

“Effects of brand awareness, religious belief, and brand trust on purchase intentions of halal products among young consumers”

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EFFECTS OF BRAND AWARENESS, RELIGIOUS BELIEF, AND BRAND TRUST ON PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF HALAL PRODUCTS AMONG YOUNG CONSUMERS

Abstract

Halal brands are gaining popularity among Muslim consumers across the world. This study aims to explore the effect of brand awareness, religious belief, and brand trust on young Muslim consumers' willingness to purchase halal-branded products. The electronic questionnaires were distributed to participants through Google Forms via a popular social media platform. The survey sample consisted of university students from Bangladesh who identified as Muslims. The paper utilized a purposive sampling technique to select participants for the study, resulting in a total of 517 respondents being included in the sample. Finally, 479 responses were found usable for this study, with a response rate of 92.70%. Among 479, 300 participants were male, while 179 students were female university students. The latest edition of the software SPSS has been employed to examine hypotheses and correlations, with a confidence level of 95%. The results showed a significant impact of brand awareness, religious belief, and brand trust on purchase willingness. Moreover, it indicates that consumers' brand awareness about halal products ($\beta = 0.392$) has a greater effect on their purchase willingness. These findings have the potential to provide valuable insights for halal brands, as they can have a substantial impact on the purchasing choices of young Muslim consumers, particularly regarding their religious and halal concerns.

Keywords

young consumers, halal, purchase willingness, Muslim, brand awareness, religious belief

JEL Classification

M21, M31, P23

INTRODUCTION

In nations with a primarily Muslim population, individuals of both Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds are exposed to a vast range of products and services. In order to successfully connect with the Muslim customer population, organizations must have a deep understanding of these aspects. This requires the development of customized marketing strategies and brand portfolios. Businesses must maintain a long-term dedication to nurturing a strong brand identity, promoting religious conviction, and establishing brand trust (Nuryakin et al., 2023). Muslim customers constantly prefer halal brands that align with their cultural norms, values, and practices (Jannat & Islam, 2019). As a result, there will be a proliferation of both domestic and global companies in response to the growing need for halal products among Muslim customers. The halal consumer market is undergoing significant growth due to the simultaneous rise of the Muslim consumer market. The market's growth can be due to Muslim customers' strong religious faith and beliefs, who actively pursue products and services with qualities such as hygiene, healthiness, and exceptional flavor (Tuhin et al., 2022).

In the context of an ever-expanding globalized society characterized by the intersection of many cultures and lifestyles, there has been a notable increase in the demand for products and services that cater to distinct cultural, religious, and ethical preferences. Bangladesh, characterized by its cultural diversity and predominantly Islamic population, is not exempt from this prevailing pattern. The increasing recognition and observance of halal principles among the Muslim community have facilitated the emergence of a thriving industry for halal goods and services. Very few studies focused on halal brands' purchase behavior of young consumers in Bangladesh. Investigating the willingness of young individuals in Bangladesh to purchase halal brands holds major importance due to the substantial presence of youth as a consumer category, exerting considerable influence on market dynamics.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term 'halal' refers to items or practices deemed permissible or acceptable within the context of Islamic teachings and beliefs (Awan et al., 2015; Nurhayati & Hendar, 2020). In the present era, Muslim consumers are presented with a diverse range of halal products and services (Handriana et al., 2021; Pratama et al., 2023). Each product category has a wide range of brands, including local and globally renowned ones. These brands, commonly known as halal brands, prominently exhibit halal logos and symbols. The visual cues are intended to reassure consumers, specifically those who follow Islamic principles, that the ingredients and production processes align with Islamic Sharia principles (Febriandika et al., 2023). As a result, halal brands strategically adhere to the principles of Sharia while simultaneously integrating the customary characteristics associated with branding. According to Shah Alam and Mohamed Sayuti (2011), the strategic positioning adopted by these entities enables them to establish unique market niches as providers of halal products.

Brands can establish strong connections with their customer base, nurturing long-lasting and meaningful relationships (Febriyantoro & Wright, 2020). The point to which individuals can recognize a product based on its name is brand awareness (Cheung et al., 2019). According to Huang and Sarigöllü (2012), brand awareness refers to the cognitive capacity of individuals to either identify a brand or retrieve it from their memory. Halal brand awareness refers to understanding the goals and benefits linked to using and consuming halal goods and services (Rahman et al., 2019). According to Alserhan (2010), adherents of the Islamic faith believe a brand should embody and reflect their principles and convictions.

