understanding of the psychological attachment that exists between customers and luxury brands. In 2005, Roberts proposed the concept of "Lovemarks," which posits the existence of a realm beyond mere brand loyalty, where love and respect merge to create powerful emotional bonds. This paper presents empirical evidence that substantiates and broadens Roberts' original hypothesis.

The study provides evidence for the Lovemarks theory proposed by Roberts (2005), which emphasizes that brand attachment is not exclusively rooted in conventional brand loyalty, but rather in a deep emotional bond characterized by love and admiration. This concept beyond rationality and enters the realm of emotions, where brands evolve into 'Lovemarks', establishing relationships that cannot be solely linked to brand performance or awareness.

Dos Santos et al. (2018) propose that a rise in affection and emotional attachment to a brand is directly correlated with an elevation in admiration for the brand. This implies the existence of a symbiotic link between these two elements. Establishing a long-lasting bond with its customers is essential for luxury firms, as they rely largely on cultivating these relationships.

Song et al. (2019) argue that brand love has a stronger influence on brand loyalty than brand respect, offering useful insights. Companies seeking to establish enduring loyalty must prioritize this crucial component. It is imperative for firms to design strategies that evoke emotional responses, leading to a profound fondness rather than just appreciation.

Han et al. (2020) have discovered a lack of information in the current literature regarding the use of the Lovemarks concept in the full-service airline industry. Their research emphasizes the need of taking into account the emotional dimensions of brand affection and admiration when making post-purchase decisions. This concept is applicable to all industries.

These studies collectively demonstrate a consensus that both brand love and respect are essential elements in cultivating attachment and loyalty. Nevertheless, the emotional connection, namely brand love, holds the most sway. To secure an enduring presence in the minds of consumers, luxury enterprises must tactfully balance the dual objectives of enhancing both love and respect.

In summary, the SEM analysis demonstrates that Brand Love and Brand Respect are significant predictors of Emotional Attachment to Luxury Brands, with Brand Love being the key determinant.

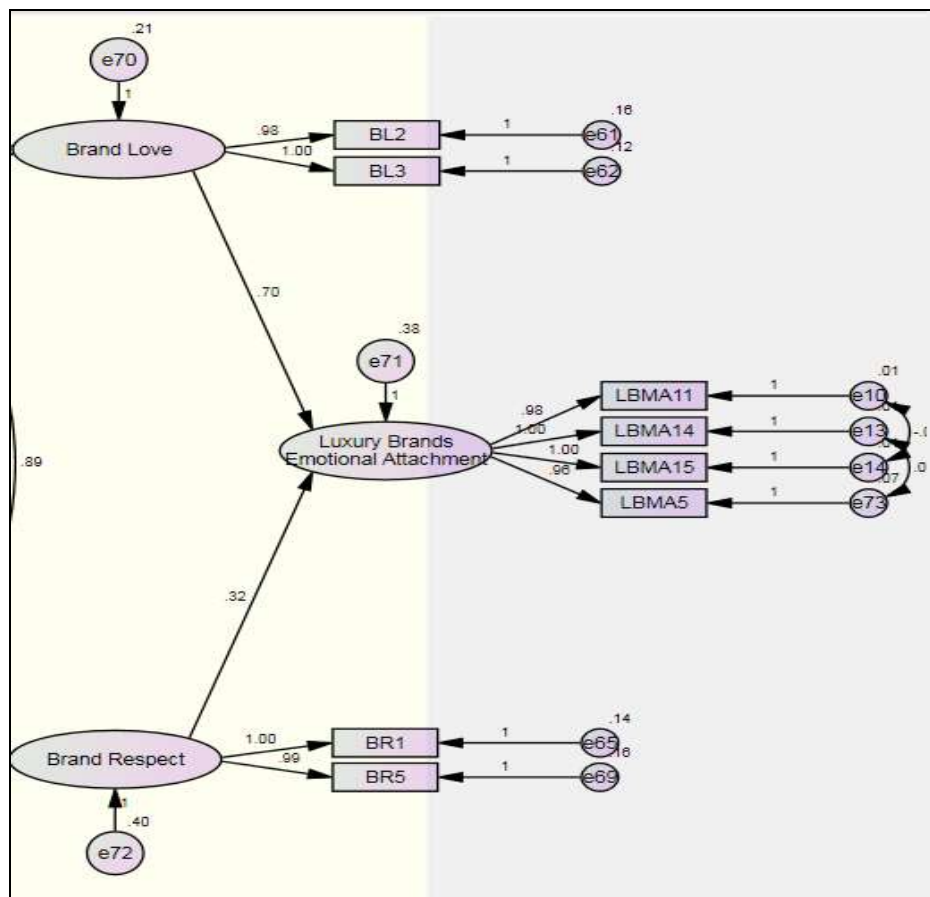


Figure 3: SEM for the Research Variables

According to the results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis The R-squared score of "Brand Love" indicates that 80% of the variability can be explained by the independent variables in the model. Furthermore, the R-squared coefficient of determination for "Brand Respect" accounts for 66.6% of the variability that can be attributed to the independent variables in the model.

