

## **Spiritual marketing and its impact on brand loyalty: an analytical study of the opinions of a sample of customers in the green apple store in Baghdad**

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### **Abstract:**

The current study aims to verify the mechanisms of spiritual marketing, represented by (faith, morals, realism, and humanity), in brand loyalty by (behavioral loyalty, and attitudeal loyalty) among a sample of customers in the green apple store in Baghdad, and accordingly the questionnaire tool was used in order to show measuring the level of availability of research variables, and in order to collect data, a sample of customers were surveyed in the green apple store in Baghdad and by (123) questionnaire form valid for analysis, The study also used in order to detect the nature of the results a set of statistical tools, which were (Cronbach alpha coefficient, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and regression coefficients). The results showed a statistically significant correlation and impact between spiritual marketing and brand loyalty, to show the store's interest in the importance of spiritual marketing at the present time because consumers seek a commercial experience characterized by spiritual depth and psychological satisfaction, and therefore the brands' use of spiritual principles helps to build a relationship of trust and loyalty with customers.

**Keywords:** (spiritual marketing, brand loyalty, behavioral loyalty, attitudeal loyalty).

### **Introduction**

Spiritual marketing and brand loyalty are key elements of brand success. Spiritual marketing helps businesses build a spiritual relationship with customers, deepening communication with them based on spiritual values and principles, which ultimately leads to increased brand loyalty. The importance of loyalty is to turn customers into potential employees of the company, as they increasingly interact with the brand and see it as part of their daily lives, advise others to shop with the same brand in addition to being willing to pay a lot of money to buy products bearing the brand

name. The importance of loyalty is to turn customers into potential employees of the company, as they increasingly interact with the brand and see it as part of their daily lives, advise others to shop with the same brand in addition to being willing to pay a lot of money to buy products bearing the brand name.

Specifically, by implementing spiritual marketing strategies aimed at promoting spiritual values and principles in their relationship with customers, companies can reach a deeper level of customer relationship, thereby increasing brand loyalty. By building this spiritual relationship, many customer-related benefits such as active and positive interaction with the brand, the quality of communication with it, as well as the constant payment of the brand's products are established. Brand loyalty is a crucial element in brand success, turning customers into highly loyal brand supporters impacting the competition market and helping manage risk. Building a spiritual relationship with customers is therefore a crucial element in increasing brand loyalty and success. Spiritual marketing helps build a spiritual relationship with customers and deepen communication with them based on spiritual values and principles, which ultimately leads to increased brand loyalty. Spiritual marketing can be said to help build trust and positivity between customers and the brand, leading to increased emotional attachment between them.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

**Spiritual shopping:** Spirituality has become increasingly important in the organization in the service sector over the past decade (Singh&Khan 2019:85). Spiritual marketing, or often called spiritual marketing, is the application of a strategic system of action that corresponds to spirituality (Astrachan et al., 2020:638). This means that in marketing compatible with spirituality the whole process of creation, the process of supply, and the process of changing the value must not conflict with the principles of

spirituality. There are several spiritual principles that can be implemented in spiritual marketing activities: the principle of justice, the principle of cleanliness, the principle of simplicity and the principle of generosity (Syaifudin 2018:6-7).

The concept of spiritual marketing arose as a result of business turmoil that suffered from drought when the swinging steps were limited only to satisfying the desires of the world, pursuing something tangible, and setting aside the immaterial (Stoner,2021:492). This concept is formed as in the concept of marketing at the intellectual or rational level. In addition, the concept of spiritual marketing was also born when many business experts realized that the concept of marketing on an emotional level, which was formed to serve as a counterweight to the almost uncontrollable pace of the times, could no longer respond to the anxiety of many individuals (Sundari 2020:21-22).

Putting in a little effort in spiritual marketing can significantly affect a consumer's purchase intentions. These meager efforts in spiritual marketing can have negative effects on the image of the company or brand (García-Salirrosas et al.,2022:8500). If a marketer fails to connect with the consumer spirit, the way the consumer interprets the brand or company image can be negative. In modern times due to developments in social media, the way consumers think and interpret marketing messages through the use of their emotions, moods, perceptions, desires, and demands is very different (Soni&Agrawal,2021:2345). Organizations therefore have to accept that these differences in consumer behavior have a significant impact on consumer purchasing intentions (Costa, 2018:834).

