

THE EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS AWARENESS OF THE HALAL MARK ON THE MUSLIM CONSUMER IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to evaluate the impact of halal brand religious awareness of consumer behavior in Malaysia. This was achieved by studying the relationship between religious awareness of the halal brand and consumer behavior, as well as investigating the effect of religious awareness of the halal brand on consumer behavior. In addition, the study explored the potential mediating role of halal branding in the relationship between religious awareness and consumer behavior. The research used a quantitative approach, using a questionnaire as the primary tool for collecting data. The study examined many aspects including the demographic characteristics of the sample, religious awareness, the halal brand, and customer behavior. Data were obtained from a group of people residing in Malaysia, with a research sample size of 112 participants. The data was analyzed using the SPSS program with the aim of examining the study hypotheses using several non-parametric tests. The study reached several results, the most important of which was identifying a positive relationship between religious awareness, the halal brand, and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia. In addition, the study revealed a positive impact of religious awareness regarding halal branding on Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia. The results of the study indicate a mediating effect of religious knowledge associated with the halal brand on customer behavior. The research suggested that further investigation into halal brand knowledge is warranted, given its ethical and economic importance, and its potential impact on human behavior.

Keywords: religious awareness, halal brand, Muslim consumer behavior.

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is distinguished by its status as a country with a Muslim majority population, with more than 60% of its population adhering to the Islamic faith. Therefore, Halal certification is an important slogan for Muslim customers in Malaysia. Halal certification means that the product has undergone verification to ensure compliance with Islamic law, thus ensuring that there are no prohibited substances or procedures. The growing awareness can be attributed to several reasons, such as expanding access to halal goods, the growing importance of halal certifications, and increasing religious awareness among Muslims. Islamic law is a complete set of rules and principles that regulate several aspects of human life, with a notable emphasis

on things related to subsistence, such as food and drink. He defined the limits of what is forbidden and what is permissible in many areas. in accordance with what Allah almighty says:

وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ

(al-Qur'an, al-A'raf, 7:157)

وَأَيضًا لِقَوْلِهِ: وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ؕ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ

(al-Qur'an, al-Ma'idah, 5:88)

The existence of the Halal certification symbol has many implications for Muslim customers in Malaysia in terms of their religious awareness. First, it can influence consumer choices. Muslim customers have a greater tendency to purchase products with halal certification, because they believe that these products are considered safe, healthy, and of high quality (Suhaila, 2010). Moreover, it has the potential to influence consumers' trust in companies. Moreover, it can influence their social relationships. Muslims have a greater tendency to patronize restaurants that have a good reputation for adhering to halal standards. (Shambavi, 2011) The increasing use of the halal certification symbol in Malaysia reflects a growing religious awareness. The growing Muslim population in Malaysia is expected to increase demand for halal goods. The above trend is expected to provide positive results for the Malaysian economy, as it will generate new prospects for companies involved in the production and distribution of halal goods.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of halal brand religious awareness on Muslim consumers' behavior. The choice of Malaysia as a research site was motivated by its significant involvement in the halal trade and the large proportion of its population that identifies as Muslim. The research problem was to study the potential intersections and disparities between the degree of awareness of halal labels and the religious practices of people within the country. This problem seeks to study the impact of Islamic awareness on the shopping behavior of Muslims in Malaysia. This study aims to study the interaction of independent factors in influencing consumer behavior, with a special focus on the role of the halal brand as an intermediary variable that explains the relationship between awareness and consumer behavior. The study also examines the impact of religious awareness on the shopping behavior of Muslims in Malaysia.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of religious awareness of the halal label among Muslim consumers in Malaysia?

2. What is the relationship between religious awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia?
3. Is there an impact of religious awareness of the halal label on Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia?
4. Is there a mediation of the halal brand between religious awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia?

RESEARCH AIMS

This study set the objectives of the research topic, which include the following points:

1. Determining the level of religious awareness of the halal brand among Muslim consumers in Malaysia.
2. Determine the relationship between religious awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.
3. Analyzing the impact of religious awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.
4. Analysis of the mediation of the halal brand between religious awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.

RESEARCH ASSUMES

1. There is a level of religious awareness variables among Muslim consumers regarding the halal label in Malaysia.
2. There is a statistically significant positive relationship for the religious awareness variable on Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.
3. There is a statistically significant positive effect of the variable of religious awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.
4. There is a direct effect of the halal brand as a mediator between the variables of awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.

