THE ROLE OF HALAL BRAND RELATIONSHIP QUALITY TOWARDS RELATIONAL, UTILITY VALUE AND HALAL BRAND RESONANCE

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ABSTRACT

Islamic marketing is an emerging field. It has a lot of potential to grow and to become a source of attention of companies. But there is a lack of attention of criteria of evaluation of Halal brands and factors which are significant in Halal brand resonance. So, it is worthwhile to investigate factors affecting Halal brand resonance with the mediation of Halal brand relationship quality. This study has been carried out through structured questionnaire by stratified sampling and cross-sectional data was collected from 410 Halal food consumers in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, twin cities of Pakistan. Theory of social exchange significantly explains concept of Halal brand resonance about choice of Halal food consumers. The study results confirm positive association between utility value, relational value and Halal brand resonance and mediation of Halal brand relationship quality. This study is limited to Halal food only. However, future researchers can conduct longitudinal study and cross-cultural comparison which can give better understanding of Halal brand consumers.

Keywords: Relational value, utility value, Halal brand resonance, Halal brand relationship quality

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumers are realizing importance of brands more than ever since it has become the part and parcel of daily life of modern consumers (Brown, 2016). Through concept of branding, consumers feel it easy to make decision for their consumption. Adding more, branding helps consumers in taking risk of choosing new products and assists consumers and brands to understand each other well (Holanda, 2017; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). It is a common experience that establishing brands and comprehension of consumers is also challenging (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). In the contemporary business milieu, field of branding is expanding and new horizons of branding are

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being explored by researchers. Islamic branding is relatively new field to be explored and focused by researchers. Islamic marketing is experiencing challenges in modern time. Islamic marketing is relatively new field. There are insufficient studies about Islamic marketing and it needs attention of researches for theoretical development (Rahman et al., 2018; Abdullah, 2017; Kadirov, 2014; Borzooei & Asgari, 2013).

For Muslim consumers, it is a major concern to follow Shariah principles while having Halal brands for their consumption. In this perspective, one of the challenges for brands is to eliminate the suspicions and doubts of consumers of Islamic brands. Moreover, experience of brand is significant because of the fact that consumers' emotional response and acknowledgement is rooted in their purchase behavior and relationship and lifestyle (Salehi et al., 2013). Jeon (2017) suggest that product is classified in three categories in terms of product class, functional, symbolic and aesthetic. For assessment of experience of product, customer values have important role like utility value (Chun et al., 2018; Sharizal & Norjaya, 2017; Parasuraman et al., 1985) and utility value helps in acquiring information more efficiently (Babin et al., 1994). It is also noted that relational value plays pivotal role in business cooperation and effective in establishing relationship (Kaur Sahi et al., 2017). Studies show that relational value and utility value have scarcely been studied in context of Islamic marketing.

Importance of Islamic branding is raising everyday due to the huge market as Muslims are second biggest population of the world. Another reason is the realization of the power of brands among Muslim consumer market (Temporal, 2011). Generally, there is a problem for consumers of Halal brands that there is insufficient literature about consumer's evaluation of Halal brands. In this way, the synchronization of knowledge of Islamic branding and relationship marketing is essential (Wilson & Liu, 2010). Investigation and addressing the problems of brand relationship is needed for success of companies involved in Islamic branding (Mustapha et al., 2019). Moreover, it is important to investigate preference of consumers of Halal brands because brand resonance helps in connecting consumers and brands and assists in building good relationship with each other (Shieh & Lai, 2017). In context of Islamic marketing, it is also important to note that investigation of consumer's psychological association with brand is worthwhile to measure because it helps in association of parties, consumers and the brand (Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2016). Hence, it is also significant to measure how a psychological bond develops between consumer and brand.

By 2050, Muslims would be the largest population of the world (Diamant, 2019). So, it is important to investigate how Muslim consumers prefer their brands and how they evaluate their brands. Halal brand resonance is significant phenomenon which has a lot of complications, and it is worthwhile to study because the success of relationship marketing of companies which are dealing with Halal branding can be found in this concept (Mustapha et al., 2019). Studies show that consumers are different in their respective cultural contexts. So is the case with Pakistani consumers' cultural context in terms of consumer market behavior (Anam et al., 2018). In a huge Muslim populated country Pakistan, a systematic effort is needed to investigate Halal brand resonance of Muslim consumers.