Spiritual marketing is a marketing strategy which is the ability to understand and meet the needs, desires, and expectations of others (customers, employees, other customers, and everything related to them (Hasrat& Rosyadah,2021:82). On the other hand, spiritual marketing affects not only the marketing strategy of the company but also the ways of

thinking of employees (Bambang et al. 2021:232). Spiritual marketing has a set of characteristics (Syaifudin 2018:38):

1. **Honesty:** The legitimate marketer is honest and always bases his words, beliefs and deeds on the teachings of religion.
2. **Trustworthiness:** The nature of trust in legitimate marketers is reflected in the position of responsibility in the implementation of every task and commitment. Confidence in the form of openness, honesty, excellent service and benevolence (trying to produce the best) is manifested in everything. The nature of this trust is important for the believer, especially for those who serve the community (Fatmawati&Fauzan, 2021:793).
3. **Professionalism:** Professionalism is defined as professional behavior. Financial institutions today must be able to use computing and their accounts must also have a standard that can be audited and indeed there is audit.
4. **Transparency:** The nature of the notification means inviting other parties and providing an example to follow at the same time to apply the provisions of the teachings in every movement of economic activity that takes place on a daily basis.
5. **Consistency:** Consistency or people call it a fixed attitude is an attitude that legitimate marketers should always have in their marketing practices Integrity in applying spiritual rules (Krishnan 2023:187).

Accordingly, it can be said that spiritual marketing is one of the important tools for companies and brands in strengthening the relationship with customers and enriching their experience with the products and services provided. Although spiritual marketing is based on spiritual values and principles, it has a strong impact on the relationship that customers have with the brand and on the loyalty that customers show to that brand. Spiritual marketing can be measured through four dimensions (Sundari 2020:22-23):

1. **Faith:** The soul of the spiritual marketer believes that this spirituality is the most just, the most perfect, the most in harmony with all forms of good, the most capable of preventing all forms of harm, the most capable of grasping the truth, eliminating falsehood and spreading benefits (Jakovljević & Jakovljević,2021:6).
2. **Ethics:** Spiritual marketing places great emphasis on ethical issues (ethics) in all aspects of its activities because moral and ethical values are universal values taught by religion (Haron et al.,2020:13).
3. **Realism:** The spiritual marketer is a flexible marketing concept as well as the breadth and flexibility of spirituality that underlies it. Spiritual marketers are professional marketers who have a clean, neat and modest appearance whatever style or style of dress they wear and work by prioritizing religious values, piety, ethical aspects and honesty in all their marketing activities (Abdullah et al.,2021:490).
4. **Humanity:** Another feature of spiritual marketing is its universal human nature which is that spirituality has been created for human beings so that their status is elevated and their human nature is preserved and preserved and their human traits can be restricted by the guidance of spirituality. The spirituality of human beings was created according to their abilities regardless of race, gender, skin color, nationality and status. This is what makes spirituality inherently universal so that it becomes a universal human law (Vatter,2022:234).

**Brand Loyalty:** Brand loyalty represents customers' preference to stay with the brand over and over again, buying the brand's products and services frequently (Tuti & Sulistia, 2022:3), and converting others to it as well. It can be further defined as trust and brand affiliation, based on satisfaction with quality, service, and brand values, which in turn lead to an expansion of the customer base and increased sales (Park& Namkung,2022:1659).

Brand loyalty means customers constantly prefer to buy certain products and services, and a sense of belonging and trust in the brand, which leads to others being converted to buy from it as well (Agha et al., 2021:12). This allows companies to increase sales, expand their customer base, and achieve many competitive advantages in the labor market (Malik et al., 2012:124) and Lin et al., 2016:34) that branding is one of the important issues that create a cognitive, emotional and behavioral customer response to products.

Brand loyalty is defined as "a firm commitment to consistently repurchase or reorder a favorite product/service in the future, causing the same brand to replicate (Alhaddad, 2014:28). Matthews et al., 2014:4; Guo et al., 2017:523) that brand loyalty represents a firm commitment to consistently repurchase a favorite brand or service in the future. Lazarevic & Petrovic-Lazarevic (2007:28) noted that brand loyalty indicates positive feelings towards the brand and a strongly established dedication to buying the same product/service from the same brand repeatedly.

Brand loyalty can be measured by (Albert, 2021):

1. **Behavioral loyalty:** This dimension is represented in a form of buyback, such as a positive word towards a product or service, recommendation to acquaintances, etc. (Pezeshki, 2009: 35), while (Shubbar, 2014: 72) referred to behavioral loyalty as it refers to the customer's behavior in repurchase to indicate brand or service preferences. Pérez & Rodriguez (2015:16) emphasized that behavioral loyalty is one of the most representative ways in which customers express satisfaction with the organization's performance and is closely related to the profitability of the organization.

