

# **PURCHASE INTENTION OF HALAL PRODUCTS: A STUDY AMONG NON-MUSLIM MEMBER OF CO-OPERATIVES**

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## **Abstract**

*This study focused on the purchased intention of halal products among Co-operatives' non-Muslim members. The study aims to understand the relationship between attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control on purchase intention. A survey was conducted in Kuching City where a total of 338 questionnaires were distributed to gather information on willingness to purchase halal products among non-Muslim member of co-operatives. With the returned questionnaires of 166, the result shows that the respondents are aware of the existence of halal products and are willing to purchase halal products. The results also indicate that the Perceived Behavior Control is the most important factor in influencing non-Muslim's halal purchase intention, followed by Subjective Norms and Attitude. Furthermore, in determining category of halal products purchased, halal food and beverages were found to be the major category of halal products that counted high willingness of purchases, followed by halal toiletries products, halal cosmetics products, and halal pharmaceutical products. This study provides halal industries with a greater understanding of the consumer behavior relating to halal products thus creating an understanding on halal principles that will influence their perceptions and attitudes towards halal products.*

**Keywords:** *Halal, Non-Muslim, Purchase intention, Co-operative members, Kuching City*

## INTRODUCTION

Purchase intention is used to demonstrate intention of buyers to buy goods or services (Armstrong, Morwitz, & Kumar, 2000). Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior; they are indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Purchasing behavior depends on specific social, cultural, economic, legal, and political contexts, which may differ significantly between countries and even regional areas that limit the generalization of research results from one country's to another country's contexts (Alam & Sayuti, 2011). Scholars often use brand attitude to predict the purchase intention and purchasing behavior of consumers (Tseng & Lee, 2012).

Halal purchase intention can be linked to religious fervor and beliefs that it is cleaner, healthier, and tastier (Burgmann, 2007). For instance, consumer's decision is based on a complex set of factors such as quality, value, and satisfaction, which can directly influence behavioral intention (Joseph, Brandy, & Hult, 2000). For Muslims, the halal standard indicates the halalness of the products and for non-Muslims it stands for not only just and fair business transactions but also for caring for animals, the environment, sustainability, social justice and animal welfare (Golnaz, Zainalabidin & Mad, 2012).

Halal products are the products that were monitored under the Islamic guidelines. According to Latif (2011), halal products cannot contain any parts or products of animal that are non-halal by Syariah Law or any parts or products of animal which are not slaughtered according to Syariah Law. It is not just in term of food, but also any tangible and intangible products, which was permitted to use or consume according to the Islamic law. Tangible goods are merchandise that exist in a physical form that we can put on hands. Intangible goods are products cannot be seen or touched. Halal products and services are universal, fit for Muslims as well as non-Muslims (Latif, 2011). There is a need for the authority to enforce standards to ensure *halal* particularly when the products and services are sold, made, and prepared. Co-operatives are social enterprises that are formed and owned by a group of individuals for the purpose of improving their standard of living. The underlying philosophy of co-operatives is essentially service and the well-being of members and as such, co-operatives are non profit oriented and will always put the welfare of the members as a priority when making key decision (Tchami, 2007). As a member based organizations, members' involvement in their co-operation is of paramount is important for the survival and success of the co-operatives for example on consumer buying behavior in co-operatives.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Most of non-Muslim consumers does not mindful and does not care on what type of products that they choose and purchase. The level of understanding regarding the halal principles among them is still low. Non-Muslim customers still look at halal food products from a religious perspective

and see it mainly as the way an animal has been slaughtered (Golnaz et al., 2012). According to Golnaz et al., (2010), non-Muslim consumers are less likely to purchase halal food products given the argument that non-Muslim most likely view Islamic slaughtering as undue cruelty to animals. This statement reflects that non-Muslim also does not realize that halal principles and practices also concerned about the animal welfare rather than just concerned about food contents and vice versa. In this situation, they might concern about the animal welfare and the environment, but still does not know what appropriate action to be taken. Halal products are known for their beneficial attributes that are not only to be enjoyed by Muslim consumers but also by non-Muslim consumers.

