

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE MODERATING ROLE OF RELIGIOSITY

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Abstract

The global halal food market has experienced rapid expansion, yet scholarly understanding of how religiosity shapes consumer behaviour remains inconsistent across geographical contexts. While religiosity functions as a significant moderator in several Asian Muslim majority nations, empirical evidence from Nigeria reveals that religiosity tested as a direct predictor presents a weak and insignificant effect on halal purchase intention. This paper addresses this gap by proposing a theoretical framework grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The framework positions attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (PBC), as determinants of purchase intention, with religiosity hypothesised as moderating the effects attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on intentions towards purchase of halal food. Drawing on a synthesis of empirical studies from China, Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Nigeria, the paper advances a theoretical framework towards testing four hypotheses. The study makes three contributions: clarifying the context- dependent nature of religiosity, refining the TPB framework by allowing, through statistical testing, for the exclusion of Perceived Behavioural Control as being moderated by religiosity, and providing a testable model for Nigeria and similar countries characterised by different halal certifications and limited empirical attention. The study recommends an empirical validation study through survey based structural equation modelling as well as policy efforts to unify halal certification standards to strengthen consumer trust.

Keywords: Behavioral Characteristics, Halal Foods, and Religiosity

1. Introduction

The contemporary global food industry is witnessing the rapid expansion of the halal food market, a sector evolving into a mainstream economic force. In Islam, *halal* food simply refers to permissible food according to the Islamic law. Consequently, it is normal to assume that religious inclination is one of the main determinants of *halal* food purchasing. The *halal* food industry has been growing very fast with an

estimate of about 20% annually. Today, the global halal food market is a major economic force, valued at approximately USD 2.67 trillion in 2024 and projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 9.33% to reach around USD 5.96 trillion by 2033 (Research and market, 2025). Nonetheless, the industry faces challenges Ethical practices in business, and particularly in production, have become a primary concern for consumers, often driven

by individual belief systems. Another challenge is about the credibility of halal certification. Increasingly, voices are demanding that halal certification not be confined to religious consideration and involve good quality control. According to recent market analysis, Islamic finance and halal food trade are increasingly intersecting as major drivers of global economic activity. Hence the importance of quality control in halal certification.

As illustration of progress in that aspect, today, halal products are no longer restricted to the process of animal slaughter for Muslim consumption alone. Rather, halal certification has come to represent broader attributes including the highest quality and healthiness, hygiene, taste, environmental friendliness, respect for animal welfare, and social considerations such as religious identity and cultural acculturation (Kristanti et al., 2025). These developments are of interest to both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers alike. Similarly, there is evidence that to non-Muslims, halal products are increasingly perceived to be associated with strict production standards, transparency in supply chains, and assurance of safe ingredients (Atieqoh et al., 2025). Countries like Saudi Arabia and Malaysia have been in the forefront of the *halal* industry. Malaysia continues to strengthen its position as a global halal hub, leveraging its internationally recognised Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) certification as a global benchmark of quality through the Halal Industry Master

Plan 2030 (Halal Development Corporation, 2025). Saudi Arabia established the Halal Products Development Company (HPDC) to position the Kingdom as a competitive global hub for the halal industry (Ministry of Commerce, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, via Saudi Press Agency, 2025).

The adoption of Islamic finance as an alternative ethical financing system, particularly in conjunction with halal food trade across various countries, has generated substantial global benefits. According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy (2025), Islamic finance assets reached USD 5.99 trillion in 2024 and are projected to grow to USD 9.72 trillion by 2029, while Muslim consumer spending on halal food reached USD 1.53 trillion in 2024 (Dinar Standard, 2026). The report identifies Shariah-compliant digital finance as a key opportunity signal for halal industry growth, framing the integration of Islamic finance infrastructure with halal value chains as central to self-sufficiency in the global halal economy (Zawya, 2026).

In Indonesia, the Islamic banking financing for the halal food and beverage sector grew by approximately 20% in 2025, while halal food exports reached USD 53.4 billion, reflecting an increasingly robust linkage between Islamic finance and the halal real sector (Beik, 2026). More so, a new development strategic cooperation agreement formalized in 2025 between Saudi Arabia and Nigeria explicitly integrates Islamic finance with halal food production, pharmaceuticals, livestock, and

supply chain development (Mahmoud et al., 2026). The agreement recognizes that Islamic banking and finance experts play an essential role in ensuring Shariah-compliant financing, certification, and risk governance across the halal food value chain (Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, 2026).