2. **Attitudinal loyalty:** Attitudinal loyalty means that a positive evaluation of the organization takes place along with an emotional relationship between the customer and the organization that in turn creates true loyalty, or at least, the desired loyalty (Martínez & del, 2013:91).

Kandampully & Suhartanto (2000:347) argues that situational behavior refers to the intention to return to buy back and recommend, which in turn indicates good indicators of loyal customers of the organization.

**The relationship between spiritual marketing and brand loyalty:** The relationship between spiritual marketing and brand loyalty depends on building a strong spiritual relationship between the customer and the brand, which leads to promoting active and positive interaction with the brand and the growth of loyalty to it permanently. Brand loyalty is a crucial factor in achieving brand success and continuously increasing market share, so that customers who support this brand can influence the recommendations they make to others, thus contributing to the expansion of the customer base of the brand. Building a spiritual relationship with customers can lead to the completion of the purchase process and provide an excellent user experience for the product, in addition to the customer's continuity in using this product and purchasing other products belonging to the brand. Companies can implement diverse spiritual marketing strategies by connecting with customers, providing positive service, promoting spiritual values and principles, thus maintaining customer loyalty to the brand permanently and increasing the success of the brand in the market. Hence, two hypotheses can be formulated:

**H1:** The increased interest of the green apple store in the dimensions of spiritual marketing contributes to building a strong association with brand loyalty.

**H2:** The increased interest of the green apple store in the dimensions of spiritual marketing affects the brigade of the brand, and Figure (1) shows the hypothesis scheme of the study.

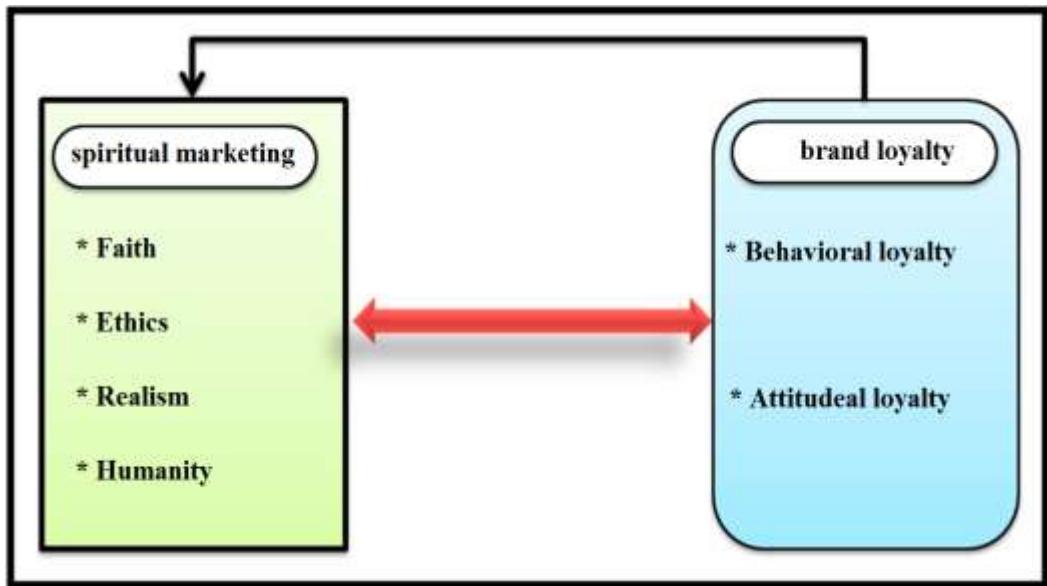


Figure 1 Hypothesis scheme of the study

## Study Methodology

### 1. Study Scales

The study focused on (8) paragraphs in order to measure spiritual marketing by two paragraphs for each dimension (faith, morals, realism, and humanity) based on the scale (Sundari, 2020), while the study focused on measuring brand loyalty on (10) paragraphs by (4) paragraphs for the behavioral loyalty dimension, and (6) paragraphs for the attitudinal loyalty dimension and depending on the scale (Albert, 2021), and in order to employ these variables, the Likert five-point gradient was adopted to measure (strongly agree) - (strongly disagree), As a result, a sample of (123) customers was withdrawn) and the stability coefficient of these variables reached (0.919) with an impact of (0.895) for the spiritual marketing variable, and (0.910) for the brand loyalty variable, and Table (1) shows the variables and stability of the study tool.

