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Antecedents of consumers' Halal brand purchase intention: an integrated approach

Halal brand
purchase
intention

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to apply the concept of traditional branding constructs – brand image, brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand loyalty to an unexplored field of Halal products – Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty. In addition, this study seeks to elaborate the relationships among brand perceived quality, Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, and Halal brand trust, Halal brand loyalty and consumer purchase intention.

Design/methodology/approach – A theoretical model with hypothesised relationships is developed and tested with the help of structural equation modelling procedure in AMOS. This research used the questionnaire survey method to collect data from 347 consumers in Pakistan who had the experience of purchasing Halal milk brand.

Findings – The empirical results suggest that perceived brand quality has a significant and positive influence on the Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust, Halal brand loyalty and purchase intention. Similarly, the Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty significantly influence consumer Halal brand purchase intention.

Research limitations/implications – The Muslim population is growing in many parts of the world, including non-Muslim countries. Although this study's focus is limited to Pakistani Muslims, findings related to the effects of brand perceived quality, Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, and Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty on intentions may not be equally valid for Muslim consumers in others Muslim and non-Muslim countries and for other types of products.

Practical implications – The findings indicate that ignoring the important quality elements of a brand could be costly to marketers who failed to realise the importance of traditional brand attributes whilst embracing Halal brand marketing initiatives. In addition, Halal branding can allow the businesses to access to new markets, to enjoy more competitive advantages and to increase their profitability by selling at higher prices with higher profit margins.

Originality/value – Although previous research has explored the relevant issues about brand image, brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand loyalty, none highlights these traditional constructs to an unexplored field of Halal products.

Keywords Pakistan, Muslim, Halal brand image, Halal brand loyalty, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

These days, Muslim consumers are faced with a broad selection of Halal products and services. Each product group offers many different local and internationally recognised brands. These brands (hereinafter referred to as Halal brand) use Halal logos or/and symbols that provide assurance to the consumers particularly the Muslims that the ingredients used and the production processes are according to Islamic Shariah (Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Yunos *et al.*, 2014). Thus, Halal brands comply with Shariah together with traditional features of a brand and appear to capture their own niches by projecting themselves as Halal brands (Alam and Sayuti, 2011).

On our earth, Islam is the fastest growing religion both in birth and adoption (Ireland and Rajabzadeh, 2011). The Muslim population is approximately 1.6 billion



(Ireland and Rajabzadeh, 2011; Pew Research Center, 2009) that is close to a quarter of the world's population (Hanzaee and Ramezani, 2011). It is projected that this figure will increase at an annual rate of approximately 35 per cent in the next 15 years, from 2.1 billion in 2015 to 2.2 billion by 2030 (Temporal, 2011). This is and will lead to a very sizeable demand for Halal products in Muslims as well as non-Muslims countries. Halal is a word which is derived from the Arabic language which means lawful, permissible or permitted by the Islamic Shariah (Alam and Sayuti, 2011; Lada *et al.*, 2009). It is the dietary standard as well as the religious obligation for Muslims to consume only food that is Halal and is prescribed in the Holy Quran. According to this standard, all foods products are Halal except those that are specifically mentioned as Haram.

Just like Muslims in numbers, the Halal food consumer market is the fastest growing in the world. According to Halal World Food exhibition (Gulfood), International Halal Market was estimated to be worth more than US\$2.3 trillion in 2012 and expected to increase to US\$10 trillions by 2030 (www.Halalhighlights.com/HH%20Feb14.html). As an example, fast food chain McDonald has added eight million customers in a year after obtaining a Halal certification and offering Halal food lines in Singapore (Sabri, 2006). Instead of significant demand for Halal brands from Muslim consumers in Muslim and non-Muslim countries, still, the research on the Halal market segment and Halal purchasing is at the nascent stage. Hence, understanding the consumer intention towards Halal brands is important for the marketers.

In marketing, academicians and researchers (e.g. Chen and Tseng, 2010; Martensen *et al.*, 2000; Chen and Chang, 2013; Biedenbach and Marell, 2009; Demirgüneş, 2014; Matzler *et al.*, 2008) are generally interested in identifying the antecedents of consumers brand purchase intention as it helps managers in developing suitable strategies for those brands. Like, previous studies have paid great attention to exploring the relevant issues of brand perceived quality, image, satisfaction, trust and loyalty to predict purchase intentions; however, none highlights these traditional constructs to an unexplored field of Halal products. Therefore, the current research wanted to fill the research gap. This study aims to apply the concept of traditional branding constructs – brand image, brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand loyalty to an unexplored field of Halal products – Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty. In addition, this study seeks to elaborate the relationships among brand perceived quality, Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust, Halal brand loyalty and consumer purchase intention.

In the past, researchers have established the inter-relationships among brand perceived quality, image, satisfaction, trust and loyalty in traditional food and non-food contexts (e.g. Chen and Tseng, 2010; Martensen *et al.*, 2000; Chen and Chang, 2013; Biedenbach and Marell, 2009; Demirgüneş, 2014; Matzler *et al.*, 2008) to predict consumers purchase intention, none of the researchers have tried to find whether for a Halal brand these relationship acts in the same way or not. In addition, some studies on consumer purchase intention and behaviour towards a range of Halal products have been conducted (e.g. Ahmed *et al.*, 2014; Rahman *et al.*, 2015; Hanzaee and Ramezani, 2011; Ireland and Rajabzadeh, 2011), however, not many studies (e.g. Awan *et al.*, 2015) have focussed on the consumers' responses towards Halal products in the Pakistani context. Furthermore, this is the first study in the Halal context that explores the inter-relationships of traditional (such as brand perceived quality) and Halal branding constructs (Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty) to predict Pakistani consumers' Halal brand purchase intention.