Pakistani Muslim population is traditionally inclined to adopt the lifestyle according to the Islamic principles. The consumers only rely on Halal foods. Presently, because of a lot of widespread news and social media awareness campaigns, many people have doubts on the foods being processed and manufactured, and served in the restaurants, according to Islamic principles and also being

hygienic. Such environment seriously affects the consumers' trust on Halal brands and their customer care strategy. The worst in this regard emerged as the result of many scams on the mainstream media about Halal food being distributed and served by violating Sharia compliance and ignoring hygienic rules and regulations. Such news created bad image about food industry and compelled the consumers to be more cautious and conscious about Islamic branding as it can help to revive their understanding about the issue. One of the mainstream media groups, broadcasted a horrific report about the mafias spreading dead animals' meat and Haram meat in different cities of Punjab. This situation gave a serious shock to the general public and especially those who are fond of eating at restaurants. Moreover, these developments helped to create bad impression about numbers of food brands in particular and food industry in general. In this way, it leads to widen the trust gap between brands and consumers. Trust gap and bad image made consumers to think about switching of their respective brands. Islamabad and Rawalpindi are the twin cities and the consumers belong to all parts of Pakistan with different cultural backgrounds, customs and norms. So, a study on these two cities would yield considerably valuable results because it would reflect the overall consumer behaviour of whole Pakistani market.

To understand consumer behavior of Halal food consumer, concept of Halal brand resonance is also important. The concept of brand resonance will be explained in light of the theory of social exchange (Homan, 1961). Social Exchange Theory (SET) presented by Homans (1961) is widely applied in the field of Marketing. SET well explains phenomenon of framework of a study. It explains why certain behavior is repeated by consumers, as brand resonance in our context. Generally, there is a trust gap between consumer and brand about providing "Halal" and Shariah compliant product. So, in this way, the brand that bridges the gap by providing consistent quality would be able to capture brand loyalty among consumers. Moreover, customer brand relationship concept is built on the principles of mutual exchange of benefit. The SET can well explain this phenomenon. SET is also significant to understand the concept of customer brand relationship and its relationship with brand resonance in our context.

This study works on three objectives. First objective is to investigate the relationship of utility and relational value towards Halal brand relationship quality. A second objective is to investigate the association between Halal brand relationship quality and Halal brand resonance. Third, to investigate the mediation of Halal brand relationship quality between relational, utility value and Halal brand resonance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. *Conceptualization of Islamic branding*

Muslims follow Quran and Sunnah for guidance (Beekan & Badawi, 2005) and it also applies on their market related tendencies and behaviours. There are several definitions of Islamic branding. Firstly, a brand is designed in accordance with Shariah principles by following all codes of conduct and this is applied mostly in context of cosmetics and food (Alserhan, 2010a; Alserhan, 2010b). Secondly, a Halal brand originates from a Muslim dominant country like United Arab Emirates. Thirdly, some brands originate from non-Muslim country and target is Muslim consumer market, but factor of "Halal" is considered before shipping it to Muslim market (Jumani & Siddiqui, 2012). Recently, Islamic branding is on a rise due to several reasons, like fast growth of Muslim

population in the world which indicates huge demand of Halal products (Diamant, 2019). Secondly, the demand has increased, and Muslim consumers are conscious about choosing Halal products. Thirdly, Muslim consumers feel that there must be Halal brands that could serve the demand of large Muslim population (Temporal, 2011). For Muslims, being Halal is not limited to brand element only but it encompasses the whole lifestyle by providing the complete set of a comprehensive belief system (Wilson & Liu, 2010). These all reasons which make Islamic branding relevant for modern Muslim consumers even more and brands are really focused on meeting the growing needs of Muslim consumers.

2.2. *Customer brand relationship in Halal context*

As human relationship exists, relationship between consumers and brand is known as customer brand relationship (Sharizal & Norjaya, 2017). Marketing has witnessed significant shift and it has changed from transactional marketing to relationship marketing and it shows importance of relationship marketing (Sheth & Pervatiyar, 1995). This changed focus has been aimed at to develop and sustain customer brand relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). So, in this perspective, different researchers have focused much on the field of relationship marketing and different dimensions of customer brand relationship have been explored like brand love (Ahuvia, 2005), brand commitment (Sung & Choi, 2010) and brand attachment (Belaid & Behi, 2011). So, customer brand relationship is not a unidimensional but a multidimensional concept (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014).

