ABSTRACT
Earlier researchers discussed the three main factors which are attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control in explaining halal consumption. However, by reviewing previous literatures, analyzing the international trends of halal consumption and the Islamic rulings of halal consumption, religiosity could be considered as an important variable influencing halal consumption. Religiosity factor has been empirically proven by previous studies in different countries. Therefore, this paper aims to contribute to the current literature by integrating religiosity factor in predicting halal consumption among Muslim consumers. An exploratory study is conducted to investigate the influence of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and religiosity in influencing halal consumption. The findings of this study reveal that religiosity is the strongest factor among all in influencing halal consumption. It is anticipated that the arguments presented in this paper would spring up further discussion in this field and encourage more empirical research to be conducted.

Keywords: Halal; Consumption; Muslim Consumers
Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than God; that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impious. This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: yet fear them not but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any of you is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, God is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

The influence of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and religiosity towards the human consumption were discussed by scholars in different fields such as marketing, business, psychology, religion and sociology. From the Islamic point of view, the halal consumption is closely related to the religiosity of Muslims.

**Literature Review**

The growth of halal consumption in Malaysia is increased together with the economic growth of the country and the emergence of larger middle class consumers among Malay Muslim who are generally more concerned about halal consumption. Undoubtedly, the government initiatives in halal production, trade and consumption has directly added the importance of halal consumption in the Malaysian society².

**Attitude, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control as Factors of Halal Consumption.**

Several researchers stressed the influence of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and religiosity on halal consumption in their research. The attitude of Muslim consumers may be linked to the Islamic ruling of halal consumption as well as the advantages or disadvantages that should be delivered from it. Abdul Raufu’ Ambali and Ahmad Naqiuddin Bakar (2012) conducted a study on Muslims’ awareness on halal food and products revealed that religious belief, exposure, logo certification, and health reasons were among the determinants in predicting halal awareness among Muslims. Interestingly, health was identified as the most significant factor that influences Muslims’ awareness on halal consumption³. Wilson and Liu (2010), discussed the idea that halal is often associated with the health.

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1 Surah al-Maidah:3  
“Muslims view health as having a strong spiritual element, encompassing elements of fatalism. Therefore, once something is been deemed Halal, it is not a question of whether it can be consumed or not; but rather the quantity.”

In Islamic teaching, halal is perceived as wholesome. The word halal has been mentioned together with the word “tayyib” several times in the Quran. The word “tayyib” means pure, good, wholesome and good quality. It reflects the characteristic of halal goods as wholesome and possesses good quality and do not harm the consumers. This is reflected in surah al Maidah, verse 87-88.

You who believe! Do not make haram the good things which Allah has made halal for you, and do not transgress; indeed, Allah does not like the transgressors. And eat of what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good, and fear Allah, in whom you are believers.

These influences of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control have been discussed as variables for halal consumption. It was found that attitude and perceived behavioral control significantly influence behavioral intentions of urban young consumers to consume halal food. However, the influence of family and friends were found less significant among urban young consumers. In contrast, according to Suddin Lada et al (2011) subjective norm was found significant in predicting halal consumption. According to the presented findings of 485 Malaysian respondents, family and friends played a major role in determining behavioral intention of Muslims in halal consumption. The author argued that a possible reason of the subjective norms influence is among the characteristic of Malaysian society itself, where Muslims practice collectivistic culture and peoples’ behavior are interdependent with the family and society.

The influence of “urf” or social behavior on halal consumption plays a certain role in determining halal consumption. For example, the “urf” of majority Muslim consumers in Malaysia tend to look at halal certification as an assurance of halal food and products. Thus, it is important to understand the urf or social behavior of the people in the country in order to

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7 Surah al Maidah, 87-88.
understand their consumption behavior. The *urf or social behavior and social influence could be important determinants in predicting halal consumption among Muslim consumers.\(^{10}\)

Bonne (2007) conducted a study of halal meat consumption among 576 Muslims who were living in France. He concluded that positive attitude, social influences, especially peers and perceived behavioral control determined the intentions of Muslims in consuming halal food. However, perceived availability was not significant in predicting halal consumption. Furthermore, the study revealed that even though halal food is not easily accessible, Muslims were willing to put an effort in consuming halal food. He added that social structures such as people’s origin and generation differences were contributing factors in predicting dietary preferences of consumers as well\(^{11}\).

In the context of Malaysia, the halal consumption among Muslim consumers may be influenced by other current challenges faced by them in the multicultural society. The availability and accessibility of alcohol and the gambling industry, capitalism and socialism monetary system and globalization were identified as challenges of Muslims in consuming halal food.\(^{12}\) The availability and accessibility of non-halal food and drinks at some urban areas in Malaysia could be one of the reasons for non-halal consumption among Muslims. This indeed reflected the perceived behavioral control factor. This argument is closely related to the religiosity of Muslims consumers in averting from the consumption of the accessible non-halal food and drinks in the society.

