

# **BRAND PERSONALITY AND GENERATION Y PURCHASE INTENTION OF HALAL FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS IN PAHANG**

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## *Abstract*

*In this modern competitive environment, many brands are available for the consumers to choose, which provide similar kind of benefits. In current scenario brand personality is very important for the companies to position their brand in the market. It is very important to differentiate our offerings from those of the competitors. In this context, brand personality plays an important role to identify and differentiate the product as companies increasingly enter and exit the market. Brand personality can be defined as the set of personality traits of human which are attributed to a brand. The purpose of this study is to categorise the important dimensions of brand personality among generation Y. The study adopted quantitative method and questionnaires being distributed randomly. The results of this study shows that sincerity is the most important dimension of brand personality which affect the purchase intention of young consumers.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

In this modern competitive environment, brand personality is an important topic in marketing studies. Currently, one of the most important marketing strategies has been considered is branding. As a centre part of typical and passionate traits of a brand, a lot of consideration has been given to the idea of brand identity recently, along these lines the use of brand identity in purchaser conduct has expanded (Yoon, 2004). Many studies have been done for fast food issues in Malaysia. However, not many studies did before by using measurement of brand personality dimensions and purchase intention among generation Y.

Malaysia is an Islamic country consists of 3 different races where the majority of the population is Muslims. Therefore, fast food restaurants provide halal goods and services to consumers which are compatible with shariah. The Halal concept today has been seen as universal, not only concerned towards Muslim consumers. Eight Halal fast food restaurant's brand were selected as certified by JAKIM and also familiar to those Chinese, Indians and Malays whom visit them frequently: McDonald, KFC, Starbucks, Pizza Huts, Domino Pizza, Burger King, Marry Brown and Kenny Rodger Roaster.

Generation Y is a group of special interest to marketers, their consumer behaviour has a great marketing implication on brand loyalty, positioning, advertising message and media. Therefore, it is very important for marketers to understand their needs, they respond well signs of fun, interaction and experiences. Generation Y today love spending their free time with their friends and most of them choose to go to a restaurant that have a personality which attract them to be there.

Branding a product or a service that can be viewed as a foundation of achievement, as it makes extra esteem for both the organization (Airikka & Maria, 2014) hence, creates many competitive advantages. The market rivalry gets to be trickier for restaurants organizations where every one of them attempt to make distinctive way of life as the reason to end up

remarkable into market. This is essential because all strong restaurants brands such McDonalds and KFC's possess outstanding quality services they gave to consumers.

### **Problem Statement**

Today, the fast food restaurants are becoming competitors throughout the years as the restaurants are expanding in Malaysia and seem to be increasing. Besides, every firm has their own personality. Brand may affect customer decision in their purchasing, customers also believe that branded goods represent their social status. Due to competitive fast food market increasingly, new firms enter and exit the market to gain profit in short-run and leave the market when they earn normal profit (McConnell et al., 2012). They are facing concentrated competitions in terms of sustaining to contribute good performance and retain their customers.

In addition, the young's way of life today is that they are more liked to force to the food service outlets, particularly fast food restaurants which are competent to contribute them reasonableness, time keeping open and relaxing eating experience (Kueh & Voon, 2007). Whether international or local fast food firm, they are not able to identify consumer needs and wants as well as understand purchase intention among young generation as they are considered as major customers of fast food. Due to lack or market share in Malaysia Halal Industry (Omar,2013) it is vital to identify young consumers purchase intention in order to ensure halal industry will be sustained and Malaysia as Halal Hub by 2020 will be achieved.

### **Research Objective**

The objective of the research is to categorise the most important dimensions of brand personality among generation Y consumers

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Generation Y**

Era Y can be represented as individuals roughly matured age 11-34. They were born between the years of 1981 and 2000 (N.Aniza et al., 2013). In the Malaysia context, era Y refer to people perceived from 1980 onwards and who entered the workforce after 1 July 2000 (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2009). All things considered, there are numerous level headed discussions on the age scope of Generation Y, numerous studies have acknowledged Generation Y to be those conceived somewhere around 1978 and 1994 (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). They are likewise expressed to as the Internet or (.com) Generation, Echo Boomers, Millennials and Nexters. In Malaysia, Generation Y represents 11 million individuals in 2010 which is 40% of Malaysia's populace (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011).

### **The Characteristics of Generation Y**

As indicated by Martin (2005), the Generation Y partner is innovation wise, autonomous, independent and entrepreneurial masterminds. Furthermore, a study by Syrett and Lammiman (Toh et al., 2011) has expressed five unique attributes of Generation Y.