RESEARCH IMPORTANCE

The primary importance of this study appears in examining the relationship between the religious awareness of the halal brand and the behavior of Muslims in Malaysia. In doing so, this research seeks to enhance religious awareness among Muslim consumers. Moreover, it contributes to enhancing economic sustainability in Malaysia by supporting halal goods and enhancing its long-term viability. The importance also shows that the research contributes to increasing cultural, religious and social awareness by identifying variables that affect Muslim consumer behavior and the importance of the halal brand. Moreover, it serves as a valuable resource for researchers and others keenly interested in the field of Islamic marketing, as it provides a theoretical foundation and practical framework. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights to organizations seeking to improve the quality of their halal goods and gain a deeper awareness of the specific requirements of the Malaysian market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To study the essence of the topic under research and to facilitate testing of hypotheses and solving the mentioned problem, our research used the descriptive and analytical approach, using a carefully designed questionnaire instrument. The research sample of 112 samples was distributed and subsequently subjected to analysis using the statistical analysis tool SPSS.v26.

The Concept of Religious Awareness

It is a set of religious knowledge, values, trends, and principles that allow the individual to face some life situations and problems in all their fields and deal with them in a correct manner considering Sharia rulings (Abdul Rasheed, 2008). It is also known as a set of faith, social and behavioral controls that determine a person's behavior and beliefs in Muslim society and his belief in God, His angels, the heavenly books and the Last Day (Bahadur, 1994).

Values of Religious Awareness

The above qualities serve to elevate the status of religious ideas and feelings, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all human experiences, understanding the universe, and highlighting unwavering confidence in many areas of endeavor. Religious principles include an individual's inherent curiosity and tendency to explore the world beyond the boundaries of nature or the observable world. The individual in question has a desire to understand the origins and ultimate purpose of humanity. Moreover, they see the presence of a ruling power that influences the world in which they reside, which prompts them to search for a way to establish a relationship with that power (Khalifa, 2008). The concept of values, as viewed through the lens of religious consciousness, relates to the personal inclinations or collective inclinations of individuals toward unambiguous religious principles. These tendencies serve to regulate an individual's behavior according to his personal interests and level of consciousness, while also serving as a means of evaluating his actions. Furthermore, these inclinations establish a set of rules that determine which behaviors are considered acceptable or prohibited for the individual in question (Al-Ghamdi, 2011).

The individual in question shows a strong connection to his or her religious beliefs and seeks to deepen his or her understanding of the noble values rooted in his or her faith. This pursuit of knowledge regarding their religion and its teachings serves as a way to provide themselves with a protective shield and a tool for dealing with those with different viewpoints. In doing so, they aim to preserve their personal safety, preserve the integrity of their religion, and support the interests of their nation.

The Importance of Religious Awareness

The importance of religious awareness carries great weight for both individuals and the Muslim community, an idea emphasized by many scholars and academics. Ensuring correct awareness of religious matters is essential to maintaining integrity and effectively confronting efforts to exploit and spread false information (Al-Ghamdi, 2011). Religious awareness is considered an

essential cornerstone that contributes significantly to the development of an individual's social and moral character. Great emphasis is placed on the importance of developing ideals that serve as moral compasses for individuals. The presence of religious awareness in society works to confirm the principles of tolerance, civilization, sincerity and justice rooted in the Islamic faith. It has been proven that highlighting jurisprudential concerns and understanding sermons and teachings was beneficial (Al-Ghamdi, 2011).

Muslim Consumer Behavior

Muslim consumers are required to adhere to Islamic principles in their consumption practices and decision-making processes. The basic principle that guides their actions is based on the Almighty's saying: "O you who have believed, eat of the good things We have provided for you, and give thanks to God if it is Him you worship." (al-Qur'an, al-Baqarah, 2:172). Emphasizes the subject of worship for believers. The verse encourages us to consume all the beneficial sustenance that God, who is always grateful, makes available to us. Therefore, the behavior of Muslims affects several aspects of their lives, necessitating a comprehensive examination by experts to understand their behavior within the halal market. This includes comprehensive field investigations aimed at understanding individuals' opinions and consumption patterns regarding organic, additive-free food products. The individual expresses a desire to adopt a practical approach towards halal products, and shows a greater inclination towards real activity, such as purchasing halal goods directly. Muslim customers with a higher level of product awareness have a stronger tendency to engage in preferred behaviors, such as purchasing halal products. The demand for halal products is positively influenced by the growth of knowledge and dissemination of information about these goods (Norafni, Zurina, & Syahidawati, 2015). There has been a marked rise in religiosity and awareness among Muslim customers, as evidenced by their increasing familiarity with the halal label. This statement underscores the need for further investigation for a comprehensive understanding of the distinct behaviors exhibited by Muslim customers in the halal market (Azreen & Rosidah, 2014).

