THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND ATTACHMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BRAND EXPERIENCE AND CUSTOMER CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Despite substantial research on the antecedents of the relationship between brand experience and customer citizenship behavior, the effect of brand attachment remains a neglected subject in marketing research. Using social exchange theory (SET) and attachment theory, this study analyses the role of brand attachment as a mediator in the relationship between brand experience and customer citizenship behavior. Specifically, is to investigate the mediating role of brand attachment in the relationship between brand experience and customer citizenship behavior to clarify the role of the different dimensions of brand values among the customers of fast-food restaurants in Egypt. In this study, data was gathered through a questionnaire based on fast food restaurants. and for data analysis, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used. Findings reveal that customer citizenship behavior is directly influenced by brand experience. Furthermore, brand experience directly and significantly impacts brand attachment. Moreover, brand experience is a strong predictor of brand attachment, which promotes consumer citizenship behavior. The study finds that there is a partial influence on the relationship between Brand experience-consumer citizenship behavior relationship.

KEY WORDS

brand attachment, brand experience, customer citizenship behavior

JEL CODES

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1   INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive and complex market, relational marketing seeks to build long-term consumer ties. However, building. Relationship between a brand and its consumer isn't always easy This relationship is not just governed by simply transactional incentives tied to utilitarian gains, it can be cognitive or emotional (Park et al., 2009; Thomson et al., 2005; Brakus et al., 2009; Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011). In this context, the ability of brands to create

lasting associations in the minds and hearts of their target customers is crucial to their success (Grönroos, 1995), which enhances the brand's ability to withstand competition due to positive consumer sentiments about the brand resulted from strong emotional connections (Kemp et al., 2014), and making the marketed brand their first choice when buying or consuming (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Wang et al., 2012). Previous research has helped brand managers gain a better grasp of how brand loyalty shapes consumer relationships (Kim et al., 2018). It is worth noting, however, that the study of brand citizenship has branched out into its field (Nyadzayo et al., 2015).

Customer citizenship behavior (CCB) stands for customer cooperative behavior, which is defined as "helpful, constructive gestures exhibited by customers that are valued or appreciated by the firm but not related directly to enforceable or explicit requirements of the individual's role" (Gruen, 1995, p. 461). Previous studies were done by Bowen (1986), Hsieh et al. (2004), and Keh and Teo (2001), who considered customers as part-time employees by providing their expertise.

Regarding this argument, companies can benefit from customers as human resources in improving the efficiency of an organization and service performance (Mills et al., 1983), productivity (Jones, 1990), and perception of service quality (Claycomb et al., 2001). Furthermore, a study by Bove et al. (2009) found that CCB affects attitude, loyalty, satisfaction, and brand equity. Additionally, it has been shown that CCB can have an effect on a company's bottom line and boost its brand's reputation and recognition among consumers (Van Doorn et al., 2010), brand' efficacy and strengthen a brand (Nyadzayo et al., 2015). First and foremost, CCB can improve a business's competitiveness (Matzler et al., 2015).

According to social exchange theory, customers who have benefited from businesses are likely to give back in kind (Groth, 2005; Payne and Webber, 2006; Xie et al., 2014). According to Grönroos (2011), customers who have positive brand experiences are more likely

to assist the service provider and its other clients. Previous Studies indicate that providing consumers with experiences is the primary focus of companies (Accenture, 2015). The term "brand experience" is used to describe the emotional and behavioral reactions that brand-related stimuli elicit in consumers (Brakus et al., 2009). Consumers are more likely to have opinions about a brand after having direct contact with the brand via packaging, the brand name and logo, and other forms of marketing communication. Specifically, Brakus et al. (2009) identify four experiential dimensions – sensory, affective, cognitive, and behavioral – that contribute to how customers might affiliate with the brand. These dimensions help businesses cultivate long-term relationships with consumers (Fernandes and Moreira, 2019; Hwang and Kandampully, 2012) and strengthen brand attachment (Dolbec and Chebat, 2013; Forbes, 2016), which in turn influences customers' attitudes and behaviors, leading to favourable results for the brand (Thomson et al., 2005), such as brand loyalty (Park et al., 2010), customers' intentions to buy, willingness to pay, engage in word of mouth, and forgiving of brand missteps (Fedorikhin et al., 2008), and customers' extra-role behaviors (Assiouras et al., 2019).

