





“Analyzing the impact of viral marketing on brand equity dimensions in Egypt’s home appliances sector: A customer and legal perspective”

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ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF VIRAL MARKETING ON BRAND EQUITY DIMENSIONS IN EGYPT'S HOME APPLIANCES SECTOR: A CUSTOMER AND LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

In the digital age, viral marketing has emerged as a key driver in shaping brand equity, particularly in the highly competitive Egyptian home appliances sector. Traditional marketing strategies have proven insufficient in reaching consumers with the same efficacy as viral campaigns, which leverage digital platforms and consumer networks. This study examines the influence of viral marketing on brand equity dimensions – brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand association – through the lens of both customer perception and legal frameworks. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 270 respondents across 389 companies, with a response rate of approximately 70% of the total population in Egypt's home appliances sector, with simple linear regression analysis employed to assess the relationships. The results indicate a strong positive effect of viral marketing on brand equity. Specifically, viral marketing accounts for 27.2% of the variance in brand awareness ($R^2 = 0.272$, $p < 0.001$), 28.1% in perceived quality ($R^2 = 0.281$, $p < 0.01$), 13.6% in brand loyalty ($R^2 = 0.136$, $p < 0.05$), and 40.9% in brand association ($R^2 = 0.409$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, the study finds that regulatory compliance plays a moderating role, ensuring that viral marketing campaigns remain within ethical and legal bounds, thereby enhancing consumer trust and the long-term impact of marketing efforts.

These findings highlight the strategic value of integrating viral marketing with a firm understanding of legal frameworks to optimize brand equity in Egypt's home appliances industry. This research provides actionable insights for brand managers and marketers looking to maximize the efficacy of their viral campaigns while maintaining brand integrity.

Keywords

viral marketing, brand equity, customer-based brand equity, home appliances industry, regulatory compliance, trademark law

JEL Classification M31, L68, M37, K20

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving digital marketing landscape, viral marketing has solidified its position as a powerful tool for engaging consumers and building brand equity, especially within highly competitive industries like Egypt's home appliances sector. Traditional marketing approaches, which often require significant financial resources, are increasingly being overshadowed by viral campaigns that leverage the widespread reach and engagement potential of social media and digital platforms (Awad, 2024). As consumer behavior continues to shift due to the influence of these platforms, businesses are compelled to adopt innovative strategies that go beyond traditional advertising to maintain their competitive edge (Watts & Peretti, 2007; Leskovec et al., 2005).

Viral marketing is crucial in shaping brand equity, with its ability to rapidly enhance brand awareness, influence perceived quality, and



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foster brand loyalty. In the home appliances sector, where consumer decision-making is significantly impacted by brand perception, viral marketing offers an efficient and cost-effective means of reaching vast audiences. Using electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and harnessing the power of social networks, companies can amplify their brand message, creating stronger consumer-brand associations and reinforcing loyalty (Mukherjee et al., 2023).

However, the success of viral marketing campaigns is not solely dependent on their reach but also on their ethical and legal compliance. Transparency and adherence to consumer protection laws are vital for maintaining brand integrity and consumer trust. In Egypt's home appliances market, understanding the intersection of viral marketing and regulatory frameworks is essential to ensuring long-term success and preventing potential legal pitfalls (Purohit, 2023). As the marketing landscape continues to evolve, companies must balance creativity with compliance to optimize the impact of their marketing efforts and enhance brand equity. Investigating the effects of viral marketing on brand equity dimensions, emphasizing the role of regulatory compliance in shaping these outcomes is very important for Egypt's home appliances sector.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the digital marketing era, viral marketing has become a critical strategy for building and enhancing brand equity. The relationship between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions, such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations, has been extensively studied. Aaker's (1991) work highlighted the significance of these brand equity dimensions in contributing to the overall value a brand brings to a product, emphasizing that high brand equity can lead to greater consumer preference and trust, setting the stage for businesses to leverage various marketing strategies, including viral marketing, to strengthen these dimensions.

