

THE DRIVERS OF HALAL BRAND EQUITY: ISLAMIC RELIGIOSITY, BRAND TRIBALISM, BRAND ENGAGEMENT IN SELF-CONCEPT, AND BRAND RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract— This research aims to study the influence of Islamic religiosity, brand tribalism, and brand engagement in self-concept on brand relationships and brand equity. The study also investigate the influence of brand relationships on brand equity and proposed the models of the drivers of Halal brand equity in Thailand. The samples are 400 Muslim consumers in Bangkok, Thailand. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used for data analysis.

The results of the study indicated that Islamic religiosity and brand relationships direct influence on brand equity, brand tribalism and brand engagement in self-concept indirect influence on brand equity through brand relationships.

Keyword— Islamic religiosity, Brand tribalism, Brand engagement in self-concept, Brand relationships, brand equity.

I. INTRODUCTION

Muslim consumers at present are counted as large group around the world. There is an expectation that the Muslim population in the world might be 2.1 billion in 2030 [1]. In this case, the market value of Halal food in the world is worth around 661.6 billion US dollars a year in 2012, and it was increased from 2011 where its value is around 634.5 billion USD or it means that the market value was increased as a percentage of 4.3 [2].

Halal brand has taken an important role in food industry. And, the business associated with the consumption of Muslims is increased as well [3] with the awareness of Muslims that they must take only Halal Food. In this case, it enables businesses to focus on Halal in order to enter into this market [3]. To be successful in the Muslim consumer's market is not easy as it doesn't use the traditional methods of marketing at the marketing mix because the principles of Islam are perfect, and it covers all aspect of life of Muslims from waking until bedtime [4][5]. Therefore, religion has a very important role for Muslim's consumption [6]. At present, alternative way for the market to create value for Brand equity is to make Brand Tribalism [7][8], and this is counted as the most challenging way for marketers to build a Brand Tribalism as it is to create a networking group of individuals with a

passion for the same brand, and they should have coherent emotion with the same group of brand in the same member group or the same tribalism [9] where it looks like tribalism with symbolic expression, tribal culture, and ritual sharing to demonstrate the commitment of members in the tribalism [10].

In addition, creating a bond with the brand is a very important issue for creating value for the brand

equity, and brand engagement in self-concept is a view related to brand equity which has relationship with the consumer, and it is focused on the importance of brand as it is a part of their identities [11][12] In this case, Flynn et al. [13] addressed that Brand engagement in self-concept, in general, has relationship with the concept of commitment to customers, which is the basis of relationship marketing. Brand relationships are an important aspect of consumer behavior. When consumers have relationship with the brand, they will become brand royalty and they will have their intention to buy the brand repeatedly [14]. Brand relationship is very essential for the process of brand equity development. This research aims to investigate the influence of the Islamic Religiosity, Brand Tribalism, and Brand engagement in self-concept towards the Brand Equity.

II. CONCEPTUAL AND HYPOTHESIS

1) Brand equity

Brand equity is the key that identifies the success of branding [15]. The brand equity reflects the consumer perception of the brand and the advantage competitiveness of company [16] because the brand is able to attract new customers as well as maintaining exist customers. Therefore, the brand company can create long-term profit and grow rapidly and continuously. In developing measures to develop brand equity, it is found that the brand equity can be divided into 3 elements which are quality perceived, the link to brand equity and brand loyalty [17][18][19].

2) Islamic religiosity

Religiosity is a pillar of the lives of Muslims. Religion is not only a popular trend that occurred in a

meanwhile. However, religion is also a factor influencing the behavior of most human beings. That's why the understanding the relationship between Islam and consumers in the market gained more and more attention [4] [20].

Islamic Religiosity has many academic research on this subject, as Siala et al. [21], Sun et al. [22], Azam et al. [23] and Mukhtar and Butt [24] has divided Islamic Religiosity into two components: 1) Religious commitment, and this is the commitment on the value of the religion, the individual's level of faith and religious practice in daily routine [25] or the level of confidence in the value of the religion of an individual, both the ideal and the practical, and 2) Religious centrism which is the correspondence of Muslims towards religious groups [243].

