Dimension of Halal Purchase Intention: A Preliminary Study

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This paper aims to examine the dimensions for factors associated to Halal purchase intention. Using questionnaire surveys on 135 respondents from Kota Samarahan District in Sarawak, Malaysia, 9 dimensions named Solidity, Certainty, Universal, Brand Association, Purity, Conformity, Halal-ness, Place & Distribution, and Knowledge were extracted using Varimax Factor Analysis from four suggested variables: Marketing Concept; Awareness, Halal Certificate; and Religiousity. The paper intends to path the way for deeper and more thorough future research on the area.

Keywords: Halal, Religiosity, Purchase Intention.

1.0 Introduction

There are 60.4% Muslims living in Malaysia as the dominant group within a plural society. As one of the most important concepts for Muslims is Halal; therefore, in Malaysia the issue of Halal has become consumers' vital concern. Halal refer to as lawful or permitted by Islamic law (Halal and Haram: A Important Book for Muslim Consumers, 2006; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Most of the time, when it comes to Halal concept, it is always positioned in mind as something that related to food. Nevertheless, Halal actually covers wide areas of consideration such as purchase intention, source of income (Regenstein, Chaudry, & Regenstein, 2003); attitude toward advertisement, attitude toward product and purchase intention (Maheswaran & Sternthal, 1990); word of mouth (Soderlund, 2006); and religiousity (Worthington et al., 2003). This paper attempts to preliminarily explore the possible existence of dimensions for purchasing intention of Halal products, which is its main objective.

2.0 Literature Review

Concept of marketing, awareness, Halal certificate, and religion are to be discussed in this section.

2.1 Marketing

Consumers' reaction towards marketing strategy has a big impact on firm success. Basic understanding in marketing and also management studies calls for company to create a marketing mix that could satisfy their customers, which

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require the need to analyze the what, where, when and how consumers buy. These would allow marketers to better predict how consumers will respond to marketing strategies. Kotler and Amstrong (2006) have acknowledged that brand is more than just a name and symbols. It represents consumers' perception and feeling towards product and everything of the product or service that could bring meanings to the consumer. Research by Sungkar (2007) revealed that brand has the power to differentiate the product and to communicate with the consumer.

Quality on the other hand is a comparative concept of expectation versus perception where the gap would determine the degree of satisfaction for a consumer or user. Associating brand to a certain level of expectation would then actually influence one's purchase decision.

2.2 Awareness

The Quran has a specific guideline on what is Halal and what is Haram. 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 reference 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 and edible products.

Halal can be defined as permitted or allowed to Muslims (Berry, 2000; Eliasi & Dwyer, 2002). 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 nine categories between Halal and Haram; Mashbooh and Makrooh falls in between (Eliasi & 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 Muslims. Mashbooh, loosely translated would mean doubtful, while Makrooh would mean not encouraged to consume. It is very important for the Muslim consumers to know the products that they bought and consumed are in which categories.

2.3 Certificate

According to Department of Islamic Development Malaysia or JAKIM (which is the common name, taken from its Malay acronym) the Halal certificate is not just a religious requirement. Malaysia is currently active in becoming the Halal Hub for Southeast Asia region, and one of the vital steps to it is with the development of Halal standard for foods, MS 1500:2004 by Department of Standards Malaysia. This standard in general is the guidelines on production, preparation, handling and storage of Halal food products as has been gazette by the Malaysia government. In order to gain the Halal certification, manufacturers must stick on to strict cleanliness and quality control. MS 1500:2004 also help the food manufacturers to control and provide guidance in

the product processing in order to satisfy Syarie, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

This Halal product certification covers the examination of food processes, from the preparation, slaughtering, ingredients used, cleaning, handling and processing, right down to transportation and distribution. In addition, to meet the Halal requirement, food producers are encouraged to adapt and maintain standards that meet global benchmarks such as ISO9000, Codex Alimentary, HACCP and Good Hygienic Practice (Hayati et al., 2008).

