

Determinants of Costumer Purchase Intention towards Halal Brands

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ABSTRACT

The prime objective of this study is to explore the factors that effect the costumer purchase intention towards Halal brands. This study aims to provide initial framework for management practitioners and future researches to consider brand personality, attitude towards other products, awareness and product ingredients as a driving force to strengthen the costumer purchase intentions towards Halal brands. The study sheds light on the path which leads to enhance the costumers purchase intention towards Halal Brands.

Key words: *Attitude, Awareness, Brand Personality, Product Ingredients.*

Introduction

In the current era of globalization and increased competition, companies are very keen to know about the buying intentions and consumer psyche. Companies are spending millions of dollars to understand and impact consumer buying behavior patterns. Though, consumers trust famous brands where names become the sign of trust, consistent quality and make unique position in the market. Many researches highlight the importance of buying behavior of consumers. Particularly in the Islamic society Halal products branding is the emerging and crucial factor for the marketers. Halal foods carry numerous qualities i.e Halal ingredients, processes, quality standards, neatness and clean standards operating procedures to make products. The range of products relevant to islamic marketing include banking, hospitality, financial products, logistics, food and beverages, cosmetic and insurance (Khraim, 2010).

In emerging markets, Halal products are not only the preferences and need of the Muslim consumers but also non-Muslim users. It is because Halal brand is not just a religious issue but also the sign of good hygienic conditions and provide standards of quality products (Aziz &Chok, 2013).

In this backdrop this study provides basis for development of the initial model of customer purchase intention which will describes all the factors which may affect the purchase intention towards halal brands. Past researches focused only the individual factors one by one and separately. Therefore, a

joint model of factors that affect the attitude of consumer towards Halal brands is not present yet. This ignored area of Islamic branding is facilitated by this study. Thus, this study provides a platform for scholars through which to organize religiosity in the realms of Halal marketing and branding. The development of positive attitude of costumer towards Halal brands will contribute to the future of halal industry in this country.

Research Question

What are the factors which intend the customer towards hilal brand in the perspective of Islam?

How purchase intention modle affect the behavior of the customer while purchasing hilal products in Pakistan?

Significance of study

Many studies have been conducted on hilal products and customer behavior but this study will explore linkage of the factors which affect purchase intention modle.

What is Hilal brand?

Halal (حلال, *halāl*, *halaal*) is an Islamic Arabic term meaning "permissible".

When word hilal is used in Islamic countries, it is meant that what is allowed intake by Islamic Laws. In non-Islamic countries, the word usually means fit to be eaten by a Muslim.

According to islamic dietary laws, hilal term is used to designate the categories of lawful or allowed diets. The best known dietary rule is the prohibition on eating carrion, blood, swine flesh, and what is consecrated to anyone or anything besides God (2:173, 16:115 and elsewhere)¹.

The brands which obey Islamic rules are called hilal brands.

Holy Quranic versus

There is extensive knowledge of halal and hram in the Holy Quran. Some versus from the holy quran are as follows.

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ جَمِيعًا هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ

"He is the One who created for you, all things on earth and then turned to the heavens and made them seven heavens. He is knowledgeable of all things."

(Qur'an 2:29)

إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ .

O you mankind! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the devil, for he is to you an avowed enemy.

(Qur'an 2:168)

Research methodology

This study aims at theoretical concepts of Halal in Islam which is based on the literature. This paper is basically literature based research which provides

indepth knowledge about the customer behavior while purchahisng Halal products in Pakistan.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the degree of possibility of potential customers to buy certain brands for themselves after a certain evaluation (Changa&Liub, 2009). Tsiotsou (2006) describes customer's purchase intention as the possibility of potential customers who plan to buy a product in the future, making the purchase again, and call again related products. Prior to purchasing, consumers purchase process begins by collecting product information based on personal experience and the external environment.

Before actual buying, customers collect information based on cognitive thinking, personal experience, social learning from the outer world. When consumer has sufficient information about brand, customer start assessment and evaluation process, and make his mind to buy or not after conducting comparison with other available options. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) have linked purchase intention with subjective inclination which consumers have towards certain products, and has been proven to be a key factor to predict consumer behavior. Purchase intention towards Halal brands in key construct of this study which is effected by numerous factors. Those factors could be brand personality, attitude towards other products, awareness and product ingredient. These are discussed below in details.

Drivers of customer purchase intention

Brand Personality

Brand personality is the outer image of the company which influences brand-consumer relationship (Lin, Chen & Hung, 2011). In everyday life, consumers interact with different brands and establish relationship with their favorite brands because of their matching personality with them. Brand personality plays crucial role in buying patterns of consumers, their processes, and making lasting relationship between brand and consumers (Lin & Lin, 2007). Also brand personality is the complex and appealing concept in the digital era of marketing (Rezai, Mohamed, &Shamsudin, 2012). It leads to build trust, expectation and the basic relationship between brand and consumer (Swimberghe, Sharma & Flurry, 2009). Mukhtar and Butt (2012) revealed that trustable brands establish high moral values, create excitement and trust to buy again and again. A strong personality trait of brand is not only appealing for buying intentions but also creates excitement among the consumers (Hanzaee&Ramezani, 2011). Halal branding is the newly evolved phenomenon in Islamic marketing. Halal brands reflect sincerity of the brand, it also mirrors the trust-ability and efforts of the company to provide product quality. The characteristic of the Halal product is to make long-lasting relationship with target segment of consumers and satisfy their needs by creating image of quality. It is therefore, the quality image of brand personality which creates charisma to attract consumers towards Halal Products (Tsiotsou, 2006).