There are three main reasons why researching Halal food preferences and behaviour is relevant. First, the majority research works on Halal food have focussed on Muslim and non-Muslim consumers in non-Muslim countries such as the USA and Western Europe

(e.g. Bonne *et al.*, 2007; Bonne and Verbeke, 2008; Ahmed, 2008) and China (e.g. Ahmed *et al.*, 2014; Ali *et al.*, 2017) rather than few notable researches in Muslim countries (e.g. Ireland and Rajabzadeh, 2011; Lada *et al.*, 2009; Mukhtar and Butt, 2012). These researches are unclear if it is transferable to Muslim countries or not. To cement this point, Bonne *et al.* (2007) also suggest enhancing sample base to increase the generalisability of study findings that investigated the determinants of Halal meat consumption within a Muslim migration population in France. The second reason that attracted researchers is that companies in non-Muslim countries normally market products that carry a certified Halal label and/or Halal sign, symbol or logo to target specifically Muslim consumers. Whereas in Muslim countries, for instance, in Pakistan, companies used to market their products without carrying Halal labels as it was assumed that Pakistan is a majority Muslim country, therefore, all available products are Halal. However, now, due to the authenticity factor of product Halal nature, to attract new customers, to enhance customer trust, to get differentiation advantage and to generate goodwill among customers, companies in Pakistan have started using Halal labels on their products. Third, companies which deal in Halal products can capture huge US\$10 trillion expected Halal market share both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries by 2030. However, the current research suggests that it is important for businesses to consider the potential Halal market of consumers, and ways to differentiate products against the competitors. Therefore, it is an important research issue to integrate the perspectives of both Halal and brand from consumer perspectives.

The current study sheds light on this issue by exploring intentions in terms of Halal brand factors in Pakistan that is the sixth most populous in the world (Pew Research Center, 2017), and second among Muslim countries (List of countries, 2017). Hence, the present research examines the impact of Halal brand perceived quality on the Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust, Halal brand loyalty and consumers' purchase intention; and the influence of Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty on consumers purchase intention. At this stage, investigating consumer decisions towards Halal brands is topical due to two important reasons: first, given the Halal food market size and its evolution, and second, given the policy relevance of the issue. The remaining paper is organised as follows. The following section undertakes a brief review of literature and research hypotheses. The subsequent sections provide details of data and methodology and present the data analysis and results. The final section discusses the conclusion and implications, and limitations of the findings and provides suggestions for future research.

Literature review and hypotheses development

In many societies, including Jewish society, religion influences consumers' behaviour (Dindyal, 2003; Pettinger *et al.*, 2004; Pitta *et al.*, 1999). For instance, in the case of Jewish consumers, the kosher dietary laws determine which food are "fit or proper" for consumption. Kosher law (halacha) include a number of prohibitions, such as the mixing of milk and meat, and a ban on pork (Ivry, 2010). According to Blech (2008), kosher certification ensures that the ingredients and the procedures are in accordance with kosher law. Fischer (2016) documented the names of big five kosher certifiers that have achieved global reach within the last two decades, i.e. OK Kosher, Orthodox Union, Chicago Rabbinical Council, Star K and Kof-K Kosher Supervision. According to Alserhan (2010a), there were 90,000 kosher products worth nearly US\$100 billion compared with just about 1,000 Halal products in the US market.

Moreover, organic food is another example of "credence good" as organic is not a quality that consumers can verify for themselves without external assurance (Yiridoe *et al.*, 2005). Organic food is defined by Chen (2009) as "the food that contains fewer harmful additives and more primary and secondary nutrients than traditional food, and it

should carry no additional risk of food poisoning". The most important attitudinal choice factor of organic vs inorganic food is health concerns (Gifford and Bernard, 2006; Hughner *et al.*, 2007; Padel and Foster, 2005). Paul and Rana (2012) further stated that organic food is perceived as healthier and safer, and organic practices are perceived to be more environmentally sound. In the case of Europe, products sold as organic must satisfy the requirements of the EU regulations on organic production and organic products labelling. Furthermore, a specific EU logo has to be displayed on all organic products in Europe from July 2010 (Janssen and Hamm, 2012).

Due to rising competition, it is increasingly difficult for businesses to create a differential advantage in order to attract new customers. Therefore, one of the approaches to achieve brand differentiation, a perception of improved quality and overall customers support without major product modification may involve getting a certification of endorsement by a third party, for instance, an independent agency or association which is well respected by consumers (Kamins and Marks, 1991). That is to say, to differentiate a Halal brand from the traditional brand, companies get Halal certifications and then use the specific label to tell potential customers that their brand encompasses Halal features. Halal as a product characteristic refers to the nature, origin and the processing method of the food, which implicates similarities with, for instance, foods produced considering sustainability issues or organic foods (Bonne and Verbeke, 2008) as well as kosher foods. Consumers cannot see and validate these characteristics even after experiencing the product, thus yielding possible quality uncertainty during the (pre-) purchasing stage (Bonne and Verbeke, 2008). The Halal label just like the green label, kosher label and organic label can provide confidence to consumers on the Halal aspect of products and services which they use.

The positive effect of brand perceived quality on Halal brand image

Brand perceived quality represents consumers' overall judgment on the superiority of a product (Tsiotsou, 2006; Zeithaml, 1988). One of the important factors that influence consumers decision making is brand perceived quality (Pappu *et al.*, 2005). It provides them with a sound reason to prefer one brand over the other (Keller, 1993; Pappu *et al.*, 2005). Low and Lamb (2000) stated that perceived product/service quality is central to the theory that strong brands add value to consumers purchase evaluations. Previous empirically researches have established that brand perceived quality influence consumers' willingness to compromise on somewhat higher prices and/or pay a premium price, hence generating brand equity (Pappu and Quester 2008).

