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Research Paper

Behavioral Influence on Halal Food Consumption of Millennial Consumers

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Abstract

Halal has caught the interest of consumers worldwide, both Muslims and non-Muslims. The concepts and principles, however, were little understood, and the research was limited to Muslims. Hence, the study on the behavioral influence of halal food consumption was conducted considering two religions and the millennials. The validated and pre-tested survey instruments were distributed in selected cities and municipalities of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Philippines with a total of 536 participants. Following the standards of analysis, IBM SPSS software version 22 was used to analyze the 519 valid questionnaires. Six stages of CB-SEM were employed, providing TPB models that were in good fit considering the satisfaction of measures. Findings revealed that the proposed measurement model was confirmed to be applicable in the local setting, and the proposed structural model was significant and acceptable. The re-specification generated the knowledge, subjective norms, and attitudes positively related and statistically significant to the intention to buy. The results also showed that the intention to buy and all variables pertaining to it highly explained the halal food consumption of millennials. The government and schools were encouraged to collaborate to intensify the promotion of halal food products and sustain the appreciation of consumers.

Keywords *Millennial Consumers, Knowledge, Attitudes, Subjective norms, Halal food consumption*

INTRODUCTION

People purchase food products to fulfill their needs and want. Thus, behavioral factors must be taken into account. Social interactions, a significant environmental influence that may influence behavior and lead to purchases, are the focus of the behavioral impact in purchasing. Studying consumer behavior is essential to marketing in order to identify buying patterns and take strategic action. Due to consumer concerns over, among other things, food safety, health, and ethics, halal has drawn attention as a sector that is expanding. Its validity guarantees the purchase of food products that adhere to halal standards. A loss of respect for halal is the result of limited knowledge, education, and awareness of the principles among consumers and producers, as cited by Baharuddin et al. (2015). Alqudsi (2014) also claims that awareness of the benefits consumers will let them search for it, regardless of faith.

The Philippine government established the Philippine Halal Export Development and Promotion Program making the nation a reputable country in the global halal ecosystem and stressed the importance of working for recognition by target consumers after realizing the potential for producing authentic halal food (Department of Trade and Industry, 2021). Concerns about halal food are common among millennial consumers. Previous studies revealed that millennials preferred halal food (Fadholi et al., 2020). Millennials in BARMM, however, are still unfamiliar with the concept of halal. The great majority of people are aware that halal simply denote foods that are free of pork derivatives. In relation, a behavioral shift is described as a change in a person's behavior from past conduct, which can be either temporary or permanent. Halal, being

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a recent issue, could affect consumers' food product purchase behaviors.

In addition, as the most lucrative customer segment, millennials are known for setting trends and being digital savvy (Pomarici & Vecchio, 2014; Suhartanto et al., 2019). The business methods of today, which are largely facilitated by technology, give all millennial consumers additional options as they also reach an economically productive age. Millennials are consumers that quickly switch to buying halal items because they are unpredictable (Amalia et al., 2020).

Responding to the above discussions on the current research on halal and its local scenario, a study was conducted to examine the behavior of consumers. This paper specifically aimed to determine if religiosity and knowledge significantly influence the attitudes of millennial consumers toward halal products. Similarly, it aimed to determine the association of religiosity, knowledge, habit, subjective norms, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and perceived political forces towards intention to buy halal food products, and lastly, it analyzed the significant influence of intention to buy towards halal food consumption. It can help marketers and sellers develop a strategic marketing action as issues on food safety and ethical concerns about consumed goods, particularly halal, are growing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muslims and non-Muslims shared interests in organic food, nutrition, hygiene, and food safety. Halal represents the idea of hygienic and wholesome food for safe consumption, according to Bonne et al. (2007). Based on estimates, 70% of Muslims worldwide consume halal products, and the global halal market was worth USD 580 billion in 2007. There is a sizable potential market for Muslims in the US, who have a combined $12 billion in disposable income. Global trade in halal food is estimated to be worth $632 billion annually, as per Halal & Ethical Business News Updates & Analysis (2011). With 1.6 billion Muslims and the Canadian halal market exceeding USD 3.2 billion in 2010, the halal business is certainly expanding.

People are looking for more meaning in their food choices in the broader context of sustainability, which also has halal issues. The TPB by Ajzen (1991) served as the basis for the study. The fundamental tenet of the paradigm is that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control all have an influence on intention. The method emphasizes the importance of prior experience with the activity and knowledge of the skills needed to perform it. Arguments on the concepts, morals, and religious traditions were seen to increase the ability of the model to predict the future. This was applied in several studies that employed the TPB model.