In Nigeria, it is assumed that consumable products sold in the northern part are completely *halal*, and this makes Muslims less observant to verify the *halal*-ness of ingredients used for production and preservation. Nonetheless, the intermingling of different cultures and religions across the country, especially the civil service setups, will necessitate the need for *halal* food certification. The Nigerian halal market currently operates under fragmented certification systems, with multiple private bodies issuing halal certificates without centralized government oversight or unified national standards (Ademola, 2025). This regulatory fragmentation has given rise to consumer uncertainty in the absence of a single government-recognized halal authority. Nigerian Muslim consumers face difficulty distinguishing between credible and non-credible certifications. Consumer advocacy groups have raised concerns that halal certification, if not properly integrated with existing food safety frameworks, may inadvertently substitute for or dilute statutory nutritional standards (Consumer Advocacy for Food Safety and Nutrition Initiative, 2025).

Beyond this, a substantial body of research conducted across several Asian

Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts have extensively explored the role of religiosity and behaviour in shaping halal food purchase intention as found in Zafar & Jafar (2025); Abdou et al. (2024); Loussaief et al. (2024) and Rafiki et al. (2022). Collectively, these studies have firmly established religiosity as both a direct predictor and a moderator of halal purchase intention while in Jatnika et al. (2025), subjective norms in West Java revealed insignificant. Furthermore, the regulated halal ecosystems in these countries are well-established and consumer awareness is relatively high. By contrast, research on the behavioural drivers of halal food purchase intention among Nigerian Muslim consumers, remains remarkably insufficient. Ibrahim (2024), Jaiyeoba, Abdullah, and Dzuljastri (2019) find that religiosity positively correlated with halal patronage, but the coefficient is statistically insignificant. While religion is set to be both a universal and contextual phenomenon across geographical contexts, recent research on halal food purchase intention reveals that the influence of religiosity and other behavioural determinants varies significantly across geographical contexts. For instance, religiosity functions as a significant moderator in China (Abdou et al., 2024) and Indonesia (Rafiki et al., 2022), however, it shows an insignificant direct effect in Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2024). Similarly, subjective norms are the strongest predictor of purchase intention in Malaysia (Wan Nawang et al., 2024) while having no meaningful impact in West Java (Jatnika et

al., 2025). These variations suggest that the relationship between religious factors and consumer behaviour may be contingent on contextual conditions such as regulatory environments, certification systems, and cultural compositions, a possibility that needs further theoretical and empirical investigation."

Studies on religiosity as a moderating variable between behavioural determinants (such as attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and halal certification) and purchase intention within the Nigerian context is limited. It is therefore appropriate to understand consumers' purchase intentions using a holistic approach in relation to the integration of religiosity. This study is set to do just that by modelling religiosity as a moderating variable in the context of halal food consumption of Muslims and the other traditional variables that capture the role of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and halal certification towards halal food purchase behaviour.

2. Halal Food Purchase and its determinants

The *halal* food industry is among the fastest growing markets which many countries are adopting as a means of market expansion that contribute to sustainable growth. The *halal* market exists wherever there are Muslim consumers whose tastes and preferences are governed by Islamic law on food specification. *Halal* food may apparently be the same as other food, but it involves hygienic source, ingredients, nature

and technique from the beginning to the finishing of the process abiding by Islamic law. It is a safe food prepared, that includes permissible food stuff such as meat, poultry, fish and most seafood. Prohibited food on the other hand includes swine and all products derived from swine, blood, alcohol and intoxicants of all types. Some exotic prohibitions are carnivorous animals with fangs, birds of prey with talons, land animals without external ears (generally reptiles and amphibians), carrion, and food dedicated to idols and all insects except locusts. Animals must be slaughtered by a Muslim as ordained by the Islamic laws, which are killed easily by removing all the blood from the body of the animal. Humane handling must also be practiced, and animal suffering minimized. Muslim consumers, guided by Islamic laws, often avoid externally applied products, such as toiletries and cosmetics, that contain alcohol-based ingredients or any derivatives of swine DNA (Muslim-friendly makeup brands, 2026; Purelab Care, 2025). This avoidance is increasingly supported by regulatory frameworks, with some jurisdictions explicitly prohibiting alcohol and pig-derived ingredients in halal-certified cosmetics (Shanghai Xiangying Enterprise Service Co., Ltd., 2026). Beyond these prohibitions, a holistic determination of a food's halal permissibility requires careful assessment of potential health risks associated with its preservation methods, including the use of alcohol as an antimicrobial agent, brine injections, or additives from non-halal sources (Malaekah,

2025). Contemporary Islamic legal discourse recognizes that alcohol serving a legitimate functional purpose, such as a preservative, may be permissible under specific conditions, provided it is not derived from grapes or dates, does not lead to intoxication, and is not consumed as a beverage (Darul Iftaa Chicago, 2025). Furthermore, the principle of *istihalah* (chemical transformation) holds that a substance derived from an impure or prohibited source can become permissible if it undergoes a complete transformation into a new substance with distinct properties, such as alcohol turning into vinegar (Halalmed, 2025). Therefore, the permissibility of preserved or processed foods must be evaluated based not only on the nature of their primary ingredients but also on the safety, origin, and properties of the preservatives and processing aids used throughout the production process, in accordance with holistic Islamic legal and ethical standards.