Brand image has been defined as "the reasoned or emotional perceptions consumers associate to specific brands" (Low and Lamb, 2000, p. 352). Keller (2003) viewed brand image as the perceptions about a brand held in consumer memory as reflected by the brand associations. According to Cretu and Brodie (2007), the brand image includes the symbolic meaning that associate with the brand-specific attributes, and it is defined as a consumer's brand mental picture in the mind of the consumer that is linked to a set of perceptions or an offering (Padgett and Allen, 1997). Moreover, brand image helps customers to choose a product or service in a situation where it is difficult to differentiate products or services based on tangible features of quality (Mudambi *et al.*, 1997). Cretu and Brodie (2007) and Keller (1993) explained that brand image is a set of perceptions about a brand reflected by brand associations for consumers. As a result, the brand image covers symbolic benefits, functional benefits and experiential benefits (Park *et al.*, 1986). Based on the above definitions and explanation, this study proposed a novel construct, "Halal brand image", and defined it as "a set of brand perceptions in the mind of a customer that is linked to Muslims faith and Halal concerns and Halal commitments".

One can find a plethora of empirical research supporting the positive association between the perceived brand quality and its image (e.g. Chen and Tseng, 2010; Jarvinen and Suomi, 2011; Ming *et al.*, 2011). For example, Jarvinen and Suomi (2011) found that superior brand quality generates excellent reputation and positive brand image. In addition, several past researchers (e.g. Arslan and Altuna, 2010; Vranesec and Seancec, 2003; Wu *et al.*, 2011) argued that a superior quality brand tends to build a positive mental image, which, in turn, influences consumer attitude towards the brand, purchase frequency and brand loyalty. Importantly, to date, no research has been conducted on the influence of perceived quality of a brand on Halal-specific brand image. Similar to brand image role for traditional products, brand image of Halal products can create value for a company as it can make it easier for consumers searching for Halal product information, and also can help create associations that elicit positive feelings and attitudes that can spread out to other products of the same brand. As perceived brand quality signals an organisation's ability to deliver overall supremacy and performance with regards to its intended objectives (Aaker and Jacobson, 2001), it is believable that when an organisation declares to deliver Halal products, the existing perceptions of quality in consumer mind may positively influence to enhance the Halal brand image and purchase intention. So, in line with above discussion, the researchers assume that perceived brand quality may positively influence to enhance consumers Halal brand image and purchase intention. The following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Brand perceived quality has a direct and positive impact on Halal brand image.

The positive effect of brand perceived quality on Halal brand satisfaction

According to Oliver (1997), "satisfaction is the consumer's fulfilment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under or over fulfilment" (p. 13). Therefore, according to Mai and Ness (1999), satisfaction is a level of overall contentment or pleasure perceived by a consumer, resulting from the product or service quality to fulfil the expectations, desires and needs of a consumer. Hence, the satisfaction is linked to the quality of a product. Kotler and Keller (2008, p. 169) rightly mentioned that the best quality product leads to more satisfied consumers. Similarly, Chen and Chang (2013) mentioned that the increase of perceived quality enhances consumers brand satisfaction along with brand trust. In addition, it is suggested that quality directs to performance and to end with customer satisfaction. The idea is that customers' positive affect towards product or service is likely to stimulate them to repurchase and recommend that particular brand to others (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996).

To be brief, past studies have examined the direct association between perceived quality and satisfaction, and have reported that perceived quality does have a direct effect on consumers' satisfaction (e.g. Kristensen *et al.*, 1999; Llusar *et al.*, 2001, p. 721; Martensen *et al.*, 2000). However, in the same way, the influence of perceived quality on Halal-specific brand satisfaction has not been explored. Therefore, based on the above arguments, this study proposed a novel construct, "Halal brand satisfaction", and defined it as "a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment to satisfy a Muslim customer's Halal desires, expectations, and needs". In the Halal context, when an organisation proclaims to deliver Halal products, the existing quality perceptions in consumer mind may positively influence to enhance the Halal brand satisfaction. Hence, this study implied the following hypothesis:

H2. Brand perceived quality has a direct and positive impact on Halal brand satisfaction.

The positive effect of brand perceived quality on Halal brand trust

According to Rousseau *et al.* (1998), trust is the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviours of another. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) defined trust as the extent to which a consumer believes that his/her confidence in a certain brand satisfies his/her desire. Trust is a willingness to depend on another party based on the expectation resulting from the party's reliability, benevolence and ability (Ganesan, 1994). In addition, previous studies (e.g. Blau, 1964; Schurr and Ozanne, 1985) argued that trust includes three beliefs: integrity, ability and benevolence. Since a consumer judgment is usually derived from imperfect otherwise asymmetric information, therefore, consumer's trust which is regarded as a signal to the consumers may rely directly on perceived quality of products or brands (Kardes *et al.*, 2004). Qualls and Rosa (1995) stated that perceived quality is a set of attributes referring to brand or product quality perception. Hence, it can decrease the costs of managing customers, build up a positive word-of-mouth effect, increase price premium and enhance purchase quantities (Sweeney *et al.*, 1999).