Table 2.1: Characteristic of Generation Y

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Description</b>
Intimacy	The ability to set up and manage tranquil connection over the internet.

Loyalty	To their own firmly protected individual networks and less reliably or dependably, to brands and employers.
Awareness	Social issues inside and outside work, of the requirement for straightforwardness and trustworthiness and awareness of hypocrisy in brand management or human resource strategies.
Balance	The interface amongst work and personal life, idealistic are also willing to embrace in 24/7 lifestyles
Risk	In their openness to regular change and their readiness to be open, that will be adaptable and versatile.

Source: Syrett and Lammiman (Toh et al., 2011)

As indicated by Aaker (1997), branding is considerably more imperative in Generation Y as this era use brand to communicate. In the term of marketing, Generation Y sees a trustworthy brand as a marker of one's status and is subsequently eager to pay additional for a favoured respectable brand (Farris et al., 2002). In term of loyalty, Generation Y has been noticeable to different alternatives and decisions in acquiring products or services (Evelyn et

al., 2011) this group of consumers additionally observed to be less faithful to one supplier contrasted with other generation (Lazaveric, 2012).

## **Brand**

The brand is a critical component in promoting a business, place or product. It can bring about perplexity with individuals, merely of the misperception that exists on the importance of "brand" (Meer, 2010). Agreeing the America Marketing Association characterizes a brand as a name, term, sign, image or plan, or a blend of these proposed to distinguish the products or administrations of one vender or gatherings of merchants and to separate them from competitors (Kotler, 2000). A brand has passionate and typical human identity viewpoints that impact customer practices past utilitarian or useful properties (Aaker, 1997).

Other than that, Aaker (1996) sees the brand definition from a buyer's viewpoint that brand is an impression saw in a customer's psyche of an item or service. Hence, a brand an image as well as its components that ring a bell when they consider the brand.

## **Brand personality**

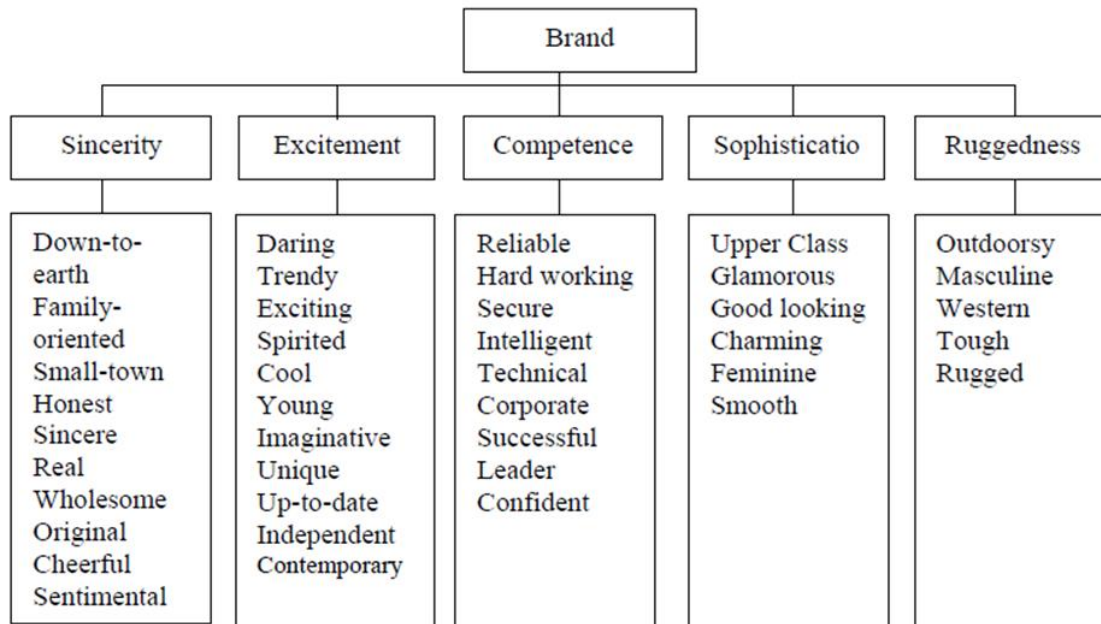
In theoretical terms, brand personality refers to the "arrangement of human attributes connected with a brand" (Aaker, 1997). It initiates enthusiastic connections amongst brands and customers (Landon 1974). Aaker attempt to build up a structure of brand identity measurements furthermore built up a solid, legitimate and generalizable scale to gauge the measurements. Aaker (1997) reveals five distinct identity dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness. Aaker accept that the brands are the same with human identity or character, and the brand identity is made when a customer joined his or her identity like character to a particular brand.

