

Chapter 78

Significant Role of Religion in Influencing Consumer Behavior

Munazza Saeed

Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

In a constantly changing and increasingly globalised world, religion still plays a significant role in influencing consumer behavior. The intent behind this study is to scrutinize the effect of normative factors on Muslim consumers' apparel purchasing decisions. The survey was comprised of a sample of 500 Muslim consumers from the universities and shopping malls in Faisalabad city of Pakistan. Correlation was used to analyze the sample. The findings indicate that consumers in Faisalabad (Pakistan) area consider Islam their source of reference, and they prefer to wear clothing as commanded by Islamic Shriah. This study confirms that normative factors had a highly significant relationship with consumer buying behavior. The chapter's interesting findings serve to remind organizations that they cannot neglect the element of religion in their marketing activities, particularly when operating in the vicinity of Islamic countries.

INTRODUCTION

Apparels convey information and hold a position in social systems (Goffman, 1959) as clothing is a universal tool of aesthetic self-management (Cash, 1990). People use clothing to identify themselves with a social class, project a positive image and as a means to improve their overall appearance (Alexander, Connell & Presley, 2005). Although apparels had been most variable category of consumer products (Kunz, 2005) and a social component as well (Jenkins, 1973), influenced by the amalgamation of fashion trends seasonal changes and religious beliefs. Outfits preference

display that how an individual would like to be. In ancient civilizations, clothing was primarily used to cover and protect human bodies. Today, most consumers see clothing as more than just a basic necessity.

Research conducted in clothing behavior has shown that consumers differ in attitudes, values and expectations of clothing. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), a person's attitudes, which influence behavior, are built from past experiences, current concerns, information, and social pressure. Religion is an important cultural factor to study because it is one of the most universal and influential social institutions that have

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significant influence on people's attitudes, values and behaviors at both the individual and societal levels (Mokhlis, 2009). Its effect on people's life is so great that it will even affect the consuming motives and choices (Chang, 2005). Although religion has influence over personal and social behavior of human beings but there is a dearth of research in this area. Kotler (2000) mentioned the buying decision are influenced by religion but did not highlight the degree to which religion could influence. However, in Islam, religion is not an element of culture but a code of conduct for its believers.

Most Arab societies of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Iran, Pakistan, Senegal and Turkey, these countries fluctuate in an extent to which they follow the Islamic teachings, However, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia taking serious actions to turn to Islamic shariah in modeling their way of life (Metwally, 1997). Despite the growing global Muslim market and magnitude of studying cultural differences, slight information is available about the influence of religion on consumer behavior. To understand the influence of religiosity, this study focused on Pakistani consumers to investigate their behavior towards apparel.

Pakistani fashion designers, artists and experts are developing their imagination to design their fashion products keeping in mind the culture of Pakistan. Several online fashion boutiques, labels and outlets registered to Fashion Pakistan are contributing to promote Pakistani culture by providing special discounts on fashion accessories, clothes and apparel that are representing features closely tied to culture of Pakistan.

This study is exploratory, seeking the elicitation of research questions from the literature, which through their application within the empirical research, that will assist in the identification of the significant issues for apparel selection and attitude towards Islamic clothing. Islamic teachings give an impact on what and how much to buy but mostly consumers make decisions on what and

how much to consume, we anticipate that Islamic teachings can influence Muslim consumers more than any other dynamics such as gender, occupation, education, salary to name a few, can. I hope that this study will help me to see how much influence Islam has on this social component of a Muslim consumer's life. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Following this section immediately is a review of the relevant literature. This is followed by a brief discussion of the theoretical frame work and hypothesis. Next is the discussion of the research methodology, analysis and results which is followed by the conclusion and implications for Islamic marketing. This is followed by the future research and limitations.

Objective

As have been mentioned above, the growth of Islamic teachings among Pakistani Muslim consumers by taking serious actions to turn into Islamic shariah. This should have must given an impact on their buying decision of apparels. Therefore, the objective of this research is to examine the influence of religious norms and social norms on the buying behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behavior, Religiosity, and Culture

Consumer behavior research concerned with Culture and subculture. Religion is a system of beliefs and practices that dictates individual reaction, providing the code that control and justifies believer social behavior (Foxall and Goldsmith, 1994); religion also fosters or frowns on particular choice behavior (Hawkins, Coney and Best 1980; Schiffman, and Kanuk, 1991). Because religion, being a fundamental part of culture, has considerable influence on people's values, habits, attitudes, and it greatly influence lifestyle, which in turn af-

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