

# The Effect of Firm's Brand Reputation on Customer Loyalty and Customer Word of Mouth: The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction and Customer Trust

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explain the role of corporate brand reputation in building strong relationships with customers. This study aims to build and test a model that includes interrelationships among a corporate brand reputation and its possible consequences. A structured questionnaire was distributed to users of home appliances who are located in Egypt. Data were obtained from 357 respondents and were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version.16 and analysis of moment structure package (AMOS) version.18. The results indicated that a firm's brand reputation has a significant impact on customer satisfaction which has a significant effect on customer trust and both customer satisfaction and customer trust have a significant effect on customer loyalty. The results of this research can be generalized to other industries and other countries. Firms can have a good reputation by offering high-quality and innovative products to the customers and considering the criteria that the customers use to evaluate home appliances before purchasing. This study is one of the few studies that investigate the interrelationships among a corporate brand reputation and its possible consequences. This study helps firms' managers to know how to create a positive corporate brand reputation and gain its benefits.

**Keywords:** corporate brand reputation, customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty, customer word of mouth

## 1. Introduction

(Abimbola and Vallaster, 2007) mentioned that the role of reputation is becoming increasingly important in competitive markets. (Hall, 1993) found that CEOs consistently ranked corporate reputation as the most important key intangible resource. (Vance and De Angelo, 2007) mentioned that corporate reputation is one of the main intangible resources that is a driver of organizational performance. (Kotha, et al., 2001) mentioned that reputation is an investment. (Hunt and Morgan, 1995) defined reputation as an intangible asset that generates superior financial performance to the firm relative to its competitors. (Gardberg and Fombrun, 2002) stated that a firm's reputation is a soft asset that represents a competitive advantage that is hard to imitate and can generate superior profits. (Almeida and Coelho, 2017) mentioned that corporate reputation is considered a necessary intangible asset that helps the firm to build its competitive advantage. (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001; Yoon, 1993) indicated that a firm's reputation represents a competitive advantage that is hard to imitate and contributes to superior profits. (Vidaver-Cohen, 2007; Gok and Ozkaya, 2011) mentioned that a good reputation maximizes the organization's ability to offer products with high added value to target customers and it reduces stakeholders' uncertainty about an organization's future performance. (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Eidson and Master, 2000; Roberts and Dowling, 2002; Eberl and Schwaiger, 2005) mentioned that a positive corporate reputation has positive consequences; they are higher customer retention, increased sales, operating cost reduction, higher product price, increased repurchase, increased revenues, and decreased capital costs. (Fombrun, 1996) stated that a good reputation can lead to numerous strategic benefits such as lowering firm costs, enabling firms to charge premium prices, attracting applicants, customers, and investors, and creating competitive barriers. (Chun, 2005) mentioned that a positive firm's reputation motivates shareholders to invest in a firm, it affects positively an employee's retention and it increases customer loyalty. (Walsh and Beatty, 2007; Walsh, et al., 2009) suggested that corporate reputation is associated with customer satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and positive word of mouth.

(Chahal and Kumari, 2014) mentioned that a negative corporate reputation has negative consequences which include lower sales, low customer retention, and a high switching rate. (Chen and Otubanjo, 2013; Chen, et al., 2016) mentioned that the uses of corporate reputation can be classified into three aspects; they are value creation, strategic resource, and corporate communication. (Fombrun, 1996; Dierickx and cool, 1989) mentioned that corporate reputation creates value for stakeholders in the future. (Beatty and Ritter, 1986; Roberts and Dowling, 2002) claim that a corporate reputation is a defense strategy that wards off the competitors and creates a competitive advantage. (Barmmer and Pavelin, 2006) argued that a corporate reputation is a mean for shaping the opinions of stakeholders about the firm. (Hall, 1993) recommended that reputation should receive constant management attention. (Hardaker and Fill, 2005) indicated that the importance of corporate reputation is greater for services firms than manufacturers because the service is intangible so, it may be more difficult to be evaluated by consumers. (Swoboda and Hirschmann, 2017) mentioned that customers use corporate reputation as the most reliable indicator of a firm's ability to satisfy their desires. This research aims to answer the following questions:

Q1: Does corporate brand reputation affect customer satisfaction significantly?

Q2: Does corporate brand reputation affect customer trust significantly?

Q3: Does customer satisfaction affect customer trust significantly?

Q4: Does customer satisfaction affect customer loyalty significantly?

Q5: Does customer satisfaction affect customer word of mouth significantly?

Q6: Does customer trust affect customer loyalty significantly?

Q7: Does customer trust affect customer word of mouth significantly?

Q8: Does corporate brand reputation affect customer loyalty significantly?

Q9: Does customer satisfaction mediate the relationship between corporate brand reputation and customer loyalty?

Q10: Does customer trust mediate the relationship between corporate brand reputation and customer loyalty?

Q11: Does corporate brand reputation affect customer word of mouth significantly?

Q12: Does customer satisfaction mediate the relationship between corporate brand reputation and customer word of mouth?

Q13: Does customer trust mediate the relationship between corporate brand reputation and customer word of mouth?