Consequently, a devout adherent of Islam is inclined to exhibit loyalty toward brands that adhere to halal standards. According to Maulan (2016), the level of consumer loyalty toward Islamic banking product services is significantly influenced by the awareness of halal brands. Ali et al. (2018) conducted a study wherein they observed a positive correlation between brand awareness and the propensity to purchase halal food products. The findings suggest that individuals with a greater awareness of the halal brand are more likely to express their willingness to purchase halal food products. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Purwanto and Sudargini (2021), which established a positive correlation between consumers' knowledge of halal brands and their inclination to purchase halal food items. According to Arsil et al. (2018), increasing the level of consciousness regarding halal products among Muslim consumers not only encourages them to examine the halal label attached to the product but also motivates them to inquire about its source.

The research on the topic of consumer behavior has frequently centered around the concept of religious belief (Elseidi, 2018; Agarwala et al., 2019). Religion encompasses a system of rituals and convictions that significantly impact individuals' decision-making processes and overall sense of contentment. Mukhtar and Mohsin Butt (2012) emphasize that religious belief plays a significant role in shaping the behavior and attitudes of consumers toward goods and services. Religious belief and faith have been identified as substantial determinants influencing consumer behaviors, as highlighted by Essoo and Dibb (2004). Furthermore, when it comes to consumer behavior, there has been a growing trend in research to investigate personal religiosity specifically at the individual level. The significance of personal religiosity holds

particular importance in Muslim society due to its profound impact on various aspects of Muslims' lives, particularly their consumption patterns (Sandıkçı, 2018). Religion functions as a conceptual structure that determines the inclination to obtain products that possess the 'halal' certification. Therefore, it is crucial for marketers to understand the impact of religious belief on the purchasing willingness of this specific demographic. Religious belief, as a term, encompasses the extent of an individual's religious dedication and belief, which has been extensively examined in various scholarly investigations (Wiyono et al., 2022). The level of religious belief significantly impacts the preferences for halal products among community members (Zeqiri et al., 2022).

Within the realm of marketing literature, the concept of trust has been extensively examined as a fundamental element that signifies the relationship between a consumer and an organization, as elucidated by Fournier (1998). Therefore, trust plays a crucial role in reducing information asymmetry and uncertainties, ultimately creating a feeling of confidence among consumers toward the brand they have selected, as stated by Pavlou et al. (2007). The development of brand trust is fostered by a series of prior experiences and the historical record of interactions that occur throughout the progression of the consumer-brand relationship (Keller, 2012). Brand trust is portrayed as the gradual development of a consumer's knowledge and understanding over time (Husain et al., 2022). It can be understood as the overall combination of information and experiences that a consumer gathers with a brand. This includes both direct usage of the brand and the resulting encounters, which can lead to positive or negative experiences, as Keller (2009) suggested. The formation of brand trust plays a crucial role in fostering long-lasting relationships between buyers and sellers. Therefore, in the realm of halal branding, the concept of brand trust denotes the willingness of consumers to have faith in the brand's ability to effectively carry out its halal-related responsibilities and fulfill its declared obligations (Ali et al., 2017).

Moreover, developing a sense of brand trust is considered a significant factor in predicting the future actions of potential consumers (Chae et al., 2020). This concept sheds light on an individual's inclina-

tion to engage in a purchase or express any hesitations. Based on the findings of Ngah et al. (2021), it can be inferred that within the given scenario, Muslim consumers are more likely to purchase a halal product if they perceive it to be trustworthy and originating from a reputable source. The correlation between this occurrence and the reliability of halal products is closely intertwined, fostering trust among consumers and encouraging their inclination to purchase the same product, as emphasized by Muhamad et al. (2017).

The literature review elucidates that the interrelationships among brand awareness, religious beliefs, and trust collectively influence young Muslim consumers' willingness to purchase halal products. The comprehension and utilization of these aspects are pivotal in shaping Muslim consumers' purchasing choices for halal products.

This study aims to ascertain the key elements that impact the purchasing willingness of young Muslim customers in relation to halal products. The paper presents a research framework grounded in the study hypotheses to accomplish the stated purpose:

- H1: *Brand awareness will influence the purchase willingness of halal brands.*
- H2: *Religious beliefs will influence the purchase willingness of halal brands.*
- H3: *Brand trust will influence the purchase willingness of halal brands.*

2. METHODS

This study gathered data from individuals who are currently residing in Bangladesh. The selected individuals were Muslim millennials from Bangladesh who were born post-1980 and presently pursuing higher education in university programs. The investigation administered the questionnaire via online methods. The initial survey comprised 14 items specifically formulated to evaluate four distinct constructs, as detailed in Table 2. The sampling technique employed in this study was a purposive sampling approach, which involved selecting participants based on specific

criteria. The selection of millennial participants for this study was deliberate as it provided an opportunity to control the sample's representation. Specifically, it allowed the analysis to ensure that the respondents accurately reflected the target market for halal-branded products, which held promising marketing prospects in Bangladesh. In this study, Google Forms was utilized as the medium for distributing an electronic survey to the participants via various social media and online communication platforms, namely Messenger and WhatsApp.

