

Halal Branding and Purchase Intention: A Brand Personality Appeal Perspective

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ABSTRACT: *A brand that appeals to consumers can retain its target market and guarantee brand repurchase. This study proposes a model that determines the effect of brand personality and brand personality appeal on purchase intention. The recognized variables were deployed based on a review of the literature. In addition, this study provides an explanation of each variable of the model. The goal of this research is to find the personality of the Halal brand and also discover the level of affection of three significant dimensions of brand personality appeal (high, moderate, or low). Moreover, the effects of these two constructs on purchase intention are another significant view of this study. Implementing the findings of this study will help managers to use various scenarios and strategies to develop an appealing Halal brand. Finally, this study is one of the first to implement the brand theories on the Halal brand.*

KEYWORDS: *Halal, Brand personality, Brand personality appeal, Purchase intention*

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumers use brands to present personal stories about their lives and identities as well as to position themselves in relation to culture, society, and other people [1]. Brands provide a means of choice for consumers [2], and lead them to reveal their behavior [3]. Indeed, a brand is a source of differentiation for one product from other products to satisfy the same need [4]. Brand attributes guarantee a trustworthy promise of performance for consumers [5]. In addition, brands add value to products and give meaning to consumption. Globally, many target consumers look for a brand that fully adheres to several specific values and practices. Therefore, international markets need to build brands that appeal to these global consumers.

As a religious brand, the *Halal* brand [6] has a significant influence as a supreme key to consumption for Muslims and for health-conscious consumers. *Halal* is a landscape of hygiene, safety, and standards. As the population of Muslims increases by approximately 35 percent in the next 20 years, from 1.6 billion in 2010 to 2.1 billion by 2015 and to 2.2 billion by 2030 [7], businesses need to focus more on *Halal* in the global market beyond quality and hygiene (permissible ingredients), from farm to spoon [8]. Therefore, discovering the attributes of the *Halal* brand enables scholars and marketers to extend this brand to different markets. However, most of the existing literature has focused on different aspects of *Halal* such as *Halal* supply chain management [9], concept of *Halal* [10], *Halal* certification [11], [12], and non-Muslim perception about *Halal* [13]. Only a few studies explore the attributes of the *Halal* brand by implementing different theories of brand. To address this gap, we deploy brand personality and brand personality appeal. Filling the gap in the literature is significant because it helps marketers first of all to develop a very strong brand in the market that appeals to consumers, followed by the discovery of how consumers perceive the *Halal* brand personality, and lastly, determine which dimension of brand personality appeal needs to be strengthened to enhance the intention of consumers to purchase the *Halal* brand.

All in all, the main purpose of this study is to propose a model that describes the effects of *Halal* brand personality and *Halal* brand personality appeal on purchase intention. Theoretically, this study is important because it paves the way for scholars to deploy different theories of brand in order to establish a strong *Halal* brand. The following theoretical model (Fig. 1) frames the constructs and their relationships in the model.

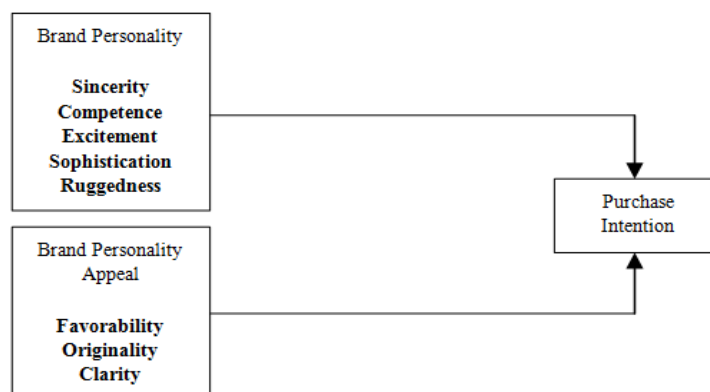


Fig. 1 Theoretical Framework

The proposed model is designed with brand personality and brand personality appeal as independent variables. Brand personality includes five dimensions which are: sincerity, competence, excitement, sophistication and ruggedness. Favorability, originality and clarity are three dimensions of brand personality appeal. Finally, purchase intention is a dependent variable. The following discussion provides an overview of variables and conclusion as well.

