

Celebrity Human Brand Authenticity A Predictor in Brand Love

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ABSTRACT

Due to the global economic crisis and its continuation and the distrust caused by this crisis, brand authenticity has become doubly important. This distrust of organizations has been strongly caused by the mismatch between the stated goals of the organization and the values, actions, and achievements. In the past decades, researchers have tried to discover the relationship between the commercial and strategic successes of the market and the brand. Brand authenticity is one of the factors that can make a significant contribution to these successes. The purpose of this study is the authenticity of the human brand of celebrities, a predictor of brand love, the statistics of people following home appliance brands that are used through social networks and famous bloggers. The results showed that brands are also dependent on their authenticity, and customers often perceive advertising to promote a brand as cunning, exaggerated, misleading, and blatantly deceptive. But authentic brands define values that direct the brand's behaviors and reactions in the market and have a great impact on the customer's view of the brand, which will result in increasing customer trust and leading firms and companies to business success

Introduction

Nowadays, investing in consumer-brand relationships has become a fundamental issue for many companies that seek to survive and earn continuous profits through the customer (Sarkar & Sreejesh, 2014), because a strong and appropriate relationship between the consumer and the brand brings benefits to the brand owner's participation (Anggraenia & Rachmanita, 2015). Also, despite the competitive environment prevailing in the business, paying attention to the consumer-brand relationship is not an issue. It has become vital for companies. In today's markets, with the increasing competition and decreasing the differentiation of products, determining consumer behavior and the relationship between the consumer and the consumer with the brand has become strategically important. Due to the growing need for transparent, honest, and genuine business, it has become a new and meaningful value in the field of industry and other political and social spheres (Perez et.al, 2020). It is a positive characteristic that refers to honesty, credibility, honor, and trustworthiness (Alhouti et.al, 2016). The increase in marketing competition between brands has recently increased consumer demand for brand authenticity (Powell et.al, 2013) and has become a prerequisite for successful businesses (de Kerviler et.al, 2022; Sit et.al, 2021). Therefore, brands use brand authenticity to reduce consumer distrust of marketing strategies and strengthen brand credibility and image (Leigh et.al, 2006; Eggers et.al, 2013). Brand authenticity is important for attracting target consumers (Safeer et.al, 2021). According to the study of Kovacs et al. (2013), consumers prefer products and services that are authentic and authentic. In a study conducted by Kraak and Holmqvist (2017), brand authenticity plays a vital role in evaluating the credibility of service providers in the service industry. Wong et al. (2018) have confirmed that brand authenticity influences consumer satisfaction, perceived quality, and service value. Therefore, it is important to promote the authenticity of service providers because it is the key to determining the perceived quality of service (Price et.al, 1995). Although research on brand authenticity is very important in the industry, there are very few such researches. Most studies on brand authenticity are from the perspective of philosophy and cultural anthropology. This has been addressed (Wang, 2011). But marketing studies and consumer studies are still scarce.

Brand originality consists of several dimensions. A particular dimension is more prominent depending on the situation (Beverland, 2005; Su et.al, 2014). This multidimensionality makes it difficult to conduct comprehensive research. Research on brand authenticity in the service industry focuses on several sub-dimensions such as brand authenticity from the consumer's perspective (Alexander, 2009; Leigh et.al, 2006; Beverland, 2005). It is also limited to certain industries (such as restaurants, repair services, and festivals). Considering these limitations, this study divides consumers' perception of brand authenticity into brand authenticity in the dimension of products and companies in the home appliances industry and fully examines the multiple dimensions of brand authenticity according to consumers' perception and provides a comprehensive interpretation. The research questions of this study are as follows:

- 1) Does the way consumers perceive a brand differ based on the purpose through which authenticity is communicated?
- 2) Does the authenticity of a brand increase brand loyalty through the moderating effect of brand value?
- 3) Does the originality of the service provider show a moderating effect on the formation of the consumer's perception of the brand?

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between customer-oriented brand value (CBBE), authenticity, and loyalty with a focus on home appliance brands to determine the research objectives. To achieve the research objectives, data were collected through a questionnaire related to consumers who used a particular brand and finally 1733 responses were obtained. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Method to Test the Hypotheses Obtained from a Comprehensive Model Based on a Comprehensive Model Previous research was used. This study also used multi-group analysis (MGA) to investigate how service provider authenticity affects the relationship between brand authenticity and CBBE. This study seeks to develop the understanding of studies conducted in the field of brand authenticity and CBBE and provide valuable insights for

brand management strategies.