The power of emotional contagion in viral marketing has been demonstrated through the use of humor and gender role blending in advertisements, which can activate emotional networks that enhance virality (Putri et al., 2023). Also, there is a significance of social media as a promotional tool, emphasizing the dual nature of viral marketing and e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth), which can be either positive or negative depending on factors affecting the company or product (Hendrayati & Pamungkas, 2020). Viral marketing is considered a creative marketing technique, allowing companies to innovatively break through the barriers customers have erected to avoid traditional promotional methods (Chusna, 2018).

The impact of viral marketing on brand awareness is particularly profound. Social media campaigns

have demonstrated a remarkable ability to increase brand visibility and consumer recognition. Research has shown that engaging content, which encourages sharing across digital networks, fosters a cascading effect that can amplify a brand's message and presence in the market (Cahyani & Sutrasawati, 2016). Higher brand awareness often translates to increased consumer preference and loyalty Cahyani (2016), while viral marketing on platforms like Instagram can significantly boost consumer interest and purchase intentions (Prayogo et al. 2023; Mulyaputri & Sanaji, 2020). The relationship between brand awareness and marketing performance has also been investigated in the context of Uganda Breweries Limited (UBL), with highlighting the positive impact of brand awareness on sales, profitability, and market share (Musiimenta et al., 2024; Kiiza, 2024). This phenomenon is evident in highly competitive sectors, such as Egypt's home appliances industry, where capturing and sustaining consumer attention is crucial (Amer & Ezz, 2023). Viral marketing serves as a potent tool for reinforcing the brand's position among consumers by expanding its visibility through digital interactions (Watts & Peretti, 2007).

The dynamics of viral marketing rely heavily on engaging and shareable content that resonates with audiences. By creating content that encourages users to share within their networks, viral marketing generates a ripple effect that exponentially increases brand visibility. This approach is especially important in industries where consumer engagement plays a vital role in shaping brand per-

ception (Leskovec et al., 2005). Companies aiming to establish a strong market presence can benefit from leveraging viral marketing's potential to enhance consumer recognition and recall (Grant, 2014). When executed effectively, viral marketing can significantly increase brand awareness by utilizing electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) to create a powerful amplification effect for brand messages (Prayogo et al., 2023).

The influence of viral marketing extends beyond awareness to impact perceived quality as well. In the mobile phone market in Tehran, research has shown that viral marketing has a positive impact on brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations, further supporting the effectiveness of this strategy (Rezvani et al., 2013). Campaigns that align a brand with positive attributes and experiences can significantly shape consumer perceptions, enhancing the brand's perceived quality (Vatjanasaregagul & Wang, 2011). Emotionally resonant content has been shown to alter consumer perceptions, positioning the brand as a premium choice within the market (Şahin et al., 2017). In sectors like home appliances, where perceived quality directly influences purchasing decisions, viral marketing can play a crucial role in building a brand's reputation (Heidari et al., 2023).

Brand loyalty, another critical aspect of brand equity, is also significantly influenced by viral marketing. When authors explored the impact of firm-generated content on social media platforms, finding that content tailored to the platform's communication style enhances social dissemination and viral potential (Zhang et al., 2023). Brand loyalty refers to the extent to which consumers exhibit attachment to a brand, leading to repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth. It has been established as a critical mediator between brand trust and overall brand performance (Brakus et al., 2009; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Engaging content fosters emotional connections between consumers and the brand, leading to repeat purchases and advocacy (Mukherjee et al., 2023). By acting as a bridge between brand awareness and purchase intentions, viral marketing creates a community of loyal consumers who actively support the brand (Maulida et al., 2022). Social networking site SNS marketing activities help to improve customer equity and customer equity im-

proves customer loyalty intention and future sales (Wang, 2020). Research on the relationship between brand equity and marketing performance in the Ugandan breweries sector has demonstrated a positive correlation between brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty with marketing performance (Elfekair et al., 2024). These findings indicate that strong brand equity can lead to improved market outcomes. This further suggests that viral marketing, by enhancing these dimensions of brand equity, can play a significant role in boosting marketing performance (Agaba, 2024).