Brand personality traits provide symbolic meaning and emotional values to a person (Shen, 2014). Take for instance, effect will cause an individual preference to make his

purchase decision. Refer to Aaker (1997), brand personality enables the person to express his own self or specific dimensions of the self. According to Hawkins et al (2001), brand personality can be considered as “what type of person the brand would be if it were human and what it would do and like”.

As indicated by Hawkins et al (2001), mark identity can be considered as "what kind of individual the brand would be on the off chance that it were human and what it would do and like". The benefit of brand identity is its appeal and capacity to inspire emotions (Airikka and Maria, 2014). As a brand personality has a tendency to acquire the brand an uncommon and extraordinary approach. As indicated by Blythe (2009), brand personality as a blend of all purchaser recognitions and convictions of the brand, yet it goes further than brand picture. Other than that, refer to Thakor and Kohli (1996), brand personality is built with two parts: brand demographics and brand attributes. Brand demographics were considered to incorporate components, for example, brand origin, age, gender and social class, while brand attributes were like the bunched by five measurements brand measurements characteristics as characterizes by Aaker (1997).

Figure 2.1: Framework of Brand Personality by Jennifer L. Aaker



**Source: Jennifer L. Aaker (1997)**

### **Dimensions of Brand Personality**

Regardless of the growing interest in brand personality concept, its measurement has been insufficient for a long time. The researchers had used either ad hoc scales or personality traits based on variety contexts and cultures to examine a brand's personality in contrast to measure its effect on consumers' behaviour. Thus, additional to the personality traits or scales are subjective as a result may include brand personality traits which are not relevant for their research.

### **Brand Sincerity**

Brand sincerity represents the brand openness, it also can be defined as how realistic the brand is. A sincere brand must present friendliness and easy going to them as well (Shen, 2014). Besides that, the results from Morschett et al. (2007) explain that sincerity personality



traits have a significant positive influence on store loyalty, which measured the intent to recommend that retail outlet. Thus, it summarizes that sincerity trait influences the most towards a buying intention. For example, Hallmark creates its own sincerity to allow consumers to have the perceived personality and influence their intention to purchase the brand (Beldona & Wysong, 2007). Sincerity which are down-to-earth, honest and wholesome its related could be Hallmark and Cola-Cola (Anvari & Irum, 2015).

### **Brand Excitement**

Brand excitement can be described as how daring and spirited the brand is. Its valiant characteristic must show unique, imaginative, trendy, up-to-date, cool, and contemporary to the products (Shen, 2014). For example, the brand Apple creates its uniqueness by adopting advanced technology and targeting young people markets. In addition, according to Harmancioglu et al. (2009), consumers' excitement is significantly associated to the impulse buying. This type of motivation is being caused by satisfying their self-esteem and self-actualization need towards new products

(Hausman, 2000). Also, Ozsomer and Lerzan (2007) discover that the personality trait excitement has a significant positive influence on the intention to purchase a brand. Another brand that are considered daring, spirited and up-to-date, excitement traits are Porsche (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009)

### **Brand Competence**

Brand competence specifies that the brand has competitive advantages for decision making, it should be reliable and successful. This will help markets increase the reputation and competition. Hence, the brand image should also be intelligent, confident, secure and technical, so that it will be useful and trustable (Shen, 2014). However, the results of Zentes et al. (2008) show that retail brand competence has significant influence on behavioral loyalty. This affects

the purchase likelihood. For supporter consumer, brand competence has been discovered as the predictor of positive brand attitude and purchase intention (Freling & Forbes, 2005). The brand that can be considered this dimension is IBM.

### **Brand Sophistication**

Brand sophistication described that the brand should be attractive, good-looking, glamorous and charming. Also, the brand is positioned as upper-level quality. One of the brand sophistication traits, 'Smooth' stands for stability of a brand. Normally it is positioned for female niche markets, because it is feminine (Shen, 2014). Brand sophistication is proved and has a significant positive influence on brand attitude and on consumers' behavioural intentions (Guse, 2011). The brand that have facet class and charming like Mercedes, Chanel and BMW (Anvari & Irum, 2015).

### **Brand Ruggedness**

Brand ruggedness shows the brands appeal to the wild and extroverted, also tough and rugged represent that the brand is strong and robust. Its characteristics are more masculine or man-oriented (Shen, 2014). For example, the brands such Levis and Nike considered as outdoorsy and tough (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Based on the results in Morschett et al. (2007), ruggedness has a significant influence on store loyalty. Its store brand loyalty is measured by the intent to recommend the retail outlet.