Previous studies that investigated the relationship between brand experience and CCB used Brand community commitment (Aishah and Shaari, 2017), and brand relationship quality (Xie et al., 2017) as mediating variables between brand experience and CCB. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the role of cognitive and affective bonds of brand attachment between these two variables (brand experience and CCB) was not examined. Hence, to address this research gap, The current study aims to examine the role of cognitive and affective bonds of brand attachment between brand experience and customer citizenship behavior CCB. Specifically, is to investigate the mediating role of brand attachment in the relationship between brand experience and customer citizenship behavior to clarify the role of the different dimensions of brand values among the customers of fast-food restaurants

in Egypt. Furthermore, this study aims to use a comprehensive measurement of brand experience and customer citizenship behaviors in one model. The model aims to include the four dimensions of brand experience (i.e., sensory, affective, behavioral, and intellectual) and the three aspects of customer citizenship behavior (i.e., feedback, helping and advocacy).

This paper is organized as follows: (1) a literature review drawing connections between brand experience, CCB, and brand attachment. (2) a discussion of the methodology utilized to collect data from a sample of 211 university students, and the results from structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis will be provided. Finally, the implications of the findings for theory and practice will be discussed.

2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Brand Experience (BE) and Customer Citizenship Behavior (CCB)

Brakus et al. (2009) defined brand experience as the subjective, internal responses of the consumer, including sensory, affective, cognitive, and behavioral experiences as the four dimensions of it that influence brand affiliation. The "sensory" component describes how consumers perceive brand and visual elements through their senses (Hwang and Hyun, 2012). This brand's aesthetic appeals to consumers' touch, sight, hearing, and scent (Brakus et al., 2009). According to Hwang and Hyun (2012), the "affective" component of experience comprises all the various forms of subjective experience that a consumer may have in conjunction with specific emotions and feelings. The "behavioral" component includes unique behavioral reactions to brand stimuli (Wang, 2014). Consumers are driven to participate in physical activities that provide memorable brand experiences (Wang, 2014; Kang et al., 2017). Finally, "intellectual" experiences spark consumer inquisitiveness and thinking (Schmitt, 1999a, 1999b).

CCB is a multifaceted term (Bettencourt, 1997), including feedback, advocacy, and assisting (Yi and Gong, 2013). Feedback is defined as "sincere information provided by customers about service quality that aids the organization in improving it" (Groth, 2005). As well as its customer service (Matzler et al., 2015). Advocacy involves endorsing a firm or employee to relatives and friends (Groth, 2005). Positive word-of-mouth advocacy improves product

quality, corporate reputation, and market share among a wider client base (Groth, 2005). In a service co-creation process, "helping" refers to customers voluntarily assisting one another with the use of the service (Yi and Gong, 2013).

As noted by Thomson et al. (2005), attachment to a brand leads to beneficial brand outcomes, and CCB is one of them (Assiouras et al., 2019). This is supported by Bove et al. (2009) who argued that CCB has positive effects on attitude, loyalty, satisfaction, and brand equity. Based on the social exchange theory, Customers who have a positive brand experience are more likely to take part in additional, unprompted actions (Bettencourt, 1997), such as spreading the word and making positive recommendations about a company (Ferguson et al., 2010; Cetin and Dincer, 2014; Delgado-Ballester and Fernández Sabiote, 2015; Chelminski and Coulter, 2011; Loureiro and de Araújo, 2014) assist other customers and Report a service failure to the staff so that they may give solutions more quickly (Kim et al., 2018; Grönroos, 2011; Aishah and Shaari, 2017; Xie et al., 2017). In the food service industry, customers would engage in CCB when the brand reminds them of pleasant moments (Kim et al., 2018). In other words, brand-focused stimuli are indicated in food restaurants and consumers can experience a restaurant directly when buying and consuming its foods and services and indirectly through its communications and advertising (Brakus et al., 2009).

