

Religiosity Role within the Halal Foods Consumptions' Antecedents

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Abstract

This research aims to highlight the determinants of the intention to purchase Halal foods. In the conceptual framework we examine the different antecedents that might affect the purchase intention to choose the Halal foods. Then, we integrate in the research model the independent constructs religiosity orientations, halal certification, subjective norm, sustainable behavior to explain purchase intention of halal food.

Moreover, we attempt to study the mediating role of the religiosity in this purchase decision process of the Muslim consumer.

The empirical study will be implemented in the Saudi Halal Foods Market. Thus, we interviewed 200 individuals in the exploratory study to purify the measurements of the selected constructs that may contribute in the explanation of the intention to consume Halal. The confirmatory phase requires a second sample that counts 400 interviewees. The software of the data analyses that we have used were SPSS and AMOS to purify measurements, to test the research hypotheses and to validate the developed model.

At the end of this research we hope to characterize and define the most important determinants' Muslim purchase intention of Halal foods. Therefore, we advance the necessary recommendations to the academicians interesting in this business field and the practices who enquiry to improve their offerings and their transactions turnover within this emerging consumption sector.

Keywords: Halal food, Religiosity, Attitude, Halal certification, Consumption habit, Subjective norm.

Introduction

Actually, companies are no longer judged solely on their financial performance, but also on their ethical performance. Certainly, in the choice and evaluation of companies, we are witnessing more and more new criteria related to ethics, such as organic food, fair trade, or social responsible. If more and more organizations are integrating ethics into their strategies, it is because consumer demand is explicit, or that these must counteract a growing criticism, critics essentially related to the environment, health, and social issues (Lavorata, 2008).

Our current society is under the influence of socio-cultural divergences resulting from exchanges between the social partners. Consumers are raising new consumer demands and are also taking into account ethical attributes. In this research, specifically we focus on the behavior of Halal food consumers in Saudi Market.

The number of believers in Islam constitute the world's second largest religious population. Thus, 24.1% of the global population are Muslim with more than 1.8 billion (Pew Research Center,

2017). In Todd and, Brian Islam will raise quicker than any other major religion that it is estimated Muslims will jump to 2.8 (or 30% of the population) by 2050.

In Saudi Arabia, Muslims will grow up from 44 million residents to more than 10% of the population by 2050. Then, we concentrate on Muslim's population consumption in this country as the topic of this research. So, we attempt to respond to the research problem: what are the major determinants of the Halal foods and how we improve this sector in Saudi Arabia?

Blackwell et al., (2006) and Alam and Sayuti (2011) signed that there is a significant and positive relationship between attitude and intentions to purchase Halal products. In Aisyah, (2015) and Nejadi and Salamzadeh (2011) subjective norm is an important in the consumer's behavior. Also, Perdana and Altunışik (2017) and Liow (2012) demonstrate that Halal certification in KSA food products is recommended to practice and well required by consumers. Ambali and Bakar (2013) demonstrate that the religiosity is most important antecedent of the Halal food in Malaysia. In the same sense, Salman and Siddiqui (2011) have stressed on the role of the religiosity as the explicative factor of the Halal food consumption in Pakistan marketplace. Nevertheless, the non-Muslims consumers might be affected by the existence of Halal certification (Aziz & Chok, 2013). Meixner et al. (2018), have confirmed that in Austria marketplace, the preferences for attributes of Halal meat from the Muslim community in Vienna was the certification. Also, Leary, et al. (2016) confirm that the sustainable behavior can affect the customer attitude and intention toward the halal consumption. Also, Minton, et al. (2016) insist on the role of the sustainability in the purchasing Halal food.

This study offer many profits to the organization, customer and governmental organization. At the beginning, we announced that the present research allowed academicians and practitioners to apprehend customers Halal food behavior in Saud Arabia market. Then, findings can provide retailers and whole sale decision-makers with information that could be useful in designing products, recruiting and training sales force in Saudi firm about their production. Moreover, this research will provide sellers with necessarily tools to promote the Halal foods in the Saudi Marketplace. Therefore, this study supplies governmental authority with controls that may improve the safety and quality of the imported products, because the Halal certification constitute the guarantee to consume healthy and pure food. Also, by the end of this research we can appreciate the level market orientation in terms of safety, healthy, and ethical consumption in KSA market.