Table (1) Variables and stability of the study tool

variants	dimensions	code	NO.	Cronbach alpha			Source
spiritual marketing (SPM)	faith	SA	٢	0.928	0.895	.٩١٩	Sundari,2020
	morals	SB	٢	0.919			
	realism	SC	٢	0.917			
	humanity	SD	٢	0.912			
brand loyalty (LOB)	behavioral loyalty	LA	٤	0.899	.٩١٠		Albert,2021
	attitudinal loyalty	LB	٦	0.900			

## 2. The study sample

The research was applied to the green apple store in Baghdad by (150) customers were distributed questionnaire to them by revealing their opinions towards the services provided to them, and accordingly it has been retrieved (136) questionnaire by (13) questionnaire damaged, which makes the number of questionnaires valid for analysis (123) questionnaire.

## 3. Results

### 3-1 Sample Description

Table (2) shows that the general arithmetic mean of the spiritual marketing variable amounted to (4.03) and a standard deviation of (0.593) and a relative importance of (81%), which explains the interest of customers in spiritual marketing as it represents one of the methods aimed at convincing the public to buy through the use of religious and spiritual concepts, and this method can lead to some results, but care must be taken in its use, as excessive focus on the spiritual aspect without paying attention to the quality of the products and services provided may lead to a negative return with a loss of confidence. customers and damage the company's business reputation. Therefore, it is recommended to employ spiritual marketing appropriately and not alone, providing high quality products and distinguished services and presenting them in a distinct manner to achieve success in the market and gain loyalty among customers. This is due to the

interest in the dimension of faith with an arithmetic mean of (4.15) and a standard deviation of (0.719), and a high relative importance of (83%), while the dimension of humanity came in last place with an arithmetic mean of (3.94) and a standard deviation of (0.823) and relative importance equal to (79%).

Table (2) Statistical description of the spiritual marketing variable (n=123)

NO.	mean	standard deviation	%	order of importance
SA1	4.24	0.860	85%	١
SA2	4.07	0.907	81%	٢
faith	4.15	0.719	83%	A
SB1	3.62	1.083	72%	٢
SB2	4.28	0.899	86%	١
morals	3.95	0.827	79%	C
SC1	4.13	1.063	83%	١
SC2	4.01	0.979	80%	٢
realism	4.07	0.867	81%	B
SD1	3.88	0.988	78%	٢
SD2	4.01	0.945	80%	١
humanity	3.94	0.823	79%	D
spiritual marketing	4.03	0.593	81%	----

The results of Table (3) also showed that the arithmetic mean of the brand loyalty variable was (3.91) and a standard deviation of (0.679) with a relative importance equal to (78%), and this is due to the interest of customers in the quality and services provided and to identify the company's reputation and the level of satisfaction of previous customers leads to improving brand loyalty. Customers are more likely to buy from companies that are of outstanding quality and service, leaving competitors unable to meet their needs similarly. As a result, a company can expand its customer base and improve its financial performance. This is due to the interest in behavioral loyalty to customers with an arithmetic mean (3.98), a

standard deviation of (0.742) and relative importance (80%), while the standing dimension came in last place with an arithmetic mean (3.84), a standard deviation of (0.694) and relative importance (77%).

Table (3) Statistical description of the brand loyalty variable (n=123)

NO.	mean	standard deviation	%	order of importance
LA1	3.99	0.945	80%	١
LA2	4.11	1.039	82%	٢
LA3	3.88	1.045	78%	٤
LA4	3.94	1.014	79%	٣
<b>behavioral loyalty</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>0.742</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>A</b>
LB1	3.99	0.954	80%	٢
LB2	3.73	0.992	75%	٥
LB3	3.80	0.964	76%	٤
LB4	3.91	1.048	78%	٣
LB5	4.08	0.955	82%	١
LB6	3.54	1.161	71%	٦
<b>attitudinal loyalty</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>0.694</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>brand loyalty</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>0.679</b>	<b>78%</b>	-----

### 3-2 Hypothesis Testing

Table (4) shows that there is a statistically significant correlation between spiritual marketing and the behavior of creative employees by (0.819) at a moral level less than (5%), i.e. at a level of confidence (95%), which means that improving the quality and services provided to customers enhances customer loyalty to the brand. Failure to meet customer needs satisfactorily may lead to a severe decline in brand trust and loyalty, so customer feedback must be taken into account and the quality and services provided must be improved to match their expectations and improve their experience

with the product or service offered. In this way, customers can be motivated to turn to products and services provided by companies that provide more quality and outstanding service, thus improving the company's financial performance and expanding the customer base.