Brand Authenticity

Consumers' perception of a brand's goodwill and authenticity towards itself and its consumers can be defined as brand authenticity, which ultimately helps consumers to be honest with themselves (Morhart et.al, 2015). And it is very important because of consumers' demand for authenticity, or value, that is usually associated with popular brands (Price et.la, 2000). Potter (2010) explains that consumers consider brand authenticity to be more important than its quality, and such behavior is very significant in today's trending markets. Most studies of brand authenticity have primarily dealt with its psychological dimensions and specifically its relationship to individual identity (Robinson et.al, 2005). Brand authenticity in the marketing context is dependent on consumption (e.g., advertising, luxury items, attracting tourists) (Beverland, 2005; Sodergren, 2021; Zebal and Jackson, 2019).

Previous research on brand authenticity has usually sought to find its sub-dimensions. Four sub-dimensions of brand authenticity have been identified by Bruhn et al. (2012): (i) reliability; (ii) continuity; (iii) originality; and (iv) naturalness. Napoli et al. (2014) cited things such as (i) heritage, (ii) commitment to quality, and (iii) purity. In addition, Morhart et al. (2015) also referred to (i) symbolism; (ii) continuity; (iii) credibility; and (iv)) have pointed out integrity. Thus, these dimensions have been able to increase consumer awareness of the brand and influence the brand value (Lu et.al, 2015a). Therefore, brand authenticity is becoming more and more important in the field of brand management (Hernandez-Fernandez and Lewis, 2019).

Customer-Oriented Brand Value

Due to the effect of CBBE on various dimensions such as business efficiency (Kim et.la, 2003), brand development (Kim and Brandon, 2010), consumer brand choice (Cobb-Walgren et.al, 1995), brand commitment (Augusto and Torres, 2018), and consumer brand attitude (Keller, 1993), interest in CBBE research among researchers has increased sharply. CBBE is the value that a brand provides to its consumers, beyond the physical or functional advantages of services or products (Keller, 1993). CBBE arises through a series of interactions between a brand and its consumers over time, leading to a set of experiences, feelings, and beliefs about that brand (Keller 2008). Xi and Hamari (2020) have noted that CBBE means a brand associated with the brand symbol and name. CBBE, as defined by Keller (1993), refers to the distinctive effect of brand value from the consumer's point of view on their response to a brand's marketing activities and plans. Brand value is also formed through the combination of intellectual and emotional awareness of the brand, and is a powerful marketing tool and intangible asset that influences consumer behavior (Agmeka et.al, 2019). In a study conducted by Verdenburg et al. (2020), brand value is the result of various marketing activities that create a positive perception in consumers. In this study, perceived quality, brand association, and brand awareness are used as common dimensions of CBBE. The CBBE dimensions mentioned above provide a competitive advantage for businesses (Huang and Cai, 2015).

Brand association

Brand association increases the uniqueness of a brand and causes a reliable correlation between brand association and brand value (Aaker, 1996). The main elements of brand value, which focus on the unique image dimensions of a brand, basically contain brand association and differentiation (Shahrokhi, 1998). Brand association elements are highly correlated with brand performance (Atilgan et.al, 2005). This role of brand association is used as a data collection tool to measure brand development (Severi and Ling, 2013). Consumers are familiar with the definition of brand association that is ingrained in their thoughts. Increasing consumer brand awareness directly increases attention to a particular brand (Hosseini et.al, 2012). Brand association can pave the way for consumer purchase and simultaneously promote the value of the company. Also, brand association affects a wide range of beneficial outcomes specific to a brand (Dada, 2021).

