

Intention to Purchase Foreign Halal Food Products among Muslim Consumers Using S-O-R Framework

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ABSTRACT

The Islamic economy has rapidly growth due to the increase in the Muslim population and also their consumption expenditure. Due to the paucity of evidence on the factors that affect Muslim consumers to purchase foreign Halal food products, this study intends to investigate the factors that affect the intention of Muslim consumers to purchase foreign Halal food products. A research framework that underlies the Stimulus-Organism-Response model has been developed, with Halal certification, Halal knowledge, Halal awareness, and perceived reputation as stimuli, and attitudes as internal cognitive organisms, while purchasing intention as a response. Throughout the data collection, a total of 211 valid responses were gathered. The results from the partial least squares-structural equation modelling showed that Halal certification, Halal knowledge, Halal awareness, and perceived reputation positively influenced attitudes. Besides, consumers' purchase intention is positively significantly affected by attitudes. These findings offer crucial understanding related to the subject matters as it would benefit the stakeholders in promoting foreign Halal food products in Muslim-dominated countries. Furthermore, the findings also further enrich the extant knowledge in Islamic marketing and consumer Halal consumption behaviour as the evidence was verified by utilizing the stimulus-organism-responses framework.

Keywords: Foreign Halal Food Products, Stimulus–Organism–Response, Muslim Consumer, Halal Awareness, Perceived Reputation

JEL Classifications: M30, M310

1. INTRODUCTION

The Islamic economy has consistently demonstrated robust development, with the increase in the Muslim population and also their expenditures. Having a relatively youthful population, the total global Muslim population was estimated around 1.8 billion in 2015 and will further expand to 3.0 billion by 2060 (Lipka and Hackett, 2017). Aligned with the population growth, the increase in the total expenditures of the Muslim population further indicated the expansion of the Islamic economy. The total expenditure is the Muslim population is estimated to reach around \$2.29 trillion in 2022, while the expenditure on food and beverage sectors is anticipated to approach \$1.89 trillion by 2027 (DinarStandard, 2023). The continuous expansion in the Halal food sector has shown

substantial interest in the Halal food sector compared to other business sectors. This progression is mainly due to an increased availability of Halal-certified ingredients, leading towards a broader range of Halal food products. Interestingly, the consumption of Halal products is also being accepted by non-Muslims due to the associated ethical and religious standards concerning Halal products such as social responsibility, animal friendly and environmental friendliness (Al-Shami and Abdullah, 2023). For Muslims, the obligation of Halal food is obligatory in serving Allah (SWT), where the food and drinks are hygienic, safe, and lawful as stated in Shariah and the Holy Quran (Khan and Haleem, 2016). Hence, it's a certainty belief that the process of Halal food has undergone strict criteria of cleanliness and safety that may naturally enhance the confidence of consumers towards Halal products.

Malaysia is among the emerging countries that are experienced in supporting this multi-trillion-dollar Islamic economy (The State of the Global Islamic Economy 2023/24 Report, 2024). The country's prominent position can be seen from its robust retail sector where the sources of products are taken from both domestic and international markets for a wider assortment of options among consumers. The food retail industry in Malaysia has risen by 5% to \$1.8 billion in 2023 (Ngumbang, 2023), where the expansion varies in many forms of store format has signalled the consumer demand for high-quality imported food and beverages. The demand for high-quality foreign or imported food and beverage products in Malaysia might be driven by several factors such as an increase in disposable income, influence by foreign cultures like the Korean culture or Japanese culture and the like. Additionally, Ngumbang (2023) also remarked on the growing concern of health consciousness, as well as the openness of the country's trade and regulatory policies in giving more opportunities to invite a wider range of imported food and beverages.

