

# THE IMPACT OF ISLAMIC BRANDING ON CONSUMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOFT DRINK PRODUCT IN MALAYSIA

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## Abstract

*The present study is an attempt to explore how much consumers are influenced by Islamic brand soft drink. In view of this, the research investigates the extent to which characteristic such as brand name, quality, and peer pressure can influence consumers in preferring Islamic brand soft drink. The data was collected from 60 Muslim consumers from different ethnicity who consume soft drink product regularly. The research finds that brand name, quality and peer pressure has a positive relationship with Muslim consumer's attitude towards soft drink. The finding also suggests that quality plays the dominant role in influencing consumer's attitude. However, the Muslim consumers are not really aware of the halal label before purchase the soft drink products. It is due to their belief that those products have been approved by JAKIM.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Branding, Consumer Attitude, Soft Drink.*

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## Introduction

Soft drink product is one of many popular beverages that are easily available in today's market. Since the invention of soft drinks in the 1830s, it is becoming difficult to ignore the existence of soft drink. According to Buendia, F & Eccius, C. (2013), there are twenty-eight brand names of the world soft-drink industry where the majority of the world soft drink market share belongs to Coca-Cola Company with 33.7 percent shares. The other soft-drink brands are Pepsi, Diet Coke, Diet Pepsi, Coca-Cola Zero, Big Cola, Pepsi Max, Pepsi Twist, RC Cola, Pop Cola, Future Cola, Cherry Cola, Inka Cola, Kola Real, Caffeine Free Coca-

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Cola, Tab, Barq's, Sinalco, Thums Up, Hoop, La Casera, Pepsi Wild Cherry, Vanilla Coke, MrPibb, Hit, and Caffeine Free Pepsi. Furthermore, there are new entrants from Islamic brand in soft drink market. It is so-called "Muslim-Colas". There are Zam Zam Cola, Cola Turka, Mecca Cola, and Qibla Cola. The idea of Muslim-colas came from the impact of a boycott of American goods (Tagliabue, 2002). The objective was to cater to European Arabs and Muslims who boycotted the U.S. beverages. They argue that this product would give consumers a soft drink choice that did not implicitly offer support to American policies in the region (Henley & Vasagar, 2003). Zam-Zam Cola and Cola Turka are being listed on the thirteenth and twenty-third ranking with 0.2 per cent of world market shares for Zam Zam Cola and 0.1 percent of market shares for Cola Turka.

The demand of soft drink will continue to grow steadily over the forecast period. Previous research conducted by Euromonitor International (2013) showed that the number of soft drink consumption is 208 liters per capita in 2003. It increased to 217.9 liters per capita in 2004, 218.7 liters per capita in 2005, 240.5 liters per capita in 2006, 253.5 liters per capita in 2007, 267.2 liters per capita in 2008, and increased to 278.2 liters per capita in 2009. The percentage change in the year 2003 to the year 2009 is 33.7%. In addition, recent studies conducted by Euromonitor International (2013) shows that the growth of soft drink consumption is around 23.7% from 2007 to 2009.

In Malaysia, soft drinks are consumed throughout the day, although most consumers still prefer to drink hot beverages early in the morning. The major international brands are available in many stores such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Sprite, 7-Up, Mirinda, and Fanta. Diet soft drinks are also popular due to increasing health consciousness, as consumers attempt to reduce their intake of sugar. The other brand name is Barbican. It is origin from Dammam, United Arab Emirates. National Fatwa Council chairman, Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Abdul Shukor stated that Barbican's non-alcoholic beer and consumable for Muslims. There is another local soft drink company which has a good reputation such as F&N (Fraser & Neave). According to F&N official website, this company has resonated with Malaysian for over 128 years and receives a *halal* certificate from JAKIM. Recently, there are Cola Radix and Stevia Cola as the new entrants. Cola Radix is a halal soft drink and produced by Muslim company for Muslim consumer.