Islam guides its followers about establishing their relationship with customers. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) teaches Muslims about customer relationship. He (P.B.U.H) says "the seller and the buyer have the right to keep or return the good as long as they have not parted; and if both the parties spoke the truth and described the defects and qualities [of the goods]; then they would be blessed in their transaction, if they told lies or hid something, then blessing of transaction would be lost" [Bukhari]. So, Islam clearly guides Muslims that there must be clarity in dealing with customer while maintaining dignity and integrity of relationship. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) repeatedly guides Muslims about fulfilling their promises. Islamic business philosophy stresses for clarity, honesty and transparency in terms of buyer and seller relationship. Prophet Muhammad's (P.B.U.H) saying that "the one who deceives is not one of us" shows how Islam is serious about trust factor in trade. Due to giving importance to trade and fair qualities, Prophet (P.B.U.H) said "the good trader will be with martyrs and with whom who speak the truth, on the Day of Judgment." It speaks about the volume of giving pivotal role to good traders. Islam urges traders for fair dealing, keeping promise and speaking truth with customers. Islam's guidance about trade and the customer's relationship is universal and it helps its followers to maintain their relationship with customers in better way. In a nutshell, Islam and the Prophet (P.B.U.H) provide clear guidance about fulfilling promises to customers so that customer relationship should be strengthened and energized.

2.3. *Utility value*

In marketing research, value is considered as important concept (Gallarza et al., 2015). In business, companies create value for customer and get profit in return (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016). Utility value is resulting from some type of conscious pursuit of an intended consequence (Babin et al., 1994). Performance of the product increases with increase of utilization of the product (Chun et al.,

2018). Utility value is categorized as task or functional oriented (Lim & Ang, 2008; Babin et al., 1994). Utility value is consisted of quality, convenience and price (Sharizal & Norjaya, 2017; Seiders et al., 2007). Utility value has an impact on brand relationship quality (Su et al., 2016). There is an association between utility value and brand relationship quality. On the other hand, Islamic service quality is based upon principles of Shariah and its values (Diniswara, 2017; Hidayat et al., 2015). Halal brands must convey trustworthy products of good quality to their customers while following Halal principles. Halal brands also offer better service quality, performance and it is not a different concept from traditional marketing concept because providing quality product conveniently and at affordable price is to satisfy needs and wants of consumers of Halal brands. It is noted that there is an effect of functional benefits on brand relationship quality (Hsu & Liou, 2017). Moreover, there is a positive impact of service quality on relationship quality (Su et al., 2015). So, we hypothesize as:

H1: There is positive relationship between utility value and Halal brand relationship quality.

2.4. Relational value

Based on the cost and benefit analysis, relational value is known as total evaluation of relationship (Blocker et al., 2011). There are multiple factors in involving brands with business like location, reputation of partner, experience, product and market knowledge, and innovativeness (Skarmeas et al., 2016; Lindgreen et al., 2012). Relational value is consisted of second order construct with trust, bonding, empathy and mutual dependence (Sharizal & Norjaya, 2017; Yau et al., 2000). Because of many reasons like unethical practices of brands, brand trust has become significant issue (Portal et al., 2019). Brand trust is important factor in establishing and evaluation of customer brand relationship (Alam & Yasin, 2010). So, relational value has got centre of attention in measuring and mapping customer brand relationship.

There is scarcity of studies about relational values of Halal brands. So, in context of Islamic branding, brand must focus on Shariah principle for creation of Islamic relational value (Peranginangin & Kusumawardhani, 2016). In Halal brands, relational value is created through creation of Shariah value and conveying it to consumers of Halal brands that brands are consistently trying to provide their desirable products. To overcome the trust deficit, brand must strive for it and Halal brand trust is recently introduced by Ali et al (2018). Along with brand trust, bonding with consumers is possible when Halal brands make it possible to follow the Shariah principles to design and manufacture the products. There is little research on the bonding of Halal brands because Muslims reject those brands that violate Shariah principles (Wilson & Liu, 2011). Bonding has effect on brand relationship quality (Huang et al., 2014). Moreover, brand trust has the positive association with brand loyalty (El Naggar & Bendary, 2017). So, we hypothesize as:

H2: There is a positive relationship between relational value and Halal brand relationship quality.