Previous researchers have claimed that perceived quality is beneficial to enhance consumer trust (e.g. Chang and Chen, 2008; Chen and Chang, 2013; McKnight *et al.*, 1998, 2004; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Pavlou and Gefen, 2004). Chen and Chang (2013) also mentioned that the increase of perceived quality cannot only enhance consumers' satisfaction but also improve the trust of consumers (Koehn, 2003). In addition, McKnight *et al.* (2004) asserted that perceived quality is one of the most significant factors, which would affect trust. Furthermore, many research scholars (e.g. Chang and Chen, 2008; McKnight *et al.*, 2002, 2004) believed that if customers perceive that a product or brand is of high quality, they are likely to have the high trusting belief for the product or brand. Just like perceived quality, positive relationship with consumers' trust for traditional brands, perceived brand quality can also play a significant role to build brand trust in the context of Halal, though, previous researchers have neglected this important area despite huge potential of the Halal market. Therefore, in view of Blau's (1964), Ganesan's (1994) and Schurr and Ozanne's (1985) studies, this study proposed a novel construct, "Halal brand trust", and defined it as "a willingness to depend on a product, service, or brand based on the expectation or belief resulting from its ability, benevolence, and credibility about its Halal performance". Hence, when an organisation market Halal products, the existing quality perceptions in the consumer mind may positively influence to enhance the Halal brand trust. Consequently, the researchers hypothesise here that higher the brand perceived quality, greater the consumers trust on Halal brand:

H3. Brand perceived quality has a direct and positive impact on Halal brand trust.

The positive effect of brand perceived quality on Halal brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is the customer's level of attachment to a brand (Aaker, 1991). According to Oliver (1997, p. 392), it is "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour". For every organisation, customer loyalty with its brands is one of the most valuable assets (Han and Terpstra, 1988; Lecterc *et al.*, 1994), and is probably one of the best measures of success. Aaker (1997) and Reichheld *et al.* (2000) argued that brand loyalty is a prerequisite for any organisation's competitiveness and profitability; therefore, every organisation desires to have its brands with high customer loyalty. In this context, the development and maintenance of consumer brand loyalty is placed at the heart of companies' marketing plans (Dick and Basu, 1994; Rust *et al.*, 2004), especially in the face of highly fragmented,

sophisticated and competitive markets with increasing unpredictability and reducing product differentiation (Fournier and Yao, 1997, p. 90; Rust *et al.*, 2004; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995). Second, loyal customers are willing to pay premium prices and are less sensitive to the marketing efforts of competitors, help organisations to increase sales, profitability and to lower marketing cost (Aaker, 1992; Dick and Basu, 1994; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Reichheld and Teal, 1996). Because of its benefits, many researchers have explored brand loyalty (e.g. Biedenbach and Marell, 2009; Caruana and Ewing, 2010; Gounaris and Stathakopoulos, 2004; Pan and Zinkhan, 2006; Song and Zinkhan, 2003), focussing primarily on antecedents such as perceived quality (e.g. Biedenbach and Marell, 2009; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Gounaris and Stathakopoulos, 2004; Liang *et al.*, 2013; Pan and Zinkhan, 2006; Song and Zinkhan, 2003).

Previous studies have examined the direct association between brand perceived quality and brand loyalty, and have reported that quality does have a direct effect on consumer loyalty with the brand (e.g. Aaker, 1991; Arora *et al.*, 2009; Ball *et al.*, 2004; Biedenbach and Marell, 2009; Lai *et al.*, 2009; Liang *et al.*, 2013; Oliver, 1997; Rios and Riquelme, 2008). Moreover, Arora *et al.* (2009) suggested that perceived quality can enhance brand loyalty by increasing customer satisfaction and provide reasons to purchase the product. According to Boulding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml (1993) and Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, Zeithaml and Kirmani (1993), perceived quality make up the foundation of overall quality perception of a customer and is thus a key determinant of purchase, repurchase and switching behaviour. As such, it has a significant impact on brand loyalty (Ball *et al.*, 2004; Liang *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, Biedenbach and Marell (2009) also found perceived quality as the main antecedent of brand loyalty, although the researchers did not notice any study that investigates this relationship and define brand loyalty in the Halal context. Refer to Aaker (1991) and Oliver (1997, p. 392), we, therefore, propose and define a novel construct "Halal brand loyalty" as "a deeply held attachment and commitment to rebuy or repatronise a Halal brand over non-Halal brand consistently in the future". In turn, the more the brand perceived quality, the more the level of Halal brand loyalty. Hence, this study implied the following hypothesis:

H4. Brand perceived quality has a direct and positive impact on Halal brand loyalty.

The positive effect of brand perceived quality, Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty on purchase intention

A link of perceived brand quality with purchase intention has also been examined. Researchers have reported that purchase intention is an important consequence of brand perceived quality (e.g. Boulding *et al.*, 1999; Chaudhuri, 2002; Tsiotsou, 2006; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1996). Consumers who perceive higher brand quality tend to have more purchase intention. In addition, previous studies have also examined the direct association between brand image and consumer purchase intention, and suggested that enhancing the brand image is beneficial for the increase of consumer brand purchase intention (Del Rio *et al.*, 2001; Keller, 1993; Lee and Tan, 2003). Similarly, prior researchers have also found the direct effect of consumer satisfaction on consumer purchase intention (e.g. Ha and Perks, 2005; Reichheld and Teal, 1996; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996). Furthermore, the direct association between brand trust and consumer purchase intention has widely been explored by the researchers, and reported that brand trust does have a direct effect on purchase intention of consumer (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Esch *et al.*, 2006; Everard and Galletta, 2006; Kang and Hur, 2012; Rahbar and Wahid, 2011; Sichtmann, 2007). Finally, many researchers also reported brand loyalty as an important antecedent of consumer purchase intention (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002; Mittal *et al.*, 1998). This study proposed four novel constructs, "Halal brand image", "Halal brand satisfaction",

“Halal brand trust” and “Halal brand loyalty” in the prior hypotheses. Therefore, in the Halal framework, the researchers hypothesise that the higher brand perceived quality, Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty, the greater is consumers’ purchase intention:

- H5.* Brand perceived quality has a direct and positive impact on consumer brand purchase intention.
- H6.* Halal brand image has a direct and positive impact on consumer brand purchase intention.
- H7.* Halal brand satisfaction has a direct and positive impact on consumer brand purchase intention.
- H8.* Halal brand trust has a direct and positive impact on consumer brand purchase intention.
- H9.* Halal brand loyalty has a direct and positive impact on consumer brand purchase intention.

