

Islamic Religious Belief and Halal Awareness as Antecedents of Purchase Intention on Halal Product among Public Servant in Kedah

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to observe people awareness on halal products among public servant in Kedah. All variables were measured using 7- points interval scale; Awareness (10 items) adapted from (Ambali & Bakar, 2012), religious belief (9 items) adapted from (Albelaikhi,1997) and (9) items purchase Intention adapted from Chen (2007) as exogenous variables. Questionnaires were distributed to 150 public servants in Kedah based on a random sampling method. A respond rate of 91.33% (137 respondents) was obtained during data collection phase and 122 were usable. The data was input and analyzed into SPSS 18. The result is discussed in the Islamic religious belief and halal awareness toward purchase intention among public servant in Kedah

Keywords: Awareness, Halal, Consumer, Purchase Intention

1. INTRODUCTION

Muslim consumers, locally as well as globally, has emerged as the force to be reckoned with. Currently, there are approximately 1.9 billion Muslims globally. With the estimated world population of 7.8 billion, almost 25% are Muslims. Pew Research has forecasted that Muslim population will increase to 2.8 billion in 2050. In Malaysia, Muslim made up more than 60% of the latest estimated 32 million people. Lately, Halal foods and products have gained widespread awareness. In addition, Non-Muslim consumers has more inclination towards halal products (Damit et al. 2019). Unsurprisingly, the global halal market size is expected to be approximately USD9.17 trillion by 2025 (Shaari et al. 2020).

As one of the most important concepts for Muslims is Halal; therefore, in Malaysia the issue of Halal has become consumer's vital concern. The word Halal literally means permissible and in translation it is usually use as lawful. The Halal food Authority rules for

Halal supported Islamic Syariah. The antonym to Halal is Haram, which suggests unlawful and forbidden. Within the Malaysian Muslim majority, the concept of Halal is an absolute key to consumption. Muslim consumers nowadays are faced with a broad selection of products and services. On top of that, each product category offers many various brands – either locally named or internationally recognized ones. A number of the local brands appear to capture their own niches by projecting themselves as “Islamic” brands via their creative packaging and labeling works. This also indirectly signals to their primary target – the Muslim consumer – the halal status of their products. On the service side, similar efforts are being wiped out in the banking and within the insurance sectors.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Awareness

The Quran has a specific guideline on what is Halal and what is Haram. Ambali & Bakar (2014) reiterate that Al Quran and Sunnah have provided clear guideline to Muslim on the prohibition (haram) and permissible (halal) consumption. In general, the concept of Halal and Haram are applicable to whole aspect of a Muslim daily life. Halal would mean any behavior or activities that are allowed or permissible by Islam while Haram on the other hand refers to behavior and act that are prohibited. The rules are stated in the Quran, and the hadith (the words and the doings of Prophet Muhammad) as the references interpreted by learned scholars of Islam called *Ulama'*. Despite the totality nature of Halal concept, the concepts of Halal and Haram in this study are restricted only to food edible products.

Halal can be defined as permitted or allowed to Muslims (Berry, 2000; & Dwyer, 2002). Ambali and Bakar (2014) defined halal awareness having special interest in or knowledge on food, beverages and halal products. Except for pork and its by products, and some certain products, most meat and vegetables are considered Halal. In Islam food and products can be divided into categories between Halal and Haram; *Masbuh* and *makruh* falls in between (EIASI & Dwyer, 2002). The halal product has to follow the conditions which the ingredients or components do not contain any parts from animal that is not Halal to be eaten or used by the Muslim

Islamic Religious Belief

Religious play an important role in influencing consumer attitude and behavior due to the nature of human beings, where their attitudes and behavior is based on their belief or religion. Essoo & Dibb (2004) stressed that religion dictates consumer's alternative choice on food, grocery products and others products.

Religiosity on the other hand represents the level of devoutness of a particular person in his religion. Previous studies have shown that religiosity as a faith with God and promise to pursue philosophy that set by God and therefore will affect behavior and attitude (Conrad, 2004). Hence, religiosity of consumers has become a vital part in marketing especially in advertisement (Froehle, 1994).