The problems of food insecurity, poverty, diseases and hunger in many nations, especially the developing countries have been a growing concern to government. These allow government of some countries to introduce genetically modified food with the view to relief people from food insecurity and hunger. Genetically modified food is commonly used to refer to crop plants created for human or animal consumption by using organisms of their components such as enzymes to make products that include wine and cheese. Biotechnology based companies are

responsible for manufacturing those genetically modified food which has been claimed to play a role in food supply for eradication of hunger. The scientific debate surrounding the safety of genetically modified (GM) foods has intensified over the past decade, prompting extensive regulatory and empirical scrutiny worldwide.

As Islam is emerging as the fastest growing religion in the world, it is well understood that all Muslims will have higher awareness and interest to abide by the unique law governing what to consume as stipulated in Shariah law. Global food consumption patterns have undergone substantial transformation over recent decades, driven by a confluence of economic, cultural, and religious factors (Olodo & Aremu, 2025). Religion plays a pivotal role in shaping dietary choices, influencing both what individuals consume and the health implications associated with those choices (Olodo & Aremu, 2025). The marketability of food products and the image conveyed to consumers are critical determinants of whether consumers—particularly Muslim consumers—develop favourable attitudes toward a product. Research confirms that halal certification, religious beliefs, and consumer purchase intentions are significantly correlated, with religious beliefs serving as a strong predictor of consumer perceptions and purchase intentions in Muslim-majority contexts such as Nigeria (Olodo & Aremu, 2025). Consequently, it is essential for firms operating in or targeting Nigerian markets to

be aware of the cultural and religious imperatives that shape Muslim consumer behaviour. This awareness requires an emphasis on the availability of certified halal products and services, which serves as a significant competitive advantage for businesses seeking to maintain greater market value and foster favourable consumer attitudes toward their products and services in Nigeria (Olodo & Aremu, 2025).

2.1 Determinants of *Halal* Food Purchase

There are several studies that highlight the relevance of behavioural intention as a determinant of the behaviour of individuals and groups. The concept of behavioural intention has been introduced into *halal* studies from similar research in different fields. This relationship was conceptualised from relevant theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). According to Ajzen (2006), the determinants of behavioural intentions are the belief of people with regards to the consequences of their behaviour and beliefs about how other people expect them to behave and belief regarding the presence of other constructs that may facilitate their behaviours. In fact, the TPB and TRA are found to be confirmed empirically as theories that guide individual behavioural intention. Across a wide range of behavioural domains, empirical research consistently demonstrates that an individual's intention is the most immediate and powerful predictor of subsequent action; the stronger a person's intention to perform a

given behaviour, the greater the probability that the behaviour will be enacted (Ajzen, 1991; Zhang et al., 2014). This fundamental premise of the Theory of Planned Behaviour has been validated extensively, including within the context of halal food purchasing, where studies confirm that behavioural intention is a key driver of actual consumption choices (Azlan et al., 2022; Pauzi et al., 2022)."

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been extensively applied as a theoretical framework to explain consumer intentions across diverse context. Recent studies have consistently confirmed the predictive validity of the TPB's core constructs attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (PBC) in shaping halal food purchase intention. For instance, a study on Generation Z Muslim consumers in Indonesia found that halal certification, attitude, subjective norms, and PBC all have a significant effect on purchase intention (Febrianti and Trapsila, 2025). Similarly, research on Malaysian Muslim travellers in South Korea reported positive correlations between attitude, subjective norms, PBC, consumer awareness, and purchase intention for halal street food (Abu Bakar et al., 2025). Likewise, Zafar and Abu-Hussin, (2026), affirm that attitude and subjective norms are significant predictors of halal purchase intention, while PBC strongly predicts behaviour. Beyond the core TPB components, habit has also been identified as an additional independent predictor. A recent study on Generation Z Muslims in Indonesia demonstrated that intention to

purchase halal food is influenced by habits, halal involvement, attitudes, subjective norms, and PBC, with habits exerting a stronger direct influence on purchase intention (Habit and Halal Involvement Study, 2025). Furthermore, extended TPB models incorporating variables such as halal supply chain knowledge and religiosity have been validated, confirming that all TPB dimensions significantly influence halal meat purchase intention (Istivani & Najib, 2026). Collectively, this contemporary body of research—spanning multiple geographical contexts and employing robust quantitative methodologies—provides conclusive evidence in support of the TPB's theoretical predictions, affirming its continued relevance and robustness in explaining halal food purchase behaviour more than two decades after its original formulation.