Methodology

Sampling and data collection

In this study, the unit of analysis is the consumer level. This study applied the questionnaire survey to verify the hypotheses and research framework. The object of this research study was Halal milk brand in Pakistan. To achieve high and rapid response rate, the questionnaire was administered in the groups, as group-administered questionnaires allow high response and rapid data collection (Evans and Rooney, 2013). The researchers with the help of their students formed four research teams comprising four members each. Then, these teams stationed themselves in different colleges, universities and in front of restaurants, handed out questionnaires and collected completed questionnaires from respondents who had purchased experience of Halal milk brand and willing to participate in the study. The recruitment was based on a convenience sampling technique which includes easy access respondents at different stationed places in two adjacent cities, i.e. Islamabad and Rawalpindi. In this way, data were collected from professional and non-professional respondents with the help of self-administered questionnaires. First, the low participation of females was due to cultural restrictions in approaching them directly. Second, the high participation of educated respondents was due to high literacy rate in the selected cities. Out of 450 distributed questionnaires, in total, 363 were returned, representing 81 per cent response rate. Finally, after removing incomplete responses and extreme outliers, all 347 responses were considered during analysis. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part was modified based on previous studies. In the second part, the researchers asked respondents for demographic information reported in Table I.

Measurement of variables

The current research referred to previous studies to design questionnaire items in the Halal brand context. Besides, the researchers adapted already developed, validated items of scales, and the language of items was, to some extent, customised to make the language understandable. As the questionnaire was modified, a pilot study was conducted to test the suitability of the instruments used in this study. A total of 30 questionnaires, apart from sample size, were collected from target respondents and analysed, to test respondents’ understanding level with modified questionnaire items, and to secure high levels of reliability and validity. After the pilot test, 347 professionals, as well as

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purchase
intention

	Frequency	Per cent		Frequency	Per cent
<i>Gender</i>			<i>Marital status</i>		
Male	248	71.5	Single	179	51.6
Female	99	28.5	Married	168	48.4
<i>Age</i>			<i>Education</i>		
Less than 20	21	6.1	Matriculation	25	7.2
Between 20 and 30	111	32.0	Intermediate	85	24.5
Between 31 and 40	173	49.9	Bachelor/master	182	52.4
Between 41 and 50	42	12.1	MS/MPhil/PhD	42	12.1
<i>Income (in Pakistani rupees)</i>			<i>Any other</i>	13	3.7
Less than 25,000	42	12.1	<i>Background</i>		
Between 26,000 and 40,000	115	33.1	Non-professional	133	38.3
Between 41,000 and 55,000	112	32.3	Professional	214	61.7
Between 56,000 and 70,000	49	14.1			
More than 70,000	29	8.4			

Table I.
Demographic profile
of the respondents

non-professionals, agreed to participate and retained. A measure of brand perceived quality was based on four items adapted from the study of Washburn and Plank (2002). The measure of Halal brand image consisted of four items, and Halal brand satisfaction with three items was adapted from previous studies (e.g. Chen, 2010; Kang and Hur, 2012; Mourad and Ahmed, 2012). In addition, Halal brand trust was measured with four items (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Chen, 2010). Similarly, the current study measured Halal brand loyalty with four items adapted from the study of Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) and Kang and Hur (2012). Finally, purchase intention was measured with two items, adapted from Summers *et al.*'s (2006) study. Moreover, a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) was used for all the part-I questions.

Characteristics of the respondents

Table I demonstrates that most respondents (71.5 per cent) are male and non-married (51.6 per cent). In addition, an overall dominance of "between 31 to 40" age group respondents (49.9 per cent) followed by "between 20 to 30" and "between 41 to 50" age group respondents, respectively. In addition, the majority of the respondents (52.4 per cent) had done or was doing bachelor/master degrees. Out of the total, 33.1 per cent respondents are in "between 26,000 to 40,000 PRs" income group followed by "between 41,000 to 55,000 PRs" income group. Finally, the majority of them (61.7 per cent) were professionals.

Tools for analysis

This study applies AMOS version 18 to obtain the empirical results. Further, the researchers adopted a two-stage approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) to structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the research framework and hypotheses. This is the most appropriate and widely used technique for complex model testing with scores of constructs, for instance, in the present study (Nunkoo *et al.*, 2013). For the first stage, the researchers analysed the measurement model for adequacy and then used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess reliability and validity of the measurement model. In a second step, this study utilised SEM to test the hypothesised causal relationships which exist among the constructs.

Data analysis and results

Results of CFA

A CFA procedure reveals that the six factors measurement model elicit acceptable fit ($\chi^2(180) = 377.864$, $p < 0.000$, c^2/df ratio = 2.099, GFI = 0.896, AGFI = 0.867, RMSEA = 0.056, PCLOSE = 0.093, NFI = 0.635 and CFI = 0.76). Table II presents standardised item factor loadings, Cronbach's α (CA) values, average variance extracted (AVE) scores and composite reliability (CR) estimates for the constructs in the estimation sample. The results in Table II indicated that all factor loadings were above the recommended level of 0.6 (ranging from 0.72 to 0.99) and statistically significant as