This study advances the necessary recommendations to the academicians interesting in this business field and to the practices who struggle to improve the share market especially in Halal food. This research is considered as pioneer in this emerging consumption sector.

Conceptual framework

Religious commitment, often referred to as religiosity, defined by Johnson, Jang and Larson (2001) as "the extent to which an individual has committed to religion [...] this commitment". The attitudes of the individual and his results determine this commitment. Religious people have different value systems than less religious and non-religious ones. Thus, religiosity is important, insofar as it is able to influence an individual cognitively and behaviorally (Safiek, 2006). Also, Urien (2003) asserted that the religiosity manifested by religious practices and the intensity of beliefs is less low in some countries than in others.

Highly religious individuals have a strong sense of commitment to their belief system and therefore they are expected to behave by standards as described by their religion (Stark and Glock, 1970). Because of their strong commitment to their faith, very religious individuals are characterized as being closed or dogmatic (Delener, 1994). There is evidence that the expression of religious commitment can extend beyond religion itself. This commitment is manifested in the apparently

very religious attachment of individuals in many aspects of their lives, including family and consumer behavior. Smith and Frankenberger (1991) and Ridhi et al. (2019) reported that the level of religiosity positively affects the desired quality of a product or service, price sensitivity, as well as the perception of social risk. These results were confirmed by McDaniel and Burnett (1990) and Smith et al. (2005). However, there was no significant effect of religiosity on brand loyalty.

A1-Habshi and Syed-Agil (1994) asserted that religion contributes to the formation of norms, attitudes and values in society. Poulson et al. Bass (1998), Mattila et al. (2001) and Diamond (2002) have pointed out that religious beliefs determine the way we dress, eat, drink, and sexual behavior. Sood and Nasu (1995) mentioned that religion is very personal and therefore its effects on consumer behavior depend on the level of religious engagement.

Finally, Essoo and Dibb (2004) confirmed that consumers who have different levels of religiosity differ particularly in their purchasing behaviors.

Then, religiosity, has been studied in a wide range of researches as a determinant factor in the customer intention (McGuire and Sharp 2012; Samanta et al. 2014, and Salleh 2012).

Then, we can propose the hypothesis 1: H1. Religiosity orientations (Intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic personal religiosity, extrinsic social religiosity) impact positively the intention to purchase Halal food.

Perdana and Altunişik (2017) and Sabri (2006) shown that the attachment of Halal certification in the products commercialized within some countries such as Turkey, Malaysia rise the number of new customers. Then, we can cite Burger King, McDonald's and KFC that they have increased their new customers by 20%.

Honkanen et al. (2006) and Khalid and Hyde (2013) achieved a study that investigated the religiosity. They found that purchase intention of New Zealand Muslim consumers was impacted by the most influential factor in inducing the purchase of Halal food in New Zealand is the religious commitment. Also, Ambali and Bakar (2013), Siddiqui (2011) and Chen (2007) determinate that religiosity have a strong effect on Halal Food consume in the Pakistani market. Then, we deduct that the religious commitment in these different countries cited above induct to the demand of the Halal certification. Then, the Halal certification is the guaranty for consumers to consume more, also to increase the share market of these certified Halal products.

Then, we can suggest the hypothesis 2: H2. Halal Certification impacts positively the intention to purchase Halal food.

The subjective norm is the perception of others that impacts consumers' decisions to purchase Halal foods. (Syed and Nazura, 2011). Karijin et al. (2007) established that social norm significantly influence the intention to purchasing Halal food. Also, Lada et al. (2009) confirmed that subjective norms influence intention to consume Halal meat. Subjective norm is highly reliant on the belief of what others think of them (Lai et al., 2014). Blackwell et al. (2001) define attitude as the evaluation of accomplishment a behavior. Alam and Sayuti (2011) shown that attitude affect intentions to purchase Halal products. From our literature review, we deduct that the attitude towards purchasing of Halal food was determinate by the certification, religiosity and subjective norm.

Then, we can suggest the hypothesis 3: H3. The Subjective norm impacts positively the intention to purchase Halal food.