Perceived Quality

Quality significantly affects a firm's productivity because consumers rely on quality to evaluate products or services (Ophuis and Van Trijp, 1995). Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived quality as the consumer's assessment of the overall preference of the product compared to the evaluation of others in the market. Aaker (1996) has noted that a key component of brand value is perceived quality, which is important in studies evaluating brand value. Several research studies have claimed that perceived quality is an important building block within the CBBE framework (Altaf et.al, 2017; Buzdar et.al, 2016). Previous research has claimed that perceived quality plays a vital role in shaping consumer decisions (Poppu et.al, 2005). For example, Siali et al. (2016) have shown that when a consumer decides to buy an internationally branded shoe, perceived quality significantly influences the consumer's purchase decision. Lee et al. (2010) also stated that consumers are more likely to buy a branded product at a higher price when they believe that the brand is of higher quality. Brand development is like registering a distinct brand position and allows for potential brand development.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a cornerstone and an essential element of brand value (Surucu et.al, 2019; Tong and Hawley, 2009). Brand awareness refers to the consumer's ability to remember and recognize a brand in a variety of contexts, linking this ability to the name, logo, and brand-related elements (Altaf et.al, 2017). Brand awareness helps to align consumer expectations with the company's brand, create more familiarity among consumers, and demonstrate brand commitment (Supiyandi et.al, 2022). Seetharaman et al. (2001) show that increased brand awareness and consumer acceptance increases the demand for a particular brand.

Theoretical Framework on Brand Authenticity and Customer-Oriented Brand Equity

This study investigated the accuracy of the factors that affect the consumer's perception of authenticity in three dimensions: product authenticity, company authenticity, and service provider authenticity. The goal of product authenticity, company originality, and service provider authenticity is to shape consumer perceptions of authenticity, and although they all have a common goal, their approach to achieving it is different. Firstly, the authenticity of the product depends on the tradition, craftsmanship, priority, style, and history of the product. Therefore, the authenticity of a product originates from the tangible and intangible characteristics of a company's product. Secondly, company authenticity is defined as the company's effort to increase consumer satisfaction, which is formed through interaction and communication with consumers. As a result, the perception of the authenticity of the company changes depending on the quality of the company's communication. Finally, the authenticity of the service provider is related to the ability of the company's employees to communicate and interact face-to-face with consumers as it is transmitted through the statements and attitudes of the service providers. Since service providers are the top introducers of their company, understanding the product or service depends on their ability. In this context, the objectives of this study are to investigate the difference in the extent of their participation in the formation of brand value in terms of each value based on the separation made according to the goal of conveying authenticity.

Product authenticity is measured in various dimensions such as style, value, position, and method of production (Beverland and Farrelly, 2010; Belk and Costa, 1998; Peterson, 2005; Beverland 2005, 2006; Wang, 1999). Also, tradition, craftsmanship, priority, style, and history related to the product affect the authenticity of the consumer's product. In particular, tradition refers to a style, method of production, and a story that relates to a particular time, place, or person (Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Siggle, et.al, 2012). Product authenticity reinforces a consumer-friendly attitude towards a brand (Carsana, Jolibert, 2018; Lundqvist et.al, 2013). Therefore, it affects their purchase decision. The greater the authenticity of a product, the greater the emotional attachment to the brand (Dion

and Borraz, 2015). The brand and product are introduced through word-of-mouth advertising (Morhart et.al, 2015). Product authenticity also has a positive effect on brand attitude and image (Chiu et.al, 2012; Pace, 2015). According to the study of Napoli et al. (2014), increasing authenticity leads to higher brand priority and purchase intention and increases the expected credibility and quality (Moulard et.al, 2016). Therefore, product authenticity promotes brand value and credibility (Erdem and Swait, 2004).

Several research studies have claimed that product authenticity has a favorable effect on brand value (Heinberg et.al, 2020; Tran et.al, 2020). For example, Tran and Nguyen (2022) have demonstrated the direct effect of authenticity on brand value. Brand authenticity towards the product also has a positive effect on some variables that make up brand value (Bruhn et.al, 2012). For example, Chen et al. (2021) have described that authenticity has a favorable effect on brand awareness and perceived quality, which are integral dimensions of brand value. Also Lu et al. (2015a)) showed that authenticity significantly improves brand awareness, brand association, and perceived quality. Phung and his colleagues (2019) claimed that authenticity influences product choice through the elements that make up brand value.

Research Methodology

In this section, the research method, statistical population, sample and sampling method, research tools (how to assess the validity and reliability of the tools) and data analysis methods are discussed (non-research articles are excluded from this framework).

H1-In the home appliances industry, there is a significant and positive relationship between brand authenticity towards the product and brand association.

H2-In the home appliance industry, there is a significant and positive relationship between brand authenticity towards the product and perceived quality.

H3-In the home appliance industry, there is a significant and positive relationship between brand authenticity towards the product and brand awareness.

H4-In the home appliances industry, there is a positive and significant relationship between brand authenticity towards the company and brand association.