2.1.1 Attitude

Attitude is defined as “the degree to which a person has a favourable or an unfavourable evaluation of a behaviour in question” (Ajzen, 1991). Essentially, it evaluates a person’s behavioural intentions. The theory of attitude provides a key framework for examining the factors that shape consumer decisions, particularly in food consumption. One of the most influential models in this area is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen as an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action. TPB identifies three core elements that influence behavioural intention: (a) attitude toward the behaviour, (b) subjective norms, and (c) perceived behavioural control. Together,

these elements link individual beliefs to actual behaviour (Ajzen, 2005). attitude-intention relationship in halal food consumption has been further validated across diverse geographical and product-specific contexts. Ramadhan, Kasri, & Yuniar, (2024), found that attitude significantly and positively affects the intention to purchase halal meat products (Ramadhan, Kasri, and Yuniar, 2024). The study hence proposes the first of four tested hypotheses:

H1: Attitude will influence the behaviour of consumers towards purchase of *halal* food

2.1.2 Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is related to a person’s perception of the social normative push (Ajzen, 2005). This is the external factor influencing the behavioural intention of a person towards a phenomenon which could be the communities a person is in, religion of a person, family members friends, and colleagues, affect the decision of a person. The determination to enact or not to enact a behaviour is dependent upon the approval of these groups of people (Ajzen, 1991). Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a conceptual framework has consistently demonstrated that subjective norms demonstrate an individual's perception of social pressure to perform or refrain from a given behaviour play a meaningful role in shaping halal food purchase intentions. Prior studies of *Abu Bakar et al. (2025)* found positive correlations between attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, consumer awareness, and purchase

intention among Malaysian Muslim travellers. Similarly, in Malaysia, Mohd Yusof et al. (2025) reported that attitude, subjective norms, and religiosity significantly influenced halal product purchase intention.

Inggrida, et al. (2026); Abu Bakar et al. (2025) and Febrianti, et al., (2025) Inggrida, et al., (2026), these studies indicate that consumers must consider the views and expectations of external referents including family members, friends, and broader social networks when forming intentions toward halal food. Based on this theoretical and empirical foundation, the present study proposes the following hypothesis concerning the role of subjective norms in shaping halal food purchase intention among Muslim consumers in Nigeria. Below is the second tested hypothesis

H2: Social norms will influence the behaviour of consumers towards purchase of halal food

2.1.3 Perceived Behavioural Control

Perceived behavioural control refers to “people’s perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour of interest” (Ajzen, 1991). Perceived behavioural control (PBC) means the evaluative act that shape whether the person intends to buy halal food.

There is inconsistency in recent studies on how important PBC really is. In Ghana, a country where most people are not Muslim, Martey (2024), surveyed 437 Muslim consumers and found that attitude,

knowledge, and subjective norms strongly predicted halal food purchase intention but PBC did not. Similarly, Nuralam, and Akbar (2024), explains that PBC did not significantly affect their purchase interest of young Muslims who wanted to buy halal certified Korean restaurant food in West Java, Indonesia. On the other hand, the link between moderating effect of religiosity and PBC determines not effect. Numerous studies in the area conclusive stated that religiosity does not moderate the relationship between PBC and halal purchase intention neither does it strengthen or weaken the link between PBC and halal purchase intention (Memon et al., 2019, El Ashfahany et al., 2023, Bhutto et al., 2024), more so, Nordin and Yee (2021) studied non- Muslim consumers in Penang, Malaysia. They found that attitude, subjective norms, and PBC all had positive effects on halal purchase intention, but religiosity did not moderate the relationship between PBC and intention. In other words, whether a person is very religious or not, PBC affects their intention in the same way, PBC is practical construct that stand as a control variable. it deals with external realities like product availability and affordability to purchase intention unlike attitude and norms that is shaped by religious values. Therefore, in the Nigerian context, religiosity is similarly unlikely to alter how perceived ease or difficulty in accessing, affording, or verifying halal products influences purchase intention. The third testable hypothesis:

H3: Perceived behavioural control will influence the behaviour of consumers towards purchase of *halal* food

2.1.4 Religiosity

Religiosity is commonly conceptualized along two primary dimensions: religious belief and religious practice (Mohd Dali et al., 2019). An individual's level of religious commitment and adherence to doctrinal teachings can shape multiple facets of daily life, including lifestyle choices and patterns of consumption. One domain where this influence is particularly pronounced is the intention to purchase halal-certified products, and prior empirical studies have confirmed that religiosity exerts a meaningful effect on such purchase intentions (Kaur et al., 2023).

