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THE IMPACT OF HALAL BRAND PERSONALİTY AND ONLİNE BRAND TRUST ON THE ONLİNE HALAL FOOD PURCHASE INTENTİON: A CONCEPTUAL PAPER

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework that provides insight and aids in understanding the factors that determine the intention of consumer to purchase halal food products via an online platform. Online consumer behaviour can be described as the way the consumer perceives the process involved in the online purchase. Consumers can order and purchase halal food from a diverse range of websites like grocery stores, supermarkets, restaurants, food intermediaries, and delivery businesses. By understanding what makes customers shop online, online retailers can build more trustable, secure, attractive, and useful websites and create the effective marketing programme for their customers. Past researches found the connection between brand personality in relation with food choice. Customers tend to purchase from the online website they trust and brands that are familiar and suitable with their personality. Although the relationship between trust and online purchase intention had been widely discussed, how trust mediates the relationship between brand personality and online purchase intention remains uncertain. Therefore, trust as a moderating variable is introduced in the conceptual framework to determine if there exists positive behavioural outcomes. The framework aids understanding in the relationships and provides insights into how these relationships develop.

1. Introduction

The development of internet and mobile technology transforms business and changes the shape of consumer behaviour. According to Nielsen, over 4 billion people (53% of the global population) are connected to the internet and every day, 85% of users (3.4 billion) spend six and a half hours browsing the web (Nielsen Insight, 2019). Consumer nowadays can purchase anything through an online transaction. Online purchase provides customers with more accessible, more convenient, and cheaper methods to find a variety of products as compared to traditional purchase. According to Statista, in 2019, online retail sales grew to 14% as compared to four years ago with just 7.4%. Statista predicts that in the next four years, 22% of retail sales will come from online channel (statista.com, 2018)

Online purchase has grown exponentially around the world in recent years, and Malaysia is no exception. Malaysia is recognised as the second largest e-Commerce market in Southeast Asia after Singapore. According to Statista, the total revenue in Malaysia's e-Commerce sector is around RM15.4 billion (US$3.6 billion) for the year 2019. E-Commerce spending in Malaysia also grew by 24% in 2019 and the government is putting in the structure to grow the online economy, such as through the National E-Commerce Strategic Roadmap (NeCC) programme.

The Digital 2019 Malaysia report conducted by Hootsuite reveals that 26 million out of 32 million population in Malaysia are active internet users. Around 80% of Malaysian users between the age of 16 and 64 are already shopping online with 91% of them searched online for a product or service to buy. According to the same report, Malaysian e-Commerce spending by category are as follows: Travel services, including accommodations (US$ 2.759 billion),Electronics & Physical Media (US$851 million),Fashion & Beauty (US$771 million),Furniture & Appliances (US$553 million),Toys & Hobbies (including sports) (US$486 million),Food & Personal Care (US$483 million),Video games (US$100 million) and Music (US$30 million). In terms of the categories that grew the most, food and personal care grew up to 39% which experienced the most significant development (We Are Social & Hootsuite, 2019). So, we can conclude that along with the growth of e-commerce and online shopping, purchasing food online is also growing in Malaysia.

The halal word is derived from Arabic, it means lawful or permissible and in the Islamic belief, which applied by Muslims and it refers to actions permitted by the Islamic law. Food and beverages constitute the major segment of the halal industry. The scope of halal food products is not limited to meat and poultry only. It extends to other food items such as confectionary, bakery products, canned and frozen food, dairy products, fast food, organic food, beverages, and herbal products. In general, consumers can order and purchase food products from a diverse range of websites for grocery stores, supermarkets, restaurants, food intermediaries, and delivery businesses.

Today, the halal industry has become a viable products and services market throughout the world. The global halal market is currently estimated to be worth about USD2.3 trillion in 2019 and