Azam et al. [23] found that Islamic Religiosity has a positive relation in the trustworthy, which is one of elements of a relationship with brand (e.g., Marquardt [26]; Valta [27] It is found that Islamic Religiosity has a positive influence on the relationship with the brand. There is also research Mukhtar and Butt [24] stated that Islamic Religiosity has a positive influence on the Halal food products. Meanwhile, the research of Alam et al. [20] identified that the strict religious principles have a huge influence on Muslim consumers' purchasing decisions. Thus, the researcher has made hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 1 H_1 : Islamic religiosity has positive influence with brand relationship

Siala [21] Islamic religiosity that influences the decision of purchasing products which have high relationship with Halal with the factor of Islamic Religiosity on the commitment in the religion and religious practice have positive relationship on the honest attitude towards products, and this is in compliance with research of Kordnaeij, Askari-poor and Postgraduat [28] which is found that Islamic religiosity has positive influence attitude towards Halal products, and Muniz and Schau [29] identified that the product can be compared to the religion with the consumers who have faith on the products' brand, and this is how to create brand equity. Thus, the researcher has made hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 2 H_2 : Islamic religiosity has positive influence with brand equity

3) Brand tribalism

Brand Tribalism is regarded as a factor that has a huge challenge for marketers in postmodernity where there is a dynamic change, so how to brand can be creates as the brand tribalism [8][30] that the consumers have common interests. There is a reciprocal relationship and admire of the same brand, and it creates sub-culture, values and rituals common share within the consumer society groups or tribes [31].

From the previous research, there were only few studies related to the Brand Tribalism [7][8][30]. And, Veloutsou & Moutinho [30] had divided the

Brand Tribalism into 5 dimensions which were 1) Degree of fit with lifestyle 2) Passion of life, 3) Reference group acceptance 4) Social visibility of brand, and 5) Collective memory. There were researchers such as Jurisic and Azevedo [32]; Loureiro [33] who also accepted in such components. The previous studies also identified that Brand Tribalism are one of processes that create society through consumable Brand Equity which are the key of royalty to the brand and brand equity [7]. From the research of Veloutsou and Moutinho [30], Loureiro and Oliverira-Brochado [34] had found that Brand Tribalism could predict relationship with the brand better than the well-known brands. Moreover, Jurisic and Azevedo [32] also had found that Brand Tribalism has a positive correlation relationship with the brand in the consumer's perspective Thus, the researcher has made hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 3 H_3 : Brand Tribalism has positive influence with brand relationships

From the review of the literature, it also discovered that Brand Tribalism has a direct relationship with the brand equity. Cova and Pace [31] said that Brand Tribalism is the creation of Brand Equity to the group that is interested in the same brand, and McAlexander et al. [36] added that Brand Tribalism is socially constructed through a consumer brand, which is the key cause of loyalty to the brand and brand equity. In addition, Taut and Sierra [36] argued that Brand Tribalism aims or has the main objective to expand the creation of emotion to the brand equity and maintain the group of tribes. With these reasons, it supports valuable brand equity from the Brand Tribalism, and from empirical research of Tsiotsou [7], it is found that Brand Tribalism affects the loyalty to the brand as it creates brand equity. Thus, the researcher has made hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 4 H_4 : Brand tribalism has positive influence with brand equity

4) Brand engagement in self-concept

Brand engagement in self-concept has a relationship with the concept of customer engagement, which is the basis of marketing relationship, and this is a method that reflects the commitment to build a loyal behavior [13][37].

Brand engagement in self-concept is appropriate for Halal as it indicates the self-concept of Muslim consumers and there are limited researches associated with Brand engagement in self-concept [13] [38].

From the review of literature on Brand engagement in self-concept, it is found that Brand engagement in self-concept of customers has positive relationship with the brand equity [37]. Moreover, Hollebeek [39] has stated that a commitment with brand equity is a marketing perspective, and it is compliance with the concept of brand loyalty among customers which is the basis of marketing relationship. The research of Brodie et al. [40] has found that a bound with the customers is built from the trust, satisfaction and

commitment. This has a positive relationship with the brand. Thus, the researcher has made hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 5 H₅: Brand engagement in self-concept has positive influence with brand relationships. However, the related research Brand engagement in self-concept has found that Brand engagement in self-concept is a way to create behavioral loyalty [37].

This researcher has found that Brand engagement in self-concept has positive influence on loyalty to the brand. Moreover, Sprout et al. [38] found that Brand engagement in self-concept affects their relationship with their attitudes and behavior towards the brand equity, and Brand engagement in self-concept is in compliance to the loyalty to the research of Bodie et al. [40], which is found that a bond with customers help to increase loyalty of customer. And, from the research of Franzak et al. [41], it is found that the brand loyalty increases brand equity. Thus, the researcher has made hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 6 H₆: Brand engagement in self-concept has positive influence with brand equity

5) Brand Relationships

Brand relationships is a key target to the market as it creates strong relationship and it changes the customers who are not interested on the brand to be loyalty and bring the most value to the brand [27]. There are current views about the relationship with the brand that is applied to create the quality of relations resulting from the 3 elements which are trust, satisfaction and commitment [26][27][42][43]. From the results of research of Valta [27], it is indicated that the relationship with the brand associated with loyalty, and it is consistent with the Abdul-Rahman Kamarulzaman [43].

