

**“The Impact of Sponsorship Disclosure by Social Media Influencers on Brand Love in the fast-food chain restaurants in Egypt”**

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**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of Sponsorship Disclosure (SD) on Brand Attitude and Brand Love and in the fast-food chain Restaurants in Egypt. Accordingly, literature is reviewed, and secondary data regarding Sponsorship Disclosure are gathered. Thereafter, a quantitative method is conducted using a self-administered online questionnaire to collect data for the current study and determine the impact of sponsorship Disclosure with Brand attitude and Brand Love. A single cross-sectional design is employed to gather the data from 400 Egyptian young adult (millennials and Generation Z) and the valid questionnaires are 392. Moreover, the data is analyzed using (IBM SPSS V.27). The findings reveal that Sponsorship Disclosure affects Brand Attitude and brand

Love significantly. Accordingly, Sponsorship Disclosure by Social Media Influencers impacts Brand Attitude and Brand Love in the Fast-Food Industry in Egypt

**Key Words:**

Social media Influencers, Influencer Marketing, Sponsorship Disclosure, Brand Love, Brand Attitude, e-wom, The Persuasion Knowledge Model.

**1. Introduction**

As Organizations not only desire shoppers to be pleased with their brand but also, they need to ensure they turned out to be in a persistent relation with the brand as their loyal customers. Thus building “brand love” is essential. Brand love for a loyal customer group explicit the emotional bond beyond fulfilment. Thus, Customers perform as if they are in affection, they search for those brands, they feel devoted to them compared to other options, and engage in WOM and discussions in favor of their beloved brand. (Song, H., Bae, S. Y., & Han, H., 2019). A vital construct that designates a robust consumer–brand relationship is Brand love (Huber et al., 2016). Practitioners have discovered value through creating of an affective connection with consumers (Trivedi, 2018b). Thus, brand love which is a significant affective construct becomes priority of the Practitioners (Karjaluoto et al., 2016; Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). As Long as various consequences of brand love are recognized as willingness to pay a premium price, positive eWOM, and

conative response like purchase intentions and brand loyalty, Brand Love should have more investigation. (Trivedi, J., & Sama, R., 2020). Nevertheless, as brand love is a fairly novel construct, further Investigation is required to unveil its leading role in the consumer–brand relationship establishment (Roy et al., 2013). Moreover, additional investigation on brand love is needed to identify their antecedents and establishing the existing ones in different contexts (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Fetscherin, 2014; M. S. Kim & Kim, 2018).

Due to the emerging practice of social media and the associated growth of info transferred via those networks an escalation in the interest of (eWOM) in consumer behavior field. References of well-known individuals and other buyer views displayed over the internet become reliable sources for buyers’ choices and procurement behavior this enhanced (eWOM) trend. According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) Ewom is defined as to “any positive or negative statement made about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet. According to Global Web Index (2017) marketing practitioners are motivated to pursuit advertising plans in order to yield profits from these novel media platforms. That is the chief cause which pushes businesses to connect with those influential individuals, to support and endorse their products.

Influencer marketing is thus a communication approach that makes use of well-known and prominent consumers who

participate in social networking sites (SNS) (Wiedmann, K. P., & von Mettenheim, 2020). Social media influencers can be conceptualized as “individuals who have accrued a sizable and engaged following on one or more social media platforms, and who possess the power to shape attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of their audience through their online content” (Freberg et al., 2011). Developing from the underlying bloggers of the late 1990s, Social media influencers have utilized (SNS) like Instagram and YouTube to advance their reach and differentiate the material they offer. Contrasting to their ancestors, SMIs draw in bigger crowds, team up with brands, and keep an organized internet-based presence, laying out trust and altogether influencing shopper conduct through genuineness and identifiability. Influencer Marketing Researches is still in its earliest stages. while specific standards for SMI effectiveness have been projected, only limited number of them have established Practical evidence. (Wiedmann, K. P., & von Mettenheim, W. ,2020).

Social media witnesses a skyrocketing amount of sponsored content in the form of blogs that social media influencers create and share. Different kinds of covert convincing posts by SMIs are sponsored content which is defined as “*the purposeful integration of brands or branded persuasive messages into editorial media content in exchange for compensation from a sponsor*” (Boerman & van Reijmersdal, 2016). Sponsorship

Disclosure was conceptualized as *the extent to which a sponsored communication notifies a viewer of its paid nature and the identity of the sponsor*. (Wojdynski et al., 2018). Disclosure of such sponsored content was researched previously; some studies concluded that sponsorship Disclosure switch on persuasion knowledge resulting in resistance to the persuasion, so customer cognition become doubtful about ads, causing ad credibility to drop, resulting in rejection affecting brand attitudes negatively. On the contrary, other researchers concluded that Sponsorship disclosure would have positive effects as well, like enhancing brand recall and brand recognition; others concluded that the *source perceived credibility* for sponsored eWOM has been ameliorated. (Jiang, McKay, Richards, & Snyder, 2017).

This scientific argument pushed the need to investigate the sponsorship Disclosure by Social Media Influencers topic that has not been thoroughly examined, asking how Egyptian consumers would respond in terms of Brand Love to sponsored content generally and especially in fast food chain restaurants. Few studies have examined disclosure effects in the context of social media in Egypt. This study would add up to the literature by concentrating on the customer response to the social media sponsorship disclosure in the Egyptian context in terms of Brand Love. This study uses one product only which is MacDonald’s (a fast-food chain restaurant). Food blogs are a popular issue on Instagram social network, with millions of posts using

#MacDonald’s as hash tags. Also, fast food appeal to both genders, beside fast food is a growing sector in Egypt nowadays. MacDonald’s particularly is chosen because its prices are affordable by most of Egyptians.