Implementing halal requirements will produce better quality products compared to those that only implement the conventional standards (Talib & Ali, 2009). Halal requirements meet many of the conventional quality standards. The halal standards and procedures definitions are not only confined to fulfilling the Islamic rituals but also on the cleanliness and quality control (Yaakob et. al, 2007). The values can be realized among non-Muslim consumers if the society at large is made to be more conscious of issues concerning health, hygiene, safety, environment, social justice, and animal welfare that come along with the halal ways. In a multi-racial and culturally diverse society it is imperative for non-Muslims to understand the cultural and religious taboos of their Muslims counterparts (Golnaz et al., 2012).

Halal concept strongly emphasizes on cleanliness especially in the context of food and drink. For food and drink, the product must be approved for consumption it must conform to the Islamic dietary laws as specified in the Qur'an. Raw materials and ingredients that are non-halal sometimes have bad side effect to the body due to unmonitored by the authority. Manufacturer that does not practice halal concept might simply mix up some contents and ingredients that might be dangerous to be consumed. Most of non-Muslim customers also do not understand about the concept of slaughtered according to Islamic rites. The rituals specify that the slaughtering must be performed by a mentally sound Muslim. The process involved severing the blood and respiratory channels of the animal, using a sharp cutting tool such as a knife.

In addition, comments and opinions from an preliminary interview conducted by the researcher found that the younger age non-Muslim consumer are more aware and understand about the halal principles compared to the older non-Muslim consumer. According to Golnaz et al., (2010) shows the variable age, which has been classified into two groups (40 years and above, less than 40 years) when the respondents grow older; their level of awareness towards the advantages of consuming Halal food products is 2.71 times less compared to the younger group. The younger consumers have positive understanding and not looking on these issues based on the religiosity perception, but view it as an important manner to choose or purchase products. They were concerned with the criteria such as clean and safe products to use and consume. Meanwhile, the older consumers undertake halal products as a brand and view in religiosity way. They will purchase halal products only for a reason and if only they have no choice.

Thus, based on above argument there is a need for the researcher to investigate further on the influence of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control towards the purchase intention of halal products among non-Muslim member of co-operatives in Kuching city, Sarawak. The study can help consumers especially the non-Muslim consumers, to have a better understanding towards halal products. It encourages them to make smarter decision in purchasing and consuming products. The scope of study is non-Muslim who are members of co-operatives who attended courses provided by MKM in Kuching. They are the consumers who consume products and services by their business co-operative.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study generally is to answer the intention of member of co-operatives to purchase halal products. The first objective is to determine which factors strongly influences the intention of non-Muslim member of co-operatives to purchase halal products. The second objective is to determine what type of halal products that mostly purchase among non-Muslim member of co-operatives.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Purchase or behavioural intention is used to demonstrate intention of buyers to buy goods or services (Armstrong, Morwitz, & Kumar, 2000). Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behaviour; they are indications of how hard people are willing to try, of how much of an effort they are planning to exert, in order to perform the behaviour (Ajzen I., "Theory of planned behaviour", 1991). Consumers' purchase intention is subject to the influence of various factors, the most common of which are others' recommendation and advertisement (Tseng et al., 2012). For example, consumers' attitude towards brand would influence their purchase intention (Mitchell & Oslon, 1981).

The laws affecting Muslims consumption behavior are governed by the Quranic philosophy of what is permissible (Halal) and what is not permissible (Haram) for a believer (Berry, 2000). The Halal product has to follow the conditions that the ingredients or components do not contain any parts from animal that is not Halal to be eaten or used by the Muslims (Jamal & Nur, 2010). These include liquor, pork, interest on money, blood of animals and the meat of animal sacrificed in the name of other than Allah (Al-Qadawi, 1999). Products that are made of/or contain liquor, pork and blood of dead animal Haram for most of the Muslims (Ford, LaTour, & Honeycutt, 1997). The core issue of Halal products resides on the religious beliefs of Muslims. Nonetheless, individual as in most cases also differ in their attitudes, intentions and behavior when it comes to religion and religious implications (Fam, Waller, & Erdogan, 2004).

According to Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) the Halal certificate is not just a religious requirement and 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. Some of the local brands appear to capture their own niches by projecting themselves as “Islamic” brands via their creative packaging and labeling (Alam & Sayuti, 2011). 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 (Jamal & Nur, 2010).