Malaysia as the multi-ethnic country has the Muslim population around 16 million or 61.3%. The study of consumer behaviour is vital when it comes to the marketing of halal products in Muslim market. The purchase behaviour of Muslim consumers also will be different than Non-Muslim consumers. Muslim consumers are more aware of the halal certification when it comes to consumables product such as foods, drinks and over the counter medicine product. According to Hamouri (1991), Muslims will choose to consume the most preferred item which fulfils their need but must be permissible in Islam. Those consumers are beginning to question and avoid products with no Halal certification, especially foreign products (Aliman and Othman, 2007). They are increasingly sensitive to those issues (Sadek, 2001). In another sense, the concept of halal is the absolute key to consumption.

Syed and Nazura (2011) stated that some local brands tried to catches the Muslim consumers by projecting itself as the brand of "Islam" through their creative packaging and labelling. According to Shafie and Othman (2005), marketers and manufacturers use the halal certification and logo as a way to inform and to convince their target consumers that their products are halal and Sharia. Patton (2008) also added that an extra level of quality

certification has attracted unprecedented demand for Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. It is, therefore, important for marketers to understand the market if they are doing business in Muslim countries.

The present study attempts to examine the effect of Islamic branding on consumer preference towards soft drinks consumption. Several studies have been conducted in the areas of the halal labels, such as Salehudin and Rogan (2011) who examined the impact of marketing halal label on behavioral intentions Indonesia's Muslim Consumers, as the same person may have different behavior across different product categories. Alserhan study (2010) found that the non-Muslim brand experts have difficulty distinguishing between the lives of Islam and have knowledge about it and, thus, a lot of brand consultancy they fell short of appreciates the depth of the brand ingrained in religion. Syed and Nazura (2011) found that the concept of TPB (Theory of Planned Behavior) appeared to be effective when to predict the halal food purchase intention among Malaysia consumers. Other studies have previously examined the effects of religiosity on consumer behavior Muslim and purchasing decisions in Malaysia (Syed et al., 2011), as religiosity acts as a mediating role in the relationship between the factors relative and contextual, and purchasing behavior of consumers Muslim.

The present study is carried out young consumers in Malaysia in order to delineate their consumption attitude towards Islamic brand soft drink. The young consumer behavior 'is very important to understand because they are the main target of many commercial activities (O'Cass and Lim, 2002), especially young consumers in Asia (Wong et al., 2008). In view of that, the study employs a quantitative research approach. The research is guided by the following research objectives: (1) Explore the consumer awareness about Islamic brand and halal label when they consume soft drink (2) investigate to what extent the characteristic (brand name, quality of product and peer pressure) can influence the consumer's attitudes towards Islamic brand soft drink.

The present study comprises the following section: Section 1 captures the introduction, section 2 highlights the review of literature, section 3 discusses the hypotheses testing in this study, section 4 discuss the methodology employed in this study, section 5 captures the analysis and discussion of findings, section 6 highlights the implications and directions for future research and section 7 captures the conclusion.

## **Literature Review**

### *Consumer's attitude towards Islamic brand products*

In a Muslim country, the understanding of Halal and Islamic brand becomes crucial for companies. According to Alserhan (2010a), Islamic branding should be related to faith, which dictates that all activities should be divine and his feelings shall be in line with Allah's guidance. Ogilvy (2010) and Alserhan (2010b) also added that Islamic branding should combine the branding approach with sharia' principles. Islamic branding is not only related with materialistic, but it also blends the religious and the heavenly with the worldly. Alserhan (2010b) and Wilson (2011) divide Islamic brand based on the characteristics of the country of origin, target audience, and the halal status: (1) True Islamic brands means the seller produced goods halal brand in an Islamic country for Muslim consumers. (2) Traditional Islamic brand means the seller produced goods from Islamic countries for Muslim consumers, but their status halal is not known. (3) Inbound Islamic brands means the seller

produced goods from Non-Islamic countries for Muslim consumers. (4) Outbound Islamic brand means the seller produced goods in Islamic countries but they are not necessarily targeting Muslim consumers. According to Sack (2001), most religions forbid certain foods or drink (for example, pork, and alcohol in Judaism and Islam, or pork and beef in Hinduism and Buddhism), except for Christianity that has no food or drinks taboos. In other meaning, every religion has a different way to describe their consumption behaviour. Muslim consumers think that halal label is not only brand element, but it also part of belief system.

