



**THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MUSLIM CELEBRITIES
ENDORSERS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMERS'
PURCHASE INTENTION**

BY

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree of Master of Science in Marketing**

**Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Science
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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to identify the Muslim Celebrity endorser's characteristics influence on consumers' purchase intention in Malaysia. The study is based on a sample of 231 respondents in Kelantan. The data was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 19 which include descriptive analysis, correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The results show that there are significant relationships between expertise, trustworthiness, and ethical values with the purchase intention. Among the three characteristics, expertise is the one that influence the consumers' purchase intention the most, followed by ethical value and trustworthiness. Surprisingly, the attractiveness of the Muslim celebrities endorsers is found to be not significant to the consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, managers need to consider Muslim celebrities with relevant characteristics to represent their products or brands.

ملخص البحث

أجريت هذه الدراسة لتحديد خصائص التأثير لمظهر المشاهير المسلمين على نية شراء المستهلكين في ماليزيا. واعتمدت الدراسة على عينة من 231 مفردة تضم المستهلكين من سكان ولاية كلنتان الماليزية. وقد تمّ تحليل البيانات باستخدام البرنامج الإحصائي (SPSS) 19 الذي يتضمّن التحليل الوصفي، والارتباط، وتحليل الانحدار المتعدد. وأظهرت النتائج أن هناك علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين المهارة والثقة، والقيمة الخلقية مع نية الشراء. وتبيّن من بين الخصائص الثلاث أن المهارة صارت أكثر ما يؤثر على نية شراء المستهلكين، تليها القيمة الخلقية ثم الثقة. ومن المثير للدهشة، أن جاذبية مظهر المشاهير ليست لها علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية مع نية شراء المستهلكين. ولذلك، يحتاج مديرو الشركة إلى مراعاة خصائص ذات صلة عند اختيار المشاهير المسلمين لتمثيل منتجاتهم أو علاماتهم التجارية.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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Signature.....

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*This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Shahaidah Bt Mohamed and Mohamad Noor
Bin Ibrahim for their endless love, support and encouragement.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

e.g	<i>exempligratia</i> for (example)
et al.	<i>et alia:</i> and (others)
etc	<i>et cetera:</i> and so forth pages that follows
n.d	no date
n.p	no place/ no publisher
SPSS	Statistical Packaged for Social Science

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide an overview of past studies made on Celebrities, Muslim Celebrities and consumer's purchase intention on products. In addition, to add focus for the study, this chapter also contains the problem statement and some information on Muslim Celebrities in Malaysia. The research objectives are included along with the study objectives, and definition of terms will illustrate key terms used in this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In this competitive world, there are various strategies that companies use to promote their products. One of the strategies that are constantly used by companies is getting celebrities as their product representative. Rafique (2012) stated that celebrities are people who enjoy specific public recognition and have some characteristic attributes that will impact on the overall brand significance. Therefore, most studies agree that the use of celebrities is one of the popular promotional tools and it is able to attract attention from consumers in this era.

The use of celebrities as a means to increase consumer's purchase intention is not new. It has been done in many parts of the world as some companies believed that well known personalities will get a high degree of attention and attract consumer to use the product (Ohanian, 1991). This is because consumers have the impression that they have a strong relationship with celebrities and thus this convinces them to choose

the product that has been used by their favourite personalities. Moreover, consumers nowadays are inclined to follow their favourite celebrities compared to other public figures (Swami, Premuzic, Mastor, Siran, Said, Jaafar, Sinniah and Pillai, 2011). A celebrity, being the figure that many look up to, plays a significant role in a community's life, and the area of consumer behaviour in purchasing is no exception to this. A study by Patra and Datta, (2011) found that companies have to consider the familiarity of the endorser in order to draw some attention to their products as it will give different effects when the endorser of the product is unknown to the consumers. Thus, it is important for the companies to carefully choose their endorser for the product in order to create the purchase intention among consumers.

On the other hand, celebrity endorsers for certain products that are less attached to consumers would probably cause a decline in consumer desire to purchase the product. A study by Shuart, (2007) supports the celebrity effectiveness as a spokesperson for products among consumers. In addition, it is crucial for companies to acknowledge the buying power of consumer and at the same time select the right celebrity to represent their product as it will contribute to the acceptance of the products in the market.