Notwithstanding the globalization in world trade and also the crucial role of Halal products for Muslim consumers, the evidence that investigates the purchase intention (PI) on foreign Halal products is under research, especially for Muslim consumers who are necessary to consume Halal food products. To date, only a few research have investigated this topic, especially in a Muslim-dominated nation like Malaysia. For instance, Arlisa et al. (2019) studied the PI on foreign Halal packaged products of Indonesian Muslim consumers. Likewise, Ramadhan et al. (2023) also investigated the PI of Indonesian Muslim consumers to purchase imported Halal meat. Besides, Pradana et al. (2024) further examined the Halal PI of Muslim young consumers in Indonesia towards foreign-branded food products. In Malaysia, Abdul Manan et al. (2019) revealed that the willingness of the Malays to accept foreign Halal foods is positively affected by their trust. Moreover, Abdul Rahim et al. (2021) have concluded that consumers' attitudes (ATT) are directly affected by Halal awareness (HA) and further found that ATT is a significant mediator on the proposed direct association between HA, Islamic branding, and product knowledge towards the Muslims intention to purchase imported Halal food. However, none of them have utilised the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework in understanding the subject matter.

Besides, abundant evidence has identified the factors that influence Muslim consumers to purchase Halal-certified products (Hasan et al., 2024; Hong et al., 2019; Kasri et al., 2023; Rizkitysha and Hananto, 2022; Sudarsono et al., 2024; Widyanto and Sitohang, 2022). Besides, some research also studied the imported foods or foreign products on Muslims or non-Muslim consumers in different countries (Bukhari et al., 2021; Choi and Jeong, 2020; Nasution et al., 2023; Nugraha et al., 2023; Sagheb et al., 2020). Although numerous research have investigated halal products or imported or foreign products, consumers may behave differently when they purchase foreign Halal products as these kinds of products possess the characteristics of both Halal certified and also products produced from foreign countries which might be in certain non-Islamic countries, such as Korea and Japan. This has posited that there is a research gap existing in this subject area as

the study that particularly focused on foreign Halal food products is relatively deficient. Therefore, further study is necessary to disclose the factors that impact intention of the Muslim consumers to purchase foreign Halal food products. With that, the study's objective is to identify the factors that significantly affect the purchase intention of Malaysian Muslim consumers toward foreign Halal food products.

The study's objective is achieved by developing a research framework based on the S-O-R framework, which consists of a sequential mechanism to explain human behaviour. With the focus of the study primarily on foreign Halal food products, three Halal-related factors, namely Halal certification (HC), Halal knowledge (HK), and HA, together with the perceived reputation (PR) of the foreign Halal food products, have been proposed as the stimuli in the framework. Besides, a personal factor of ATT has also been added as the internal organism, and the response of the study is the PI of foreign Halal food products. The findings are projected to be beneficial to both theoretical and practical perspectives as it not only enriches the existing knowledge in the subject area, but the findings are useful for the stakeholders in promoting the consumption of foreign Halal food products.

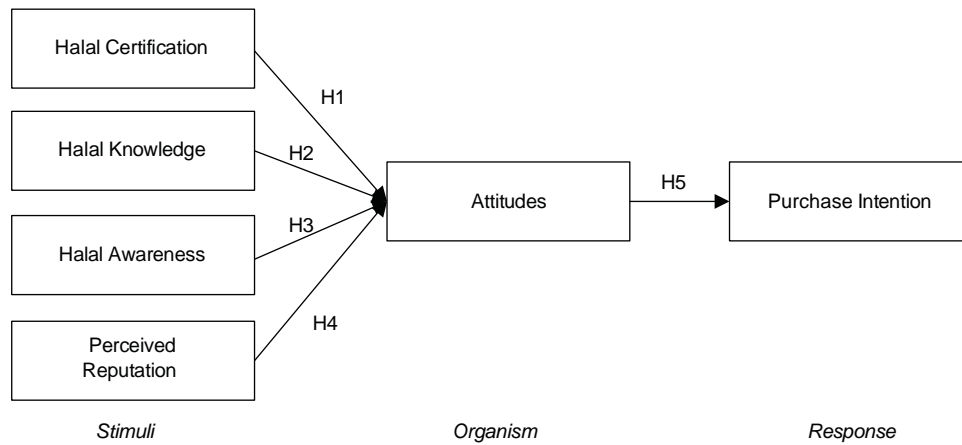
2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Stimulus–Organism–Response Framework (S-O-R)