is expected to continue to grow. Halal food constitutes the largest segment of the halal industry, the demand for which is globally on the rise. According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2018/2019, Muslim consumer expenditure reached $ 1,128 billion, equivalent to 17% of total expenditure on food and beverages. The Malaysian Halal industry is valued at $ 30 billion and is expected to grow further by 25% within the next 5 years (Organ, 2018). Malaysia's halal industry offers a variety of opportunities for manufacturers of products and services as the demand for both increases with the growing global population and acceptance from the non-Muslim community. In addition, the Malaysian government is committed to continually develop the performance of this industry. This can be seen through the organisation of specific programmes such as the Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) and the establishment of the bodies such as the Halal Hub Division and HDC, which have been entrusted to undertake certain responsibilities related to the halal industry. The Government has also introduced the concept of the Halal Park in almost every state in Malaysia as a measure to encourage local manufacturers to venture into the production of Halal products. These measures clearly demonstrate the government's aspiration to turn Malaysia into "the global halal hub". In addition, the development of the halal industry in Malaysia is also supported by several other government agencies that cooperate and support the role played by JAKIM and HDC. Other government agencies that are cooperating in enforcing halal legislation are the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Ministry of Cooperatives and Consumerism (KPDNKK), the Department of Standards Malaysia, the Department of Veterinary Services, Ministry of Health (MOH), Royal Malaysian Customs Department (Customs) and Local Authorities (PBT).

The rapid development proved that the Malaysian Halal industry received a positive response, not only locally but also globally from around the world due to its huge market and high demand. Consequently, there is also an increase number in the Small Medium Enterprise (SMEs) manufacturers in the halal food market. However, despite the great potential, the Muslim manufacturers face an intensive competition with the multinational companies. This is due to majority (80%) of halal products producers are non-Muslims. Therefore, it has become a huge challenge for Muslim manufacturers to produce quality halal food products and to strengthen brand position in order to accommodate the local as well as international market. Generally, in today's global occurrence, non-Muslim countries still dominate the halal food market especially on halal meat. There are no Muslim countries among the 10 largest halal exporters in the world. For example, the largest poultry exporter is Brazil while India is the largest beef exporter. Thailand is the biggest halal product exporter. Countries such as South Korea, China and Thailand also increase their halal meat exports and market it to most Muslim countries.

Recently, the global COVID-19 outbreak is forcing consumers to dramatically change their purchase behaviours. Malaysians who work from home have been spending more time online and have shown more willingness to purchase online food. A survey conducted by Vase.ai on Malaysian consumers found that 40 percent of respondents stated that they bought their food from the local groceries or supermarket during COVID-19 outbreak.

Online purchase is now the 'new norm' as the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in e-commerce businesses booming globally as people shift towards online platforms. So, we need to understand the factors influencing customers' online purchasing behaviour. One of the most common

approaches made by marketers in gaining an understanding of the actual behaviour of consumers is by studying their buying intentions. Buying intention is an antecedent that stimulates and encourages the purchase of consumer products and services. So, buying intention serves as an alternative to measuring consumer buying behaviour (Haque, Sarwar, Yasmin, Tarofder, & Hossain, 2015). Purchase intention is one of the two key factors that carry significant impact on buying behaviour. Purchase intention indicates on how people are willing to try and how much effort they plan to perform the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). According to Ajzen (1991), the intention is a factor that motivates consumers and in turn, it affects their behaviour. The probability that certain behaviours will be carried out by individuals depends largely on the strength of their intentions. If the intention to commit a certain behaviour is strong, there is a greater possibility that each behaviour will occur. Every customer who wants to purchase online, the customer needs to be engaged with the e-retailer whenever there is a desire to purchase the product.

2. Background of the Study

Purchase intentions are described as consumer's willingness to purchase a certain product or services. Past studies have proven that purchase intentions are the primary determinants of the actual purchase behaviour (Ashraf, 2019; Birch & Memery, 2020; Grimmer & Miles, 2017; Khor & Hazen, 2017). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), intentions are the most effective way to identify the actual behaviour and the stronger the intentions are, it is most likely that the actual behaviour will be performed. Purchasing online or online shopping has certainly become one of the most effective, necessary, and popular activities on the internet. Pavlou (2003) defined online purchase intention as a situation where a consumer is willing and intends to make online transactions. Previously, Shim et al. (2001) proposed that there was a relationship between internet search and purchase intention. Consumers who searched for items using the internet generally went on to purchase these items using the same medium (Shim, Eastlick, Lotz, & Warrington, 2001). Madan and Yadav (2018) pointed in the context of mobile shopping that positive behavioural intentions lead to actual product purchase.

