



BRAND PREFERENCES IN MUSLIMAH FASHION INDUSTRIES: AN INSIGHT OF FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to have better insight regarding come out with a conceptual framework in studying the brand preference in Islamic Muslimah fashion industry development. Muslimah fashion industries are areas that have attracted attention, especially after the recent wave among brand endorser such an artist increases their level of awareness towards the religious and affected way of their attire. This study highlights a significant shift in consumers' behavior regarding brand preferences and investigates the motives behind such moves.

Methodology: This paper explores the three independent variables and gathers findings from qualitative data through the literature on factors influencing customers' preferences for Muslimah fashion. Future branding empirical research would include these elements as items in building up the survey instrument.

Results: The results show that uniqueness, price, and celebrity endorser are among the determining factors that influence customers' preferences in making decisions.

Implications: Understanding customers' preferences on Muslimah fashion are crucial for a company that operates in fashion industries due to such a highly competitive industry and rapid change on taste and preference. Having a good understanding of the real motives behind customers' preferences on Muslimah fashion will help the business organization to understand customers better. These results will eventually be used for developing a conceptual framework to be used for future empirical research.

Keyword: Brand preference, Muslimah fashion, branding, customers' preferences, framework development

INTRODUCTION

Through rapid developments in a modest fashion that are also known as Islamic Muslimah fashion and takes inspiration from the more modest way devout Muslim women dress, [Alserhan \(2010\)](#). Thinking covered hair, flowing lines and a riot of color inspired by African, and Asian and Arab heritage. The identity of Islamic fashion industries has been rebranded as modest fashion is a recognition that its appeal transcends women of faith, [Pink \(2009\)](#). In some circles, it is seen as revolutionary. Feminists' researchers think it will dismantle the patriarchy. Through the industrial development, it will banish Islam phobia, and doomsayers think it will be the end of western secularism. Certainly, modest fashion is a coming revolution in the fashion industry as a part of branding but one that will leave crucial parts of society intact. To understand why this revolution will disappoint, the paper first tries to understand why it is revolutionary.

The relation between brand and fashion in Islamic Muslimah fashion is highly sexualized. There is a very particular view of women's bodies that are sold as desirable and fashionable. Modest fashion doesn't opt out of that paradigm while it brings with it, its own sets of rules but it does change it. According to the previous article by offering diverse ways to be fashionable and by proving that women aspire to look well-dressed outside of the received views of what is fashionable. Women who now find that high street fashion isn't built with them in mind but older women, those with plus-size bodies, those who simply don't want clothes that fixate on their curves will keen in finding that the desire to tap into the market of Muslim women will also lead stores to cater to their needs too ([Temporal, 2011](#); [Duru and Chibo, 2014](#); [Purnama, 2014](#); [Dim and Ezeabasili, 2015](#); [Wang and Lu, 2016](#); [Nazal, 2017](#); [Taqi et al., 2018](#)).

Islamic Muslimah fashions branding evolve and not only find favors with women who appreciate flowing lines and covered hair, regardless of religion, but it will also lead to a more segmented fashion market, [Sandıkçı \(2011\)](#). Much previous research



claimed that high street designers will gradually find it normal to release, for example, a "bohemian festival" line of summer clothing, with designs in the range that cater to modest wear customers and those with plus-size bodies. The whole notion of fashion as one industry with one set of rules will change, for the Islamic Muslimah fashion industry players this is a 360 turn around to them. Looking at the industries players who are cheerleading modest wear because they believe it will undercut what they see as the current sensation of the female body in mainstream fashion will be disappointed. Those who think fashion today is oppressive will find modest wear, despite its origins in faith, will be just as unforgiving.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Among the customers, there are a lot of reasons for them to stick with a brand and it is hard for them to change their favorites brands, but once brands know which factor that makes their customers stick with them, the company may come out with a solution or idea that may lead to securing their customers and create loyalty among their customers. The brand has paramount importance and intangible asset of a company that occupies a prominent position in customer minds. Without these intangible assets (brands) companies' tangible assets have less value because customer demand largely depends on brand equity. Therefore, the company takes several steps to protect their brand as these valuable assets are constantly facing risk.

For this study, a Muslimah fashion brand-named, that involve in the Muslimah fashion industries is studied with numerous competitor, which will lead to the challenge for the company in competing with other brands. Brand preferences will assist them to have a better understanding of their existing customers and also non-customers in order to create loyalty and converting non-customer to customer.

