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# BRAND PERSONALITY FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF AAKER'S MODEL<sup>1</sup>

Muhammad Ahmed  
Muhammad Tahir Jan  
Arif Hassan

## Abstract

*Current challenges reflect intense competition in the market and low switching cost of customers. For any brand to be appealing and ultimately profitable, it necessitates differentiation in comparison with other brands. Marketers engage in various differentiation techniques such as Aaker's brand personality model. Aaker's model contains five dimensions (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness) along with 42 underlying aspects. Brand personality helps in developing customer-brand relationship, brand image, and brand commitment. Extensive research has been done based on the above model yet several scholars have criticised it based on issues such as generalizability across countries and cultures. Religion being an important part of culture has also been ignored in the brand personality domain. This research proposes an Islamic brand personality model, which not only looks into the dimensions, but also examines the underlying aspects based on the Qur'an, hadith and the scholarly work of both traditional and modern Muslim scholars. This paper found that the Islamic brand personality model contains two new dimensions, namely trustworthiness and justice in addition to the existing dimensions. This model can benefit any Islamic brand (Islamic bank, Islamic Insurance company etc.) to differentiate itself from others, especially from conventional brands in order to develop a potentially larger Muslim consumer market.*

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**Keywords:** Islamic, Brand personality, Aaker's brand personality model, Malaysia

## 1. Introduction

Organizations from both manufacturing and service industries, generally strive for high profits in order to grow and sustain in the competitive market. Feurer and Chaharbaghi presume that competition is created when several organizations or brands struggle to fulfill the similar needs of customers, providing them with multiple alternatives.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, the requisite for a brand to survive and be sustainable is the demand of its product or service. For the purpose of establishing a higher demand, marketers have been using various strategic techniques, and differentiation is one of them.<sup>3</sup>

Differentiation is "the extent to which the brand is seen as different, unique, or distinct".<sup>4</sup> Due to the growing competition, marketers are trying hard to differentiate their product from other brands. The absence of differentiation makes all products look similar and customers' buying decisions are based solely on price which may lead to less commitment and loyalty towards a specific brand.<sup>5</sup> Murray<sup>6</sup> maintains that the product differentiation strategy works only when customers are more concerned about the product attributes rather than price. However, there must be significant differences in terms of how they offer the product, its packaging and the way they serve it to the customers.

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<sup>2</sup> R. Feurer and K. Chaharbaghi, "Defining Competitiveness," *Management Decision* 32, no. 2 (1994): 49-58, doi:10.1108/00251749410054819.

<sup>3</sup> W. R. Smith, "Product Differentiation and Market Segmentation as Alternative Marketing Strategies," *The Journal of Marketing* 21, no. 1 (1956): 3-8.

<sup>4</sup> V. Kumar and D. Shah, *Handbook of Research on Customer Equity in Marketing* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2015), 367.

<sup>5</sup> D. A. Aaker, *Brand Portfolio Strategy: Creating Relevance, Differentiation, Energy, Leverage, and Clarity* (New York: Free Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> A. I. Murray, "A Contingency View of Porter's "Generic Strategies," *Academy of Management Review* 13, no. 3 (1988): 390-400, doi: 10.5465/amr.1988.4306951.

One of the tools that help marketers create product or service differentiation is known as brand personality.<sup>7</sup> Brand personality is defined as “the set of human characteristics associated with the brand”.<sup>8</sup> As per the definition, it implies that the correlation between human traits (customer personality) and brand or product attributes (brand personality) is developed. It is believed that when the personality of a customer matches with the personality of a brand, a relationship is formed,<sup>9</sup> commonly known as customer-brand relationship. Importantly, the human traits are linked to the brand attributes that are essentially required to generate differentiation among the brands. The notion of differentiation applies to both people and brands. Caprara, Barbaranelli, and Guido<sup>10</sup> explain that people differ from each other based on the unique characteristics they possess. Similarly, brands can also be distinguished from other brands based on the distinct attributes that they hold.

As mentioned earlier, Aaker<sup>11</sup> defined, and developed a model involving, brand personality. This model comprises five major dimensions i.e. sincerity, competence, excitement, sophistication and ruggedness. The five major dimensions further constitute forty two underlying items altogether. Aaker's brand personality model has provided new research avenues to the academic world. Several studies<sup>12</sup> have been conducted based on Aaker's model across countries.

A considerable amount of research has been conducted based on Aaker's brand personality model, although the model has been criticized from several perspectives. A primary issue involves the

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<sup>7</sup> B. J. Thomas and P. Sekar, “Measurement and Validity of Jennifer Aaker's Brand Personality Scale for Colgate brand,” *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers* 33, no. 3 (2008): 49-62.

<sup>8</sup> J. L. Aaker, “Dimensions of Brand Personality,” *Journal of Marketing Research* 34, no. 3 (1997): 347-356.

<sup>9</sup> S. Ganesan, “Determinants of Long-term Orientation in Buyer-seller Relationships,” *The Journal of Marketing* (1994): 1-19.

<sup>10</sup> G. V. Caprara, C. Barbaranelli and G. Guido, “Brand Personality: How to Make the Metaphor Fit?” *Journal of Economic Psychology* 22, no. 3 (2001): 377-395.

<sup>11</sup> Aaker, “Dimensions of brand personality . . .

<sup>12</sup> Y. Sung and S.F. Tinkham “Brand Personality Structures in the United States and Korea: Common and Culture-specific Factors,” *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 15, no. 4 (2005): 334-350, doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1504\\_8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1504_8)

lack of generalizability.<sup>13</sup> Aaker<sup>14</sup> initially highlighted this problem as one of the limitations. Subsequent brand personality research conducted in different cultures and countries either found new dimensions or highlighted weak relationship of existing dimensions. Hence, it provides the evidence that Aaker's model is not generalizable across other populations. Therefore, first, there is a need to investigate this model in other countries where very few studies have been reported. Second, majority research on brand personality has been conducted in the individualistic cultures rather than collectivist cultures. Third, religion (e.g. Islam) being an important element of a culture has been understudied. This conceptual paper fills the above gaps by proposing an Islamic brand personality model in the collectivist culture of Malaysia. Moreover, the proposed Islamic brand personality model can be tested in the context of Islamic brands, SMEs or any business associated with Muslims. This model can help Islamic brands and businesses create differentiation, improve marketing effectiveness and gain deep understanding of the Muslim consumer market.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Human and Brand Personalities Defined

Personality has been previously studied at length in the field of psychology. It is defined as "the sum total of ways in which an individual reacts and interact with others".<sup>15</sup> There are many definitions given by different scholars,<sup>16</sup> however, this research focuses on the characteristics of human personality. In relation to the characteristics, a human personality has been defined as "the systematic description of traits".<sup>17</sup> Traits refer to "the fairly

<sup>13</sup> H. J. Lee and M. S. Kang, "The Effect of Brand Personality on Brand Relationship, Attitude and Purchase Intention with A Focus on Brand Community," *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal* 17, no. 2 (2013): 85-98.

<sup>14</sup> Aaker, "Dimensions of brand personality . . .

<sup>15</sup> Stephen P. Robbins, *Organizational Behavior*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. (New Dehli: Prentice-Hall of India, 2007), 106.

<sup>16</sup> Robbins, *Organizational Behavior* . . .

<sup>17</sup> R. R. McCrae and P. T. Costa, "Validation of the Five-factor Model of Personality across Instruments and Observers," *Journal of Personality and Social*



consistent characteristics a person exhibits".<sup>18</sup> These are "relatively enduring styles of thinking, feeling, and acting".<sup>19</sup> It implies that a human personality contains certain attributes or characteristics that may be distinct (making him/her different from others) or somewhat similar to other people.

Brand, on the other hand, reflects "a name, term, sign, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's goods or services as distinct from those of other sellers."<sup>20</sup> Similar to humans, brands also possess certain attributes that differentiate them from others<sup>21</sup>. According to Plummer,<sup>22</sup> three unique features can describe a brand namely physical qualities, functional aspects and brand personality. This paper focuses on the last attribute which is brand personality. It is defined as "set of human characteristics associated with the brand."<sup>23</sup> Personality of a brand can be of product-brand or company-brand. Mixed results have been reported about which is more important than others. For example, Wang, Yang and Liu<sup>24</sup> support product-brand personality based on its direct impact on consumers' decision making unlike company-brand personality. On the other hand, proponents of company-brand personality consider it more important due to the values and attachment customers have with product traits and gains.<sup>25</sup> Two factors play a significant role in

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*Psychology* 52, no. 1 (1987): 81.

