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THE 13TH INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION, INVENTION & DESIGN COMPETITION 2024

EXTENDED ABSTRACTS

e-BOOK

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MODELLING NON-MUSLIM CONSUMERS' ADOPTION OF HALAL FOOD IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

The concept of halal food is rooted in Islamic religious principles and serves as a guide for Muslims in their dietary choices. However, this concept and principles are not typically central to the lives of non-Muslims. Nevertheless, there has been a recent trend of non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia showing acceptance towards halal food, raising intriguing questions that require further exploration. Hence, this study aims to examine the factors that may impact the purchasing intentions and behaviour of non-Muslim consumers regarding halal food within the Malaysian setting. The study analyses the complex relationships between five key variables: preferences for halal food, social influence, assurance in halal food, purchase intention regarding halal products, and actual purchase behaviour. Furthermore, it investigates the potential moderating effect of government initiatives in promoting halal food adoption among non-Muslim consumers. Employing a methodical sampling approach, data was gathered via self-administered surveys from 422 non-Muslim participants in the Klang Valley region. The structural equation modelling was employed to analyse the acquired data. The findings reveal several noteworthy insights. The findings were then used to develop a model to support marketers, food producers, and policymakers in their decision-making. By understanding the drivers behind non-Muslim consumers' adoption of halal food, stakeholders can develop more effective marketing strategies and policies to foster greater awareness and acceptance of halal products among this demographic in Malaysia.

Keyword: halal food, non-Muslim consumers, purchase behaviour, purchase intention, Theory of Planned Behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept and practice of halal, rooted in Islamic dietary laws, have traditionally been central to the lives of Muslims worldwide. However, in recent years, there has been a notable shift in Malaysia, where non-Muslim consumers are increasingly demonstrating acceptance towards halal food products. This emerging trend raises intriguing questions about the factors influencing the purchasing intention and behaviour of non-Muslim consumers in the Malaysian context. This study aims to explore the complexities surrounding non-Muslim consumers' adoption of halal food in Malaysia.

By examining the interaction of various factors, including preferences for halal food, social influence, assurance in halal products, purchase intention, and actual purchase behaviour, this study seeks to shed light on the motivations driving this phenomenon. Furthermore, this study explores the potential moderating effect of government initiatives aimed at promoting halal food adoption among non-Muslim consumers. With Malaysia being a multiethnic and multicultural society, understanding the role of governmental policies in shaping consumer behaviour towards halal products is of paramount importance.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a cross-sectional method to investigate the factors influencing the purchasing intention and behaviour of non-Muslim consumers regarding halal food in Malaysia. Data were gathered through a survey method from the population of Malaysian non-Muslim consumers aged 18 and above residing in three distinct areas of the Klang Valley: Kajang, Puchong, and Kota Damansara. These areas were selected due to their significant non-Muslim populations and expected experience in purchasing halal foods. Systematic sampling was used to select respondents, with a total of 768 questionnaires distributed to the respondents. Self-administered questionnaire sets which were distributed to respondents covered socio-demographic characteristics and various constructs related to halal food preference, social influence, halal food assurance, purchase intention, and government initiatives in promoting halal.

Data analysis was carried out which involved descriptive statistics, normality tests, and hypotheses testing using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS 3.0. The analysis assessed the relationships between variables and examined the moderating effect of government initiatives on purchase intention and behaviour towards halal food among non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia.

3. FINDINGS

The study confirms a significant relationship between the intention to purchase halal food and the actual purchase behaviour among non-Muslim consumers. This implies that as non-Muslim consumers develop a stronger intention to purchase halal food, their actual purchase behaviour becomes more pronounced. This finding aligns with existing literature (Chong et al, 2022; Haque et al., 2015; Mathew, 2014; Nuryakin et al., 2023), demonstrating that consumers with a heightened intention to purchase can indeed influence their actual behaviour in the future.

Three key factors significantly influence the purchase intention of halal food among non-Muslim consumers: preference for halal food, social influence, and assurance of halal food. These variables collectively accounted for a substantial percentage of the variance in purchase intention towards halal food, explaining 69.2 percent of the differences observed. Preference for halal food emerges as the most influential factor, followed by social influence and assurance of halal food. Non-Muslim consumers with a positive attitude towards halal food products tend to exhibit higher intentions to purchase these products. This finding resonates with previous studies, indicating a significant positive influence of attitude on purchase intention (Bashir et al., 2019; Abd Rahman et al., 2015).

