Customer-Based Islamic Brand Equity (C.B.I.B.E) Pyramid

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ABSTRACT

The study proposes a model for developing Customer-Based Brand Equity (C.B.B.E) of Islamic brand. The Customer-Based Islamic Brand Equity (C.B.I.B.E) pyramid is developed based on the C.B.B.E pyramid and the theory of self-congruity. The study attempts to fill a significant conceptual gap in the area of Islamic branding. It holds both theoretical and practical significance for the development of Islamic brands. The proposed model provides Islamic brand building blocks, i.e., religiosity, Islamic brand knowledge, ICSR, and Islamic brand resonance. It adopts a secondary data analysis and builds on the existing brand management constructs to customize them according to the Muslim consumer market. Up until now, a customized model for the creation of C.B.B.E in Islamic brand has not been developed. Limited research exists within the area of customized brand elements of an Islamic brand. This study attempts to fill in the gap in the area through the proposed model and concepts.

Introduction

The concept of brands and brand management has existed since ancient times. It can be traced back to 2700 BC when the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans used to brand their livestock and slaves to mark their ownership. The purpose of branding evolved from representing origin and ownership to the creation of differentiation and competitive advantage (Bastos & Levy, 2012) and ultimately as an expression and identification of the consumer's individual and social self. Research on brands and brand management has also followed the evolutionary trends (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). In the second half of the 20th century, researchers started focusing on the relationship between brands and consumers' perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and emotions.

Brand equity has been studied and analyzed by researchers for the past 40 years from different perspectives. C.B.B.E is deemed as one of the most significant aspects of brand equity (Keller, 1993). It has been conceptualized and analyzed under varying market conditions and using different models and approaches. Even in the presence of significant research in the area, researchers have highlighted the need to improve and develop context-specific models and measures of C.B.B.E. Researchers are of the opinion that the current work in the area of C.B.B.E does not entirely capture the dynamic and complex nature of the concept and the continually evolving consumer markets in today's world (Chatzipanagiotoua et al., 2016; Veloutsou & Guzmán, 2017). In today's world, C.B.B.E's operationalization and effective development are some of the most challenging tasks for managers aiming to capture and retain diverse geographic and cultural consumer segments (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019).

Literature Review

The Muslim consumer market is a complex and dynamic global consumer market that has received significant attention from marketers and researchers in the past decade (Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016). The needs, attitudes, and behaviors of Muslim consumers are integrated and ultimately with their religious faith. Religious values and specified codes of conduct are a significant part of Muslim culture, influencing their eating habits, consumption behavior, professional conduct, societal relationships, and all the other dimensions of everyday life. Therefore, attracting and retaining the Muslim consumers requires customized branding strategies that have synergy with their religious ideologies in Islamic branding (Alserhan, 2010b; Leightner, 2019). It is a branding ideology that is developed to appeal to the Muslim consumer market. It is in line with the Shariah values and offers Shariah compliance in all aspects of a brand's personality, brand elements, brand development stages, behavior, and communications (Ogilvy Noor, 2012). Research reveals that a large number of Muslim consumers still experience a feeling of alienation when interacting with the majority of global brands (El-Bassiouny, 2016).

Islamic Branding

Brands are developed through the execution of the strategy of branding. Branding creates and integrates a particular meaning and personality into an offering by forming various brand associations in the consumer's mind. Branding is a brand-building process that requires several brand elements such as brand name, logo, symbol, color, etc. These brand elements are communicated and associated with the brand in the target market's minds through various promotional strategies (Kotler et al., 2017). These associations develop brand image and personality. The strength of the brand associations influences the consumer's belief in the brand's claims and promises. Consumers are loyal and emotionally attached to the brand when they believe that the communicated brand personality is congruent with the consumer's ideal/desired personality (Kotler & Keller, 2015).

When a brand associates itself with Islam, it leverages the secondary associations of the religion and uses them to increase its brand equity in the Muslim consumer's minds (Wilson & Liu, 2011). This process of connecting Islamic associations with each aspect of a brand's life cycle from pre-consumption to post-consumption is based on Islamic branding. Islam is deeply connected with every part of its follower's life. Due to this reason, a brand may borrow all the associations of Islam in the Muslim consumer's mind and leverage it as an Islamic brand's

association (S. N. Z. Bukhari & Isa, 2019; Samidi et al., 2016; Temporal, 2011). Islamic branding gives an Islamic image and personality through strong and believable religious associations to a brand. Islamic brands are developed through the implementation of Islamic branding. Islamic branding is based on the premise that Islam is a brand in itself, with its unique brand image (M. Yusof & Jusoh, 2014).