There is a clear scientific conflict regarding the effect of Sponsorship disclosure on the brand attitude. As various empirical studies found that after customers notice and comprehend the sponsorship disclosure, this leads to resistance for the perceived message credibility, skepticism, negatives attitudes toward brand. However negative impacts are not always the result of sponsorship disclosure. (De Veirman, M., & Hudders, L., 2020) On the contrary, other researchers concluded that disclosure would have positive effects as well, like enhancing brand recall and brand recognition; others concluded that the source perceived credibility for sponsored eWOM has been ameliorated. (Jiang, McKay, Richards, & Snyder, 2017). To this day, these questions cannot be fully answered by past research articles not involved in social media context. That’s why the sponsorship disclosure issue and its impact on the followers’ attitude toward the brand and consequently the Brand Love should be investigated in the Egyptian Community. To the best knowledge of the researcher, an analysis of the Sponsorship disclosure effect on brand love in general and in the fast-food chain restaurants in Egypt is missing. Marketers need to know, If Sponsorship Disclosure either positively or negatively affects their brand. Several authors dealt with the topic of promoting brands on social media. But to the

best of the researcher knowledge the measurement of the effect of Sponsorship Disclosure as an independent variable, on Brand Love construct is unstudied. more research on brand love is necessary to identify additional antecedents and establish the existing ones in different contexts (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Fetscherin, 2014; M. S. Kim & Kim, 2018)

## **2. Research Problem and importance**

1. Determine whether Sponsorship Disclosure will have an impact on the Brand Love of the Egyptian followers in general and in the context of fast-food chain restaurants in particular, which might improve the academic understanding and managerial practice of this topic.
3. Test the mediating role of brand attitude in the relationship between Sponsorship Disclosure by Social Media Influencers & the Brand Love in the fast-food chain restaurants in Egypt.
4. To identify the relative criticality among study variables in Developing Brand Love through digital influencers with antecedents that haven't been studied before.
5. To investigate the intricate associations among the drivers in social media setting.

### **Importance from academic perspective**

Although an exponential number of Vlogs appeared lately, in order to justify SMIs intent regarding sponsored ads, Followers are somehow sceptic about their real intent and would perceive

them differently, resulting in different brand attitudes that in turn may impact the consumer brand relationships. This study will investigate The Sponsorship Disclosure made by Social Media Influencers in Egypt and how could this influence the brand consumer relationship consequently in terms of new construct such as brand love. This study will fill the gap in the literature in such a topic specifically in Egypt. Thus, this research will contribute to science by Trying out something in this country that has previously been done only elsewhere. Specially, that studying Sponsorship disclosure effects have many contradicting findings concerning if (SD) Conflict in results either to have a positive effect or no difference for the studied (SD). This research contributes to science by trying to solve the scientific debate regarding this issue.

### **Importance from the practical perspective**

1. It is important to note that the role played by influencers in marketing communications is understudied. This is arguably one of the first studies focused on observing the effect of influencer marketing on consumer brand relationships behavior from the perspective of Brand Love.
2. This research will be useful for SMIs themselves. It will provide practical guidelines when promoting for sponsored brands, SMIs will know either to include (SD) or not.
3. It would also be beneficial for those who are working on fast food chain in Egypt, by incorporating Influencer Marketing



practices, and knowing if SD is needed to be possessed by the SMIs to be assigned for their planned campaigns.

4. As Brand managers tend to create more lovable brands, e.g., McDonald’s “I’m Lovin it”. However, the importance of this concept is not frequently discussed in marketing literature. Furthermore, the impact of brand attitude on brand love has not been investigated in any empirical research. This research aims to address this gap by developing a model incorporating brand love, brand attitude together with SD to investigate the relationships among them.

### **3-Literature Review**

#### **E-WOM**

According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) any statement, whether favourable or unfavourable, that is rendered about a product or a company and made available to numerous people and organisations online is referred to as "eWOM." Particularly on digital platforms, people who want to exchange brand-related data with other people in their online communities can spread eWOM about brands. eWOM typically refers to unpaid, organic communication by customers who actively promote certain brands because of earlier positive interactions with the company. However, marketers may frequently use compensated eWOM to leverage opinion leaders to magnify marketing messages, in the manner referred to as influencer marketing. In order to support a brand's marketing efforts, influencer marketing can be described by Brown and Hayes (2008) as

recognizing and utilization of particular significant figures who have sway over potential customers. Influencer marketing has the potential to be an effective eWOM mechanism (Evans, N. J., Phua, J., Lim, & Jun, H., 2017)

### **Sponsored content on social media**

New types of advertisements are gaining traction as free online material presents more difficulties to established forms of advertisement. Sponsored material created in conjunction with social networking influencers (also known as SMIs) serves as one tactic for businesses. Due to their capacity to connect with large audiences who share similar hobbies, blogging, vlogs created by SMIs have become growing in prominence as promotional channels. Because of its "freshness" and "spontaneity," online material produced by amateurs or people who are not journalists have been proposed to be, or at least is considered to be, more genuine than expert content. This is because common people are seen as being more authentic than major corporations and political leaders (Luoma-aho, V., Pirttimäki, T., Maity, D., Munnukka, J., & Reinikainen, H., 2019).

When choosing Instagram stars to promote their products, brands should pick the ones that their niche interests match those of the audience they are targeting. The influencers will then share their brand-related writings with their large following, creating a win-win

situation for both parties (Evans, N. J., Phua, J., Lim, J., & Jun, H., 2017) Sponsored assessments of goods are difficult to discern from unsponsored ones without admission of sponsorship. Viewers ability to critically examine the messaging is weakened when they are ignorant of the marketing context/nature of such reviews, they also can susceptible to similar influences by the sponsored and unsponsored product reviews. Advertising regulating authorities, like the FTC, which regulates advertising in the US, have released updated endorsement standards to address complaints regarding the rise in sponsored product evaluations posted on social networking sites. Authenticity in advertising is the primary objective of the FTC's regulatory rules for online sponsorship (FTC 2013). Reviewers of products on social media are expressly required by the new rules to reveal any kind of sponsorship they may have obtained as a substitute for a review (Pfeuffer, A., Lu, X., Zhang, Y., & Huh, J., 2021)

Users can be influenced to like and buy things on social media using a variety of strategies, from putting content on company or brand sites to shelling out influencers to advertise products on their personal social networking profiles. Online influencers are Third-party advocates who influence audiences' perceptions by posting on blogs, tweeting, and using other digital platforms (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). They specialize in a certain industry (such as fashion, food blogging, technological advances, or home décor), share the most recent developments in their professions, and show how they rely

on specific goods and companies. These people capture their daily life on the internet. These influential individuals have amassed sizable, dependable, and enthusiastic fan networks, and they significantly affect the purchasing decisions of those fans. As a result, corporations and companies began contacting these influencers to ask them to promote their goods or services on the internet in exchange for gifts, invitations to special events, or even cash payments (De Jans, S., Van de Sompel, D., De Veirman, M., & Hudders, L., 2020)

Evans, Phua, Lim, and Jun (2017) discussed the various collaborative approaches brands use with influencers, such as sponsored content, product placements, and hosting events. According to their findings, 81% of marketers who have utilized influencer marketing deemed it effective, with over half reporting acquisition of better customers and nearly 40% noting higher retention rates due to consumers' greater trust in influencers over traditional advertising methods.