Huber et al. [44], who found that the intention to repeatedly purchase associated with the brand. Liu et al. [45], stated that the relationship with the brand helps to reduce barriers to change to another brand, and it increases the loyalty of customers. Moreover, Xie Heung [46] found that the relationship with the brand associated with the intention to purchase. Lee and Kang [47] found that a relationship with the brand positive influence on brand loyalty. Morgan-Thamas and Velooutsoi [48] found that the relationship with the brand helps to build customer satisfaction and it influences behavioral intention to purchase. In addition, Alejandro et al. [43] found that there is a positive relationship between brand and brand royalty. Marquardt [26] found that the relationship with the brand positive influence on brand equity. Thus, the researchers made hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 7 H₇: Brand relationships has positive influence with brand equity

III. RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The population in this study is Muslim consumers in Thailand by choosing 400 sampling of Muslim consumers in Bangkok, Thailand. Tool to collect data is a questionnaire. It is found that Cronbach alpha of all part of the questionnaire over .70. The data was analyzed and tested the hypotheses by using structural equation modeling (SEM).

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

1) Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Islamic religiosity is a new variable to this kind of study so it must be tested EFA. KMO index (a measure of sampling adequacy Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) is equal to the value of .833. From the Bartlett test of sphericity, it is found that the p-value = .000, and it means that the test of sample in a model is developed with the statistical significance.

It can be divided into elements of Islamic religiosity in 3 sections which are Religious commitment: RCM, Religious centrism: RCM, and Religious Ethicism: REC. In Religious Ethicism, it is a new element added into this religious research. The opinions of Islamic scholars have noted that faith (Iman) and good ethicism are results of faith that presented into the form of exquisite manners of behavior by thinking that Allah still see what we do all the time [49].

2) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

For CFA analysis, all analysis of CFA, which all up over a given criteria (Chi Square/df < 5, GFI = > .90, CFI = > .90, RMSEA < .80, SRMR < .80). Validity and Reliability found that loading value is greater than .50 [50] this presented that data obtained is reliable and valid.

3) Analysis of Structural Equation

It was found that the index has 5 acceptable indexes which are $\chi^2/df = 2.983$, GFI = .906, CFI = .948, RMSEA = .070, SRMR = .068. This shows that the structural equation models are appropriate. The following is brand relationships which has influenced the brand equity ($\beta = .69$, $P < .001$). Brand engagement in self-concept influences brand relationships ($\beta = .44$, $P < .001$). Brand tribalism influences the brand relationships ($\beta = .43$, $P < .001$). Islamic religiosity has influences on brand equity ($\beta = .17$, $P < .01$). In this case, Brand engagement in self-concept has no influences of brand equity ($\beta = .09$). Brand tribalism has no influences brand equity ($\beta = .07$). And, Islamic religiosity has no influences brand relationship (BR) ($\beta = .01$).

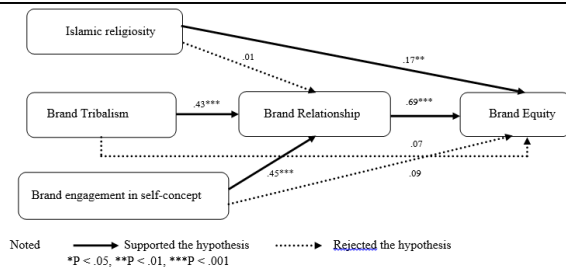
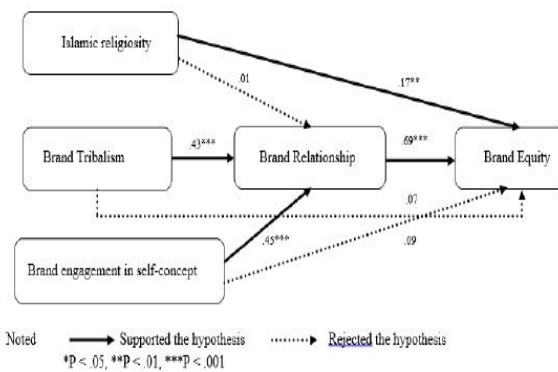


Figure 1: Model of the driver of Halal brand equity

Overall, the structural model exhibits excellent explanatory power. The model explains 64% of the variance in brand relationships and 84% of the variance in brand equity, which can be summarized into the model results as indicated in Figure 1, and Table 1.

