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RESEARCH LETTER



Muslim tourists' purchase intention of halal food in Spain

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study aims to observe the purchase intention of halal food products in Spain from the perspective of Muslim tourists. 500 Muslim respondents who have visited Spain participated in answering our research questionnaire. The data were analyzed using the PLS-SEM method using SmartPLS 3.0 software. Our result shows that both the halal credence and the need for cognition have no direct effects on halal purchase intention. However, halal consumers' attitude acts as significant mediators in the indirect effects of both halal credence and the need for cognition on halal purchase intention.

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KEYWORDS

Halal tourism; halal purchase intention; halal consumer behaviour; Spanish market; structural equation model

Introduction

Business policymakers have acknowledged halal tourism as a potential market while academic scholars have integrated it as a part of business literature (Al-Ansi et al., 2019). We decided to focus this study specifically in Spain because it is one of the few countries that planned and develop halal concepts seriously—alongside New Zealand, Australia, South Korea, and Japan (Al-Ansi et al., 2019). Spain also has a long Islamic history during the Moors' reign since 800 A.D. until the seventeenth century (Mesa, 2012). According to recent data by the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain (UCIDE, 2018), the country is now home to around 1.9 Muslims.

A study by Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral (2019) and Pradana et al. (2020) have become decent pathfinders in exploring halal tourism in Spain. Still, there is a clear gap in the literature, especially in the discussion of how halal food purchase intention affects the travel experience of Muslim tourists' (Bashir et al., 2019). Therefore, we formulate these research hypotheses, which are visually presented in Figure 1.

H1 – Halal credence has a positive effect on halal consumers' attitude

H2 – Halal credence has a positive effect on halal purchase intention

H3 – Need for cognition (NFC) has a positive effect on halal consumers' attitude

H4 – NFC has a positive effect on halal purchase intention.

H5 – halal consumers' attitude has a positive effect on halal purchase intention

H6 – Halal consumers' attitude acts as a mediator in the relationship between halal credence and halal purchase intention

H7 – Halal consumers' attitude acts as a mediator in the relationship between NFC and halal purchase intention.

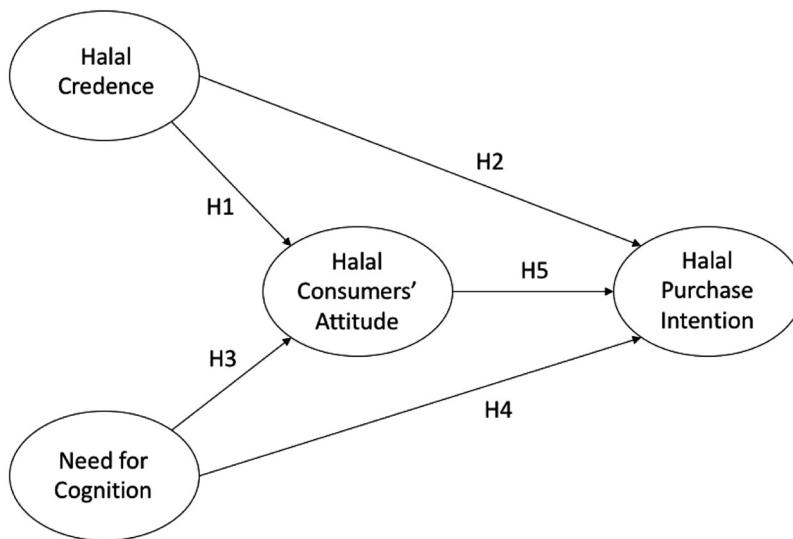


Figure 1. Research model.

Research Methodology

The respondents of this research were 500 Muslims who have visited Spain at least once. They were invited to answer our questionnaire—which was distributed using email and mobile chat applications (WhatsApp and Telegram). The profiles of these respondents can be seen in [Table 1](#).

The measures contain five constructs which were generated from prior studies: halal credence (3 items from Verbeke et al. [2013]), halal consumers' attitude (4 indicators from Bashir et al. [2019]); and Pradana et al. (2020), need for cognition (3 indicators from Cacioppo and Petty [1982]; and Wibowo and Ahmad [2016]), and purchase intention (3 indicators from Garg and Joshi (2018) and Pradana et al. (2020)).

We evaluated the items' validity according to the procedures suggested by Hair et al. (2014). Cronbach's alpha is required to indicate a minimum value of 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, the composed reliability coefficient has to be at least a value of 0.7 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1992) and the average variance extracted (AVE) has to be at least a value of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). [Table 2](#) shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Table 1. Profiles of respondents.

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Men	262	52.4
	Women	238	47.6
	TOTAL	500	100.0
Age	<26 years old	62	32.9
	26–35 years old	86	36.4
	36–45 years old	82	30.7
	TOTAL	500	100.0
Marriage Status	Married	216	43.2
	Not Married	284	56.8
	TOTAL	500	100.0
Part of Spain they visited	Catalunya	183	36.6
	Madrid	89	17.8
	Andalucia	83	16.6
	Valencia	15	0.3
	Others	130	26.0
	TOTAL	500	100.0

Table 2. Construct validity (CFA result).