## 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

### *Corporate reputation*

(Weigelt and Camerer, 1988) defined corporate reputation as a set of economic and non-economic attributes that a firm gained according to its past behavior. (Bromley, 1993) defined reputation as an accumulated impression of firm's external stakeholders. (Fombrun, 1996) mentioned that reputation is stakeholders' accumulated experiences with a firm. (Post and Griffin, 1997) mentioned that corporate reputation is a combination of opinions and attributes of a company's stakeholders including customers, investors, suppliers, employees, community, ...etc. (Brown and Dacin, 1997) defined corporate reputation as an overall impression of a company based on information, opinions, and associations cues generated in the minds of its stakeholders. (Weiss, et al., 1999) mentioned that corporate reputation reflects how well it has done in the eyes of the marketplace. (Garuana and Chirop, 2000) stated that corporate reputation emerges from the images held by the public of an organization. (Fombrun, et al., 2000) defined corporate reputation as a collective assessment of a company's ability to provide valued outcomes to a representative group of stakeholders. (Schultz, et al., 2001) mentioned that corporate reputation is an assessment of the firm made by a set of audiences based on their perceptions. (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001) indicated that corporate reputation is a stakeholder's overall evaluation of a company's overtime based on the stakeholder's direct experience with the company. (Rose and Thomsen, 2004) stated that corporate reputation reflects stakeholders' perceptions of a given firm based on what they think and what they know about the firm. (Argenti and Druckenmiller, 2004) stated that the corporate reputation is a reputation built on objective representations of images of a society over time which depends on the program's identity of a company, its performance, and how a population perceives the behavior of several constituencies. (Rindova, et al., 2005) mentioned that corporate reputation is the firm's ability to provide higher value relative to its competitors from its stakeholders' perspectives. (Brown, et al., 2006) defined corporate reputation as mental

associations about the firm held by others outside the firm. (Castro, et al., 2006) defined corporate reputation as the collective representation of actions and outcomes of the past and the pre-set of the organization that describes its capability to obtain valuable outcomes for different stakeholders. (Basdeo, et al., 2006) mentioned that stakeholders receive and interpret the firm's strategic choices to form representations that shape corporate reputation. (Walsh and Beatty, 2007) mentioned that corporate reputation is the customer's overall evaluation of a firm based on his/her reactions to the firm's known activities, goods, services, communication activities, and interactions with the firm and its representatives. (Walker, 2010) defined corporate reputation as a relatively stable, specific, aggregate, and perceptual representation of a company's past actions, and prospects compared against some standards. (Ruiz, et al., 2016) mentioned that corporate reputation is an indicator of the quality of business actions. (Davies and Miles, 1998) mentioned that there are three dimensions of corporate reputation; they are identity, image, and desired identity. (Davies and Miles, 1998) defined identity as how we see ourselves, they defined image as to how others see ourselves and they defined the desired identity as how we want others to see ourselves. (Barnett, et al., 2006) stated that identity, image, and reputation are still often used interchangeably. (Gray and Balmer, 1998) defined organizational identity as the distinct characteristics of the organization; in other words, it is what the organization actually is. (Bromley, 2000) stated that identity is the way key members conceptualize their organization. (Davies, et al., 2001) defined corporate identity as employees' view of the company. (Barnett, et al., 2006) stated that identity is the basic characteristic of the company. According to the previous discussion, the researcher suggests that identity is considered the employees' actual evaluation or opinion about the firm. (Bromley, 2000) defined organizational image as the way a company presents itself to its audience. (Whetten and Mackey, 2002) stated that image is what company's owners want their external stakeholders to understand the most distinctive about it. (Lewellyn, 2002) suggested that corporate image is a message sent from a firm to its external stakeholders. (Brown, et al., 2006) stated that organizational image is what an organizational member wants others to know about the organization. According to the previous discussion, the researcher suggests that the image is a desired evaluation or opinion that the firm tries to build into the minds of its external stakeholders. (Bromley, 2000) suggested that corporate reputation is the way key external stakeholders conceptualize the company. (Cable and Graham, 2000) suggested that a firm's reputation is a public's effective evaluation of a firm's name relative to other firms' names. (Lewellyn, 2002) defined an organization's reputation as a message available to an organization from its stakeholders. (Rindova, et al., 2005) defined a firm's reputation as stakeholders' opinions about a firm's ability to build better value compared to the competitive firms. (Rhee and Haunschild, 2006) stated that corporate reputation is the consumer's subjective assessment of the perceived quality of the firm's product. (Barnett, et al., 2006) stated that a firm's reputation is the evaluations made by observers about a firm. (Brown, et al., 2006) mentioned that organizational reputation is the perception of the organization actually held by its external stakeholders. According to the previous discussion, the researcher suggests that corporate reputation is considered the actual evaluation or opinion of the firm's external stakeholders about it. (Walker, 2010) mentioned that corporate reputation has five attributes; (1) it is based on perceptions, (2) it is the total perception of all stakeholders, (3) it is comparative; the firm's reputation can be compared with a previous reputation of a firm, other leading competitors or an industry average, (4) it can be positive or negative and (5) it is stable and enduring.

#### *Dimensions and measures of corporate brand reputation*

Fortune's AMAC annually surveys CEOs and asks them to evaluate a competitor's reputation according to (8) key sub-measures of reputation; they are financial soundness, long term investment value, use of corporate assets, innovativeness, quality of products and services, ability to attract, develop and keep talented people and acknowledgment of social responsibility (Fortune, 2000). Financial Times surveys the CEOs of the most respected ranked companies based on (8) criteria of reputation; they are strong and well-thought-out strategy, maximizing customer satisfaction and loyalty, business leadership, quality of products and services, strong and consistent profit performance, robust and human corporate culture, successful change management and globalization of business (Financial Times, 2000). (Caruana and Chircop, 2000) developed (12) items of reputation; they are quality of a product, advertising, sponsoring activities, conduct factory tour, long-established tradition, highly regarded employment with the firm, well-trained employees, well-known products, strong management, cost of advertisement, soundness of company and profitability. (Fombrun, et al., 2000) developed a reputation quotient model that contains (20) items for measuring corporate reputation. These items were analyzed into (6) factors; they are the emotional appeal, products and services, vision and leadership, workplace environment, social and environmental responsibility, and financial performance. (Fombrun, et al., 2000) also named the first factor with (3) items the emotional factor and they named the other five factors with (17) items the rational factors. (Castro, et al., 2006) suggested that corporate reputation consists of two key components; they are (1) business reputation which is resulted from perceptions of stakeholders who are close to business

activities of the firm such as managers, employees, suppliers, and customers, and (2) social reputation which is resulted from perceptions of other stakeholders who aren't close to business activities of the firm such as investors and community at large. (Walsh and Beatty, 2007) suggested that customer-based corporate reputation consists of five dimensions; they are (1) customer orientation which refers to the customers' perceptions of the willingness of company's employees to satisfy their needs, (2) good employer which refers to the customers' perceptions about employees' competence, (3) a reliable and financially strong company which refers to company's competence and profitability, (4) product and service quality which refers to customers' perceptions of the value and reliability of the firm's goods and services, (5) social and environmental responsibility which refers to customers' perceptions of the role of the company toward the environment in general.