On social networking sites, compensated product evaluations are distinct from native advertising in other ways as well. As reviews of goods, despite being paid for by the company, still fall under the category of content created by users; Native advertising describes the procedure of a brand developing an ad communication that seamlessly blends into other materials visible on a particular platform. In contrast, funded product

assessment material is ultimately managed by the item's reviewer. Given these variations, SD showing online material such as a native advertisement or a funded assessment of a product may have a distinct effect on customers understanding of persuasion, including ideas about the efficacy and suitability of persuasiveness tactics, and as a result, have a unique effect on customers actions and opinions. The impacts of sponsored declaration in the setting of social networking reviews of goods are deserving of additional study due to the distinctive features of review sites. (Pfeuffer et al., 2021)

Sponsorship Disclosure was conceptualized as the extent to which a sponsored communication notifies a viewer of its paid nature and the identity of the sponsor. (Wojdynski et al., 2018). Full Disclosure of sponsorship: The presence of a sponsorship disclosure. (Stubb, C., Nyström, A. G., & Colliander, J., 2019). No disclosure of sponsorship: The lack of a sponsorship disclosure. (Stubb, et l., 2019). Non-sponsorship Disclosure: influencers tend to explicitly mention if a post including a brand is a genuine recommendation by including the hashtag #notsponsored. (De Veirman, M., & Hudders, L., 2020).

### **3.2.2 The Persuasion Knowledge Model**

In accordance with "the persuasion knowledge model (PKM)" developed by Friestad & Wright in 1994, people gain knowledge about and awareness of the persuasive purpose of

advertising messages via experience. Thus, "persuasion knowledge" is Knowledge that enables people to recognise, assess, interpret, and recall attempts at persuasion as well as pick and use coping mechanisms they think to be effective and suitable. When an advertisement message is revealed, the recipient reacts defensively since it also connects to the persuasive information. The crucial information that social media consumers need to be persuaded in native advertising is endorsement disclosure. The sponsorship message identifies an outside source of fascination and income when native advertising tries to convey a message in a piece of personal editorial material. Additionally, exposure to advertising might result in behavioral responses to marketing communications. Brehm's (1989) reactance hypothesis states that people are more likely to reject persuade efforts when they are aware of them and use coping mechanisms like suspicion and opposition. On social networks, users have the ability to employ a response mechanism and dispute the message when they perceive that the circumstance is being focused by a commercial communication (Kim, D. Y., & Kim, H. Y., 2021).

Consumers' awareness of the persuading character of advertising, as defined by Freistad and Wright, is referred to as conceptually persuading knowledge. Clients critically analyze the advertisement and employ message coping techniques to either be persuaded or avoid being persuaded once conceptually persuasion

expertise has been triggered. Previous research looking at sponsoring disclosure in media outlets have discovered the impact of sponsoring disclosure on theoretical persuading understanding as well as feelings toward the organization based on the idea of persuasive knowledge (Evans et al., 2017).

Users are expected to respond to persuading attempts differently when their persuasive knowledge has been activated compared to when it is not. In order to be persuaded or to avoid being persuaded, people might use their understanding about a persuasive attempt, according to the persuasion understanding model. The theory of reaction asserts, however, that people generally prefer to keep their rights to choose and are unwilling to be coerced (Brehm & Brehm, 1981). Therefore, it is believed that if individuals recognize persuasive tactics for what they are, they prefer to oppose them. The realization that an article on a blog aims to persuade visitors may be perceived as a danger to their right to free will, leading to the development of resistance tactics to deal with the undesired attempt at convincing. The fact that resistant can be both cognition and emotional when persuasion information is activated and resistance reactions can be both cognition and subjective may help to explain how blog exposes affect the effectiveness of advertising (Van Reijmersdal, et al. 2016).

## **Cognitive Resistance**

"The cognitive response approach" of Petty, Ostrom, and Brock (1981) asserts that people primarily react to persuasive arguments with mental processes. These mental processes might be either beneficial or adverse depending on numerous (message) variables and preexisting ideas. Following that, these mental processes have an effect on attitudes as well as other connected responses including intentions and behaviour. People are more prone to respond negatively (i.e., counterargue) when they have a reason to oppose a convincing argument. In fact, counterarguing is an efficient and frequently employed mental resistance tactic in reaction to convincing arguments, according to Zuwerink and Cameron's 2003 research. People may reject compelling communications for a variety of reasons. The perceived persuading aim of a message is one frequently researched variable. When given advance notice of a persuasive message, individuals are more probable to engage in counter argumentation, which strengthens the persuasive message's case. Additionally, an investigation on sponsored television shows reflected that a disclosure raised the number of sentiments about advertisement and reduced the quantity of positive opinions about the business. According to these studies, disclosures in the overall setting of paid material on blogs might not only stimulate people's understanding of persuasiveness but may also lead to additional counterarguments. Visitors may contest the assertions made



regarding the brand or product once they understand that the blog serves commercial interests (Van Reijmersdal, et.al ,2016).

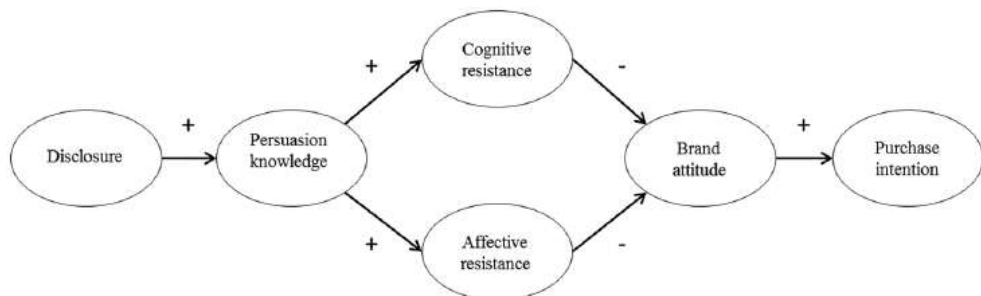
Prior research has shown that exposing sponsored material has a detrimental impact on consumers' opinions towards the company and their decision to buy the brand being promoted or a product in a variety of contexts (such as TV, radio, movies, and blogs). A further significant mediator for persuading has been demonstrated to be people's mental responses to a persuading message. Countering a persuasive argument specifically reduces persuading in terms of changing attitudes. Buyer brand perceptions may thus be negatively impacted by the mental resistance that is predicted to be sparked by the revelation and activation of persuasive learning (Reijmersdal, Van, et al., 2016).

