A cross-cultural study of staying reasons of American brands
Analysis of millennial Muslim consumers
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Abstract
Purpose – Although researchers have investigated thoroughly the consumer’s brand switching behaviour, the probability of confusion regarding “brand switching” is a less travelled road so far. Therefore, the purpose of current study is to investigate and highlight the underlying convincing parameters in relation to not switching from American brands within the context of millennial Muslim consumers in Pakistan and Malaysia.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from 704 consumers living in two divergent cultures, who were asked about American brands. Two categories of “reasons to stay” were examined: switching barriers and affirmative factors.

Findings – The main discovery was that staying reasons for specific brands could be different in two different cultures, but they influence the ultimate brand switching behaviour.

Practical implications – This study is important for those firms who have many prospective switchers because it is important to understand why these customers stay and discover to what extent such firms can discourage such consumers from leaving, in both positive and negative ways.

Originality/value – This is the first paper of its kind that examines the brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslim consumers.

Keywords Pakistan, Malaysia, American brands, Brand switching behaviour, Staying reasons

Paper type Research paper

Introduction
All consumers at least once face a situation where they have to make a choice of either to stay or leave. Some stay, some go. Just as satisfied customers do not necessarily remain loyal (Rowley and Dawes, 2000), so dissatisfied customers do not always leave (Hirschman, 1970; Day, 1984). After the attack by the USA on Iraq and Afghanistan, there was a negative response towards American brands in Muslim countries like Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco, where the sales of American brands decreased up to 70, 68, 64, 62 and 51 per cent, respectively (Chiozza, 2004; Ahmed et al., 2013). The survey found that the number of respondents manifesting a low opinion of American brands was increasing and reached a worrying level in Indonesia, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Turkey and Palestine (Chiozza, 2004; Ahmed et al., 2013). The behaviour of Muslim consumers depicts that they not only have considerable spending power but also can speak loudly and proudly about
their religious identity. Interestingly, American brands have managed to survive after such a bad situation. Overall, however, American brands still have prospective potential switchers among Muslim consumers. It seems interesting to understand why Muslim consumers can switch, and to what extent American brands can discourage such consumers from leaving. To discourage the brand switching behaviour, it is essential to take switching behaviour into consideration (Colgate et al., 2007).

There has been little research investigating the reasons why consumers prefer to stay with a brand after considering a brand switching decision. Ganesh et al. (2000) introduced the idea of “stayers”, although they looked at stayers in the context of bank customers who had never moved from their banking institution, whereas Colgate et al. (2007) focussed on stayers in the context of customers who had decided to stay after recent consideration of switching, regardless of their past switching habits. Stayers in the study by Colgate et al. (2007) are from two different cultures with their own local brands. The aim of this study is to examine a group of consumers that has never been researched before. This group consists of millennial Muslim stayers, in particular those consumers who have (recently) seriously considered switching from American brands but decided to stay with their current American brands.

Despite the importance of Muslim consumer behaviour currently and considering that the socio-cultural context of the investigated consumers can also impact on their brand switching behaviour, so far there appears to have been no cross-cultural research in Muslim countries regarding the staying reasons of American brands. This study is designed to examine the millennial Muslim stayers from two different cultures but with fixed brands to extend the research by Ganesh et al. (2000) and Colgate et al. (2007). The paper begins with introduction and it is followed by literature review which provides theoretical grounds about the brand switching behaviour which is then followed by the methodology used. The next section discusses the results and discussion and last section provides conclusion with recommendation.