2.4 Religion & Religiosity

Religion plays an important role in influencing consumers' 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 consumers' alternative choices 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 have become a vital part in marketing especially in advertisement (Froehle, 1994). Weaver and Agle (2002) stress on the strong impact on consumers' behavior and attitude that religiosity has.

Figure 1 below depicts the simplified brainstorming process in identifying the items and variables associated to purchase intention.

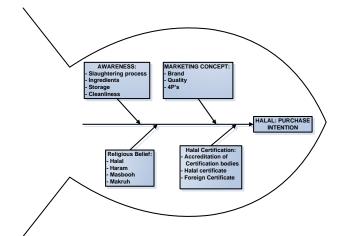


Figure 1: Brainstorming Using Fishbone Diagram

	Sources	Measurement			
Marketing	Regenstein, Chaudry,	6-Likert Scale			
Concept	& Regenstein (2003)				
	Soderlund (2006)				
Awareness	Froehle (1994)	6-Likert Scale			
Halal Certificate	Hayati et al. (2008)	6-Likert Scale			
Regiousity	Weaver & Agle (2002); Worthington et al. (2003)	6-Likert Scale			

3.0 Methodology

This study employed survey research method from a random sample of 200 respondents around Kota Samarahan, randomly based on non probability basic sampling where the respondents do not know they will be selected as a sample subject (Malhotra, 2004). Research surveys were used to quantitatively gauge the level of understanding of general Halal concept that contributes to Muslim consumers purchasing decision. The questions were prepared using six point Likert scale questionnaires. The six anchors that were used in the questionnaires were (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) fairly disagree, (4) fairly agree, (5) agree, (6)strongly agree. Data was then analyzed using SPSS with frequency and mean analysis used to explain the demographic and level of agreeable of respondents towards the purchase intention statements. Factor analysis was later employed to identify the dimension for Halal purchase intention.

4.0 Results & Discussion

From the 200 questionnaires being distributed, 135 questionnaires were successfully collected, giving a 67.5% response rate. Sekaran (2000) agrees with Roscoe (1975) that for most studies, a sample size between 30 and 500 would be sufficient.

Analysis on the respondents' demographic profiles as in Table 1 below reveals that majority of the respondents were female, 78 (57.8%), while for age category, the number of respondents with age between 20-29 years old, 86 (63.7%) was the highest. Most of the respondents were single, 70 (51.9%) respondents. Malay constituted highest respondents' race with 116 (85.9%) respondents, while the rest, includes Bidayuh, Melanau, and Iban were 19 (14.1%). In terms of level of education, 67 respondents (49.6%) stated having SPM and below. Most of the respondents' works in government sector, 51 (37.8%); 28 (20.7%) work in private sector, and 33 participants were students.

73 of the respondents (54.1%) have annual income below RM 15000; 20 (14.8%) between RM 15001 to RM 30000; 8 (5.9%) between RM 30001 to RM 45000, 2 (1.5%) between RM 45001-RM 60000, and RM 60001 and above, while 30 (22.2%) respondents cited having no annual income.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Details	Frequency	Percent (%)
	Male	57	42.2
Gender	Female	78	57.8
	20-29 years old	86	63.7
Age	30-39 years old	18	13.3
	40-49 years old	21	15.6
	50-59 years old	8	5.9
	60 years old and above	2	1.5
	Single	70	51.9
Marital Status	Married	63	46.7
	Others	2	1.5
	Malay	116	85.9
Race	Others	19	14.1
	SPM and below	67	49.6
Highest Level Education	STPM	19	14.1
	Diploma	14	10.4
	Degree	25	18.5
	Master	3	2.2
	Others	7	5.2
	Government	51	37.8
Occupation	Private sector	28	20.7
-	Student	33	24.4
	Unemployed	6	4.4
	Others	17	12.6
	Below RM 15000	73	54.1
Annual Income	RM 15001 - RM 30000	20	14.8
	RM 30001 - RM 45000	8	5.9
	RM 45001 - RM60000	2	1.5
	Above RM 60001	2	1.5
	No annual income	30	22.2
	Not at all	2	1.5
Level of religiosity	Not a devout	6	4.4
	Fairly not a devout	13	9.6
	Fairly a devout	66	48.9
	A devout	36	26.7
	An extremely devout	12	8.9

Respondents were asked to rate themselves of their level of religiosity. Highest number of respondents claimed to be fairly devout follower, 66 (48.9%); 36 (26.7%) a devout follower, 12 (8.9%) extremely devout follower, 13 (9.6%) fairly not devout follower, 6 (4.4%) not a devout follower and 2 (1.5%) of the respondents admitted to totally not at all a devout follower.

