

HOW HALAL BRAND TRUST AND HALAL BRAND IMAGE INFLUENCE HALAL BRAND PURCHASE INTENTION

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this paper is to study the relationship between brand trust and brand image towards customer purchase intentions related to halal consumptions products. Research model is developed to measure the direct relationship between the brand trust and brand image using structural equation model. This study used quantitative survey approach where survey forms was distributed to over 1,000 target respondents in three major cities in Malaysia. 657 usable data were gathered and the results indicates that brand image positively associated to purchase intentions. Brand trust however is negatively influenced towards customer purchase intentions. The findings show that business organizations need to more effort in creating the brand trust among their target market especially in terms of communications and awareness. Customer would like to know more details and dislike any propaganda in terms of advertisements.

KEYWORDS: Brand image, Brand trust, Halal brand purchase intention.

I. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia was ranked as number one in the Global Islamic Economy (GEI) out of top 10 countries in the world. Based on the report, Malaysia scored highest points for 3 sectors which are halal food, Islamic finance and halal travel. Overall next to Malaysia are UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. It was reported that Malaysia have been dominate the halal's market since 2013 and continuously leading by incremental of points every year. As at today, annual export value for halal product is more than RM30 billion and part of the success factors was because of the support from Malaysian governments by providing the conducive environments and policies.

As at today, there are more than 7,000 halal certificates companies in Malaysia which shows an exponential increased by percentage from the year of 2011. There are at least 200% percentage increased in numbers as compared to the earlier days based on the statistic provide by JAKIM (2019). Among the major industries player in Malaysia related to halal are Ramly, Brahim and CCM. At the same time there are many factories established in Malaysia with halal certificates such as Nestle, Coca-Cola, F&N, Cargill and Alpharma. High numbers of industry's players in market lead to a tough competition to create the brand trust and brand image in the high Muslim population in the country. Some may just not aware on the halal status of each products or the communication was not reached to the market as a whole.

Brand trust and brand image are among the important factors that may influence customer towards purchase intentions. As such this study will measure the relationship and evaluate the strength of both predictors towards the customer's purchase intentions.

II. Literature review

2.1 Purchase intentions

From the perspective of marketing, purchase intentions can be described as the willingness of a customer to buy certain products (Kumar, Scheer, & Kotler, 2000). The purchase intentions could be derived from internal and external factors (Pérez Sánchez, Gázquez Abad, Marín Carrillo, & Sánchez Fernández, 2007). Most of the times, the purchase intentions will be measured through the attitude of customers towards the purchasing or action (Lee, Goh, & Mohd Noor, 2019). Purchase intentions according to Konuk(2015) is also related to the customer

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evaluations based on the expected benefit's and the expected cost derived from the products. It means that customer purchase intentions are based on the perceived value where customer's will measure the benefits over cost to determine the value of certain products (Kamalul Ariffin, Mohan, & Goh, 2018). High value leads to high purchase intentions as compared to the low values (Sallaudin Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019).

Past research highlighted that purchase intentions closely related to the factors that is available within the customers' environments(Razak & Shamsudin, 2019). It was also reported that customer could buy a products based on stimulus. Such situations happens when certain attributes of a products trigger the customer to select and purchase the items. Parts of attributes could be many things such as packaging, halal and shape. Role of stimulus is to hint customer with some cue that may immediately trigger customer's action in considering the products or choosing the brand (Kamalul Ariffin et al., 2018). Chakraborty(2019) highlighted that purchase intentions could also be derived from the outcome expectations. It means that customer will evaluate the overall benefits to the user upon purchased the products. Business organizations or brand managers must ensure that the products available in the market must have good characteristics that meet customer expectations. The products or services must provide a greater benefit to the user (Chakraborty, 2019).

According to Kadir and Shamsudin(2019), purchase intentions can also have influenced by the aspirational value such as luxury status, clean and health or halal. It is very important the products or brand manager to promote something that can inspire customer to buy. Such inspirations could lead and influence customer in their decision making (Lee et al., 2019). The most common influencer in purchase decision is recommendations by trusted group. It could be within the family members or social friends. It is also one of the reasons why customer satisfaction can help business organizations to survive, because satisfied customer will help to give testimonial, review and comments that may indirectly influence customer to purchase.

Marketing scholars such as Konuk(2015) claimed that purpose of business is to gain profit and based on that, business organizations must make a proper communication about the products or services sell clearly in the market. According to Kamalul Ariffin et al., (2018) customer will not buy if the products is alien to them. Business organizations must make a mass communication that there is a new product in market and the explain the benefits features and advantage to attract customers. Basic communication's is first to attract customer's attention about the products. It must first make known to the market that such products or services is available. Business organizations can make used of multiple channel to communicate. According to Ma (2017) the first challenge of business owner is get the attention and awareness of the customer.