By considering behavioral traits, including religion, knowledge, habit, subjective norms, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, perceived political forces, and intention to buy, this paper aimed to determine how millennials consume halal food products. Figure 1 was designed to conceptualize the paper, which included all the constructs, and it was aligned to the path diagram of structural equation modeling. The framework was based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), changes to expand the model have improved its predictability on consumer behavior in several contexts. This is supported by Conner (2015) that adding new factors helps extend the theory and examines the improvement of its predictability. It also addresses the involvement of non-Muslims in understanding buying behavior as halal is globally accepted.

In a study that included Islamic practices and beliefs, Rahim and Junos (2012) found that these elements significantly predict behavior. Another study that included respondents who were Muslims and non-Muslims, as well as the variables religion and halal certification, was conducted. It was demonstrated that, despite non-Muslim customers having a higher r^2, Muslim customers' shifting purchase intentions may be accounted for by religion, subjective norm, attitude, and perceived behavioral control.

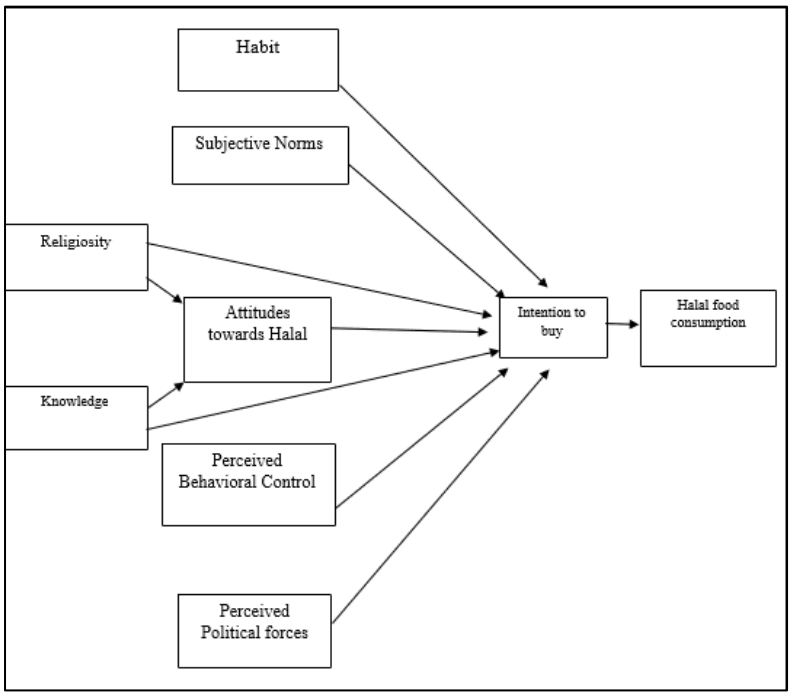


Figure 1. Behavioral Dimensions of Halal Food Consumption

The following constructs were behavioral dimensions considered in understanding halal food consumption:

1. Religiosity

Strong religious feelings or beliefs are referred to as religiosity, which is a broad phrase that covers a variety of human occurrences. It covers aspects of God-related conduct, attitudes, convictions, sentiments, and experiences (Ibrahim & Hashanah, 2015). Both of its components, intrapersonal and interpersonal, are crucial to the lives of people (Mokhlis & Sparks, 2007). The identity of a person, values, attitudes, and beliefs are included in the internal component of religiosity. The outer dimension, on the other hand, is associated with religion, is zealous about religion, and belongs to a spiritual group. People who are deeply religious will probably consider their surroundings in light of the values and dimensions of religion.

Products that are considered halal are seen as supporting the efforts of religious society to uphold Islamic principles and objectives, which fosters consumer approval of the brand (Rahim & Junos, 2012). Religiously committed individuals, who are more prone to base their decisions on faith, place a greater emphasis on religion. In the Muslim culture, the level of religiosity of a person is likely to have an impact on their attitudes and sense of religion. As a result, ardent Muslims will toss out dishes that might contain substances that are forbidden. Numerous prior studies have discovered that religious adherence greatly affects consumers' attitudes and behaviors (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012; Asnawi et al., 2018; Garg & Joshi, 2018; Charsetad, 2016). Religious commitment affected opinions toward halal brands, according to research by Garg and Joshi (2018). Asnawi et al. (2018) assert that Muslim consumers' devotion influences their intention to select halal goods.