<sup>18</sup> R. L. Daft, *New Era of Management*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (Ohio: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2011), 413.

<sup>19</sup> R. R. McCrae and P. T. Costa Jr, "Personality Trait Structure as A Human Universal," *American Psychologist* 52, no. 5 (1997), 509.

<sup>20</sup> T. C. O'guinn, C. Allen, and R. Semenik, *Advertising and Integrated Brand Promotion*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed (Mason, Ohio: Thomson/South-Western, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> Caprara, Barbaranelli, and Guido, "Brand personality: . . .

<sup>22</sup> J. T. Plummer, "How Personality Makes a Difference," *Journal of Advertising Research* 24, no. 6 (1985): 27-31.

<sup>23</sup> Aaker, "Dimensions of brand personality . . .

<sup>24</sup> X. Wang, Z. Yang, and N. R. Liu, "The Impacts of Brand Personality and Congruity on Purchase Intention: Evidence from the Chinese Mainland's Automobile Market," *Journal of Global Marketing* 22, no. 3 (2009): 199-215.

<sup>25</sup> K. L. Keller, *Strategic Brand Management*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2003); K. L. Keller and K. Richey, "The Importance of Corporate Brand Personality Traits to A Successful 21<sup>st</sup> Century Business." *Journal of Brand Management* 14, no. ½ (2006): 74-81, doi: 10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550055.

developing brand personality. One is linked directly to the product such as price where the other provides indirect effect for example, consumer's experience, word of mouth etc.<sup>26</sup>

## **2.2 Relationship between Brands and Humans (Customers)**

On one hand, it is assumed that people build relationships with each other in the community. The possibility of such relationships may be because of common interests or somewhat similar characteristics in their personalities. On the other hand, researchers claim that similar connection exists between customers' attributes and brands.<sup>27</sup> Possible reason is the interaction that one has with a particular brand just like he/she has with other people.<sup>28</sup> However, communalities between customer and brand attributes is essentially required.<sup>29</sup> The preference for a particular brand increases when there is a stronger congruity between the attributes of customer and the brand.<sup>30</sup> A strong relationship between customers and brands carries some benefits for the customers for example, easement, self-identity, and confidence. At some point, when the relationship becomes stronger, emotional connection between brand and customer is developed.<sup>31</sup>

The metaphorical phenomenon of customer-brand relationship has been enlightened and proved by brand personality.<sup>32</sup> Sweeney

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<sup>26</sup> R. Batra, D. Lehmann and D. Singh, "The Brand Personality Component of Brand Goodwill: Some Antecedents and Consequences," *Brand Equity and Advertising* (1993): 83-96; G. McCracken, "Who is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process," *Journal of Consumer Research* 16, no. 3 (1989): 310-321.

<sup>27</sup> Aaker, "Dimensions of brand personality . . .

<sup>28</sup> D. A. Aaker, *Building Strong Brands* (New York, USA: Free Press, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> M. Thomson, D. J. MacInnis and C. Whan Park, "The ties that Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers' Emotional Attachments to Brands," *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 15, no. 1 (2005): 77-91.

<sup>30</sup> N. K. Malhotra, "A Scale to Measure Self-concepts, Person Concepts, and Product Concepts," *Journal of Marketing Research* 18, no. 4 (1981): 456-464; M. J. Sirgy, "Self-concept in Consumer Behavior: A Critical Review," *Journal of Consumer Research* 9, no. 3 (1982): 287-300.

<sup>31</sup> O. Bouhlef et al. "Brand Personality's Influence on the Purchase Intention: A Mobile Marketing Case," *International Journal of Business and Management* 6, no. 9 (2011): 210.

<sup>32</sup> P. L. Chang and M. H. Chieng, "Building Consumer-brand Relationship: A

and Brandon<sup>33</sup> have defined brand personality in this context as “the set of human personality traits that correspond to the interpersonal domain of human personality and are relevant to describing the brand as a relationship partner”.

### **2.3 Aaker's Brand Personality Model**

Aaker contributed to the literature with a definition of brand personality. Furthermore, to measure the brand personality construct, Aaker developed a measuring instrument and claimed its generalizability across all categories. The sources that Aaker has used to develop brand personality model are personality scales from psychology such as the Big Five personality scales used by the marketers and the original qualitative research regarding several brands' personality characteristics.<sup>34</sup>

According to Aaker' brand personality is “the set of human characteristics associated with the brand”. The brand personality scale consists of five dimensions i.e. sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Sincerity is related to a brand that family-people use for practical purposes. Moreover, sincerity exhibits a brand which is fair and just; provides what it promises and these promises stem from the facts. Furthermore, it shows that brand is an innovator, provides mental and physical fulfillment and used for emotional reasons while helping like a friend. Excitement is concerned with a brand which is spirited, exciting, imaginative, independent and up-to-date.<sup>35</sup> This dimension is more related to consumers' emotional responses for example “being excited”.<sup>36</sup> Emotion refers to “the feeling of being caught up, fascinated and engaged.”<sup>37</sup> Competence is about brand's reliability,

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Cross-cultural Experiential View,” *Psychology & Marketing* 23, no. 11 (2006): 927-959.

<sup>33</sup> J. C. Sweeney and C. Brandon, “Brand Personality: Exploring the Potential to Move from Factor Analytical to Circumplex Models,” *Psychology & Marketing* 23, no. 8 (2006): 639-663.

<sup>34</sup> Aaker, “Dimensions of brand personality . . .

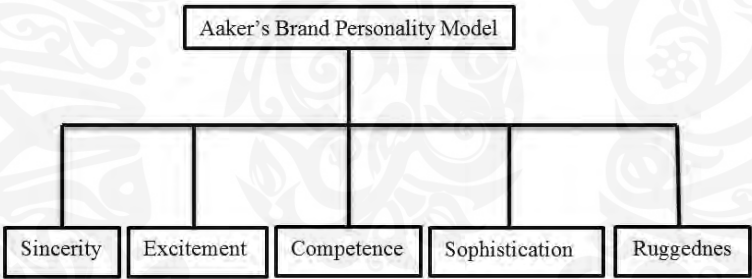
<sup>35</sup> Thomas and Sekar, “Measurement and Validity . . .

<sup>36</sup> Y. Sung and J. Kim, “Effects of Brand Personality on Brand Trust and Brand Affect,” *Psychology & Marketing* 27, no.7 (2010): 639-661, doi: 10.1002/mar.20349

<sup>37</sup> C. E. Izard, *Human Emotions* (New York: Springer Science & Business Media,

success and intelligence. Moreover, competence reflects the perception of consumers regarding brand’s knowledge, capability and performance to fulfill consumers’ needs and job completion.<sup>38</sup> Sophistication refers to the brand that exhibits upper class (good looking, glamorous, sophisticated), charming (feminine, smooth, gentle) whereas ruggedness dimension is related to a brand that is outdoorsy (masculine, western, active, athletic) and tough such as rugged, strong and no non-sense.<sup>39</sup> It has been claimed that framework of brand personality that consists of 42-item scale is reliable, valid and generalizable.<sup>40</sup> Despite the presence of several other brand personality models, Aaker’s model is still valid and prevalent for brand personality measurement.<sup>41</sup> Aaker’s brand personality model comprising five dimensions is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Aaker’s Brand Personality Model



**2.4 Criticism on Aaker’s Model**

Aaker herself already stated a number of limitations. For example, an imperative shortcoming of brand personality model is the population

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1977).

<sup>38</sup> K. S. Coulter and R. A. Coulter, “Determinants of Trust in A Service Provider: The Moderating Role of Length of Relationship,” *Journal of Services Marketing* 16, no. 1 (2002): 35-50. doi: 10.1108/08876040210419406

<sup>39</sup> Aaker, *Building Strong Brands* . . .

<sup>40</sup> Aaker, “Dimensions of brand personality . . .