Islamic branding requires developing customized Islamic branding elements that create emotional attachment in Muslim consumers' minds through brand-self-connection. Islamic branding requires the brand to "go beyond stating ingredient permissibility, the real challenge is to fit, package and brand the product into a credible proposition, without compromising or undermining its true essence" (Maulan et al., 2016, p. 12). Islamic brands face challenges in capturing and retaining the Muslim consumer market due to gaps in the Islamic branding strategy, leading towards a low level of C.B.B.E for Islamic brands. The development of C.B.B.E requires the formation of emotional brand attachment by creating brand-self-congruity. Brand managers develop congruity between a brand and the consumer's self-concept through humanizing the brand. This is done by developing various brand elements customized according to the personality of the target market (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017).

Methodology

The proposed brand-building blocks are adapted from Keller's C.B.B.E pyramid. The theoretical ground of this conceptualization lies in the theory of self-congruity and is supported through existing literature. The study applies secondary data to support the proposed model.

Theory of Self-Congruity

Self-congruity is a psychological and emotional phenomenon. In its outcome, a brand's target consumers match the brand's perceived image with their self-image. The theory of self-congruity examines the consumer's identification with the brand. The brand personality is evaluated positively by a consumer if it matches their self-image. It is based on the assumption that the perception of a similarity existing between a brand and the customer influences the customer's pre-purchase and post-purchase behavior. It also

profoundly affects the consumer's behavioral and attitudinal attachment towards the brand (Frías-Jamilena et al., 2019; Sirgy, 2018; Willems & Brengman, 2019).

If a brand inculcates values and personality similar to its target market, it can create a C.B.B.E that can protect the brand against various threats. Muslims are connected to their religion on both a logical and emotional basis. This deep connection requires them to judge a brand on both mental and emotional levels. Thus a need to develop an emotional connection is triggered (Ahmadova & Aliyev, 2019). This theory has been applied in many brand-self-congruence studies to understand the role of religion in the determination of brand and consumer match or mismatch (S. N. Z. Bukhari & Isa, 2019; Butt et al., 2017; Suhartanto et al., 2019; Surya & Saragih, 2019).

Religion occupies an essential place in the lives of Muslim consumers. Islam has numerous symbolic associations in the minds of its followers. These symbolic brand associations influence all aspects of the consumption process and create a strong bond between religion and followers (Alserhan, 2010b; Jumani & Sukhabot, 2020). Based on the above theoretical discussion's premise, it can be deduced that brand managers should develop customized brand building blocks to create brand resonance for Islamic brands. The need to explore the emotional and psychological antecedents of Islamic branding has been identified in past literature (Al-Hajla et al., 2018). Islamic branding should create congruence between Muslim consumer's self-concept and Islam's functional, hedonic, and symbolic associations regarding that product category. Islamic brands should be developed to achieve brand-consumer congruence through Islamic branding. Thus, the brand elements required for an Islamic brand will differ from those required for conventional brands. Islamic branding requires strategies that serve as antecedents to the formation of C.B.I.B.E. The antecedents of Islamic branding are adapted from the C.B.B.E pyramid's brand building blocks, as discussed in the next section.

Customer-Based Brand Equity (C.B.B.E) Pyramid

A brand possessing C.B.B.E will serve as a valuable resource for a firm that will be very difficult for competitors to imitate in the long run

(Dedeoğlu et al., 2019; Keller, 2001). A model of C.B.B.E was developed by Keller (2001), comprising four levels. According to the C.B.B.E pyramid, when a brand is developed, the first brand-building block is the creation of Brand Salience or Brand Identity. The next stage of the C.B.B.E pyramid is Brand Meaning through performance and image-related brand associations. Finally, it depends on establishing the desired brand image and communicating the associations and the meaning of these associations in consumers' minds (Keller, 1993, 2001).

After a brand has successfully developed its identity and meaning in the consumer's mind, the next brand-building block is Brand Response development. This step of the brand-building process determines how the consumer responds to the marketing communication and other information about the brand (Raut et al., 2019; Taghipourian & Noormohammadan, 2017). The last step in the C.B.B.E pyramid is the creation of Brand Resonance. To achieve brand resonance, the brand must first lay down the foundations of resonance by creating the required brand identity, meaning, and response. The strong foundation of brand resonance ensures that the brand can reap the benefits of a consumer's emotional brand attachment and save the brand from various threats

(Keller, 2009; Moura et al., 2019).