In this case, customers would seek out similar favorable brand experiences in the future

(Brakus et al., 2009), which in turn lead to increased CCB (Oliver, 1997). Hence, this study hypothesizes that:

H_1: *Brand experience is positively related to customer citizenship behavior.*

2.2   Brand Experience (BE) and Brand Attachment (BA)

Park et al. (2010) described brand attachment as "the strength of the bond connecting the brand with the self", it has two dimensions: brand-self connection and brand prominence. Attachment and the cognitive connections established between the individual and the brand form the basis of the concept of brand-self connection (Chaplin and John, 2005). According to Mittal (2006), consumers' attachment to particular brands serves as a form of self-definition. By making mental associations between the brand and the consumer, a sense of belonging is fostered. The degree to which a brand is remembered readily is referred to as its prominence (Park et al., 2010). Consumers are more likely to recall a brand's meaning when it strongly resonates with their values, needs, ambitions, and sense of identity, and when that meaning is strongly tied to their own experiences and personal memories (Gill-Simmen et al., 2018).

Social exchange theory (SET) explains the link between brand experience and brand attachment. People build and keep connections with others because they think it's in everyone's best interest, including the company's and the customer's (Blau, 1964). This is the core idea behind the SET. Customers who have a positive experience with a brand are more attached to that brand (Yu and Yuan, 2019; Mostafa and Kasamani, 2021; Tran et al., 2023; Chieng et al., 2022). According to Trudeau-Hamidi and Shobeiri (2016) and Park et al. (2010), there is a positive association between brand experience and brand attachment. This is because having a memorable experience with a brand helps to close the psychological gap that exists between the self and the brand. Thus, thanks to sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral experiences, brands help people form

meaningful memories (Shapiro and Spence, 2002; Krishna, 2012). Having access to this kind of memories relating to the brand may boost brand prominence (Chieng et al., 2022; Japutra et al., 2016; Park et al., 2010; Park et al., 2013; Trudeau-Hamidi and Shobeiri, 2016). Affective experiences indeed can alter one's temper and elicit strong feelings (Schmitt, 1999a, 1999b, 2012). One's connection to a brand may be affected by the feelings of excitement and pleasure one has because of these experiences (de Almeida and Nique, 2005; Schmitt, 2012). Additionally, studies done by (Chieng et al., 2022; Mostafa and Kasamani, 2021; Park et al., 2013; Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2013; and Trudeau-Hamidi and Shobeiri, 2016) have shown that having a positive experience with a brand can also contribute to cognitive and affective self-evaluation. Furthermore, Ramaseshan and Stein (2014) argued that consumer-brand relationship such as brand attachment, is the product of memorable, individual experiences with the brand that are retained in the minds of consumers and lead to brand loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009). Hence, we can hypothesize that:

H_2: *Brand experience is positively related to brand attachment.*

2.3   Brand Attachment (BA) and Customer Citizenship Behavior (CCB)

According to social exchange theory, CCB is influenced favorably by a high degree of customer-perceived value. Rather than being merely beneficiaries of the brand's resources, customers typically engage in proactive behavior such as investing and developing their resources to preserve their relationship with the brands that they consider to be their favorites (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014).

According to Bove et al. (2009) and Lee and Kim (2022), customers who are attached to a brand engage in CCB toward a brand and other customers, and they are more likely to be willing to invest time and energy into preserving their relationship with that brand (Park et al., 2010). Tan et al. (2018) found that when a consumer has a high level of connection between a brand
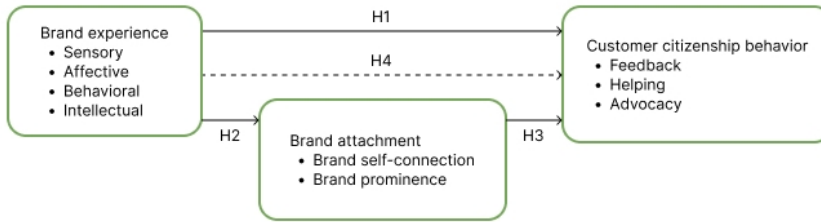
Fig. 1: Conceptual model