#### *Corporate brand reputation and customer satisfaction*

(Day, 1977) defined customer satisfaction as a customer's evaluation of the suitability of using the firm's product or service. (Helm, 2006) defined customer satisfaction as the individual's own experiences of the company's products and services. (Oliver, 2010) defined customer satisfaction as a judgment that a product is providing a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment including levels of under or over fulfillment. (Kotler and Keller, 2008) mentioned that customer satisfaction is a customer's feeling that results from comparing customer's perceptions with customer's expectations if the performance is short, the customer will be dissatisfied if the performance matches the expectations, the customer will be satisfied and if the performance exceeds expectations the customer will be highly satisfied or delighted. (Garcia de los Salmones, et al., 2009) proved that both corporate social responsibility oriented to customers and employees impact customer satisfaction. (Lei and Jolibert, 2012) concluded that there is a strong correlation between customer satisfaction and firm reputation. (Chang, 2013) proved that corporate reputation is a significant predictor of customer satisfaction. (Su, et al., 2015) concluded that corporate reputation has a significant and direct impact on customer satisfaction. (Perez and Rodriguez, 2015) found that customers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility initiatives significantly and positively impact customer satisfaction. (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Bigne, et al., 2011; Saeidi, et al., 2015; Rivera, et al., 2016; Bianchi, et al., 2019) proved that perceived corporate social responsibility has a significant direct positive effect on brand satisfaction. (Chang, 2013) mentioned that a positive and strong firm's reputation refers to customers' expectations about receiving high-quality products and these expectations lead to customers' satisfaction with a firm. According to the above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H1: A firm's brand reputation has a significant and positive impact on customer satisfaction.

#### *Corporate brand reputation and customer trust*

(Chang, 2013) found that corporate reputation is a significant predictor of customer trust. (Doney and Cannon, 1997; Groenland, 2002; Keh and Xie, 2009; Jeng, 2011; Jalilvand, et al., 2017b) proved that corporate reputation significantly and positively affects customer trust. (Casalo, et al., 2011) concluded that consumer trust in a certain website is influenced by website reputation. (Kirmani and Rao, 2000) mentioned that customers are likely to perceive a good reputable brand as trustworthy as opposed to a poor reputable brand. (Osakwe, et al., 2020) found that corporate reputation has a positive role in the development of customer trust. (Loureiro and Kastenholz, 2011) mentioned that high-reputed firms can build customer trust and reduce customers' perception of risk. (Chang, 2013) mentioned that a strong corporate reputation works to inspire confidence in an organization. (Jalilvand, et al., 2017b) stated that consumers may perceive highly reputable companies as trustworthy. (Bartikowski, et al., 2011) indicated that a firm's strong reputation leads to customers' trustworthiness which motivates them to attach to the firm. (Osterhus, 1997) stated that the firm's ethical practices significantly affect customer trust in the firm. (Hosmer, 1994) mentioned that considering ethical principles in companies' strategic decision-making process helped firms to build trust with stakeholders. (Brown and Dacin, 1997) mentioned that the company's social responsibility initiatives provide information about its character and values that help in building trust in the company. (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001) stated that corporate social responsibility activities protect and improve the welfare of the society thus building trust among consumers. According to the previous discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H2: A firm's brand reputation has a significant and positive impact on customer trust.

#### *Customer satisfaction and customer trust*

(Delgado and Munuera, 2005; Lam and Shanker, 2014; Li, et al., 2014) indicated that brand satisfaction increases brand trust. (Casalo, et al., 2011) found that consumer trust in a certain website is affected by consumer satisfaction with this website. According to the above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H3: Customer satisfaction has a significant and positive impact on customer trust.

*Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty*

(Zeithaml, et al., 1996) defined customer loyalty as expressing a preference for a company over others by continuing to purchase from it or by increasing business with it in the future. (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001) mentioned that brand loyalty has two dimensions: attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty. Attitudinal loyalty is defined as the customer's willingness to repurchase the brand whereas behavioral loyalty is defined as the actual repurchasing action. (Salmones, et al., 2009) anticipated that customer satisfaction has a significant and positive impact on customer loyalty and customer satisfaction is considered one of the main determinants of customer loyalty. (Gronholdt, et al., 2000; Athanassopoulos, et al., 2001; Henning - Thureau, et al., 2002; Chumpitaz and Paparoidamis, 2007) emphasized that customer satisfaction is an obvious antecedent of customer loyalty. (Delgado and Munuera, 2001) mentioned that customer satisfaction is one of the key constructs predicting customer loyalty. (Garcia de Los Salmones, et al., 2009; Kim, et al., 2010; Matute, et al., 2011; Perez, et al., 2013; Gallarza, et al., 2013; Ozkan, et al., 2020) concluded that customer satisfaction is positively and directly related to customer loyalty. (Delgado and Munuera, 2005; Chang, et al., 2009; He, et al., 2012; Ha and Park, 2013; Lin, et al., 2015; Su, et al., 2015; Kim, et al., 2016; Bianchi, et al., 2019) proved that customer satisfaction significantly and positively affects customer loyalty. (Hasnelly and Yusuf, 2012; Sharifi and Esfidani, 2014) found that customer satisfaction has a significant positive influence on customer loyalty. (Loureiro and Kastenholz, 2011) found that customer satisfaction is an important antecedent of customer loyalty. (Liu and Jang, 2009; Loureiro and Kastenholz, 2011; Chang, 2013; Giovanis and Athanasopoulou, 2017) concluded that customer satisfaction is a strong driver of repurchase intentions. (Deng, et al., 2010; Liu, et al., 2011; Nam, et al., 2011; Chen, 2012) indicated that customer satisfaction is one of the antecedents of customer loyalty and has a positive impact on it. According to the previous discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Customer satisfaction has a significant and positive impact on customer loyalty.