**Literature review**

**Millennial Muslim consumers**

Millennial consumers are defined as the people born between 1980 and 2000 (Richard, 2011a), but there is no consensus regarding this period, and other definitions indicate a slightly different time interval: 1980-1995 (Edelman/Strategy One, 2010), 1981-1995 (Lafayette, 2011), 1982-1994 (Kavounis, 2008); 1982-2000 (Rich, 2008), 1982-2002 (Littman, 2008) or 1982-2005 (Howe and Strauss, 2007). In this study, conducted in 2016, the interval taken into consideration was 1980-2000, with the research focussing on millennial consumers aged between 18 and 30 years old. The generational cohort theory argues that entire populations can be grouped into generations based upon placement in the historical cycle which includes specific events that shape the attitudes and behaviours of members within each cohort (Howe and Strauss, 2000). This assumption is used as a general basis for consumer segmentation. The millennials are described as self-centred, techno savvy, environmentally-conscious individuals, who spend more than previous generations and display low levels of brand loyalty (Amplitude, 2009; Greenberg, 2011). A contrast of opinions exist in the literature regarding the characteristics of millennial consumers. Caplan (2005) notes that millennials want products that match their personality and lifestyle and pay little attention to brands. Phillips’ (2007) findings outline that millennials consider themselves as rationally oriented consumers, for which price and product features are more important than brand names. In contrast, other studies indicate that young consumers are loyal to the brands.
which are in line with their personality and values (Beirne and Howe, 2008; Edelman/Strategy One, 2010). However, in addition to the general debate on millennial consumers, there is a large segment within the millennial generation, the millennial Muslim consumers, who are also called Generation M. This is a particular segment within the wider global Muslim population as well as among millennial consumers. Muslim millennials are the next big opportunity for brands, as millennial Muslims are an emerging consumer group (WARC, 2016). One key defining characteristic of this generation is that they believe faith and modernity go hand in hand (Janmohamed, 2016). They do not see any contradiction between faith and modernity; indeed, faith and modernity complement each other (Janmohamed, 2016). In their view, their faith makes the world a better place. Therefore, to evidence the impact of the origin of the brands or brand names on the patterns of brand switching behaviour displayed by millennial Muslim consumers, the present study investigates brand switching behaviour for American brands.

It is evident from the literature that the frequency of brand switching is high among young consumers (Shukla, 2009). In emerging markets, consumers are increasingly faced with a choice between local and non-local (or foreign) brands and their choice making is worth researching (Batra et al., 2000). Consumers in emerging countries are also influenced by Western culture through media and modern forms of distribution, as well as through tourists and immigrants, and so they have become familiar with global brands and generally prefer them to local ones (Akram et al., 2011). Pakistan is the country with the largest number of millennial Muslim consumers and has been categorized as belonging to the “Next Eleven”, the 11 countries with high economic potential for the twenty-first century (Wilson and Stupnytska, 2007), whereas Malaysia has millennial Muslim consumers living in a multi-religious and multi-cultural environment. However, the majority of its population is Muslim, and therefore millennial Muslim consumers in Pakistan and Malaysia are considered to be the best respondents within the context of this study, as both countries are emerging markets and most of their consumers follow the same religion yet have differences in their socio-cultural perspectives.

Brand switching behaviour
Brand switching behaviour involves exchanging or replacing a relationship with a current brand with another brand (Shukla, 2009) and is the opposite of customer loyalty. The interest in switching behaviour grew during the 1990s. Since then, business researchers have paid attention to such behaviour, as it is highly related to business continuity – an essential concept in business marketing – because companies are able to use it as a way to re-evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and use it as a tool to attract new customers, and the benefits related to customer retention are very high in comparison with attracting new customers (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991; Shukla, 2004; Njite et al., 2008). The literature on switching behaviour so far can be divided into four main types. The first aims to understand the switching behaviour itself and the relationships between the variables affecting switching behaviour (Colgate and Hedge, 2001; Han et al., 2011; Chih et al., 2012; Jung and Yoon, 2012; Ha and Jang, 2013; Han and Hyun, 2013; Park and Jang, 2014; Sun, 2014). The second involves reviewing the mean differences between individual groups in terms of switching behaviour (Grace and O’Cass, 2001; Swanson and Hsu, 2009; Wieringa and Verhoef, 2007). The third focuses on the process of switching behaviour decision-making and disclosing the factors that cause customers to switch brands (Keaveney, 1995; Njite et al., 2008; Roos, 1999). The last identifies switching behaviour by applying existing
theories such as theories of planned behaviour and the push-pull-mooring model (Bansal and Taylor, 1999; Bansal et al., 2005; Hou et al., 2011; Hsieh et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2008). These four aspects come under the umbrella of direct and derived brand switching behaviour. Being intrinsically driven by inherently satisfying rewards of changing or variety-seeking behaviour is known as direct brand switching behaviour (McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; Van Trijp et al., 1996), whereas derived brand switching behaviour is because of altered commitments about brands owing to external causes such as advertising (Deighton et al., 1994) or sales promotion (Grover and Srinivasan, 1992). However, as well as direct and derived brand switching behaviour, consumers also switch brands because of socio-political dynamics between two groups or nations. The socio-political dynamics have also damaged the image of American brands in Muslim countries. It also speaks to the impact of religious ideology on consumer behaviour. Religion and ideology intertwine in complex ways in the marketplace, often informing consumer identity and attitudes toward brands (Miller 2009; Pink 2009). Therefore, to control brand switching behaviour, firms use tactics that strengthen the relationship between consumer and firm and discourage switching behaviour (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997; Colgate and Lang, 2001; Lam et al., 2004; White and Yanamandram, 2007). Strong staying reasons can play an important role in controlling brand switching behaviour.