Islam provides rules and regulations over foods and products so that it is produced and prepared according to God’s commandment, and meeting the safety, quality and nutritional needs, similar concerns are shown by non-Muslims over the issues (Asyraf, Wan, Mohd & Zainab, 2011). The Halal products are also growing in popularity among non-Muslim consumers due to humane animal treatment concerns and the perception that Halal products are healthier and safer (Golnaz et al., 2010). The non-Muslim have all right to produce non-halal products as long as they do not label their product as halal (Hayati et al., 2008). For example, non-Muslim Russians made purchases from Muslim stores because they believe the products are fresh, safe and infection free, and had confidence that Muslims would adhere to their religious belief not to cheat (Golnaz et al., 2010).

Malaysia is multicultural and multiracial country, which is forecasted to be a growing halal market (Sudin, Geoffrey & Hanudin, 2009). In a multi-racial and culturally diverse society it is imperative for non-Muslims to understand the cultural and religious taboos of their Muslim counterparts (Golnaz et al., 2012). Non-Muslim was primarily eating vegetarian dishes and it might be easier for them to find a halal restaurant but when they’re looking for a prepared meal, it is been very limited (Marcella, 2011). There is crossover appeal for halal products and many non-Muslim consumers already choose to buy halal products, especially meat offerings (Azizah, 2011). The Halal concept is not unfamiliar to non-Muslims, especially those in Muslim countries (Golnaz et al., 2010).

It is no longer a concept confined or restricted to the slaughtering of animals for the consumption of Muslims but encompasses products and services of the highest quality that meet the ever increasing awareness and needs of non-Muslim consumers in a demanding market (Golnaz et al., 2010). One reason is because halal is widely known to have higher standards of quality (Azizah, 2011). The consumption of Halal food for non-Muslims is quite different from the consumption of “regular” food or other foods for non-Muslims (Golnaz et al., 2010).

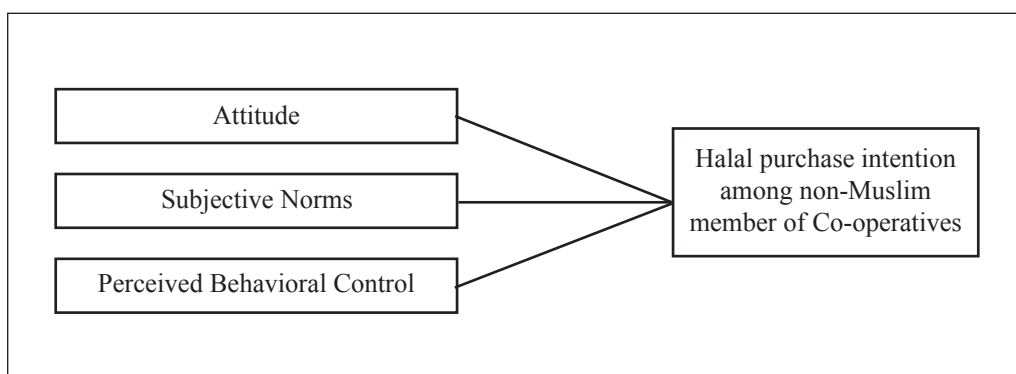
Lack of knowledge among non-Muslims on Halal principles and insufficient information on the benefits of the Halal process, Halal principles have not become a major element in the fabric of non-Muslims lives (Golnaz et al., 2012). Halal products should be recognized as a symbol of cleanliness, safety and high quality among non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia (Yuhanis & Chok, 2012). Non-Muslim consumers are less likely to purchase Halal food products given the argument that non-Muslim most likely view Islamic slaughtering as undue cruelty to animals (Golnaz et al., 2010). In-depth understanding of the non-Muslim consumers’ purchase behaviour

can strengthen the position among the halal marketplace (Yuhanis and Chok, 2012). Thus, non-Muslim consumers still look at Halal food products from a religious perspective and see it mainly as the way an animal has been slaughtered (Golnaz et al., 2012).

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1985, 1991) is commonly used to investigate consumer behavior and purchase intention behavior. This theory postulates three conceptually independent determinants of behavioral intention: attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control (Bonne, Vermeir, Bergeaud-Blackler, & Verbeke, 2007). Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are shown to be related to appropriate sets of salient behavioral, normative, and control beliefs about the behavior, but the exact nature of these relations is still uncertain (Ajzen, 1991).