<sup>41</sup> T. H. Freling, J. L. Crosno and D. H. Henard, “Brand Personality Appeal: Conceptualization and Empirical Validation,” *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 39, no. 3 (2011): 392-406.

itself, on the basis of which the model has been drawn. The model represents U.S. population only and Aaker<sup>44</sup> predicts that her model may bring different results if applied on various population groups or countries. Markus and Kitayama<sup>42</sup> explained that the population may differ based on cultures for example, individualistic (autonomous, independent and unique) or collectivist, i.e. conformist and interdependent cultures. The presumption that Aaker's model may produce different outputs if applied in other cultures or countries is because of the dissimilar perception customers may have regarding brand personality.<sup>43</sup>

Several cross-cultural studies based on Aaker's brand personality model have been reported worldwide. For example, brand personality comparison between Korea and U.S. has been studied. Results exhibit two unique dimensions in each culture. In case of Korea, the two unique dimensions are passive likeableness and ascendancy, whereas U.S. culture has showed white collar and androgyny that are linked with occupational status and gender roles.<sup>44</sup> Another study in Korea has found a new dimension, i.e. 'cute' along with four pre-existing dimensions of Aaker's model (sincerity, excitement, sophistication and ruggedness). To be cute is characterized by "attributes such as primness, pettiness, cuteness, and coyness".<sup>45</sup> Similarly, brand personality has been studied in three countries namely Japan, Spain and the U.S. Few common as well as unique dimensions appeared as a result. The common dimensions between Japan and the U.S. are sincerity, excitement, competence and sophistication whereas dimensions unique to each culture are peacefulness in case of Japan and ruggedness related to U.S. Between Spain and the U.S., common dimensions are sincerity, excitement

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<sup>42</sup> H. R. Markus and S. Kitayama, "Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation," *Psychological Review* 98, no. 2 (1991): 224-253, doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224.

<sup>43</sup> H. J. Lee and M. S. Kang, "The Effect of Brand Personality . . .

<sup>44</sup> Y. Sung and S.F. Tinkham "Brand Personality Structures . . .

<sup>45</sup> Y. Yang and E. H. Cho, "The Study of Korean Brand Personality Scale Development and Validation," *Korean Journal of Consumer and Advertising Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2002): 25-53.



and sophistication, whereas unique dimensions are passion from Spain, and competence and ruggedness from the U.S.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, a study on Ford's brand personality in Chile has found that 'ruggedness' is not strongly associated with the construct 'Brand Personality'.<sup>47</sup> The dimensions of ruggedness and excitement of brand personality have also showed weak relationship with brand attitude and brand commitment.<sup>48</sup> In an Indian context, 10 items of Aaker's brand personality model has been found inappropriate.<sup>49</sup> Even the definition of brand personality has been questioned. It has been claimed that brand personality definition given by Aaker has numerous socio-demographic features in addition to personality. From the above discussion, it implies that the stability of Aaker's model varies in different countries and cultures.

Literature suggests that several studies based on brand personality have been done in different countries and cultures. However, religion being an important part of culture has been overlooked. Only few researches have been conducted in this regard. For example, a conceptual paper on the notion of halal brand personality has been investigated recently in relation to other variables such as brand trust and purchase intention.<sup>50</sup> Hence, there is a need to examine brand personality from a religious perspective. This paper fills this gap by analyzing Aaker's brand personality model from an Islamic perspective in a collectivist Muslim majority country i.e. Malaysia.

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<sup>46</sup> J. L. Aaker, V. Benet-Martínez and J. Garolera, "Consumption Symbols as Carriers of Culture: A Study of Japanese and Spanish Brand Personality Constructs," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81, no. 3 (2001): 492-508, doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.81.3.492.

<sup>47</sup> J. L. Rojas-Méndez, I. Erenchun-Podlech and E. Silva-Olave, "The Ford Brand Personality in Chile," *Corporate Reputation Review* 7, no. 3 (2004): 232-251, doi: 10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540223.

<sup>48</sup> M. Eisend and N. E. Stokburger-Sauer, "Brand Personality: A Meta-analytic Review of Antecedents and Consequences," *Marketing Letters* (2013b): 1-12.

<sup>49</sup> B. J. Thomas and P. Sekar, "Measurement and Validity of Jennifer Aaker's Brand Personality Scale for Colgate Brand," *Vikalpa: The Journal for Decision Makers* 33, no. 3 (2008): 49-62.

<sup>50</sup> M. Borzooei and M. Asgari, "The Halal Brand Personality and Its Effect on Purchase Intention," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business* 5, no. 3 (2013): 481-491.

## 2.5 Brand Personality from Islamic Perspective

Since brand personality is defined in terms of human characteristics associated with a brand. This definition can be transformed and specified in the context of Islamic domain in order to develop an Islamic brand personality model. The definition for Islamic brand personality entails “set of Muslim characteristics associated with the Islamic brand”. Based on this definition, there is a need to look into the characteristics that a true Muslim possesses. In order to do this, help from the *Qur'an*, *hadith* and the work of traditional and modern Muslim scholars was obtained. These Muslim scholars<sup>51</sup> have studied Muslim personality and debated on its characteristics.

This research not only looks into the dimensions but also the underlying selected items from Islamic perspective. It will help understand the model comprehensively and not on the surface only. Within Aaker's model, few dimensions match with the teachings of Islam such as sincerity, competence and the underlying items of excitement though excitement as a word itself is somewhat contradictory. The dimension of sophistication contains attributes such as glamorous and upper-class that are not encouraged according to the Islamic teachings. Another dimension i.e. ruggedness applies mostly towards the manufacturing sector and not the service sector. However, the aim of this research is to propose a model that is applicable to both manufacturing and service sectors. Based on this, ruggedness has also been eliminated. Apart from that, few new Islamic dimensions e.g. trustworthiness and justice have been added. The Islamic perspective of brand personality dimensions and the selected underlying items is given below.

### 2.5.1 Sincerity and the underlying items (Islamic perspective)

The dimension of sincerity matches with the concept of being ‘*Mukhlis*’ in Islam. According to Shafi,<sup>52</sup> the Arabic word ‘*Mukhlis*’ is used as synonym to sincerity. Several verses from the *Qur'an* and *hadith* from Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) highlight sincerity as a

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<sup>51</sup> Al-Hashimi, 1990; Al-Isawi, 1990; Al-Shanawi, 1989; Al-Shirazi., 1399 H.; Fall, 2009a; Ibn Hazm al-Andalusiyy, 1970; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1980; Maskawayh., 1398 H.; Najati, 1982

<sup>52</sup> M. Shafi, *Ma'rariful-qur'an*, vol. 2, trans. M. Shamim (Pakistan, 1998).

trait in an ideal Muslim personality. However, sincerity in Islam is demanded in two ways; first, to be sincere with Allah and second, to be sincere with other human being etc. Allah says in the Qur'an *"Save those who repent and amend hold fast to Allah and are sincere in their obedience to Allah—these are with the believers. And Allah will soon grant the believers a mighty reward"*.<sup>53</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said *"Al-Din is the name of sincerity. We asked to whom (we should be sincere). Prophet (S.A.W) replied, to Allah, to His Messengers, to His Book, to the leaders of Muslims and to their common folks"*.<sup>54</sup> As sincerity is one of the characteristics of Muslim personality, therefore brand personality of an Islamic brand (associated with Muslim characteristics) may also contain sincerity as an important attribute. For any Islamic brand, being sincere to other people (customers) is imperative and encouraged in Islam. Hence, sincerity is an important attribute of Islamic brand personality.

One of the aspects of sincerity involves being 'down-to-earth', which generally means modest, not too proud, not showing or feeling excessive pride.<sup>55</sup> Islam also emphasizes on the quality of being 'down-to-earth' or being humble. Allah says in the Qur'an: *"And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not each arrogant boaster. Walk humbly and lower your voice - the ugliest voice is the donkey's voice"*.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) has always advised to be humble and avoid arrogance. He said *"If a person rides on his horse, not for the sake of Allah but for arrogance, joy, show off and reputation, the feed, hunger, thirst, water and manure of horse will be his loss on the day of judgment"*.<sup>57</sup> It is implied that a true Muslim is always down-to-earth and humble. Therefore, an Islamic brand which constitutes Muslim characteristics should also reflect humbleness and modesty in its interaction with the customers. Hence,

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<sup>53</sup> Al-Qur'an, 4:146

<sup>54</sup> Muslim

<sup>55</sup> Webster's Dictionary

<sup>56</sup> Al-Qur'an, 31:18-19

<sup>57</sup> N. U. D. Al-Haithami, *Bughyat ul Bahith'an Zawaid Musnad al-Harith*, vol. 2 (Madinah: Marlaz Khidmat Al-Sunnag wa Al-Seerah Al-Nabawiyyah, 1992), 675.

being 'down-to-earth' is an important trait of Islamic brand personality.