and themselves, they are more likely to develop a culture of care that connects other customers as well as employees. Furthermore, Thomson et al. (2005) argued that powerful emotions and thoughts that customers have about the service brand have a role in shaping their attitudes and behaviors. Thus, customers who feel a strong connection to a brand are more likely to promote it to others through positive word-of-mouth, testimonials, and recommendations (Sharif and Sidi Lemine, 2021; Moliner et al., 2018; Kemp et al., 2014). This demonstrates that customers are more likely to develop a strong emotional connection to a brand if they associate it with positive emotions and pleasant memories (brand prominence). As a result, high levels of brand engagement are to be anticipated (Thomson et al., 2005). So, the study can hypotheses that:

H_3: *Brand attachment is positively related to CCB.*

2.4 The Mediating Role of Brand Attachment (BA)

According to the social exchange theory, customers who have benefited from businesses are likely to reciprocate and be committed to a relationship with them (Groth, 2005; Payne and Webber, 2006; Xie et al., 2014). Bettencourt (1997) argued that customers who have a pleasant brand experience are more likely to take part in extra-role behaviors, such as making positive recommendations about a company and positive word of mouth (Ferguson et al., 2010; Cetin and Dincer, 2014; Delgado-Ballester and Fernández Sabiote, 2015; Chelminski and Coulter, 2011; Loureiro and de Araújo, 2014) helping and assisting other customers and providing feedback about the delivered service

to staff (Kim et al., 2018; Grönroos, 2011; Aishah and Shaari, 2017; Xie et al., 2017).

Based on attachment theory, consumers who are strongly attached to a brand are more likely to consider it as irreplaceable because of their increased commitment to it (Park et al., 2010). Therefore, when consumers receive a pleasurable brand experience, they become more attached to the brand and have positive feelings about it (Belaid and Temessek Behi, 2011). In addition to this, previous research showed that the more consumers are attached to a brand, the more they are willing to engage in CCB (Park et al., 2010; Sharif and Sidi Lemine, 2021; Lee and Kim, 2022).

As presented earlier, a memorable and pleasurable brand experience resulting from customer–organization relationship leads to customer-brand attachment (Trudeau-Hamidi and Shobeiri, 2016; Park et al., 2010), which in turn makes customers more willing to elicit additional, unprompted actions (Bove et al., 2009; Lee and Kim, 2022). Hence, this study can postulate that brand attachment is a mediator between brand experience and CCB.

H_4: *Brand attachment mediates the relationship between brand experience and CCB.*

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This theoretical model is developed to shed light on the relationships between this study's variables. The key premise is that attachment to a brand cannot happen without a positive brand experience. Moreover, brand attachment is thought to be an important indicator of customer citizenship behavior. As a result, the relationship between brand experience and customer citizenship behavior may be significantly influenced by brand attachment (see Fig. 1).

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Philosophy and Procedures

This study followed a positivist research philosophy and undertook deductive reasoning using a quantitative approach with a survey method to deliver needed results. Quantitative research involves quantifying data which typically applies statistical analysis (Malhotra et al., 2017). Hence, as quantitative research is essentially about collecting numerical data to explain a phenomenon, questions seem directly appropriate to be answered using quantitative methods. This study was quantitative. The primary data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. A survey was carried out to fulfil the purpose of this study, as well as to test its hypotheses and the model shown in Fig. 1. This study uses a convenient sample, that is consistent with previous studies using the same variables included in this study (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019; Trudeau-Hamidi and Shobeiri, 2016; Kemp et al., 2014). It is applied to fast food restaurants as a response to a call from a study done by Kim et al. (2018), which argued that brand experience and CCB are apparent in the food service industry. Prior studies done by Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka (2019) and Trudeau-Hamidi and Shobeiri (2016), testing the same variables included in this study, collected data from the university students who participated in an online survey.