Attitude towards the target behavior and subjective norms about engaging in the behavior are thought to influence intention halal food purchasing behavior, and TPB includes perceived behavior control over engaging in the behavior as a factor influencing intention and purchasing behavior (Syed & Nazura, 2011). An attitude towards a behavior is a positive or negative evaluation of performing that behavior and perceived behavioral control is informed by beliefs about the individual's possession of the opportunities and resources needed to engage in the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioral control in TPB representing a person's belief about how easy it is to perform the behavior is important in predicting behavior (Syed & Nazura, 2011). The relative importance of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in the prediction of intention is expected to vary across behaviors and situations (Ajzen, 1991). The research framework that was adopted from Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1991) is further illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Research Framework

Based on the research framework above, three hypotheses were also developed and tested based on the three independent variables.

**Attitude:** Attitude refers to the degree to which a person has favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question (Syed et al., 2011). It is the evaluation of performing a particular behavior involving the attitude object, such as buying the product (Blackwell, Paul & James, 2006). By applying these statements the first hypothesis developed is:

H1: There is significant relationship between attitude of non-Muslim member of co-operatives and their halal purchase intention.

**Subjective Norms:** The predictor social factor termed subjective norm is the perceived social pressure to comply with expectations about engaging in the behavior, which should influence the individual's intention to perform, or not to the behavior (Syed & Nazura, 2011). As such, a second hypothesis is developed:

H2: There is significant relationship between the subjective norms of non-Muslim member of co-operatives and their halal purchase intention.

**Perceived Behavioral Control:** Perceived behavioral control is the extent to which a person feels able to engage in the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioral control of the focal person in a decision-making situation may affect his/her behavioral intentions (Jyh-Shen, 1998). Therefore, the third hypothesis is proposed:

H3: There is significant relationship between perceived behavioral control of non-Muslim member of co-operatives and their halal purchase intention.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used for this study is based on a survey questionnaire adopted from previous studies. The studies were from Gornaz et. al, (2009), "Concern of halalness of halal-labelled food products among Muslim Consumers in Malaysia: Evaluating of Selected Demographic Factors", Jamil & Nur (2011), "Dimension of Halal Purchase Intention: A Preliminary Study" and Suddin & Hanudin (2009), "Predicting Intention To Choose Halal Products Using Thoery of Reasoned Action". The questionnaire consists of four parts namely demographic profile, factors that influence the intention of non-Muslim member of co-operatives to purchase halal products and purchase intention. Five points Likert scales were used as a measurement for the respondents with scoring of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was prepared in both English and Malay language. Simple random sampling technique was used to collect the data among non-Muslim member of co-operatives in Kuching. Respondents from a main city center of Pending and Padungan was selected due to the areas was located in center of Kuching and majority of the population were made out of non-Muslim. The sampling method



of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), was applied and it greatly helps to simplify the sample size by providing the table that ensured as accurate sampling size decision methods.

Questionnaire was distributed to a sample size of 338 respondents; however only 166 respondents provided valid returns. Sekaran (2000), agrees with Roscoe (1975), that for most studies, a sample size between 30 and 500 would be sufficient. Data was then analyzed using SPSS with frequency, reliability and correlation used to explain the demographic, factor that influences the intention of non-Muslim member of co-operatives to purchase halal products and hypotheses.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Overall, 45.2 percent of the respondents were male respondents, and 54.8 percent were female. The average age of the respondents ranged from 51 years old and above (34.3%), followed by 20 – 30 years old and 31 – 40 years old (21.7%) respectively, 41 – 50 years old (20.5%), whereas, 19 years old and below made up the smallest group at only 1.8 percent. In terms of religion, majority of respondents (43.4%) were Christian Catholic. Most of the respondents were SPM and below and earned RM1000 and below monthly.

The most reliable variables is Perceived Behavioral Control, which has 3.73 mean value, followed by Subjective Norms 3.14, and the lowest is Attitude with 3.69. Perceived Behavioral Control is the strongest factor that influences the intention of non-Muslim member of co-operatives to purchase halal products. Therefore, this argument corresponds with the agreement from past researcher whereas according to Syed & Nazura (2011), there is a significant and positive relationship between perceived behavior control and intention to purchase halal food products.

Majority of non-Muslim member of co-operatives purchased halal food and beverages with (52.4%), followed by halal toiletries products (1.8%), halal cosmetics products (1.2%), and halal pharmaceutical products (0.8%). Meanwhile, there were (44%) of non-Muslim members choosing not to purchase any of halal products in the market. Out of 56% respondents who purchased halal product, 52.4% purchased halal food and beverages. This result is answering the second objective of this study. Therefore, this argument disagree with the agreement from past researcher whereas according to Golnaz et al. (2010), non-Muslim consumers are less likely to purchase halal food products given the argument that non-Muslim most likely view Islamic slaughtering as undue cruelty to animals. This is due to the difference in demographic factor as the past researcher had conducted the survey on non-Muslim consumer in West Malaysia.