Weaver and Agle (2002) stress on the strong impact on consumer's behavior and attitude that religiosity has. The study of religiosity in the Muslim context has recently gained interest from academics and business practitioners from around the world (J.A. Wilson, 2012). The religiosity of Muslims determines their intention to consume products that comply with sharia (Soesilowati E.S., 2012)

Underpinning Theory

The study's conceptual framework was adapted from (Ajzen, 1991) is Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model. TPB was designed to conceptualize, measure, and empirically identify factors that determine behavior and behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Ajzen, (1991) defines intention as the probability of a dimension that involves the relationship between himself and some action. According to TPB, behavior is determined by the individual's intention to perform the behavior. Intention is determined by three factors; attitudes toward the behavior, which are informed by beliefs needed to engage in the behavior; subjective norm, the social pressures to perform or not to perform the behavior and perceived behavioral control refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behavior. Damit et al. (2019) and Bakar, Shahwahid & Eksan (2018) among others have adopted Theory of Planned Behavior in understanding halal purchase intention and behavior.

The TPB construct is a cognitive model of human behavior derived from the extension of TRA (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). In the TPB Model, the main independent constructions are Attitudes, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control which predict behavioral intentions Ajzen (1991). Intention is defined as a plan to perform certain behaviors and the most important factors to predict behavior directly Ajzen (1991). In the context of marketing, behavioral intentions are the main indicators of actual purchases (M. Fishbein and I. Ajzen, 1975). Purchase intention in this study is the purchase intention of Muslim consumers towards halal products that are measured using indicators: 1) Halal awareness among Muslim public servant to purchase intention toward halal product. 2) Islamic religious belief among Muslim public servant to purchase intention toward halal products.

3. METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the quantitative nature of this study, then a systematic planning has been planned since the beginning of the study. It is intended that the data collected is accurate and adequate Cavana (2001). In this study, 150 questionnaires were distributed to school teachers in public primary and secondary schools in Kedah state based on a random sampling method. 137 questionnaires were returned (91.33% respond rate) and 122 were usable. SPSS 18 was employed to path analysis. From the hypothesized model, (Figure 1), there is one regression coefficients: (1) Halal Awareness and 2) Islamic religious belief is independent variable, and purchase intention is the dependent variable.

Each variables was measured as follows: All variables were measured using 7- points interval scale; Awareness (10 items) adapted from (Ambali & Bakar, 2012), religious belief (9 items) adapted from (Albelaikhi,1997) and (9) items purchase Intention adapted from Chen (2007) as exogenous variables measured by 7-point interval-scale of(1) strongly disagree to (7)- strongly agree). The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) values for each study's instrument are shown in Table 1 below. All instruments used in this study have a high level of consistency ($\alpha > 0.8$).

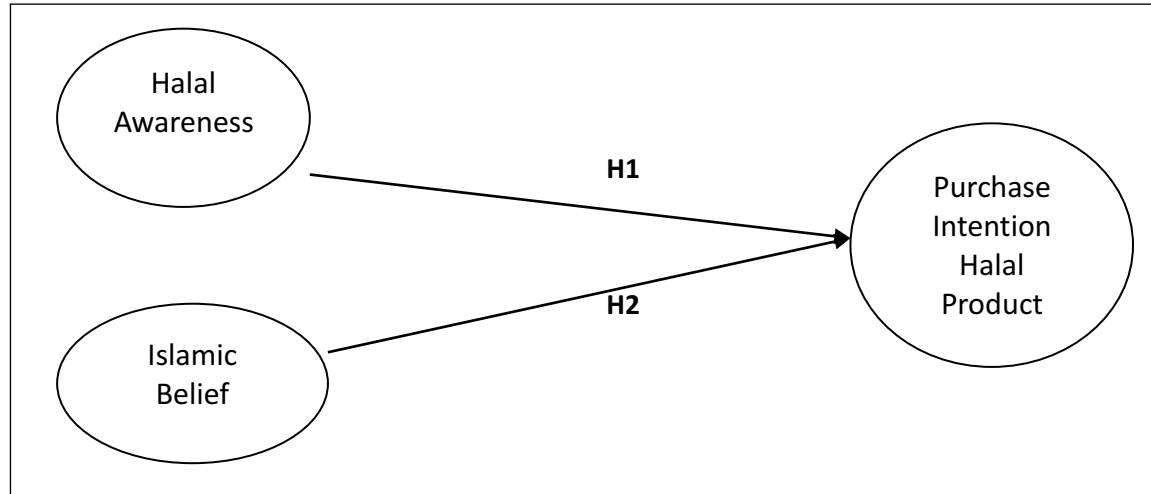
Variable	α	Consistency
Halal awareness	0.874	High
Islamic religious Belief	0.880	High
Purchase intention	0.880	High

Table 1 Internal Consistency of Study's Instrument

There are also six demographic questions included in the instrument which use ordinal and nominal scale such as gender, age, marital status, race, education level and annual income.