### *Brand name*

Previous studies conducted by Herzog (1963), Bullmore (1984), Newman (1985), Keller (1993), Kapferer (1994), and Netemeyer et al. (2004) have found that brand images for products are not only the physical attributes of the products such as logo and picture, but also emotional, functional, and self-expressive benefits. Keller (2002) stated that brand has a role in differentiating goods or services of one seller to the competitors. Wisegeek (n.d) also added that people tend to choose a familiar brand. Once consumers have a positive experience with one product, they are likely to be loyal to the brand and buy other products with the same name on them. Furthermore, Lassar et al. (1995) stated that customer's attitudes and expectation towards a product have been influenced by a good brand image. They tend to perceive the brand image from their purchase experience.

### *Quality*

Quality is the important factors that influence customers' preference. Normally, the customer will prefer to choose a well establish brand name because they know the quality of that product, which will bring the great satisfaction to them. According to Mehta (2012), quality as an essential character: nature, an ingredient or distinguishing attribute: property: a character trait, superiority of kind, the degree of grade or excellence. The word "quality" is derived from Latin word "qualitas" which means attribute, characteristics, property, and condition. But when it comes to people, it might bring various perceptions about quality. Mehta (2012) added that quality depends on peoples' perception of the value of a product or service under consideration and their expectation of performance, durability, and reliability of that product or service, where it means different things to different people. Let say in the case of soft drink, according to Peter Allan (2013), they suggest that the alcohol level is as low as 10mg in every litre, and this works out at around 0.001 per cent alcohol. In the case for Islamic soft drink manufacturers, it has no quality because their view is to produce soft drinks which totally free from the forbidden elements, especially alcohol. Quality is very important. An article titled "Importance of Quality" highlighted that quality is the business of doing business. It is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skilful execution. It represents the wise choice of many alternatives. It functions, amongst, as the determinant of economic value to the customer to use it till it lasts, to price it rightly, to optimum the total life cycle cost to the customer, and to conform to norms and ethics and does not infringe on any trademark or patent laws and is genuine. Therefore, Cronin et al (2000) mentioned that there is a positive relationship between value and satisfaction.

### Peer Pressure

The previous research conducted by Moschis and Churchill (1978); Churchill and Moschis (1979); Achenreiner (1997), explained that the consumer's behaviours of young people are easily influenced by their family and friends. They are likely to communicate about their consumption matters with their family and peers. Therefore, these groups can influence young people in their buying and consumption decisions. Ganassali et al. (2006) also added there are many factors that influence the individual's buying behaviour such as social influence, social rewards, peer pressure, social perceptions, social sanctions, social cues, etc.

### Hypothesis Testing

- ) H1: There is a significant and positive relationship between the brand name and consumer's attitudes towards Islamic brand soft drink products.
- ) H2: There is a significant and positive relationship between quality of product and consumer's attitudes towards Islamic brand soft drink products.
- ) H3: There is a significant and positive relationship between peer pressure and consumer's attitudes towards Islamic brand soft drink products.

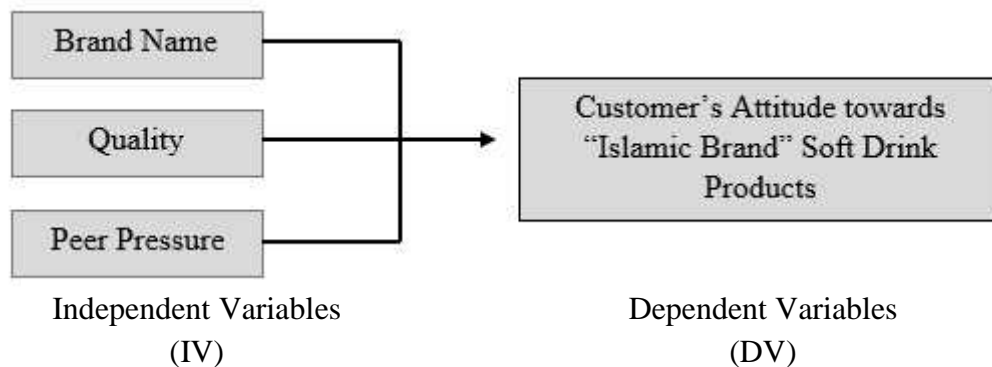


Figure 1: Theoretical framework model relating brand name, quality and peer pressure to Muslim consumer's attitudes towards "Islamic brand" soft drink products.