**Staying reasons and brand switching behaviour** The expression “staying reasons” refers to why customers choose to stay after having seriously considered leaving. It has been argued that staying reasons are important factors to take into consideration when examining switching behaviour (Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003). In prior research, staying reasons can be divided into two main dimensions: first, switching barriers, and second, affirmative factors (Colgate et al., 2007). Switching barriers are interpreted as negative reasons to stay with a brand and are critical for customer retention (Qiu et al., 2015; Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003), whereas affirmative factors are the positive reasons for staying. However, each dimension has different categories of staying reasons. There are four major categories of switching barriers that can affect switching behaviour: relational investment, switching costs, availability of alternatives and service recovery (Colgate and Lang, 2001). These categories are further developed and include both positive and negative reasons for staying and four switching barriers: time and effort, alternatives, emotional bonds and switching costs. The second dimension, affirmative factors, has three staying reasons: confidence, social bonds and service recovery (Colgate et al., 2007). In this study, the term “affirmatory factors” refers to those factors that help the brands to retain the customers by addressing the issues that are bothering those consumers. Several researchers argue that affirmative factors reduce the switching behaviour of consumers because of emotional attachment, trust, confidence and well-handled complaints (Colgate et al., 2007; White and Yanamandram, 2007), as well-handled complaints tend to result in customer satisfaction (Tax et al., 1998).

**Conceptual framework and hypotheses development** The theoretical models of brand switching behaviour that exist in the literature so far focus specifically on the phenomenon of consumer switching behaviour in the specific industry context of developed countries. While it is well understood that there is a high level of importance accorded to the role that Western cultures have played in building consumer behaviour models, it would seem there is little manifest interest in validating their explanatory powers in markedly different cultures. This is unfortunate because the few cross-cultural studies in marketing have shown how Western models may require regional modification (Mattila, 1999a; Mattila 1999b; Winsted, 1997). For a phenomenon to be well
understood, a variety of theories are needed for examining that phenomenon within specific contexts (Nimako and Winneba, 2012). Therefore, this research has its roots in the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985). TPB is an expectancy-value model that has been used to provide a framework for the analysis of behavioural normative and control commitments that impact consumer action (Ajzen, 1991). The central factor in TPB is the intention to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Intentions are held to be determined by attitudes toward the behaviour (favourable or unfavourable), subjective norms (perception of social pressures to perform or not to perform the behaviour), and PBC (perceived behavioural control), which is the perceived difficulty or ease of performing the behaviour. The TPB was proposed by Ajzen (1985) as a response to criticism that the theory of reasoned actions failed to include behaviours over which people have incomplete control. Therefore, the concept of perceived behavioural control was added to the new model. This study is interested in perceived behavioural control beliefs of the TPB framework as the idea of staying reasons is very close to perceived behavioural control. A person’s perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest can be different in different situations and for different behaviours. Moreover, the presence or absence of a certain factor can positively or negatively affect behaviour. In this study, perceived behavioural control is used in relation to staying reasons that can discourage actual brand switching behaviour among millennial Muslim consumers in Pakistan and Malaysia. By reviewing and integrating the literature in the context of brand switching behaviour and staying reasons, in this study the switching barriers and affirmatory factors are modelled as antecedents of switching intentions. The proposed model is depicted in Figure 1.