	Components						CA	AVE	CR
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
<i>Brand perceived quality</i>							0.87	0.67	0.89
My current Halal milk brand is of very good quality	0.87	-	-	-	-	-			
My current Halal milk brand is of consistent quality	0.83	-	-	-	-	-			
My current Halal milk brand is very reliable	0.84	-	-	-	-	-			
My current Halal milk brand features are excellent	0.72	-	-	-	-	-			
<i>Halal brand image</i>							0.91	0.73	0.91
My current Halal milk brand is the best benchmark of Halal commitments	-	0.82	-	-	-	-			
My current Halal milk brand is well reputed among Halal milk brands	-	0.88	-	-	-	-			
My current Halal milk brand addresses all my Halal concerns	-	0.87	-	-	-	-			
My current Halal milk brand is trustworthy about Halal promises	-	0.84	-	-	-	-			
<i>Halal brand satisfaction</i>							0.90	0.74	0.90
I am happy about the decision to choose my current Halal milk brand because of its Halal commitments	-	-	0.72	-	-	-			
I believe that my current Halal milk brand is a right thing to purchase because of its Halal assurance	-	-	0.85	-	-	-			
Overall, I am satisfied with my current Halal milk brand because of my Halal concerns	-	-	0.99	-	-	-			
<i>Halal brand trust</i>							0.89	0.65	0.88
I trust my current Halal milk brand	-	-	-	0.75	-	-			
I rely on my current Halal milk brand	-	-	-	0.82	-	-			
My current Halal milk brand is an honest brand	-	-	-	0.80	-	-			
My current Halal milk brand is safe	-	-	-	0.86	-	-			
<i>Halal brand loyalty</i>							0.87	0.67	0.89
I prefer my current Halal milk brand to other Halal milk brands	-	-	-	-	0.82	-			
I intend to buy a product (like yogurt) of my current Halal milk brand in my next purchase	-	-	-	-	0.84	-			
I recommend my current Halal milk brand to others (e.g. friends, family)	-	-	-	-	0.85	-			
I intend to pay even more money for my current Halal milk brand than for other Halal milk brands	-	-	-	-	0.77	-			
<i>Brand purchase intention</i>							0.86	0.77	0.87
I will also buy my current Halal milk brand in the near future	-	-	-	-	-	0.99			
Whenever I intend to buy milk, probably I will purchase my current Halal milk brand	-	-	-	-	-	0.75			

Table II. Reliability and validity estimates in the estimation and holdout samples

Notes: BPQ, brand perceived quality; HBI, Halal brand image; HBS, Halal brand satisfaction; HBT, Halal brand trust; HBL, Halal brand loyalty; BPI, brand purchase intention

suggested by Chin *et al.* (1997). All CA values are above the threshold level of 0.70 (ranging from 0.86 to 0.91) (Hair *et al.*, 1998), therefore demonstrating the adequate internal consistency among items. Moreover, all CR estimates exceed the recommended level of 0.6 (ranging from 0.87 to 0.91) (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) that exhibit construct reliability.

Convergent validity is demonstrated as all factor loadings are highly significant and load strongly on expected constructs, and AVE score for each construct is greater than 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, the square root of AVE for all constructs (see Table III) is greater than the standardised correlation of those constructs, implying the presence of discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). For example, the correlation between brand perceived quality and the Halal brand image is 0.288, and the square root of the AVEs of brand perceived quality and Halal brand image are 0.45 and 0.53, respectively; both AVEs were above the correlation between them implying the presence of discriminant validity (Chin *et al.*, 1997). Moreover, the means, standard deviations and correlation matrix are shown in Table III. There are positive correlations among perceived brand quality, Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust, Halal brand loyalty and purchase intention (see Table III).

Results of SEM

Table IV exhibits hypothesised paths directions, standardised β coefficients (β), critical ratios (CR) and significance levels. The parameters for proposed relationships in Figure 1 and individual hypotheses are examined next. Overall, all the proposed hypotheses were statistically supported at the α level of 0.05.

A significant positive influence of brand perceived quality was reported on the Halal brand image ($\beta = 0.54$; CR = 6.71, $p < 0.05$), Halal brand satisfaction ($\beta = 0.37$; CR = 5.64, $p < 0.05$), Halal brand trust ($\beta = 0.48$; CR = 6.71, $p < 0.05$) and Halal brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.44$; CR = 6.03, $p < 0.05$) which supported *H1-H4*. In other words, this indicates when a customer perceives that a Halal milk brand quality is superior, brand Halal image, his or her

	Mean	SD	BPQ	HBI	HBS	HBT	HBL	BPI
BPQ	4.36	0.425	1	–	–	–	–	–
HBI	4.45	0.482	0.288** (0.45,0.53)	1	–	–	–	–
HBS	4.43	0.468	0.240** (0.45,0.55)	0.369** (0.53,0.55)	1	–	–	–
HBT	4.54	0.441	0.313** (0.45,0.42)	0.199** (0.53,0.42)	0.244** (0.55,0.42)	1	–	–
HBL	4.52	0.438	0.322** (0.45,0.45)	0.357** (0.53,0.45)	0.152** (0.55,0.45)	0.296** (0.42,0.45)	1	–
BPI	4.51	0.468	0.380** (0.45,0.59)	0.392** (0.53,0.59)	0.373** (0.55,0.59)	0.395** (0.42,0.59)	0.340** (0.45,0.59)	1

Table III.
Correlation between
the constructs and
descriptive statistics

Notes: Values in bracket indicate square root of the AVEs of respective constructs, with upper values indicating the correlations. Significance at * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$ levels