Brand associations, which are the cognitive and emotional connections consumers form with a brand, are further strengthened by viral marketing. Emotionally engaging campaigns help establish strong brand associations, significantly impacting consumer attitudes and perceptions (Severi & Ling, 2013). The mental links consumers make between a brand and its attributes. Strong brand associations, as discussed by Severi and Ling (2013) and Park et al. (2010), can enhance brand equity by creating positive consumer attitudes and emotional connections. Viral marketing has the potential to create "brand love," fostering stronger emotional bonds and increasing customer loyalty (Sonia et al., 2024). This dynamic is especially relevant in markets where product differentiation is minimal, as it provides brands with a competitive edge by establishing a unique identity that resonates with consumers (Tabelessy, 2024).

In addition to the influence of viral marketing on brand equity dimensions, it is essential to consider the regulatory environment. Legal frameworks governing trademarks, consumer protection, and digital marketing practices are key factors in ensuring ethical marketing practices and maintaining consumer trust. Adhering to these regulations not only protects brand integrity but also enhances the long-term effectiveness of viral marketing campaigns (Purohit, 2023). In the context of Egypt's home appliances sector, understanding and complying with legal and regulatory standards are essential for optimizing the impact of viral marketing. The effectiveness of viral marketing must be balanced with legal and ethical considerations. Although viral marketing offers numerous advantages, it is essential to con-

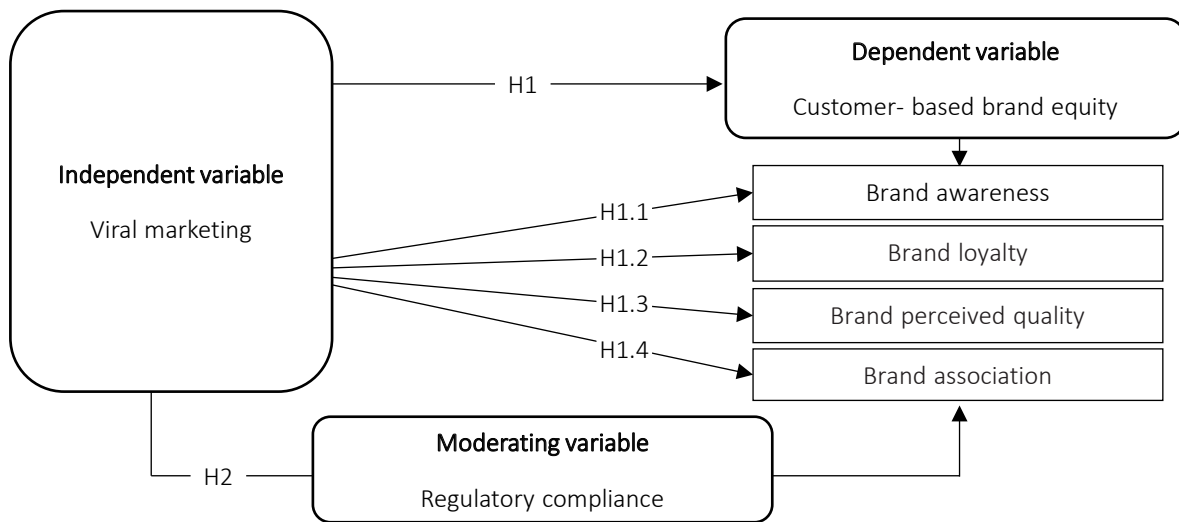


Figure 1. Research model

duct it within the framework of trademark and consumer protection laws to maintain brand integrity (Purohit, 2023). Transparency and accuracy in viral marketing campaigns are critical for fostering consumer trust and ensuring long-term relationships (Al-Sherman & Aldabousi, 2024). Ethical marketing practices are particularly relevant in markets where consumer confidence is a significant factor in enhancing brand equity (Obeidat et al., 2024).

In summary, the literature indicates that viral marketing has a profound impact on various aspects of brand equity, including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations. The strategic use of viral marketing in enhancing these dimensions is evident, though further research is needed to explore its optimization in the unique cultural and economic landscape of Egypt's home appliances sector.

This research aims to comprehensively analyze the impact of viral marketing on brand equity in Egypt's home appliances sector, providing actionable insights for brand managers and marketers to optimize their strategies while safeguarding brand value.

Using an analysis of existing literature and pertinent references, a research model was developed to visually represent the correlation between the research variables, as shown in Figure 1.