By considering the hypotheses, the following regression equation is shown

$$\begin{aligned}
 Y \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{purchase willingness} \\ \text{of halal brands} \end{array} \right) &= \\
 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 (\text{brand awareness}) &+ \quad (1) \\
 + \beta_2 X_2 (\text{religious belief}) &+ \\
 + \beta_3 X_3 (\text{brand trust}). &
 \end{aligned}$$

The study actively interacted with the community of halal cosmetics consumers through the social media platform of Instagram. Furthermore, assistance was received from individuals included in WhatsApp contacts to facilitate the dissemination of the questionnaire link. In order to establish the eligibility of participants, the study verified that they were individuals of the Muslim faith who had previously engaged in the purchase and uti-

lization of halal products. This was accomplished through inquiries regarding their religious affiliation and prior experience with brands adhering to halal standards. The final sample size was $n = 479$, although 517 questionnaires were sent to potential respondents. 38 questionnaires were not included due to partial response. The paper utilized Likert scale items to measure the variables, enabling respondents to indicate their survey feedback on a continuum where greater values indicate higher harmony or disharmony with the provided statements.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to concisely depict the characteristics of the data. In contrast, inferential statistics were employed to make deductions and inferences about the larger population based on the sample data. Furthermore, a regression test has been run to evaluate the validity of the hypothesized associations among the variables. The statistical software utilized for conducting the analyses was IBM SPSS Statistics. Table 1 displays the results of the reliability and validity evaluations conducted on the variables. The findings indicate that all variables exhibited satisfactory levels of both reliability and validity.

Table 2. Sources of study variables

Variables	References
Purchase Willingness (PRWILNG)	Asheq et al. (2022); Rahaman et al. (2022)
Brand Awareness (BRAWR)	Ali et al. (2017)
Religious Belief (RELBL)	Awan et al. (2015)
Brand Trust (BRTRS)	Awan et al. (2015)

Table 1. Reliability and validity of the study variables

Construct	Items	Loading	Cronbach (α) value
Purchase willingness of Halal brand (PRWILNG)	PRWILNG1	0.948	0.839
	PRWILNG2	0.847	
	PRWILNG3	0.936	
	PRWILNG4	0.739	
Brand Awareness (BRAWR)	BRAWR1	0.943	0.792
	BRAWR2	0.835	
	BRAWR3	0.821	
	BRAWR4	0.734	
Religious Belief (RELBL)	RELBL1	0.834	0.899
	RELBL2	0.883	
	RELBL3	0.903	
Brand Trust (BRTRS)	BRTRS1	0.883	0.910
	BRTRS2	0.711	
	BRTRS3	0.870	

Note: $n = 479$.

3. RESULTS

Table 3 presents a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants involved in the study, comprising a total of 479 individuals. The gender distribution of the respondents demonstrates a relatively equitable representation, as 62.6% of participants self-identified as male and 37.4% as female. A slightly higher proportion of males in the sample indicates the inclusion of individuals from diverse gender backgrounds.

Table 3. Statistical representation of the sample

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	300	62.6%
Female	179	37.4%
Age		
21-30	254	53.0%
31-40	184	38.4%
More than 40 years	29	6.1%
Education		
Undergraduate Degree	370	77.2%
Postgraduate Degree	109	22.8%
Monthly Income		
Less than 15,000 BDT	86	18.0%
15,001 to 25,000 BDT	206	43.0%
25,001 to 35,000 BDT	173	36.1%
More than 35,000	14	2.9%

Note: ** n = 479.