Hypothesised path	Estimate	CR	p	Result
<i>H1</i> : HBI \leftarrow HBPQ	0.54	6.71	***	Supported
<i>H2</i> : HBS \leftarrow HBPQ	0.37	5.64	***	Supported
<i>H3</i> : HBL \leftarrow HBPQ	0.48	6.71	***	Supported
<i>H4</i> : HBT \leftarrow HBPQ	0.44	6.03	***	Supported
<i>H5</i> : BPI \leftarrow HBPQ	0.30	2.52	0.012	Supported
<i>H6</i> : BPI \leftarrow HBT	0.19	2.67	0.008	Supported
<i>H7</i> : BPI \leftarrow HBS	0.20	2.50	0.013	Supported
<i>H8</i> : BPI \leftarrow HBI	0.21	2.45	0.014	Supported
<i>H9</i> : BPI \leftarrow HBL	0.17	2.25	0.025	Supported

Note: *** $p < 0.001$

Table IV.
Results of the
structural model

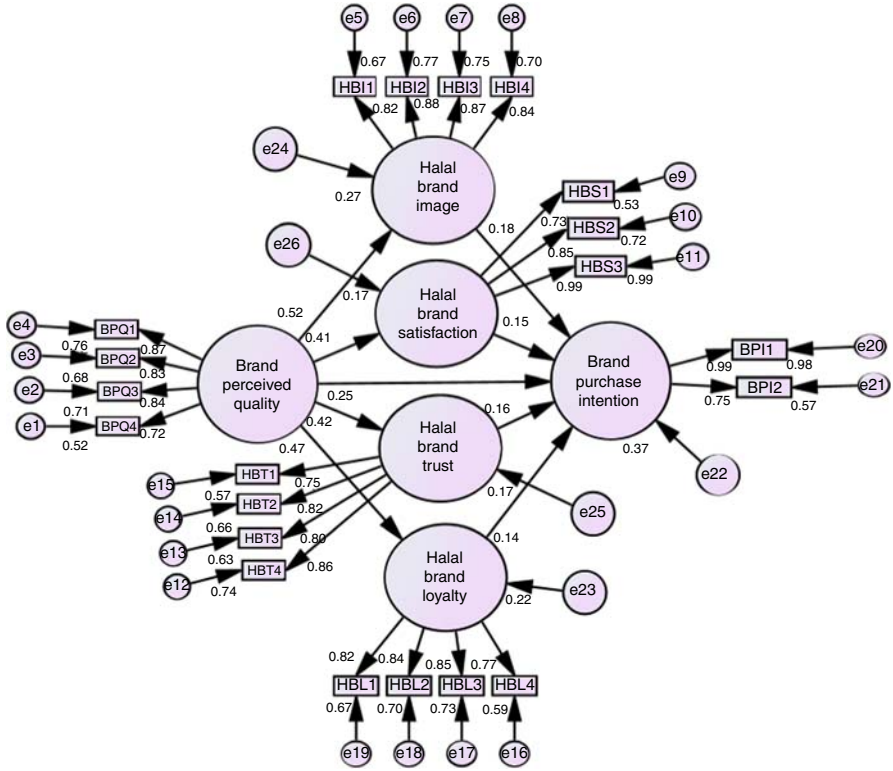


Figure 1.
The structural model

satisfaction, trust and loyalty of the Halal milk brand increases. Moreover, when compared to the brand perceived quality-Halal brand satisfaction path, brand perceived quality-Halal brand trust path and brand perceived quality-Halal brand loyalty path, brand perceived quality-Halal brand image path has the greater coefficient, which suggests that brand perceived quality plays the more important role in forming Halal image of a brand.

Similarly, brand perceived quality ($\beta = 0.30$; $CR = 2.52$, $p < 0.05$), Halal brand image ($\beta = 0.19$; $CR = 2.67$, $p < 0.05$), Halal brand satisfaction ($\beta = 0.20$; $CR = 2.50$, $p < 0.05$), Halal brand trust ($\beta = 0.21$; $CR = 2.45$, $p < 0.05$) and Halal brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.17$; $CR = 2.25$, $p < 0.05$) also had a significant positive influence on the intention to purchase the Halal brands that supported *H5-H9*. From the results, positive Halal brand image, and high consumer satisfaction, trust and loyalty are understood to be significantly important in determining customer purchase intention for Halal milk brand. When compared to the Halal brand image-purchase intention path, Halal brand satisfaction-purchase intention path, Halal brand trust-purchase intention path and Halal brand loyalty-purchase intention path, brand perceived quality-purchase intention path has the greater coefficient, which suggests that quality of a brand plays the more important role in increasing consumer purchase intention for Halal brand.

Moreover, the researchers also test indirect effects to further examine the relationships in the proposed model. The bootstrapping technique for bootstrap samples of 2,000 with 95 per cent bias-corrected confidence intervals was used to analyse the direct and indirect effects amongst constructs. This technique is very popular among researchers and considered to be very useful for relatively small sample size (Zhang and Wang, 2008).

As shown in Table V, the results of mediation test confirm that Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty partially mediated the relationship between brand perceived quality and brand purchase intention. This suggest that brand perceived quality can be viewed as a direct predictor of purchase intention and, at the same time, may function as an indirect predictor of purchase intention via Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty.

Mediations tested	Mediations paths	Mediations results
Brand perceived quality → halal brand Image → brand purchase intention	<pre> graph LR A((Brand perceived quality)) -- 0.25** --> C((Brand purchase intention)) A -- 0.52** --> B((Halal brand image)) B -- 0.18** --> C </pre>	Partial mediation
Brand perceived quality → halal brand Satisfaction → brand purchase intention	<pre> graph LR A((Brand perceived quality)) -- 0.25** --> C((Brand purchase intention)) A -- 0.41** --> B((Halal brand satisfaction)) B -- 0.15** --> C </pre>	Partial mediation
Brand perceived quality → halal brand Trust → brand purchase intention	<pre> graph LR A((Brand perceived quality)) -- 0.25** --> C((Brand purchase intention)) A -- 0.42** --> B((Halal brand trust)) B -- 0.16** --> C </pre>	Partial mediation
Brand perceived quality → halal brand Loyalty → brand purchase intention	<pre> graph LR A((Brand perceived quality)) -- 0.25** --> C((Brand purchase intention)) A -- 0.47** --> B((Halal brand loyalty)) B -- 0.14** --> C </pre>	partial mediation