The sustainable behavior has been an important consideration in both literature and consumption marketplace (Dong et al., 2020; Garvey and Bolton, 2017). The sustainable behavior is undoubtedly an essential aspect of pro-social consumption actions (Halder et al., 2020) that welfares the quality of life (Park et al., 2018). Nowadays, eco-friendly behaviour and sustainable consump-

tion is becoming most interesting motives towards customers (Trang et al., 2019 and Wang et al., 2018, 2020). Certainly, the sustainable behaviour has a significant impact on the choose of the Halal food as well as in the ordinary life (Xu et al., 2020). Then, we can suggest the hypothesis 4: H4. The sustainable behavior impacts positively the intention to purchase Halal food.

The following figure resumes the determinants of the purchase intention of Halal food.

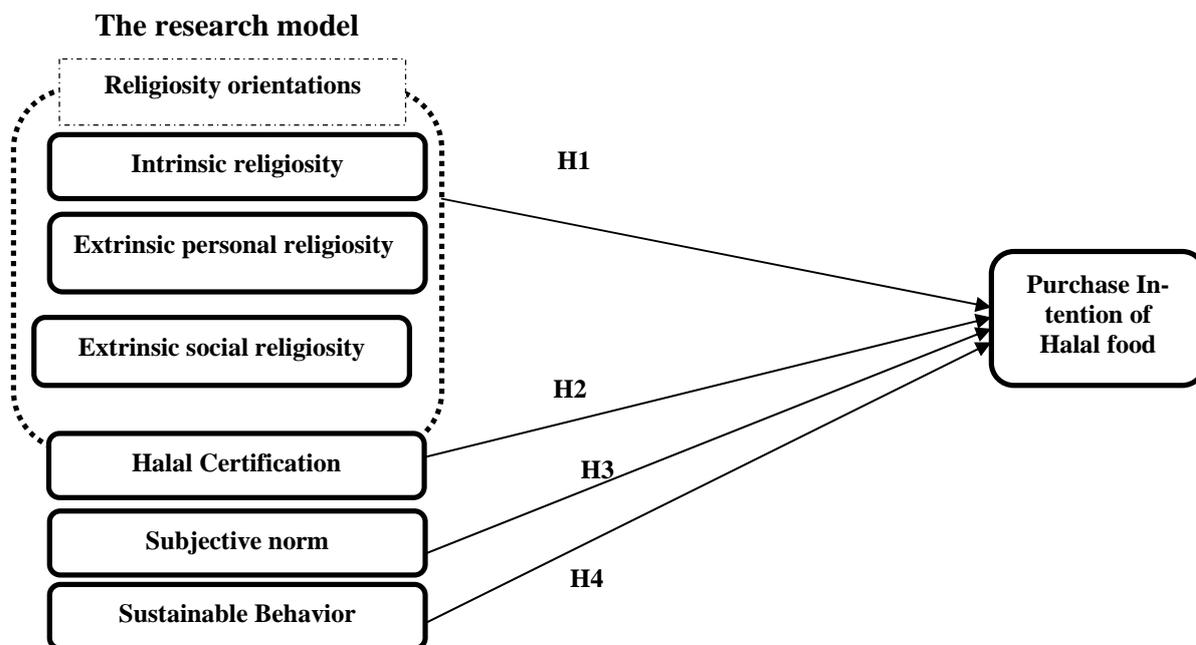


Figure 1. Halal consumption

Methodology

Sampling and Survey

To answer to the research questions, we have to delve deeper into previous studies and then perform a phase field to be able to validate our research model.

The data was collected in the Saudi marketplace. Therefore, we integrate in the research samples the Saudis and non-Saudis. This exploratory stage is essential to purify and validate the scales that measure the research constructs. Thus, we will interview first sample that count 200 individuals in the exploratory study to purify the measurements of the selected constructs that might contribute in the explanation of the intention to consume Halal. The confirmatory phase requires the second sample. Hence, the confirmatory analysis will be deployed by interviewing 400 individuals.

Then, we have used at this first stage the Principal Components Analysis (PCA) and Alpha Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) by means SPSS software. Also, the confirmatory analysis will be used to test the hypotheses and validate the research model by using the Amos software. Thus, this second step is based on the confirmatory analysis by addressing the second sample, within using AMOS software. Then, the empirical study will be implemented in the Saudi Halal Foods Market.

The measurements

The original scales were in English (see table 1). So, the measures have undergone the process of translation from English to Arabic using the back-translation method. Respondents were solicited to answer on a seven-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7

(strongly agree). To measure the research constructs we use the below developed and validate scales in the literature review.