### **Purchase Intention**

To help managers in their orientation strategies and decision in the marketplace, purchase intention is one of the critical marketing concept. Purchase intention tells consumer interest to purchase a specific brand (Tariq et al., 2013). Purchase intention is the most

important issue in each industry to induce a positive sense among consumers and improve brand standing in the market. In fact, brand personality is very significant to increase purchase intention. The personality that discovering of the Halal brand can assist them present their products to different target group that can serve as a core competency for company.

### **The Relationship between Brand Personality and Purchase Intention**

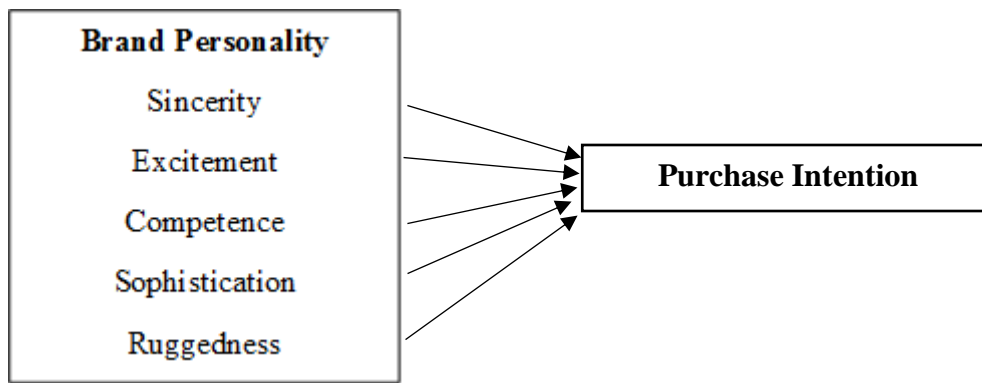
Past research demonstrates that a positive and solid brand identity can could bring about in positive item assessments. As indicated by Aaker (1991) states that an especially positive brand personality may be more ideal brand value than when they just give the product information. In addition, when respondents are definite to positive brand personality, they have a propensity a more prominent extent of strong brand associations and more noteworthy special brand associations (Freling and Forbes, 2005).

Besides, when typical implications are connected to brands, particular measurements of brand personality, for example, sophistication and excitement make to be decidedly identified with saw quality (Ramasehan and Tsao, 2005). Brand personality dimensions likewise could influence purchaser's self-discernments on appropriateness, mind, extroversion and reliability (Fennis et al., 20015). So that, brand identity has a tendency to be decidedly effect on builds purchase intention

### **Conceptual Framework**

Independent variables

Dependent variable



## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Selection of Halal Fast Food Restaurants**

This research focused on brand personality of fast food restaurant in Kuantan, Pahang. Since this research is about the halal fast food brand, restaurants that involves in this research obtained from the Halal Directory retrieved from Halal Malaysia Official Portal for the conformity of halal status.

### **Population and Sampling**

The sampling technique used in this research was the convenience sampling. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the determination of sample size was based on the population and the number of sample size selected in this research was 357 respondents. But only 311 completed questionnaire were received.

### **Data collection Technique**

In general, the measures employed in this study were acquired from previous researchers. The measurements used to tester five brand personality dimensions were adapted from the research An Empirical study of The Concept of Brand Personality: The Case of Restaurants (Yoon, 2004) and later modified to match in this s

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

No.	Variables	Frequency	Mean score	Ranking	Percentage
1	Sincerity	290	0.9666	1	96.7%
2	Excitement	236	0.7866	2	78.7%
3	Competence	209	0.6966	3	69.7%
4	Sophistication	156	0.52	5	52.0%
5	Ruggedness	160	0.5333	4	53.3%

Table 4.11: Ranking for the most important dimension of fast food restaurant brand

Based on the table 4.10, the brand personality has been ranked from the data analysis collected. It shows that the Sincerity dimension in the 1<sup>st</sup> rank present 96.7%, while the Excitement dimension in the 2<sup>nd</sup> place with 78.7%. Besides, dimension of Competence in the 3<sup>rd</sup> rank which collect 69.7%, following by Ruggedness for the 4<sup>th</sup> rank with 53.3%. The last dimension Sophistication indicates 52.0%. In this research, young consumers reveals that the Sincerity characteristics determined for the most important dimension for a fast food restaurant.