S-O-R is a theoretical framework introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) and posits that the responses (R) of an individual are influenced by the internal cognitive organism (O), and the internal organism is affected by the stimuli (S) that represent the external factors. This framework has been widely utilised in a multitude of studies in different subject areas and this further demonstrates the adaptability of the framework in explaining human behaviour. For example, by using the S-O-R framework, Jeong et al. (2022) highlight that personalised recommendations may influence consumer behaviour in shaping their feeling and thoughts, which substantially may affect their purchasing intention. Ming et al. (2021) also used the S-O-R framework to examine the consumers' impulsive buying behaviour in the context of live streaming commerce. Similarly, this framework has also been utilized to explore occupational psychology behaviour within the construction workforce globally (Chang, 2024). Besides, Ling et al. (2024a) also used the S-O-R framework to study the food waste separation intention of Chinese university students. This has shown that the S-O-R model is a suitable theoretical lens, especially with the sequential mechanism in the S-O-R, that could be adapted in the current study. Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 1, the S-O-R framework has been used as the foundation and further proposes HC, HK, PR, and HA as four external stimuli, ATT as an internal organism, and PI on foreign Halal food products as the response.

2.2. Effect of Halal Certification on Attitudes

HC is defined as the process where the handling product of foods and beverages has successfully met the Islamic prospect of the Quran and Hadiths in dietary regulations (Al-Shami and

Figure 1: Research framework of the study

Abdullah, 2023). The HC shall be awarded from an authority such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) after a comprehensive inspection in adherence to Islamic dietary regulations has been made. Hence, HC is perceived as an assurance symbol to Muslim consumers globally where the process and ingredients have been thoroughly inspected and adhere accordingly to Shariah standards to be permissible and lawful to consume (Jaiyeoba et al., 2019). With the high prestige of the HC, it postulates that HC has a crucial role in establishing Muslim consumers' favourable ATT towards foreign Halal food products, and this supposition has been widely acknowledged in previous studies. For example, Widyanto and Sitohang (2022) found that consumers' ATT towards Halal cosmetics and pharmaceutical products are positively affected by HC. Similarly, Sudarsono et al. (2024) also revealed the positively significant influence of HC on ATT towards using Halal vaccines. Besides, Ibeabuchi et al. (2024) also further concluded that the ATT towards Halal-certified cosmetics are significantly influenced by HC. Hence, the hypothesis below is formulated.

H₁: HC has a positive and significant effect on ATT.

2.3. Effect of Halal Knowledge on Attitudes

HK is defined as the individual's understanding level towards the Halal concept (Nurcahyo and Hudrasyah, 2017). Besides, Widyanto and Sitohang (2022) further defined HK as the facts and experiences that have been identified by the individuals. Theoretically, the understanding and knowledge of an individual tend to influence their behaviour as they might behave based on their level of knowledge and understanding of a particular issue. Empirically, the level of knowledge is acknowledged as a crucial factor that might determine the individual's ATT. As proved in the prior studies, HK is expected to play a significant effect in creating positive and good ATT towards foreign Halal food products. For example, Rizkitysha and Hananto (2022) revealed a positively significant relationship between knowledge of Halal on ATT toward Halal-labeled detergent. Besides, Widyanto and Sitohang (2022) also remarked the similar findings whereas HK is positively significant with ATT toward Halal cosmetics and pharmaceutical products. Likewise, Sudarsono et al. (2024) also revealed a positive significant role of HK on Muslim consumers' ATT toward the Halal vaccine in Indonesia. Therefore, the hypothesis below is proposed.

H₂: HK has a positive and significant effect on ATT.

2.4. Effect of Halal Awareness on Attitudes

HA refers to the perceptions and reactions of an individual that derive from their experience when engaging in Halal-related behaviour (Nurhayati & Hendar, 2020). With that, it could be referring to the individual's consciousness level towards Halal issues and problems. When individuals have a high level of awareness towards Halal-related issues, it might influence their cognitive assessment and this may form a different ATT towards the behaviour. Therefore, this study also proposed a positively significant effect between HA and consumers' ATT. This postulation is supported by previous evidence, such as Abdul Rahim et al. (2021) revealed that ATT is positively affected by HA in their study on imported Halal food. Similarly, Handriana et al. (2021) revealed a positively significant effect of HA towards the ATT of Halal cosmetics products. Besides, Irfany et al. (2024) also remarked a positive significant role of Halal green awareness on the ATT towards environmentally friendly Halal cosmetic products. With that, the hypothesis below is recommended.