2.5. Halal brand resonance

According to Keller (2003, 1993), "brand resonance refers to nature of the relationship that customers have with brands and the extent to which they feel they are 'in sync' with brands". The high level of loyalty and psychological association exists between brand and customers in brand

resonance. According to Keller (2013), brand resonance "in terms of intensity, or the depth of psychological bond that customers have with the brand, as well as level of activity endangered by this loyalty". Firms that succeed in creating brand resonance, can cultivate a lot of benefits from this relationship with customers (Keller, 2001). Hence, brand resonance has a lot of importance in relationship and customer brand relationship so; brand should give importance to the concept of brand resonance and to craft its strategy wisely.

In the context of Muslim consideration and Halal brand, customer-based brand resonance is outcome of preference of one brand over another because of the fact that it has Halal certification (Butt et al., 2017). While making decision about Halal brand, Muslims considers "Halal factor" important and it is the part of their set of considerations (Butt et al., 2017). It is significant to know that brand's attitudinal attachment is linked with fundamental belief and principle of customer (Bukhari et al., 2020). Active consumer engagement is also helpful in capturing better brand loyalty. Islamic brands can create better and fine characteristics of Halal produce brand loyalty (Polas et al., 2018).

From the consumer perspective, utility of product increases with utilization of the product that leads to better performance of it (Chun et al., 2018). In a recent study, it is established that there is an impact of product and service quality on brand loyalty (Khan et al., 2016). It is evident that there is an impact of utility value on brand loyalty and consumers do consider utility value of brand for long term association of the brands. So, utility value has deep connection with brand loyalty as one of the dimension of brand resonance.

Following the Shariah principles, Halal brands are more appealing among Muslim consumers than their competitors. It is noted that perception and identity lead to brand loyalty (Fatema et al., 2013) and this is true for Halal brands as well. Moreover, service quality has more impact on brand loyalty (Hemsley-Brown & Alnawas, 2016). Furthermore, it is established that there is an effect of product and service quality on brand loyalty. On the grounds of traditional marketing support, the study infers that:

H3: Utility value affects Halal brand resonance.

Relational marketing has been significant in business relationship. Similarly, in this modern era, relational value is known as a source of cementing relationship in business cooperation and plays pivotal role in durable relationship (Kaur Sahi et al., 2017). In perspective of creation of relational value in Islamic brands, brand must build relation in accordance with Shariah principles (Peranginangin & Kusumawardhani, 2018). It is noted that brand trust is created with repeated usage of brands, and it leads to brand loyalty. Consumers who perceive that they are cared for and their expectations are relatively more than other competing brand, there will be a chance that they will be more satisfied and loyal to their particular brands (Rust et al., 2004; Vogel et al., 2008). It is noted that brand trust leads to brand loyalty (El-Naggar & Bendary, 2017). It is proved that brand trust is effective in brand loyalty (Mishra & Kesharwani, 2016). So, like traditional marketing empirical support, this study proposes that there is relationship between relational value and Halal brand resonance. So, this study infers that:

H4: Relational value affects Halal brand resonance.

2.6. Brand relationship quality

Brand relationship quality is defined as "customer-based indicator of the strength and depth of person-brand relationship which reflects intensity and viability of the enduring association between customer and a brand" (Fournier, 1998). Fournier came up with BRQ hierarchical relationship model where BRQ is result of satisfaction of consumers and it paves the way for brands to get the desired customer behaviour (Lou & Kou, 2017). Customer brand relationship is rooted in brand relationship and it is a rich concept because it explains better and durable customer brand relationship (Kim et al., 2014). At first, Fournier (1998) explained the concept of brand relationship quality which consisted of six dimensions (love & passion, self-connection, interdependence, commitment, intimacy, brand partnership quality).

Elements of brand relationship quality are interlinked with each other, and studies suggest that there is a positive impact of brand relationship quality on brand resonance (Hashim & Yasin, 2012; Ou et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2011; Chung & Shin, 2010). So, the study hypothesizes as

H5: there is positive relationship between brand relationship quality and Halal brand resonance.

Islam emphasizes on better relationship among communities. Allah SWT guides in Quran "make better relationship with each other" [Quran, 8: 1]. This ayah is relevant about fostering relationship and hints at importance of relationship which leads to address this important subject. Prophet (P.B.U.H) also stressed on fair trade and avoidance of deception to customers so that there must be environment of trust created in market.