First Hypothesis (H1) : Lovemarks (Love and Respec) has a significant influence on Luxury Brands Emotional.

H1a : Love as a part of Lovemarks has a significant influence on Luxury Brands Emotional.

H1b: Respect as a part of Lovemarks has a significant influence on Luxury Brands Emotional.

The Lovemarks theory posits that both brand love and brand respect exert a positive influence on emotional attachment towards luxury brands. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) research demonstrates that brand love exerts a substantial and robust positive influence on emotional attachment to luxury brands, as indicated by a standardized estimate of 0.617. However, brand esteem also has a notable and favorable impact on emotional attachment to luxury brands, though it is somewhat less strong, with a standardized estimate of 0.302. Additionally, the evidence indicates a robust association between Brand Love and Emotional Attachment to Luxury Brands, with Brand Respect ranking second. Therefore, increasing a consumer's level of Brand Love is anticipated to have the greatest impact on strengthening Emotional Attachment to Luxury Brands. As a result, consumers are more likely to form an emotional connection with a brand rather than a logical one, and research suggests that having a strong emotional attachment to a brand has a greater influence than simply admiring the brand.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study enhances the theoretical comprehension of emotional connection to high-end brands by incorporating the notion of Lovemarks, which encompasses both affection and admiration towards a brand. The study expands the scope of Lovemarks theory beyond Western contexts by utilizing this framework in the Egyptian luxury clothes sector. Additionally, it distinguishes between the varying impact of brand love and brand respect, offering detailed insights into their respective functions in promoting emotional connection.

Practitioners can use the findings to gain practical insights on how to improve consumer loyalty and emotional connection to luxury companies. Marketing tactics should prioritize highlighting both the practical features of luxury businesses and cultivating emotional bonds through brand adoration and admiration. To achieve long-term success in the Egyptian market, luxury brand managers should have a thorough awareness of the cultural subtleties unique to this market. By doing so, they can customize their marketing strategies to effectively connect with their target audience, leading to increased brand loyalty and prolonged market success.

Limitations

This study offers useful insights into the influence of Lovemarks, namely brand love and brand respect, on emotional attachment to luxury brands in Egypt. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations in order to properly interpret the findings. The utilization of a non-probability judgmental sampling technique, while essential because of the absence of a thorough demographic framework and the emphasis on luxury brand customers, introduces possible biases. This approach is dependent on the researcher's subjective assessment in choosing participants, which may lead to a sample that does not accurately represent the larger population. Therefore, the extent to which the results can be applied to other situations or populations may be restricted. Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional methodology, which only collects data at one specific moment, limits the capacity to make conclusions about cause and effect linkages. This method fails to consider the dynamic nature of consumer behavior, which can be shaped by exogenous variables like economic fluctuations or emerging cultural patterns. A longitudinal study design could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the progression of brand love, respect, and emotional attachment over a period of time.

Additionally, the narrow geographic scope of Egypt in this study may restrict the generalizability of the results to other cultural settings. The cultural and sociological elements influencing consumer behavior in Egypt may not be directly comparable to those in other locations, hence restricting the extent to which the results may be applied universally. In addition, the study's focus on the luxury apparel sector, although it offers valuable insights into this specific market, fails to consider potential variations in emotional attachment dynamics in other luxury industries, such as automobiles or jewelry. Each luxury industry possesses distinct characteristics that impact brand adoration and admiration in varying ways. Hence, it is imperative for future studies to utilize more inclusive sample techniques, incorporate longitudinal designs, and investigate diverse cultural settings and luxury industries in order to enhance our holistic comprehension of the impact of Lovemarks on consumer-brand connections.

Future Research

To address these limitations, additional research could explore specific facets of the Lovemarks idea in different cultural situations. While the current study provides valuable insights into the application of Lovemarks in Egypt, future studies should aim to explore how different cultural dimensions, such as collectivism versus individualism or high versus low power distance, influence the formation of brand love and respect. Researchers could investigate how these cultural factors affect consumers' emotional attachment to brands in different regions, providing a comparative analysis between Western and non-Western markets. Additionally, future studies could examine the role of other emotional factors, such as nostalgia or pride, within the Lovemarks framework to see how they interact with brand love and respect across diverse cultural settings. By

focusing on these specific areas, future research can contribute to a more nuanced and globally applicable understanding of the Lovemarks theory.

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