H₃: HA has a positive and significant effect on ATT.

2.5. Effect of Perceived Reputation on Attitudes

PR denotes an individual's opinion and beliefs towards a particular object that may be triggered through their personal experiences. PR is a significant factor in building consumer trust in online platforms (Gong-An and Qi, 2008) and revealed that PR influences consumer trust which PR positively impact perceived security control. In this study, the PR refers to the consumers' beliefs and opinions towards foreign Halal food products. Theoretically, PR is essential in affecting human behaviour as the PR might form the individuals' ATT towards the objects. For instance, consumers tend to have favourable ATT towards Halal products if they feel that products have a high reputation. Contrastingly, a lower reputation for Halal products might lead to an unfavourable or negative feeling. The substantial role of reputation-related factors on the individual's ATT has been reported in the literature. For example, Ahn and Back (2018) documented the positively significant impact of brand reputation on brand ATT. Similarly, Moriuchi (2021) also revealed a significant influence of the PR of the seller on ATT toward third-party sellers and intermediaries in the setting of e-commerce. The positively significant role of sector reputation on the ATT toward the sector was also revealed in a study on the

stock PI in Egypt (Ismail et al., 2024). Therefore, inspired by the studies in different contexts, this study also formulated the hypothesis below.

H₄: PR has a positive and significant effect on ATT.

2.6. Effect of Attitude on Purchase Intention

ATT is defined as the feelings of an individual towards a certain behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). The individual's feelings could be positive or negative and they will be formed based on their personal feelings derived from other factors (Ling et al., 2024b). A favourable or positive feeling tends to encourage the individual to take part in certain behaviour, while an unfavourable or negative feeling inclines to hinder them from engaging in it. Plentiful studies have noted the positive influence of ATT on behavioural intention (Irfany et al., 2024; Ling et al., 2024a; Rizkitysha and Hananto, 2022; Widyanto and Sitohang, 2022). For instance, Handriana et al. (2021) revealed the significant role of ATT on female Muslims' PI towards Halal cosmetic products. Besides, Hasan et al. (2024) also concluded that Halal ATT have a substantial role in intention towards Halal cosmetics among cosmetics users in Bangladesh. Likewise, the positively significant influence of the ATT towards the use intention of the Halal vaccine in Indonesia was also concluded by Sudarsono et al. (2024). Moreover, by focusing on non-Muslims in Malaysia, Ibeabuchi et al. (2024) also found that PI on Halal-certified cosmetic products is positively significantly affected by ATT. Consistent with the evidence from the prior studies, the hypothesis below is recommended.

H₅: ATT has a positive and significant effect on PI.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study collected the primary quantitative data from the targeted population using non-probability purposive sampling. Malaysian Muslim consumers who are aged 18 and above are eligible to join the study. During the data collection process from May until July 2023, 211 usable responses were collected and this number of respondents is considered satisfactory as it exceeded the suggested minimum sample size of 129 that was calculated based on power analysis. To collect these quantitative responses, the Google Forms platform has been utilized to create an online survey for the data collection of the study.

In total, 23 validated items have been borrowed and adapted from previous studies such as Abd Rahman et al. (2015), Awan et al. (2015), Aziz and Chok (2013), Iranmanesh et al. (2020), Muflih and Juliana (2021), Nurhayati and Hendar (2020), and Usman et al. (2023). The five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 representing strongly disagree to 5 representing strongly agree, has been used to measure the level of agreement of the respondents toward the measurement items. The collected responses were then been first assessed by the Mardia's coefficient procedure for the multivariate normality test and it found that the dataset is not normally distributed as the kurtosis coefficient (106.4477) is higher than 20 (Byrne, 2013). Therefore, the partial least square-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is appropriate to utilize in the study (Hair et al., 2019).