2. Knowledge

Knowledge is a result of learning and experience that has increased awareness, familiarity, and consciousness (Rahman et al., 2015). This demonstrates the fundamentals of halal and how

customers who have received education and experiences have come to understand them. Determine whether the intended purchases of the products are indeed halal and where the consumer can find the products using pertinent knowledge (Muhamad et al., 2016). Especially for halal goods, knowledge is a vital component and crucial aspect impacting both actual purchasing behavior and intentions (Rahim, 2016; Maichum et al., 2017; Nurhayati & Hendar, 2019). Lack of product knowledge on the part of the consumer will considerably influence how product qualities are rated (Hong & Sternthal, 2010). According to Muhamad et al. (2016), goods have distinctive qualities and properties, which may result in product perceptions of consumers that vary either subjectively or objectively. Based on several research, consumer education can influence consumers' inclinations to buy halal goods in a favorable way (Ahmad et al., 2017).

In a study by Sultana (2022), there are misleading informations about Islam called Islamophobia. The term "Islamophobia" refers to a negative attitude toward Muslims that is brought on by false information about Islam and an incorrect association between knowledge and Islamic terminology. Around 50% of respondents indicated their agreement with the cause and their recommendation to utilize this as a means of finding a solution to the issue. The simplest and most straightforward religion is Islam. But, there are so many complications and barriers that people are creating nowadays in relation to Islam. Because of this, there exist misconceptions about Islam among non-Muslims and individuals from other religions.

3. Habit

Habit is the routine of buying halal food that is regularly repeated. Frequent buying creates a habit. Buying happens as the brain forms a path that allows moving quickly from the origin, for example, eating halal, watching TV, and smoking (Rahim & Junos, 2012). It was explored that habits take a longer period to develop depending on the randomness of frequency and with which it is performed. However, the evidence shows that the path remains flat along the lines and is difficult to end. It may also reveal its strict adherence to Islamic norms. Therefore, some people acknowledge or consume goods as a habit because they do so regularly. Verplanken (2006) stated that once it has been created, behavior is carried out routinely any time a context or situational cue is present. The performance does not require much in the way of behavior or heightened awareness.

4. Political forces

In halal logistics, the government has a crucial role to play (Samsi et al., 2011). It entails a variety of activities, including formulating plans, putting them into action, enforcing rules, promoting them, and teaching manufacturers and consumers about halal. Political factors in Malaysia affect laws, regulations, tax incentives, employment opportunities, certification, and government financial assistance (Tan et al., 2012a; Talib, 2014; Muhammad et al., 2016). In addition, the assistance of the government and the promotion of the logistics sector is critical. Malaysia aimed to establish itself as a center for the creation and exchange of halal goods and services.

5. Attitudes

Attitude is the set of emotions and evaluations of an object, ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive. It has been thoroughly researched as an indicator in the existing literature on consumption behavior sustainability as to why attitude can represent a favorable or unfavorable attitude of buyers generally about a particular issue (Kendrick & Olson, 2012). It is vital to understand consumer views because attitudes affect their behavioral intentions

(Kraft & Kraft, 2005). Resistance to attitude change may be brought on by personal experience and group dynamics (Asiegbu et al., 2012). However, when confronted with a similar object, the attitude might operate as a guide for people to carry out their actions.

Both Mukhtar and Butt (2012) found a connection between attitude and willingness to buy halal food items. In their investigation of food purchasing patterns of people, Tarkiainen and Sundqvist (2005) discovered a significant positive relationship between individual attitudes and buying intention. It appears that personal characteristics like a favorable attitude toward halal cuisine and power in its usage during the process of buying may have an impact on these elements, strong personal values on a culture of individuals.

6. Subjective norms

Subjective norms are the opinions of individuals who are significant to consumers, such as family members, coworkers, business partners, or friends. Another description states that it is dependent on higher mental practices, governs the emotions of a person, and influences their decisions (Park, 2000). For instance, subjective norms might affect a decision with regard to food processing, food ingredients, food safety issues, and product use knowledge. As a result, it denotes an influential viewpoint of a person or group and support of a specific action.

The study claims that it also pertains to how much a person believes that people in their immediate circle consume halal meals. Herman (2017) acknowledged De Castro in his discovery that social factors have an impact on changes in food consumption behavior in addition to the attitudinal effect. He found that eating in groups, especially ones that include familiar faces, results in higher meal option compliance. As a result, peer and family pressure affects how much people plan to eat (Teng & Wang, 2015).

7. Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control is the perception of consumers on their ability to consume halal foods. The ability can be based on convenience and availability of resources. The Quran and Hadith are the primary sources that emphasize Islamic concepts and practices of action and intention for various behaviors, including Muslims' acceptance of halal products (Rahim & Junos, 2012). The Hadith, as quoted, "*Your practice of faith will not be correct unless your actions are correct*," may be regarded as a fundamental Islamic rule that governs many Muslim behaviors. According to Alam and Sayuti (2011), it was also connected to the desire to buy halal products. Hence, this element of intention reflects the perception of individuals in the effort to carry out a specific behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1985).

8. Intention to buy

Intention to buy is the state of mind where consumers develop the desire to buy and the determinant of the usage of halal food. It is also the central factor of TPB. The above-mentioned variables were observed as significantly influencing purchasing intention and use of products. These elements were important in the design of the paper with an objective to evaluate the significance of religiosity, knowledge, habit, subjective norms, attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and perceived political forces on buying intention and consumption of halal food as actual behavior.

The local approach of Acas and Jeanette (2020) looked into the factors influencing Filipino Muslims' intentions to buy halal cuisine. It aimed to identify the most important elements that supported Islamic devotion and arbitrary standards. But the poll was conducted in Luzon, namely in Metro Manila, where non-Muslims are the majority. Customers who are not Muslims are urged to purchase halal products since they are sanitary and safe for consumption (Yusoff

et al., 2015). Muslims are no longer the only ones who seek out halal food products. Additionally, it has increased awareness among non-Muslims, demonstrating that the concept of halal and its associated goods are now accepted globally, which applies to everyone (Hussain et al., 2016).

Further, the acceptance of a product by Muslims may be influenced by a variety of variables, including the customer's decision, Islamic law, the influence of loved ones, and potentially the items themselves. Those with a lesser level of recognition as Muslims will depend on personal aspects, including attitude and moral standards, claim Bonne et al. (2007). Typically, a high-value product is acquired by thoughtful decision-making (Verbeke et al., 2013).

Millennials, on the other hand, are people who were born between 1981 and 1996. They are referred to as millennials since they were born around the turn of 2000 and spent more of their formative years in the digital era (Khanfar et al., 2012). Due to their expressiveness, belief in the freedom of expression, openness to new experiences, and status as trendsetters, millennial consumers place high importance on communication. As they have reached an economically productive age (Pomarici & Vecchio, 2014; Suhartanto et al., 2019), they are emerging as the most lucrative group of consumers. Also, their number is three times larger than that of Generation X (Bucci et al., 2012; Reuters & Standard, 2017). They also heavily rely on technology to get information immediately, which is essential when making decisions (Valentine & Powers, 2013; Bucci et al., 2012). Further, in terms of financial literacy in Islam, millennials are highly literate, particularly in Banjarmasin. Islamic financial literacy, nevertheless, has an indirect impact on financial planning by using financial behavior as an intermediary variable rather than having a direct impact on financial planning (Handayani et al., 2021).

Origin, nutrition, hygiene, animal welfare, and quality are ethical norms that consumers are becoming more aware of (Latif et al., 2014; Mathew, 2014). Halal food items are being sought after by non-Muslims as well. Lastly, since it has grown in popularity among non-Muslim consumers, it indicates that the halal idea and its products are now widely recognized and applicable to everyone (Hussain et al., 2016).

RESEARCH METHOD

The paper was a descriptive and correlation research that focused on covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) utilizing the six-stage model created by Hair et al. (2010). The number of structural equation modeling applications has significantly increased in recent years, Matthews et al. (2017) applied this. It is mostly because the methodology has improved its capacity to assess the validity and reliability of multiple-item construct assessments and linkages between structural models.

The variables were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale. Finstad (2010) asserts that seven-point scales are more likely than five-point options to accurately reflect respondents' evaluations of the usability of questionnaire items. He further stated that it is the most precise and user-friendly. Considering the systematic way of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation, the following were practiced such as validity and reliability of research instrument, approval of requests, the conduct of the survey, data cleansing, analysis, and interpretation.

