

The Personality and Quality of the perceived Al-Ahly club brand on the level of loyalty of the football first team fans

Sabrein Attia Mersal Gweuda

*Assistant Prof Faculty of Physical Education for Girls,
55 Mostafa Kamel St, Fliming, Alexandria University*

This research aims at measuring the perception of personality and quality of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club brand on the level of loyalty of the football first team fans who are keen to purchase the team's T-shirt with the brand through the following variables (age, sex, governorate, level of education, living standard), and the elements of the brand's personality and quality (validity, efficiency, shape, complexity, material) and the level of loyalty. Additionally, the effects of the elements of the brand's personality and quality on the level of fans' loyalty, Using a questionnaire consisting of three parts, and applied on a sample of (559) fans, By descriptive analysis of data, variance analysis, Scheffe's test of significance and direction of differences among means and its critical value, standard division of the mean, multiple regression analysis using the method of gradual regression to test the research hypotheses and verify its goals.

Key words: *Brand, Loyalty, Team Fans*

Introduction

Brand is one of the factors affecting consumers' purchasing decision. will not reach this level unless it has high-quality characteristics perceived by the consumer in a way that differs from other competing brands, and preventing them from buying other brands (Keller, 2002). Therefore, persons responsible for it are concerned with strengthening its image in the minds of consumers through several qualifications that distinguish it from other competing brands (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). It has also been characterized by certain elements determining its personality, giving it a favorable identity that makes it desirable for consumers (Bejoy and Sekar, 2008). Thus, it has become a major tool in raising the value of for-profit products contributing in the growth of the organization (Seetharaman, et al., 2001). The personality of the brand refers to a number of characteristics derived from

personal characteristics, and can be applied to it. It enhances the performance of the represented organization (Gelder, 2003). Moreover, perceived quality is one of the main dimensions that determine the moral value of brands (Annie, 2008). Loyalty to the brand is the consumer's deep commitment to the product or service (Yuping, 2007).

Clubs as sports organizations should work on directing their investment projects in order to diversify their sources of income. They should offer products with their brand, especially if their administration is concerned with investment (Faisal, 2007). This will increase the number of consumers from their fans population. Thus, the brand will contribute in highly achieving their profit goals (Rodoula, 2005). European clubs took that route, the experience of Manchester United and Real Madrid (Hans and Necol, 2005; Ahmad, 2008).

In Egypt, Al-Ahly club is one of the oldest, largest, most famous, and most popular Egyptian, Arab and African clubs. It has also been rated in 2000 as the best African club in the 20th. It is also one of the richest clubs in Africa and the Middle East, with a budget of L.E. 200 million in 2011-2012, according to FIFA reports (IFFHS; ahlynews).

Recently, the club's brand appeared jointly with its local and international sponsors' brands, as a source of generating L.E. millions annually in revenues, especially after adding some of them to the football first team's T-shirts. This is an attempt to make it to the international market after its success locally (Abir, 2006). By offering products and introducing activities that holds its brand, as well as opening new markets for the brand and providing legal protection for the optimum use (Douaa, 2011). The club's marketing professionals worked on the inauguration of "Al-Ahly stores", chain stores specialized in selling all the products holding the club's official brand, and uses famous players as marketing interface.

The aims of this study at measuring the perception of the

personality and quality of the Egyptian Al-Ahly brand on the level of loyalty of football first team fans that are keen to buy the team's T-shirt with the brand through:

1. Demographic (age, sex, governorate, level of education, and living standard)
2. Characteristics of the brand's personality and quality elements (validity, efficiency, shape, complexity, and material) and the level of loyalty to the brand.

Material and Methods

Sample

The study sample has been determined according to the sizes used in marketing research (Malhotra, 2004). The final number of sample members are (639), (559) of which are surveyed for the main study and (80) for checking the research tool.

Pilot Study

It aims at identifying the most popular products with the brand bought from Al-Ahly Stores branches. Structured interviews have been used with 50 fans. The results show that about 90% of the sample members (45 fans) are keen to buy the football first team T-shirt, especially the T-shirts of distinguished players.