Considering the research model and its variables, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H1: There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on the dimensions of brand equity from the customers' perspective (brand awareness, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, brand association) in the home appliances industry in Egypt.

H1.1: There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on brand awareness in the home appliances industry in Egypt.

H1.2: There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on brand loyalty in the home appliances industry in Egypt.

H1.3: There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on perceived brand quality in the home appliances industry in Egypt.

H1.4: There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on brand association in the home appliances industry in Egypt.

H2: Regulatory compliance significantly moderates the relationship between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand association) in the home appliances industry in Egypt.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a quantitative research design with a descriptive and analytical approach to examine the impact of viral marketing on brand equity in Egypt’s home appliances sector. The research focuses on key dimensions of brand equity, including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand associations. Regulatory compliance was added to assess the extent to which companies in Egypt’s home appliances sector adhere to legal and regulatory frameworks during their viral marketing campaigns. This dimension includes items that evaluate transparency, consumer protection, and compliance with advertising standards. A survey method was employed as the primary data collection tool to gather insights from respondents within the target industry. The measurement scale used in the research can be illustrated in Table 1:

A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data, targeting general managers or their equivalents in companies operating in the home appliances sector in Egypt. The questionnaire was distributed electronically via email and messaging platforms, ensuring accessibility and encouraging participation. The questions aimed to capture various aspects of viral marketing’s influence on brand equity with moderating role of regulatory compliance from the perspective of those directly involved in marketing and brand management within the industry.

The research population comprises the home appliance industry in Egypt, consisting of 389 companies (Egyptian Federation of Industries, 2023). The authors employed a census approach for the study population, with the sampling unit being all general managers or their representatives in these companies. The questionnaire was distributed to all of them via electronic means for faster

response. A questionnaire template was designed electronically and sent through email. Data collection lasted for approximately three months, from March 3, 2024, to June 12, 2024. A total of 270 questionnaires were correctly completed, representing about 70% of the total population. The distribution of the recovered questionnaires is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of companies under study by activity

Activity	Number of companies
Home electrical appliances	218
Non-home electrical appliances	26
Cooling and air conditioning	26
Total	270

The authors used Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient to measure the content reliability of the study variables. As shown in Table 3, reliability is defined as the ability of an instrument to produce the same results if the measurement is repeated on the same person multiple times under the same conditions. Cronbach’s Alpha for the overall study variables (independent, moderating and dependent) was 0.793, indicating high reliability for the study sample. The questionnaire exhibits a very high degree of reliability. Higher Alpha values above 0.6 indicate that the scales used possess internal consistency and accurately measure the research phenomenon. This reflected on the content validity, which is the square root of reliability, and reached 0.891. The reliability coefficients for viral marketing (as an independent variable) were also high 0.868. The reliability coefficients for brand equity dimensions from a customer’s perspective (as a dependent variable) were high, ranging from 0.632 to 0.875, indicating the reliability of these measurements. This suggests that the research instrument is reliable, and its outputs can be generalized to the wider population.

Table 1. Measurement scales of research variables and number of items in the questionnaire

Variable	Type	Dimensions	Number of items
Viral marketing	Independent	Viral marketing	30
Regulatory compliance	Moderating variable	Regulatory compliance	10
Brand equity dimensions from a customer’s perspective	Dependent	Brand awareness	12
		Perceived brand quality	13
		Brand loyalty	10
		Brand association	10

Table 3. Reliability and content validity coefficients for research variables using Cronbach’s Alpha

Study dimensions	Number of items	Reliability coefficient	Validity coefficient
Independent variable (viral marketing)			
Viral marketing	30	0.868	0.931
Moderating variable (regulatory compliance)			
Regulatory compliance	10	0.750	0.866
Dependent variable dimensions (brand equity from a customer’s perspective)			
Brand awareness	12	0.844	0.918
Perceived brand quality	13	0.632	0.794
Brand loyalty	10	0.754	0.868
Brand association	10	0.875	0.935
Total brand equity dimensions from a customer’s perspective		0.776	0.878
Total dimensions of viral marketing and brand equity from a customer’s perspective (total dimensions of independent and dependent variables)		0.793	0.891