Studies on the factors that reduce brand switching behaviour are limited so far. The work available is more conceptual-based rather than empirical (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997), and on service industries (Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty, 2000; Burnham, Frels and Mahajan, 2003). The work on staying reasons that empirically tested such reasons on two different cultures (China and New Zealand) identified that staying reasons vary across cultures (Colgate et al., 2007) but their study, however, is using brands and respondents from the same country. There is a limitation that brands in both countries target consumers according to the culture. In the light of the gaps identified in the literature, there is a need to provide an understanding of the staying reasons in the two different cultures of Pakistan and Malaysia on the brands originating from America and the effect of staying reasons on brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslim consumers in Pakistan and Malaysia. Thus, the following hypotheses have been developed for this study:

Figure 1. Conceptual framework
There is a significant difference between the staying reasons of Pakistani and Malaysian consumers.

There is a significant difference between the switching barriers of American brands in Pakistan and Malaysia.

There is a significant difference between the affirmatory factors of American brands in Pakistan and Malaysia.

Related literature suggests that consumers may decide to switch the relationship based on positive and negative factors (Colgate et al., 2007). They may be attracted by alternatives, better offerings and positive characteristics of competitors, which influence consumer switching behaviour (Sharma and Patterson, 2000; Jones et al., 2000). In contrast to the above, if competitors’ offerings are not attractive, the switching intention might discourage the actual switching behaviour. In addition, because of affirmatory factors, consumers may decide to stay with the same brand. Moreover, consumers in developing countries associate American products with high quality and prestige (Bhardwaj et al., 2010). Therefore, staying reasons influence the brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslim consumers, as Pakistan is lacking in local brands and they prefer to buy international brands because non-local brands are perceived as high quality ones in Pakistan (Alden and Steenkamp, 1999; Schuiling and Kapferer, 2004; Aneela, 2011), whereas Malaysia has strong local brands and they are practising ethnocentrism against American brands (Othman et al., 2008; Ghani and Mat, 2017), although they also regard international brands as high quality ones (Bhardwaj et al., 2010). Thus, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H2. Staying reasons significantly influence the brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslim consumers in Pakistan and Malaysia.

Actual behaviour is an outcome of intention. The brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslim consumers and staying reasons are mediated by the switching intention. Staying reasons lead to a high switching intention, and a high switching intention leads to high brand switching behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In contrast, high staying reasons lead to a low switching intention and a low switching intention leads to low brand switching behaviour. Thus, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H3. Intention mediates the relationship between staying reasons and the brand switching behaviour of Muslim consumers.

The brand switching literature lacks comparative studies in developing countries and most research is conducted in relation to service industries (e.g. Morgan and Dev, 1994; Keaveney, 1995; Roos, 1999; Colgate and Hedge, 2001; Bansal et al., 2004; Bansal et al., 2005; Njite et al., 2008; Abou Aish el al., 2008; Marshall et al., 2011). Consumer behaviour is directly affected by cultural factors, as well as through the consequences of culture (Manrai and Manrai, 2011). People in different countries think, feel and act differently (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). Such patterns of thinking, feeling and acting are learnt during an individual’s lifetime (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). However, there is a lack of research regarding the comparison of Muslim consumers’ behaviour in two different countries. Thus, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H4. There is a significant difference between the relationship of staying reasons and brand switching behaviour among millennial Muslim consumers in Pakistan and Malaysia.
Research methodology
A cross-sectional survey design was used to measure the constructs of the study in both countries. The survey instrument had two distinct parts. In the first part, items for measuring switching barriers and affirmative factors were adapted from the literature (Colgate et al., 2007). The switching intention was measured through seven items, adapted from Ping (1995), Bansal et al. (2005) and Nimako et al. (2014). The second part of the questionnaire was about the demographics of the respondents. A panel of four marketing experts, two from Pakistan and two from Malaysia, checked the content validity. The questionnaire was revised according to the comments of the experts, and face validity was checked through pilot testing. The sample size of the pilot test for this study was 66. The threshold of respondents for pilot testing is between 10 to 100 in a normal sample size, but for a large sample size the threshold for pilot testing is 200 (Saunders et al., 2012). The reliability was assessed by measuring Cronbach’s alpha, which assesses the consistency of the whole scale (Hair et al., 2010). The value of Cronbach’s alpha 0.7 or above is considered good (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2005). All scale items were measured by five-point Likert-type scales ranging from “strongly disagree to strongly agree”. In addition, before distributing questionnaires to the respondents, the aim of the research was explained to each respondent, and a pre-screening question was asked about whether they were using American brands and they had ever thought about switching but did not implement that switching decision. The value of Cronbach’s alpha for switching barriers, affirmative factors, switching intention and brand switching behaviour was 0.90, 0.90, 0.84 and 0.86, respectively.