II. BRAND PERSONALITY

Brand personality refers to “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” [14]. Brand personality is formed and sustained in the mind of consumers, reflecting their perception toward a brand [15]. The main theories of brand personality are rooted in cognitive and social psychology and in the psychology of consumer behavior [1]. Thus, brand personality is similar to human personality in that it describes a brand as having human characteristics [16]. In fact, this comprehensive concept is so distinctive and enduring that it comprises all the tangible and intangible traits of a brand to shape a good position in the consumer’s mind [17]. Aaker [14] developed a brand personality model with five core dimensions (Fig. 2), namely, competence, excitement, ruggedness, sincerity, and sophistication, to measure the nature of a brand’s personality. These dimensions are a critical part of brand strategy for marketing managers to establish differentiation in the marketplace [15]. Indeed, managing and developing brand personality create a chance for marketers to inject charisma into their products and services [2].

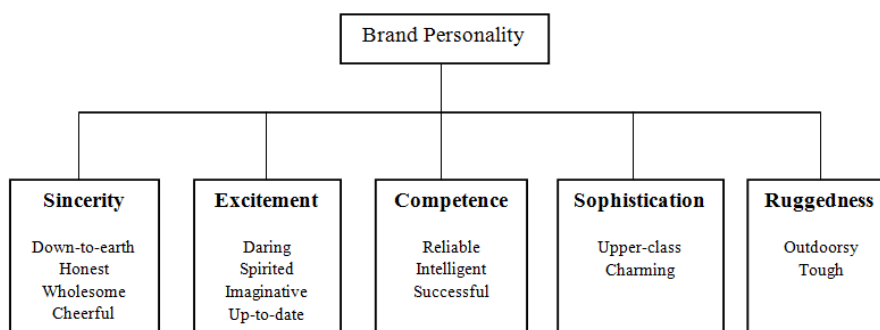


Fig. 2 Brand Personality Model

Every brand has its own personality [18]; the lack of such a personality complicates association with consumers [17]. Every brand tries to win shelf space from other competitors. The *Halal* brand, with its broad range of products, from edibles to cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, is active in the market. However, [11] indicated that *Halal* signifies a message for consumers to buy and use *Shariah*-compliant products; success in the competitive market should exceed religious uniformity. In this regard, [7] emphasized that western producers' managers have negative perceptions about *Halal* and believe that *Halal* is selling a religion. In addition, consumers of the *Halal* brand are not limited to Muslims; attracting other religious affiliations is also crucial for marketers. Thus, finding a *Halal* brand personality assists marketers in revealing the personality of *Halal* and serves as a unifier in the minds of consumers, particularly non-Muslims, and producers.

In addition, brand personality affects relations with consumers and increases purchase intention [19], [20]. Aaker [14] described several examples of different brands with different personalities, such as Dunhill, which is perceived as masculine, Mild Seven as feminine, IBM as old, and Apple as young. In this regard, if the *Halal* brand mirrors a sincere personality, it will reflect the truthfulness of human personality [21]. This characteristic of *Halal* can establish a durable relationship with target groups and bring peace of mind to consumers. Similar to human personality, brand personality does not change easily [2]. Therefore, if the same personalities join together, they can make a strong connection. Discovering brand personality emerges from the four functions of the consumer brain: thought, feeling, sensation, and intuition [2]. Thus, finding the *Halal* personality assists marketers to understand consumers' perceptions toward the brand and how they feel about it [21]. Furthermore, consumers choose a brand with its personality at the social or individual level [1]. At the social level, brand personality provides a signal that specifies belongingness to a specific group or subculture. At the individual level, brand personality helps consumers demonstrate themselves. Accordingly, identifying the *Halal* brand personality assists international and local companies in presenting *Halal* beyond *Shariah* obligation and aligns their strategies to a different set of Muslim consumers with various values and beliefs as well as to non-Muslim consumers to satisfy their consumers socially and individually.