This analysis employs a convenient sample, which is consistent with prior studies (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019; Trudeau-Hamidi and Shobeiri, 2016; Kemp et al., 2014). It is applied to fast food restaurants in response to a study conducted by Kim et al. (2018), which suggested that brand experience and CCB are visible in the food service business. Prior studies tested the same variables covered in this analysis (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019; Trudeau-Hamidi and Shobeiri, 2016). The research strategy includes structural equation modelling (SEM) to analyze data. Before the main survey, a pilot study involving 55 participants helped to identify the fast-food brands capable of generating positive experiences and to test the reliability and validity of each of the scales.

3.2 Measures

All the survey questions came from previously published studies and were modified to fit the research environment when appropriate. On a scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree), the respondents ranked how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement using a five-point scale. According to Brakus et al. (2009), the measurement of brand experience included four sub-dimensions: the sensory experience, the emotional experience, the cognitive experience, and the behavioral experience, with three items for each experience. a scale established by Park et al. (2010) used to measure Brand attachment. This scale consisted of two dimensions: brand-self connection and brand prominence. Helping customers, advocating, and offering feedback were the three components that were included in the scale of CCB that was designed by Yi and Gong (2013).

4 RESULTS

Following the methodology used in the literature (Malär et al., 2011; Park et al., 2010), respondents are asked to select from a list of fast-food brands the one with which they have the most positive experience. Then, they were asked to complete the survey with the selected brand in mind. The questionnaire was sent to 211 students. The sample has the following demographic profile: gender (female 63.5%, male 36.5%); the majority (55.4%) of the respondents are frequently eating in fast food restaurants once a month (see Tab. 1).

Tab. 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	134	63.5
Male	77	36.5
Total	211	100.0
Frequency of eating in brand X		
Once a month	117	55.4
Twice a month	55	26.1
Three times or more	39	18.5
Total	211	100.0

To examine the connections between the latent and observable variables, this study employs confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with AMOS 24.0. The proposed model was tested using structural equation modelling (SEM). Root means square approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), and Tucker-Lewis's index (TLI) were employed to evaluate the study model's goodness of fit. Then, the values of the Average extracted variance (AVE), the Composite Reliability (CR), and the standardized loading of terms and dimensions are presented. Finally, the study's discriminant validity was tested. The results of the CFA in Tab. 2 showed that the values of CFI, TLI, NFI were all higher than the specified standard (Hair et al., 1998; Hu and Bentler, 1999), where all their values are greater than (0.9), and the value of RMSEA is less than (0.06).

Tab. 2: The results of model fit measurements

RMSEA	TLI	NFI	CFI	*p*-value
0.05	0.90	0.90	0.902	> 0.01

Campbell and Fiske (1959) provided two criteria for determining the construct validity of a test. Convergent validity – the degree of confidence that a trait is accurately measured by its indicators. Discriminant validity – the degree to which measures of different traits are unrelated. Confirmatory Factor Analysis has traditionally been used in structural equation modelling, to assess construct validity. In a Confirmatory Factor Analysis convergent and

discriminant validity examine the extent to which measures of a latent variable share their variance and how they are different from others. According to this criterion, the convergent validity of the measurement model can be assessed by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR).

Tab. 3: List of measurement items, factor loading, CR and AVE

Items	Factor loading	*t*-value	Sig	AVE	CR
X				0.520	0.764
X_1	0.672	7.941	> 0.01		
X_2	0.77	8.174	> 0.01		
X_3	0.717	constant	> 0.01		
X_4	0.598	6.346	> 0.01	0.453	0.707
X_5	0.832	7.253	> 0.01		
X_6	0.557	constant	> 0.01		
X_7	0.652	8.522	> 0.01	0.516	0.760
X_8	0.784	10.024	> 0.01		
X_9	0.711	constant	> 0.01		
X_{10}	0.702	9.167	> 0.01	0.588	0.809
X_{11}	0.882	8.888	> 0.01		
X_{12}	0.701	constant	> 0.01		
M				0.611	0.862
M_1	0.783	constant	> 0.01		
M_2	0.803	12.472	> 0.01		
M_3	0.834	13.003	> 0.01		
M_4	0.701	10.537	> 0.01		
M_5	0.792	constant	> 0.01	0.511	0.806
M_6	0.763	10.679	> 0.01		
M_7	0.636	9.357	> 0.01		
M_8	0.647	9.485	> 0.01		
Y				0.50	0.749
Y_1	0.730	constant	> 0.01		
Y_2	0.649	7.678	> 0.01		
Y_3	0.738	8.335	> 0.01		
Y_4	0.782	constant	> 0.01	0.534	0.820
Y_5	0.766	8.409	> 0.01		
Y_6	0.718	8.783	> 0.01		
Y_7	0.650	8.892	> 0.01		
Y_8	0.835	constant	> 0.01	0.695	0.872
Y_9	0.859	13.684	> 0.01		
Y_{10}	0.806	12.885	> 0.01		