In relationship marketing, concept of relationship quality is important and customer brand relationship serves the role of mediation between relationship activities and its end results (Roberts et al., 2003; Hadwich, 2003). In context of Halal phenomenon, brand relationship quality would be termed as "brand that offers conventional performance as well as considered Halal attributes that are acceptable to Muslim consumers under Shariah" (Ali et al., 2017). It is noted that perceived quality has effect on brand loyalty (Jeon & Roo, 2021). Relationship quality plays its role of mediation effectively in retail services (Ou et al., 2011). Moreover, relationship quality is seen as effective mediator between financial sector and antecedents of customer brand relationship (Rajaobelina & Bergeron, 2009). Mediation role of self-brand connection is noted between advertising effectiveness and brand loyalty in Islamic banking sector (Nemati et al., 2018). Mediation role of relationship quality is significant between predictor and outcome variable (Akrout & Nagy, 2018). Seeing all empirical evidences, it is noted that brand relationship quality can play its role as mediator.

H6a: Halal brand relationship quality mediates between utility value, and Halal brand resonance

H6b: Halal brand relationship quality mediates between relational value, and Halal brand resonance

Figure 1: Proposed Model
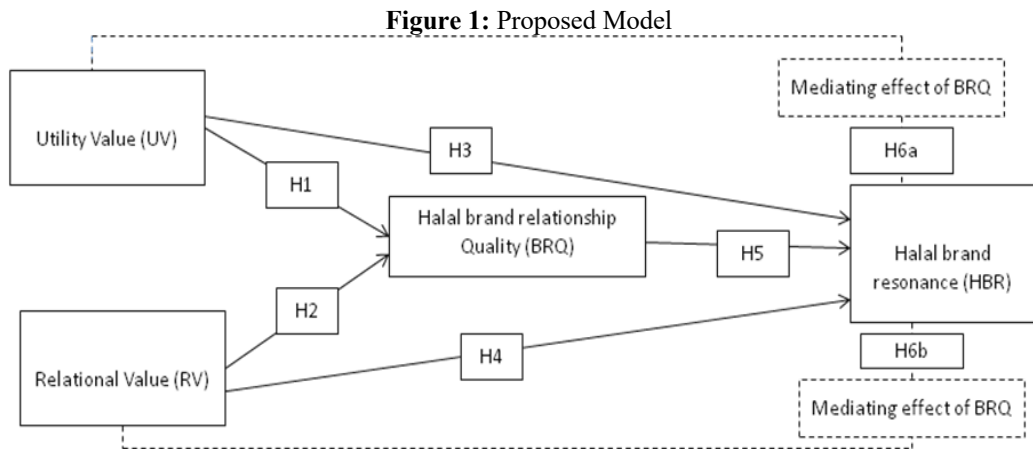
3.   METHODOLOGY

Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from consumers of Halal brands. There were two sections of questionnaire in which first section comprised gender, age, income, educational qualification, Halal preferred brands and how long consumers are using them. Second section comprised elements for measurement of Halal brand resonance, Halal brand relationship quality, utility value, and relational value. The measurement of "Halal brand resonance" comprised 14 items, adopted from (Keller, 2001; Aaker, 1995; Kim et al., 2014). "Halal brand relationship quality" consisted of 10 items and adopted from study of (Kim et al., 2014). "Utility value" comprised 6 items and adopted from work of (Babin et al., 1994). "Relational value" was measured from 6 items and adopted from (Miguel et al., 2014). The questionnaire was distributed among Halal brand consumers in Rawalpindi/Islamabad. In the light of suggestions of Sekaran (2003), stratified random sampling was taken up for study because it is pertinent in identification of sub groups (rural and urban) and diversity and richness of data is achieved. Resultantly, questionnaire was distributed among 450 consumers in twin cities of Pakistan. In light of Krejice and Morgan (1970), there must be minimum 384 respondents while seeing population above the 600,000. Out of 450 samples, 410 responses received, hence response rate was 91.11 %. Survey was designed in English language and responses were required from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".