In this comparative study between Pakistan and Malaysia, Lahore was selected for sampling from Pakistan as it is the capital of the province of Punjab and is the main centre for culture in Pakistan as a whole. Its population in 1998 stood at just under 6.5 million with a figure for 2013 of just over 7 million with a current growth rate of just over 2 per cent. It has expanded to double its size in the past 14 years but remains the 42nd most heavily populated city in the world. In contrast, Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia, was selected for the sampling purpose because of its relatively greater affluence and population density. As a capital city, Kuala Lumpur is the most developed region in Peninsular Malaysia, with modern amenities and infrastructure, compared to other parts of the country. From there, these new ideas are being diffused to other parts of the country. Demographically, although the distribution of ethnic groups is somewhat different in Kuala Lumpur to nationally, the characteristics of these groups in Kuala Lumpur closely resemble those of the national population.

The respondent age starts from 18 years. The first reason behind the choice of this age group is the restriction of the Ethical Research Committee that the respondents’ age should be above or equal to 18 years old. If the research targets children or specific young respondents, in such cases, approval from the committee is required. Second, young people are keener on brand switching than older consumers are (Shukla, 2009). The structural equation modelling (SEM) requires larger samples, compared to other multivariate approaches. The required sample size for SEM is 300 and the acceptable communality level is 0.45 (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, although this total sample size meets all the requirements of the analysis technique, the researcher’s target was a sample size of 300 valid responses from each country (Pakistan and Malaysia), and in fact, the valid responses from Pakistan and Malaysia were 400 and 306, respectively. The current study depended on probability sampling, namely, multistage cluster sampling. This method is appropriate when it is difficult to identify the sample size from a large population (Creswell, 2013). At the first stage, two universities were selected from Kuala Lumpur and two from Lahore. At the
second stage, data were collected from each department through simple random sampling: every 10th student was selected as a participant.

Results and discussion

Descriptive statistics were used to provide an overview about the sample (Saunders et al., 2012). The respondents were of different age and were categorised into two groups: those of age from 18 to 24, representing 79.9 per cent of the sample, and those of age between 25 and 30, representing the remaining 19.1 per cent. The demographic details of the main survey sample show that the majority of the respondents were females, forming 53.1 per cent of the whole sample, while males were represented by only 46.9 per cent. The mainstream level of the social status of respondents varied between single (91.1 per cent) and married (8.9 per cent). The occupational status showed that 90.7 per cent of the respondents were students and 9.3 per cent were both students and employees. The respondents from Pakistan represented 56.7 per cent of the sample, while Malaysians represented the other 43.3 per cent. The majority of respondents had completed their degree and represented 81.3 per cent of the total sample, while 11.6 per cent had a masters’ degree and 7.1 per cent respondents were at PhD level. The respondents were affiliated with four different universities in Lahore and Kuala Lumpur.

A T-test was used to test H1a and H1b. Table I shows that the significant (two-tailed) value was 0.00 for switching barriers and affirmatory factors. This value is less than 0.05, which shows that there is a significant difference between switching barriers and affirmatory factors in relation to American brands in both countries. Table II indicates that the mean of Malaysian customers is 3.19 for switching barriers while the mean of Pakistani customers is 4.17. The switching barriers of American brands are higher in Lahore compared to Kuala Lumpur. The reason behind this is the differences of culture in both countries and their response toward American brands. Pakistani consumers in Lahore have a weak local industry as compared to Kuala Lumpur. It is difficult for Pakistani millennial consumers in Lahore to switch brands because they do not have alternative options whereas Malaysian millennial consumers in Kuala Lumpur do. In other words, millennial Malaysian consumers in Kuala Lumpur have lower switching barriers of American brands because they have alternative options with good quality and prices. Moreover, Malaysian consumers are ethnocentric (Othman et al., 2008; Bojei et al., 2010; Tabassi et al., 2012). They prefer to use local brands as compared to American brands. These results are consistent with the previous research by Colgate et al. (2007), who found that the switching barriers are different between New Zealand and China. Thus, American brands need to develop their strategies according to the culture of the target markets, especially in Kuala Lumpur, as they are ethnocentric because of the image of America as an anti-Muslim country. Thus, American brands need to change this image.