The respondents of this study ranged from age twenty years old to sixth years old. Only 40.2% of the respondent aged from 20-29 years old. Meanwhile, 31.1% of the respondents aged between 30-39 years old. Then follow by respondents who aged between 40-49 years old (18.0%), and finally 50-59 years old (10.7%). The sample size was randomly selected and consisted of both male (31.1%) and female (68.9%) teachers in public schools. Most of them were married (52.5%). The racial compositions in this study were 97.5% Malay because this study was designed to explore the influence of awareness and religious belief on intention to buy.

The collected data is analyzed using path analysis which is an extension of linear regression analysis where the use of regression analysis is to estimate the causality relationship between variables (causal models) previously determined based on theory Path analysis in this test was conducted to determine the effect of Halal Awareness (X1), Islamic Religious Belief (X2) and Purchase Intention (Y2). The data processing using SPSS 18.0.



Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study are;

H1) Halal awareness among Muslim public servant to purchase intention toward halal product.

H2) Islamic religious belief among Muslim public servant to purchase intention toward halal products.

4. RESULTS

In order to get rid of outliers, data cleaning was done and 15 cases (8,11, 15, 19, 21, 25, 28, 34, 47,51,63,78,80, 88, 90) were excluded. Normality test were also performed on every item, and items which were not normal were transformed using CDFNORM until normality were achieved.

The revised model achieved the goodness criteria as shown in Table 1 below.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize d Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.545	.298		5.178	.000
awareness	.382	.064	.471	6.001	.000
Islamic Religious Belief	.316	.059	.423	5.384	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intent

The finding supports two significant direct effect in the revised model, thus supporting the hypothesis regarding the halal awareness belief on purchase Intention among public servant on halal products is positive significant ($\beta = 0.382$, Sig <0.000) and religious belief is positive significant ($\beta = 0.316$, Sig <0.000).

In the results of testing the H1, the hypothesis is accepted, which means that halal awareness variables have a significant effect on the purchase intention among of public servant in Kedah. The direct effect of the halal awareness variable on the purchase intention variable is equal to 0.382. This result shows that the influence of halal awareness such can have an influence on buying intention toward halal product is getting bigger.

The test results of H2 are accepted, meaning that the Islamic religious belief variable effect have a significant effect on the purchase intention among of public servant in Kedah and has direct effect coefficients of Islamic religious belief on purchase Intention of halal product is 0.316. The result shows that the higher the level of religiosity Muslim consumers in Kedah will have influence on the halal products purchase intention.

5. DISCUSSION

This study has established one direct causal effect; halal awareness and religious belief is significantly influencing purchases intention. Thus, both H1 and H2 are supported. The effect of halal awareness and Islamic religious belief on purchases intention among public servant was concurred with past studies by (Hasan, 2016). The case of halal awareness on purchase intention shows when halal awareness high that can influence the increasingly the purchases intention of halal products. In conclusion, purchases intention of halal product among public servant in Kedah can be influenced by Islamic religious belief and halal awareness.

One major limitation of this study needs to be pointed out is the questionnaires are self-reported. Individuals are likely to portray themselves as more than they really are. This is not a major problem for the study as the focus is on relative and not absolute scores. A future study should address the issues of any discrepancies between self-reported intention to buy and observed awareness behaviors among them. The study also provides some practical implications.

This study offers some practical implications such as the positive relationship between halal awareness and Islamic religious belief, the importance of Halal Malaysia logo towards food products, the importance of online and traditional media tools to educate and creating awareness among the Muslim consumers. However, the respective board and the government must find a way on how to reduce the numbers of fake Halal logo and dubious Halal certified companies in Malaysia to protect the Halal food industry, especially in the local market by Che Kifli (2009) and Yusuf, Abdul Shukor, and Ahmad Bustamam (2016).

Halal is not only a concept but also creating a system. A Muslim consumer demand for Halal products consider as fardhu ain (individual obligatory duty), the manufacturer supply or deliver the products by following specific guidelines that prepared by the respective authority, it is the fardhu kifayah (obligatory duty). For future research, since the consumers quite attach to the online information, element of online and mobile applications can be included and can be tested to see how far the information, communication and technology (ICT) will contribute to the development of Halal industry.

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