Based on the assessment of the validators, the questionnaire was excellently developed (mean = 4.50), and a pre-survey was conducted with 50 participants, including Muslims and non-Muslims. These respondents were excluded from the survey in actuality. The reliability requirements for the study were satisfied with a rating of 98.10%. Prior studies have revealed that Cronbach's alpha of 60% threshold level or higher exhibits good composite reliability for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2017). As a result, the constructs provided excellent satisfaction

for their reliability. The measured scales behaving separately were verified by factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure is employed to evaluate the suitability of the indicating variables. The statistical value from 0.5 to 1 indicates that the factor analysis is appropriate for the data (Latif, 2020). Normally, values that are less than 0.50 are deleted. Through the varimax procedure, which was shown to be the best orthogonal rotation provided the factors were uncorrelated, these criteria were used to evaluate the observed scales as well as the factor rotation.

To administer survey instruments, the researcher asked for approval. But deploying enumerators was required under the COVID-19 and national election restrictions, especially in conflict areas. The enumerators attended orientations and accomplished actual instruments to become familiar with the tool. They carried out the survey and, if necessary, provided a translation into the local dialect of the respondents. The 536 millennial consumers from the provinces and special geographic areas of BARMM served as the respondents. They were proportionately distributed and systematically identified in the households. The 519 valid survey questionnaires were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 22.

The CFA stages by Hair et al. (2010) were followed and started with (1) individual constructs definition, (2) measurement model development and specification, (3) empirical data gathered to carry out the research, and (4) measurement model validity assessment. The analysis allowed the researcher to determine if the constructs were accurately represented by the measured variables. The x^2 statistic, root mean square error of estimate (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), normed x^2, comparative fit index (CFI), and parsimony normed fit index (PNFI) were used to assess how well the model matched the data as a whole. Additionally, the model diagnostics evaluation took into account the standardized residuals of the study and examined its concept validity, construct reliability, discriminant validity, and standardized loadings. The specifications and validation of the structural model, which comprised the latter two (2) steps, both used metrics. The metrics and standards used in the model evaluation for goodness-of-fit are shown in the table.

Table 1. Goodness-of-fit indicators and Criteria

I. Absolute fit	**Criteria**
x^2 statistics	Close to zero
RMSEA	between 0.03 to 0.08
SRMR	< 0.05
Normed x^2	< 5.0
II. Incremental fit	**Criteria**
CFI	> 0.90
III. Construct Validity	**Criteria**
Standardized loadings	0.50 - 0.70
Construct reliabilities	> 0.70
Discriminant validity (AVE)	> 0.50
IV. Model Diagnostics	**Criteria**
Standardized residuals	< 2.5
Modification index	> 10 (area for improvement)

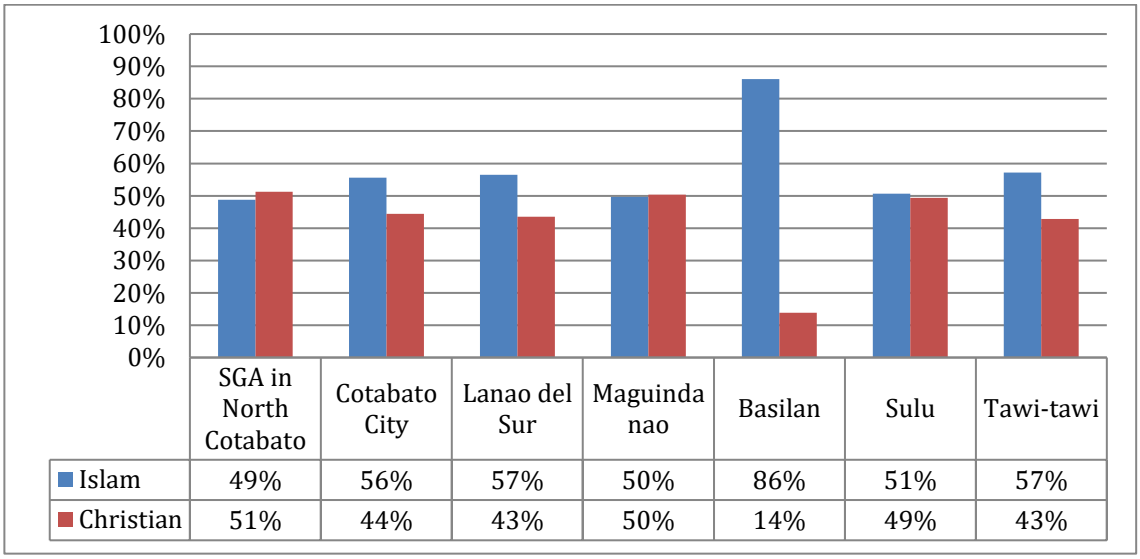
The observed and computed covariance matrices were compared using the goodness of fit measure provided by x^2. By using the RMSEA, it was possible to measure the attempts to correct the tendency of x^2 with a high sample size. In contrast, the SRMR was used to compare the fit of