Table 1: Beta value (β) in type of relationship and results from the hypothesis test



Noted: $R^2_{BR} = .64$, $R^2_{BE} = .84$
 *P < .05, ** P < .01, *** P < .001

V. DISCUSSION

1) Islamic religiosity relationship with brand relationships and brand equity

Islamic religiosity has no effect with the relationship of the brand. It is because Thailand is Buddhist country and most of Halal food's entrepreneurs in Thailand are non-Muslims. Therefore, Muslim consumers are not sure about Halal brand, and this is consistent with the research of Khasuwan [51] and Tangtrongphairoj [52]. However, it is found that Islamic religiosity has a direct influence on brand equity and it is in compliance with Siala [21] that Islamic religiosity has very high positive relationship with the brand loyalty.

2) Brand tribalism relationship with brand relationships and brand equity

Brand tribalism has an influence on the relationship with the brand equity in Muslim consumers' groups. This is in compliance with the research of Kordnaej and Askaripoor [53] that the quality is consistent with the Halal Brand significantly. Moreover, the research of Veloutsou and Moutinho [30], Jurisic and Azevedo

[33], Loureiro and Oliverira-Brochado [34], Hayeemad, Jaroenwanit and Khamwon [54] found that Brand Tribalism has an effect on brand relationships. And, it is found that brand tribalism has no direct influence to brand equity. However, it has indirect brand equity through brand relationships which is in compliance with the research that supports the result of the research. In this case, brand tribalism influences to brand equity [7][35][54]. Taut and Sierra [8] provide reasons about the important target and objective related to brand tribalism to expand the expression towards brand equity and to maintain the brand tribalism.

3) Brand engagement in self-concept relationship with brand relationships and brand equity

Brand engagement in self-concept influences brand relationships as Muslims consumers in Thailand have close and special relationship to the Halal brand. This research is consistent with the research of Flynn, Goldsmith and Kim [13] as it is found that brand engagement in self-concept relating to customer engagement. Therefore, this is in the same direction of the research of Hollebeek [37] stated that the commitment with the brand of the customers influence brand relationships.

In addition, the results showed that brand engagement in self-concept has no direct effect on brand equity. It has an indirect influence on brand equity through brand relationships. This is consistent with the research of Hollebeek [37] found that brand engagement in self-concept related to the customer loyalty that result in value to the brand through brand relationships.

4) The relationship of brand relationships to brand equity

Brand relationships direct influence on the brand equity, and this is consistent with the research of Valta [27] found that the relationship with the brand associated with loyalty to the brand. The research of Abdul-Rahman and Kamarulzaman [43] found that the relationship of the brand has a relationship with the loyalty of the customer. Huber et al., [44] found an influence to the intention to buy the products repeatedly and the relationship with the brand. Liu et al. [45] stated that the relationship with the brand helps to reduce the obstacle in changing their minds to use the new brand and increase the loyalty of customers. Xie and Heung [46] found that the relationship with the brand is related to the future intention. Lee and Kang [47] found that the relationship with the brand influenced with the loyalty to the brand. Moreover, Morgan-Thamas and Veloutsoi [48] found that brand relationship helps to create satisfaction and it influences to the buying intention behavior. In addition, Marquardt [26] found that the quality relationship is the resource to build brand equity as it is found in the industry that the

relationship with the brand has an influence with the brand equity.

CONCLUSION

From the study, it is found that Islamic religiosity and the relationship with the brand direct influence on the brand equity. And, brand tribalism and brand engagement in self-concept indirect influence on brand relationships.

From the previous researchers such as Siala et al.

[21], Sun et al. [22], Azam et al. [23] and Mukhtar and Butt [24], they stated that Islamic religiosity can be divided into 2 elements which are religious commitment and religious centrism. The Muslim population is the large group of the population in the World, and they mostly focus on the media consumption and decision making on product purchasing [6][20].

In addition, Brand Tribalism and Brand engagement in self-concept influence on the relationship of the brand and brand equity in the context of Halal. This research shows that the Brand Tribalism and Brand engagement in self-concept can be applied in other contexts to increase knowledge to the academic market. It also can be applied to private entities such as operators of Halal food or supplier of Halal products, etc., to perfectly determine the marketing strategy in creating value to Halal.

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