Past research claimed that product awareness is important as it may create customer interest towards the products (Baharudin Kadir, Shamsudin, Nurul, & Mohd, 2020). Customer that have awareness or information about certain products may have interest towards it. However, it depends on how good is the communication have been made. It should disclose all the benefits, features and advantages in order to quick win in bringing customer interest towards the products or services. According to Naeem (2019), some products may use certain other elements to capture the attentions such as influences amongst the popular people or trigger customer in terms of health concerns or in the case of halal is due to the religious obligations.

Strong purchase intentions could be from the strong desire of customers towards the specific products. The strong desires will lead to customer to search more about the products and find many new things about it especially on how to get and buy (Salem, Shawtari, Shamsudin, & Hussain, 2016). Customer who are having strong desire may explore the possible means that they can get the products. According to Ma (2017), at this stage, past customer review and comment over the social media and any electronic platforms would increase the customer level towards purchase intentions. Business organizations should highlight the advantages of the products and why it should be consumed in order to strengthen the purchase intentions (S. Hassan, Shamsudin, & Mustapha, 2019). Products must be made available everywhere in order to create easy access towards consuming the products (Ha & Janda, 2014).

Customer action of purchase is the translation of the act of willingness to buy. It representing customers' action upon went through a series of customer decision making process. (Pérez Sánchez et al., 2007) claimed that purchase intentions normally come together with the great expectations on the overall outcome and customer experiences. Positive customer experience's will lead to a positive brand image to the products but failing to meet customers' expectations will lead to a damage on the brand image(S. Hassan et al., 2019). This study will focus in brand trust and brand image towards customer's purchase intentions on halal products.

It was recommended by Lee et al., (2019) that business organizations should serve the customer first followed by the selling activities. In business, relationship is important to helps for strong bonding. Customer who enjoyed or happy with the level of services will definitely purchase the products or services. It means that seller must show and portray good behaviour and morale that eventually will attract customers towards their brands.

Besides the products benefits, features and advantages of the products, another important that may influence the customer purchase intentions is the demand. Business organizations may not only need to understand customer expectations but to fulfil the needs. One important factors that may lead to purchase intentions is the demand(Konuk, 2015). It means the ability of customer to pay as an exchange of the products or services. Business

organization's must make sure that products is within the acceptable range of price in order to increase demand in markets.

2.2 Brand Trust

It was reported by Huang(2017) that brand trust is the most valuable assets for a business. Brand trust according to (Kotler, 2017) is a conditions where customer put high reliability and responsiveness towards the brand and the believed on it promises. By definition, brand trust is referring to the extends that customer trust that the brands is capable to deliver the promised made by the brands' product or business organizations (Rambocas, Kirpalani, & Simms, 2014).

Recent study conducted on purchase intentions revealed that 90% customer's purchased based on the brand that they trust. There are so many brand that exist in the market and customer is more comfortable with the brands that they are familiar with (Pinar, Girard, Trapp, & Eser, 2016). Brand trust at the same time reflects the quality and service delivery that have been proven by the products' brand. According to Rambocas et al., (2014) satisfied customer will remain to repeat purchased the same brands to avoid another circle of searching, trial and experiences that may turns positive or vice versa. Past research also claimed that brand trusts represent the acceptable brand attributes and quality that 80% influenced customer purchase decision. It was also mentioned that brand trust would lead to brand loyalty over a period of times (Pinar et al., 2016).

According to Kotler(2017) brand trust can be prosper through communications and information to customers. Business organizations should make known the market about their brand characteristics and benefits that customer may gain from their purchased. Halal products may need to position carefully to trigger customer needs and their requirements on consuming halal products. Muslim is obligate to choose the halal products align with their principal of faith. Business organizations need to open the access to information's so that customer may learn and aware about their products and the characteristics of the products. Ohnemus (2009) stated that customer knowledge is important to instil trust and eventually lead top purchased intentions.

Pinar et al., (2016) quoted that most of the times customer will make decision based on emotional. Halal products is more than emotional as it is part of the way of life where a Muslim should opt for purchase at the first place. However, the communication and brand positioning is important to cultivate trust and relationship development (Phan & Ghantous, 2013). Business organizations need to be honest about their product's strength and weakness. It means that business organization to be more transparent in order to attract more sales and trust (Phan & Ghantous, 2013).