This research will provide an insight for the players in the Muslimah fashion industries an overview regarding brand preferences that may help the company involve in the Muslimah fashion industries in future strategy. Most of the past research stated that uniqueness and price are the main factors that lead to brand preferences. This research will take into consideration uniqueness, price and celebrity endorser as the independents variable while brand preference as the dependent variables. The purpose of this research is to have better insight regarding come out with a conceptual framework in studying the brand preference in Islamic Muslimah fashion industry development. There has a bunch of research about the brand preference for food product and gadget product. Hence, this research delved brand preference towards Muslimah fashion industry that have huge development in nowadays. This research will help the Muslimah fashion manufacturer have a better understanding of their customer purchasing behavior.

In this study, the researcher highlighted these three independent variables involving uniqueness, price and celebrity endorser as among the determining factors or predictors that influence customers' preferences in consumer buying making decisions. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The next section offers a systematic literature review of the relationship between uniqueness, price and celebrity endorser as among the determining factors that influence customers' preferences in making buying decisions. Results are presented in the penultimate section followed by a discussion and implications.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dependent Variable

Brand Preferences

Through the years, brands become much important valuable intangible for the company, a distinctive tool that builds a long-term relationship with the consumers, and protects its' rights (Nze *et al.*, 2016; Kimengsi and Gwan, 2017; CHE and Sundjo, 2018; Cheng *et al.*, 2018). For consumers, brands reflect their experience and knowledge; simplifying the processing of information accumulated over time about the company and its products or brands. In addition, brands also reflect consumer's experiences and knowledge; thus, simplify the processing of information accumulated over time about the company and its products or brands (Castorena *et al.*, 2014; Ibrahim and Jaafar, 2015; Tanoos, 2017; Chowdhury *et al.*, 2018).

Recently, the significance of affective factors on brand preference development has been demonstrated (Bai *et al.*, 2015) exhibit the role of emotional experience in improving attitude models. Consistently, Chen (2017) demonstrate the importance of effective responses in addition to the cognitive perceptions in understanding consumer brand preferences. Many studies are



attempting to investigate how consumer tradeoff between the hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of the products when making choices (Eelen *et al.*, 2017).

Such research suggests that consumer's value between different dimensions according to its relative importance to the product type (Eelen *et al.*, 2017). The consumer gives high importance to the hedonic dimensions after the fulfillment of the utilitarian aspects (Tajvidi *et al.*, 2017). However, it has been argued that the interplay between the two dimensions in consumer behavior resulting in different emotional responses and behavioral consequences.

Independent Variable

Uniqueness

An individual's need for uniqueness is a manifestation of a goal-driven behavior with the pursuit of differentness or desire for unique products as the ultimate end-goal. The motivation that drives a high need for uniqueness individuals towards this goal will be reflected in the behaviors engaged by these individuals (Swani and Milne, 2017).

Customer with a strong need for uniqueness have a social-adjustive attitude toward a product, and they just consume the product to gain approval from other people. Refer to Kauppinen-Räsänen *et al.* (2018) recent studies in the marketing literature make it appear that the need for uniqueness could have an impact on consumers purchase intention (Liu *et al.*, 2018). The previous study also found that consumer's need for uniqueness has a significant positive impact on their luxury purchase intention (Manthiou *et al.*, 2018).

For those who are high in need for uniqueness, products with fewer varieties are more attractive than those with more variety; on the contrary, for those who are low in need for uniqueness, products with more varieties are more convincing than those with fewer varieties. For example, firms are advised to launch the so-called "limited version" goods to attract high-need for uniqueness consumer (Mühlbacher *et al.*, 2016).

As a conclusion, most of the researcher stated that uniqueness has a positive relationship with the brand preference, this is not limited to the design only but also some other elements such as packaging.

Price

Price consciousness customers always seek the best or lowest price for products. They just want value for the money. People buy counterfeit products because they are less expensive than real or genuine products, people can get these products easily in the absence of an authentic product (Huang *et al.*, 2017).

They can divert shoppers from being brand or shop loyal, or shoppers can stockpile, increase their consumption rate or just simply bring forward future demand (Salamandic *et al.*, 2014). Frequently shoppers do not remember prices any better and do not check prices any more than do infrequent shoppers. Thus the frequency of shopping may not be a useful basis for retailers to classify shoppers (Olbrich *et al.*, 2017).

Price and quality have an influence on the consumer buying decision. The fact remains that consumers consider both price and quality in their buying situation. The observation shows that customers feel reluctant to buy low quality and high price product means quality and it shows that price can't be used as an indicator of quality (Shen *et al.*, 2017). Such a finding is consistent with the feelings of retailers themselves, who indicate the price is an important selection criterion for shoppers (Campos *et al.*, 2013). Some of the researchers stated that price played an important role in customer's decision, while some others said that only infrequent customer will check the price but not for the frequent customers.

