

Book Review

'Islamic Branding and Marketing: Creating a Global Islamic Business' by Paul Temporal. Singapore: John Wiley & Sons. 2011. 324 Pages. ISBN 978-0-470-82539-6.

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Anybody familiar with Paul Temporal's other works on branding would also find his latest book, *'Islamic Branding and Marketing: Creating a Global Islamic Business'*, informative. Whilst the book in general emphasises the importance of strategic brand management to any business's sustainable development and success, it provides particular managerial implications for those organisations which are, in one way or another, engaged in Muslim geographies. The author's practitioner background (as a branding consultant), coupled with his academic insight, has equipped him with a sharp binocular to spot the urgency for strategic branding amongst businesses and organisations emerging from or entering Muslim contexts.

The key importance of the book lies in its detailed discussion of the socio-cultural and economic characteristics of this diverse and large population. Such issues in international/global marketing textbooks are often generally, but unhelpfully briefly, addressed under the subject of 'adaptation' or 'glocalisation' strategies. Besides, given the fact that relevant books on global/international branding (e.g., Gregory with Wiechmann, 2001; van Gelder, 2003; Bühler, 2008; Cato, 2010) are generally focused on familiar western brands, Temporal's timely book draws marketers' attention to the myriad brands in non-western contexts. The author's admirable use of numerous case studies presents to the reader a rich source of knowledge that is not essentially 'west-centric' (see Featherstone, 2006; Tadjewski, 2010; Jafari et al., 2012; Tadjewski and Jafari, 2012). This in itself is a valuable contribution to our marketing literature which is largely dominated by case studies on repeatedly discussed multinational corporations.

The book consists of eleven chapters excluding the author's preface, two appendices, and the index. Temporal's preface justifies the importance of the book to contemporary marketing and defines the scope of 'Islamic' branding and marketing. Chapter 1 serves as an overall background to the book. It describes the basic concepts that underpin business philosophy and practice (e.g., ethics) amongst Muslims and explains the reasons for the rise of interest in branding in this large population. Chapter 2 creates a link between branding at micro and macro levels. The author emphasises that branding at a company (micro) level is not enough as factors such as country of origin and B2B relationships immensely influence the success likelihood of organisational branding. Therefore, branding at national as well as industry/sector levels is deemed vital. In Chapter 3, the author sheds light on the structure of markets in Muslim geographies. This section is particularly rich in terms of the comparative statistical data presented on the demographic disparity of Muslim populations. Chapter 4 introduces a typology of branding at three levels of countries (e.g., Malaysia), organisations

(e.g., Organisation of the Islamic Conference), and companies (e.g., Zam Zam Cola). Examples in this section link chapters 2 and 4 in the sense that they stress how branding at macro and micro levels can benefit Muslim societies. Next, in Chapter 5, Temporal presents a broad array of globally renowned brands to highlight learning opportunities for organisations and companies in Muslim contexts. This chapter builds upon a specific part of marketing literature we commonly refer to as ‘branding techniques’. Chapter 6 identifies the major industry sectors where Islamic branding can particularly help to capture opportunities. Discussions in section are rather unbalanced. Whilst industries such as banking, food and beverages, and pharmaceuticals are discussed in detail, other industries such as education, fashion, and entertainment are addressed very briefly. In Chapter 7, the author highlights the implications of digital marketing for branding. The Internet, as Temporal rightly argues, provides myriad opportunities for brands to enhance their visibility and relationship building with different stakeholders. Chapter 8 focuses on the challenges facing Islamic brands and offers a series of practical solutions to such brands. Issues of brand awareness, accessibility to markets, acceptability by consumers, meeting target market standards, gaining trust, and responsiveness to competitors’ attacks are discussed. Similarly, in Chapter 9, the author focuses on the significance of brands’ understanding of their target markets and their own value proposition. The consultant’s advice in this section is similar to the step-by-step planning of a new market entry strategy commonly discussed in many international/global marketing textbooks. Chapter 10 revisits the challenges explained in Chapter 8, but this time recommendations are given to ‘non-Islamic’ brands targeting markets in Muslim contexts. Short case studies in this section provide tangible evidence for what established companies are actually doing in expanding their markets. Finally, Chapter 11 summarises the key managerial implications of the book for companies emerging from or entering Muslim geographies. The two appendices explain the Oxford Saïd Business School’s research and education project on Islamic branding.

All these features make the book appealing to several audiences in both Muslim and non-Muslim contexts. Whilst brand managers can particularly – as their immediate organisational responsibilities require – benefit from the book in many ways, CEOs can equally, and even more strategically, gain a deeper understanding of the ever-increasing importance of brand management in a globally competitive environment. The authoritative narrative of the book leaves no doubt that brand management is not an ‘aesthetic’ addition to organisations’ operative agenda; on the contrary, it is a necessary strategic torch to firmly and permanently hold in hand in order to safely continue one’s journey. Within this community of marketing and business practitioners, the book’s primary audience could be newly founded and/or growing SMEs. Similarly, established organisations can use the book to refresh their knowledge of branding in a dynamic world. Furthermore, and from an educational perspective, the book avails marketing educators with a rather unconventional teaching source that not only familiarises to-be-marketers’ ears (particularly in western institutions) with a large number of brands and business tales from other parts of the world, but also sets live examples for them to better understand multiple socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that affect branding strategies.

Just like any other book, ‘*Islamic Branding and Marketing*’ is not limitation-proof. The key weakness of the book is its lack of sufficient engagement with the concept of ‘country of origin’. Although in Chapters 2 and 8, the author refers to issues of brand awareness and country of origin, his discussions remain somehow superficial. During the recent economic downturn (since around 2008), a series brands (e.g., GMC and Chrysler, Bear Stearns Companies, Lloyds TSB) were bailed out by governments. Such examples indicate that in

today's political economy, brands are no longer standalone entities. They signify national pride and political-economic power and stability. That is why governments pay special attention to how their countries' giant brands perform in international arenas. Traditionally, as a result of political-economic hegemony (see Schiller 1976; Weiler, 2000), western powers have used global media as an influential tool to their own benefit at the expense of demoting other (non-western) countries' economic gain. Such imperialist behaviours, along with the unfortunate events such as the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks, have all led to the demonization of Muslim populations as a result of which their brand image may have badly suffered. As such, the country of origin concept is a highly political concept which needs to be specifically studied in the light of 'postcolonial' and 'post-development' theories (see Varman and Costa, 2012). Another highly significant point the author should have elaborated in further depth in this book is related to the political-ideological conflicts amongst Muslim countries (e.g., the Persian Gulf region and North Africa). No matter how great brands from a Muslim country may be, international conflicts can always overshadow trade balance between these countries. As a result, brands' simply don't get to find their way in their intended markets. To conclude, the book is a good source of knowledge that provides opportunities for marketing practitioners and academics to think about the opportunities and challenges of branding in cross-cultural contexts.

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