Table (1): description of the core sample and exploratory sample according to the demographic characteristics (n= 639)

demographic		Core sample (559)		Exploratory Sample (80)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Less than 18 years old	142	25.402%	10	12.50%
	From 18 to 30 years old	228	40.79%	48	60.00%
	Over 30 years old	189	33.81%	22	27.50%
Sex	Male	324	77.64%	61	76.25%
	Female	125	22.36%	19	23.75%
Governorate	Greater Cairo and Guiza	227	40.60%	26	32.50%
	Lower Egypt	126	20.54%	20	25.00%
	Upper Egypt	117	20.93%	16	20.00%
	Suez Canal governorates	89	15.93%	18	22.50%
Level of Education	Basic Education	52	9.30%	9	11.25%
	Secondary Education	126	22.54%	23	28.75%
	University Education/ Higher Institute	298	53.32%	33	41.25%
	Graduate Studies (Diploma, M.A./M.Sc., Ph.D.)	83	14.84%	15	18.75%
Living Standard	Low	103	28.80%	22	27.50%
	Average	295	52.77%	41	51.25%
	Above Average	158	28.80%	17	21.25%

Instruments

A questionnaire consisting of three parts as follows:

- Part 1: research demographic: some demographic variables for

- collecting general data about the fans.
- Part 2 (Aaker Scale): for measuring the elements of the brand's personality (Jennifer, 1997). It has been modified and checked to be suitable for measuring the Egyptian Al-Ahly club's brand, and to adjust to the Egyptian terms and nature.

- Part 3 (data related to the consumers' loyalty to the brand): consists of 9 statements measuring the moral value club's brand through the level of fan's loyalty

Scientific Treatment of the questionnaire

First: Validity of the Questionnaire

Construct Validity: through finding Pearson's correlation (Salah, 2006)

Table (2): Correlation coefficients between the themes' score and the score of every theme and the total score of the questionnaire (n= 80)

Scale themes	Brand validity	Brand efficiency	Brand shape	Brand complexity	Brand material	Level of loyalty to the brand
First theme	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brand validity	-					
Brand efficiency	0.711*	-				
Brand shape	0.731*	0.694*	-			
Brand complexity	0.719*	0.738*	0.719*	-		
Brand material	0.738*	0.729*	0.733*	0.699*	-	
Second theme	0.742*	0.698*	0.684*	0.735*	0.744*	-
Level of loyalty to the brand						-
Total score of the scale	0.739	0.784*	0.755*	0.769*	0.733*	0.781*

- **Tabular correlation coefficients value at P level (0.01) = (0.286)**

Table (2) shows that the correlation coefficients of themes scores range from 0.694 to 0.738 for the first theme, and from 0.684 to 0.744 for the second theme. They also ranged between each

of them and the total score of the scale between 0.733 and 0.784. All these values are statistically significant at P level of (0.01) = 0.286.

Table (3): correlation coefficients of the score of each item and the score of its theme (n=80)

First Theme: elements of the personality and quality of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club's brand on the football first team's T-shirt										Second Theme: The level of loyalty of Al-Ahly football first team fans who are keen to buy the team's T-shirt with the brand			
Brand validity		Brand efficiency		Brand shape		Brand complexity		Brand material		The level of fans' loyalty to the brand			
No.	Correlation coefficient	No.	Correlation coefficient	No.	Correlation coefficient	No.	Correlation coefficient	No.	Correlation coefficient	No.	Correlation coefficient	No.	Correlation coefficient
1/1	0.698*	2/1	0.718*	3/1	0.777*	4/1	0.738*	5/1	0.682*	6	0.711*	11	0.722*
1/2	0.715*	2/2	0.738*	3/2	0.698*	4/2	0.741*	5/2	0.706*	7	0.734*	12	0.744*
1/3	0.769*	2/3	0.746*	3/3	0.709*	4/3	0.759*	5/3	0.711*	8	0.725*	13	0.726*
						4/4	0.711*			9	0.738*	14	0.707*
										10	0.719*		

- * **Tabular correlation coefficients value at significance level (0.01) = (0.286)**

Second: Reliability of the Questionnaire

By using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient (Salah, 2006)

Table (4): reliability coefficients of themes' items, reliability of each theme, and the total reliability of the scale using Cronbach Alpha coefficient method (n=80).

First Theme: elements of the personality and quality of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club's brand on the football first team's T-shirt										Second Theme: The level of loyalty of Al-Ahly football first team fans who are keen to buy the team's T-shirt with the brand			
Brand validity		Brand efficiency		Brand shape		Brand complexity		Brand material		The level of fans' loyalty to the brand			
No.	Reliability coefficient	No.	Reliability coefficient	No.	Reliability coefficient	No.	Reliability coefficient	No.	Reliability coefficient	No.	Reliability coefficient	No.	Reliability coefficient
1/1	0.811	2/1	0.825	3/1	0.843	4/1	0.851	5/1	0.855	6	0.854	11	0.837
1/2	0.821	2/2	0.834	3/2	0.822	4/2	0.862	5/2	0.845	7	0.843	12	0.852
1/3	0.819	2/3	0.825	3/3	0.837	4/3	0.847	5/3	0.839	8	0.867	13	0.863
						4/4	0.835			9	0.855	14	0.864
										10	0.849		
Theme's reliability coefficient without deleting any item										0.871			
0.869													
Reliability Coefficient of the Questionnaire = 0.873													

Table (4) shows that the reliability coefficients of the first theme range between 0.811 and 0.862 and 0.869, and between 0.837 and 0.867 for the second theme, and 0.873 for the scale as a whole.