*Customer satisfaction and customer word of mouth*

(Silverman, 2001) defined word of mouth as the oral communication about products and services between customers. (Baumann, et al., 2007) concluded that overall customer satisfaction is one of the main predictors of customers' willingness to recommend a firm to others. (Garcia de Los Salmones, et al., 2009; Matute, et al., 2011; Perez, et al., 2013; Su, et al., 2015) indicated that customer satisfaction has a significant direct and positive effect on word of mouth intentions. (Liu and Jang, 2009; Loureiro and Kastenholz, 2011; Chang, 2013) concluded that customer satisfaction is a strong driver of recommendation behavior. According to the above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Customer satisfaction has a significant and positive impact on customer word of mouth.

*Customer trust and customer loyalty*

(Doney and Cannon, 1997) indicated that the buying firm's trust in the supplier firm is positively related to the buying firm's anticipation of future interactions with the supplier. (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001) identified customer trust as a major driver of customer loyalty. (Flavian, et al., 2006) proved that in a virtual context, the customer trust in a firm website affects significantly the customer loyalty to this website. (Chiou and Droge, 2006) mentioned that customer loyalty can be increased through a customer's trust in a firm. (Casalo, et al., 2008) found that consumers' trust placed in a virtual community has a positive and significant effect on consumers' commitment to that virtual community. (Lau and Lee, 1999; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Delgado and Munuera, 2005; Salmones, et al., 2009; He, et al., 2012; Veloutsou, 2015; Giovanis and Athanasopoulou, 2017) concluded that brand trust is one of the main factors affecting brand loyalty. (Casalo, et al., 2011) indicated that consumer trust in a certain website has a positive impact on consumer commitment to this website. (Sharifi and Esfidani, 2014) concluded that customer trust has an indirect impact on both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. According to the previous discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H6: Customer trust has a significant and positive impact on customer loyalty.

*Customer trust and customer word of mouth*

(Jalilvand, et al., 2017a) indicated that customer trust is significantly associated with customer intention to disseminate a positive word of mouth. (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001) demonstrated that customer positive word of mouth is influenced by customer trust. (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001) mentioned that the customer who trusts in a product is more likely to spread positive word of mouth. (Lin and Lu, 2010) concluded that word of mouth mediates the relationship between customer trust and customer purchasing intention. According to the above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H7: Customer trust has a significant and positive impact on customer word of mouth.

### *Corporate brand reputation and customer loyalty*

(Selnes, 1993; Skallerud, 2011; Ali, et al., 2012; Rak, 2013; Su, et al., 2015; Graca and Arnaldo, 2016; Ruiz, et al., 2016; Seo and Park, 2017; Ozkan, et al., 2020) concluded that corporate reputation significantly and positively affects customer loyalty. (Nguyen and Leblanc, 2018) found that intention of loyalty is considered an important outcome of corporate reputation. (Walsh, et al., 2009) confirmed that having a good reputation is a key driver of customer loyalty. (Osakwe, et al., 2020) concluded that corporate reputation has a positive role in the development of customer loyalty. (Caruana and Ewing, 2010) mentioned that corporate reputation can mediate the relationship between value and loyalty. (Walsh and Wiedmann, 2004; Walsh, et al., 2009) mentioned that a good corporate reputation can reduce customers' perceived risk and generate greater loyalty intentions. (Lai, 2019) concluded that there is an indirect relationship between corporate reputation and customer loyalty mediated by customer commitment. (Lai, 2019) mentioned that a good firm reputation is built after gaining a good post-experience so, a firm's customers may be more likely to become committed to a firm. (Loueiro and Kastenholz, 2011; Chang, 2013; Su, et al., 2015) confirmed that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between corporate reputation and customer loyalty. (Chang, 2013) indicated that there is a significant and indirect relationship between corporate reputation and customer loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction and customer trust. (Lafferty and Goldsmith, 2005; Mandhachitara and Poolthong, 2011; Martinez, et al., 2014; Perez and Rodriguez, 2015; Raza, et al., 2018) pointed out that customers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility initiatives have a significant direct and positive effect on customer loyalty. (Raza, et al., 2018) proved that customer trust mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and customer loyalty. (Raza, et al., 2018) concluded that corporate social responsibility activities have an impact on customer loyalty through service quality. (Martinez and Rodriguez, 2013; Perez and Rodriguez, 2015) concluded that there is an indirect effect of perceived corporate social responsibility on loyalty mediated by satisfaction. According to the previous discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H8: Corporate brand reputation has a significant and positive effect on customer loyalty.

H9-a: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between corporate brand reputation and customer loyalty.

H9-b: Customer trust mediates the relationship between corporate brand reputation and customer loyalty.