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The background of the respondents is presented in Table 1. Overall, the female respondents (54.50%) are slightly greater than male respondents (45.50%). Regarding the age ranges, most of the respondents are aged between 31 and 40-year-old, followed by 21-30 years, and 41-50 years old. Approximately 58.29% of the respondents (123) are employed, while students accounted for 27.01%, and 9.95% of respondents are self-employed (21). In terms of the highest education level, the respondents with college or university qualifications dominated the study with around 63.03%, followed by postgraduate qualification (29.38%), and high school qualification (7.58%). Lastly, 59 respondents have a monthly income of RM 1500 and below, followed by RM 6000 and above (21.33%), and RM3000-RM 4500 (16.11%).

The study first assessed the outer model and the summary result is presented in Table 2. In total, except for HA4, HC3, ATT2, and PI3, the loading values for all remaining 19 items are larger than 0.7080 and this confirmed the convergent validity (Hair et al., 2017). Similarly, the convergent validity is also confirmed at the construct level as the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are >0.5000 (Bagozzi et al., 1991). Besides, all constructs have a composite reliability (CR) value that is higher than 0.7000, and this indicates that internal consistency is also established (Gefen et al., 2000). The discriminant validity also attained in the study as the result of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) correlation in Table 3 showed that all values do not exceed the threshold of 0.9000 (Gold et al., 2001). Furthermore, the common method bias was also controlled in the study as the variance influence factors (VIF) values (in Table 2) for all constructs in the study are less than the level of 5 (Anwar et al., 2021; Hair et al., 2017).

The study continues with the inner model assessment to validate the proposed hypotheses. As provided in Table 4 and Figure 2, the result indicated that all hypotheses were accepted. Specifically,

Table 1: Respondents' background information

Characteristics	Sub-Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	96	45.50
	Female	115	54.50
Age Range	20 years old and below	21	9.95
	21-30 years old	63	29.86
	31-40 years old	75	35.55
	41-50 years old	29	13.74
	51-60 years old	17	8.06
	61 years old and above	6	2.84
Occupation	Employed	123	58.29
	Self-employed	21	9.95
	Students	57	27.01
	Retiree	5	2.37
	Unemployed	5	2.37
Highest education level	High School	16	7.58
	College/Universities	133	63.03
	Postgraduates	62	29.38
Monthly income range	RM 1,500 and below	59	27.96
	RM 1,501-RM3,000	32	15.17
	RM 3,000-RM4,500	34	16.11
	RM 4,501-RM6,000	41	19.43
	RM 6,000 and above	45	21.33

Table 2: Results of convergent validity, reliability, and common method bias

Factors	Items	Loading	AVE	CR	VIF
Halal awareness	HA1	0.8442	0.7119	0.8808	2.7510
	HA2	0.7823			
	HA3	0.9006			
Halal certification	HC1	0.7489	0.6809	0.8643	2.2180
	HC2	0.8949			
	HC4	0.8252			
Halal knowledge	HK1	0.8289	0.5852	0.8083	1.7680
	HK2	0.7418			
	HK3	0.7200			
Perceived reputation	PR1	0.7183	0.6573	0.8843	1.9780
	PR2	0.8323			
	PR3	0.8285			
	PR4	0.8568			
Attitudes	ATT1	0.8819	0.7473	0.9220	3.7950
	ATT3	0.8814			
	ATT4	0.8441			
	ATT5	0.8498			
Purchase intention	PI1	0.8505	0.7972	0.8869	2.5800
	PI2	0.9333			

Table 3: Result of discriminant validity

	HA	HC	HK	PR	ATT	PI
HA						
HC	0.8638					
HK	0.8082	0.6721				
PR	0.6938	0.6660	0.6362			
ATT	0.8846	0.7687	0.7687	0.7719		
PI	0.8149	0.7784	0.7387	0.7823	0.8803	