Tab. 4: Discriminant validity

	X_A	X_B	X_C	X_D	M_A	M_B	Y_A	Y_B	Y_C
X_A	(0.721)								
X_B	0.652**	(0.673)							
X_C	0.466**	0.508**	(0.718)						
X_D	0.485**	0.457**	0.721**	(0.766)					
M_A	0.379**	0.422**	0.579**	0.635**	(0.781)				
M_B	0.405**	0.470**	0.540**	0.588**	0.777**	(0.714)			
Y_A	0.353**	0.254**	0.253**	0.306**	0.358**	0.405**	(0.707)		
Y_B	0.256**	0.230**	0.217**	0.323**	0.364**	0.340**	0.441**	(0.730)	
Y_C	0.496**	0.475**	0.282**	0.387**	0.413**	0.457**	0.417**	0.374*	(0.833)

AVE measures the level of variance captured by a construct versus the level due to measurement error, values above 0.7 are considered particularly good, whereas the level of 0.5 is acceptable. CR is a less biased estimate of reliability than Cronbach's α, the acceptable value of CR is 0.7 and above (Alarcón and Sánchez, 2015).

Tab. 3 presents the values of CR and AVE as well as the factor loading. The t-value shows that all Standardized loading for the expressions is statistically significant, at a significance level < 0.01. All values of the Standardized loadings for the expressions are appropriate, as they were all greater than (0.5). The composite reliability (CR) indicators are high, above the threshold value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2006). It is clear from the table that all AVE indicators are appropriate (above or equal to 0.5). Therefore, they are considered acceptable values. Thus, confirming the convergent validity of the scales (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988).

The square root of AVE values for each variable is greater than the values of the correlation between it and the rest of the variables, presented in Tab. 4, which indicates the acceptable level of discriminatory validity for the variables (Gefen et al., 2000). Further evidence, the correlation coefficient between the components is less than 0.90, indicating a moderate correlation between the elements that improve discrimination of the factors from each other, referring to discriminant validity.

Amos' confirmatory factor model is presented in the following diagram (see Fig. 2) for the study variables. Where large ovals indicate the study's variables (brand attachment brand experience and customer citizenship behavior), while smaller ovals indicate measurement errors. The arrows indicate the connection between the variables of the study. The single-directional arrows emanating from the variables to the rectangles (which represent the indicators that are measured) indicate the paths of each specific group of items and the measured indicators on the factor to which they belong.