### Conclusion

A brand is made up of many parts, but personality is one of the main ingredients. Having a brand personality allows the restaurant to stand apart from the competition and can boost

name recognition. The brand and its personality creates an expectation for the dining experience and attracts customers who are looking for what the restaurant offer. The brand personality also becomes infused into everything on what we do. It will be reflected in the customer experience, in the food, in the ambiance, in the logo and tagline for the marketing messaging. The marketer should try to differentiate the brand personality of their brand with that of the competitors (Kelly Ellis, 2008).

As Aaker's brand personality scale there are five dimensions of brand personality such as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness, brand personality refers to personality traits of humans associated with a brand. Brand personality traits help the consumers to identify and differentiate the different brands available in the market.

In modern era, especially generation y consumers do not buy a particular brand not only to satisfy their basic physiological needs, social and safety needs but to satisfy their self-actualization and self-esteem needs also. They finally buy a brand only when the personality of that brand matches with their own personality. If they are satisfied with the brand after purchasing, they tend to be loyal with that particular brand and feel attached with the brand. So it is a challenge for the marketer to develop and create brand personality which is consistent with the personality of their target customers.

One of the issues that regularly arises is strategic management, it is a saying that strategic management is all about gaining and maintaining competitive advantage. In the term of brand personality, a sustainable competitive advantage gained from a marketing perspective. Achieving competitive advantage strengthens and positions a business better within the business environment. Branding and brand-based differentiation are important means for creating and sustaining competitive advantage (Aggarwal, 2004).

Developing a sustainable, competitive advantage requires customer loyalty by satisfy customer needs. This can be accomplished through branding. Brand personality, like human personality is both are build over a period of time. It refers to the outcome of all the consumer's experiences with the brand. In other words, the brands personality is the weight average of previous impressions. In consumers mind, these impressions merge to form an overall concept of what to expect from brand. Through brand personality, firms can achieve differentiation and competitive advantages depending on how strong is the personality created and also on who exactly is their target market. Understanding aspect of these brand personalities, will also help the brand manager in deciding the right decision for the broadcast of the brand.

Based on the Big Five Personality Traits, the five dimensions of brand personality are represented by Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness. Due to its increasing importance of brand personality, successful brands need to establish first their brand personality in order to create successful brand strategies.

### **Recommendation**

From the research findings, following recommendations can be given to the marketer to exploit the benefits of brand personality. As brand personality can help a company to communicate their brand more effectively to the consumers, the marketer should use brand personality traits to advertise their brand in the market. They should try to highlight and strengthen positive aspects of their products and eliminate the negative aspects of their products in order to get regular commitment with the consumers. Brand personality traits also can help the consumers to identify and differentiate the different brands available in the market.

In order to meet the changing needs of the consumers and to match the brand personality traits with the personality traits of the consumers, the marketer should update and make regular changes in their products and brand personality. Furthermore, marketer should be honest and

loyal towards their customers in providing good quality products to increase brand loyalty and brand commitment. They also should focus on the advertising and other promotional efforts to make the consumers aware about the availability of their brand in the market.

Sincerity contains 11 traits: down-to-earth, family-oriented, small-town, honest, sincere, real, wholesome, original, cheerful, sentimental and friendly. The sincerity factor indicates that the brand is considered to be an honest and real brand. The consumers trust the brand to provide them with standard quality products. Sincerity of a brand implies commitment from the brand to its consumers. Sincerity factor plays an important role in creating common committed (loyal) relationships between the brand and its user. This is not only because it makes the product attractive for new customers but also because it helps marketer retain the existing customers by engaging them in loyal relationship with brand. Awareness of brand personality enables marketers to design advertisement campaigns around the generic views towards the brand.

This study only addressed the personality opinions of users of the brand. Interesting findings can be found if comparisons are made between personality opinions of users vs. non-users of brands. The difference will be the gap to be covered by the brand to convert non-user into users. Also future study on relationship between brand personality and brand loyalty should be undertaken to gauge the tangible benefits of the tangible personality dimensions.

### **Implications**

For academics, this study is of value as one of the empirical comparative study brand personality measure and its well established alternative by Aaker. The findings present clear advantages of the more recent measure for branding research in the context of restaurants brands.

For marketing practitioners, this study demonstrates the understanding of consumer behaviour and their purchase intention especially among young generation. This study suggests that



Aaker's measure can be successfully adopted for use in the marketing practice. Besides, its application may improve the quality and efficiency of brand personality research in strategic management.

For the consumers, they get the knowledgeable about brand personality dimensions from the total set of personality items (42 traits by Aaker's scales respectively). This study give widen the understanding of the idea of brand personality and shed understanding into how brand personality works when buyers assess brands.

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