Multiple studies examined the phenomenon of online purchase intention. For example, scholars worldwide such as in Australia (Mortimer, Fazal e Hasan, Andrews, & Martin, 2016), in Pakistan (Hassan & Pandey, 2019; Memon, Azhar, Haque, & Bhutto, 2019), in Malaysia (Khalek & Ismail, 2015; Lim, Osman, Salahuddin, Romle, & Abdullah, 2016; Marmaya, Zakaria, & Mohd Desa, 2019), and in Indonesia (Amalia, Sosianika, & Suhartanto, 2020a, 2020b; Muslichah, Abdulllah, & Razak, 2014; Nurhayati & Hendar, 2019; Vanany, Soon, Maryani, & Wibawa, 2019a). Previous studies have carried out extensive research to explore the antecedents or predictors of online purchase intention(Gopi & Ramayah, 2007, 2011; Heijden, Verhagen, & Creemers, 2003; Javed, 2016). However, each literature found different factors, none could agree on which factors were the most important. This study will help to prioritise underlying shopper motivations in order to fill the gap defined by Heng, Gao, Jiang, & Chen, (2018) and Pappas et al. (2017) who relatively note the lack of understanding of motivations of online shoppers in food product (Heng et al., 2018; Pappas, Kourouthanassis, Giannakos, & Lekakos, 2017) and none in halal food specifically.

Determining the drivers of online purchase intention is crucial in providing a safe and attractive environment for online shoppers worldwide and to identify the reasons that online buyers shop

the way that they do. Some authors focus on different online shopping motivations with no clear primary factor driving purchase intention. A dearth of research exists to explain online grocery shopper motivations (Heng, Gao, Jiang, & Chen, 2018). Many authors focus on well-established purchase intention factors such as risk (Chang & Wu, 2012; Ismail, Nasiruddin, & Samad, 2017) 2007), perceived value (Mosunmola, Adegbuyi, Kehinde, Agboola, & Olokundun, 2019) perceived control (Li, Xu, & Xu, 2018), and trust (Al-Debei, Akroush, & Ashouri, 2015; Ling, Chai, & Piew, 2010; Loketkrawee & Bhatiasevi, 2018). Failure to understand the factors that drive purchase intention and their associated levels affects e-vendor through monetary losses and online cart abandonment during online shopping (Rubin, Martins, Ilyuk, & Hildebrand, 2020; Song, 2019; Xu & Huang, 2015). Cart abandonment is when a potential customer starts a check out process for an online order but drops out of the process before completing the purchase. Any item that enters the shopping cart but never makes it through the transaction is "abandoned" by the shopper.

From the consumers' perspective, trust, perceived risk, attitude, and personal innovativeness play vital roles in consumers' online purchase intentions. Trust is considered as a challenge in the online environment, if customers trust vendors or websites and think that the application is risk-free, they will make more online purchases. Hassan et al. (2018) that examines trust and online purchase intention includes multiple sub-dimensions of trust, such as trusting beliefs, past experiences, word-of-mouth, and trust in the marketplace. Hsu, Chang, & Chuang (2016) used quality, value, satisfaction, and confirmation and brand. However, none of the studies which examined trust and purchase intention include the elements of online brand trust and website trust as variables.

Several prior studies had focused on halal brand, for instance: Islamic brand or Halal brand (Alserhan, 2010), Halal cluster (Tieman.M, 2015), Antecedents of Halal brand personality (Ahmad M.F, 2015), Halal certification (Azis and Vui, 2013), Halal-Holistic brand (Aoun, et al., 2015). Personality combined with the brand may create a solid relationship (Borzooei and Asgari, 2013). Ahmad (2015) researched the brand personality of halal in Malaysia. The objective of the research was to gain insights into the various dimensions of the halal brand personality. The author used mixed methodologies to develop a theoretical framework for the halal brand personality and purchase intention. The author identified the main dimensions associated with the halal brand personality to be purity, excitement, safety, sophistication, and righteousness. This study tries to enhance a dimension of Halal Brand Personality in developing a unique brand personality for halal brand products.

This study attempts to bridge the contextual gaps within online purchase behaviour and halal food consumption. This study will provide a framework on the determinants of online halal food purchase intention in the context of non-Muslim customers in Malaysia. This is because recently, the halal market not only attracts Muslim but also non-Muslim consumers. Furthermore, culture assimilation in a multiracial country like Malaysia has shaped the purchase intention of non-Muslim consumers towards halal food products. However the perception of non-Muslim towards halal product and purchase intention is not quite the same as Muslim consumers. Therefore, the model of online halal food purchase intention for non-Muslim is essential to be developed.