3. RESULTS

To test the main hypothesis *H1*, the analysis was divided into sub-hypotheses. To explore the relationship between viral marketing and brand awareness, a simple linear regression analysis was performed. Viral marketing served as the independent variable, while brand awareness was the dependent variable. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Simple linear regression analysis for viral marketing and brand awareness

Correlation coefficient (R)	Determination coefficient (R ²)	t	Sig.
0.522	0.272	17.25	0.000

The analysis indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between viral marketing and brand awareness in Egypt’s home appliance industry. The correlation coefficient R is 0.522, signifying a strong relationship. The determination coefficient R² is 0.272, suggesting that viral marketing accounts for 27.2% of the variance in brand awareness. The t-value of 17.25 at a significance level of 0.000 confirms the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating a significant effect of viral marketing on brand awareness.

To assess the relationship between viral marketing and perceived brand quality, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Simple linear regression analysis for viral marketing and perceived brand quality

Correlation coefficient (R)	Determination coefficient (R ²)	t	Sig.
0.551	0.281	43.571	0.001

The results show a positive and statistically significant relationship between viral marketing and perceived brand quality. The correlation coefficient R is 0.551, indicating a moderate to strong relationship. The determination coefficient R² is 0.281, implying that viral marketing explains 28.1% of the variance in perceived brand quality. The t-value of 43.571 at a significance level of 0.001 leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, affirming that viral marketing significantly impacts perceived brand quality.

Simple linear regression analysis was also used to investigate the relationship between viral marketing and brand loyalty. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Simple linear regression analysis for viral marketing and brand loyalty

Correlation coefficient (R)	Determination coefficient (R ²)	t	Sig.
0.370	0.136	94.078	0.019

The analysis reveals a positive and statistically significant relationship between viral marketing and brand loyalty. The correlation coefficient R is 0.370,

indicating a moderate relationship. The determination coefficient R^2 is 0.136, showing that viral marketing accounts for 13.6% of the variance in brand loyalty. The t-value of 94.078 with a significance level of 0.019 results in the rejection of the null hypothesis, suggesting a significant effect of viral marketing on brand loyalty.

To examine the relationship between viral marketing and brand association, simple linear regression analysis was employed. The findings are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Simple linear regression analysis for viral marketing and brand association

Correlation coefficient (R)	Determination coefficient (R^2)	T0	Sig.
0.640	0.409	40.060	0.000

The findings indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between viral marketing and brand association. The correlation coefficient R is 0.640, representing a strong relationship. The determination coefficient R^2 is 0.409, meaning that viral marketing explains 40.9% of the variance in brand association. With a t-value of 40.060 at a significance level of 0.000, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that viral marketing significantly influences brand association.

The regression analyses confirm that viral marketing has a statistically significant effect on all four dimensions of brand value – brand awareness, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, and brand

association – among companies in the home appliance industry in Egypt.

Based on the moderated regression analysis for the relationship between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions with regulatory compliance as a moderating variable, Table 8 shows the results.

As shown in Table 8, R reflects the strength of the relationship between viral marketing and each of the brand equity dimensions. R^2 indicates the percentage of variance in the dependent variable explained by viral marketing. All relationships between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions are statistically significant (p -value < 0.05).

As shown in Table 9, R^2 change shows the increase in variance explained in the dependent variable (brand equity dimensions) after adding the moderating variable (regulatory compliance). Interaction term, the beta value for the interaction effect between viral marketing and regulatory compliance, p -value, is less than 0.05, indicating that regulatory compliance significantly moderates the relationship between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions.

