

Does celebrity credibility influence Muslim and non-Muslim consumers' attitudes toward brands and purchase intention?

Abstract

Purpose - This study aims to distinguish between Muslim and non-Muslim consumers regarding celebrity influence on brands and purchase intention, and assess the relative importance of celebrity credibility, in terms of physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and product–brand congruency. The study also researches attitudes towards brands, and purchase intention and their ability to predict consumers' religion.

Design/methodology/approach - The research aim was achieved through an empirical study involving a self-administered questionnaire distributed to members of the public recruited from the Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia. Data were collected from 250 Muslim and non-Muslim consumers using a convenience sampling method. Their participation was purely voluntary. Multiple discriminant analysis via Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program version 20 was used to answer the research questions.

Findings - Empirical results of the multiple discriminant analysis indicated that celebrity expertise and attitudes towards brands strongly predict allocation to Muslim consumers rather than non-Muslim consumers. The relative importance of the celebrity credibility aspects from Muslim consumers' perspectives was: celebrity expertise, celebrity attitudes towards brands, purchase intention, product–brand congruency and physical attractiveness. Muslim consumers are found to choose expertise but not trustworthiness. Muslim consumers' faith or trust may be linked to the perception that products and services endorsed by the celebrities are in line with Shariah principles which are consistent with Islamic principles.

Research limitations/implications - Respondents were randomly drawn from the Muslim and non-Muslim population of the Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia. Consequently, they may not represent the entire population of Malaysia. Future researchers could overcome the limits of generalizability by increasing sample coverage.

Originality/value - The paper empirically justified the discriminating function among celebrity credibility elements in terms of physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and product–brand

congruency of Muslim and non-Muslim consumer attitudes towards brands and purchase intention. Thus, the results of this study offer a new forward motion to the findings of prior studies on consumer perception of celebrity credibility, which is not much covered in the literature in the Malaysian context between Muslim and non-Muslim consumer perspectives. The findings are able to add literature on Muslim consumer behaviour in the use of celebrities, as these celebrities could act as inspirational to the consumers.