It was also reported that brand trust is representing the perceptions of policy from the top management towards the brands appearance in the market (Naeem, 2019b). Top management must be consistent towards their brand promised and maintains their service delivery as promised. Information and communication must be made clear so that it can invites customer trust and desire to purchase. It is also important the business organizations understand the actual customer needs so that they can positioned their products based on the needs and wants.

2.3 Brand image

Brand image is the customer perceptions' and how they think about the brands from the perspective of customers. According to Kotler (2017), the image was developed over time through interactions, communications, advertisements and customer own experiences. According to Khan and Rahman (2016) brand image is "an image is the set of beliefs, ideas and impression that a person holds regarding an object". Brand image portrayed in the market ideally should be different from other brands available in the market. Brands that promotes halal can be perceived as clean and followed the standards policies and guidelines by the Islamic council. It may help the customer in the market to quickly recognize the brands based on the image that they render or wanted customer to recognized them to be.

Positive brand image according to Khan and Rahman (2016) may leads to positive profits and more people may have attracted to the product's characteristics and positioning. Halal products in a Muslim highest population such as Malaysia and Indonesia may provide huge market size to be penetrated. B. Kadir and Shamsudin (2019) claimed that brand image plays important role towards building trust and inspire customer to purchase. It is also benefits to both customer and brand organizations to introduce new product using the same brand image. A halal based business organizations may easily penetrate the market by using the same brand image since customer's recognized the brands as halal based providers.

According to Maulan, Omar and Ahmad (2016) brand image may help the business organizations to boost the customers' confidence and maintains them in the customers' lifecycle. Customer that hooked to the brand image may stay loyal and support the business because of the relationship and trust (Naeem, 2019b). In a long term, business that maintains positive business image may able to develop the positive relationships for a long term benefits.

Recent research indicates that brand image usually associated with the quality of the products or services. In the case of halal based products it should be presenting their halal genuinely through transparency of their process and deliverables (Phan & Ghantous, 2013). Brand image at the same time also reflects the usability or specialised of the products based on certain or specific characteristic. Halal based products can be one of the brand characteristics

that can invite customers’ trust and belief towards the brand image. Overall, it is important for the business organizations to nurture positive perceived value among the customers in order to sustain in the markets. Business organizations need to improve their brand image as it will lead to expectations. Customer who are familiar with the brand image may easily associate the brands with the expectations that they have based on the exposure made by the brands. As a results, brand image may influence the performance of the business organizations., Positive brand image may influence customer purchase decision but negative brand image may keep customers to distance from the brands. Phan and Ghantous (2013) claimed that the brand image, eventually will be the functions or basis of expectations. Customer may immediately put some level of expectations based on the brand image. At the same time, it also may affect the internal stakeholder’s motivation that eventually will lead to business performance.

III. Methodology

This study used a quantitative survey in order to test the relationship between brand trust and brand image towards purchase intentions. Measurements scales were adapted from recent research from the literatures. Brand trust was examined using five items adapted from Khan and Rahman (2016) while brand image was adapted from Ali, Xiaoling, Sherwani and Ali (2018) with 5 items of measurements. At the same times, purchase intentions was adopted from Sahi, Sekhon, & Quareshi(2016) with overall four items. Final questionnaire was sent to 3 subject matters expert for their validation and comments. Some comments were highlighted based on the sentence structured and vocabulary used. The survey was conducted in three major cities in Malaysia namely Johor Baharu, Kuala Lumpur and Pulau Pinang. Data collection was done through a face to face sessions with customers from 12 supermarkets in those 3 major cities. At the end, the survey managed to generated 657 usable questionnaires (54 percent females and 46% male’s respondents). Data collected was measured using the structural equation model.

IV. Findings

Table 1 shows the summary of the questionnaire based on the 657 usable data received. Ther are in total 14 items to be measured based on three variables. Brand trust consists of five items, brand image is five items and purchase intentions consist of 4 items. Highest mean recorded for brand trust = 5.324 while the lowest is 4.3750 for purchase intentions. All alpha value is above the minimum setting and recommendations.

Table 1: Summary statistics of the questionnaire survey

Constructs	No. of items	Mean	SD	α
Brand trust	5	5.324	1.151	0.801
Brand image	5	5.000	1.142	0.851
Purchase intentions	4	4.750	1.181	0.802

Notes: SD, standard deviation; α , Cronbach’s α ; overall $\alpha = 0.831$

Table 2, represents the principal component analysis. Eigenvalue for brand trust, brand image and purchase intentions are 8.216, 4.326 and 3.918. Goodness-of-fit indicates that all values above the minimum requirements as suggested by Hair (2017).