### **Affective Resistance**

People frequently react emotionally to persuasive communications, even though mental processes have been suggested as a key mediator for persuading effects. Emotions and moods are terms used to describe these affective responses. Negative affective emotions like frustration and rage are likely to occur when people are driven to oppose persuasiveness, and they will utilize these feelings to fight back against the message. Negative affect, which entails reacting to the persuading attempt by becoming angry, frustrated, or agitated, is in fact one of the most common affective resistance techniques. When a disclosure triggers persuasive knowledge, this might elicit negative emotions like disapproval and doubt. A

confession may also elicit stronger emotional reactions, such as rage and frustration, in addition to skepticism and dislike. A change in significance is also produced by activating persuasive knowledge in response to disclosure. The buyer may feel duped as a result of this shift in significance from a lighthearted activity to a persuading attempt, which could cause unfavorable emotional reactions. As a result, subjective resistance to the funded blog is also caused by the activation of persuasive knowledge. The mechanism underlying the negative impact of a revelation on brand views and purchase intentions may potentially be the elicited unfavorable effect. Because of the sponsoring, the customer is likely to have a bad opinion of the organization, or the sponsored brand. Consequently, the company may be held responsible for the adverse effect, which would account for the detrimental effects of revelations on brand views and plans to buy. According to this logic, studies have demonstrated that negative sentiments toward sponsored material led to fewer favorable opinions about the brand. The ability to resist influence brought on by blog revelations is what makes this possible. (Van Reijmersdal, et al., 2016).

Van Reijmersdal et al. (2016) integrated resistant theories in conjunction with Friestad and Wright (1994) persuasion understanding model, hypothesizing that disclosures could activate people's persuasive knowledge, leading to the adoption of cognitive and affective resistance techniques that would limit persuasion.



**Fig (1) Resistance Toward Sponsored Blog Content**

Van Reijmersdal, E. A., et al. (2016).

According to the Persuasive Knowledge Model (PKM), the method of persuasion involves a pair of persuasive agents and targets. Targets are the people that a persuasive initiative is meant to persuade, and agents are the people who design and construct a persuasive endeavor. In a persuasive episode, an agent and a target each make an effort to obtain a desired result based on their understanding of persuasion, as well as on their own abilities and those of the other party. On the target side, the PKM suggests three kinds of understanding: persuasion expertise (beliefs regarding persuasive intentions, efficiency, and the suitability of methods for persuasion and methods for coping with persuasiveness attempts), topic knowledge (beliefs regarding the subject matter of the message), and agent knowledge (beliefs regarding the characters involved in persuasiveness attempts). The interconnections between these three different categories of information can affect how customers react to initiatives at persuading. Persuasive

knowledge (PK), one of the three forms of knowledge, has attracted a lot more scholarly interest over the other two (A. Pfeuffer et al., 2021).

The PKM states that when PK is engaged, a change-in-meaning takes place that could lead to a departure from the advertisers' initial intended significance. However, in some circumstances, activated PK may have nothing on attitudes or might even have a beneficial effect on the way customers feel toward the product. The majority of advertising research actually indicates that activating of PK results in critical handling of ad messages and fewer positive assessments of the item being marketed. The concept of persuasion knowledge (PK) refers to the ability of targets to recognize and comprehend the goals and strategies used by persuasion agents, as well as to judge the appropriateness and efficacy of their own attempts at persuading. The acceptance of advertising purpose especially has been the subject of numerous research (A. Pfeuffer et al., 2021).

According to Friestad and Wright (1994), critical analysis of advertising communications was linked to an understanding of advertising purpose. The activation of viewers' persuasive expertise through sponsorship disclosure allowed them to identify sponsored material as advertising, and that in turn resulted in fewer favorable attitudes towards the product. Among the few research investigations that have looked at observed suitability, it is feasible that disclosing the existence of sponsorship might help

viewers recognize the persuasive aim behind advertisements, which would probably cause them to evaluate the information more critically and develop less favorable opinions. Furthermore, consumers' perceptions of the suitability and effectiveness of the material may change as a result of sponsored disclosure. Particularly, The PKM postulates that clients will form opinions regarding the suitability and efficacy of persuasive strategies, and that these opinions may be evaluated critically by the strategy's context. Consumers' perceptions of how suitable this persuasive technique is may be favourably influenced by the open revelation of the material's commercial goal. Consumer attitudes toward the potential impact of advertisements on them may also be impacted by disclosure. Since disclosure would alert consumers to the possible prejudice of the content, it is most likely that it would reduce the way customers think of the potential impact of provided content on them (A. Pfeuffer et., 2021).

## **Brand Love**

Organizations understand that obtaining like and satisfaction is no longer enough to win over customers' loyalty over the years given the prevalence of consumer independence. Instead, Advertisers are urged to come up with ideas for making consumers adore their companies. Knowing brand love is important given the desired organizational results, such as good word-of-mouth (WOM), brand loyalty, customer readiness to pay higher prices, forgiving of brand mistakes, and favorable public displays of

passion towards the brand (Palusuk, N., Koles, & Hasan, 2019). Shimp and Madden's (1988) groundbreaking research is credited with helping to establish the notion of affection for brands in marketing research. The two researchers heavily depend on psychological ideas in this work. In particular, they claim that brand love includes the aspects of devotion, closeness, and commitment, adapting Sternberg's relational theory of love (Sternberg, 1986) to the setting of marketing and branding.

Love is described as " an attitude held by a person toward a particular other person, involving predispositions to think, feel and behave in certain ways toward the other person " (Rubin, 1973). Brand love, on the opposite hand, is a concept that characterizes the deep emotions and sense of connection that happy customers have for brands. The concept of brand love is derived from studies on consumer-brand connections and enjoyment (Gumparathi, V. P., and Patra, 2020). Brand love is defined as the amount of passionate emotional attachment; a satisfied consumer has for a particular brand name (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006)

The idea of brand love is developed further in later contributions, with a stronger emphasis on the marketing and branding environment. Ahuvia (2005) was among the first to undertake empirical study on the idea; using an interpretative strategy, the author demonstrates how consumers may form strong emotional bonds with a range of consuming items, including brands. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) then suggest that brand love may be

quantified using a ten-item questionnaire as a single-dimensional concept. Batra et al. (2012), who employ the idea of "prototype" to describe brand love, also put out a multi-faceted understanding of the term. For them, the idea of a "prototype" best captures complicated phenomena that are hard to define rigorously and precisely, such as love. The “self-brand integrating”, the “passion-driven behaviours”, the “long-term relationship”, positive overall “attitude valence”, “attitude certainty” and “confidence” (strength) and “anticipated separation distress” make up the seven fundamental components of the brand love model. On the basis of multiple studies on consumers in the United States, Batra et al. (2012) developed the brand love magnitude, which is an instrument for measurement that consists of 84 items organized in 16 first-order measurements, some of which are also categorized in second-order dimensions. (Zarantonello, L., Formisano, M., & Grappi, S.,2016).