3. Literature Review And The Development Of Hypothesis
3.1 Theoretical Background

Intentions can be explained as the inclination of an individual to conduct certain behaviour, and a precursor of the behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Purchase intention is the state of an individual being prepared to purchase certain products (Alam & Sayuti, 2012). Past studies have proven that purchase intentions are the primary determinants of the actual purchase behaviour (Ashraf, 2019; Birch & Memery, 2020; Grimmer & Miles, 2017; Khor & Hazen, 2017). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), intention is the most effective way to identify the actual behaviour and
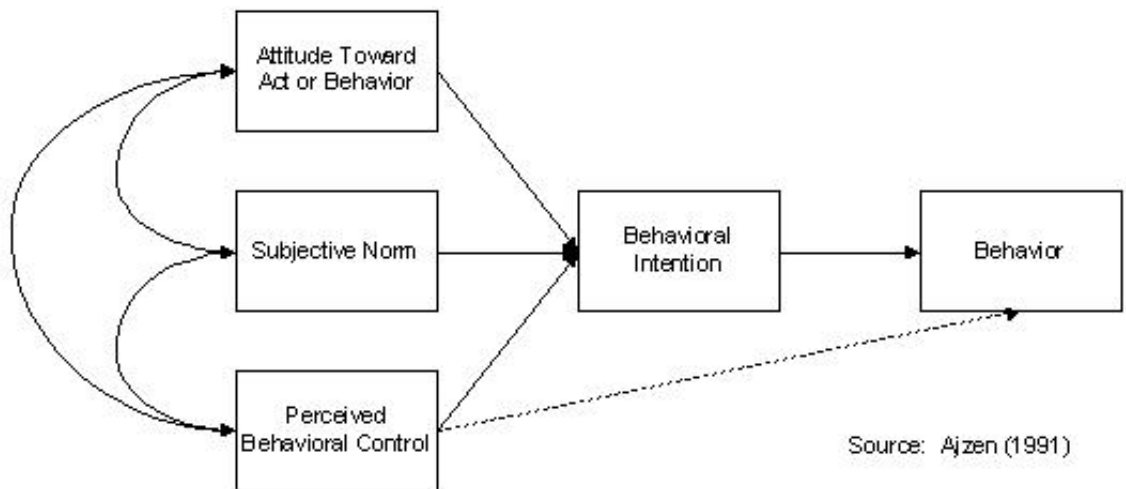
Source: Ajzen (1991)

the stronger the intentions are, it is most likely that the actual behaviour will be performed.All models are influenced by Ajzen's (1991) often-cited theory of planned behaviour which aimed to understand the complexity of human behaviour.

Azjen's theory posited that the stronger the intention, the stronger the likelihood that the intention will turn into the given behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) could be utilised for the prediction and explanation of the human behaviour especially on food related researches and Halal food choice (Asnawi, Sukoco, & Fanani, 2018; Nardi, Jardim, Ladeira, & Santini, 2019; Shah

Alam & Mohamed Sayuti, 2011). Based on the TPB, attitude towards the behavioural, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control have been perceived as the elements to predict and explain the behavioural and intention. From the theory context, attitude towards behaviour could be determined by evaluating the pros and cons of conducting certain behaviour; subjective norm refers to the perceived   perception of an individual on the peer or social pressure leading to performing of the behaviour; perceived behavioural control means an individual's interpretation confidence of the ability to perform the behaviour.

3.2 Online Purchase Intention

Understanding what the factors are influencing customers' online purchasing behaviour is particularly important to online retailers. Purchase intention is the state of an individual being prepared to purchase certain products (Alam & Sayuti, 2012). Purchase intention indicates how people are willing to try and how much effort they are planning to perform the behaviour (Haque, Sarwar, Yasmin, Tarofder, & Hossain, 2015). If the intention to commit a certain behaviour is strong, there is a greater possibility that each behaviour will occur (Ajzen, 1991). Heijden et al., (2003) defined the online purchase intention by the threshold at which the consumer is inclined to buy a product or service from a specific website.

3.3 Halal Brand Personality

Purchase intention is a desire to continue using the specific brand (Changa & Liub, 2009; Tariq et al., 2013). This helps marketers to foresee the purchase behaviour from consumer's point of view. According to the study by Shaari and Arifin (2010), assessing the Halal purchase intention would help to better understand the needs and expectations of consumers. To analyse the purchase decision process by consumers, the effect of consumer-brand relationships on purchase intention plays a significant issue in the market (Khan et al., 2012). Over time, brands form powerful associations in the minds of consumers (Keller, 1993), which help consumers recover information archived in their minds to make decisions: once recovered, the information provides a reason to acquire the product (Aaker, 1992). The relationship between brands and consumers indicates the strength of consumers' cognitive connection to the brand.