We have retained the scale of Arli and Pekerti (2016) to measure the religiosity orientations identify two dimensions. The intrinsic dimension, and extrinsic religiosity that is divided into two categories: extrinsic personal and extrinsic social.

Afshan (2016) have developed and confirmed the Halal certification scale. The items of the Halal Certification are: I feel free to use products from non-Muslim manufacturers that have halal logo, Products produced by non-Muslim manufactures that have halal logo are safe to eat, Products produced by non-Muslims manufactures that have halal logo ensure that the products sold are halal, The halal logo can convince the Muslims buyers to buy the products produced by non-Muslim manufacturers.

Moreover, we have selected the scale of Fitzmaurice (2005) in three items that were adapted to measure the subjective norm because it is suitable to our research. The three items of the subjective norm that we are retain from the four items: “most people important to me think that I should do this activity,” “close friends and family think it is a good idea for me to do this activity,” “important people in my life want me to do this activity,” and “people I listen to could influence me to do this activity.”

Minton, et al. (2016) confirm the scale of the sustainable behaviors that is consisted of five items: I am willing to pay more for products that are friendly to the environment, I will stop buying my favorite brand if I know the company producing it was polluting the environment, I usually buy products that use recycled packaging, I would be willing to bring my own bags for shopping to reduce the use of non-recyclable bags, I would be willing to use a nonpolluting detergent even if I have my laundry less white.

Ahmad et al. (2014) design the purchase intention scale with three items: I am intending to buy halal packaged food product from non-Muslim manufacturers, Probability to consider to buy halal packaged food product is high, I am considering buying halal packaged food product produced by non-Muslim manufacturers.

The following table resumes the measurements of the purchase intention determinants.

Table 1. The measurements purchase intention determinants

Constructs	Authors	Dimensions	Items number
Religiosity	Arli and Pekerti (2016)	Intrinsic religiosity	5
		Extrinsic personal religiosity	3
		Extrinsic social religiosity	3
Halal Certification	Afshan (2016)	Halal Certification	4
Subjective norm	Fitzmaurice (2005)	Subjective norm	3
Sustainable behavior	Minton, et al. (2016)	Sustainable behavior	5
Purchase Intention	Ahmad et al. (2014)	Purchase Intention	3

Results

The exploratory study

The following table shows the measurements testing results from the data analysis on SPSS software within the first sample that counts 200 interviewees. Thus, we find that the Standardized factor loading values are more than 0.7 and all the Composite Reliabilities (CR) exceed 0.8. Then,

we can confirm representation quality of the constructs in our research model (Toukabri and Gharbi, 2022, Toukabri, 2021, Toukabri and Ettis, 2021, Toukabri, Najjar and Zaidi, 2021).

Table 2. The measurements testing results

Items standardized	Loading	Composite Reliabilities
Intrinsic religiosity		
I enjoy reading about my religion.	0.79	0.91
It is important to me to spend time in private thought and prayer.	0.81	
I have often had a strong sense of God's presence.	0.88	
I try hard to live all my life according to my religious beliefs.	0.82	
My whole approach to life is based on religion.	0.77	
Extrinsic personal religiosity		
What religion offers me most is comfort in times of trouble and sorrow.	0.75	0.83
Prayer is for peace and happiness.	0.78	
I pray mainly to gain relief and protection.	0.79	
Extrinsic social religiosity		
I go to a religious service to spend time with my friends.	0.73	0.81
I go to a religious service because it helps me to make friends.	0.75	
I go to a religious service because I enjoy seeing people I know there.	0.78	
Halal Certification		
I feel free to use products from non-Muslim manufacturers that have halal logo.	0.77	0.83
Products produced by non-Muslim manufactures that have halal logo are safe to eat.	0.75	
Products produced by non-Muslims manufactures that have halal logo ensure that the products sold are halal.	0.76	
The halal logo can convince the Muslims buyers to buy the products produced by non-Muslim manufacturers.	0.79	
Subjective norm		
Close friends and family think it is a good idea for me to buy Halal food	0.77	0.84
The people who I listen to could influence me to buy Halal food	0.81	
Important people in my life want me to buy Halal food	0.83	
Sustainable Behavior		
I am willing to pay more for products that are friendly to the environment,	0.80	0.88
I will stop buying my favorite brand if I know the company producing it was polluting the environment,	0.81	
I usually buy products that use recycled packaging,	0.83	
I would be willing to bring my own bags for shopping to reduce the use of non-recyclable bags,	0.78	
I would be willing to use a nonpolluting detergent even if I have my	0.75	