The structural equation model is used to test the study model and its hypotheses (Hair et al., 1998). The results in Tab. 5 showed that brand experience significantly influenced CCB ($\beta = 0.262$, t-values $= 12.841$, $p < 0.05$) and brand attachment ($\beta = 0.663$, t-values $= 3.438$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H_1 and H_2. Furthermore, brand attachment had a positive significant effect on CCB ($\beta = 0.353$, t-values $= 4.630$, $p < 0.05$), thus H_3 was supported. When brand attachment was inserted as a mediator between brand experience and CCB, BE was still significant ($\beta = 0.234$, $p < 0.05$); hence, brand attachment partially mediates the BE and CCB association, thus supporting H_4.
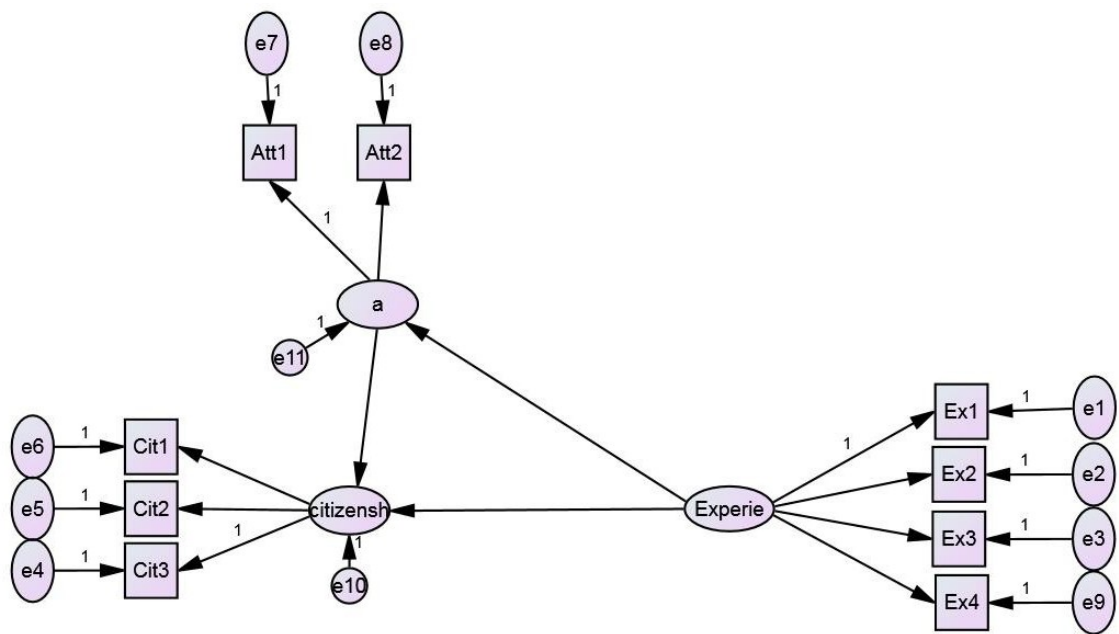
Fig. 2: Amos Confirmatory factor model

Tab. 5: Result structure equation model test

	Path	Estimate	t-value	SE	Sig
H_1	Experience → CCB	0.262	12.841	0.072	Sig
H_2	Experience → Attachment	0.663	3.438	0.079	Sig
H_3	Attachment → CCB	0.353	4.630	0.057	Sig
H_4	Experience → Attachment → CCB	0.234			

5   DISCUSSION

The main objective of this research is to investigate the role of brand attachment in the relationship between a brand experience (BE) and customer citizenship behavior because of ignoring its role and focusing on other mediating variables (Aishah and Shaari, 2017; Xie et al., 2017). The results of the data analysis were novel. H_1 is supported by the fact that BE has a direct, significant effect on the CCB. This is in line with findings from previous studies such as Kim et al. (2018) and Xie et al. (2017). Hence, this demonstrates the significance of providing a unique experience at every point of contact between a brand and its target audience. Second, the findings confirmed H_2 and showed that a positive brand experience

has a direct and substantial effect on brand attachment. This agrees with the findings of prior researchers: Chieng et al. (2022), Schmitt (2012), and Tran et al. (2023). Consequently, the findings support H_3 by showing that BE is a fundamental predictor of brand attachment, which in turn encourages consumer citizenship behavior. This finding is also consistent with Park et al. (2010) indicating that when a customer has a strong attachment to a product or service, they are more likely to devote resources, time, and energy, into the relationship to keep it going. On the other hand, our research finding is partially consistent with the study done by Lee and Kim (2022) which indicated that only brand prominence significantly influenced

CCB but not for self-brand connection. The findings also supported H_4: brand attachment partially mediates the BE-CCB association. As a result, this discovery provides crucial insight into how consumers' emotional and cognitive responses to various brand-related stimuli (such as brand characters, packaging, and layout design contribute to their attachment to that brand, which further makes them more eager to engage in CCB.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