As a component of subcultural identity, religiosity captures the depth of a person's religious devotion and worldview. It constitutes a fundamental basis upon which personal values are formed, and these values subsequently guide consumer attitudes and behavioral responses (Graafland, 2017; Sani et al., 2023). Research by Safiek (2009) found that religiosity correlates with several consumer orientations, including quality consciousness, impulsive buying tendencies, and price sensitivity. Nevertheless, empirical findings on this relationship have not been entirely uniform. For example, a study conducted by Ali et al. (2017) reported that religiosity had only a marginal influence on the intention to purchase halal meat. Furthermore, complexity, religious rulings known as fatwas may occasionally provide

flexibility in permissible consumption. However, it remains uncertain whether such rulings are effectively disseminated and adequately understood by the broader Muslim community (Mizerski, 2016). The global halal marketplace represents an exceptionally lucrative opportunity that food manufacturers cannot afford to disregard. Within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), attitude which is significantly shaped by culturally rooted religious dimensions emerges as the most relevant component influencing behavioural outcomes. Specifically, collective behavioural beliefs, such as the conviction that a product is halal, generate favourable attitudes, which subsequently lead to the formation of purchase intentions (Ajzen, 1991).

The research by Ibrahim, (2024) affirm that religiosity tested alongside other variables shows positive coefficient but statistically insignificant, suggesting that its influence may depend on interaction with other factors Supporting this view, Jaiyeoba, et al. (2019) found that halal certification marks and brand quality exerted positive effects on Nigerian consumers' buying decisions than religious factors alone.

These divergent findings collectively indicate that the influence of religiosity on halal food purchase intention is not absolute but conditional, varying according to the specific behavioural determinant under consideration, the cultural and regulatory environment, and whether religiosity is tested as a direct predictor or as a

moderating variable. Accordingly, the present study aims to contribute clarity by systematically examining the moderating role of religiosity on the relationships between each TPB component; attitude, subjective norms, PBC, and Halal behavioural purchase intention within the specific context of Nigeria, where such comprehensive investigation remains limited.

2.2 Moderating Effect of Religiosity

2.2.1 Moderating Effect of Religiosity on Attitude

Religion is a long-term phenomenon and cannot be dismissed by the market as it defines the idea of life that are reflected in the value and attitude of individuals and society. The strength of the relationship between religiosity level and attitude toward halal products depends on various factors besides religiosity level (Ahmadova and Aliyev, 2021). The study of Junaidi (2021) shows that external religiosity significantly influences consumer attitude while internal religiosity has a lesser impact. Furthermore, consumer attitude plays a partial role in mediating between religiosity and consumer preferences as well as mediating between religiosity and the intention to purchase halal products (Tuhin et al., 2022). Other studies, Zafar & Abu- Hussin (2026), (Koc et al., 2024) and (Tao et al., 2022), conducted with non-Muslim consumers showed that religiosity affects purchase reluctance (Tao et al., 2022). It can be concluded that religion is the predicting

variable toward the attitude of consumer on *halal* food. The study hence proposes that:

H4: Religiosity moderated the relationship between attitude and behaviour of consumers towards purchase of halal food

2.2.2 Moderating Effect of Religiosity on Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is consumers' perception toward social normative push (Ajzen, 2005). It is the external pressure that influences individuals' intention to perform a phenomenon. Such external factor is related to a person's religion which plays an important role on the activities of one's life. In the context of this study religion is an external factor that affects consumers subjective norms toward the given phenomenon. It is assumed that people with strong religious belief system are being controlled by their religion. Siddiqi (1992) asserts that Muslims hold a strong social value which they commonly share with other members. For example, those who outlaw the Islamic teachings might try not to disclose their deeds to the public.

Research in the field of consumers behaviour toward Halal purchase intention, Zafar, et al., (2026) Rafiki, et al., (2024) and Nora, et al. (2023) has acknowledge the role of religion in shaping consumers' behavioural intentions towards halal food. Recent empirical studies have demonstrated that religiosity directly influences purchase intention through multiple pathways, including awareness, trust, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control

(Loussaief et al., 2024). Furthermore, the moderating effect of religiosity on the relationship between halal brand awareness and purchasing decisions has been established, suggesting that religiosity strengthens or weakens other behavioural determinants (Rafiki et al., 2024). Collectively, these findings confirm that religion remains a fundamental factor guiding consumers' intentions to purchase halal food.