Choosing a celebrity as an endorser for a product is highly recommended as celebrities create more sense of credibility of the products in the sense that the products are recommended by a big figure such as the celebrities themselves (Spry, Pappu, & Cornwell, 2011). The use of celebrities as product endorser is not a new strategy to approach the consumers in Malaysia. There are several studies about celebrity endorsers in Malaysia (Mohd Suki, 2014; Rashid & Nallamuthu, 2002; Swami et al., 2011) and its influences on consumer's purchase intention but there is a smaller and limited number of studies done in the area of Muslim endorsers. Malaysia

is a developing Islamic country with a population of approximately 61 percent Muslims and the country's official religion is Islam (itc.gov.my). Clearly, the followers of Islam have improved and equip themselves with knowledge to practice Islamic religion in their lives. This includes all areas of living including business, laws, regulation, and basic knowledge.

With the increasing awareness to Islamic practices in their lives, Muslim celebrities endorsers in Malaysia have taken part to generate more knowledge and information about the religion and product endorsements. This is because religiosity can also play a significant role in consumer lives in order to determine the consumer behaviour's and buying decisions (Mansour & Diab, 2013). This is evident where religion is an important cultural factor that can influence the social institutions subsequently radically influencing consumer attitudes, values and behaviours at both the individual and society level (Mokhlis, 2009). Figure 1 shows the distribution of religion in Malaysia.

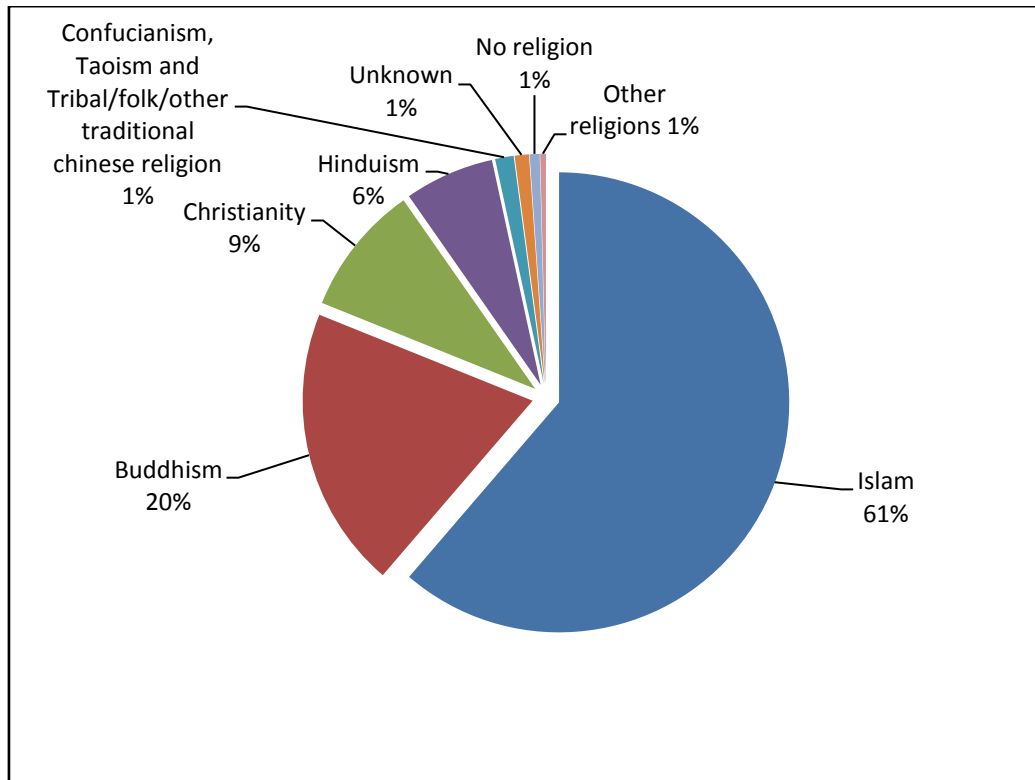


Figure 1: Percentage distribution of the population by religion, Malaysia, 2010
 Source: www.statistics.gov.my

Recently, there has been an increasing movement of Muslims in Malaysia regarding laws, regulation, lifestyles and on several of issues. Islamic perspective that is based on *Syariah* Islam is universal and rational and can be adapted according to situations and the environment (www.islam.gov.com). This is because *Syariah* Islam is inclined towards Muslim's understanding and interaction with the sources of *syara'* in order to derive certain laws (www.islam.gov.my). To be specific, terms of Islamic perspective for Muslim celebrities can be illustrated by their characteristic, lifestyles, knowledge and behaviour when representing any product. Many companies in Malaysia are widely using Muslim celebrities to draw more consumers to purchase their products. Any issues related to the Islamic terms and practices are taken seriously by the consumers as well as the government. This is proof that in Islam the

behaviour of a consumer is governed by religious injunctions (Shah Alam, Mohd, & Hisham, 2011). Besides, the buying power that has increased from time to time in Malaysia also influences the purchase pattern in Malaysia.