Several theoretical contributions are made by this study to the marketing literature. First, Prior researchers have studied the relationship between BE and customer citizenship behavior, but they have neglected the role of brand attachment as a mediator of this relationship. This study adds to the existing literature by investigating the impact of BE on the cognitive and affective ties that customers have with their preferred fast-food brands, and how this, in turn, affects the citizenship behavior of these consumers. Therefore, this study makes a theoretical and empirical contribution by proposing and testing, for the first time (to the best of the researcher's knowledge), a relationship between BE and consumer citizenship behavior via brand attachment. Second, this research makes an important new addition to the existing body of literature on branding and expands our understanding of the customer–brand relationship and the BE–CCB association by shedding light on the fundamental role that attachment plays in branding and its function as a fundamental mediator in the relationship between BE and CCB. Finally, this study establishes that customers' cognitive and affective ties towards the brand can be major antecedents to their extra-role behaviors (Park et al., 2010).

5.2 Practical Implications

The current study provides valuable information that can be used by marketing managers who are attempting to build long-term relationships with customers of fast-food restau-

rants and strengthen their brands. The current study's findings could help to improve customer citizenship behaviour in the fast-food restaurant industry. Fast food managers may focus on customer relationship management concerning the four dimensions of brand experience and attempt to develop a brand relationship with customers. Because brand experience has been determined to have the greatest impact on brand relationships.

First, experiential brands are crucial to consumers' extra-role behaviors, therefore fast-food brand managers should promote and build holistic BEs to maintain strong customer relationships. Customers who are attached to the brand are more likely to voluntarily aid other customers, recommend the brand to others, and provide feedback to the brand. Managers need to be aware of this fact to properly manage their properties. To be more specific, this refers to the favorable memories and thoughts that a customer has towards the brand and the service that it provides. This can be done by communicating the brand's personality, history, and stories externally through developing brand platforms. Second, businesses should establish cognitive and affective links with consumers through means such as developing marketing initiatives that arouse consumers' feelings of warmth and a sense of belonging and boost their sense of identification with and recall of the brand. As well as designing experiences that are continuously in line with the desires and priorities of the target market. Third, experiential branding should be prioritized as it influences clients' buying decisions when customers encounter various brand stimuli, such as brand-related shapes, layout, colors and design, slogans, salespeople, events, etc. In addition, fast food organizations are advised to allow their consumers to participate in more fast food-related activities, increasing interactions between customers and marketers or staff. Furthermore, Fast food managers should deliver a customized fast-food service to facilitate client reaction for an effective brand experience. Finally, marketing managers should convey the desired experience internally to create a shared vision and instruct staff on how to choose

ambient conditions (music and aroma) and outlet design (signs and lighting). Fast food restaurants can communicate their philosophy by providing unique symbolic philosophy, and entertainment activities to make it easier for customers to attach to the brand and its distinguished position in the industry.

In addition, encourage client participation in service delivery by providing suggestions for healthy food menus or suggestions for green restaurant premises. Frontline personnel should also receive training to improve their customer service skills and to make quick decisions when solving client difficulties and ensuring their satisfaction.

5.3 Limitations and Further Research

This research has several Limitations. Firstly, a convenience sample limits our study, so generalizing the results should be done with caution. Secondly, if the research used cross-sectional data, a longitudinal investigation would be ideal. Thirdly, the sample was collected in Egypt. Thus, collecting data from other nations to test hypothesized relationships could im-

prove future research studies. Finally, this study solely covered fast food brands. The model could be tested in different sectors.

5.4 Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate the role of brand attachment in the fast-food brands that mediate the relationship between BE and CCB. The findings provided support for the hypothesized linkages and enhanced the importance of BE in the process of initiating brand attachment, which will ultimately result in CCB. In particular, the results showed that customers are inspired to participate in CCB after having a positive experience. Experiential brands also endorse consumers' self-connection and foster a feeling of affection for the brand by appealing to their emotions and thoughts. Additionally, the findings have important theoretical implications, as the study contributes to the BE-CCB literature by investigating the mediating role of brand attachment. The research also offers brand managers recommendations for creating an unforgettable brand experience that strengthens customers' emotional and cognitive connections to the company.

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