Another underlying aspect of sincerity is being 'family-oriented'. The word 'oriented' means that one is interested in certain thing or activity. From this, the meaning of the word 'family-oriented' can be extracted. A person would be family-oriented who is interested in family activities which may involve taking care of the family, looking after it and provide what is needed. In Islam, a Muslim personality is always family-oriented. There are several Qur'anic verses and hadith that directly or indirectly highlights this trait. Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Qur'an "*And He it is Who has created man from water, then He has made for him blood-relationship and marriage-relationship. And thy Lord is ever Powerful*".<sup>58</sup> It is implied that Allah (S.W.T.) Himself wanted humans to form families, which supports the concept of being family-oriented. Shafi<sup>59</sup> elaborates that these relationships that Allah (S.W.T.) has created among human beings are His blessing for them to spend an amusing and pleasing life. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said "*The best person among yourselves is that who is best to his family and I am best of you for my family*".<sup>60</sup> The implication of a Muslim being family oriented on any Islamic brand is that Islamic brands should come up with products and services that can benefit the whole family of every Muslim. Hence, being 'family-oriented' is an attribute of Islamic brand personality.

Honesty is another aspect of sincerity. It generally means being good and truthful; does not lie, steal or cheat.<sup>61</sup> Islam emphasizes the importance of being honest. Honesty has been one of the important traits of all prophets that came on earth. Allah (S.W.T.) mentions the words of prophet Hud (A.S.) that he spoke to his people "*I deliver to you my Lord's messages, and I am honestly advising you*".<sup>62</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was known as "Al-Amin" (one who is honest) among the people of Makkah even before he was

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<sup>58</sup> Al-Qur'an, 25:54

<sup>59</sup> M. Shafi, *Ma'rarif-ul-qur'an*, vol. 6, trans. M. Shamim (Pakistan, 1998).

<sup>60</sup> Ibn Majah

<sup>61</sup> Webster's Dictionary

<sup>62</sup> Al-Qur'an, 7:68

bestowed with prophethood. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said that *"He who is not honest, he has not belief (upon Allah)"*.<sup>63</sup> It is implied that a true Muslim is always honest. Therefore, an Islamic brand which instills Muslim attributes should be honest in its dealings too. It reflects that 'honesty' is a characteristic of Islamic brand personality.

Cheerful is also one of the aspects of sincerity, which means feeling or showing happiness.<sup>64</sup> Being cheerful in Islam is one of the fundamental teachings for every Muslim. Islam always encourages a kind interaction along with a smiling face. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) always met others with a cheerful and smiling face. He said *"Your smile towards your brother is like charity"*.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, Allah does not like those who show arrogance during their interaction with other people. He has forbidden this attitude of contempt that people show to others. Allah says in the Qur'an *"And turn not thy face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exultingly. Surely Allah loves not any self-conceited boaster"*.<sup>66</sup> It implies that being cheerful is one of the characteristics of Muslim personality. Therefore, an Islamic brand should also reflect cheerfulness. For example, employees of an Islamic brand should always interact cheerfully with their customers. Hence, 'cheerful' is an important trait of Islamic brand personality.

Being friendly is also another item of brand personality which means *"acting like a friend; kind and helpful"*.<sup>67</sup> Islam always promotes friendly interaction in all aspects of life. Even Allah Himself (the creator of this universe) keeps friends as reflected in one of the verses in Qur'an. Allah (S.W.T.) says, *"Allah is the Friend of those who believe - He brings them out of darkness into light. And those who disbelieve, their friends are the devils who take them out of light into darkness. They are the companions of the Fire; therein they*

<sup>63</sup> Ahmed bin Al-hassan, Al-kibri, & Abu-bakar, (Vol. 288: 12470). (Makktatul Mukaramah: Maktabah Dar-ul-baaz, 1994).

<sup>64</sup> Webster's Dictionary

<sup>65</sup> M. B. E. Al-Tiradhi, *Sunan al-Tirimadhi*, vol. 4 (Al-Misr: Maktabah Mustafa Al-Babi, 1975), 1956.

<sup>66</sup> Al-Qur'an, 31:18

<sup>67</sup> Webster's Dictionary



*abide*".<sup>68</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) has always taught the lesson of tolerance and friendliness. One *hadith* is narrated in this regard. He said, "*Allah Almighty has commanded you to show your patience with believers when you are in anger, and tolerance when anyone misbehaves, forgiveness when harmed by anyone....consequently your enemies will become your fast friends*".<sup>69</sup> It means that friendliness is among the characteristics of a true Muslim. It can be applied on any Islamic brand personality since it constitutes Muslim characteristics. Therefore, Islamic brands (their employees) should be friendly within as well as with customers or consumers. Accordingly, 'friendly' is an important element of Islamic brand personality.

### 2.5.2 Excitement and the underlying items (Islamic perspective)

The word 'excitement' generally means "a feeling of eager enthusiasm or the state of being excited."<sup>70</sup> Scitovsky<sup>71</sup> argues that there are two extremes of excitement and both are not good. One represents high intensity of excitement that leads to unlikable and intolerable consequences. On the other hand, there is very low excitement which results being uninteresting and less satisfactory. The middle way is the most suitable and satisfying way, also called enjoyable excitement. This shows some similarity with the Islamic concept of moderation discussed in the Islamic perspective at the end. Shafi<sup>72</sup> has mentioned the Arabic word for moderate, which is *wasat* or *mu'tadil* (adjective). Allah (S.W.T.) says, "*We have made you (true Muslims) a moderate nation so that you could be an example for all people and the Prophet an example for you*".<sup>73</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) has also taught the lesson of moderation: "*He who adopts moderate way, never faces needfulness*".<sup>74</sup> On another occasion the Prophet (S.A.W.) said, "*The*

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<sup>68</sup> Al-Qur'an, 2:257

<sup>69</sup> Al-Baihaqi, *Al-Ma'arif*, vol. 7 (Hayderabad: Majlis Daurah, 1925), 13580.

<sup>70</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>71</sup> T. Scitovsky, "The Desire for Excitement in Modern Society," *Kyklos* 34, no. 1 (1981): 3-13. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6435.1981.tb02650.x

<sup>72</sup> M. Shafi, *Ma'rariful-qur'an*, vol. 1, trans. M. Shamim (Pakistan, 1998).

<sup>73</sup> Al-Qur'an, 2:143

<sup>74</sup> Ibn Abi Shaiba Abu Bakar Abdullah bin Muhammad, *Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba*, vol. 5 (Al-Riyath: Maktabah Al-Rushd, 1988), 26604.

*best of dealings are the ones done in moderation*".<sup>75</sup> Based on the above discussion, it implies that moderation is an important trait of a true Muslim personality. Therefore, Islamic brands should also adopt the quality of being moderate. In other words, the above-mentioned concept of 'enjoyable excitement' is acceptable in the Islamic domain. Hence, moderation is more appropriate as a characteristic of Islamic brand personality.

To be 'daring' is also one of the underlying aspects of excitement in Aaker's model. It generally means "courageous or fearlessness: the quality of being willing to do dangerous or difficult things".<sup>76</sup> Islam always encourages Muslims to act bravely and with courage. Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Qur'an, "*Many godly people fought to help the Prophets in the cause of God. They did not lose courage, show weakness, or give in when facing hardships in their fight for the cause of God. God loves those who have patience*".<sup>77</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) has been an example of courage and bravery. It has been narrated that Ali (R.A) said "*I remember the day of Badr, when we were seeking shelter with the Messenger of Allah and he was the closes of us to the enemy and the most courageous of the people that day*".<sup>78</sup> It implies that a true Muslim is always daring (brave and courageous). Therefore an Islamic brand should also reflect bravery and courage in its actions against wrongdoings and unethical practices. Hence, daring is one of the attributes of Islamic brand personality.