Celebrity Endorser

The use of celebrities to endorse a marketing offer creates a very favorable influence on the consumers and it creates a connection that forces consumers to patronize a product. It has been proved from the discussion that celebrity endorsements are a powerful and useful tool that magnifies the effect of a campaign but the word of caution to be followed seriously; celebrities alone do not guarantee success nor does a great advertising campaign or the best possible product. It is the combination of



several factors especially the price and other elements that work together for the success of a brand and its acceptance in the minds of consumers as well as for its market offers (Erfgen *et al.*, 2015).

Celebrity endorsement has positively impacted the company as well as brand and customers. They were enhancing the image of the product, brand awareness, recall, retention, and credibility (Centeno and Wang, 2017). A printed advertisement comprising celebrity, and analyzed that celebrity endorsement has a positive influence on the customer buying behaviors and customers were motivated to purchase a product endorsed by a celebrity. However, customers also considered celebrity's product association in their buying decision.

For the conclusion, most of the researcher claimed that celebrity endorser may influence customers purchase decision but it needs to combine with other elements like product quality. Celebrity endorser only creates desire but not the main reason for customers to purchase it.

DISCUSSIONS

Throughout the literature study, the researcher found any evidence of the previous study revealed the relationship between brand preference and uniqueness. An individual's need for uniqueness is a manifestation of a goal-driven behavior with the pursuit of differentness and ultimate end-goal. The motivation that drives a high need for uniqueness individuals towards this goal will be reflected in the behaviors engaged by these individuals (Swimberghe *et al.*, 2018).

Psychology places a strong and large part in pricing a product. Consumers facing any risk in their purchasing decision feel safer with a price. The fact that a high price is an indicator of the quality of a product is the consumer's perception (Huang *et al.*, 2017). The researcher also discovers several past types of research try to study the relationship between price and brand preference.

Furthermore, the researcher also tried to study the relationship between celebrity endorser and brand preference. Celebrity endorsement has a positive impact on the company, brand, and customers; they enhance the image of the product, brand awareness, recall, retention, and credibility (Erfgen *et al.*, 2015).

Through rapid developments in Islamic Muslimah fashion, understanding customers' preference on Muslimah fashion is crucial for a company that operates in the fashion industry due to such a highly competitive industry and rapid change on taste and preference. Having a good understanding of the real motives behind customers' preferences on Muslimah fashion will help the business organization to understand customers better.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the researcher found that the elements of uniqueness, price and celebrity endorser play an important role in creating brand preference. The literature studies indicate that there is a significant relationship among customers reaction toward the three elements. As a company within Muslimah fashion industry, roughly using these three elements in their marketing strategies and this literature study has discovered how effective this marketing strategy is towards customer's brand preferences? From the previous literature also have reveal uniqueness, price and celebrity endorser provide a relationship with brand preference, which means customers giving strong attention towards these three elements before they making a purchase decision.

The literature study results also suggest several recommendations for Muslimah industrial players to include more uniqueness element, industry players may also focus on the creative advertisement such as using the marketing influencer strategy despite focusing on products and packaging only. A unique advertisement may attract customer because' people nowadays are really close to the technology that they like to make a survey first from social media such as Instagram and Facebook. A unique advertisement by using social network may increase a customer's interest in purchasing product and also brand preference.

Other than that, Muslimah industrial players also may adjust their pricing strategy, this is because, from the data, price and brand preference indicate the relationship. The industrial players can consider in lowering their price in order to hold customer's interest. Currently, the can be considered high in pricing compared to another boutique due to its prestige status. Even some people think that price is an indicator of quality, due to current economic situations, the players may considering their price



again.

The last recommendation is regarding their celebrity endorser. This element is the weakest compared with the uniqueness and price based on the data analyzed. A company can try to use other popular artist compared with right now and also can use another medium of marketing such as billboard, event sponsoring and charity event that using a popular artist.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE STUDIES

As been stated before an introduction, there have several limitations faced by the researcher in conducting this study. For the future study, the researcher may have time constraint; another researcher can overcome this problem by properly set up a schedule to make their research become smoother. Other than that, future study will try to use other dependent variable compared by using uniqueness, price and celebrity endorser. This will allow future researcher has a wider understanding of brand preference and this study can be the guideline. The researcher may try to use other variables like quality, product, and some other elements.

The future study also can analyze another brand because the different brand will have different marketing strategies and also different customer's preference. There has a lot of other databases that could provide sources of literature that can be the reference. The result also may be different and will lead to a different recommendation.

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