### **Brand Attitude**

in the present study is defined as a favorable or unfavorable personal evaluation, emotional feeling, and behavior tendency that an individual keeps toward brand. (Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., Makens, J. C., & Baloglu, S., 2014). Brand attitude can be characterised as a network of interconnected beliefs and lasting opinions towards a brand: an overall brand evaluation (Eagly and Chaiken,1993; Keller,1993). It is a state of mind that enables a customer to develop viewpoints about brand based on attributes suchas features, durability, serviceability, and performance

(Aaker and Keller, 1990), as well as experiential benefits (Keller,1993). While brand attitude is relatively enduring when it is formed, research has also revealed that attitude can be changed over time through various marketing stimulus (e.g., Keller and Lehmann, 2006) and the attitude-behaviour link is subject to numerous moderating effects (ParkandMacInnis,2006). Brand attitudes are useful in predicting consumer behaviour.

#### **4 -Hypotheses Development**

##### **Sponsorship Disclosure and Brand Love**

Brands use SMIs to advertise and evaluate items in order to fully utilize the advertising capabilities of social media. Paid collaborations between brands and SMIs are commonly realized in the form of sponsored content. In other words, the influencer produces and posts an online suggestive post in exchange for payment from the sponsored company (Stubb, C., Nyström, A. G., & Colliander, J., 2019). There is little study exploring the effects of sponsoring declaration in the overall setting of digital consumer product reviews, despite the fact that research on sponsoring declaration has recently drawn greater interest in the environment of social media sites where paid eWOM is common.

A multiple-method study discovered that funded online customer product reviews were typically more intricate and nuanced than non-sponsored evaluations, and that revelation of sponsorship led to a decrease in the perceived value of reviews by readers. The study also discovered that disclosures increased



consumers' skepticism about reviewers' hidden agendas and, even in the case of positive reviews, reduced consumers' desire to make purchases (Kim, Maslowska, & Tamaddoni, 2019). According to some recent research (e.g., Boerman, Willemsen, and van der Aa 2017; Campbell, Mohr, and Verlegh 2013; de Veirman and Hudders 2020; van Reijmersdal et al. 2016), the disclosure of sponsored content had a negative impact on consumers' attitudes toward the brand in the setting of different types of eWOM, the interest in the blogger (Liljander et al. 2015), and reliability of the source (de Veirman and Hudders 2020; Liljander et al. 2015), a number of these investigations that especially looked at the effects of the message features of various eWOM sponsorship disclosure, like (1) clearly vs. inherent disclosure; (2) unclear vs. obvious disclosure the language itself; and (3) particular details showed in the disclosure, are especially pertinent to the present investigation.

Carr and Hayes (2014) discovered that clear publication of funding in a blog post—which discloses the full terms of sponsorship, such as receiving a smartwatch—increases the perceived reliability of the blogger considerably more than implicit publication, which only discloses the existence of paid sponsorship. This has a positive impact on the blogger's ability to influence readers' attitudes toward the subject of the study goods and purchase intentions. Evans et al. (2017) found that when it came to funded brand posts, clearer publication language ("Paid

ad"), as opposed to unclear publication (such as "SP"), raised brand understanding when buyers noticed and recalled the information and, as a result, negative reactions and a lower probability of participating in Ewom. Sponsored disclosure implications may also vary depending on the specific data provided: Hwang and Jeong (2016) discovered that bloggers' emphasis on objectivity in the face of sponsorship can lessen the negative effects of discloses on them.

Because electronic word-of-mouth marketing differs significantly from traditional advertising, even while a sponsored brand may affect the sentiment of eWOM, the content is still created by regular consumers, not advertisers. Due to this important distinction, it is likely that viewers may interpret more detailed disclosure of financial gain as a sign of the honesty and goodness of the content creator, leading them to have greater faith in them and to adopt more positive attitudes (Pfeuffer, A., & Huh, J., 2020).

The revelation of sponsorship, according to Evans et al. (2017) and van Reijmersdal et al. (2016), may result in increased perception of the material as advertising, which could reduce persuasiveness. However, there have been some conflicting findings in the previous research. Young consumers' reactions to alleged hidden (concealed) and explicit (obvious) advertising on blogs were documented by Liljander et al. (2015) who found no evidence of a detrimental impact on the blogger's trust. According to Colliander and Erlandsson (2015), when the

acknowledgment of the blog's sponsorship came from an outside source, it damaged the reputation of the blogger. Despite this, opinions of the sponsored brand were not similarly impacted. According to (Van Reijmersdal et al. , 2016) Sponsorship Disclosure has affective Resistance Responses.to the best knowledge of the researcher there is a lack of studies investigating the influencer marketing context Sponsorship Disclosure on brand love as a nouvelle construct of the consumer brand relationships. Also, most previous studies have applied Influencer marketing in contexts such as consumer electronics products. (Trivedi, J., & Sama, R., 2019; celebrity owned restaurants (Trivedi, J., & Sama, R. ,2021) Investigating the impact of Influencer marketing on Brand Love.

Consequently, the researcher anticipates that:

H1: Sponsorship Disclosure has a significant Impact on Brand Love.

### **Sponsorship Disclosure and brand attitude**

According to (Friestad and Wright 1994) *the persuasion knowledge model* explicates that whenever individuals spot a convincing trial, they could utilize their knowledge regarding conviction to handle the trial judgmentally and choose either to be convinced or to refuse such persuasion, particularly advertising literacy. (VanReijmersdal, E. A., Fransen, M. L., van Noort, G., Oprea, S. J., Vandenberg, L., Reusch, S., ... Boerman, S. C., 2016). According to Hudders et al. (2017) *advertising literacy* is defined as *person's ability to distinguish commercials,*

*apprehend its convincing purpose, and gain vision into convincing procedures.* Moreover, the concept infers person’s knowledge about discovering and regulating feelings provoked by ads and his capacity to assess commercials on realized objectivity and suitability. A key requirement to initiate such knowledge is the persons’ conscious that they are exposed to a commercial content. This attentiveness becomes lower in case of confronting hidden or inherent ad that is similar to editorial material. According to (Brehm and Brehm 1981) reactance theory proposed that clients refuse to feel deceived and appreciate their sovereignty and freedom. Once users recognize such a persuasion attempt via sponsorship disclosure, they start opposition due to sensation of threat to affect their choices. Consequently, sponsorship disclosure affects brand responses negatively through a critical consideration on the advertisement. (De Veirman, M., &Hudders, L. 2020).