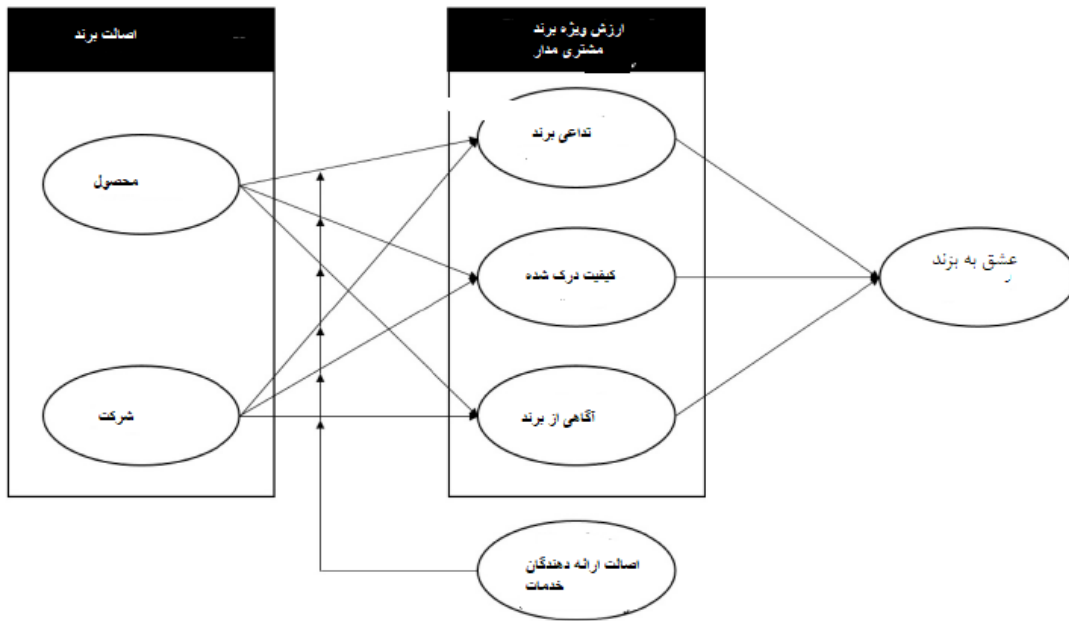
H5-In the home appliance industry, there is a positive and significant relationship between brand authenticity towards the company and perceived quality.

H6-In the home appliance industry, there is a positive and significant relationship between brand authenticity towards the company and brand awareness.

H7-In the home appliance industry, brand association has a positive impact on brand love.