Attitude toward other products

The second important factor which may impact the consumer purchase intention is the attitude of the costumers about other products. Consumer attitude is based on several beliefs of brand (Golnaz& Nasir, 2012). As per the expectancy value theory, attitudes are based on core beliefs, attitude is the inner personality of the brand, how it causes behave, and react in a certain way. To some researchers attitude is the negative or positive feelings towards certain object. An attitude revealed relative evaluations, perceptions, feelings and trends toward certain object of product or person. It is the attitudes of people which creates love, hate, interest and ignorance to accept or reject brand. In the context of Islamic branding consumers attitude and feelings about non-Halal brands effects consumer purchase intention. If consumers have negative inclination towards non- Halal products it implies that purchase intentions towards Halal brands will be positive.

Awareness

Awareness described as the perception of the people and their cognitive response towards certain objects likewise what to eat or what to drink etc. The level of awareness is the subjective term and vary from person to person, depend upon his/her cognitive abilities, environment, level of education, experience, age and demographic factors etc.

Awareness in this particular context explains that the consumers know the product is made according to the principles of Islam, and there is no Haram element or ingredient in the product and everything is mentioned categorically in label of the product. The level of awareness increase the realization in the Muslim community about acceptable or not acceptable products brand in the society, especially food items.

Awareness comes from internal state of mind of the human beings, and is effected by the external factors which influence our sensory input system and realize the worth of certain objects (Nooh et al., 2007). According to Ambali and Bakar (2013) most of the consumers make their perception by relying on words of seller and trust on the information they received from them. Therefore, it is very crucial in marketing to transfer the knowledge and benefits of the product amongst the consumers, for example give them exposure and make them realize the worth of Halal brands, and give them choice of what to eat or drink. Wang (2002) recommended that the best way to create awareness amongst the consumer is to educate them, explain the features and distinguishable traits of the brand. By educating, we can empower the consumers with wisdom, and we can give them choice between right or wrong about their daily life consumption (Ali, 2014). Halal product emerged worldwide as major concern, it is not only the concern of the Muslim society but also of the others. The word Halal becomes the symbol of extra care and conscious effort for Muslim community by the multinational companies. It also showed the worth of the consumers by brands, their sincerity, interest and care

for the consumers (Changa, &Liub, 2009). Therefore, Halal food awareness may also open new opportunities for the marketers and reshape the concept of brand trust.

Salman and Siddiqui (2011) revealed that brand awareness can be judged on the scale of consumer knowledge about the brand, how much he is informed about the features and characteristics of the brand and how much they persuade, and appealed consumers to try it. Consumer should have knowledge of the product before actually buying it. Because customer satisfaction is measured by the mind set of consumers before using and after using that product and evaluating the difference between both situations (Davies & Wright, 1994).

Product Ingredients

In an Islamic society consumer buying intentions towards Halal brands closely depends on the environmental factors like situation, available marketing information, brands choice and ingredients of the product (Anir, Nizam & Masliyana, 2008). The role of Shariah is to provide the major guidelines for the Muslims to choose any Halal product specially food items. From Islamic point of view, ingredients of the food or drink is the major consideration to make a choice for Muslims. The familiarity of the ingredients of the food is major issue for the consumer of Halal products. The role of knowledge transfer about the Halal ingredients is very necessary for the brands to capture the opportunities in the market. Halal is the new emerging concept to gain competitive advantage in the market and can become the major player and most attractive choice for the Muslim community. Most of the companies embarked Halal stamp on labeling of the products (Warshaw, 1985). Available knowledge about the ingredients of the Halal products attract the attention of the consumers and make their mind towards purchase. The name of chemicals and their universal code played major role in constructing the soft image of Halal products, and language is the second most important factors for consumers (Davies & Wright, 1994). There is consensus of opinion among the Muslim community about Halal products which covers the basic beliefs of safety quality and they order of Shariah about eating, drinking and other usage. Ismaeel and Blaim (2012) suggested that it is also closely linked with the advertisement, packaging, labeling, designing, distributing and retailing of the products.

In the lights of existing literature, past researches and discussions following model of purchase intention has been developed for the deeper understanding of the patterns of customer purchase intentions towards Halal brands. This model depicts all those factors which may influence the customer choice and desire for purchase of Halal products and brands.



Purchase Intention Model (Developed by authors)

Conclusion

Halal Foods is the major emerging market not only in the Muslim countries but also in non-Muslim countries. Halal branding is the area where organizations can achieve the competitive advantage. This study concluded four major factors which regulate costumer purchase intentions towards Halal brands. Brand personality is the major influencing element of effecting consumer buying behavior as organizations are spending millions of dollars on making brand personality. It is the psychological picture in the mind of the customer to buy certain brand. Brand personality comprised on trust-ability, consistency, and meeting the expectations of the customers. Similarly, to buy a certain product or brand, companies investing huge amount to reshape the attitude of the consumers towards brands. Attitude is the inner soul of the human being and its measurement is the predictor of the future behaviors. Consumer buying behaviors can be judged by the attitudes of the particular segment of the group in the market. Transforming information hit the cognitive processes of the human being and change the perception and attitude towards brand. Awareness about the brand and their offering is the major factor leading to the actual purchase of the brand. Brand awareness improves the image of the company in consumer's minds, their value, care and excitement to address and satisfy their need with value added services and premium quality. In Islam, certain things are forbidden because of their ingredients and declared categorically as prohibited (Haram). Therefore, companies need to pass the information about the Halal ingredients of the brand and gain competitive advantage over other products.

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