### *Corporate brand reputation and customer word of mouth*

(Fombrun and Van Riel, 1997; Keh and Xie, 2009; Ruiz, et al., 2016; Jalilvand, et al., 2017b) proved that corporate reputation has a significant and positive effect on customer word of mouth. (Walsh, et al., 2009) concluded that having a good reputation is a key driver of customer word of mouth. (Perez and Rodriguez, 2015) concluded that customers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility initiatives significantly and positively impact customers' recommendation behaviors. (Manohar, et al., 2020) concluded that reputation mediates the relationship between service innovation and word of mouth. (Walsh, et al., 2009) mentioned that customers who perceive the company that has a good reputation would be expected to engage in positive word of mouth. (Walsh, et al., 2009; Hong and Yang, 2009; Park and Lee, 2009; Buhalis and Inversini, 2014; Yim and Kwon, 2015; Tang, et al., 2016; Su, et al., 2016) mentioned that customers tend to speak positively about reputable companies to their friends and relatives. (Jalilvand, et al., 2017b) mentioned that companies with very good reputations will stimulate positive word - of- mouth whereas companies with very poor reputations may stimulate negative word of mouth. (Su, et al., 2015) concluded that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between corporate reputation and word-of-mouth intentions. According to the above discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H10: Corporate brand reputation has a significant and positive impact on customer word of mouth.

H11-a: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between corporate brand reputation and customer word of mouth.

H11-b: Customer trust mediates the relationship between corporate brand reputation and customer word of mouth.

## **3. Conceptual Model**

Figure (1) shows a proposed model that includes the hypothesized relationships among research variables. Research variables involve brand reputation, customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty, and customer word of mouth. This model proposes that corporate brand reputation is achieved through many ways such as knowing customers' needs, satisfying them, studying customers' complaints, and solving their problems. Positive corporate brand reputation leads to satisfying customers that leads to building their trust in the brand. Both customers' satisfaction and customers' trust lead to positive word of mouth, attracting new customers, building customers' loyalty to the brand, and retaining current customers. This means it is proposed that corporate brand reputation helps in building strong relationships with customers.

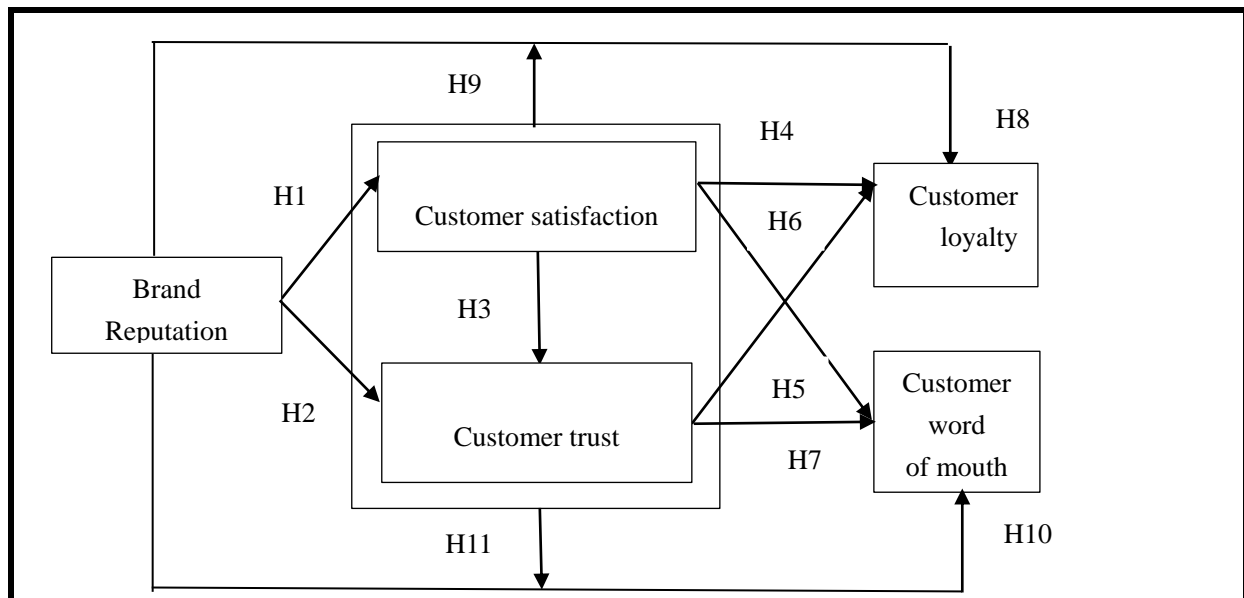


Figure 1. Proposed model

#### 4. Methods

##### *Sampling and data collection*

Research's sample size was 384 users of home appliances located in Cairo and Giza governorates in Egypt. The Sample size was calculated by using a sample size calculator according to the following assumptions: population size =19,040,018 citizens located in both Cairo and Giza; confidence level = 95%; margin of error =  $\pm 5\%$ . The number of respondents was 357 users. The response rate was 92.97 %. Questionnaires used for collecting responses of users were designed and distributed online. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS.16 and AMOS.18.

##### *Measures*

Brand reputation was measured using 26 - item scale developed by (Fombrun, et al., 2000; Garuana and Chirop, 2000; Adheare, et al., 2005; Wals and Beatty, 2007; Hansen, et al., 2008). Customer satisfaction was measured using the 10- item scale developed by (Hsin-Hui and Yi-Shun, 2006; Bigne, et al., 2011). Customer trust was measured using 8 - item scale developed by (Fombrun, et al., 2000; Edrem and Swait, 2004; Delgado and Munuera, 2005). Customer loyalty was measured using 5 - item scale developed by (Zeithmal, et al., 1996; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). Customer word of mouth was measured using 4 - items scale developed by (Wong, 2004). All items were measured on 5 - point Likert scale where 1=completely disagree and 5= completely agree.