The analysis reveals that the impact of viral marketing on brand awareness is significantly enhanced with the presence of regulatory compliance, with $\beta = 0.189$ and p -value = 0.004, suggesting that compliance strengthens the effect. Regulatory compliance has a strong positive influence on the relationship between viral marketing and perceived quality, with $\beta = 0.215$ and p -value = 0.002. While the moderating effect on brand loyalty

Table 8. Basic regression analysis table (simple linear regression)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R	R^2	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
Brand awareness	Viral marketing	0.522	0.272	17.25	0.000
Perceived quality	Viral marketing	0.551	0.281	11.32	0.001
Brand loyalty	Viral marketing	0.370	0.136	9.78	0.015
Brand association	Viral marketing	0.640	0.409	14.23	0.000

Table 9. Moderated regression analysis table (with regulatory compliance)

Dependent variable	Independent variable	R^2 change	Interaction term (beta)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
Brand awareness	Viral marketing × regulatory compliance	0.035	0.189	2.87	0.004
Perceived quality	Viral marketing × regulatory compliance	0.042	0.215	3.12	0.002
Brand loyalty	Viral marketing × regulatory compliance	0.029	0.145	2.54	0.011
Brand association	Viral marketing × regulatory compliance	0.050	0.230	3.45	0.001

ality is less pronounced than other dimensions, it remains statistically significant.

This dimension shows the highest interaction effect ($\beta = 0.230$), indicating that regulatory compliance significantly enhances the impact of viral marketing on consumers' brand association.

The results suggest that regulatory compliance not only plays a significant role but also substantially moderates the relationship between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions. These findings emphasize the importance of regulatory compliance in building effective and sustainable marketing strategies.

The results of the hypotheses testing conducted during this study are presented in Table 10. The study summarizes the relationships between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions, as well as the moderating effect of regulatory compliance. Table 10 indicates whether each hypothesis was accepted or rejected based on the findings derived from the regression analyses, and provides a detailed overview of the hypotheses, their respective testing outcomes, and the conclusions drawn from the data.

4. DISCUSSION

This study provides valuable insights into the influence of viral marketing on customer-based brand equity (CBBE) within Egypt's home appliances industry. The findings show a strong and statistically significant relationship between viral marketing and the key dimensions of brand equity: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand association. These results are consistent with prior research, which has highlighted the ability of viral marketing to enhance brand visibility and influence consumer behavior.

The correlation between viral marketing and brand awareness demonstrates the importance of creating shareable content that captures consumer interest and fosters recognition. Viral marketing allows brands to rapidly disseminate their messages through social networks, generating a cascading effect that amplifies brand visibility. This finding aligns with studies by Prayogo et al. (2023) and Mulyaputri and Sanaji (2020), who showed that viral marketing significantly boosts brand recognition and increases consumer interest in various sectors. For com-

Table 10. Hypotheses testing results

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis text	Hypothesis testing results	Conclusion (accepted or rejected)
H1	There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on the dimensions of brand equity from the customers' perspective (brand awareness, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty, brand association) in the home appliances industry in Egypt.	Simple linear regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship.	Rejected
H1.1	There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on brand awareness in the home appliances industry in Egypt.	Significant positive relationship found ($R^2 = 0.272, p < 0.001$).	Rejected
H1.2	There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on brand loyalty in the home appliances industry in Egypt.	Significant positive relationship found ($R^2 = 0.136, p < 0.05$).	Rejected
H1.3	There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on perceived brand quality in the home appliances industry in Egypt.	Significant positive relationship found ($R^2 = 0.281, p < 0.01$).	Rejected
H1.4	There is no statistically significant impact of viral marketing on brand association in the home appliances industry in Egypt.	Significant positive relationship found ($R^2 = 0.409, p < 0.001$).	Rejected
H2	Regulatory compliance significantly moderates the relationship between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand association) in the home appliances industry in Egypt.	A significant moderating effect was found ($p < 0.05$).	Accepted

panies in Egypt's home appliances industry, developing strategic content that resonates with their audience can create strong brand awareness, which is crucial in a highly competitive market.

In terms of perceived quality, the study revealed a significant positive relationship between viral marketing and how consumers perceive the quality of a brand. This finding underscores the role of viral campaigns in shaping consumer perceptions by associating the brand with positive attributes, experiences, and emotions. This is particularly relevant in industries like home appliances, where consumer trust in product quality heavily influences purchase decisions. The findings support the research of Vatjanasaregagul and Wang (2011) and Şahin et al. (2017) who emphasize that high-quality, emotionally resonant viral content can significantly improve a brand's perceived quality.