Trendy is another aspect of excitement, which means "currently popular or fashionable".<sup>79</sup> Islam does not encourage trendiness in terms of fashion yet popularity (repute) of the prophets has been reported in Islamic teachings. For instance, Allah (S.W.T.) has mentioned in the Qur'an, the conversation between Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) and his people. Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) supplicated "*And grant me true and lasting reputation among posterity*".<sup>80</sup> It is

<sup>75</sup> Al-Jazari, Imam Majd al-Din Al-Mubarak Ibn Al-Athir, *Jami'al-Usul fi Ahadith al-Rasul*, vol. 1 (Bayrut: Maktabah Dar ul Bayan, 1969), 101.

<sup>76</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>77</sup> Al-Qur'an, 3:146

<sup>78</sup> Al-Bukhari, *Al Jamaya al Saheeh*, vol. 3 (Bayrut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 1987), 2751.

<sup>79</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>80</sup> Al-Qur'an, 26:84

important to note here, that the supplication of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S.) was not for worldly desires. Ibn Kathir<sup>81</sup> explains that he wanted to be remembered as an example so that future generations could follow Allah (S.W.T.)'s commandments that He revealed through his Prophet. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) also supplicated in the similar manner. He said "*O Allah! Make me one who is most patient and grateful; and make me small in my own eyes but great in the eyes of others*".<sup>82</sup> It is implied from that popularity (trendiness) for the sake of guiding people (as an example) towards the right path rather for worldly desires is encouraged in Islam. Considering it as a quality of a Muslim, every Islamic brand should strive for excellence and gain popularity as a successful institution that is built upon Islamic foundations thereby giving an example to the world. It indicates that 'trendy' is an important trait of Islamic brand personality.

Another underlying aspect of excitement is being 'spirited', which means "determined or very lively".<sup>83</sup> Islam always advises to stay determined (spirited) in one's speech and actions. Allah says in the Qur'an "*Thus it is by Allah's mercy that thou art gentle to them. And hadst thou been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around thee. So pardon them and ask protection for them, and consult them in (important) matters. But when thou hast determined, put thy trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who trust (in Him)*".<sup>84</sup> Similarly, an *al-Qudsi* hadith has been recorded which reflects determination of the sinner not to commit sins. It has been narrated that "*a person who repents constantly and is determined not to commit the sin again but still commits it, such a person will not be counted among the persistent and stubborn*".<sup>85</sup> Being determined (spirited) is one of the traits of a Muslim personality. It can be implied that an Islamic brand should also be determined (spirited) in

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<sup>81</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Kareem* (Madina: Darul Taibati Printing Press, 1999).

<sup>82</sup> Al-Bazzar, Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Amr b. Abd al-Khaliq al-Ataki, *Musnad Al-Bazzar* (DKI: Beirut, n.d.).

<sup>83</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>84</sup> Al-Qur'an, 3:159.

<sup>85</sup> Muslim bin Hajjaj, *Saheeh al Muslim* (Bayrut: Dar Ihya Taurath al Arabi, n.d.), hadith no. 2702.

its practices. It indicates that being ‘spirited’ is a trait of Islamic brand personality.

Being ‘cool’ is another aspect of excitement, which refers to one who is “able to think and act in a calm way”.<sup>86</sup> Islam always teaches the lesson of calmness (being cool) and self-control. Allah has mentioned thirteen characteristics of his favoured people. One of these characteristics is their calmness. Allah (S.W.T.) says “*And the slaves of the Most Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth in humility and sedateness, and when the foolish address them (with bad words) they reply back with mild words of gentleness*”.<sup>87</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) always advised others to remain calm and show tolerance. A hadith has been recorded in this regard. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said, “*When you come to the prayer, do not come rushing in haste. Come calmly and with tranquillity, and whatever you catch up with, pray, and whatever you miss, make it up*”.<sup>88</sup> It implies that being calm (cool) and tolerant is one of the qualities of Muslim personality. Therefore, Islamic brands should also remain calm and tolerant during the difficult times. It also applies on their employees while interacting with the customers. Hence, being ‘cool’ represents a trait of Islamic brand personality.

Another aspect of excitement is being ‘imaginative’, which generally means “showing an ability to think of new ideas”.<sup>89</sup> Islam does not discourage people to be imaginative. However, new ideas resulting from the imaginative thinking should be within the *Shari’ah* domain. Islam also encourages people to think deeply and understand signs of Allah the Almighty depicted in the Qur’an. Allah (S.W.T.) says, “*(It is) a Book We have revealed to you abounding in good that they may ponder over its verses, and that those endowed with understanding may be mindful*”.<sup>90</sup> During the life of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) several incidents occur that reflect imaginative thinking of the Prophet’s companions. For example, in the early days of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and his companions were

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<sup>86</sup> Webster’s Dictionary.

<sup>87</sup> Al-Qur’an, 25:63.

<sup>88</sup> Al-Bukhari, *Al Jamaya al Saheeh*, vol. 1 (Bayrut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 1987), 610.

<sup>89</sup> Webster’s Dictionary.

<sup>90</sup> Al-Qur’an, 38:29

finding a way to call people for prayer. A companion came to prophet (S.A.W) and described his dream in which he saw someone calling the *adhan*. His dream (a kind of suggestion) was approved and the *adhan* became the medium to call people for prayer.<sup>91</sup> On another occasion, just before the battle of trench was fought, companions of the Prophet were thinking how to fight the battle efficiently and defeat their enemy. A companion named Sulaiman Faarsi thought of the idea of digging a trench, which was approved by Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and all his companions.<sup>92</sup> It is implied that Allah (S.W.T.) and his Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) encouraged people to think deeply, generate new ideas, but always within the guidelines of the *Shari'ah*. Hence, having an imaginative personality is appreciated in Islam. Similarly, Islamic brands should also come up with new ideas in order to compete well yet those ideas should be within *Shari'ah* limits. Resultantly, being 'imaginative' is an important attribute of Islamic brand personality.

Uniqueness, or to be 'unique', is also one of the aspects of excitement, which means "distinctively characteristic; something or someone is unlike anything or anyone else".<sup>93</sup> Uniqueness in Islam is reflected in almost everything, e.g. in the holy book of Qur'an, in a Muslim's dress and his/her way of life. Similarly, there are many things that differentiate followers from non-followers. Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Qur'an, "*Can the one who follows the authority of his Lord be considered equal to the one whose evil deeds are made to seem attractive to him and who follows his own desires?*"<sup>94</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) himself was unique even among the non-Muslims. Before prophethood, non-Muslims of Makkah used to call him *saadiq* (truthful) and *amin* (honest). Similarly, the Prophet advised his companions to follow what has been commanded by Allah (S.W.T.) and practiced by him. He said "*Do the opposite of what the pagans do. Keep the beards and cut the moustaches*

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<sup>91</sup> Al-Baqi, *Musnad al-Baqi*, vol. 1 (Makkah: Maktabah Dar Al-Baz, 1994), 181.

<sup>92</sup> Ibrahim bin Muhammad, *Mar'iyat Ghazwa al Khandaq* (Al- Madinah: Jamiyah Al Islamiyah, 2003).

<sup>93</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Qur'an, 47:14



*short*".<sup>95</sup> Similarly, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) advised Muslims to fast on 9<sup>th</sup> as well as 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram in order to differentiate Muslims from Jews who used to fast on 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram.<sup>96</sup> It is implied that a true Muslim lives life in accordance with the commandments of Allah (S.W.T.) and *sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). His way of life differentiates him from non-Muslims and also those Muslims who do not follow the teachings of Islam completely. In the context of Islamic brands, they should also act upon the orders of Allah (S.W.T.) and his Prophet and implement them in how they comport and conduct themselves. As a result, Islamic brands will be unique and distinct as compared to other brands. Hence, being 'unique' is a characteristic of Islamic brand personality.