Discussion

Verifying the first aim: The researcher performed a statistical analysis of the results related to the research sample variables, and the elements of the personality and quality

of the brand and level of loyalty to the brand by using variance analysis of the sample's opinions. The analysis demonstrates that, with the exception of brand complexity according to the living standard, there are no significant differences for all the demographic in terms of the research sample's perception of the personality and quality of the club's brand, as well as loyalty to the brand.

Table (5): variance analysis of the element of brand complexity of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club brand on the football first team T-shirt according to the living standard variable (n=599)

Element	Source of variance	Total squares	of freedom	Level of	Mean of squares	F value	Significance level
Brand complexity	Among groups	2.035	2		1.017	6.886*	0.001
	Within groups	82.141	566		0.148		
	Total	84.176	558				

* **F_{tab} at (2, 556) with significance level (0.01) = (4.605)**

Table (5) shows that the calculated F value = 6.886, P at (0.01) is (4.605). This indicates great variance in the opinions of the research sample. Due to the existence of significant differences,

the researcher has conducted Scheffe's Test of significance and direction of differences among means, and has calculated Scheffe's critical value.

Table (6): Scheffe's Test of significance and direction of differences among means of the brand complexity element of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club brand on the football first team's T-shirt according to the living standard variable (n=559)

Living standard	Number	Mean	SD	Low	Average	Above average	Aspect of comparison	Scheffe's critical value
Low	103	4.189	0.409				m1-m2	0.120
Average	298	4.347	0.369	0.157*			m1-m3	0.133
Above average	158	4.342	0.369	0.153*	-0.005		m2-m3	0.103

Table (6) shows that Scheffe's critical value comes between the low and average living standards in favor of the average living standard and equals

(0.157). Meanwhile, Scheffe's critical value comes between the average and above average living standards in favor

of the average living standards and equals (0.153).

Verifying the second aim: the mean's percentage has been calculated. It represents the ration between the calculated mean and the highest score of the questionnaire's rating scale, by using the mean value division standard (James and Rocco, 2007).

A. The first theme: The mean percentage has been calculated for the

Table (7): Mean and Standard Deviation of the characteristics of the personality and quality elements of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club brand on the purchased football first team

No	Element	Mean	SD	t value	Mean percentage	Charact-eristic Order by element	Element's grade
1	Brand validity	4.32	0.45	69.53*	86.49%		Strongly describes it
	1/1 clear	4.29	0.71	43.10*	85.76	2	Strongly describes it
	1/2 cheerful (delightful)	4.26	0.76	39.19*	85.30%	3	Strongly describes it
2.	1/3 practical	4.42	0.62	54.46*	88.41%	1	Strongly describes it
	Brand efficiency	4.27	0.46	65.74*	85.34%		Strongly describes it
	2/1 successful	4.53	0.68	52.71*	90.52%	1	Strongly describes it
3.	2/2 trusted	3.91	0.89	24.23*	78.28%	3	Describes it
	2/3 unique (special)	4.36	0.75	42.70*	87.23%	2	Strongly describes it
	Brand shape	4.31	0.49	63.63*	86.17		Strongly describes it
4	3/1 realistic	4.32	0.73	42.39*	86.33%	2	Strongly describes it
	3/2 modern	4.43	0.80	42.11*	88.66%	1	Strongly describes it
	3/3 bold	4.18	0.87	31.85*	83.51%	3	Describes it
5	Brand complexity	4.32	0.39	80.12*	86.32%		Strongly describes it
	4/1 elegant	4.39	0.73	44.98*	87.87%	2	Strongly describes it
	4/2 attractive	4.47	0.64	53.95*	89.37%	1	Strongly describes it
5	4/3 simple	4.05	0.93	26.49*	80.93%	4	Describes it
	4/4 showy	4.36	0.73	43.71*	87.12%	3	Strongly describes it
	Brand material	4.31	0.55	56.13*	86.15%		Strongly describes it
5	5/1 inspired by local environment	4.33	0.78	40.34*	86.51%	2	Strongly describes it
	5/2 inspired by foreign environment	4.20	0.86	33.10*	84.08%	3	Strongly describes it
	5/3 combination of foreign and local environments	4.39	0.73	44.98*	87.87%	1	Strongly describes it

*"t" tabular value at significance level of (0.01) = (1.96)