These are called brand building blocks. It depicts a branding ladder where all the brand-building blocks are associated and dependent on one another. According to Keller (2003), the development of brand meaning is based on the creation of the desired brand identity, which in turn leads to the formation of required brand responses. Finally, customer-brand relationships cannot be nurtured unless the desired brand responses have been shown by the consumers (Chekalina et al., 2018). In the C.B.B.E pyramid, each step's completion is subject to the successful implementation of the previous steps. This study proposes Islamic brand building blocks based on the C.B.B.E pyramid. In addition, this study proposes customized brand-building blocks for developing an Islamic brand based on the C.B.B.E pyramid and the theory of self-congruity.

Customer-Based Islamic Brand Equity (C.B.I.B.E) Pyramid

The proposed C.B.I.B.E pyramid is composed of four Islamic brand building blocks, i.e., religiosity, Islamic brand knowledge, ICSR, and Islamic brand resonance adapted from the four brand building blocks of the C.B.B.E pyramid in Figure 1.
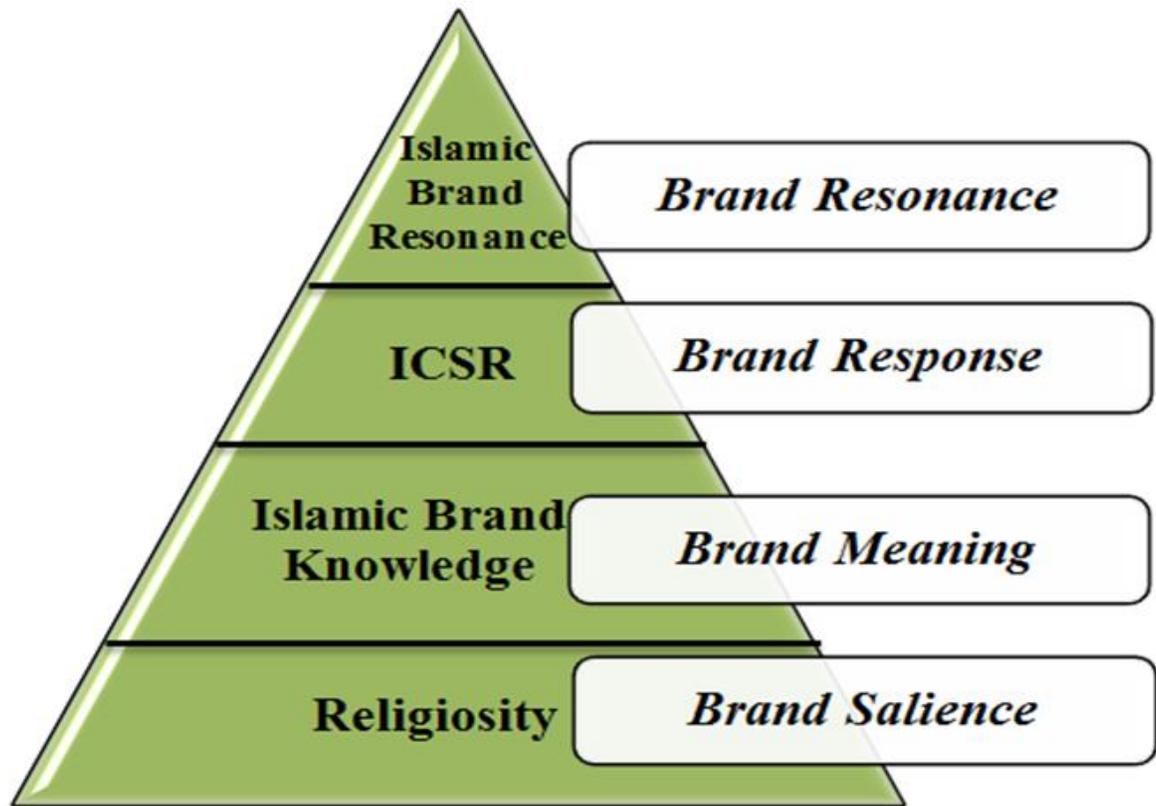
Figure 1: *Customer-Based Islamic Brand Equity (C.B.I.B.E) Pyramid*