Another underlying item of excitement is being 'up-to-date' which means "including the latest information".<sup>97</sup> Islam encourages people to be well-equipped with the latest knowledge, in other words, to remain current and up-to-date. In fact, Islam draws a clear line between those who have knowledge (understanding) and those who do not have it. Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Qur'an, "*Are those who know equal to those who know not? It is only men of understanding who will remember (from Allah's Signs and Verses)*".<sup>98</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) advised people to seek knowledge. He once said, "*A person who follows a path for acquiring knowledge, Allah will make easy the passage to Paradise for him*".<sup>99</sup> On another occasion he said, "*A Muslim is never satiated in his quest for good (knowledge) till it ends in Paradise*".<sup>100</sup> The above verse and hadith indirectly indicate that a Muslim should be well equipped with the knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge should be remain up-to-date. It also applies to Islamic brands, since they should have an up-to-date knowledge of their business in line with the

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<sup>95</sup> Al-Bukhari, Vol.18:5442).

<sup>96</sup> A. Thavi, *Sharh Maani al Athar*, vol. 2 (Bayrut: Alam Al Kutub, 1994), 3302.

<sup>97</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>98</sup> Al-Qur'an, 39:9

<sup>99</sup> Muslim

<sup>100</sup> Tirmidhi

modern-day requirements and level of competition. Hence, being 'up-to-date' is one of the traits of Islamic brand personality.

Another aspect of excitement is being 'independent', which generally means "not subject to control by others".<sup>101</sup> Islam encourages people to be independent yet responsible for their actions. Allah (S.W.T.) has created all human beings independent in terms of what way they choose. Hence it is upon one's discretion whether he chooses right way or the wrong way. Regarding the difference between one who is dependent and the other who is independent, Allah (S.W.T.) says, "*And God cites the example of two men: one is dumb, lacks the ability to do anything, is totally dependent on his master - whichever way he directs him, he cannot produce anything good. Is he equal to one who rules with justice, and is guided in the right path?*"<sup>102</sup> Being independent also means "earning one's own income and paying bills",<sup>103</sup> certainly as a result of effort and hard work. It is far better than those who beg money from others despite having good health. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said, "*The upper hand is better than the lower hand*".<sup>104</sup> It is implied that a Muslims should always believe on his capabilities and be independent rather being controlled by others. Same applies in the context of Islamic brands. They should not be under the control of conventional institutions. Rather they should be independent and believe that they can do something on their own. Therefore, being 'independent' is an important attribute of Islamic brand personality.

### 2.5.3 Competence and the underlying items (Islamic perspective)

The word 'competence' means "the ability to do something well: the quality or state of being competent".<sup>105</sup> Islam encourages people to seek knowledge in order to become capable and perform tasks in the best possible way. All the prophets who were sent on earth were knowledgeable (competent) due to the fact that Allah (S.W.T.) gave them wisdom and understanding of the Holy Scriptures. Allah

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<sup>101</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>102</sup> Al-Qur'an, 16:76

<sup>103</sup> Chris Owens, *Independent Living* (Lulu.com, 2009).

<sup>104</sup> Al-Baqi, *Musnad al-Baqi*, vol. 4 (Makkah: Maktabah Dar Al-Baz, 1994), 7541.

<sup>105</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

(S.W.T.) mentions the knowledge and wisdom, in short, the competence of Prophet Sulaiman (A.S.) and Prophet Daud (A.S.) in the Qur'an. Allah (S.W.T.) says, "*So We made Solomon to understand it. And to each (of them) We gave wisdom and knowledge. And We made the mountains, declaring (Our) glory, and the birds, subservient to David. And We were the Doers. And we taught him the skill of making shields to protect you in war. Are you then thankful?*"<sup>106</sup> Wisdom and knowledge are also reflected in Prophet Muhammad's (S.A.W) personality throughout his life. One of the wise decisions that prophet took after the battle of *Badr* has been recorded which also reflects the importance of seeking knowledge in one's life. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) decided to take ransom against prisoners of war in such a way that each literate prisoner will teach (literacy) for ten children of the *Ansar*.<sup>107</sup> One of the four Caliphs, Ali (R.A.) said, "Learn knowledge so that you will be recognized and act upon it so that you will become competent".<sup>108</sup> From the above discussion, it is implied that knowledge, wisdom and skills are important elements for competence. Islam realizes the importance of seeking, knowledge and developing skills. Hence, competence in one's personality is admired in Islam. It also applies on the Islamic brands. They should have the required skills and expertise in order to become competent. Hence, competence is one of the important characteristics of Islamic brand personality.

Reliability is also one of the underlying aspects of competence, which means "able to be believed or relied on".<sup>109</sup> Islam emphasizes the importance of reliability both in one's speech as well as actions. Thus, reliability is reflected generally in the promises that some people keep and few do not. Allah (S.W.T.) says, "*O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do? Most abominable in the sight of God is that you say what you do not do*".<sup>110</sup> Reliability also means true,<sup>111</sup> consistent, dependable and repeatable. Prophet

<sup>106</sup> Al-Qur'an, 79-80

<sup>107</sup> A. Behki, *Al Sunan*, vol. 6 (Makkah: Dar Al Baz, 1994), 11460.

<sup>108</sup> A. Dainori, *Al Majalisa wa Jawahir al Ilm*, vol. 2 (Bayrut: Bayrut, 1998), 277.

<sup>109</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>110</sup> Al-Qur'an, 61:2-3.

<sup>111</sup> Brian Weatherson, "Luminous Margins Thanks to Tamar Szabó Gendler, John Hawthorne, Chris Hill, Ernest Sosa, and the AJP's Referees," *Australasian Journal*

Muhammad (S.A.W.) advised people to be reliable in their deeds. He said, "*The best deed is that which is done consistently though less in quantity*".<sup>112</sup> It is implied that a true Muslim is reliable as he keeps his promises and shows consistency. Considering reliability as a Muslim characteristic, Islamic brand should also be reliable in their dealings, both with their employees as well as with customers. It reflects that being 'reliable' is an important attribute of Islamic brand personality.

To be hardworking is another aspect of competence, which generally means "using a lot of time and energy to do work".<sup>113</sup> Islam encourages those people who work hard. Most of the Qur'anic verses are related to doing good deeds with patience and persistence. One among them is close to working hard and its outcome. Allah (S.W.T.) says, "*Certainly no one will bear the responsibility of the sins of another, nor can man achieve anything without hard labour. He will certainly see the result of his labour and will be fully recompensed for his deeds*".<sup>114</sup> It can be implied that higher the effort one puts into a task, better will be the result out of it. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) used to work very hard and teach others to do the same. He was self-reliant and advised others to follow him. He said, "*A person who takes a rope and goes to the mountains and when he returns, he comes back with a log of wood on his back. He sells it and he becomes independent in such a way that he does not need to beg*".<sup>115</sup> It implies that a Muslim strives to work hard with all his effort. Therefore, Islamic brands should also work hard to accomplish their goals. Hence, 'hardworking' is one of the traits of Islamic brand personality.

Another aspect of competence involves being 'secure', which means "providing protection or being protected from danger or harm".<sup>116</sup> The teachings of Islam realize security as an integral element of human life. Security in Islam means that one should

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<sup>112</sup> Ibn Majah, *Sunan*, vol.5 (Bayrut: Maktabah Abi Al Mauti, n.d.), 4240.

<sup>113</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>114</sup> Al-Qur'an, 53:38-41.

<sup>115</sup> Al-Baihaqi, *Al Arbaon al Sughra* (Bayrut: Dar Al Kitab Al Arbi, 1987), Hadith No 53.

<sup>116</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

secure himself and also keep others safe. Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Qur'an, *"For this reason We prescribed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a person, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he had killed all men. And whoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved the lives of all men. And certainly Our messengers came to them with clear arguments, but even after that many of them commit excesses in the land"*.<sup>117</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said, *"The Muslims are those from whose tongues and hands other Muslims are safe and sound"*.<sup>118</sup> This hadith clearly entails how a Muslim is obliged to provide security/safety to others not only in his speech, but also in his actions. In the context of Islamic brands, their actions and practices should be in the best interest of their employees, customers and the society. An Islamic brand should not do any harm to any stakeholder. Hence, being 'secure' is one of the important attributes of Islamic brand personality.