**Religiosity**

The influence of religion to mankind has made it an important dimension in this study. In Islam, religiosity or in Arabic term called as "*tadayyun*” could be defined as practicing Islamic teaching comprehensively in thinking, words, action in every aspects of life. It could be based on the Islamic knowledge and the understanding of Islam as a religion. al Qardhawi (1984) described religiosity as practicing Islam in all aspects of life, including akidah, ibadah, syariah and akhlak\(^{13}\).

The first academic attempt to investigate the influence of religion on consumer behavior was undertaken by Allport and Ross in 1967. Since then, many studies were conducted by researchers worldwide to determine the role of religion and religiosity on human consumption. A numbers of studies have shown the significant role of religiosity in the attitude of people towards consumption in general\(^{14}\). However, the exact roles of religion in determining halal consumption need to be explored further\(^{15}\). The influence of religion on human consumption, particularly in food consumption is normally associated with the teaching of one religion. The

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influence of religion on food consumption is conscientiously related to religious teaching and people’s interpretation of their religious teaching.

According to Bonne et al. (2007) religion was a significant determinant in deciding food purchasing and developing food habits of individuals and society\(^\text{16}\). The role of religiosity as a contributing factor of halal consumption was also demonstrated in the research conducted in Canada, which revealed that people who attended mosque regularly were the group of people with higher halal consumption\(^\text{17}\). Similarly, a study took place in Turkey showed that Muslim consumers with higher religiosity were more concerned with halal products when they purchased the food products\(^\text{18}\). The influence of religiosity on consumer behavior is also discussed comprehensively by Nazlida and Mizerski\(^\text{19}\).

A halal research conducted in Malaysia demonstrated that religiosity moderated the relationship between subjective norm and perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention to patronage halal restaurants\(^\text{20}\). Syed Shah Alam (2011) examined the role of religiosity on Muslims’ purchasing behavior and it was found that religiosity played a full mediating role in the relationship between independent variables and purchasing behavior of Muslim consumer\(^\text{21}\). In addition, Safiek Mokhlis (2009) examined the role of religiosity towards shopping orientation among consumers from different religions in Kuala Lumpur. The findings of this study showed that religiosity determined the shopping orientation of consumers. Shaﬁek (2009) suggested that religiosity should be placed as one of determinants of shopping orientation in the consumer behavior framework\(^\text{22}\). This study was supported by Delener and Nejdet (1994) who concluded that religion influences the consumers’ decision in buying things for their consumption\(^\text{23}\).

In a nutshell, religiosity has a certain degree of influence among consumers on their consumption behavior. However, it is found that in the current literature, religion has received merely slight attention in understanding consumer behavior\(^\text{24}\). Therefore, this study explore the role of religiosity in influencing halal consumption. Hence, to embed the religiosity factor as an independent variable in the present framework.

\(^{16}\) Bonne et al., "Determinants of Halal Meat Consumption in France", 379.


The Theoretical Framework on Factors Influencing Halal Consumption Among Muslim Consumers

Numbers of the frameworks were reviewed in understanding the factors of halal consumption. It was found that the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) were among the two conspicuous frameworks which were used in explaining the factors influencing Muslims consumers in consuming halal.

These two theoretical frameworks were developed by a reputable and distinguished social psychologist, Ajzen Izek. Based on the TRA, Ajzen (1991) further developed the framework by included the “perceived behavioral control” as the third variable in the framework. This innovative framework, then called as the TPB is used as a proposed theory, as reflected in the Figure below;

Figure I. A Schematic diagram of the Theory of reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behavior

According to the TPB, intention to perform the behaviors is influenced by three determinants; attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. Attitude yields a favorable or an unfavorable valuation toward the behavior. Secondly, subjective norm is a perceived social influence, and thirdly perceived behavioral control is an individual belief of how easy or difficult it is for a person to perform the behavior. In sum, attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control, influence the formation of a behavioral intention in performing the behavior. As a general rule, positive attitude, favorable influence of subjective norm, and the higher perceived control should contribute to the individual’s intention

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25 Ajzen and Fishbein, "Understanding Attitude and Predicting Social Behavior," 179.
to perform the behavior. The Intention is then expected to be the direct antecedent in performing the behavior.  

TPB is used as a backbone framework for this study because of three reasons; firstly it was proven as an effective theoretical framework in predicting consumers’ behavior towards halal food. Secondly, the TPB incorporated “perceived behavioral control” as one of the determinant in determining consumers’ intention and it was established as an influential variable in determining food preference. This is supported by Armitage & Corner (2001) who confirmed that perceived behavioral control is found as a significant determinant of consumer behavior. Thirdly, the independent variables and dependent variable presented in the TPB do not contradict with Islam and is suitable to be to be tested on Muslim respondents. As an example, subjective norm as an independent variable represent the influence of family, friends and society on the behavioral intention of an individual. This is in accordance to Islam where the role of the family and society is important in shaping the behavior of Muslims.