The analysis of age distribution provides significant insights into the demographic composition of the participants. The study reveals that a substantial proportion, precisely 53.0%, belongs to the age group of 21-30, indicating a notable prevalence of young adults in the sample. A minority proportion of participants, specifically 6.1%, belongs to the age range of 31-40, whereas a mere 2.5% of the sample comprises individuals aged 40 years or older. The sample's age distribution highlights the participants' predominantly youthful nature. The participants' educational attainment is significant, as 77.2% have

completed undergraduate degrees, and 22.8% have obtained postgraduate qualifications. The observed distribution of participants in this study indicates a highly educated sample. This characteristic has important implications for how research findings should be interpreted and applied to individuals with different levels of educational attainment. The distribution of monthly income within the sample exhibits a range of diversity. Around 18.0% of the respondents indicate a monthly income below 15,000 BDT, whereas a substantial proportion, specifically 43.0%, falls within the income bracket of 15,001 to 25,000 BDT. Additionally, it is worth noting that 36.1% of the participants in the study reported monthly incomes falling within the range of 25,001 to 35,000 BDT. Furthermore, a smaller subset of participants, specifically 2.9%, indicated that their monthly earnings exceeded 35,000 BDT.

The correlation matrix in Table 4 specifically emphasizes the variable of interest, purchase willingness (PRWILNG). The study investigates the correlations between this particular variable and other variables, specifically brand awareness (BRAWR), religious belief (RELBL), and brand trust (BRTRS). The statistical analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between purchase willingness (PRWILNG) and brand awareness (BRAWR), with a correlation coefficient of 0.431**. This finding indicates that individuals with greater brand awareness are more inclined to demonstrate a willingness to acquire halal products affiliated with the brand. The variable of purchase willingness (PRWILNG) exhibits a significant positive correlation of 0.544** with religious belief (RELBL). This suggests that individuals who hold stronger religious beliefs are more likely to exhibit a higher inclination to engage in halal product purchasing activities. Moreover, it is worth noting that a significant positive correlation of 0.778** exists between purchase willingness (PRWILNG) and brand trust (BRTRS). This finding suggests a positive correlation between brand trust and the likelihood of individuals being willing to

Table 4. Correlation matrix

Variables	Mean	SD	ATSB	RELI	SUBN	PURINT
Brand Awareness (BRAWR)	4.740	0.365	1.000			
Religious Belief (RELBL)	4.112	0.432	0.429**	1.000		
Brand Trust (BRTRS)	3.832	0.528	0.596**	0.334**	1.000	
Purchase Willingness (PRWILNG)	4.552	0.633	0.431**	0.544**	0.778**	1.000

Note: **p < 0.05 (n = 479).

purchase halal products associated with that particular brand.

Table 5. R-squared value

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	S _e
1	0.605	0.366	0.362	0.3032

Note: Independent variables: Brand Awareness (BRAWR), Religious Belief (RELBL), Brand Trust (BRTRS). Dependent Variable: Purchase Willingness for Halal Brands (PRWILNG).

Besides correlation, regression analysis was undertaken to investigate the association between the different aspects of the independent variables and the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination, denoted as R-squared, was computed to be 0.366, as presented in Table 5. This value suggests that the collective independent variables explain 36.6% of the variability observed in the studied variable (i.e., purchase willingness of halal brands).

Hence, when the given values are substituted into the regression equation, it can be expressed as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 Y \left(\begin{array}{l} \text{purchase willingness} \\ \text{of halal brands} \end{array} \right) &= \quad (2) \\
 &= 0.315 + 0.392(X_1 = \text{brand awareness}) + \\
 &+ 0.288(X_2 = \text{religious belief}) + \\
 &+ 0.359(X_3 = \text{brand trust}).
 \end{aligned}$$

Table 6. Regression coefficient

Variables	β value	t- value	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.315	3.064	0.000	–	–
Brand Awareness (BRAWR)	0.392	4.934	0.000**	0.832	1.847
Religious Belief (RELBL)	0.288	3.942	0.000**	0.532	1.636
Brand Trust (BRTRS)	0.359	4.345	0.000**	0.843	1.936

Note: Durbin Watson value = 1.844. *p < 0.10; **p < 0.05 (n = 479).

Table 7. t-test (Independent samples) on gender

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	t-value	p-value
Purchase Willingness of Halal Brands (PRWILNG)	Male	300	4.539	5.938	0.000**
	Female	179	3.837		
Brand Awareness (BRAWR)	Male	300	4.238	1.758	0.108
	Female	179	4.736		
Religious Belief (RELBL)	Male	300	4.274	1.063	0.884
	Female	179	4.221		
Brand Trust (BRTRS)	Male	300	3.899	1.643	0.249
	Female	179	3.881		

Note: *p < 0.10; **p < 0.05 (n = 479).