Additionally, social pressure from colleagues, family, and society at large plays a significant role in shaping the intention to purchase halal food among non-Muslim consumers. This finding is consistent with prior research that highlights the influence of social norms on purchase intention (Wilson & Grant, 2013; Golnaz et al., 2010; Afendi et al., 2014). Assurance of halal food, comprising dimensions such as food safety, health consciousness, hygiene, animal welfare standards, and halal logo credibility, also significantly influences purchase intention. Non-Muslim consumers place value not only on the quality of halal food products but also on safety, hygiene, and animal welfare. This finding aligns with previous research demonstrating a significant relationship between assurance of halal food (perceived behavioural control) and purchase intention (Al-Haque et al., 2015; Mathew et al., 2014)

Interestingly, the study finds no significant relationship between assurance of halal food and the actual purchase of halal food among non-Muslim consumers. This suggests that while assurance of halal food is important, it may not be sufficient to stimulate actual purchases. Instead, non-Muslim consumers must first develop the intention to purchase before translating it into actual behaviour. This finding resonates with previous research indicating that high intention or motivation to purchase halal food may be undermined by a lack of information and knowledge about halal food (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2004). The study reveals an insignificant effect of government initiatives in promoting halal food on the relationship between the purchase intention of halal food and non-Muslim consumers' purchase behaviour. While there are limited empirical findings on this topic, this result suggests that the impact of government initiatives may vary depending on consumer types, products, and business contexts (Lim et al, 2022)

Overall, these findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing non-Muslim consumers' adoption of halal food in Malaysia, providing valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, and food producers aiming to promote halal products effectively. Figure 1 below depicts the model developed based on the findings of this study.

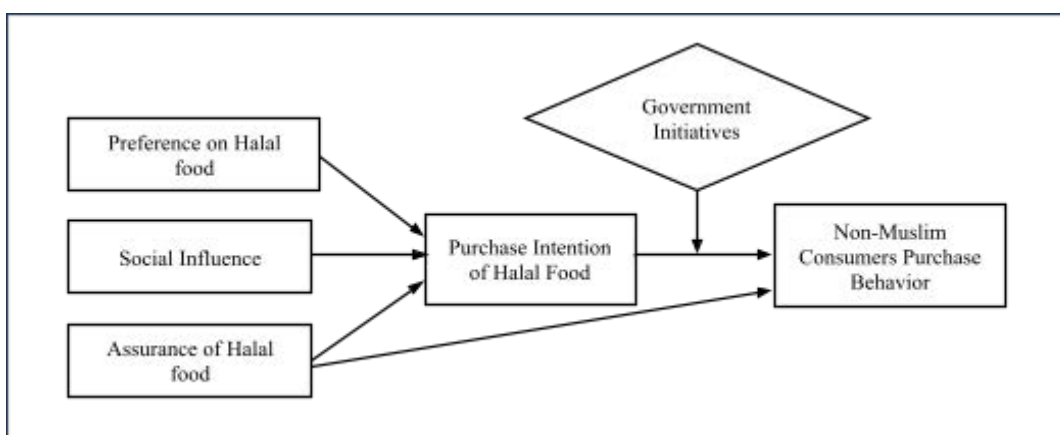


Figure 1 Non-Muslim Consumers' Adoption of Halal Food in Malaysia Model

4. CONCLUSION

The study aimed to explore how non-Muslim consumers' attitudes toward halal food influence their intention to purchase. It found a strong positive relationship between their purchase intentions and actual buying habits, highlighting the importance of intention in making purchasing decisions. Key factors affecting these intentions include the desire for halal cuisine and the assurance of food safety, quality, health, hygiene, and certification. However, the actual purchase behaviour was not significantly influenced by these assurances. Government initiatives to promote halal cuisine showed no notable impact on the relationship between purchase intention and behaviour.

The findings offer valuable insights for marketers, legislators, and manufacturers, aiding in understanding consumer behaviour dynamics in the halal food market and other niche sectors. The model presented here may prove to be a useful foundation for comprehending the dynamics of consumer behaviour, not only in the context of halal food but also in other companies looking to capitalise on consumer segments and specialised markets.

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Sekian, terima kasih.

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