##### *Measures reliability and validity*

Table (1) shows that all constructs exhibited acceptable composite reliability values exceeding the minimum limitation of 0.7 suggested by (Bagozzi, 1994). Removed items after the first trial of reliability analysis are PQ3, GE4, CS1, and CT1. Table (1) shows that AVE (average variance extracted) for all constructs was greater than 0.5 confirming internal consistency and convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were used to test the construct validity of scales of study. Exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis extraction method and varimax rotation method was used on 49 items which represent dimensions of corporate reputation and its consequences. The Bartlett test of sphericity was significant ( $\chi^2=2214.23$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy ( $KMO = 0.992$ ) was greater than 0.5 which shows that the use of factor analysis was appropriate. 49 items in the questionnaire were reduced to five factors. Factor loading for each scale item maintained the minimum standard of 0.5. These results are shown in table (1). The resultant factor structure explained 71.27 % of high communalities across the scale components. Eigenvalues for all five factors were greater than 1 (corporate reputation=7.292, customer satisfaction=11.47, customer loyalty=7.192, customer trust= 5.197 and customer word of mouth = 3.770).

Table 1. Measurement Model Evaluation

Constructs	Items	Loadings ( $\lambda$ )	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Corporate Brand Reputation	My preferred appliance brand satisfies my needs (CO1).	0.669	0.954	0.963	0.535
	The producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand takes its customers' rights seriously (CO2).	0.644			
	The producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand is responsible for the products it offers (CO3).	0.655			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand offers a variety of well-known products (CO4).	0.691			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand offers innovative products (CO5).	0.797			
	The producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand makes an effort to solve customers' problems (CO6).	0.698			
	The producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand cares about customers' views (CO7).	0.793			
	The producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand responds to customers' complaints (CO8).	0.695			
	My preferred appliance brand has a good reputation among my colleagues, friends, and family (CO9).	0.798			
	My preferred appliance brand has a good reputation compared to competitive brands (CO10).	0.792			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand offers strong and reliable products (PQ1).	0.788			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand offers high-quality products (PQ2).	0.690			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand provides excellent value to its customers (PQ4).	0.795			
	The employees of the producer of my preferred appliance brand are well trained (GE1).	0.699			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand is a long-established company (GE2).	0.698			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand has strong management (GE3).	0.699			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand is a sound company (GE5).	0.798			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand is one of the best in the sector (GE6).	0.698			
	I have a good feeling about my preferred appliance brand (EA1).	0.791			
	I trust my preferred appliance brand (EA2).	0.799			
	I admire my preferred appliance brand (EA3).	0.786			
	The producer of my preferred appliance brand contributes to protect the environment from pollution (ESR1).	0.666			
	The producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand respects the legal regulations (ESR2).	0.628			
Customer Satisfaction	My preferred appliance brand is successful (CS2).	0.795	0.968	0.931	0.601
	My preferred appliance brand is consistent with my expectations (CS3).	0.765			
	I am generally satisfied with my preferred appliance brand (CS4).	0.782			
	Buying my preferred appliance brand is an intelligent decision for me (CS5).	0.695			
	Buying my preferred appliance brand is a great decision for me (CS6).	0.797			
	I think I did the right thing by buying my preferred appliance brand (CS7).	0.785			
	My preferred appliance brand offers exactly what I needed from it (CS8).	0.790			
	My preferred appliance brand has made a positive impression on me (CS9).	0.790			
	I like to buy my preferred appliance brand (CS10).	0.775			



Table 1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Continued)

Constructs	Items	Loadings ( $\lambda$ )	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Customer Trust	The producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand is honest and straightforward in its communication (CT2).	0.750	0.922	0.897	0.555
	I firmly believe that the producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand will solve my problem when it is occurred without making me suffer (CT3).	0.759			
	The employees of the producer or the agent of my preferred appliance brand always answer the questions of customers in an honest manner (CT4).	0.798			
	My preferred appliance brand meets my expectations (CT5).	0.651			
	My preferred appliance brand guarantees satisfaction (CT6).	0.778			
	My preferred appliance brand gives me confidence (CT7).	0.698			
	My preferred appliance brand never disappoints me (CT8).	0.772			
Customer Loyalty	I always consider my preferred brand as my first choice (CL1).	0.595	0.934	0.858	0.552
	I am loyal to my preferred appliance brand (CL2).	0.755			
	I will definitely keep purchasing my preferred appliance brand (CL3).	0.889			
	I will purchase my preferred brand next time when I need a new appliance (CL4).	0.772			
	I will select my preferred brand to purchase most of the appliances which I need (CL5).	0.669			
Customer Word of Mouth	I say positive things about my preferred appliance brand to other people (WOM1).	0.828	0.920	0.908	0.713
	I recommend my preferred appliance brand to others (WOM2).	0.860			
	I encourage friends and relatives to buy my preferred appliance brand (WOM3).	0.889			
	If my friends were looking for an appliance, I would tell them to purchase my preferred appliance brand (WOM4).	0.797			

Note: CO: customer orientation- PQ: product quality- GE: good employer- EA: emotional appeal-ESR: environmental and social responsibility-CS: customer satisfaction- CT: customer trust -CL: customer loyalty- WOM: word of mouth.

To test the construct validity of measures of research a confirmatory factor was computed also. Fit indices of the CFA model for brand reputation are as follows:  $\chi^2/DF = 172.216 / 44 = 3.914$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ,  $RMR = 0.017$ ,  $GFI = 0.903$ ,  $AGFI = 0.828$ ,  $NFI = 0.933$ ,  $RFI = 0.899$ ,  $IFI = 0.943$ ,  $TLI = 0.915$ ,  $CFI = 0.943$ .  $\chi^2/DF \leq 3$ ,  $RMR \leq 0.08$  and  $GFI$ ,  $AGFI$ ,  $NFI$ ,  $RFI$ ,  $IFI$ ,  $TLI$  and  $CFI \geq 0.90$ . Fit values are well within acceptable range. These values indicated that there is a good fit between structural model and data (Bryne, 2010). All correlations are significant at 0.001. This result is presented in Table (2). Figure (2) illustrates the CFA model for measuring brand reputation and its consequences.