Table 4: Summary results of the hypotheses testing through PLS-SEM

Hypo.	Path	Coeff.	Standard Deviation	T-value	P-value	f ²	Result
H ₁	HC -> ATT	0.2701	0.0666	4.0528	0.0000	0.1237	Supported
H ₂	HK -> ATT	0.1548	0.0628	2.4636	0.0069	0.0477	Supported
H ₃	HA -> ATT	0.3094	0.0885	3.4959	0.0002	0.1331	Supported
H ₄	PR -> ATT	0.2767	0.0595	4.6528	0.0000	0.1564	Supported
H ₅	ATT -> PI	0.7509	0.0841	8.9331	0.0000	1.2927	Supported

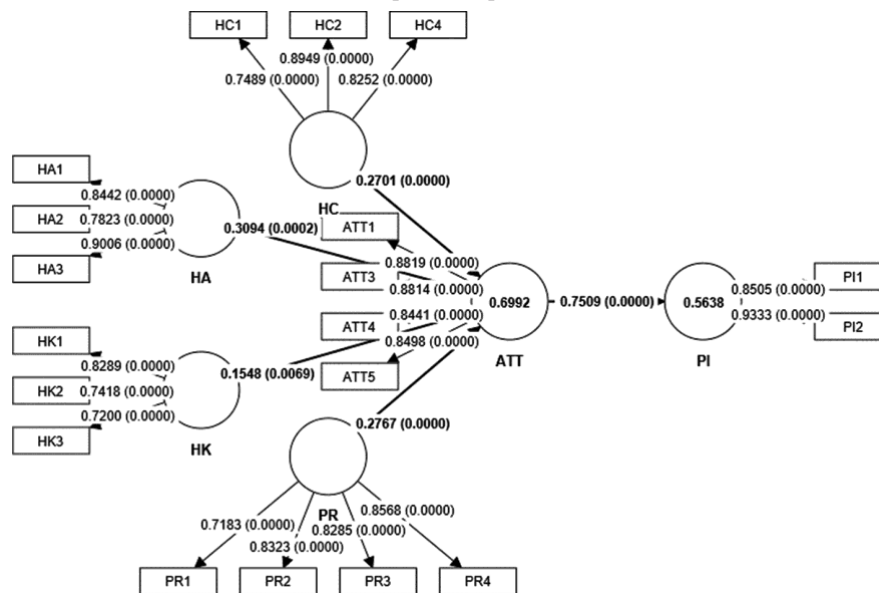
HC ($\beta = 0.2701$) is positively related to ATT, and this supports the H₁. H₂ is also supported as the result showed that HK ($\beta = 0.1548$) also positively influenced ATT. Similarly, HA ($\beta = 0.3094$) demonstrated a positive significant influence on ATT, and therefore, H₃ is supported. Besides, H₄ is also supported in the study as PR ($\beta = 0.2767$) is found to have a positively significant influence on ATT. This indicated that among the four predictors of ATT, HA is the most influential construct on ATT, followed by PR, HC, and HK. Lastly, PI is positively significantly affected by ATT ($\beta = 0.7509$), thus, supporting H₅.

Regarding the coefficient of determination (R²), the result showed that all four constructs (HC, HK, HA, and PR) were able to predict 69.92% of the variation in ATT (R² = 0.6992), and 56.38% of the variance in PI is explained by ATT (R² = 0.5638). Besides, the Q² values for both ATT (Q² = 0.3333) and PI (Q² = 0.3509) also confirmed the predictive validity of the endogenous constructs towards ATT and PI. Moreover, refers to the guidelines of Cohen (1988), the effect size (f²) value in Table 4 further indicates that HC, HK, and HA have a small effect size on ATT, while PR have a medium effect size on ATT. However, ATT possess a substantial effect size on PI.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study intends to bridge the gap by identifying the factors that impact the intention of Malaysian Muslims to purchase foreign Halal food products. The S-O-R framework has been adopted as a