It can be concluded that religion is a factor that influences consumer's intention towards purchase of *halal* food. The fifth last hypothesis of the study hence proposes that:

H5: Religiosity moderated the relationship between subjective norms and behaviour of consumers towards purchase of halal food.

3. Empirical Review

The empirical literature on halal food purchase intention has expanded considerably over the past decade across different countries remarkable.

Jatnika, et al, (2025). Examine the consumers' intention toward importing halal food value factors in West Java and to integrate the role of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in shaping purchase intention. A quantitative approach was applied through a survey of 273 purposively selected respondents, with data analysed using Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results show that attitude and perceived behavioural control significantly affect purchase intention, whereas subjective

norms have no meaningful impact. Quality, price, and emotional values strongly influence attitude, and through it, enhance behavioural intention, while conditional values show no significant role. These findings suggest that intrinsic consumption values and positive attitudes are the main drivers of intention, highlighting the limited effect of social and situational factors. The study further recommend that policymakers and halal certification bodies should strengthen trust in product quality and authenticity while fostering emotional engagement through branding and communication strategies. Rather than focusing on social influence or temporary promotions, sustainable growth in halal consumption depends on nurturing intrinsic values and favourable consumer attitudes.

While, Zafar, B.M. and Jafar, A., (2025) extends the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by integrating religiosity as a determinant of Halal purchasing behaviour. While TPB has proven effective in predicting consumer intention and behaviour, it often overlooks culturally embedded variables such as religious belief systems. Structural Equation Modeling (MASEM) was explore using data from 42 empirical studies synthesizing associations among Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), Religiosity, Intention, and Behaviour. Results from the two-stage SEM (TSSEM) approach confirm Attitude, Subjective Norms and Religiosity as significant predictors of intention. Although PBC does not predict intention, it strongly predicts

behaviour. Intention also significantly predicts behaviour. The extended model demonstrates excellent fit supporting the inclusion of religiosity in TPB. Robustness was assessed using a one-stage MASEM, which confirmed the consistency of the findings. These findings advance understanding of how cognitive, normative, and faith-based factors interact in shaping behaviour, particularly in culturally or religiously motivated consumer contexts.

Furthermore, the study of Abdou, A. H., et al. (2024) in chain, investigates the relationship between halal credence, awareness, certification, need for cognition (NC), effort, health consciousness, and satisfaction towards halal food (STHF). In addition, observe the influence of STHF on purchase intention explored. Finally, religiosity is examined as a moderator between STHF and halal purchase intention. It obtained data from a total of 476 Muslim participants who eat food from halal food hotels in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, China. A purposive sampling technique is used to collect data from respondents. PLS-SEM was used to test the proposed hypotheses. Findings reveal that halal credence, awareness, certification, effort, and health consciousness increase STHF. Conversely, NC does not influence STHF. Moreover, STHF significantly determines halal purchase intention. Finally, religiosity strengthens the positive association between STHF and purchase intention. Practical implications Food marketers and policy decision-makers can use research findings to enhance halal purchase intention. In China,

Muslim customers usually search for halal food by putting in extra effort and seeing halal certification. They trust halal food because religiosity is their priority.

Also, Abdullahi (2024) conducted a Nigerian study using Tobit and ordered logit models and reported that religiosity had a positive but statistically insignificant direct effect on halal business patronage, while advertising exerted a moderate negative influence – a finding that challenges the assumption that religiosity uniformly drives halal consumption across all Muslim majority contexts.

A study of (Koc et al., 2024) conducted in Turkey examined how trust and religiosity influence consumers' intention to purchase halal products, with attitude tested as a mediating variable. Data were collected from 847 Turkish respondents via an online survey, and the conceptual model was empirically tested using structural equation modelling. The findings revealed that trust in halal products positively affects both purchase intention and attitude towards halal products. Attitude towards halal products, in turn, positively affects purchase intention. The study distinguished between two dimensions of religiosity: the belief dimension (what one believes) significantly and positively influences purchase intention, while the practice dimension (what one does) influences attitude towards halal products. Indirect effect analyses further demonstrated that trust in halal products and religious practices have an indirect impact on purchase intention through attitude. The

study also examined trust at three levels: trust in the halal product itself, trust in the company producing halal products, and trust in institutions providing halal certification. The researchers concluded that sharing information through websites, social media platforms, and product packaging can be effective strategies for businesses. If businesses genuinely adhere to halal standards and address the needs of consumers who value halal products, they can enhance consumer interest. The study acknowledges that validating these conclusions on a larger scale and exploring them in different cultural contexts would be beneficial.