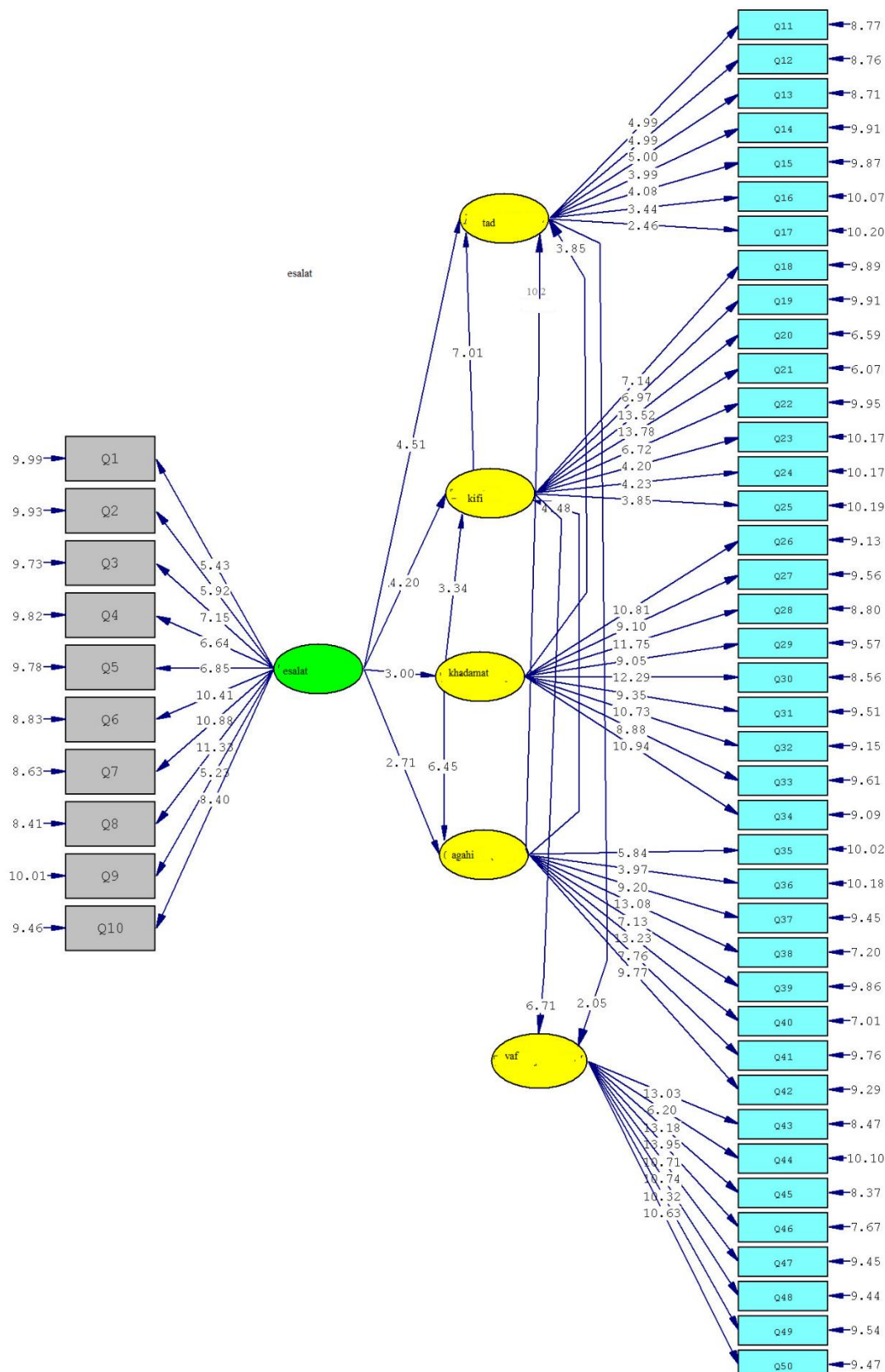
H8-In the home appliance industry, perceived product quality has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

H9-In the home appliance industry, brand awareness has a positive effect on brand love.



Results

After evaluating the validity and reliability of the questionnaire used to measure the proposed hypotheses, the study data were fitted with a structural model, in the descriptive demographic part of the study, variables such as (gender, age, field of study) were investigated using frequency and frequency graph tables. The results of the frequency of the respondents' age range showed that 43% of the respondents were in the age range of 30-40 years, 35% of the respondents in the age range of 40-50 years, and 22% of the respondents were over 50 years old. The results of the frequency of educational degrees of the respondents showed that most of the respondents had a master's degree (43%).



Test Result	Significance	The value of the statistic t	Path Coefficient (Standard Estimation)	The path studied in the model
Confirm	**0.0001	9.27	0.126	Brand authenticity <--- brand association
Confirm	**0.0001	14.25	0.542	Brand Authenticity <--- Perceived Quality
Confirm	**0.0001	2.27	0.132	Brand Authenticity <--- Brand Awareness
Confirm	**0.0001	10.354	0.288	Brand authenticity <--- brand association
Confirm	**0.0001	3.214	0.141	Brand Authenticity <--- Perceived Quality
Confirm	**0.0001	12.12	0.321	Company Brand Authenticity <--- Brand Awareness
Confirm	**0.0001	11.84	0.290	Brand association <--- brand love
Confirm	**0.0001	10.512	0.285	Perceived Quality <--- Brand Love
Confirm	**0.0001	9.141	0.260	Brand Awareness <--- Brand Love

The MGA method with the help of AMOS software investigated how service provider authenticity modifies the relationship between brand authenticity in the product and company dimensions, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand association. To investigate the variance in authenticity between service providers, multigroup confirmatory factor analysis was performed. This analysis was proposed by Davidov (2008)., involves assessing the inefficiencies of measurement to prove that the same construct is measured in each group. This analysis includes an evaluation of measurement inefficiency to prove that in each group, the same construct is measured, which allows comparison of the mean and path coefficients of factor weights (Chen, 2011). To record the measurement inefficiency, three conditions (metric inefficiency, scalar inefficiency, structural covariances) were tested (Davidov, 2008).

Metric invariance has bound the factor weights to be equal in the whole group, while the scalar invariance has bound both the factor weights and the width of the origins to be equal to each other. Structural covariances, weights, width of origins, variances, and covariances have been constrained to be equal in all groups. Following the criteria introduced by Chen (2007) And Cosma (2010), the difference in the goodness of fit index was used to measure the inefficiencies of the measurement.