Figure 2: Graphical output from PLS-SEM



theoretical based on the study's research framework and proposes four stimuli (HC, HK, HA, & PR), ATT as an internal organism, and PI as the response. Remarkably, the finding found that all four stimuli have a positively significant influence on ATT, and ATT is positively influenced by PI. These findings theoretically contributed to the literature of the subject areas as they successfully addressed the research gaps by identifying the factors that impact consumers' intention to purchase Halal foreign food products. As proved, the sequential mechanism of the S-O-R provides some advantages in explaining the consumers' Halal consumption behaviour, especially the four proposed stimuli played a substantial role and were able to explain approximately 70% of the variances in the ATT, while 56% of the variation in PI also explained by ATT. This indicates the appropriateness of the S-O-R framework in explaining the consumers' Halal consumption behaviour. Besides, the findings also showed that three Halal-related factors (EC, EK, & EA) together with PR are crucial in predicting consumers' favourable ATT toward foreign Halal food products, while ATT positively influences consumers' PI. This finding enhances the existing knowledge on the subject matters, especially on the PR as the evidence on the impact of PR on the consumer's Halal consumption behaviour is limited. This also proved that not only Halal-related factors might establish a favourable ATT towards Halal products, but some other non-Halal-related factors will be affecting consumers' ATT towards Halal products as well.

The result first showed that HC possesses a positive and significant effect on the ATT, and this is paralleled with Ibeabuchi et al. (2024), Sudarsono et al. (2024), and Widyanto and Sitohang (2022), who also remarked that similar findings in their studies in different contexts. This signified that Malaysian Muslim consumers might have positive and favourable ATT towards foreign Halal food products if the products are certified with a Halal certificate. As required in the Islamic principle, Muslim consumers only can consume products that have been certified Halal, therefore, HC is crucial for forming a favourable feeling towards these foreign Halal food products. The merchandisers or importers of foreign food products have to ensure that they import the products that have been certified with Halal certificates from other countries, as it will significantly influence the Muslim consumers' ATT towards these foreign food products. Besides, the stakeholders also necessary to ensure the Halal certificate labelled on the foreign products is recognized by JAKIM, as recently there have been a lot of cases that involved the using false Halal certificate or misuse of the Halal certificate caught by the enforcement agencies, and this further raises the concern of the Muslim community about the authenticity of the Halal certificate.

HK also demonstrated a positively significant role in consumers' ATT towards foreign Halal food products. The substantial influence of HK on ATT is in line with the studies from Rizkitysha and Hananto (2022), Sudarsono et al. (2024), and Widyanto and Sitohang (2022). Muslim consumers tend to have a favourable ATT towards foreign Halal food products if they have a higher knowledge level regarding the Halal concept. Usually, when someone has sufficient knowledge or understanding towards a particular concept, this will enhance their positive feelings about this concept. As suggested by the study, the relevant stakeholders

such as the JAKIM and Islamic Religion Council have to play their role in enhancing the HK of the Muslim community in the nation as it is crucial in promoting a favourable ATT towards foreign Halal food products. With that, some educational programmes and activities that might disclose the latest development of the Halal concept should be frequently organized for the public, especially for the Muslim communities as this will further increase the level of knowledge and eventually nurture the positive ATT towards the foreign Halal food products.

The positive influence between HA and ATT towards foreign Halal food products was also noted in the study, and this significant role is followed by Abdul Rahim et al. (2021), Handriana et al. (2021) and Irfany et al. (2024) who also revealed the positively significant effect of HA on ATT in different study settings. The significant effect of HA indicates that perceptions and consciousness of Muslim consumers towards Halal-related behaviour are crucial in affecting their ATT. Consumers are inclined to have good and positive feelings towards foreign Halal food products if they are highly aware and conscious of Halal issues. This finding specified the substantial role of consumers' awareness and consciousness regarding Halal-related issues as this perception and reaction might affect their feelings toward Halal products. With that, the stakeholders have to publicly disseminate the latest issues about the Halal concept to raise the awareness and consciousness of the Muslim community toward these issues. For instance, the businesses that have been certified Halal or those businesses that have been blacklisted or caught due to the using false Halal certificate or misuse of Halal certificates have to be widely informed to the public as the Muslim community needs to avoid consuming food and beverages products from them.