Rafiki et al., (2022). examine the moderator effect of religiosity on the relationship between halal brand awareness and habit towards purchasing decisions of halal products. Quantitative method is used in the study. Descriptive and statistical (multiple and moderated regression) analyses are employed to test the hypothesis according to the research model. The data is collected using a cross-sectional design from 197 respondents consisting of business owners in North Sumatera, Indonesia. Findings reveals that both halal brand awareness and habit have a positive and significant effect on the

purchasing decision of halal products. Meanwhile, religiosity significantly acts as a moderating variable in the relationship between awareness and purchasing decisions, as well as habit and purchasing decisions. This study concludes the important factor of religiosity as a moderating factor in purchase decisions of halal products. It stated that, government may need to collaborate with Islamic educational institutions to raise awareness of the halal concept and product awareness. It is assumed that individuals who know about the Islamic religion will have a higher degree of awareness of halal products compared to individuals with limited knowledge of Islam; thus, providers of Islamic education play a crucial role in raising the level of awareness of halal products.

4. Modelling approach

The proposed framework for this study as shown in Figure 1 below shows the role of Attitude, Subjective norms and perceived behavioural control is amplified or inhibited by religious based evaluation on the importance of consuming *halal* food. The following figure illustrates the chain of transmission of the effects.

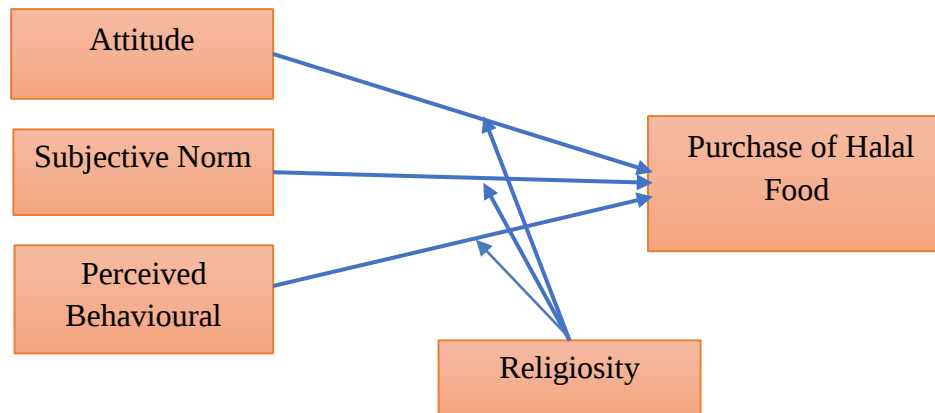


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 states attitude and subjective norms and perceived behavioural control as variables that are shaped by religiously evaluations concerning their importance on consuming halal food. This treatment is empirically justified: studies conducted in Pakistan (Memon et al., 2019) and Indonesia (El Ashfahany et al., 2023) consistently reported that religiosity does not moderate the relationship between PBC and purchase intention, indicating that PBC functions independently as a practical, resource-based determinant of behaviour. Although, religiosity has been demonstrated to strengthen other relationships as shown, the satisfaction to purchase intention link in China (Abdou et al., 2024) and the awareness to purchase decision link in Indonesia (Rafiki et al., 2022) suggesting its potential as a moderator for attitudinal, normative, and certification related antecedents. Within the Nigerian context, however, religiosity tested in isolation as a direct predictor has shown a weak and statistically insignificant effect (Ibrahim, 2024). This finding does not preclude the possibility that religiosity may operate effectively as a moderator. More so, religiosity may not directly predict purchase

intention on its own, yet it may signify either strengthen or weaken the influence that other variables including attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control have on behavioural intention to purchase halal food. *This untested proposition constitutes the central focus of the present conceptual study, which is limited to developing a theoretical framework for understanding these moderating relationships within Nigeria. The propositions advanced here require further empirical testing in future research. Hence the inclusion of religiosity as a moderator¹ of perceived behavioural control in our model.*

¹ A moderator, or moderating variable, is a third variable Z (Religiosity in the study) that affects the strength of the relationship between a dependent and independent variable. If statistically significant, the moderator causes an amplifying or weakening effect between independent variable X and the dependent variable Y.

The model in figure 1 can be translated in 2 equations: one representing the determinants of Behavioural intention, another the determinants of Purchase decision.