**Table 1: Correlation Analysis**

Dimension	Relationship	Attitude	Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavior Control
<b>Attitude</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)	1		
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)	.444** 0.000	1	
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)	.534** 0.000	.644** 0.000	1

n = 166

All dimensions are at significant of  $p < 0.05$

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

Cohen (1988), suggested that,  $r = 0.10$  to  $0.29$  /  $r = -0.10$  to  $-0.29$  the strength of relationship is low; on the other hand,  $r = 0.30$  to  $0.49$  /  $r = -0.30$  to  $-0.49$  the strength shows a medium relation; meanwhile if the  $r = 0.50$  to  $1.0$  /  $r = -0.50$  to  $-0.10$  then the relation strength is high.

The validity was evaluated by the results of the correlation analysis. Based on Table 1, all correlation values between the variables are less than 0.8. Thus, all are acceptable. Measurement scale used in this research was generally valid and reliable, which enable the researcher to draw further discussion on assessing the relationship between independent variables (Attitude, Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control) and dependent variables (Halal purchase intention among non-Muslim consumers).

The total values of Pearson correlation for attitude were 0.444 with subjective norms and 0.534 with perceived behavioral control. Both of the dimension were significant with attitude as the results were below than the significant level of 0.05. Thus, attitude has an averagely moderate relationship with both subjective norms and perceived behavioral control.

Next, subjective norms have a significant relationship with both attitude and perceived behavioral control as both of the significant values were below 0.05. The total values of Pearson correlation for subjective norms were 0.44 with attitude and 0.644 with perceived behavioral control. Based on Guttman's Rule of Thumb, subjective norms has a strong relationship with perceived behavioral control, meanwhile it has a moderate relationship with attitude.

The third dimension was perceived behavioral control which has a total values Pearson correlation of 0.534 with attitude and 0.644 with subjective norms. It has a strong relationship with subjective norms and moderate relationship with attitude. Both of the dimensions were significant with perceived behavioral control as the results were below than the significant level of 0.05.

These results supported by previous study by Ajzen (1991), whereby the intentions to perform behaviours of different kinds can be predicted with high accuracy from attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control; and these intentions, together with the perceptions of behavioral control, account for considerable variance in actual behavior.

Based on the correlation analysis, all three variables are significant. The  $R^2$  result shows that attitude ( $\bullet = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), subjective norms ( $\bullet = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and perceived behavioral control ( $\bullet = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were significant factors in halal purchase intention among non-Muslim member of co-operatives. As a result, hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were supported.

## CONCLUSION

From the analysis that has been carried out, it can be concluded that non-Muslims member of co-operatives with high perceived behavioral control will be more willing to purchase halal products. In other word, it reflects their self-confidence and product knowledge influence their intention in purchasing products. Their products knowledge may shape their information and decision-making actions. For example, the demonstration of product's performance in order to develop consumers' confidences. It explained that non-Muslim member of co-operatives behavior are strongly influenced by their self-belief in their capability to execute them.

Halal food and beverages products are now capturing the market for both Muslim and non-Muslims. It clearly shows that most of the non-Muslim consumers are aware of the benefits that they get from consuming halal food and beverages because of their positive perceptions. These benefits are the strength of halal food and beverages to pull and influence non-Muslim consumers thus, creating a new generation of halal user among non-Muslim is not an impossible task.

Manufacturers of halal products should produce high quality halal products that can satisfy both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers and have competitive advantage over the conventional products. According to Hayati et al., (2008), manufacturers must take advantage of the reputation and credibility of the Malaysian halal standards, halal certification and label, which has received a worldwide acknowledgement and recognition. Manufactures that have halal certificate should produce variety type of halal food and beverages products. This is to ensure that all consumers both of Muslim and non-Muslim consumers will have many choice to choose halal products and beverages that they want.

According to Golnaz et al., (2012), the non-Muslim food manufactures and producers that produce halal product are on the rise considering the Malaysian Government's vision of making Malaysia a world Halal hub for food production and manufacturing industries and the ever increasing demand of halal products in the market both domestic and in the global market.

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