The Methods and Procedures Used in The Research

A total of 112 questionnaires were collected from individuals residing in Malaysia for this research. The sample size represents more than 86.15% of the intended sample. The results show that the reliability coefficient of the scale in Malaysia reached 0.975. The observed value is high and close to 1, indicating that the items in the scale consistently assess the same basic concept across different respondents. In conclusion, the interpretation confirms the reliability and consistency of the data obtained from the Malaysian sample. This indicates that the measure used in the research effectively captures the target constructs. As shown in the following table (1):

Table 1: Reliability and stability statistics of the scale

	Cronbach's Alpha Test	Items
Thailand	0.975	45

Positive results have been achieved for the hub. All collected results exceed a value of 0.8. Hence, it can be said that the scale used shows internal consistency, which makes it reliable in the practical application of research. The results presented in this study demonstrate that there is strong internal consistency and reliability between religious awareness, halal labeling, and consumer behavior, as evidenced by the estimated Cronbach's alpha coefficients. As shown in the following table (2):

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha stability coefficient.

	Items	Malaysia Cronbach's Alpha Test
Religious Awareness	9	0.960
Halal Mark	10	0.974
Consumer's Behavior	10	0.934

Normal Distribution Test

The normal distribution, which is a symmetrical curve with its center aligned with the arithmetic mean, plays a vital role in the field of statistical inference. The distributions of data on the Malaysia Religious Awareness and Consumer Behavior Scale were examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

The results indicate that the skewness values are less than three and the kurtosis values are less than seven. According to Table 3, it can be seen that the data does not show a normal distribution.

Table 3: Results of the normal distribution.

	Malaysia		
	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogrove-Semengrove
Religious Awareness	-2.146	4.936	.000
Consumer's Behavior	-1.420	3.094	.000

The Study Sample by Gender

It is noted from Table No. (4) that most respondents in Malaysia are male, with a percentage of 65.2%, which represents the majority in the study sample, while the percentage of females constitutes 34.82% of the total respondents.

Table 4: Distribution of the study sample by gender.

Gender	Malaysia	
	Frequency	Percentage
Male	73	65.2%
Female	39	34.8%
The Total	112	%100

Calculating Correlation Coefficients and Testing Hypotheses

Table (5) shows that there is a positive correlation between most of the variables specific to Malaysia, as there is a positive correlation between the independent awareness variables and the consumer behavior variable, which reached its value, respectively, (0.472**, 0.742**, 0.742**). The highest correlation rate was between religious awareness and consumer behavior, with a value of (0.472), as well as the independent awareness variables and the halal brand variable, which had a value of (0.593**, 0.733**, 0.687**). The highest correlation rate was between religious awareness and the halal mark, with a value of (0.733).

Table 5: Correlation matrix table between the research variables using the Spearman’s test.

Spearman’s Rho		Religious Awareness	Halal Mark	Consumer’s Behavior
Religious Awareness	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.733**	.742**
	Two-tailed criterion	.	.000	.000
Halal Mark	Correlation coefficient	.000	.000	.000
	Two-tailed criterion	.733**	1.000	.710**
Consumer’s Behavior	Correlation coefficient	.000	.000	.000
	Two-tailed criterion	.472**	.710**	1.000

Table 6: Multiple linear regression equation

Malaysia									
Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	R	R2	F	Sig F	Beta	t	Sig. t	VIF
Consumer’s	Religious	0.832	0.693	81.135	0.000	-0.042	-0.683	0.496	1.218

Hence, there is a clear interpretation of the regression analysis results, the importance of the beta coefficients, the explanatory power of the model (R^2), and the absence of multicollinearity problems. It effectively explains how religious awareness variables influence consumer behavior and highlights the statistical significance of these relationships.

CONCLUSION

Religious awareness of the halal brand will increase the rate of adult consumption and its impact on Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia. The importance of religious awareness of the halal brand is an important responsibility for Muslim consumers and therefore they must have self-monitoring of what they consume and buy from the markets. The study reached several results as follows:

1. There is a level of religious awareness variables among Muslim consumers regarding the halal label in Malaysia.
2. There is a statistically significant positive relationship for the religious awareness variable on Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.
3. There is a statistically significant positive effect of the variable of religious awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.
4. There is a direct effect of the halal brand as a mediator between the variables of awareness and Muslim consumer behavior in Malaysia.

The recommendations were the following points:

1. Institutions must pay attention to the religious awareness of the halal brand among consumers in Malaysia.
2. Researchers must expand the study of the awareness of Muslim consumers in Malaysia.
3. Interest in developing the halal brand in Malaysia in many areas and expanding its introduction in local and international markets.

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