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis for brand reputation and its consequences

Path	Standardized Regression Weights	Un Standardized Regression Weights	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	Probability
F1→PQ2	0.863	1.000	-	-	-
F1→PQ4	0.891	0.870	0.041	21.454	***
F1→GE2	0.634	0.751	0.057	13.119	***
F1→GE6	0.696	0.909	0.061	14.842	***
F2→CS10	0.916	1.000	-	-	-
F2→CS7	0.914	0.908	0.034	27.075	***
F3→CT5	0.825	1.000	-	-	-
F3→CT7	0.927	0.908	0.044	20.863	***
F4→CL4	0.968	1.000	-	-	-
F4→CL5	0.917	0.967	0.032	30.062	***
F5→WOM3	0.902	1.000	-	-	-
F5→WOM2	0.893	0.995	0.044	22.584	***

Note. \*\*\*:  $P < 0.001$ .

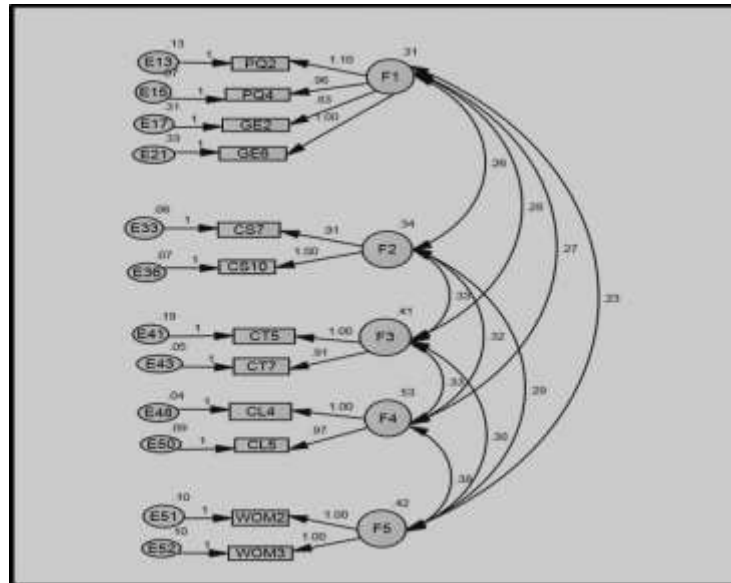


Figure 2. CFA model for measuring brand reputation and its consequences

Table (3) shows that the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than the absolute value of the correlation of each pair of constructs confirming discriminant validity.

Table 3. The discriminant validity test

Construct	Square Root Of AVE	BR	CS	CT	CL	CWOM
BR	0.858	1				
CS	0.894	0.720**	1			
CT	0.829	0.674**	0.768**	1		
CL	0.892	0.614**	0.696**	0.677**	1	
CWOM	0.899	0.548**	0.701**	0.655**	0.723**	1

Note. \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

### Demographics of respondents

Respondents' demographics are gender, age, income, and education. Table (4) shows the demographic distribution of respondents.

Table 4. Demographic distribution of respondents

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Female	202	56.6
Male	155	43.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100</b>
18-less than 30	180	50.4
30-less than 40	89	24.9
40-less than 50	73	20.4
50-less than 60	12	3.4
60 or more	3	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100</b>
Less than 1000 LE	70	19.6
1000-less than 3000 LE	130	36.4
3000-less than 6000 LE	60	16.8
6000-less than 10000 LE	76	21.3
10000-less than 15000 LE	15	4.2
15000 LE or more	6	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100</b>
Secondary	41	11.5
Above secondary	28	7.8
Bachelor or license	144	40.3
Diploma	74	20.7
Master	43	12
PH.D	27	7.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100</b>

### Respondents preferences

Table (5) shows respondents' distribution according to their preferred brand.

Table 5. Respondents' preferred brand

Brand	Frequency	Percentage
Toshiba	183	51.3
LG	65	18.2
Sharp	50	14
Fresh	15	4.2
Zanussi	11	3.1
Unionaire	10	2.8
Panasonic	8	2.2
Samsung	8	2.2
Sony	7	2
Total	357	100

### Findings

The proposed hypotheses in the proposed model (H1-H11) were tested by using a structural equation modeling technique (SEM) through path analysis. Table (6) shows the results of bath analysis for the research model.

Table 6. Path analysis

Significant Path	Standardized Regression Weight	Unstandardized Regression Weight	S.E.	T-value	P.
BR→CS	0.720	0.714	0.036	19.583	***
CS→CT	0.768	0.863	0.038	22.657	***
CS→CL	0.430	0.546	0.072	7.600	***
CT→CL	0.347	0.392	0.064	6.133	***

Note. \*\*\*,  $P < 0.001$ .

Fit indices of bath analysis for the research model are as follows:  $\chi^2/DF = (6.058 / 2 = 3.029)$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ,  $RMR = 0.021$ ,  $GFI = 0.954$ ,  $AGFI = 0.770$ ,  $NFI = 0.959$ ,  $RFI = 0.878$ ,  $IFI = 0.961$ ,  $TLI = 0.884$ ,  $CFI = 0.961$ . Fit values are well within acceptable range. These values indicated that there is a good fit between structural model and data. Figure (3) shows the tested model.