Table 2: Result of principal component analysis

No	Brand trust	Brand image	Purchase intentions
BRT1	0.807		
BRT2	0.844		
BRT3	0.816		
BRT4	0.718		
BRT5	0.805		
BRIM1		0.804	
BRIM2		0.816	
BRIM3		0.718	
BRIM4		0.805	
BRIM5		0.708	
PI1			0.811
PI2			0.805
PI3			0.818
PI4			0.821
Eigenvalue	8.216	4.326	3.918
Variance explained (%)	35.078	17.063	16.415

Table 3: Goodness-of-fit statistics for measurement model and structural model

	Suggested values	Measurement model values	Structural model values
X^2/df	<3	1.159	1.302
RMSEA	<0.06	0.065	0.037
GFI	>0.90	0.890	0.902
NFI	>0.90	0.964	0.978
CFI	>0.90	0.918	0.158
IFI	>0.90	0.908	0.904

CR value for all the constructs is between 0.81 and 0.91. while AVE values for vbrand trust, brand image and purchase intentions are 0.72, 0.74 and 0.79.

Table 4: Measurement model results

Constructs and variables	Standardized loadings	t-statistics	CR	AVE
Brand trust				
BRT1	0.801	15.127**	0.81	0.72
BRT2	0.911	16.320**		
BRT3	0.765	12.117**		
BRT4	0.617	11.323**		
BRT5	0.825	15.632**		
Brand image				
BRIM1	0.912	14.055**	0.91	0.74
BRIM2	0.832	13.103**		
BRIM3	0.721	11.214**		
BRIM4	0.836	12.058**		
BRIM5	0.804	13.576**		
Purchase intentions				
PI1	0.799	11.204**	0.82	0.79
PI2	0.721	11.031**		
PI3	0.611	11.043**		
PI4	0.826	15.212**		

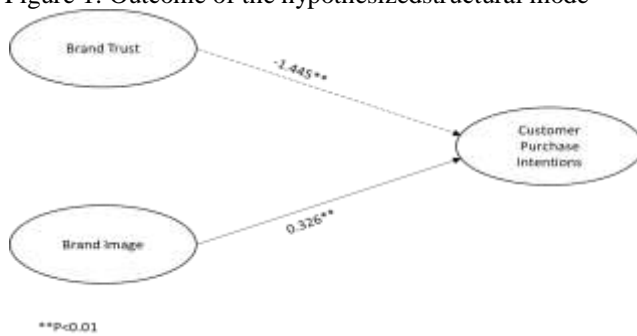
Results for the analysis of structural model shows that brand image is positively influence purchase intentions but not to the brand trust. The result indicates that brand trust is negatively influence towards purchase intentions.

Table 5: Path analysis of structural model

Casual path	Path coefficient	t-statistics	Results
Brand trust → Purchase intentions	-1.445**	-4.252	Not supported
Brand image → Purchase intentions	0.326**	2.397	Supported

Notes: *, ** Significant at $P < 0.05$ and $P < 0.01$ levels, respectively

Figure 1: Outcome of the hypothesized structural mode



V. Discussion and conclusions

The results of the above study show that brand image is significantly influence purchase intentions. However, the brand trust negatively supported the purchase intentions. The important of brand image have been mentioned by a few researchers and tested in various scope of study. This results somehow, supporting the results of past research (Eren-Erdogmus & Dirsehan, 2017; Thomas, 2015). Past research highlighted that the strength of brand image basically lies from the strong advertisements and customer experiences. Customer who have positive experiences over their personal usage or consumptions will borne the relationship and strengthen the trust with the image portrayed. Business organizations need to play more communication campaign in order to promote the brand image among the market and compete wisely for the product differentiation.

Business organizations need to be careful on positioning their brand trust as customer may observed and make decision based on what present to them. According to Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka (2019) customer will not easily put their trust should the business organizations that hide information's and less communications. Customer need to be exposed with all type of information's especially about halal as it involves the religion obedience matters. Business organizations should not manipulate their advertisements that keep customer in doubt and puzzle. It was also recommended that brands should not put hidden agenda in communications such as trying to kill other brands among competitors as customer may not willing to accept the used of that strategy for their decision making. Customer requires a transparency and need to know the strength of the brands itself other than manipulating the weakness of other brands in the market.

Based on the above results, business organizations especially related to halal products or services may need to rearrange their way of communications and marketing strategy in order to win customer support and trust towards purchase intentions.

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