### Methodology

#### Survey

The present study investigates and identifies factors on consumer's attitude toward Islamic brand soft drink products. The study used quantitative approach. Empirical research using survey was carried out to examine the proposed structural model and suggested hypotheses.

#### Instruments – Questionnaire

The survey instrument was a two-section self-administered questionnaire. The instruments used to measure each of the constructs were multi-items scales each of these constructs was

measured using established, close-ended questions, which were conveniently distributed to respondents.

Section 1 provides a demographic profile of respondents. Some of the anchors are: (1) Gender, (2) Age group, (3) Level of education, (4) Ethnicity, (5) Income per month, (6) Addiction to soft drinks, (7) Frequency of consuming soft drinks during the stated occasions, and so on. Section 2 explores attitudes regarding brand name, quality, and peer pressure towards Islamic brand soft drink. Section 2 is using Likert scales to capture the respondent answer based on five qualities, which are: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree and (5) Strongly Agree.

The attitude of Muslim consumers was measured by looking at the factors influencing consumer's preference of the 'Islamic brand' soft drink products. Frequency distribution, coefficient correlation, multiple regression and ANOVA were used to analyze the data collected.

### *Sampling*

Data used in this study was collected via a self-administered questionnaire completed by young consumers, conducted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Non-probability sampling by convenience was used. The sample for this study comprised of 60 participants, age group of 18-35, who consumes soft drinks. Data was collected then analyzed to obtain meaningful results to answer research questions.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### *Demographic Information*

An equal distribution of respondents was observed for this survey, consisting of 30 male and 30 female. Out of 60 respondents, 26.7 percent were age between 18 to 21, 48.3 percent were between 22 to 25, 16.7 percent were between 26 to 30 and the rest is over 30 years old. To make the survey becomes interesting; the study was conducted among several local ethnicities. Out of 60 participants, 53.3 percent were Malay, 3.3 percent were Chinese, 11.7 percent were Indian, and the rest were from other ethnics. In addition, the participants were selected from a different level of education. In term of respondent education level, 10 percent were from an undergraduate program, 88.3 percent were from the postgraduate program, while 1.7 percent was from the executive postgraduate program. For monthly income information of respondents, 30 percent were earning less than RM1000, 58.3 percent were earning around RM1000 to RM3000, 10 percent were earning between RM3000 to RM5000, and 1 percent was earning more than RM5000.

Table 1. Summary of Demographic Information

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Education Level</b>		
Male	30	50	Undergraduate	6	10.0
Female	30	50	Postgraduate	53	88.3
<b>Age</b>			Others	1	1.7
18-21	16	26.7	<b>Monthly Income</b>		
22-25	29	48.3	Less than RM1000	18	30.0
26-30	10	16.7	RM1000 – RM3000	35	58.3
Over 30	5	8.3	RM3000 – RM5000	6	10.0
<b>Ethnic</b>			More than RM5000	1	1.7
Malay	32	53.5			
Chinese	2	3.3			
Indian	7	11.7			
Others	19	31.7			

*Explore the Awareness of Muslim Consumers about Halal Label and Islamic Brand Soft Drink Products*

Table 2: Summary of Muslim consumer’s awareness about halal label and Islamic brand soft drink

Islamic brand soft drink and halal label awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Have you heard about Islamic brand soft drink product</b>		
Yes	32	53.5
No	28	46.7
<b>Concern about halal label before purchasing soft drink</b>		
Yes	19	31.7
No	41	68.3

It has shown that 53.5% of respondents know about Islamic brand soft drink. To confirm the above finding, the respondents have been asked about their familiarity with two local Islamic brands of soft drinks: Radix Cola and Stevia Cola. There were 36 respondents who heard about Islamic brand of soft drink such as Radix Cola, 16 respondents who heard about Stevia Sweet, and only 8 respondents who heard about others Islamic brand names, such as ZamZam Cola and Mecca Cola. However, only 31.7% of the respondents did concern about halal label when chooses their favorite soft drinks, while majority 68.3% of them did not concern at all. This is due to their belief in the product. They assume that soft drink product has been approved by JAKIM.