Items		CR	HA	NC	HP
Halal Credence	I will choose halal products because I am sure that it has been produced according to Islamic method	0.589*			
	Halal label makes me feel safe to consume the product	0.886			
Halal Consumers' Attitude	I prefer halal products because it is free from residues	0.855			
	The existence of a halal label in the packaging of food products is important		0.920		
	I will choose a product based on whether there is a halal label or not		0.361*		
	Halal label makes me feel safe to consume the product		0.918		
Need for Cognition	I always look for the Halal Label on the product packaging before buying any products or goods			0.933	
	My decision to consume halal food comes after going through some process of thinking			0.689	
	I prefer halal product with a bit higher price to cheaper non-halal food			0.514*	
Halal Purchase Intention	I prefer just to keep consuming the same halal food than having to evaluate other food products			0.874	
	I am willing to pay more for food products with an authentic Halal label				0.937
	I prefer to buy halal-certified products even when the brand is not very popular				0.939
	I am willing to travel long distance to buy food products with an authentic Halal label				0.361*
	<i>Cronbach's Alpha (a) (>0.7)</i>	0.869	0.864	0.717	0.869
	<i>AVE (>0.5)</i>	0.662	0.684	0.574	0.693
	<i>Composite Reliability (>0.7)</i>	0.906	0.910	0.867	0.913

The composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values were higher than the recommended values of 0.50 and 0.70, respectively. We retained all items with factor loadings higher than the recommended value of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2014).

Result and discussion

We analysed the relationships between constructs using the structural equation modelling (SEM). The partial least squares (PLS) approach was selected because of its small size requirements and the exploratory nature of the research (Ringle et al., 2015). We used SmartPLS 3.0 for the software analysis and the bootstrapping technique to review the significance levels of the predicted relationships. Each indicator's *p*-value was examined to observe the significance of each coefficient (Ringle et al., 2015). Table 3 summarizes the path coefficients and their *p*-values.

Table 3 shows that there is a significant positive effect of attitude on purchase intention (β 10.996, *p*-value < 0.005). Therefore, H1 is supported. There is also a significant positive and direct effect of halal credence on the attitude (β 20.689, *p*-value < 0.005). Therefore, H2 is also supported. However, the result of the halal credence's effect on purchase intention (β 30.052, *p*-value > 0.005) does not acknowledge the significance of halal credence on purchase intention. Therefore, H3 is not supported.

When discussing the effect of NFC on the attitude on halal purchase intention, we also concluded similar interpretations. There is a significant positive and direct effect of NFC on the attitude (β 40.245,

Table 3. Hypothesis testing.

		Path coefficients	<i>P</i> Values	Verdict
H1	Halal Credence -> Halal Consumers' Attitude	0.689	0.000	Supported
H2	Halal Credence -> Halal Purchase Intention	0.052	0.059	Not supported
H3	NFC -> Halal Consumers' Attitude	0.245	0.003	Supported
H4	NFC -> Halal Purchase Intention	-0.054	0.070	Not supported
H5	Halal Purchase Intention -> Halal Purchase Intention	0.996	0.000	Supported

Table 4. Mediation effects.

Hypothesis	Path	<i>p</i> -value	β	Results	Verdict
H6	Halal credence -> Halal consumers' attitude -> Purchase Intention	0.000	0.689	Supported	Full Mediation
H7	NFC -> Halal consumers' attitude -> Purchase Intention	0.004	0.245	Supported	Full Mediation

p -value < 0.005). Therefore, H4 is supported. However, the result of the NFC's effect on purchase intention (β 5–0.054, p -value > 0.005) does not acknowledge the significance of halal credence on purchase intention. Therefore, H5 is not supported.

From Table 4, we can see that both halal credence and NFC have no direct significant relationship with halal purchase intention. However, both have an indirect significant relationship with halal purchase intention through the halal consumers' attitude as a mediating variable. Both p -values of H6 and H7 are significant (below the threshold of 0.005). This means that both indirect effects are significant (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Conclusion

We found that our hypothesis, which predicts that halal credence has a positive impact on halal purchase intention, was not supported. We argue that this result is caused by the aspect of credence which still has not fully convinced the Muslim tourists visiting Spain. The lack of knowledge about industrial halal quality coordination in Spain might also be a cause. Another unsupported hypothesis is the effect of need for cognition (NFC) on halal purchase intention. The possible reason behind this is because this construct has not been used frequently in such a specific topic, as well as with a specific choice of respondents.

The rest of the direct effects of our hypotheses were supported. Halal consumers' attitude indeed does have a positive effect on purchase intention. This result corresponds with several previous research (Abd Rahman et al., 2015; Garg & Joshi, 2018). Halal consumers' attitude also has a direct effect from both halal credence and NFC. We also proved that halal consumers' attitude has a central role in relationships with other constructs. It mediates the relationship between halal credence and halal purchase intention, as well as the relationship between NFC and halal purchase intention.

We suggest to expand this study into a longitudinal study that can be conducted in other European countries. We believe future research should also differentiate between halal food products that are local-made or those which are imported from different countries. This can give more useful insights to food industry players.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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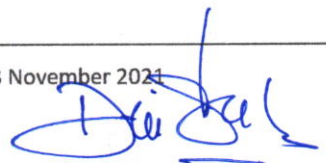
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