Appendix 1 shows the profile of respondents in which there were 230 males (56.09 %), 180 females (43.9%). 195 (47.56%) respondents were from age group of 20-30 years, 180 (43.9%) respondents were from the range of 31-40 age groups. From age group of 41-50 there are 32 (7.81%) respondents. Above 50 years there are only 3 (0.93%) respondents. Among single respondents there are 175 (42.68%). Married respondents were 210 (51.22 %) and divorced were 25 (6.1 %). In terms of educational qualifications, there were 203 (49.51%) bachelors, 132 (32.2 %) masters, 50 (12.2 %) M.Phil. 25 (6.1%) Ph.D. In respect of occupation, 125 (30.49 %) were student, 136 (31.17 %) were business owners, company employees 100 (24.39 %), government employees 45 (10.98 %), others were 4 (0.97 %).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Measurement model assessment

By using discriminant and convergent validity, measurement model is applied for analysis. There were four constructs involved in the study. For assessment of convergent validity, the values of composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and factor loading were used as shown in Table 2. The overall values of (CR) and (AVE) of four constructs exceeds the threshold of 0.7 and 0.5. Each item's factor is above the 0.7 threshold as values of average variance extracted and composite reliability are more than required values or extracted values. Cross and Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) were used for assessment of discriminant validity. Except the values of outer loading of all indicators exceeds cross loading of construct. In the same way, HTMT ratio was analyzed through HTMT 0.90 cut off value. Through results of all values as shown in Table 3, it is evident that all HTMT values of constructs are less than 0.90. Hence, results of each construct's discriminant validity are believed to be satisfactory.

Table 1: Factor Loadings, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	AVE	CR
Utility value	UV1	0.769		
	UV2	0.741		
	UV3	0.681		
	UV4	0.788	0.588	0.849
	UV5	0.583		
	UV6	0.77		
	UV7	0.733		
Relational Value	RV1	0.783		
	RV2	0.875		
	RV3	0.867	0.622	0.906
	RV4	0.855		
	RV5	0.795		
	RV6	0.783		
Halal Brand relationship Quality	HBRQ1	0.744		
	HBRQ2	0.733		
	HBRQ3	0.754		
	HBRQ4	0.778		
	HBRQ5	0.76	0.570	0.913
	HBRQ9	0.679		
	HBRQ10	0.674		
	HBRQ11	0.664		
	HBRQ12	0.708		
	HBRQ14	0.651		
	HBR1	0.763		
	HBR2	0.692		
	HBR4	0.736		
	HBR5	0.708		

	HBR6	0.786	
	HBR7	0.704	
	HBR8	0.595	
	HBR10	0.619	0.565	0.934
Halal Brand Resonance	HBR11	0.756	
	HBR12	0.739	
	HBR13	0.678	
	HBR14	0.743	
	HBR15	0.661	

Table 2: Discriminate Validity

Hetero-trait Mono-trait ratio	Brand relationship quality	Halal Brand resonance	Relational value	Utility value
Brand relationship quality				
Halal brand resonance	0.862			
Relational value	0.843	0.835		
Utility value	0.800	0.819	0.481	-

For structural model assessment, values and dimensions of beta coefficients and relevant t-statistics with measures of R^2 for endogenous construct have been used. Bootstrapping statistical technique, comprising of 410 samples was used to measure path coefficients and their relative significance. As shown in Table 3, the values calculated for R^2 for endogenous variables brand relationship quality and halal brand resonance are 0.730 and 0.624 respectively. It is evident from results that utility value (B=0.155, p<0.003), relational value (B=0.249, p<0.000), and brand relationship quality (B=0.790, p<0.000) shows positive effect on Halal brand resonance. Moreover, it is showing that mediation of brand relationship quality is taking place.

Table 3: Structural Model Assessment

Relationship	Beta	T-value	P-value	Status
H1 : UV-> BRQ	0.155	2.782	0.003	Accepted
H2: RV -> BRQ	0.249	4.521	0.000	Accepted
H3 : UV -> HBR	0.126	2.268	0.009	Accepted
H4 : RV -> HBR	0.233	4.803	0.000	Accepted
H5: BRQ -> HBR	0.790	20.207	0.000	Accepted
H6a: UV-> BRQ -> HBR	0.269	2.572	0.010	Accepted
H6a : RV-> BRQ -> HBR	0.202	4.190	0.000	Accepted

5.   DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis of utility value has positive relationship with brand relationship quality. This is consistent with the findings of Hsu and Liou (2017). It shows that Muslim consumers consider product's performance important for their like and passion of the Halal brand. It also shows that those Halal brands that are consistent in delivering their promised satisfaction, the consumers tend to develop relationship with them. It is also evident that Pakistani consumers also rely upon quality of product, price and convenience of the product for their association with their particular brands. Furthermore, Pakistani consumers are not limited to Halal factor only but they also consider utility

of product through the prism of quality, price and convenience of the product. These findings are also cementing a social exchange theory explanation which narrates that benefit of the relationship is based upon benefits. SET also explains that durable relationship is based upon profitable exchange and in this way upon receiving performance of the brand consumers develops loyalty with that particular brand.