Along with this growing pattern, most companies in Malaysia are likely to choose celebrities endorsers to promote their products from an Islamic perspective. The effect of Islamic compliance in consumer lives has a positive relationship because of the development of the religious identity has significantly influenced the individual characteristic of being Muslim (Peek, 2005). For instance, Kelantan which is one of the states in Malaysia has implemented the general rules of Islamic practices where the celebrities endorser for products on billboards or banners needs to cover their *aurah*¹. In Malaysia, it does not matter which celebrities who appears in the billboard or banner in Kelantan, whether the celebrity is Muslim or not, he or she must follow the Islamic guidelines that have been assigned. This shows that the title Muslim and Islamic is measured by the adherence to Syariah and Islamic lifestyle rather than the religion of the endorser.

Attractiveness, expertise and credibility has been a focus in a study by Tripp, Jensen, and Carlson (1994). Studies have also revealed that Muslim consumers tend to be attracted to the physical attractiveness of the celebrity endorser more than non-Muslim (Mohd Suki, 2014). Attractiveness has shown a positive relationship between celebrity endorser and purchase intention (Till & Busler, 2007). Contrastingly, Ohanian (1991), in her study found that between attractiveness, trustworthiness and expertise, only expertise has a significant relationship with consumer purchase intention. It is highly recommended for company to use a celebrity endorser to influence purchase intention for the product that has the physical appeal. This can be

¹A term used within Islam which denotes the intimate parts of the body, for both men and women, which must be covered with clothing

supported by Kahle and Homer (1985), who concluded the effectiveness of celebrities as endorsers representing products has increased the effectiveness of the attitude of consumers towards the product. Furthermore, celebrities who have more skills and expertise in their product representation have been found to generate more intention to buy the product (Ohanian, 1991; Till & Busler, 2007). Therefore, understanding the characteristics of celebrities endorsers who influence consumer's purchase intention is necessary for the companies to improve the skill of celebrities endorsers for their products.

Most Muslim celebrities in Malaysia represent Muslim products in which they need to convince the consumers which the product is *Shariah* compliant such as in terms of being *halal*. Muslim consumers tend to believe and are more convinced when the picture of their Muslim celebrity is shown in the advertisement (Mohd Suki, 2014). This is because the recognition of celebrity has created a positive attitude and distinct personality for the endorsed brand (Mansour & Diab, n.d.). In addition, the match up of celebrities endorsers and the product that they represent mostly influences the purchase intention of the consumer (Till & Busler, 2007). Thus, this will result in enhancing purchase intention among consumers.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There has been an increase on awareness towards Islamic ethics in Malaysia since the past few decades. This has been reflected in all parts of its citizens' lives including the preferences of products and services (Shah Alam et al., 2011). Though Malaysia is a country that is mostly populated by Muslims, the challenge in order to influence their

Islamic perspectives may be affected by how clear their understanding on Islamic guidelines is.

In the area of purchase intention, the demand for products that are Shariah compliant has boomed and this has much to do with the choice of product endorser. An endorser plays a major role in shaping the image of a product (Kamins, 1990; B. D. Till & Busler, 2007). Representatives of a product bear some characteristics or the features of the product that company tries to create. In Malaysia, there are no specific guidelines for celebrity endorsers when they are appointed as ambassador of the product. However one of the states in Malaysia which is Kelantan, has enacted laws to control their Muslim society in the state (Mohd Azhar Abdullah & Raihanah Abdullah, 2010). The law which is “Undang-undang Kecil Iklan MPKB 1990” states that the model for outdoor advertising must be in accordance to Islamic guidelines which means following the dress code of Islamic practices such as covering aurah for men and women (www.mpkbri.gov.my). The law is enforced for Muslim and non-Muslim appearance in outdoor advertising such as on billboards and banner. This rule and regulation received positive feedback from all companies that use outdoor advertising in Kelantan.