4.1 Purchase Intention

Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 depict the mean scores of all 9 items within Purchase Intention: Marketing Concept; Awareness; Halal Certificate; and Religiousity respectively.

Table 2: Means for marketing concept

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev
Always make sure product that purchased is Halal	5.57	0.71
When purchasing brand is vital	4.83	1.20
Purchase based on the brand	4.42	1.21
Choose to purchase Halal even not familiar with the brand	4.39	1.40
Make sure the quality of a Halal product	5.18	0.99
Before purchasing consider with the price	4.81	1.20
Choose to purchase Halal even quite expensive	4.64	1.10
Sales promotion influence in purchasing Halal product	4.30	1.21
Place plays important role in purchasing Halal product	4.64	1.17
Total	4.79	0.67

The statement "always make sure product that purchased is Halal" had the highest mean of 5.57 while the lowest mean for this **marketing concept** variable was "sales promotion influence in purchasing Halal product" with 4.30.

Table 3: Means for Awareness

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev
Before purchasing meat product make sure with the slaughtering	5.50	0.80
Will not purchase if not sure with the slaughtering process	5.16	1.07
The important slaughtering process that follow Islamic rules	5.66	0.65
Always aware with the product ingredients	5.16	0.92
Know that certain food additive contain non Halal ingredients	4.85	1.16
A product contain 1% of prohibited ingredient	5.32	0.95
Will not purchase Halal product if it arrange next to non-Halal	5.10	1.13
Cleanliness and protection is equally important	5.54	0.63
Not purchase distributors of Halal product if not practicing cleanliness	5.66	4.47
Total	5.38	0.81

For the variable **awareness**, "important of slaughtering process that follow the Islamic rules" and "will not purchase if distributors not practicing cleanliness" were the two highest mean with score of 5.66. The lowest mean score was 4.85 for the variable "knowing that certain food additive contains non Halal ingredients"

Table 4: Means for Halal Certificate

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev
Halal logo is important in choosing product	5.66	0.60
Choose Halal product based on the Halal logo on product	5.27	0.87
Purchase without considering which institution	3.10	1.60
Does not matter who produces the Halal logo	3.17	1.67
Know that forged logo exist	5.08	1.02
Know to differentiate between genuine and not genuine Halal logo	4.71	1.11
Know certain products received Halal certificate from other country	4.57	1.10
Will purchase product that have Halal logo from other country	3.63	1.48
Will always be careful when choosing product with Halal logo	5.24	0.84
Total	4.47	0.62

Table 4 shows the means for **Halal Certificates** items. "Halal logo is important in choosing product" showed the highest mean value of 5.66, while the lowest mean value was "purchase without considering which institution produces the logo". Some interesting observation detected were on the low mean scores for two other items, "will purchase product that have Halal logo from other country" with 3.63 and 3.17 mean score for "does not matter who produces the Halal logo" respectively.

Table 5: Means for Religion belief

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev
As Muslim well informed every product that purchased supposedly Halal	5.71	0.56
Well informed that matters on Halal is important	5.64	0.60
Noticed every product that are Haram to be eaten by Muslim	5.20	1.02
Not consume product contain non-Halal ingredient	5.43	0.87
Know there are certain product considered as Makruh	4.93	0.94
Islam does not encourage of using or consuming Makruh	5.11	0.88
Know that product that is Masbuh need to avoid	5.22	0.83
Will not purchase if not sure with the ingredients	5.39	0.74
Realize that everything eaten will influences life	5.54	0.71
Total	5.35	0.64

Table 5 depicts mean scores for **religion belief** variable. The highest mean value under this variable was "as a Muslim well informed that every product that supposedly Halal" with 5.71, while the lowest value of mean was that "certain product considered as Makruh" which was 4.93.