Items standardized	Loading	Composite Reliabilities
laundry less white.		
Purchase Intention		0.91
I am intending to buy halal packaged food product from non-Muslim manufacturers.	0.83	
Probability to consider to buy halal packaged food product is high.	0.85	
I am considering buying halal packaged food product produced by non-Muslim manufacturers.	0.88	

The confirmatory phase

To test the quality of research model and to check the hypotheses paths, we have used the Structural equation modeling with AMOS software (Toukabri, 2019a, Toukabri, 2019b, Toukabri and Ibrahim, 2016 and Toukabri, and Ghali, 2017). The confirmatory phase requires a second sample that sums 400 interviewees.

The measurements were validated by the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Factors were estimated by using the maximum likelihood method. Then, to test the quality of model, we used the comparative fit index (CFI), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

Table 3. The fit indices of the research model

Absolute fit indices	GFI	RMR	RMSEA		
Values	0,93	0,108	0,086		
Incremental adjustment indices	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Values	0,95	0,94	0,96	0,97	0,98
Parsimonious adjustment index	CMIN/df				
Value	3,75				

The fit indices of the Halal food purchasing intention model showed an acceptable fit as recommended by Hair et al. (2009) : GFI = 0.93, RMR = 0.108, RMSEA = 0 .086, also NFI = 0.95, RFI = 0.94, IFI= 0.96, TLI = 0.97 and CFI = 0.98.

The hypotheses test

To test the research hypotheses, we have estimated the standardized regression weights of the hypothesized relationships. The Standardized regression weight shows that all constructs have a positive and significant impact on the purchasing intention of the Halal food except of the sustainable behavior. Then, the following table shows that the three dimensions of the religiosity, the Halal certification and subjective norm are the significant antecedents of the purchasing intention of the Halal food. Nevertheless, there isn't a significant effect of the sustainable behavior on the purchasing intention of the Halal food.

Table 4. The hypotheses check

Hypothesis	Regression Path	SRW (p)	Result
H1.1.	Intrinsic religiosity Purchase Intention	0.002	Supported
H1.2.	Extrinsic personal religiosity Purchase	0.004	Supported

Hypothesis	Regression Path	SRW (p)	Result
	Intention		
H1.3.	Extrinsic social religiosity Purchase Intention	0.008	Supported
H2.	Halal Certification Purchase Intention	0.02	Supported
H3.	Subjective norm Purchase Intention	0.03	Supported
H4.	Sustainable behavior Purchase Intention	0.37	Rejected

SRW = Standardized regression weight; $p < 0.05$

Discussion and conclusion

The results show that the Halal food certification is the most influential factor in the intention to purchasing this product that is in consistence with the research findings of Kolkman (2014), Latif, et al. (2016) and Perdana & Altunışik (2017). Moreover, the religiosity orientations show a significant and important antecedent of the intention to purchase Halal food. Then, the religiosity orientations have a more effect than the subjective norm in the process of purchasing Halal food. Then, many studies have confirmed the religious and religiosity impact of the Halal food consumption, such as the Khalid and Hyde (2013) research in the context of New Zealand Muslim consumers and the Ambali and Bakar (2013) study in Malaysia marketplace, also the Widodo (2013) and Faryal Salman (2011) work in Pakistani population.

The empirical analysis confirms the significant impact of the subjective norm on the Halal food purchasing intention. These results are in consistence with the researches in this field, such as we cite Tariq, et al. (2019) and Han, et al. (2017) indicated the subjective norm role in the intention of purchasing Halal food.

The background of the present research is in consisting with the previous researches that affirm the organic, health and sustainable consumption in Sweden context consist one of the most essential concerns that induct the purchasing intention (Heesup Han, 2021 and Magnusson et al., 2001). Nevertheless, the results shown non-significant impact of the sustainable behavior on the purchase intention of Halal food.

This study advances the necessary recommendations to the academicians interesting in the Halal food purchasing intention and to the practices who strive to improve the share market especially in food. This research is considered as pioneer in this emerging consumption sector.

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