Brand personality refers to "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Jennifer L. Aaker, 1997; Jennifer Lynn Aaker, 2011). Brand personality is formed and sustained in the mind of consumers, reflecting their perception toward a brand. Brand personality is rooted from Self-Congruence Theory by Rosenberg (1979). Brand personality is like human personality in that it describes a brand as having human characteristics. Consumers can achieve self-congruence by consuming a brand with personality traits that they are similar to(Aaker, J.1997) first suggested that the dimensions of brand personality can be defined by extending those human personality traits to that of brands. She identified five underlying dimensions of brand personality just like the Big Five in human personality. These dimensions were labeled as sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness.

The concept of Halal brand personality was first proposed by Ahmad (2015) in his article "Antecedents of Halal Brand Personality". Ahmad (2015) identified five dimensions of Halal brand personality that consists of three new dimensions' purity, safety, and righteousness and two

Aaker's (1997) existing dimensions which are excitement and sophistication. Previous study indicated that there is a strong relationship between brand and purchase intentions(Bukhari, 2018). Therefore, identifying the halal brand personality will increase consumer' purchase intention, and it can change consumer intention for those who see Halal as a merely spiritual issue (Borzooei & Asgari, 2013b, 2013a). Halal brand personality will assist marketers in revealing the personality of Halal in the minds of consumers (Borzooei & Asgari, 2013a)

Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a significant and positive effect between halal brand personality and online halal food purchase intention

3.4 Brand personality and trust relationship

The goal of marketing is to generate an intense bond between the consumer and the brand, and one of the main ingredients of this bond is through trust. Previous study discovers the relationship between brand personality and trust. Trust has been empirically tested as a key factor in the initiation and maintenance of long-term relationships with customers. Trust leads to customer loyalty and commitment (Yoon, 2002; Hess, 1995; Anderson and Narus, 1990). The role of trust on the purchase intention was highlighted by various researches (Yoon, 2002; Andreassen and Lindestad, 1997; Gurviez and Korchia, 2002; Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Aleman, 2001).The brand trust literature takes the stand that consumers trust brands that are good and honorable, and hold positive brand images and personalities (Ferrandi and Valette-Florence, 2002; Hiscock, 2001). The consumer trusts a brand when he perceives it as credible, honourable, and friendly (Gurviez, 1999). Cristau (2006) considered brand trust as a feeling of security that is held by the consumers that the brand will meet their consumption expectations. The trust on the relationship consumer - brand is "a psychological variable or more a state of faith or assumption that the brand, as a personified entity, makes a commitment to have a predictable action and conform to his expectations, and to maintain with benevolence this orientation in the duration " (Lacoeuilhe, 2000).

Research on brand personality suggests a connection between human characteristics and brands and explains how the personality traits associated with a brand influence consumer decision. Past research has found that the use of a brand will develop brand personality; this allows customers the ability to express specific characteristics of self. Furthermore, in the highly competitive market, online brand trust is a significant competitive advantage which has a great impact on the behavioural intentions of consumers. Indeed, trust enhances the consumer's purchase intention and it affects consumer repetitive purchase behaviour as well (Borzooei & Asgari, 2013b). Brand increases the level of trust in intention to purchase halal food by non-Muslim consumer (Ali, Sherwani, Ali, Ali, & Sherwani, 2020; Borzooei & Asgari, 2013b; Bukhari, 2018; Rosmayani & Mardhatillah, 2020).

Based on past results, this study proposes the role of trust as the mediating variable in the following relationship:

H2: There is a significant and positive effect between halal brand personality and trust

H3: There is a significant and positive effect between halal brand personality and online halal food purchase intention mediated by trust.