*Testing model hypotheses*

The present study was used Pearson correlation ratio test to analyse the relationship between the variables of each hypothesis.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between Dependent and Independent Variable

		Brand name	Quality	Peer pressure	Consumer's attitude toward Islamic brand soft drink
Brand name	Pearson Correlation	1	.688**	.722**	.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	60	60	60	60
Quality	Pearson Correlation	.688**	1	.797**	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	60	60	60	60
Peer pressure	Pearson Correlation	.722**	.797**	1	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	60	60	60	60
Consumer's attitude toward Islamic brand soft drink	Pearson Correlation	.731**	.778**	.778**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	60	60	60	60

The above analysis shows that three variables are significantly correlated. It indicates that brand name, quality and peer pressure factors have shown a significant correlation to Muslim consumers' attitudes towards Islamic brand soft drink products. All those values are reliable because it is more than 0.6. We used regression analysis to test the hypothesis whether the brand name, quality and peer pressure have a positive significance with consumption preferences towards soft drink.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis  
 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.840 <sup>a</sup>	.706	.690	.42143

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand name, Quality, Peer pressure
- b. Dependent Variable: Consumer's attitude towards Islamic brand soft drink



ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	23.850	3	7.950	44.762	.000 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	9.946	56	.178		
Total	33.796	59			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand name, Quality, Peer pressure
- b. Dependent Variable: Consumer's attitude towards Islamic brand soft drink

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.991	.234		4.233	.000
	Brand name	.227	.091	.271	2.492	.016
	Quality	.274	.098	.348	2.794	.007
	Peer pressure	.267	.115	.304	2.324	.024
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer's attitude toward Islamic brand soft drink						

Based on above table, three variables namely brand name (T=2.492, p<0.05), quality (T=0.274, p<0.05), and peer pressure (T=0.267, p<0.05) were found to have a significant effect on the attitude of Muslim consumers' towards Islamic brand soft drink. In all, 70.6% (R square =0.706) of the variance in attitude towards Islamic brand soft drink were explained by the independent variable. However, it is fairly sufficient to suggest the feasibility of the model.

**Limitation**

This study has expanded the perspective of Islamic brand in the real world. However, this research acknowledges three limitations. Firstly, this study is not designed to include all possible factors on consumer's attitude. Therefore, we limit our consideration to the three variables. Secondly, since the quality is the dominant factors, it is worth to explore it in wider scale to measure different opinion from different places. Finally, measure action of actual purchase behavior could increase the validity of the study.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

The result of this study showed that young Muslim consumers, particularly in Malaysia, have a positive attitude towards Islamic brand soft drink. They are familiar with few Islamic brands in the market such as Zam Zam Cola, Mecca Cola, Stevia Cola, and Radix Cola. However, they are not really looking into the halal label before purchase soft drink because

they have put their belief on those products. They think the ingredients of soft drink products in Malaysia have been approved by JAKIM. Furthermore, the hypotheses examined in this research also have supported the assumption that brand name, quality, and peer pressure has a greater influence on Muslim's consumers' attitudes towards consumption of Islamic brand soft drink.

Quality plays the dominant roles in influencing the consumer's attitudes. The quantitative findings suggest that manufacturers and retailers should not depend on the religiosity of the Malaysian customers to market their Islamic brand and consumption of soft drink in Malaysia. Rather, Islamic brand soft drink manufacturer and retailers should create its greater awareness among general public, instil concern on the customer to consume Islamic brand soft drink and enhance the quality of their soft drink. This can be done through more research and development invested in producing a soft drink that has the quality of low carbonated water content, less sugar, healthy but at the same time must still be tasty and observe the halal standard. Furthermore, Islamic brand soft drink business in Malaysia should position their product to be available in major retails and hypermarkets to enable the mass having easy access to the Islamic product.

Finally, the findings of the current study have great implications for the body of knowledge, in the sense that they provide a ground for the future studies to establish a comprehensive model for Islamic branding adoption on any product especially on soft drink that will consider both the conventional dimensions as well as the dimensions that are specific to the Islamic branding practices. This is due to the fact that religious based motives are not the only factors influencing the consumption decisions of customers.

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