III. BRAND PERSONALITY APPEAL

Brand personality appeal (BPA) is "a brand's ability to appeal to consumers through the combination of human characteristics associated with it" [20]. Indeed, managers can precisely understand the relevance, strength, and endurance of a particular brand personality as well as how this personality affects purchase intention and behavior when they discover the degree of appeal of a brand's personality. Freling et al. [20] broke BPA down into three dimensions: favorability, originality, and clarity. These dimensions facilitate the evaluation of different aspects of brand personality. Favorability indicates how consumers view a brand, whereas originality shows how distinct the personality of a brand is from that of competitors. Clarity expresses how clearly brand personality is perceived by consumers. In fact, BPA complements the brand personality scale and presents a greater nuance in understanding brand personality. BPA can detect which aspects of personality are strong or weak to give managers greater managerial insight into how their brand can be managed personality. Overall, BPA indicates how consumers perceive a brand personality [20]. In addition, although brand personality scales precisely measure brand personality, they do not measure consumer feelings toward brand personality and how a specific personality affects consumer purchase intention.

Thus, when a brand is perceived to have a sophisticated personality, does this perception affect consumer purchase intention or draw out positive attitudes? Developing three core dimensions of BPA and finding the level of affection for them (high, moderate, or low) help managers use various scenarios and strategies [20]. For example, a company might find that its brand personality is viewed as original and clear and only moderately favored. This example indicates that the company should focus on favorability and exert more effort to improve its rating. Increasing the three core dimensions boosts overall BPA [20]. As regards success in the *Halal* market, companies should not only determine the *Halal* brand personality but also identify a way through which personality appeals to consumers. For instance, although the favorability of the *Halal* brand personality indicates how it is positively viewed by consumers, the originality of the *Halal* brand personality indicates the extent to which consumers perceive the novelty of its personality and its distinctness from other brands in the same product category. In this manner, the clarity of the *Halal* brand personality mirrors the extent to which the personality of the *Halal* brand is apparent and recognizable to consumers. Therefore, understanding the degree of appeal that the *Halal* brand's personality holds among target consumers is crucial for companies to focus their efforts on strengthening the overall *Halal* BPA.

IV. PURCHASE INTENTION

Purchase intention is a critical marketing concept that assists managers in their alignment strategies and decisions in the marketplace [22]. Purchase intention reveals consumer interest to purchase a specific brand [23], [24]. The process of purchasing by consumers is complicated. Therefore, analyzing this process reveals consumer behavior, perception, and attitude toward a brand. Purchase intention is the most significant issue in each industry to induce a positive feeling among consumers and improve brand standing in the market. In this regard, the effect of brand personality and BPA is very important to increase purchase intention [20], [19]. In fact, discovering the personality of the *Halal* brand can serve as a core competency for companies that can help them present their products to different target groups. Finally, the consequence of purchase intention is not always brand purchase, even if consumers recognize the brand. Although the attitudes of several consumers toward the *Halal* brand are positive, they may never buy it. Thus, implementing BPA is vital to lead and motivate these consumers to buy the brand.

V. CONSLUCION

In this research, an attempt was made to conceptually clarify the implementation of brand theories on *Halal*. For this purpose, we propose a model that describes the relationships between brand personality, brand personality appeal and purchase intention. Brand personality in the context of current practice in marketing theory has been employed in this research. The highlight of this study is the application of brand personality appeal as a complementary scale of brand personality. It is hoped that the findings from this research will provide useful insights for scholars, *Halal* manufacturers and marketers to establish an appealing *Halal* brand for consumers. Theoretically, this study is important because it provides an insight into how consumers are becoming more conscious of *Halal* brand. Finally, it is recommended that this proposed model should be deployed to different target consumers (Muslim and non-Muslim) empirically.

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