In Malaysia, 61 percent of the population are Malay consumers (www.statistic.gov.my). Therefore, it can be inferred that majority consumers are also Muslims. Research shows that there is a significant relationship between religion and purchase behaviour (Mansour & Diab, n.d.). In other words, the Muslim society is most likely drawn to a Muslim endorser. Non-Muslims in Malaysia are also found to accept the Islamic guidelines in their purchasing behaviour (Mohd Suki, 2014). This means non-Muslims in Malaysia also accepted the guidelines of Islamic practice which are applied in an Islamic product. However, another study showed that a

celebrity endorser might not be the major influence to purchase intention where it is reported consumers only focus on product itself instead of its representative (Lafferty et al., 1999). This also could influence the Muslim celebrity endorser when they are representing general product that Muslim and non-Muslim is the target consumers. Based on Mohd Suki, (2014) non-Muslim and Muslim in Malaysia tend to choose expertise and skills that endorser represent regardless of who are the celebrities.

Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to investigate the influence of Muslim celebrity endorser's characteristics on purchase intention. The growth of the Muslim celebrity as a representative to products and marketing promotion calls for more research to be made in this area. This is an area that can be further developed, as it will significantly contribute to research in the area of marketing.

Malaysia is selected because as mentioned, 61 percent of the population is Muslims (www.statistic.gov.my). In addition, Islam is the country's official religion (www.itc.gov.com). Moreover, in contrast to other Muslim countries, Islamic resurgence are dominated by Malay because of the ethno-religious phenomenon who are actively engaged in raising and revitalizing the people's interest in Islam through teaching, laws and values (Hassan, 2001). Additionally, this also could be a further development from the previous studies on the characteristics of celebrity endorsers that influence on purchase intention among consumers. Most of the studies on celebrity endorsers that influence on purchase intention were conducted in non-Muslim countries. Furthermore, there are few studies on religion based representation by the endorser in order to influence the purchase intention in Malaysia. The outcome from this study will hopefully be helpful for the marketing managers or advertising companies to plan a strategic promotion to satisfy and approach consumers.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

An objective is important to determine reliable and accurate research. Thus, the outcomes of this research would be beneficial and distinctive for a company to be competitive. The research objectives are:

1. To determine the influence of Muslim celebrity endorser's characteristics on consumers purchase intention (Attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and ethical value).
2. To identify the factors that determines the consumer purchase intention influence by Muslim celebrity endorser.
3. To identify the characteristics of Muslim celebrity endorser that has the most influence on consumer's purchase intention.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

This research is conducted to find the relationship of the independent variables, which are attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise and ethical values with the dependent variable, which is the consumer purchase intention. Therefore, this study intends to answer the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between attractiveness of Muslim celebrities endorsers on consumer's purchase intention?
2. What is the relationship between trustworthiness of Muslim celebrities endorsers on consumer's purchase intention?
3. What is the relationship between expertises of Muslim celebrities endorsers on consumer's purchase intention?

4. What is the relationship between the ethical values of Muslim celebrities endorsers on consumer's purchase intention?
5. Which among the four characteristics of Muslim Celebrity endorsers has the most influence on consumer's purchase intention?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Nowadays, the Muslim market has widened its reach throughout the world and is accepted by most Muslim countries. In Malaysia, there are studies about Muslim consumers who are influenced by celebrities endorsers but not on the Muslim celebrities themselves. There have been less studies on the celebrities as a Muslim as a representative of the product and the effectiveness of using Muslim celebrities as a product endorser.

This study will also include the study of Muslim as religiosity influences the effectiveness of the celebrity on consumer's purchase intention. Generally, most studies focus on the effectiveness of the celebrities as endorsers on the purchasing decision making. However, the most important element is the characteristic of a Muslim celebrity that will be discussed in order to know the reaction of consumer. The focus of this study is to identify the effectiveness of Muslim celebrities as product endorser on consumer purchase intention as well as to identify the most contributing characteristics. Moreover this study can contribute to many parties such as corporations, regulators, policy makers, and the analytical and empirical researches.

The research can provide insight for companies and policy makers on the strategic promotions in pursuing the consumer. Advertisers will benefit from some of the criteria highlighted in the outcome of this research as they use Muslim celebrities to represent their products. In addition, the information on the reactions and responses