4.2 Halal Purchase Intention Dimensions

Table 6 depicts the findings for factor analysis on the four variables. Using SPSS, a principle components extraction was done to find a pattern to propose a preliminary Halal Purchase Intention Dimensions. The KMO was 0.737,

greater than the required minimum of 0.6 for a satisfactory factor analysis to be proceeded further. Total Variance explained was 62% for the suggested 9 dimensions.

Table 6: Varimax Factor Analysis for Halal Purchase Intention Dimensions

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	SOLIDITY	CERTAINTY	UNIVERSAL	BRAND ASSOC.	PURITY	CONFORMITY	HALAL-NESS	PLACE & DISTRIB	KNOWLEDGE
As a Muslim well informed that matters on Halal food or things are important	.796								
Know the important of process to follow Islamic rules	.793								
As a Muslim well informed that every product that purchased supposed to be Halal	.741								
Cleanliness and protection is equally important	.726								
Before purchasing meat, make sure the slaughtering process	.721								
Halal logo is important in choosing product	.699								
Will not purchase or use a product if in doubt with the ingredients	.533								
Know there are certain product considered as Makruh		.792							
Know Islam does not encourage of using or consuming product that are Makruh		.758							
Know product that is Masbuh/ doubted need to be avoided		.638							
If informed that a product that just purchased contain non Halal will not consume it		.554							
Does not matter which institution produces the logo			.868						
Purchase without considering which institution produces the certificate			.862						
Brand is vital in purchasing				.864					
Usually purchased based on brand				.812					
Know that forged Halal logo exist					.795				
Place plays an important role for me in purchasing Halal					.573				
Know that if a product contain even 1% of prohibited it should not be eaten					.541				
Not purchase if not sure with the slaughtering process						.669			
Make sure of the quality of the product						.647			
Choose to purchase Halal even it is quite expensive							.743		
Buy Halal even the brand not familiar							.720		
Sales promotion influences in purchasing Halal							.594		
Not likely to purchase if it is arrange next to non Halal product								.710	
Will not purchase if the distributors not practicing cleanliness								.634	
Know every products that are prohibited to be eaten or used by a Muslim									.730
Know that certain products received their Halal logo from other country									.576
Eigenvalue	7.997	3.311	2.013	1.803	1.671	1.479	1.461	1.336	1.256
% of variance	22.215	9.196	5.591	5.007	4.641	4.109	4.058	3.711	3.488
Cumulative % of variance	22.215	31.411	37.002	42.009	46.650	50.758	54.816	58.527	62.015
Reliability	0.876	0.743	0.885	0.75	0.648	0.461	0.556	0.463	0.575

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged

in 13 iterations.

The proposed given names, items extracted and brief descriptions on the dimension of Halal purchase intention are as below:

SOLIDITY

- As a Muslim, well informed that matters on Halal food or things are important.
- Knows the important of process to follow Islamic rules.
- As a Muslim, well informed that every product that is purchased supposed to be Halal.
- Cleanliness and protection is equally important.
- Before purchasing meat, make sure the slaughtering process.
- Halal logo is important in choosing product.
- Will not purchase or use a product if in doubt with the ingredients.

In general, Halal products are only relevant for Muslims because only a Muslim is bound to consume products that are permitted under the Shariah Law. This dimension stresses on the importance of having solid understanding of the Islamic teaching and solid confidence that a product to be purchased is Halal. Solid belief and understanding covers the knowledge that that particular product follows Islamic rules for preparation process with cleanliness and protection as equally important. Halal label is an important factor for Muslims in choosing product and as source of information of the contained ingredients as it helps to eliminate doubt of ingredients used in particular product.

CERTAINTY

- Know there are certain products considered as Makruh.
- Know Islam does not encourage of using or consuming product that are Makruh.
- Know product that is Masbuh/ doubted need to be avoided.
- If informed that a product that just purchased contain non Halal will not consume it.