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

Table V.
Results of
mediation tests

Conclusion and implications

Though previous studies widely discussed branding issues, there has been no study exploring the concept of Halal products in the branding literature. Therefore, the current research applied the concept of traditional branding constructs – brand image, brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand loyalty to an unexplored field of Halal products – Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust and Halal brand loyalty. Moreover, a research framework was developed to elaborate the relationships among brand perceived quality, Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, and Halal brand trust, Halal brand loyalty and consumer purchase intention. In addition, this study is the first that developed an integrated model to investigate the relationship between traditional and Halal branding constructs. Finally, this study summarises the literature on Muslim consumers, their food concept, Halal food market segment and branding management into a new managerial framework.

The empirical results suggest that perceived brand quality has a significant and positive influence on the Halal brand image (*H1*), Halal brand satisfaction (*H2*), Halal brand trust (*H3*), Halal brand loyalty (*H4*) and purchase intention (*H5*). Similarly, the Halal brand image (*H6*), Halal brand satisfaction (*H7*), Halal brand trust (*H8*) and Halal brand loyalty (*H9*) significantly influence consumer Halal brand purchase intention. All the proposed hypotheses are supported in this research. However, the results indicate that it is extremely important for the companies to ensure that along with Halal attributes, the functional performance of their products is very important to enhance the Halal brand image, Halal brand satisfaction, Halal brand trust, Halal brand loyalty and to attract Halal conscious customers. Similarly, a positive Halal brand image and increase in consumers' Halal brand satisfaction, trust and loyalty play an important role to influence their purchase intentions. From another perspective, when the traditional product attributes of the Halal brand are on par with competing brands, the Halal attributes will act to serve as the source of additional value that could generate consumer preference towards such brands. One can infer that the results confirm the traditional thinking even in Halal products that without the provision of core functional quality, as well as strong Halal brand image, high Halal brand satisfaction, trust and loyalty any organisational effort to successfully attract Halal conscious customers with Halal product attributes will face difficulties.

The findings have significant implications which may help the marketers to develop suitable strategies for Halal brands and its purchasing. With the rise of Muslim population and Halal products demand in Muslim and non-Muslim countries, Halal product branding is one of the expected trends for businesses in Muslim and non-Muslim countries, and its concept has been widely accepted and applied in recent years. Because the Halal concerns have increased Muslim consumers' desire for Halal brands, consumers are more willing to purchase products which are Halal and also offer traditional brand features. This indicates that ignoring the important quality elements of a brand could be costly to marketers who failed to realise the importance of traditional brand attributes whilst embracing Halal brand marketing initiatives. In addition, Halal branding can allow the businesses to access to new markets, to enjoy more competitive advantages and to increase their profitability by selling at higher prices with higher profit margins.

Moreover, high brand quality cannot only raise Halal brand image, satisfaction, trust and loyalty but also enhance consumers' Halal brand purchase intention directly and indirectly. If companies want to improve consumers' purchase intentions of their brands, they should implant the notions of Halal brand perceived quality, image, satisfaction, trust and loyalty into their business models. In addition, as high brand quality seems to play an important role in consumer purchase intentions, thus marketing communication strategies (advertising messages and promotional activities) should be designed so that they emphasise product traditional as well as Halal attributes which can enhance consumers'

perceived brand quality. In addition, managers can use Halal brand quality, image, satisfaction, trust and loyalty for segmentation purposes to identify homogeneous consumers groups, target the most profitable segments and implement effective marketing communication strategies.

Similarly, the researchers observed that, normally, companies in Pakistan do not use Halal label on their products might be because Pakistan is a majority Muslim country. However, this would be a blessing in disguise for companies that use and promote Halal labels in a way that trustfulness of Halal labels can exert a significant influence on Halal purchase behaviour of consumers. As the Halal product nature is beyond doubt, therefore, Halal certification not only clears consumers' doubts about nature of product but also authenticates producer's claim. Unfortunately, in many Muslim countries, including Pakistan, there is no policy and regulatory authority regarding Halal labels. Therefore, the government should devise a policy regarding Halal-labels implementation and then keep a check to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of messages carried in Halal labels. Besides, government can raise campaigns to promote public awareness of Halal labels as with the increased awareness on Halal labels, it would help companies in promoting Halal-labels brand consumption among consumers.

Limitations and scope for future research

The Muslim population is growing in many parts of the world, including non-Muslim countries. Although this study's focus is limited to Pakistani Muslims, findings related to the effects of Halal brand perceived quality, image, satisfaction, trust and loyalty on intentions may not be equally valid for Muslim consumers in others Muslims and non-Muslim countries and for other types of products (e.g. products like cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and toiletries, and services like insurance, banking and travel and leisure). Moreover, this study concentrates on a single product (milk) in one product category, so future researches may consider more than one product in multiple product categories, i.e. convenience, shopping, speciality and unsought product, and compare with this study to support the generalisability of results.

This study considered the impact of five antecedents on consumers' Halal brand purchase intention. There may be others that should be considered in the future researches, for instance, religious self-identity, moral obligation and availability. In addition, the researchers only measured purchase intention, not actual behaviour. Thus, researchers in future may report the actual behaviour that will help to link the relationship between intention and actual purchase behaviour. Finally, the researchers used a questionnaire survey to verify the hypotheses, thus only providing cross-sectional data. To observe, if any, dynamic change in consumer's behaviours over time, future studies may set forth towards the longitudinal study.

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