Being intelligent is another aspect of competence, which means "having or showing the ability to easily learn".<sup>119</sup> Allah the Almighty has created humans as the best creation on the face of earth. One of the events that indirectly show the superiority of humans over angels has been mentioned in the Qur'an. The verse states *"And He taught Adam all the names (of everything), then He showed them to the angels and said, 'Tell Me the names of these if you are truthful.' They (the angels) said: 'Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except what you have taught us. Verily, it is You, the All-Knower, the All-Wise.' He said: 'O Adam! Inform them of their names,' and when he had informed them of their names, He said: 'Did I not tell you that I know the Ghaib (unseen) in the heavens and the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you have been concealing?'"*.<sup>120</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said, *"Intelligent person is the one who brings his self to account and acts in the preparation for what lies beyond his death; and the foolish person is the one who abandons himself to his desires and cravings and*

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<sup>117</sup> Al-Qur'an, 5:32

<sup>118</sup> Abu Dawood, *Sunan*, vol.2 (Bayrut: Dar Al Kitab Al Arabi, n.d.), 2483.

<sup>119</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>120</sup> Al-Qur'an, 2:31-33



*expects Allah to fulfil his futile wishes*".<sup>121</sup> It implies that intelligence is part of a Muslim's personality. However, he/she should consider the fact that if he performs good deeds here in this world, he will be rewarded in the hereafter and the vice versa. The same applies in the case of Islamic brands especially those people developing them. Being intelligent is encouraging according to Islam yet they should be careful about the consequences of their deeds in the hereafter. Hence, being 'intelligent' is an important attribute of Islamic brand personality.

Another aspect of competence involves 'technical' ability, which means "having special and usually practical knowledge".<sup>122</sup> First and foremost, Islam has always encouraged people to seek knowledge. The first word of Qur'an sent down to Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was *Iqra'*, which means to read. Allah (S.W.T.) has mentioned in several verses, the importance of knowledge. Additionally, the Qur'an indirectly shows how technical knowledge can be helpful in dealing with worldly issues. Allah (S.W.T.) mentions the incident of Zulkarnain in Qur'anic verses, which state, "*He said: 'That (wealth, authority and power) in which my Lord had established me is better (than your tribute). So help me with strength (of men), I will erect between you and them (Ya'juj and Ma'juj) a barrier. Give me pieces (blocks) of iron,' then, when he had filled up the gap between the two mountain-cliffs, he said: 'Blow', till when he had made it (red as) fire, he said: 'Bring me molten copper to pour over it'*".<sup>123</sup> Similarly, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) passed through some people who were transplanting the date trees. Prophet asked, "What are you doing". They replied "We are pollinating through transplantation". Prophet (S.A.W) said, "if you leave, they may still be fruit giving". Upon this, people stopped following that practise but eventually did not get many dates as a result. When Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was informed about it, he said "As for the worldly technicalities are concerned, you are more aware about them".<sup>124</sup> It is implied that Islam does not forbid seeking technical

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<sup>121</sup> Tirmidhi. *Sunan: Kitab sifat al-qiyyamah*, vol.7, 155.

<sup>122</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>123</sup> Al-Qur'an, 95-96

<sup>124</sup> A. Tahavi, *Mushnil al Athar*, vol. 4 (Bayrut: Muassah Al Risalah, 1994), 1722.

knowledge. A Muslims should be well versed in the technical capabilities of his job or business. Similarly, an Islamic brand should also have all the relevant technical knowledge in order to compete well. Hence, being technical is an important element of Islamic brand personality.

To be ‘successful’ is also among the aspects of competence, which means “getting the desired result or ending in success”.<sup>125</sup> Success holds significant importance in Islam. When a true Muslim lives his life according to the commandments of Allah (S.W.T.), he succeeds both in this world and the hereafter. The Qur’an clearly mentions the characteristics of those who are successful.<sup>126</sup> Allah (S.W.T.) says, “*Successful indeed are the believers. Those who offer their Salat (prayers) with all solemnity and full submissiveness. And those who turn away from Al-Laghw (dirty, false, evil vain talk, falsehood, and all that Allah has forbidden). And those who pay the Zakat. And those who guard their chastity (i.e. private parts, from illegal sexual acts)*”.<sup>127</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) supplicated many times and said, “*O our Lord, bestow upon us good in this world and good in the hereafter and save us from chastisement of the fire*”.<sup>128</sup> From the above discussion it is implied that being successful has significant importance in Islam. One who performs righteous deeds succeeds not only in this world but also in the next world. It implies that striving for success here in this world and especially in the hereafter, is an important part of Muslim personality. Similarly, with an Islamic brand, and especially the brand’s employees should perform tasks that can make them succeed not only in this world but also in the hereafter. Therefore, being successful belongs to Islamic brand personality.

Another aspect of competence involves being a ‘leader’, which means “a person who leads”.<sup>129</sup> Islam always admires the role of true in leader for a group of people, for a nation as well as before the

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<sup>125</sup> Webster’s Dictionary.

<sup>126</sup> Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur’an al-Kareem (Madina: Darul Taibati Printing Press, 1999).

<sup>127</sup> Al-Qur’an, 23:1-5

<sup>128</sup> Abu Daud, *Sunan*, vol.1 (Bayrut: Dar al Kitab al Arabi, n.d.), 1521.

<sup>129</sup> Webster’s Dictionary.

whole world. The true examples are the prophets sent on earth who lead people toward the right path. Allah (S.W.T.) has made them leaders Himself. Allah (S.W.T.) says, "*And We bestowed upon him Ishaq (Isaac), and (his son) Ya'qub (Jacob). Each one We made righteous. And We made them leaders, guiding (mankind) by Our command, and We inspired in them the doing of good deeds, performing salat (iqamat-as-salat), and the giving of zakat and of us (alone) they were worshippers*".<sup>130</sup> Similarly, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) has been the best example of true leadership. He used to supplicate, "O my Lord, make me one of the leaders of pious people".<sup>131</sup> It implies that a true Muslim has leadership qualities in his personality. Similarly, an Islamic brand should also possess leadership traits in order to become a market leader. Hence, being a good 'leader' is an important attribute of Islamic brand personality.

'Confidence' is also among the aspects of competence, which means "having a feeling that one can do something well or succeed at something".<sup>132</sup> In Islam, the key to become confident is to have a strong trust in Allah (S.W.T.). Once a person has strong *tawakkul* (trust) in Allah (S.W.T.), his belief is strengthened and he has a feeling that he can succeed, hence becomes confident. Allah (S.W.T.) says, "*When you have decided on a course of action, put your trust in Allah: Allah loves those who put their trust in Him. If Allah helps you [believers], no one can overcome you. If he forsakes you, who else can help you? Believers should put their trust in Allah*".<sup>133</sup> The example of trust and strong belief (confidence) in Allah (S.W.T.) is reflected in one of the incidents of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). It is narrated that, "the Prophet was taking rest under the tree when a Bedouin (dweller of desert) took his sword (out of its sheath) and said "who will save you from me". Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) replied 'Allah' three times. The Bedouin put the sword back into the sheath".<sup>134</sup> It implies that the belief and faith of a true Muslim make his personality confident. An Islamic brand therefore, should also be

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<sup>130</sup> Al-Qur'an, 21:72-73

<sup>131</sup> A. Fakahi, *Akhbar e Makkah*, vol. 2 (Baurut: Dar Khidar, 1993), 1411.

<sup>132</sup> Webster's Dictionary.

<sup>133</sup> Al-Qur'an, 3:159-160.

<sup>134</sup> Al-Bukhari, *Al-Jamay al-Sahih*, vol. 3 (Bayrut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 1987), 2753.

confident with a firm belief in Allah (S.W.T.). Hence, being confident is an important trait of Islamic brand personality.

#### 2.5.4 *New dimensions of Islamic brand personality*

Based on the work of traditional and modern Muslim scholars, this paper introduces two most prominent characteristics of a Muslim personality.<sup>135</sup> These are trustworthiness and justice.