Sponsorship disclosures might assist persons to detect the true intent regarding the social media post. Once users know the convincing reason behind the sponsored disclosed post, the opposition to the persuasion attempt takes place initiating precarious sense like ad skepticism. the word ‘sponsored’ displayed to a celebrity Facebook post improved user’s capacity to detect the native advertising embedded. Such a word impacted eWOM objectives negatively by reduction of message confidence. (Boerman, Willemsen, and Van DerAa,2017).

Evans et al. (2017) examined the effect of sponsorship Disclosure in Instagram posts and concluded that a full sponsorship disclosure ‘PaidAd’ or ‘Sponsored’ resulted in higher advertising recognition contradicting to an unclear acronym ‘SP’ or no disclosure. A prominent sponsorship disclosure provides a positive impact on ad recognition and disclosure memory. Consequently, provides a negative effect on both brand attitudes and consumers’ readiness to share the post.

The researcher surmises that the persuasion knowledge model (Friestad and Wright 1994) and reactance theory (Brehm and Brehm 1981) together bring forth that sponsorship disclosure is probably to aid users in discovering the native advertising of a sponsored social media post. The recognition that social media content has an advertising intent would trigger a doubtful estimation of the material leading to negative assessment of the brand.

Consequently, the researcher anticipates that:

H2: Sponsorship Disclosure has a significant Impact on Brand Attitude.

### **Brand attitude and Brand Love**

Batra, Ahuvia, and Bagozzi (2012) stated that adored trademarks are challenging to be substituted. Customers are worried in the case of their unattainability and are willing to reimburse exceptional price for those loved brands. According to (Alex and Joseph 2012) the remarkable and recognized antecedents of brand love are a positive brand attitude, a

sensation of affectional attraction with the brand and positive brand experiences. To develop brand love, a consumer must have a positive brand attitude and positive experiences, as well as a feeling of psychological proximity to the brand (Joji and Ashwin, 2012). Navaneethakrishnan, K., & Sathish, A. S. (2020) explore the love for the brand Amazon. The results revealed that brand attitude plays an important role in creating brand love. According to Trivedi, J., & Sama, R. (2020) who concluded that The Brand attitude affected Brand Love. As Brand Love is a somewhat unstudied variable designating an impressive consumer brand relation, it is important to investigate it more thoroughly. As the prior literature recognized brand attitude as an antecedent to brand love.

Consequently, the researcher anticipates that

H3: Brand Attitude has a significant impact on Brand Love

In conclusion, Sponsorship Disclosure can be argued to increase Brand Love. Consequently, we assume that Sponsorship has a positive effect on the brand attitude, and therefore the following hypothesis proposes that:

H4: The impact of Sponsorship Disclosure on Brand Love is mediated by Brand Attitude.

## 5-Conceptual Framework

The research Model of this study is a comprehensive theoretical model that composed of a set of correlated variables, that illustrates a methodical sight of the problem in investigation.

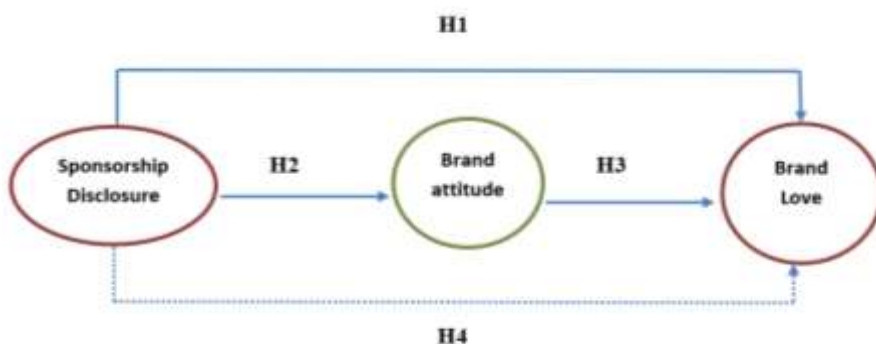


Figure (2) The conceptual Framework

## 6- Research Methodology and Data Collection

The researcher used the Deductive Approach to determine the relationships between the variables included in the research model based on the previous literature. Determining ways to measure dimensions, and developing the proposed framework for the relationships between research variables. The Inductive Approach was also used by directing an online-administered survey list of the items of the research sample and analyzing the data with the appropriate statistical methods to reach the results. It is represented in the data collected through the survey list from the clients under study, unloading and analyzing it in a way that enables the researcher to test the validity or falseness of the

study's hypotheses and reach the results. The research Design is descriptive cross sectional research Design.

The researchers employed non-probability convenience sampling as there is no sampling frame. The questionnaire was utilized as a tool for data collection. The researchers developed the items or scales included in the questionnaire list based on the previous studies. The questionnaire included a list of items that measures the research variables understudy. Where the sponsorship Disclosure construct was measured with the (3) items (Wojdyski, B. W., Evans, N. J., & Hoy, M. G., 2018). and Brand attitude was measured with (5) items (Spears and Singh 2004 Brand Love was measured by (9) items (Karjaluo, Munnukka, and Kiuru, 2016).); these items were measured using Five -point Likert scale which ranges between strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.

that The Population is represented by millennials (generation Y) and generation Z the Fast-food restaurant customers (McDonald's) who Follow SMIs on various SNS (Facebook, Instagram.). A self- administered online survey was launched and the number of respondents reached 402 the number of valid questionnaire lists was 392.

The total number of distributed questionnaires was 402 self-administered online Questionnaire to Fast-food restaurant customers (McDonald's) who Follow SMIs on Instagram. the number of respondents was (402) including (10) invalid

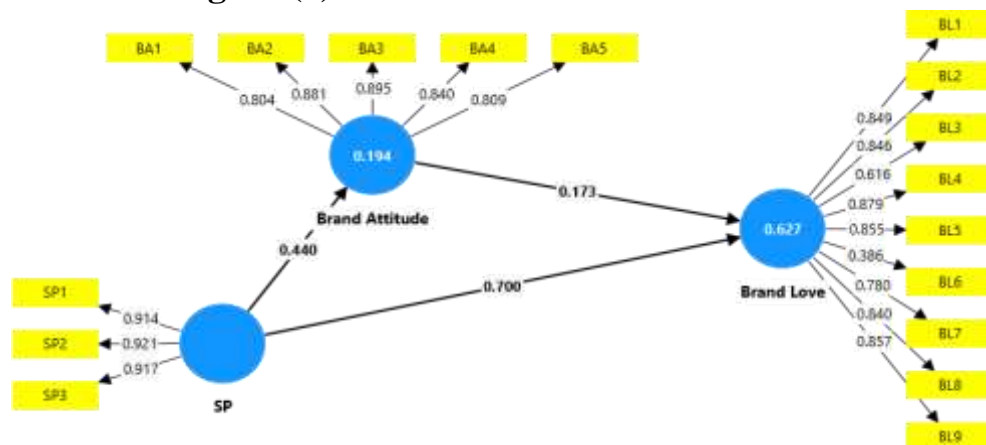


questionnaires that were excluded. Therefore, the total valid sample size in our study is (392) questionnaires. Data was collected online. Questionnaires were distributed electronically through designing the questionnaire on Google forms with a link for the Questionnaire.