Second hypothesis confirmed that there is a positive relationship between relational value and Halal brand relationship quality. This result is consistent with the findings of (El Naggar & Bendary, 2017). It describes that if Halal brand establishes brand trust, bonding or mutual dependency, it helps Halal brand to build brand relationship with its consumers. It is evident from results that consumer give importance to relational value and consider it significant for brand relationship quality. It shows that Pakistani consumers are sensitive about brand trust and if brand really works on establishing building trust with consumers through their consistent performance and delivering their promised quality and brand trust builds over period of time then it helps for long term association of the brand. Strengthening the brand trust will yield more brand relationship quality of the brand consumers and this is aligned with assumption of the theory of social exchange.

Third Hypothesis proved that utility value affects Halal brand resonance. In previous studies it is confirmed that performance of the brand plays an important role in loyalty of brand (Khan et al., 2016). Functional benefits of the brand are pivotal factors for brand loyalty and satisfaction of brand. The result of the study is consistent with findings of (Hemsley-Brown & Alnawas, 2016). Results reveals that Pakistani halal food consumers develop brand resonance with those particular brands which provides them consistent quality. So, this finding is consistent with the theory of social exchange which explains desirable benefits will lead to repeatable actions (association). So, in this way, this finding is aligned with assumption of the theory of social exchange.

Fourth hypothesis confirmed that relational value affects Halal brand resonance. Results showed that consumers of Halal brands consider relational value necessary for Halal brand resonance. In context of Pakistani consumer market, they are devoid of taking risk and consider relationship important for purchase. They give importance to tried and tasted products. Once brand trust is developed, they give value to their brand. In this way, Halal brand relationship successfully mediates between relational value and Halal brand resonance and this is consistent with findings of (Akrout & Nagy, 2018).

In the light of social exchange theory and in respect of Halal brand resonance, this study contributed in the field of Islamic marketing by investigating "Halal brand resonance" in Muslim dominant market, Pakistan. "Halal brand resonance" is also a term coined by authors which is also contribution of the study. The study is carried out in Halal food industry of Pakistan which is sixth most populous country and the second largest Muslim country in the world (Statistics, 2017). Brand resonance of Halal brands was not investigated in the past and the study came up with the conclusion that there is a positive and strong effect of relational value and utility values on Halal brand resonance.

Fifth hypothesis confirms that there is a positive relationship between Halal brand relationship quality and Halal brand resonance and this confirmed the study of Huang et al., (2014) and Hashim and Yasin (2012). It also describes that whenever consumers get consistent performance from brands then it leads to long term relationship with that particular brand. Secondly, it also describes

that Pakistani consumer also value self-connection for brand resonance. By the time with usage of product it develops love for that particular brand and providing desirable brand commitment yields brand associations which is aligned with the theory of social exchange.

Sixth hypothesis confirmed that Halal brand relationship quality mediates between utility and relational values and Halal brand resonance. Mediation between utility values is confirmed with results of the study of Sharizal and Norjaya (2017). Results demonstrate that consumers of Halal brand value functional benefits build intimacy that leads to satisfaction of consumers. Moreover, psychological bridge is necessary for active engagement and it is more important than consumption (Burgess & Spinks, 2014). So, it is noted that Pakistani consumers are aware of the benefits of utility value of the brand that helps them to build satisfaction which leads to the subsequent intimacy with the brand which is necessary for long term association of the brands. So, in this way, brand intimacy leads to brand resonance. Findings suggest that Pakistani Halal food consumers prefer brand intimacy for long term relationship with particular brands which is consistent with the theory of social exchange.