Table 4 Correlation matrix

	١	٢	٣	٤	٥	٦	٧	٨
faith(١)	1							
morals(٢)	.265**	1						
realism(٣)	.295**	.411**	1					
humanity(٤)	.261**	.447**	.566**	1				
<b>spiritual marketing(٥)</b>	.594**	.734**	.795**	.788**	<b>1</b>			
behavioral loyalty (٦)	.487**	.561**	.602**	.629**	<b>.781**</b>	1		
attitudinal loyalty (٧)	.446**	.614**	.533**	.646**	<b>.768**</b>	.789**	1	
<b>brand loyalty (٨)</b>	<b>.493**</b>	<b>.620**</b>	<b>.602**</b>	<b>.674**</b>	<b>.819**</b>	<b>.949**</b>	<b>.942**</b>	1

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of Table (5) show that the dimensions of spiritual marketing represent an influential variable in the dimensions of brand loyalty, as it is clear from the responses of the members of the study sample that there is a significant impact of spiritual marketing on brand loyalty, and at a moral level less than (0.05), which means that increasing spiritual marketing by one unit leads to improving brand loyalty by (0.937), and this supports the validity of the second main hypothesis.

Table (5) Standard weights of the impact of the dimensions of spiritual marketing on the dimensions of brand loyalty

path	regression	T	R <sup>2</sup>
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			coefficients		F
spiritual marketing	--->	brand loyalty	0.937	10.708	$R^2=0.671$ $F=246.731$

The results also show that spiritual marketing contributed to the explanation of (0.671) of the variation square in brand loyalty, while the remaining value falls outside the limits of the study.

#### 4. Discuss Results

The study contributed to providing a set of results that can improve the performance of the green apple store in Baghdad by focusing on investing in spiritual marketing as it leads to building a strong and long-term relationship between the brand and its customers. When a customer is associated with the brand on a spiritual level, they tend to buy more products belonging to that brand, recommend them to others, and defend them in the event of competition in the market.

The results also showed that the spiritual relationship also increases the loyalty that customers show to the brand. When customers feel that they have a relationship with the brand that goes beyond simply buying products and services, they become more comfortable and comfortable interacting with it, and feel a greater sense of loyalty and attachment to it.

The strong relationship between spiritual marketing and brand leads to increased brand loyalty, as the relationship between the customer and the brand is strengthened by highlighting the spiritual and positive side of the brand. In the process of spiritual marketing, spiritual values such as honesty, transparency, altruism, cooperation, etc. are promoted, which positively affects the customer's relationship with the brand, and ensures greater brand loyalty by customers. In addition, the customer traded in the spiritual marketing segment is constantly in contact with the brand and its thoughtful vision in the community, which leads to increased trust and respect between the two sides, and an increase in the frequency of purchases among customers. Thus, the brand gets more profits and maintains its leading position in the local and global market.

**The study recommends** that in order to achieve positive results related to the relationship between spiritual marketing and brand loyalty, companies should invest lengthy in knowing and understanding the needs, desires and goals of their customers by listening to them and conducting the necessary studies for this purpose. Positive and empathetic customer service must be provided, and spiritual values must be fostered in interacting with them, such as honesty, integrity, cooperation and altruism, thus achieving greater connection between the brand and customers, and continuously increasing brand loyalty.

Indeed, spiritual marketing is a key element in strengthening the customer's relationship with the brand, thereby increasing loyalty to it. Therefore, marketing professionals must ensure as much as possible that respectful spiritual ethics, honesty, transparency and altruism are promoted at all stages of marketing. They must also paint a positive brand image in the community, provide continuous support to customers and solve their problems professionally and honestly. All these efforts will lead to increased trust between customers and the brand and thus increase brand loyalty. There is nothing better than a solid marketing relationship and high moral spiritual qualities to find satisfied consumers and more loyalty.

Spiritual marketing mainly aims to strengthen the customer's relationship with the brand, so it contributes significantly to increasing brand loyalty. When products are marketed with spiritual intent, a positive message is sent to customers about the values and beliefs that underpin the brand, and this helps build trust and belief in the brand. Moreover, spiritual marketing can help to find new consumers for the brand, and this increases the chances of growth and expansion of the brand. Overall, it can be said that spiritual marketing contributes significantly to building solid and sustainable relationships between the brand and customers, thereby increasing brand loyalty.

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