The TPB was found to be well supported by empirical research findings. The main idea of TPB is the individual behaviors are guided by his/her behavioral intention. The importance of behavioral intention in engaging behavior was researched and discussed by many scholars. It was found that the stronger intention to perform a behavior, the more likely the behavior will be performed (Ajzen, 1991). Likewise, the importance of behavioral intention was highlighted in the teaching of Islam. In fact, every human action either ibadah or daily activities should begin with a behavioral intention or “niat”. Some Muslim scholars argued that mubah (permissible) actions which are normally performed in daily life, for example, food consumption could be transformed into good deeds if it was accompanied by a good intention or niat.

This study proposes an additional independent variable which is religiosity and is grounded on the significant influence of it in previous researches. The influence of religiosity could be explored in order to comprehend the factors of halal consumption among Muslim consumers. Thus, this study proposes the modification of the conceptual framework as shown in Figure II.

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30 ‘Umar Sulayman, Al-‘Aqidah fi Allah (Jordan: Dar al-Nafa’is, 1999), 151.
Method

An exploratory study was conducted among 50 Muslim consumers to explore the influence of the proposed framework on halal consumption. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data among the respondents. The instrument was constructed by the researcher based on the literature, conceptual framework and discussion among Muslim consumers on this topic. The main guidelines on constructing the TPB questionnaire, written by Ajzen Icek the pioneer of the TPB was referred to.

A few items were also grounded based on the discussion with Muslim consumers and previous literature. The items and constructs were checked by 3 experienced researchers to ensure its content validity and statistical suitability. Finally, the questionnaire went through language expert review to ensure the accuracy and readability of the language used. The amendments were made based on their feedback and good items were selected for each dimension. Below are the items of religiosity construct used in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I. List of Items Measuring the Construct of Religiosity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
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<td>R2</td>
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<td>R3</td>
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<td>R6</td>
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<td>R7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
R8 I believe that as a human being, I belong to Allah SWT.

R9 I believe that the main purpose of this life is to perform ‘ibadah to Allah

R10 I pray regularly five times a day

R11 I fast regularly in the month of Ramadhan

R12 I perform/will perform pilgrimage/ haj when I can afford to do so

R13 I pay zakat fitrah every year if I fulfil the prescribed criteria

R14 I regularly recite the holy book of al Al-Qur’an

R15 I always try to avoid minor sins

R16 I always try to avoid major sins

R17 I try to follow Islam in all matters of my life

R18 I try to maintain a good behaviour (akhlak)

R19 I try to maintain good relationship with other fellow Muslims

R20 I try to maintain good relationship with non-Muslims

Findings

Table II shows the summary of the results of reliability analysis for the constructs used in the present study. The reliability of the items in this study was verified by computing the Cronbach’s alpha. Nunnally (1978) recommended a minimum alpha 0.7 for basic research reliability. Table II presents the Cronbach’s alpha for religiosity and behavioral intention constructs reaches the minimum alpha of 0.7. Therefore, the reliability of the constructs is acceptable for this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>No of Items</th>
<th>Pilot Study (Cronbach Alpha)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Intention</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.837</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results obtained in table III, attitude (r=0.479, p<.01), subjective norms (r=0.321, p<.05), religiosity (r=0.491, p<.01) were found significantly influenced the intention to consume halal. However, perceived behavioral control (r=0.123, p> .05) was found not significant in this exploratory study. Religiosity was found as the most significant factor influencing behavioral intentions of halal consumption. The correlation coefficient between religiosity and the behavioral intention to consume halal food is highly significant at 0.491.

Table III: Correlation Correlations between Religiosity and Behavioral Intention to Consume Halal Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Subjective norms</th>
<th>Religiosity</th>
<th>Intention</th>
<th>Perceived behavioral control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.479**</td>
<td>.321*</td>
<td>.491**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Similarly, previous studies have also shown the same trend of consumption among Muslim consumers, whereas religiosity aspect played certain roles in determining their intention and consumption behavior (Habiba 2011, Syed Syah Alam 2011, Djamchid Assadi 2008). This strengthens the view of Adilla (1999) that religion is an important factor determining Muslim consumers’ behavior. In fact, according to the teaching of Islam, human behavior should be guided by the revelation including daily matters including food consumption. A Combination of good intention and behaviour, even though a routine activity of mankind, could be rewarded by Allah SWT as a good deed.²

A combination of good intention and good deeds, even though a routine activity of human life could be rewarded as a good deed. Therefore, this study reveals that Muslim consumers, especially for those who practicing the Islamic teaching consume halal food primarily because of the teaching of Islam, their positive attitude about halal food and family influence.

Conclusion

This study examines factors influencing halal consumption of Muslim consumers’, grounded on the Theory of Planned Behavior. The findings of the exploratory study have revealed that religiosity is the strongest factor influencing halal consumption among Muslim consumers. The proposed framework could essentially explain the factors of halal consumption. Therefore, this paper expects to provide the theoretical perspective for consumer behavior and halal consumption research. It is assumed that the arguments presented in this paper would spring up further discussion in this field and encourage more empirical research to be conducted.

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