H1b is that affirmatory factors of American brands are significantly different in both cities. Table I shows that the significant (two-tailed) value is 0.00 for switching barriers and affirmatory factors. This value is less than 0.05, which shows that there is a significant difference of affirmatory factors of American brands in both countries. Table II indicates that the mean of Malaysian customers is 3.16 for affirmatory factors while the mean of Pakistani customers is 4.15. The millennial Muslim consumers in Lahore have strong affirmatory factors as compared to such consumers in Kuala Lumpur. The affirmatory factors refer to those factors that minimise the switching behaviour because of satisfaction, loyalty, trust and emotional attachment. The reason behind this is that American brands have created more emotional attachment with Pakistani millennial consumers in Lahore as compared to Malaysian millennial consumers in Kuala Lumpur. In other words, it may be
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>$T$</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig. (two-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>Std. error difference</th>
<th>95% confidence interval of the difference Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>212.29</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>21.31</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>19.26</td>
<td>370.24</td>
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<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.06</td>
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<td>22.51</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>1.07</td>
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<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.89</td>
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</table>
easy for American brands in Lahore to attach consumers emotionally to them because of the low level of competition as compared to Kuala Lumpur because Malaysian consumers are ethnocentric (Othman et al., 2008; Bojei et al., 2010; Tabassi et al., 2012). The results of this study are consistent with those of Colgate et al.’s (2007). According to that, affirmative factors may vary from country to country. Thus, to have strong affirmative factors, it is necessary to consider existing competitors in the market and develop strategies by keeping in mind the competitors’ strategies and local brands as well.

SEM was used to test H2, H3 and H4, using two models: a measurement model and a structural model. Table III below shows the factor loadings of the items, and Table IV represents the model fit. CFA is conducted to ensure the convergent and discriminant validity of constructs (staying reasons, switching intention, and brand switching behaviour). Findings recommended that a three-factor model where all of the study

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>Std. error mean</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affirmatory factors</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>4.15</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Malaysian</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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</table>

**Table III.**
Factor loadings

- Looking for a new brand takes too much time and effort: 0.71
- Switching from one brand to another takes too much time and effort: 0.74
- Learning about the new brand takes too much time and effort: 0.73
- Too much effort involved in establishing a new relationship with another brand: 0.73
- I am concerned that the new brand may be worse than my current one: 0.82
- I do not think that the alternatives that exist are any better: 0.86
- I am concerned about the possible problems caused by moving to another brand: 0.87
- A complaint I had was handled well: 0.85
- A problem I had was handled well: 0.81
- Other family members or friends also use my current brand: 0.72
- I am familiar with my current brand: 0.77
- I am satisfied with my current brand: 0.81
- I feel a sense of loyalty to my current brand: 0.84
- I trust my current brand: 0.83
- The staff at my current brand are friendly and caring: 0.76
- The staff at my current brand understand me: 0.70
- I am not likely to continue the business relationship with the current brand: 0.66
- I will probably consider a replacement of the current brand in the near future: 0.80
- I am looking at a replacement of the brand: 0.84
- I will probably stop doing business with the current brand in the near future: 0.65
- I like new brands: 0.62
- I try new brands very often: 0.72
- I never come back to switched brands: 0.82
- Whenever I change a brand it is for long time: 0.79
- I have changed from American brands to other brands in last 12 months: 0.70
- I stopped using American brands and moved to using local brands in my country: 0.70
variables were treated as separate latent variables resulted a better model fit ($\chi^2 = 904.975$, df = 184, RMSEA = 0.05, CFI = 0.93, IFI = 0.93), as compare to any other model that loaded these latent variables on a model with few factors. A two-factor model where staying reasons and switching intention are loaded on separate latent factors showed a relatively poor model fit ($\chi^2 = 2786.24$, df = 821, RMSEA = 0.08, CFI = 0.89, IFI = 0.90).