To verify the face validity and the content validity of the measurement scale for this study, the questionnaire list was presented to five academic experts specialized in the marketing research field to review the questionnaire in terms of the relevance and bonding of the items for the research topic, also the extent of its clarity, wording, and structure. Few comments were received and were taken into consideration in the final version of the survey.

## 7. Statistical Analysis and Results

Figure (1) shows the measurement mode:



**Table (1): Factor loading**

	Brand Attitude	Brand Love	SP
BA1	0.804		
BA2	0.881		
BA3	0.895		
BA4	0.840		
BA5	0.809		
BL1		0.849	
BL2		0.846	
BL3		0.616	
BL4		0.879	
BL5		0.855	
BL6		0.386	
BL7		0.780	
BL8		0.840	
BL9		0.857	
SP1			0.914
SP2			0.921
SP3			0.917

According to Table (1), all factor loading values for all items are higher than 0.7, without (BL6) which means that the covariance between the latent variable and its items is greater than the variance of measurement errors, thus all the questionnaire items were retained.

**Table (2): Indicators of reliability and validity of the variables**

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Rho_C	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Attitude	0.901	0.907	0.927	0.717
Brand Love	0.915	0.934	0.932	0.613
sp	0.906	0.909	0.941	0.842

The traditional criterion for internal consistency is cronbach's alpha coefficient, which provides an estimate of reliability based on the correlations of the observed indicator variables. According to Table (2), cronbach's alpha coefficient values are all greater than 0.7, which indicates a high internal consistency of the questionnaire items used to measure the research variables.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient assumes that all the questionnaire items are equally reliable or have equal external factor loads on the construct. SEM -PLS prioritizes indicators according to their reliability, therefore, we rely on other coefficients and indicators that are more accurate than Cronbach's alpha coefficient, such as; The Rho De Joreskog criterion is more accurate than Cronbach's alpha coefficient, because it incorporates errors into its calculation process. Also, the composite reliability (CR) can be relied upon, which this indicator takes into account various external factor loads of the items and the statistically acceptable value for these coefficients is “greater than 0.7. We note that the values of both Rho\_A and

CR are greater than 0.7, which confirms the high internal consistency between the questionnaire items of these dimensions.

Also, the average variance extracted (AVE) expresses the average variance extracted for the items loaded for each indicator or the extent of convergence among the constituent dimensions of the latent variable. If the average variance extracted is greater than 0.5, this indicates the convergence between the dimensions of the latent variable (Hair et al., 2010, 2014). According to the results of the AVE coefficient, it is clear that the variables are highly consistent, as all values were greater than 0.5

**Table (3): Discriminant validity using Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)**

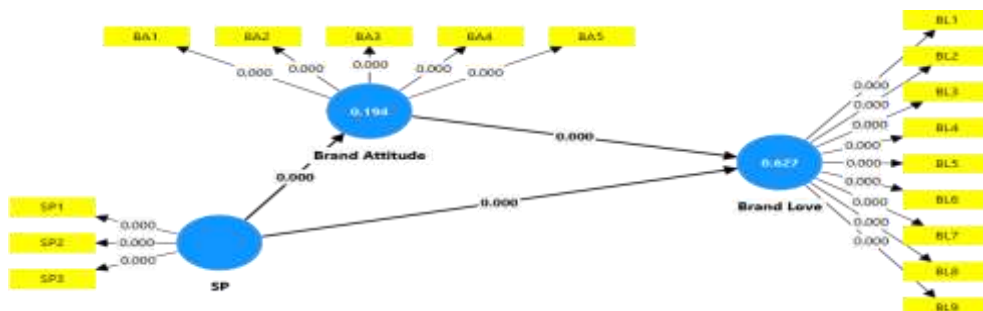
HTMT	Brand Attitude	Brand Love	Sponsorship
Brand Attitude			
Brand Love	0.514		
Sponsorship	0.483	0.848	

**Hetrotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) Criterion:** HTMT measures the correlation between indicators through constructs or latent variables, and the value of this criterion for variables must be less than 0.9 for it to be said that the model is characterized by discriminant validity. Table (3) shows all HTMT values are less than 0.9, which indicates the discriminant validity of all the variables that make up the study model.

**Table (4): Discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion**

Fornell	Brand Attitude	Brand Love	Sponsorship
Brand Attitude	0.847		
Brand Love	0.481	0.783	
Sponsorship	0.440	0.776	0.917

**Fornell Larker Criterion:** Fornell Larker measures the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) with the latent variables association matrix, and according to this criterion, for the model variables to be characterized by discriminant validity, the square root of the average variance extracted for one of the variables must be greater than the association of this variable with any other variable in the model (Hair et al., 2017). According to Table (4), we find that the diagonal values, which represent the square root of the average variance extracted for each variable, we find that they are greater than its association with other variables in the model, which indicates that the variables that make up the study model are characterized by discriminant validity.



**Table (5): Hypotheses test results**

H		Beta	T statistics	P values	Accepted /Rejected
Direct effect					
H1	Sponsorship -> Brand Love	0.700	20.531	0.000	Accepted
H2	Sponsorship -> Brand Attitude	0.440	10.100	0.000	Accepted
H3	Brand Attitude -> Brand Love	0.173	4.206	0.000	Accepted
Indirect effect					
H4	Sponsorship -> Brand Attitude-> Brand Love	0.076	3.848	0.000	Accepted

Table (5) shows that there is a positive effect of **sponsorship disclosure** on brand love, whereas, the value of ( $\beta = 70$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). This means that **sponsorship disclosure** contributes to improving brand love by 70%, at a significant level of less than 0.05. The value of "T" exceeds 1.96, which reflects the confidence level in the research results at a significant level of 95%, and therefore the first main hypothesis is accepted.