##### 2.5.4.1 *Trustworthiness*

The word ‘trustworthiness’ means “able to be relied on or deserving of trust”.<sup>136</sup> Arabic word for trustworthiness is *amanah*. According to Putra,<sup>137</sup> it means trustworthy, i.e. “one who is submitted a matter or an affair and people believe that the affair will be done as well as possible”. Trustworthiness of a Muslim is operationally defined as “degree to which a person respects rights of others even if there is an opportunity to violate these rights without a condemnation”.<sup>138</sup> Islam emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness both in the Qur’anic verses and hadith. Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Qur’an, “*Those who are faithfully true to their amanat (all the duties which Allah has ordained, honesty, moral responsibility and trusts etc.) and to their covenants...These are the heirs. We shall inherit the paradise. They shall dwell therein forever*”.<sup>139</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was an example of trust and honesty, so much so that even before his prophethood, people used to call him *sadiq* (one who speaks truth) and *amin* (one who keeps his word). In relation to how one should run his business, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said, “*One who has no deen, is not honest in the dealings*”.<sup>140</sup> It implies that

<sup>135</sup> Al-Hashimi, 1990; Al-Isawi, 1990; Al-Shanawi, 1989; Al-Shirazi., 1399 H.; Fall, 2009a; Ibn Hazm al-Andalusiyy, 1970; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1980; Maskawayh., 1398 H.; Najati, 1982

<sup>136</sup> Webster’s Dictionary.

<sup>137</sup> Y. H. S. Putra, “Detecting Internal Control Problems Based on COSO and Islamic Perspective: Case on SMEs,” *Tazkia Islamic Finance and Business Review* 8, no. 1 (2014): 25-44.

<sup>138</sup> A.A. Fall, “Development and Validation of a Muslim Personality Scale,” (PhD dissertation, International Islamic University Malaysia, 2009).

<sup>139</sup> Al-Qur’an, 23: 8-11

<sup>140</sup> Al-Tabarani, *Al-Mu’jam al-Kabir*, vol. 22 (Maktabah al Ulum wa al Hikmah, 1983), 7972.

trustworthiness is an important characteristic of Muslim personality. Similarly, an Islamic brand should also reflect trustworthiness in its interaction with customers and also among its employees. Hence, trustworthiness can be an important attribute of Islamic brand personality.

#### 2.5.4.2 Justice

The word 'justice' means "the quality of being just, impartial, or fair". In Islam, the Arabic word for justice is '*Adl*' which means "justice according to the law where law is defined as God's law, the *Shari'ah*, as revealed to the Prophet and to the Muslim community".<sup>141</sup> Similarly, Fall<sup>142</sup> refers justice to "the characteristics of fairness that human beings should deserve" and claims that it is one of the required attributes to be a true Muslim. Justice is also defined in terms of "equity and balance".<sup>143</sup> Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Qur'an, "*O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah and be just witnesses and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do*".<sup>144</sup> Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is an example of justice for every Muslim and for all the human beings. He always advised others to be just. He said, "*Seven people will be under the shadow of Allah's throne, when there will be no shadow anywhere else. One of them is the person who does justice*".<sup>145</sup> On another occasion the Prophet said, "*Do justice between your progeny and your sons*".<sup>146</sup> It is implied that justice is an important part of a Muslim personality and ensuring a peaceful society. Therefore, justice should be an essential element of Islamic brands/organizations. Hence, justice can be an

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<sup>141</sup> B. Lewis, "Freedom and Justice in the Modern Middle East," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 3 (2005): 36-51.

<sup>142</sup> A.A. Fall, "Development and Validation of a Muslim . . .

<sup>143</sup> R. Beekun and J. Badawi, "Balancing Ethical Responsibility among Multiple Organizational Stakeholders: The Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Business Ethics* 60, no. 2 (2005): 131-145. doi: 10.1007/s10551-004-8204-5

<sup>144</sup> Al-Qur'an, 5:8

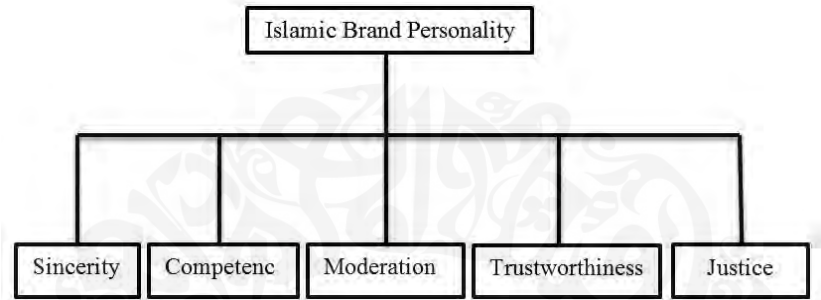
<sup>145</sup> A. Tahawi, *Sharah Mushil al Athar*, vol. 15 (Bairut: Muassassah Al Risalah, 1994), 5487.

<sup>146</sup> Abu Daud, *Sunan*, vol.3 (Bayrut: Darul Kitab al Arabi, n.d.), 3546.



important characteristic of Islamic brand personality. The Islamic brand personality model, comprising a number of existing, as well as new Islamic dimensions, is depicted in the Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Islamic Brand Personality Model

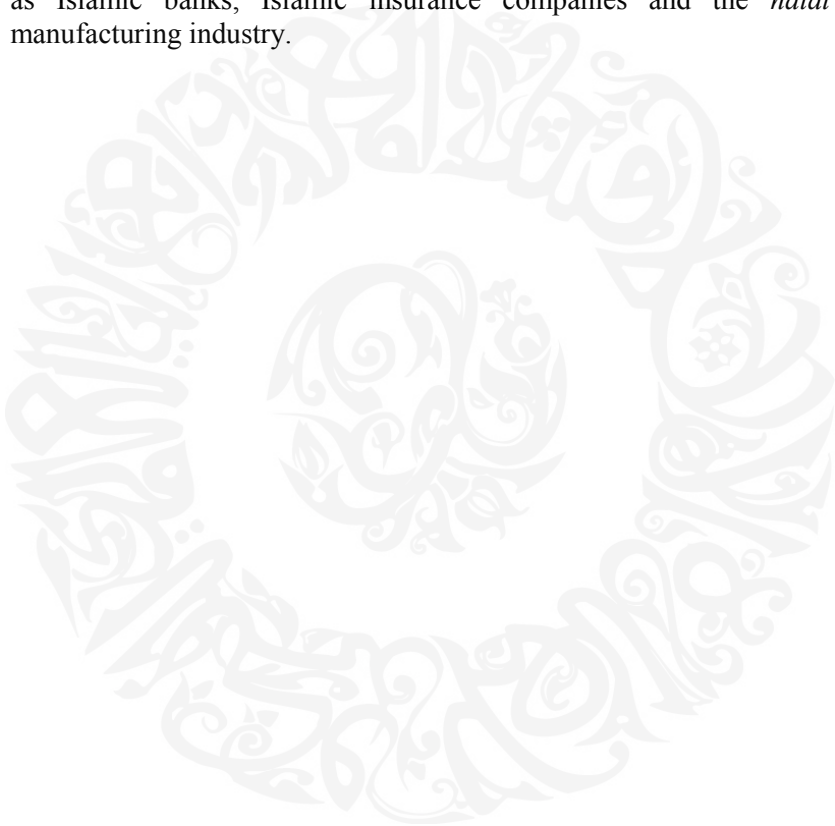


All the above dimensions and their underlying items have been examined in accordance with the Islamic teachings and scholarly work on Muslim personality. As per the proposed definition of Islamic brand personality, i.e. Muslim characteristics associated with Islamic brand, the dimensions and items have been linked to Islamic brands in general, in order to develop an Islamic brand personality model. These Muslim attributes can be reflected in any Islamic brand, which would generally be attractive to any Muslim consumer market.

**3. Conclusion**

In summary, brand personality plays a vital in differentiating one brand from another and builds a strong customer-brand relationship, leading towards brand commitment, trust and loyalty. This paper highlights the criticism and fills the research gaps in relation to Aaker’s brand personality model. Considering religion an important element of culture, this conceptual paper investigates Aaker’s brand personality dimensions and the selected underlying items from the Islamic perspective in a collectivist Muslim majority country of Malaysia. Two new Islamic dimensions, namely trustworthiness and justice, have been proposed in the Islamic brand personality model. On other hand, two existing dimensions, sophistication and

ruggedness have been eliminated. Proposed Islamic brand personality model may help both manufacturing and service brands differentiate themselves from the conventional brands. Moreover, the dimensions and the underlying items can be utilized in improving the advertising effectiveness thereby attracting a potential Muslim consumers and retain the existing ones. In future, this model can be tested empirically and can be applied in the context of Islamic brands such as Islamic banks, Islamic insurance companies and the *halal* manufacturing industry.



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