Table (7) and the results of the research sample opinions demonstrate that the elements of the personality and quality of the brand strongly describe it, the percentage ranged between 90.52% and 78.28%. The brand validity element has scored the highest percentage of 86.49%. Meanwhile, the brand efficiency element is the least descriptive of the brand personality elements, even though it strongly describes it (85.34%). Furthermore, the brand is described as practical (88.41%), one of the characteristics of its validity. It is also successful as practical (90.52%), a characteristic of brand efficiency; modern (88.66%), attractive

lements of personality and quality of brand, in order to calculate the grades of each element (strongly describes it, describes it, slightly describes it, does not describe it, does not describe it at all) in order to establish the match between the characteristics and the measured brand.

in terms of complexity (89.37%), and a combination of local and foreign environments as the characteristic that describes its material the best (87.87%). All these characteristics strongly describe it. It thus reflects what strongly describe the brand. The characteristics of the personality and quality of the brand include the important characteristics of its personality as a perspective for measuring it and measuring its quality (Susan, 1995). Moreover, the strong and positive personality of the brand positively affects the consumers' attitudes irrespective of the most perceived dimension (Traci and Lukas, 2003).

B. The second theme: the mean percentage of the theme's items has been calculated in order to determine the grade of each statement. According to the rating of the statements grades

(strongly agree, agree, slightly agree, disagree, strongly disagree) in order to establish the matching level of the statements with the measured level of loyalty.

Table (8): Level of loyalty of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club football first team who are keen to buy the team's T-shirt with the brand (n=559)

N	Statement	Mean	SD	t value	Mean percentage	Statement order	Level of loyalty
6.	I pay more to get the football first team's T-shirt with the Egyptian Al-Ahly club brand	4.10	0.72	36.33*	82.08%	3	High loyalty
7.	I am ready to wait for the football first team T-shirt if it is not available at Al-Ahly stores when I go buy it	4.13	0.75	35.44*	82.61%	2	High loyalty
8.	I am ready to purchase the football first team's T-shirt from places other than Al-Ahly stores (the black market)	3.39	1.08	8.46*	67.73%	4	Average loyalty
9.	I am interested in purchasing the football first team T-shirt with the original Al-Ahly club brand	3.08	1.33	2.29*	61.68%	6	Average loyalty
10.	I offer other Al-Ahly club fans advice on how to purchase the football first team's T-shirt with the brand from Al-Ahly stores	4.38	0.71	45.90*	87.58%	1	Very high loyalty
11.	I collect a group order when I wish to purchase the football first team's T-shirt with Al-Ahly club's brand from Al-Ahly stores.	3.02	1.33	1.99*	60.32%	7	Average loyalty
12.	I am willing to accept another brand on the football first team's T-shirt in addition to Al-Ahly club's brand as long as it provides the club with financial and moral support	3.35	1.37	6.00*	66.94%	5	Average loyalty
13.	I am not willing to accept buying Al-Ahly football first team's T-shirt with any other brand than Al-Ahly's.	1.62	0.69	-47.41*	32.45%	9	Very low loyalty
14.	Al-Ahly club crises due to the political events in Egypt make me unwilling to buy Al-Ahly football first team's T-shirt even if it has the club's brand.	1.78	0.75	-38.60*	35.56%	8	Very low loyalty
	Theme	4.21	0.68	18.90*	69.11%		High loyalty

*"t" tabular value at significance level of (0.01) = (1.96)

Table (8) shows that the loyalty of fans to the Egyptian Al-Ahly club brand is high (69.11%). This level of loyalty makes them offer advice to tother fans and help them purchase the football first team's T-shirt with the brand (87.57%). The high loyalty level also makes them willing to wait for the T-shirt if it is not available at Al-Ahly stores (82.61%), specialized in selling the club's original products, and pay more in order to purchase it (82.08%). They do not accept purchasing a T-shirt that has any brand other than Al-Ahly's. Furthermore, the club's crises due to the political situation in Egypt do not discourage them from buying the T-shirt (35.56%). The consumers' perception is affected by the quality of the product and the loyalty to the brand, represented by encouraging others to deal with it and not to turn to another competitor (Amr, 2002). The consumers' perception

of the brand also affects their evaluation. This relationship is affected by the consumers' level of intolerance that is reflected in their loyalty (Supphellen and Kjell, 2003). The emotional connection between the consumer and the product makes it difficult for them to do without it or use another product (Govers and Ruth, 2004). The perceived value of the brand by the consumers is an outcome of the emotional and mental positive connections towards it (Adam, 2006).

Conclusions

- The perception of the Egyptian Al-Ahly club brand personality and quality does not have different effects on the level of loyalty of the football first team fans according to the differences in the demographic aspects of the age, sex, governorate, or level of education variables.

However, it differs according to the living standard variable with the element of complexity in favor of the average living standard.

- The Egyptian Al-Ahly club indicator for predicting their future loyalty.

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