**Also**, the results show that there is a positive significant impact of **sponsorship disclosure** on **brand attitude**, whereas the value of ( $\beta = 44$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). This means that **sponsorship**

**disclosure** contributes to improving **brand attitude** by 44%, at a significant level of less than 0.05. The value of "T" exceeds 1.96, which reflects the confidence level in the research results at a significant level of 95%, and therefore the second main hypothesis is accepted.

There is a positive impact of brand attitude on brand love, whereas, the value of ( $\beta = 17$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). This means that brand attitude contributes to improving brand love by 17%, at a significant level of less than 0.001. The value of "T" exceeds 1.96, which reflects the confidence level in the research results at a significant level of 95%, and therefore the third main hypothesis is accepted.

Finally, the effect size of the mediator variable "brand attitude" in this relationship is determined based on the following table

**Table (6): The effect size of the mediator variable for the fourth hypothesis**

Steps	Hypotheses	Path analysis	Beta
First Step: Calculating the direct effect between Sponsorship and brand love without brand attitude			
Step1	H1	Sponsorship -> brand Love	0.700*
Second step: Calculating the indirect effect between Sponsorship and brand Love in the presence of brand attitude			
Step2	H3	Sponsorship -> Brand Attitude -> brand love	0.076***
Third Step: Total effect (direct effect + indirect effect)			
Step3		Sponsorship -> brand Love	0.776***
Fourth Step: Calculated the variance size = indirect effect/total effect			
Step4		Sponsorship -> brand Love	0.10
*** Significance level less than 0.001, confidence greater than 99.9%. ** Significance level less than 0.01, confidence greater than 99%. * Significance level less than 0.05, confidence greater than 95%.			

We conclude from the previous table (6) that the overall effect of Sponsorship on brand Love is 14%. Also, we note that the effect size of the variance calculated from the mediation analysis is 10%, which indicates the presence of partial mediation. Thus, brand attitude is accepted as a mediator variable for the relationship between Sponsorship Disclosure and brand Love.

Table (7): **Coefficient of determination of the dependent variable**

	R-square	R-square adjusted	interpretive ability
Brand Attitude	0.011	0.009	weak
Brand Love	0.257	0.253	weak

According to Table (7), the coefficients of  $R^2$  and  $R^2$  adjusted are all statistically acceptable, as the coefficients of determination of the dependent variable are the weak power. It is clear from the previous table (27) that the ( $R^2$ ) of love marks is 0.259, which means that the proposed research model explains 26% of achieving love marks.

### **Goodness-of-fit (GOF) index**

GOF index is a comprehensive measure of the measurement model using the PLS-SEM method. GOF measures the availability of the study model, which shows the overall performance of the research model. It is calculated from the relation  $GOF = \sqrt{R^2 * AVE}$



Wetzels et al. (2009) demonstrate the statistically acceptable value for this criterion is "greater than 0.30". According to our research model, we find that:

$$GOF = \sqrt{R^2 * AVE} = \sqrt{0.134 * 0.667} = 0.31$$

As the GOF value of the model is approximately equal to 0.31, which is greater than 0.30, this indicates the great quality of the study model or the results of this model can be relied upon with confidence because it is statistically acceptable.

## **8. Discussion, Implications, Future Research**

### **Discussion**

These results of Sponsorship Disclosure with Brand Attitude and Brand love are consistent with Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. A. (2014) Consequently, full disclosure of outside influence increases credibility by reducing the reader's uncertainty regarding the quality and character of the opinion leader by increasing the perceived credibility and forthrightness of the blogger. Moreover, there may be a complementary endorsement effect positively influencing credibility, particularly in the explicit disclosure condition. That an organization would sponsor the blogger for a review may imply company perceives the blogger as a knowledgeable and significant source of information regarding its products. Thus, explicit disclosure of sponsorship may create an endorsement effect, whereby the sponsored

reviewer is perceived as endorsed by—and therefore more credible regarding—a company or product.

These results of brand attitude and brand Love is consistent with Navaneethakrishnan, K., & Sathish, A. S. (2020). study applied in the context of online e-commerce portal “Amazon” in India in which their study findings reveal significant relationship between brand attitude and brand Love. The relationship between brand attitude and brand love which didn’t get much attention in research was tested. The results that brand attitude has a strong positive relationship with LoveMarks is part of the researcher’s contribution. Brand love increases with positive brand attitude. The impact of brand attitude on the consumer will increase the use of the brand and will push the consumer towards making a commitment to the brand (Kotler and Keller, 2008). Also, consumer with strong positive brand attitude would be willing to pay a premium for the brand (Keller, 1993). Brand attitude has an important relationship with brand love.

### **Importance from the practical perspective**

This is arguably one of the first studies focused on observing the effect of Sponsorship influencer marketing on consumer brand relationships behavior from the perspective of Brand Love. This research will be useful for SMIs themselves. It will provide practical guidelines when promoting for sponsored brands, SMIs are recommended to include (SD). It would also be beneficial for those who are working on fast food chain in Egypt,

by incorporating Influencer Marketing practices, and knowing if SD is needed to be possessed by the SMIs to be assigned for their planned campaigns. As Brand managers tend to create more lovable brands, e.g., McDonald’s “I’m Lovin it”. the impact of Sponsorship Disclosure on brand love has to be included in their Influencer marketing campaigns when contacting Sponsor SMIs.

### **Limitations and future Research:**

We acknowledge some limitations in our research, in which these limitations may also provide fruitful areas for future research. These limitations must be overcome to improve the accuracy and validity in the interpretation of this study. First, Limited in the terms of location. Egypt. Second, the practical consideration such as time, the current study's time horizon was a cross-sectional design since the research is resource and time constrained. Third, the chosen method, with non-probability convenience sampling, in which the researcher conducted the study at the expense of more generalizability to real world environments, where the techniques of probability sampling should be applied in future research. Fifth, this SMIs study relied heavily on young people (Gen Y & Gen Z) samples, with differences in socio-demographics being excluded. Therefore, future studies should consider more diverse populations and examine how age impacts the effectiveness of social media Influencer Marketing. Future research needs to expand this study, by investigating sponsorship disclosure types by SMI and their unique side being famous via the Internet., Investigating those

variables for Egyptian Customers in Experimental Designs to determine the cause-and-effect relationships. due to the variety of Loved brands and Products categories , the enormous amount of SMIs and their fields of Expertise, the customer brand relationships, other associations need to be considered in further research. This study only focused on fast food chain industry. Thus, future research may consider using other types of products with multiple brands such as (FMCG, electronics, mobile phones, coffee shop

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