After checking the factor loadings and model fit, the next step was to establish the convergent and discriminant validity. The results of the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model are presented in the Table V. The reliability of the constructs was above 0.7, ranging from 0.82 to 0.90, indicating good reliability. The average variance extracted (AVE) was above 0.5 for all constructs, ranging from 0.50 to 0.55, suggesting good convergence. The value of maximum shared variance (MSV) and average shared variance (ASV) was below the value of AVE. The table also shows that the values of MSV and ASV are less than the value of AVE. Hence, the convergent and decrement validity of the data is proved, and the measurement model is ready for further analysis.

The measurement model was converted into a structural one for testing the hypotheses proposed in the theory (Hair et al., 2010). Three types of tests were conducted to check the hypotheses. The first was the direct impact of independent variables on a dependent variable, the second was the mediation test of switching intention between independent variables (switching barriers and affirmatory factors) and the third test was a multi-group moderation (this study had two groups, from Pakistan and Malaysia, respectively). The results demonstrated the acceptance $H2$ for a direct relationship between staying reasons with the brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslim consumers. Staying reasons exert a direct significant impact on brand switching behaviour with a path estimate of 0.043, $t$-values = 2.142 and a significance level of $p = 0.032$. Millennial Muslim consumers in both countries are influenced by staying reasons of American brands. The findings of this study

### Table IV. Model fit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>$\chi^2$/df</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model fitness</td>
<td>904.975</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table V. Validity and reliability of model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>AVE</th>
<th>MSV</th>
<th>ASV</th>
<th>AF</th>
<th>SI</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>BSB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>078</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSB</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** CR: construct reliability, AVE: average variance extracted, MSV: maximum share variance, AF: affirmatory factors, SI: Switching Intention, SB: switching barriers, BSB: brand switching behaviour
are in line with those of Ranaweera and Prabhu (2003), which indicated that switching barriers are a useful tool in customer retention, and the study by Qiu et al. (2015) which found that switching barriers has a significant relation with customer loyalty. In addition, this finding supports Phillips (2007) findings, which indicated that millennials consumers consider themselves to be rationally oriented consumers: for them, product features and brand performance are more important than brand names. Moreover, this finding is also in line with previous research by Alden and Steenkamp (1999), Schuiling and Kapferer (2004) and Akram et al. (2011) that consumers from developing countries prefer brands that they perceive as originating from a non-local country, especially from Western countries, more than they do local brands, and that preference is linked to perceived quality. The focus of millennial Muslim consumers in Pakistan and Malaysia is more on the time and effort required to change the brand, the availability of alternatives, emotional attachment to current brands and the costs of switching which are incurred in changing from one brand to another. In addition, satisfaction, loyalty, trust and emotional attachment to current brands minimise the decision to switch brands (Colgate et al., 2007). Although American brands carry the image of an anti-Muslim country, they manage to survive because of switching barriers and the affirmatory factors of millennial Muslim consumers. Thus, American brands have to develop strong staying reasons if they wish to control the brand switching behaviour among millennial Muslim consumers. Table VI represents the results of direct path. American companies maintain their brands in terms of quality and price and develop emotional attachment with their consumers, thus providing strong staying reasons to millennial Muslim consumers.

Staying reasons have a significant association with the brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslim consumers in Pakistan and Malaysia. The coefficient value is 0.033, which demonstrates that a one percent change in staying reasons leads to a 3.3 per cent change in switching behaviour. The full mediation of switching intention exists between staying reasons and brand switching behaviour. $H_3$ is accepted. The results indicate that switching barriers and affirmatory factors are strong predictors of brand switching behaviour. The results of this study are consistent with those of Bansal et al. (2005), who explored the mediation role of intention between pull factors and brand switching behaviour, where switching intention successfully mediates the relation between pull factors (staying reasons) and brand switching behaviour. Table VII represents the direct and indirect results of the constructs Figure 2 is representing the mediation model of this study.