3.5 Online Trust and Online Purchase Intention Relationship

Trust can be viewed in different ways by different authors in different contexts. Ganguly, Dash, Cyr, & Head, (2010) define trust as the perceived integrity and benevolence of the online store according to the view of the customer. In contrast, Bhattacharya, Devinney, & Pillutla, (1998) characterise trust as the "belief that the other party will carry on in a tried and true way in a business environment." According to Meyer (1995), trust is the crucial element in the business transactions that are constructed on the following basis: namely ability, benevolence, and integrity. These three strongly associated aspects take an important role in forming the trust that someone must believe in media, transaction and commitment as offered in e-Commerce and they are related trusting beliefs in an online situation (Geffen, 2002). Trust also being viewed as "a set of specific beliefs dealing primarily with the integrity, benevolence, and ability of another party", and it refers to "an expectation that others one chooses to trust will not behave opportunistically by taking advantage of the situation" (Söllner, Gefen, Leimeister, & Pavlou, 2016).

Generally, trust is an important predictor of attitude towards buying online and the intention of online consumers (Alam & Sayuti, 2012; Loketkrawee & Bhatiasevi, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2019; Pappas, Kourouthanassis, Giannakos, & Chrissikopoulos, 2016; Pappas et al., 2017). Loketkrawee & Bhatiasevi (2018) found that website trust is positively associated with attitude towards online grocery shopping,and trust in online websites plays a critical role in consumer decisions to purchase food online (Vanany, Soon, Maryani, & Wibawa, 2019b) Keh & Shieh, (2001) found trust to be significantly positively correlated with online purchasing intention for grocery products in the emerging country context(Loketkrawee & Bhatiasevi, 2018)
Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:
H4: There is a significant and positive effect between trust and online halal food purchase intention

4. Conceptual Framework

Based on the review of literature above, the proposed research framework in this study gives a clear picture of the whole idea of the study and illustrates the schematic diagramme in Figure 1
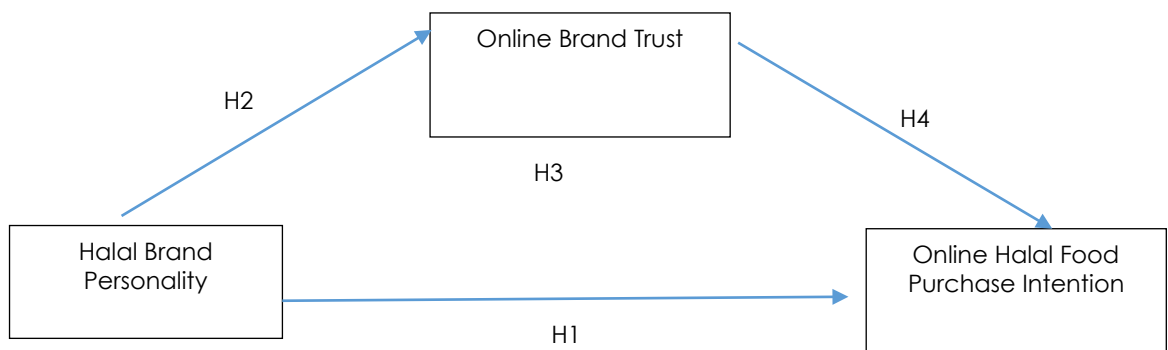

Figure1: The conceptual framework

5. Conclusion

This study attempts to bridge the contextual gaps within online purchase behaviour and halal food consumption. This study investigates the role of halal brand personality and online brand trust. Overall, this study will provide better understanding of the factors that may influence online halal food purchase intention. The findings from this research should be useful to the various business associated with halal, for example, halal producers, distributors, halal restaurant owners, and halal marketers. The findings can inform the stakeholders about how they can optimise the marketing of the halal brand. The optimised marketing can translate to a more positive brand image of halal leading to greater revenue and customer satisfaction. Hence, the contribution of this study can assist other online retailers involved in the online process in developing and managing their strategies and initiative which aim to promote the product through website. As part of an ongoing research, the authors will sought for the measurement items from the literature and empirically validate the proposed framework.

Acknowledgement

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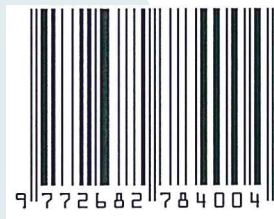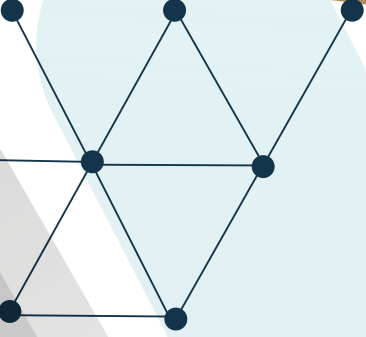
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