When the value $\Delta RMSEA$ Below 0.1 and values ΔCFI And ΔTLI Below 0.02 was obtained, a good fit was obtained, indicating the inconsistency of the measurement (see Table 5).

After proving the inadequacy of the measurement, the respondents to the service provider authenticity questions were categorized into two groups, the middle low and the middle high (Yi and Jeon, 2003). The median value for the authenticity of the service providers was obtained equal to 5. Also, the low group consisted of 300 people with a median value of below 5 for the authenticity of the service provider and the upper group with a median value of 5 Or higher, it included 384 people.

Table 5- Inefficiency of measurement based on the originality of the service provider

مدل	N	χ^2	DF	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
CFA تک گروهی						
میانۀ پایین	790	133.250	88	0.993	0.990	0.026
میانۀ بالا	943	146.893	88	0.992	0.989	0.027
CFA چند گروهی						
خط مبنا	1733	280.144	176	0.992	0.990	0.018
(مقیّد نشده)						
ناوردایی متریک	1733	295.389	186	0.992	0.990	0.018
ناوردایی اسکالر	1733	354.496	224	0.991	0.990	0.018
کواریانسهای ساختاری	1733	312.092	207	0.992	0.991	0.017

The decision to accept or reject the hypotheses affected by the moderating variables depends on the chi-square values of the constrained model and the unconstrained model. An efficient moderating effect is obtained through a difference greater than 3.84 in the chi-square values (Hair et.al, 2013). The results of the moderating study are shown in Table 6. The results of the data analysis have shown that the following relationships are moderated by the originality of the service provider: (i) Brand originality in product alignment and brand awareness, (ii) Brand originality in company alignment and brand association. Therefore, H10c and H11a are confirmed.

Discussion and conclusion

Firstly, in the home appliances industry, the findings of the study on the effects of product authenticity on brand association, perceived quality, and brand awareness have prominent management concepts. These results emphasize the pivotal role of product authenticity in the formation of consumer perceptions and relationships with a brand. Managers and industry stakeholders gain strategic insights from the proven effect of product authenticity on increasing brand value in various dimensions. The positive effect of brand authenticity on brand association shows that emphasizing it can create a stronger mental bond between consumers and the brand. In particular, the relationship between product authenticity and perceived quality shows that clarifying the authentic nature of products can increase consumer perception of quality. This result has significant implications for the home appliance industry, where product quality profoundly influences consumer choices. Also, the discovery that the authenticity of the product also strengthens brand awareness implies that its effective transmission can increase the visibility and brand recognition among customers. And this points to the necessity of communication and transparent communication of the authenticity of the product through marketing and communication approaches. Based on these findings, industry stakeholders should integrate product authenticity with their marketing and brand development activities. In the dynamic food and home appliances industry, managers can strengthen brand association, increase perceived quality, and promote brand awareness through the sincere display of product authenticity. This approach can increase brand competitiveness and maintain and attract the loyalty of consumers familiar with home appliances.

Secondly, the findings of the study, which show the effect of company authenticity on brand awareness, provide fundamental managerial insights. This emphasizes the importance of fostering and conveying a strong sense of authenticity to form consumer brand awareness, and shows that the company's integrity, transparency, and commitment to its values are strictly in line with consumers, thus increasing brand visibility and recognition. Also, the emphasis on the originality of the company distinguishes the brand in the competitive home appliances market and causes its durability and attracts the attention of potential consumers. Finally, recognizing the link between

company authenticity and brand awareness has provided managers with a practical path to display their brand more prominently in the home appliances industry. By leveraging authenticity as a strategic asset, brands can capture and retain consumer attention and thus increase their positions and competition in the dynamic market.

Finally, this research focuses on the importance of service provider authenticity. Provider authenticity may involve personal costs (such as emotional costs among employees) (Yagi and Medler-Liraz, 2012), and proper multifaceted management is vital. Service providers that authentically embody and communicate the essence of the brand allow companies to provide a comprehensive and consistent brand experience for consumers. Managers can understand Create better brand values and messaging among service providers and allow them to reliably showcase the brand to customers. Therefore, brand owners should educate their brand and services in such a way that their employees can become big fans of that authentic service. Proper compensation also encourages them to provide reliable services.

Resources

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