Religiosity

According to the C.B.B.E pyramid, when a brand is developed, the first brand building block is the creation of the Brand Salience or brand Identity. Brand salience relates to the awareness of a brand in the minds of the consumer. Brand awareness is concerned with recognizing and recalling the brand by the consumer when a need for the respective product category arises. Brand identity is developed through various brand associations about the product or service category (Badrinarayanan et al., 2016). The creation of brand-self-connection through branding elements enables the brand to resonate with the consumer's identity (S. N. Z. Bukhari et al., 2020). This is limited to consumers' self-identity and can be influenced by various socio-cultural factors affecting consumers' identity. When a brand successfully creates identity congruence, it can cause consumers to feel like a part of a wider community, using the same brand (Cheng et al., 2019). In such cases, brand identity development will serve the purpose of self-enhancement and gratification (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). For example, if the Islamic brand successfully

associates itself with Islam in the consumer's mind during the first stage of brand development, it will build a strong brand salience (Khandelwal et al., 2019).

This is true in the case of the Islamic brand since the identity of a Muslim consumer is based on their religion and greatly interconnected with the wider Muslim community. In the case of the Islamic brand, brand identity is created on a more symbolic basis. Religion plays a dominant role in the formation of a Muslim consumer's identity (Abuznaid, 2020; Al-Hyari et al., 2012; S. A. A. Bukhari et al., 2019). The bases of consumption decisions are present in the consumer's perceived social identity. In Islam, the consumption of permissible items is considered a good deed. Based on this premise, it is proposed that the first building block for an Islamic brand should be the development of the religious connection between the brand and the Muslim consumer market. Religiosity has been stated as one of the most effective identity-maker. Identity developed based on religion is considered the most salient type of brand identity (Butt et al., 2017).

Religiosity is proposed as the first building block

of an Islamic brand. The successful development of the first step of the C.B.B.E pyramid will make the Muslim consumer perceive that brand as a Halal (permissible in Islam) option when a need arises in that particular product category. For example, an Islamic brand targeting the halal food market should have a top-of-the-mind recall whenever a Muslim consumer wants to purchase halal food. This is only possible through the development of a strong brand identity based on religiosity. Suppose the brand identity is not strongly developed on a religious basis. In that case, the Muslim consumer will easily doubt the brand's adherence to Islamic standards when they hear any negative information about the brand. The development of the desired brand identity is not sufficient for the development of brand resonance. The next stage of the C.B.B.E pyramid is the creation of Brand Meaning.

Islamic Brand Knowledge

The development of brand meaning in the consumer's mind involves the creation of a brand personality based on the brand knowledge given to the consumer. The brand associations required to be developed at this stage are mostly related to brand performance and brand image (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). This step of brand building involves the creation of brand associations in the consumer's minds about the brand's ingredients, production processes, storage, packaging, pricing, promotion, and other brand elements. These brand associations are based on both the tangible and intangible aspects of a brand (Sadek & Tantawi, 2017). This is done by creating brand elements that reinforce the brand identity and communicate the target market's desired brand elements. Through developing a brand, the brand managers communicate their personality and brand image to the consumers (Keller, 2001, 2003). As proposed in the theory of self-congruity, a brand should develop an image congruent with the actual or desired image of the target market (Sirgy, 2018; J. M. Yusof & Ariffin, 2016).

Based on these theoretical grounds, Islamic brand knowledge development is proposed as the next brand-building block. Islamic brand knowledge should develop associations for both tangible and intangible Shariah-compliant features of the brand (Suki & Salleh, 2018). The brand knowledge about Islamic branding will be built through providing information about the brand's halal ingredients, halal supply chain processes, halal packaging, or associating it with various Islamic events (Simanjuntak & Murti, 2019; Vanany et al., 2020). When the brand meaning is developed based on Islamic brand knowledge, the consumers will be less susceptible to religious-based attacks on the brand. The extent of Islamic brand knowledge within the Muslim consumer market is critical for the success of the Islamic branding. Brand knowledge will play an important role in differentiating an Islamic brand from a conventional brand. If the Muslim consumer is not aware of the distinguishing attributes of Islamic branding, he/she will not be able to develop a differentiating response towards the Islamic brand (Yusoff et al., 2015).