A significant association between PR on PI was also found in the study, and this finding is similar to Ahn and Back (2018), Ismail et al. (2024), and Moriuchi (2021) in different subject areas. Foreign food products from other countries might be labelled with different Halal certificates which are authorized by the authorities in their countries. Therefore, the PR of foreign Halal food products played a crucial effect on consumers' ATT, as they will have favourable ATT if they perceive that the reputation of the foreign Halal food products is highly reputed. The relevant authorities such as the Ministry of Religion, JAKIM and the Islamic Religion Council have to take the initiative to verify the Halal certificate that is certified in other countries and to ensure that the Halal certificate in other countries fulfils the requirement of our regulations. The authorities could share the list of Halal certificates in other countries that are recognized by our country and make this list publicly available. This could allow Muslim consumers aware of the list of Halal certificates from foreign countries that are recognized by JAKIM and this will be convenient for them when making the purchasing decision. Undeniably, different countries may have different requirements for the Halal certificate, and therefore, the reputation of the Halal certificate in foreign food products affects the consumers' ATT.

The study further concluded that the PI of Muslim consumers towards foreign Halal food products is significantly impacted by their ATT, and this finding is consistent with previous studies such

as Handriana et al. (2021), Hasan et al. (2024), Ibeabuchi et al. (2024), and Irfany et al. (2024). This signified that the favourable ATT of the Muslim consumers will further influence their PI on foreign Halal food products. As proved, Muslim consumers tend to have a high likelihood to purchase foreign Halal food products if they have favourable and positive feelings towards this kind of product. Hence, to nurture the PI of Muslim consumers toward foreign Halal food products, the stakeholders have to cultivate favourable and positive ATT on these products. As discussed before, HC, HK, HA and PR all are the four important factors that will influence consumers' feelings towards foreign Halal food products. Therefore, these four factors should be prioritised by the stakeholders as the positive and good ATT towards foreign Halal food products will be established among Muslim consumers.

In a nutshell, the PI of Malaysian Muslim consumers towards foreign Halal food products is directly affected by their favourable ATT. Besides, to establish a favourable and positive ATT toward foreign Halal food products, HC, HK, HA and PR are proved to be essential as all four factors would significantly increase the consumers' ATT towards foreign Halal food products.

6. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the limited evidence on the subject matter, this study endeavours to fill the research gap by examining the factors that impact the PI of Malaysian Muslim consumers towards foreign Halal food products. The S-O-R framework is utilized to establish the research framework, and three Halal-related factors (HC, HK, & HA) together with PR have been proposed as stimuli, while ATT is the organism and the response is PI. The results from 211 responses showed that all five proposed hypotheses were supported. This showed that HC, HK, HA, and PR are significantly related to ATT, while ATT positively significantly affect PI. The findings are anticipated to provide some useful information for the stakeholders in nurturing the Muslim community to purchase foreign Halal food products and further enrich the extant knowledge of the consumers' Halal consumption behaviour.

The study has some limitations which need to be considered in the upcoming research. Firstly, the study focused on Muslim consumers in Malaysia only, and thus it will limit the generalizability of the study's findings. To increase the generalizability of the study's findings, future studies should extend the geographical scope to other countries as Muslim consumers in different countries might have different perspectives on the subject matter due to their diverse cultures. Besides, the study only particularly examined the PI of Muslim consumers and ignored the perspective of non-Muslim consumers. However, recent statistics further showed that non-Muslim consumers are also interested in consuming Halal-certified products. Therefore, it would be meaningful if upcoming studies would consider including non-Muslim consumers as their respondents, or maybe the comparison study between Muslim and non-Muslim consumers could be one interesting topic. Next, this study only examined the direct relationships among the proposed factors and this may

inappropriately explain the consumers' PI as the consumers' PI on certain products usually involves a complicated decision-making process. Also, the theoretical framework of S-O-R provides a sequential mechanism that can be used to examine the indirect influence of stimulus on the response and investigate the mediator effect of the organism factor in the consumer's decision-making process. Therefore, future research might consider exploring the mediating role of organism factors (such as ATT in this study) or may propose some other mediators to provide more robust and thorough findings regarding the subject matter.

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