The study also found a moderate yet significant relationship between viral marketing and brand loyalty. While the impact on loyalty was somewhat weaker compared to other dimensions, the findings are consistent with the work of Mukherjee et al. (2023) who identified viral marketing as a tool for building long-term consumer loyalty through engaging and emotionally compelling content. For companies in the home appliances sector, fostering brand loyalty through viral marketing requires continuous engagement with consumers, creating content that encourages repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth.

Brand association emerged as the dimension most positively affected by viral marketing, with a strong relationship indicating that viral campaigns can effectively strengthen the mental and emotional connections consumers have with a brand. This supports the findings of Severi and Ling (2013) and Park et al. (2010) who noted that brand associations contribute significantly to overall brand equity. By leveraging viral marketing strategies that clearly convey a brand's values and characteristics, companies can cultivate deeper emotional connections with their consumers, which in turn enhances brand equity.

A unique aspect of this study is the inclusion of regulatory compliance as a moderating variable. The results demonstrate that legal frameworks play a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of viral marketing campaigns. Regulatory compliance positively moderates the relationship between viral marketing and brand equity dimensions, suggesting that adhering to legal and ethical standards strengthens consumer trust and ensures the sustainability of marketing efforts. This finding aligns with studies by Purohit (2023) who emphasized the importance of trademarks and consumer protection laws in safeguarding brand integrity. Ensuring transparency and adherence to regulations not only protects brands from legal risks but also enhances their credibility in the eyes of consumers.

While viral marketing presents significant opportunities for brands to expand their reach and engage consumers, it also poses challenges related to the ethical use of consumer data, transparency, and compliance with advertising standards. In markets like Egypt, where the legal and regulatory environment is still evolving, companies must balance the creative aspects of viral marketing with the need for legal compliance. Failure to do so can result in reputational damage and loss of consumer trust.

The findings of this study have practical implications for brand managers and marketers in Egypt's home appliances sector. First, companies should prioritize creating engaging, shareable content that resonates with their target audience to enhance brand awareness and perception. Second, ensuring that viral campaigns align with regulatory requirements is essential for building long-term trust and brand equity. Marketers should work closely with legal teams to ensure that their campaigns comply with consumer protection and advertising laws, thus safeguarding the brand's reputation.

While this study offers significant insights into the impact of viral marketing on brand equity, it is limited to the home appliances sector in Egypt. Future research could expand on this by exploring other industries and geographic regions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how viral marketing influences brand equity across different contexts. Additionally, further research is needed to explore the evolving role of regulatory compliance in digital marketing strategies, especially in

emerging markets where legal frameworks are still developing.

In conclusion, this study reaffirms the value of viral marketing in enhancing brand equity, particularly

in industries where consumer perception is critical. By integrating regulatory compliance into their marketing strategies, companies can maximize the effectiveness of viral campaigns while maintaining consumer trust and ensuring long-term success.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the relationship between viral marketing and customer-based brand equity (CBBE) in Egypt's home appliances sector, with a focus on the moderating role of regulatory compliance. The research aimed to determine how viral marketing impacts brand equity dimensions—brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand association—and the extent to which regulatory compliance enhances these effects.

The study's findings revealed a significant positive relationship between viral marketing and all four dimensions of brand equity. Viral marketing was shown to increase brand awareness, improve perceived quality, foster brand loyalty, and strengthen brand associations. Additionally, regulatory compliance was identified as a key moderating factor, enhancing the impact of viral marketing by ensuring campaigns are conducted ethically and within legal boundaries. This not only strengthened consumer trust but also contributed to long-term brand equity.

From these results, it can be concluded that integrating viral marketing strategies with regulatory compliance significantly boosts brand equity in Egypt's home appliances sector. Companies that develop engaging viral campaigns while adhering to legal standards are more likely to build sustainable relationships with consumers and maintain their brand's integrity.

In summary, this study highlights the critical role of viral marketing in enhancing brand equity and the importance of regulatory compliance in ensuring the effectiveness and ethical execution of these campaigns. Businesses in the home appliances industry should focus on creating impactful viral marketing strategies, while simultaneously adhering to legal frameworks, to maximize their brand equity and secure a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Abdelrehim Awad, Ahmed Moustafa Aldabousi.

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Writing – review & editing: Abdelrehim Awad, Ahmed Moustafa Aldabousi.

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