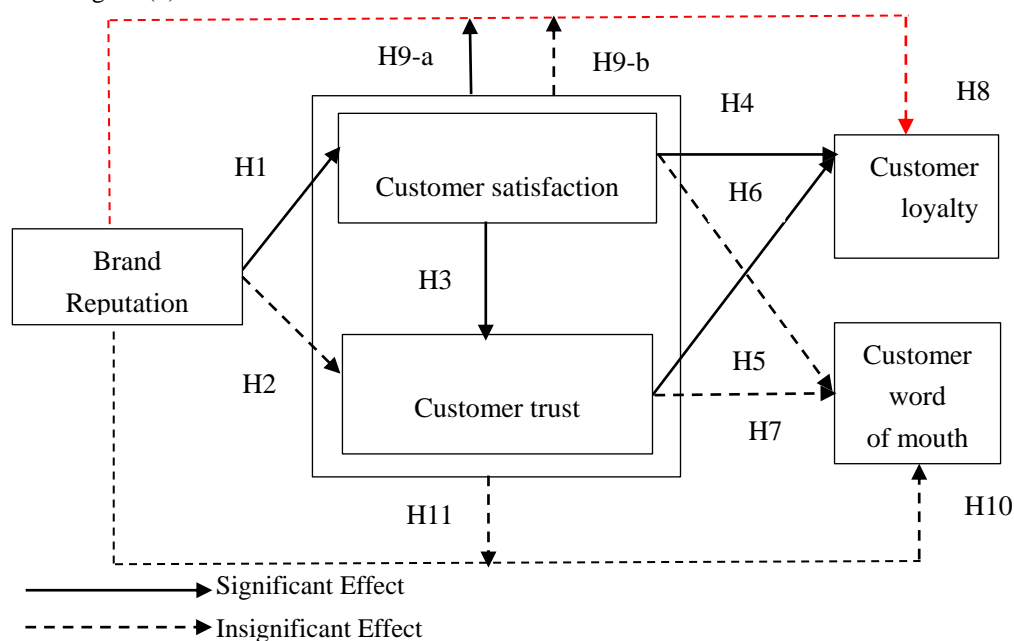


Figure 3. Tested Model

According to the results of bath analysis and regression analysis, it was found that brand reputation has a significant and positive effect on customer satisfaction and corporate brand reputation explains 51.7% of variations in customer satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.770$ ,  $t = 19.556$ ,  $Sig = 0.000$ ,  $R^2 = 0.517$ ). So, H1 was accepted; this result coincides with the results of previous studies. It was concluded that brand reputation hasn't a significant effect on customer trust. So, H2 was rejected; this result doesn't coincide with the results of previous studies. It was found

that customer satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on customer trust and customer satisfaction explains 58.9% of variations in customer trust ( $\beta=0.768$ ,  $t=22.625$ ,  $\text{Sig}=0.000$ ,  $R^2=0.589$ ). So, H3 was accepted; this result coincides with the results of previous studies. It was concluded that customer satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on customer loyalty and customer satisfaction explains 48.3% of variations in customer loyalty ( $\beta=0.696$ ,  $t=18.273$ ,  $\text{Sig}=0.000$ ,  $R^2=0.483$ ). So, H4 was accepted. It was found that customer satisfaction hasn't a significant effect on customer word of mouth. So, H5 was rejected; this result doesn't coincide with the results of previous studies. It was concluded that customer trust has a significant and positive effect on customer loyalty and customer trust explains 45.7% of variations in customer loyalty ( $\beta=0.677$ ,  $t=17.331$ ,  $\text{Sig}=0.000$ ,  $R^2=0.457$ ). So, H6 was accepted; this result coincides with the results of previous studies. It was found that customer trust hasn't a significant effect on customer word of mouth. So, H7 was rejected; this result doesn't coincide with the results of previous studies. It was concluded that brand reputation hasn't a significant direct effect on customer loyalty. So, H8 was rejected; this result doesn't coincide with the results of previous studies. It was found that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between brand reputation and customer loyalty. Table (7) shows the indirect relationship between brand reputation and customer loyalty mediated by customer satisfaction. So, H9-a was accepted; this result coincides with the results of previous studies.

Table.7 The mediating effect of customer satisfaction on the relationship between brand reputation and customer loyalty

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total Effect
BR→CS→CL	0.000	0.501	0.501

It was concluded that customer trust doesn't mediate the relationship between brand reputation and customer loyalty. So, H9-b was rejected; this result doesn't coincide with the results of previous studies. It was found that brand reputation hasn't a significant effect on customer word of mouth. So, H10 was rejected; this result doesn't coincide with the results of previous studies. It was concluded also that customer satisfaction and customer trust don't mediate the relationship between brand reputation and customer word of mouth. So, H11-a and H11-b were rejected; these results don't coincide with the results of previous studies.

## 5. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to explain how corporate brand reputation helps in building strong relationships with customers. Results indicated that corporate brand reputation has a positive significant effect on customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction has a positive significant impact on customer trust and both customer satisfaction and customer trust have a positive significant influence on customer loyalty.

## 6. Conclusion

Good brand reputation leads to customer satisfaction which leads to customer trust. Both customer satisfaction and customer trust lead to customer loyalty to the brand. The producer of home appliances can have a good reputation through its experience with the key success factors in the industry which it works in such as having a strong management and well-trained employees, providing customers with high-quality products which represent the good value for them, and offering innovative or new products that fulfill the changed needs of customers. The producer of home appliances should consider the quality dimensions that the customer evaluates the product based on. There are many home appliances' quality dimensions such as ease of use, durability, aesthetic of the design, variety of colors, maintainability, repairability, low malfunction rate, noiseless during operating.

## 7. Limitations

The results of this study can be generalized to other industries and other countries.

## 8. Future Research

The proposed model of this study can be retested in other industries such as banking, fast food, and mobile by adding other variables such as perceived value.

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