The Intention equation is modelled as follows:

$$BI_i = a_0 + a_1 ATT_i + a_2 SN_i + a_3 PBC_i + a_4 R_i + a_5 ATT_i R_i + a_6 SN_i * R_i + a_7 PBC_i * R_i + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

BI, ATT, SN, PBC represent Behavioural Intention, Attitude, Subjective Norm and Perceived Behavioural Controls respectively. $a_0, a_1, a_2, \wedge a_3$ represent the relative importance of the constructs, and a_5, a_6 and a_7 the moderation effect of attitude and subjective norms and perceived behavioural control respectively. The dependent variable BI is linearly related ATT, SN, PBC directly, with the effect of ATT and SN, and PBC moderated by Religiosity. The partial effect of ATT, SN and PBC will depend on religiosity². Hence the moderation effect introduced in this study.

The equation (Purchase Halal food) is predicted jointly by the individual's intention (BI) and the Perceived Behavioural Control:

$$Purchase_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BI + \beta_2 PBC_i + \mu_i \quad (2)$$

Where the variables are already defined and the parameters β_1 and β_2 represent the effects of Behavioural Intentions and the control variables/ constructs on purchase.

The following hypotheses are advanced based on the theoretical and empirical foundations established above:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Religiosity moderates the relationship between attitude and halal food purchase intention. Based on evidence that religiosity strengthens satisfaction- intention links (Abdou et al., 2024) and Behavioural purchase decisions, (Koc et al., 2024) and (Rafiki et al., 2022), this study proposes that among Nigerian Muslims, higher levels of religiosity will amplify the positive effect of favourable attitudes towards halal food on purchase intention. This proposition awaits empirical verification.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Religiosity moderates the relationship between subjective norms and halal food purchase intention. Subjective norms have shown variable influence across contexts strong in Malaysia but insignificant in the of West Java Malaysia but religiosity has moderated normative related paths in other studies, this conceptual study posits that religiosity will strengthen the impact of perceived social pressure from family, friends, and community on Nigerian Muslims' intention to purchase halal food. Empirical testing is required to confirm or refute this proposition.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): Religiosity does NOT moderate the relationship between perceived behavioural control (PBC) and halal food purchase intention. Drawing on consistent empirical findings from Pakistan (Memon et al., 2019) and

² It is the partial derivative of BI with respect to ATT, SN and PBC respectively.

Indonesia (El Ashfahany et al., 2023) that religiosity has no significant moderating effect on the PBC- intention link, this study treats PBC as a control variable. Therefore, no moderating hypothesis is advanced for PBC; instead, PBC is expected to exert a direct, unmoderated influence on purchase intention, reflecting its nature as a practical, resource- based determinant.

- Hypothesis 4 (H4): Religiosity moderates the relationship between halal certification and halal food purchase intention. To test this hypothesis, $a_8HC_i + a_9 HC_i * R_i$ is added to equation 1 above. Halal certification marks have been identified as the most influential factor in Nigerian consumers' buying decisions (Jaiyeoba et al., 2019), and that religiosity has been shown to strengthen similar quality assurance pathways, this study proposes that religiosity will enhance the positive effect of halal certification on purchase intention. Specifically, more religious consumers are expected to place greater trust in and be more influenced by a recognised halal logo. This hypothesised moderation awaits empirical testing.

5. Conclusion

The growing tension among Nigerians regarding the health effects of genetically modified foods has significantly shaped what people consume. This concern over personal control extends to halal food purchases: the more perceived control an individual possesses about making halal food choices, the more likely he or she will be to act on that control. The present

conceptual study was undertaken to address a significant gap in the halal consumer behaviour literature: the absence of a systematic theoretical framework that examines the moderating role of religiosity on the relationships between the core antecedents of halal food purchase intention – namely, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control (PBC), and halal certification – within the Nigerian context. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and synthesising empirical evidence from China (Abdou et al., 2024), Indonesia (Rafiki et al., 2022; El Ashfahany et al., 2023), Pakistan (Memon et al., 2019), and Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2024; Jaiyeoba et al., 2019), the study makes three principal contributions. Firstly, it hypothesises that the influence of religiosity on halal food purchase intention is not uniform but context and individual, varying across individuals, geographical and regulatory settings. Secondly, it proposes a refined conceptual framework that allows the researcher to test whether attitude, subjective norms or perceived behavioural control should enter the Theory of Planned Behaviour modelling as control variables. Thirdly, it formulates a set of testable hypotheses for each behavioural determinant, thereby providing a roadmap for future empirical research in Nigeria – a country characterised by a fragmented halal certification system and limited prior empirical attention.

Thus, exploring the effects of religion on consumer behaviour toward halal food will provide marketers with valuable insights to better serve Muslim markets. Understanding the underlying reasons and mechanisms of consumer perceptions of halal foods is essential, as it enables food manufacturers to refine their marketing strategies through

empirical validation of key variables. This awareness will also guide government officials, lawmakers, and other stakeholders in re- strategizing for economic benefits, ultimately promoting a healthy environment and sustainable development.

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