Through results, it is also known that brand relationship quality successfully mediates between utility value, relational value and Halal brand resonance and this is aligned with the study of (Xie et al., 2017) in which BRQ successfully mediates. Studies suggest that mediator transmits the impact of independent variable on dependent variable (Aguinis et al., 2016; Baron & Kenny, 1986). In the perspective of study, brand relationship quality showed complete mediation. Halal brand consumers desired to be loyal customers after getting consistent quality performance, better relationship values delivered by brand itself. Moreover, results indicate commitment, trust and performance also deliver their best results in the form of loyalty of brand. It is also explained that better customer brand relationship breeds brand loyalty of customer which produces profit for the brand. In addition to it, Social Exchange Theory well explained customer brand relationship by expounding the fact that brand and customers measure both sides and also evaluate the level of profitability for them and they tend to take risks and profitability after careful analysis. Case of mediation of utility and relational value is also supported by previous studies of Sharizal and Norjaya (2017), Akrout and Naggy (2018).

6.   CONCLUSION

The study has produced various findings which are: A) It contributed much in the measurement of Halal brand resonance through the impact of utility and relational value. B) Brand relationship quality is effectively playing its part for brand resonance. So, in this regard, role of trust is important for brand resonance. C) For trust building measures, Pakistani government can come up with the idea of third-party Halal certification which, presently, is either non-existent or in slow pace. It will help in trust building of Pakistani consumers which is otherwise low due to various market developments. There is common perception among Pakistani Halal food consumers that everything available to them is Halal and they can trust on those brands. So, in this regard awareness campaign is needed so that consumers could actually know more authentic study of their brand. Brand managers should consider this factor and try to differentiate their brand among all brands. Brand managers can also educate their consumers how their brand can be best choice when they can have doubt about other Halal food brands in the market. In this way, this study has not only the business implications but has better results for society. On the other hand, there are some

limitations in this regard. Firstly, Halal brand resonance can also be measured through other factors like religious factor and effect of price on loyalty of Halal brand customer. Secondly, the study was carried out in Muslim dominant country, but future studies can be executed in Muslim minority countries like Malaysia and secular Muslim country like Turkey. The cross comparison of the studies could/would develop better understanding about Halal brand consumers. Thirdly, the study was conducted in the food sector. Other sectors can also be investigated and explored like Halal cosmetics where there is a need of research to explore loyalty of Halal brand consumers.

Brand managers can take benefit of this study to lay out their plans to capture loyalty by designing effective strategies of communication to Halal brand customers. Brand managers can/should chalk out Halal brand development programmes to better educate the consumers and academia about Halal brands. Moreover, brand managers should focus on brand quality and brand commitment to its consumers and design their policy accordingly. Islamic marketing is relatively new but a comprehensive field and Halal brand resonance still needs more investigation.

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APPENDIX 1

Respondent profile

Details		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	230	56.09
	Female	180	43.9
Age (Years)	20-30	195	47.56
	31-40	180	43.9
	41-50	32	7.81
	Above 50 years	3	0.93
Marital status	Single	175	42.68
	Married	210	51.22
	Divorced	25	6.1
Educational qualification	Bachelors	203	49.51
	Masters	132	32.2
	M.Phil.	50	12.2
	Ph.D.	25	6.1
Occupation	Student	125	30.49
	Business owner	136	33.17
	Company employee	100	24.39
	Government employee	45	10.98
	Others	4	0.97
What Halal food do you usually consume?			
Milk and Dairy products		108	26.34
Meat (Bovine and chicken)		250	60.97
Convenience products (Biscuits, snacks, cold drink)		50	12.19
Others		2	0.5
Willing to pay for more Halal food?			
1 % to 3 %		150	36.6
4 % to 5 %		95	23.17
6 % to 8 %		55	13.42
9 % to 10 %		48	11.7
11 % to 15 %		35	8.53
More than 15 %		27	6.58
How often do you consume Halal food?			
Daily		300	73.17
Once to three times a week		50	12.2
Once to three times in a month		40	9.76
Less than once in a month		20	4.87
How much do you usually spend per month on Halal food?			
Less than 5000 PKR (31 USD)		30	7.31
5000 PKR (31 USD) TO 10000PKR (62 USD)		250	60.98
10000 PKR (62 USD) TO 20,000 PKR (124 USD)		100	24.39
20,000 PKR (124 USD) TO 30,000 PKR (241 USD)		20	4.88
More than 30,000 PKR (more than 241 USD)		10	2.44