The p-value, as illustrated in Table 6, indicates the statistical significance and unique contribution of the variables under analysis to the model. A p-value below or equal to 0.05 implies a statistically meaningful and constructive connection between the independent and dependent variables. According to the findings presented in Table 6, the p-values corresponding to brand awareness (BRAWR), religious belief (RELBL), and brand trust (BRTRS) are all below the significance level of 0.05. This observation suggests that the three factors mentioned statistically impact the purchase willingness of products branded as halal.

To evaluate the differences or similarities in the perceptions of respondents in Bangladesh regarding their willingness to purchase halal brands, the study utilized independent sample t-tests, as presented in Table 7. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female participants in terms of their propensity to buy halal-branded products ($\mu = 4.539, t = 5.938, p < 0.05$). Indeed, the data indicate that male participants demonstrated a greater inclination toward purchasing halal brands than their female counterparts.

4. DISCUSSION

In the context of Bangladesh, the first hypothesis (H1) proposed that brand awareness (BRAWR) of halal brands will positively influence young

Muslim customers' willingness to purchase halal products. The study's conclusions demonstrated a strong positive correlation ($\beta = 0.392$, t -value = 4.934, p -value < 0.05) between purchase willingness and brand awareness of halal brands. This result is in line with Pratama et al. (2023), who showed that customers' willingness to purchase halal products is significantly influenced by their awareness of the halal brand. Vizano et al. (2021) pointed to a significant correlation between the willingness to purchase and Sharia-based brand awareness. Those who are more aware of halal brands are more likely to be inclined to make purchases. This study offers insightful information about the relationship between young Muslims' brand awareness and their intent to purchase halal products. The positive relationship between purchase willingness and halal brand awareness highlights the importance of raising potential customers' awareness of halal companies to increase their propensity to buy halal items.

The second hypothesis (H2) suggested that young Muslim customers' purchase willingness of halal items will be positively influenced by religious belief (RELBL) in the setting of Bangladesh. The study showed a significant positive connection ($\beta = 0.288$, t -value = 3.942, p -value < 0.05) between Muslim consumers' willingness to purchase halal brands and their religious beliefs. The current discovery bears relevance to Zeqiri et al. (2022). This finding supports earlier arguments stressing the

significant impact of religion on consumer purchasing decisions (Forghani et al., 2019). Buying halal things is often associated with people's religious beliefs. This study finds that one of these religious convictions has the greatest impact on consumers' willingness to buy halal products (Nurhayati & Hendar, 2020). The results suggest that focusing on individuals with more pronounced Islamic religious beliefs may serve as a viable approach for promoting halal-branded products and generating interest among potential Muslim consumers.

The third hypothesis (H3) proposed that brand trust (BRTRS) of halal brands will positively influence young Muslim customers' willingness to purchase halal products. The study's conclusions demonstrated a strong positive correlation ($\beta = 0.359$, t -value = 4.345, p -value < 0.05) between purchase willingness and brand trust of Halal brands. This result is in line with Muhamad et al. (2017), who showed that customers' willingness to purchase halal products is significantly influenced by their trust in the halal brand. The results suggest that the purchasing willingness of individuals toward halal products is contingent upon the degree of trust they have in these products. The confidence and trust among Muslim consumers regarding a brand's commitment to halal standards significantly influence their decision-making process (Shamsudin et al., 2020), resulting in a favorable propensity toward purchasing such products.

CONCLUSION

This investigation aimed to ascertain the factors influencing the purchase willingness of young Muslim individuals regarding halal brands in the Bangladeshi market. The literature review identified three significant predictors of the willingness to purchase halal products: brand awareness, religious belief, and brand trust. The results of the study provided evidence that the attitudes toward brand awareness, religious beliefs, and brand trust had a positive and statistically significant impact on the purchase willingness of consumers in Bangladesh toward halal brands. Moreover, the results of the t -test revealed that there was not any evidence of significant disparity in the variables of brand awareness, religious belief, and brand trust in relation to gender. Nonetheless, a notable disparity in purchase willingness for halal products was observed between male and female respondents, with males exhibiting a higher propensity to purchase these products.

In summary, the outcome of the current analysis provides substantial practical implications that can be utilized to improve customer purchase willingness toward halal products in the Bangladeshi market and other markets with a Muslim-majority population. The implications of the study's findings are significant for halal brands in understanding the dynamics of Muslim consumer purchasing behavior. The

utilization of halal branding can function as a strategic pathway for enterprises to penetrate untapped markets, acquire competitive edges, and augment their financial gains, and brands should deliberately integrate religious beliefs into their marketing plans, modifying their messaging and visuals to conform to Islamic tenets, and encouraging educational programs that clarify the halal elements of products can improve consumer trust and transparency.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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