To make the comparison between Pakistan and Malaysia regarding brand switching behaviour, a multi-group moderation was performed. A moderation effect occurs when a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table VI.</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>$P$-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct path</td>
<td>Staying reasons → Brand switching behaviour</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>2.142</td>
<td>0.032*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table VII.</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Direct effect</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mediation</td>
<td>S.R → S.B</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.339***</td>
<td>0.372***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
third variable or construct changes the relationship between two related variables/constructs. Moderation typically involves the testing of structural model estimates, and the process involves multi-group analysis for testing measurement invariance. In the present study, the first group model was estimated with path estimates calculated separately for each group. Then a second group model was estimated where the path estimate of interest was constrained so as to be equal between the groups. A comparison of differences between the models, using a Chi-square test, indicated whether the model fit decreased significantly when the estimates were constrained to be equal. A statistically significant difference between the models indicated that the path estimates were different and the moderation did exist. The findings of the multi-group moderation are shown in Table VIII. The multi-group moderation was conducted through a Chi-square test to check the group differences between

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall model</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unconstrained</td>
<td>1931.779</td>
<td>540</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully constrained</td>
<td>2039.255</td>
<td>565</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>107.476</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VIII. Multi-group moderation
Pakistan and Malaysia, using AMOS. The influence of staying reasons on brand switching behaviour varied across Pakistan and Malaysia. It can be seen through the $p = 0.000$, which demonstrated that it is significant. Both countries have differences in brand switching behaviour although they share the same religion and both groups are composed of millennial Muslim consumers. This difference is because of socio-cultural variation. People in different countries think, feel, and act differently and such patterns of thinking, feeling and acting are learnt during an individual’s lifetime (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011). From this study, it was found that consumers in both countries are different. The consumers in Pakistan make their purchase decisions based on the owner’s credibility. In other words, if the owner is credible and the consumer believes in the owner, they ignore the brands and make their purchase decisions based on the owner’s credibility. Malaysian consumers, on the other hand, have a strong bonding with domestic products: they prefer to buy local products rather than foreign ones, and Malaysian consumers’ scores are comparatively high in ethnocentrism and patriotism (Othman et al., 2008; Ghani and Mat, 2017). Being ethnocentric, Malaysians switch away from American brands and buy local brands. Thus, marketing strategies developed by firms are not universally applicable but they need to be developed according to the marketing environment and cultural values of the country.

Conclusion
The current study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in three areas: staying reasons, brand switching behaviour and millennial Muslim stayers. First, this study is a step forward from Ganesh et al. (2000) and Colgate et al. (2007), by investigating millennial Muslim stayers across different cultural settings: Pakistan and Malaysia. Second, the study assesses the influence of staying reasons on brand switching behaviour. The brand switching literature is limited to features that strengthen the relationship between consumers and firms and discourage brand switching behaviour (Bendapudi and Berry, 1997; Colgate and Lang, 2001; Lam et al., 2004; White and Yanamandram, 2007). The model of this study, however, provides a deeper understanding of brand switching behaviour, in particular that of millennial Muslim stayers, although there could be other constructs than those that were incorporated in this model. Consumers in both countries exhibit different levels of switching barriers and affirmative factors of American brands, although, both countries are sharing same religion. Second, staying reasons influence the brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslims consumers. The decrease in sale of American brands is because of socio-cultural dynamics which in turn are controlled by the staying reasons. Third, millennial Muslim consumers are influenced by the product features instead of brand names. But this conclusion has introduced an important construct, which is that religious commitments can influence the brand switching behaviour of millennial Muslim consumers.

There are certain limitations to this study, as the results are narrowed to a single segment of consumers, who are only Muslims from two geographical locations. However, even if, with rapid market globalisation and technological advancement, consumer brand switching behaviour seems to look convergent, the motivations behind the choice of products are different across cultures (Malhotra et al., 1996). This study has considered all product and service brands originating from America, rather than specifying product and service categories, and so this is to be regarded as a limitation.

Future research can focus on consumers in other countries where people have different perceptions, cultures and characteristics. The testing of the model in a different context is likely to yield further valuable insights. Additionally, the model can be applied to the service
sector and products separately. The use of a longitudinal study could trace consumer brand switching behaviour and gauge the stability of the constructs of this study.

This suggests that practitioners need to define the appeal of brands, which is distinct from the general recognition of brands in Muslim countries. In defining “brand”, the favourability of brand types and novelty attributes that differentiate one brand from others should be apparent and should focus on the salient traits. A positioning strategy for consumer segments in two different cultures with the same religion is critical. It highlights the importance of how consumers’ self-expression impacts on their decision to switch brands or stay with that brand. This implies that marketers need to define the consumers in the target market and transfer explicitly this definition of consumers to the brand. Accordingly, market research is required to uncover the target consumer’s self-concept based on their religion and matched brand-image.

References


Further reading


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