Islamic Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR)

The next step involves the creation of the desired Brand Response from the target consumers. Brand managers implement different marketing strategies to elicit the desired brand response. In this stage, a brand should develop brand associations that create feelings of credibility, trustworthiness, security, and self-congruence towards the brand (Keller, 2001, 2003). This building block in the C.B.B.E pyramid is based on consumer's judgment and feelings about the brand. Brand feelings have been termed as the social currency earned through a brand. These brand feelings are manifested in consumers' responses towards the brand (Ambedkar et al., 2018). Completing this stage of the C.B.B.E pyramid requires the formation of intense and enduring brand feelings (Keller, 2020). Researchers have stated that the brand's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities can positively elicit the desired brand response from the target consumer (S. A. A. Bukhari et al., 2020a). Consumers with high spirituality, religiosity, or ethical standards display greater emotional brand attachment to brands with credible CSR portfolios (Mehedi & Jalaludin, 2020). Consumers identify with brands showing similar values of social responsibility and experience increased self-esteem through the consumption of such brands (Hur et al., 2020; Muniz et al., 2019).

For Muslim consumers, socially responsible activities aligned with the Islamic principles and

promoted as measures of compliance with the Islamic standards are perceived more favorably (S. A. A. Bukhari et al., 2020b; Farook, 2007). Based on this discussion, the research framework proposes a brand's Islamic Corporate Social Responsibility (ICSR) activities as the brand building block for creating the desired brand response that can achieve the last step of the pyramid, i.e., brand resonance. Therefore, ICSR has been proposed as a brand-building block of Islamic branding since these socially responsible activities of a brand are congruent with Islam's teachings and thus given importance by the Muslim consumers (Kamil & Jan, 2014). Therefore, these activities have greater chances of creating brand-self-congruence and eliciting a strong and positive response from Muslim consumers.

Islamic Brand Resonance

Based on the proposed pyramid's theoretical premises, the successful implementation of brand salience, brand meaning, and brand response lead to brand resonance development. Based on the theory of self-congruity, it is hypothesized that if a consumer perceives a brand to have the same personality as their perceived self-image, they will have a greater level of loyalty, attachment, sense of community, and engagement with that brand (Akgun et al., 2013). These will lead towards the creation of the highest level of the C.B.B.E pyramid, i.e., brand resonance. The proposed C.B.I.B.E pyramid proposes Islamic brand resonance as the last brand building block of an Islamic brand. Research shows that Muslim consumers prefer brands with Islamic branding elements if two brands have the exact attributes. The investment of significant resources for attaining halal certification by brands targeting Muslim consumers has been stated as institutional support of the relationship between Islamic branding and brand resonance. Brands spend money on acquiring Islamic branding elements because they know that it will cause an increase in the brand's goodwill, market share, and ultimately the brand resonance (Aziz & Chok, 2013; Butt et al., 2017; Khan et al., 2019).

When a Muslim consumer perceives the brand to be consisting of similar religious associations, the brand resonance of that particular brand increases in his mind. For Muslim consumers, branding strategies cannot be separated from their faith's various interconnected and intrinsic dimensions. Muslim consumer seeks and portray the elements of their religious beliefs in every aspect of their consumption behavior (Jumani & Sukhabot, 2020). The creation of brand resonance requires the implementation of Islamic principles in all aspects of a brand's marketing mix (Abuznaid, 2020; Al-Hajla et al., 2018).

Conclusion

Historical developments in the field of marketing reveal the increasing customization and humanization of brands to capture the large and lucrative consumer segments. The era of mass production ended a long time ago, and in the current times, consumers are loyal to brands that they can emotionally connect with and are in congruence with various aspects of the consumer's value system. For a Muslim consumer, the most critical aspect of his life is his faith. The faith of a Muslim consumer is deeply and inseparably connected to consumption behavior. Based on the theory of self-congruity, it is proposed that an Islamic brand can capture the Muslim consumer market by creating congruence between the brand's elements and the Muslim consumer's self-image. An Islamic brand having C.B.I.B.E will guarantee a loyal and emotionally attached consumer base that is less vulnerable to various external threats and incidents.

C.B.I.B.E can be achieved by inculcating the proposed Islamic brand building blocks in the brand branding strategy. This pyramid has been proposed as a brand-building ladder for the development of Islamic brands. The brand-building blocks can prove beneficial for brand managers targeting the global Muslim consumer market to create a long-term relationship with the target consumers and minimize anti-consumption behavior from Muslim consumer markets. This study has significant implications for various stakeholders, including policymakers and brand managers of Islamic brands. Brand managers may use the proposed C.B.I.B.E pyramid to create Islamic brands and capture a share in the substantial global halal market.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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