Having intention to purchase Halal products involve the feelings of certainty, that is to know what product which are not encouraged to consumed (Makruh), to avoid due to doubt (masbuh), and to avoid not able to consume purchased product if it turned out to be non-Halal. This dimension stresses on the importance of being certain, hundred percent sure of the product to be purchased is Halal.

UNIVERSAL

- Does not matter which institution produces the logo.
- Purchase without considering which institution produces the certificate.

This dimension named Universal reflects the teaching of Islam, which applies for everybody. Having a Halal logo or certificate in today's globalized world is a must in order to cater for all Muslims' needs. The good news is it is not restricted to any specific institution since the 'standard' for the logo or certificate is Halal, which is as discussed earlier should reflect only one meaning that is permissible for any Muslim in the world.

BRAND ASSOCIATION

- Brand is vital in purchasing.
- Usually purchased based on brand.

Brand association explains the importance of having and creating a "credible" image that could communicate to consumer that that certain products are from reliable producer, hence 'permissible' to consume. This dimension in fact could be an extension for further study on 'branding' and Halal issues.

PURITY

- Know that forged Halal logo exist
- Place plays an important role for me in purchasing Halal
- Know that if a product contain even 1% of prohibited it should not be eaten

It is important for producer to understand this dimension of purity. The concern is to have a genuine Halal logo, the right place for product distribution, and to ensure the purity of product and process. Marketing concept explains on the power of negative word-of-mouth, which if it is to be applied to Halal product could definitely hurt producer for failure in recognizing the concept behind this dimension.

CONFORMITY (QUALITY)

While the reliability test resulted in a rather low of 0.461 as Nunnally (1978) has suggested that 0.5 as the minimum level for acceptable reliability, the researcher opted to still list out and name this dimension as the study is meant to be a preliminary study. Future research with greater number of respondents and more thorough investigation might give better sight to this dimension. Items extracted were:

- Not purchase if not sure with the slaughtering process.
- Make sure of the quality of the product.

Liker (2004) stresses on the importance of having the right process to produce the right results, while Hayati, et al (2008) calls for concern and implementation

of total quality management practices in Halal industry to ensure marketability.

HALAL-NESS

- Choose to purchase Halal even it is quite expensive.
- Buy Halal even the brand not familiar.
- Sales promotion influences in purchasing Halal.

This dimension again asserts the importance of Halal status for customer purchasing Halal products. As Halal is identified to play bigger role than price and brand in consumer decision in purchasing Halal product, promotion would then obviously be an influence on consumer purchasing behavior. This also shed some lights, an impetus for further research on the relationship for the concept of Halal against price and branding.

PLACEMENT & DISTRIBUTION

- Not likely to purchase if it is arrange next to non Halal product
- Will not purchase if the distributors not practicing cleanliness

Placement and distribution call for detail in Halal industries as consumer might not be happy to have Halal product placed together with the non-Halal. Halal does also reflect the cleanliness of a product. However, reliability test resulted in a low 46.3%.

KNOWLEDGE

- Know every products that are prohibited to be eaten or used by a Muslim
- Know that certain products received their Halal logo from other country

In this final dimension, knowledge is pointed out as key ingredient to influence Halal purchase intention. Knowledge of what is allowed and permissible and knowledge that certain Halal logo originated from other country would influence the judgment of a consumer in purchasing Halal product. Obviously, without the knowledge consumer might be reluctant to purchase a Halal product, or might be purchasing a non-Halal product, or might also ignore a product with foreign Halal logo that is not known to the consumer. This implies the task in hand for marketer in disseminating the correct knowledge for potential buyer.

5.0 Implication & Conclusion

This paper as a preliminary study has achieved its objective of deriving dimensions for Halal purchasing intention. The dimensions proposed consist of nine dimensions. Despite the simplicity of its current nature, the study has raised issues that should path ways for further and thorough research.

Main potential for implication benefits, other than shedding the light for future research would be for firms to understand the scope or criterion to focus on in winning consumer purchasing decision. Understanding how consumers

evaluate their purchase intention in buying Halal product would contribute to better meeting the needs and expectation of potential consumer.

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