several models. The normed x^2 is a straightforward x^2 to degrees of freedom ratio. The incremental fit of the model was determined using the CFI. The normed fit index has been enhanced using this. According to Hair et al. (2014), the following values are considered acceptable given these indicators: RMSEA is between 0.03 and 0.08, SRMR is 0.05, normed x^2 is 5.0, and CFI is > 0.90.

Construct validity was assessed using standardized loadings, construct reliabilities, and discriminant validity. A recent work utilizing CB-SEM found that the values for 63 measurement variables were still adequate for the desired sample size of 536, with standardized loading of 0.5 to 0.7, construct reliability of > 0.7, and discriminant validity of > 0.5. Finally, the model diagnostics evaluation took into account the standardized residuals of the study. The acceptable value is 2.5 for the given sample size and measurement variables. These requirements were met, allowing the measurement model to be validated and opening the SEM phase, which needed the fifth and sixth stages to be finished. The CFA success implies that the researcher can move on to further analysis using other multivariate techniques like structural modeling.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

After the compliance of procedures and approval, the survey was conducted. The completed data gathering was observed to have 519 (97%) valid survey questionnaires, while 17 (3%) were found to be invalid and excluded from the analysis. Cotabato City (56%), Lanao del Sur (57%), Maguindanao (50%), Basilan (86%), Sulu (51%), and Tawi-tawi (57%) have the highest percentages of Muslims, whereas the majority (51%) in North Cotabato are Christians. The province of Basilan has the highest proportion of Muslim participants and the lowest proportion of non-Muslim participants due to dominance by Muslims and the difficulty of getting around the area. The data gathering was challenged due to high alert for the national election in 2022, which was observed in most of the survey sites.



	SGA in North Cotabato	Cotabato City	Lanao del Sur	Maguindanao	Basilan	Sulu	Tawi-tawi
Islam	49%	56%	57%	50%	86%	51%	57%
Christian	51%	44%	43%	50%	14%	49%	43%

Figure 2. Distribution of Respondents by Religion per Province

The socio-demographic characteristics of millennial consumers in BARMM, Philippines, are presented in Table 2. They were characterized based on age, sex, educational attainment, and years in school. On average, the respondents were 31 years old. The majority were female (55%), and most of them were at the college level (27%). They stayed in school for an average of 11.26 years only since most of them had a family already.

Table 2. Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency (n=519)	Percentages (%)	*Average*
Age (in years)			*31*
25 - 30	276	53.00	
31 - 35	95	18.00	
36 - 40	148	29.00	
Sex			
Male	234	45.00	
Female	285	55.00	
Educational attainment			
Elementary level	48	9.00	
Elementary graduate	41	8.00	
High school level	134	26.00	
College level	139	27.00	
College Graduate	129	25.00	
Graduate studies	20	4.00	
Years in school			*11.26*
1 - 6	86	17.00	
7 - 12	186	35.00	
13 - 18	233	45.00	
19 - 24	6	1.00	

Prior to the confirmatory factor analysis, an assessment of the possibility of multi-collinearity was made. It guarantees that each item functions properly on its own. It divides numerous variables (observed variables) into smaller, more controllable elements (latent factors). The appropriateness of the measurement scales is assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure. According to Latif et al. (2020), a high statistic value (between 0.5 and 1) denotes the suitability of the factor analysis for the data. Communality refers to how much variance a variable shares with all the other variables being taken into account. Smaller values indicate variables that might need to be eliminated from the analysis since they do not closely match the factor solution. Values that are less than 0.50 are frequently removed.

A number of examined measured scales of knowledge, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and perceived political forces produced multi-collinearity and cross-loadings during the assessment of adequacy, prompting the removal of items and also with values lower than 0.50. the removal of scales was believed to improve the model. According to Hair et al. (2014), scales of a construct with higher loadings have a bigger impact and must be chosen to indicate constructs formed in a single category that requires a label. Ensuring that the problem was solved, another run was employed. The KMO values of 0.955, 0.947, and 0.950 demonstrate the appropriateness of the examined scales for attitude, intention to buy, and consumption of halal food, respectively. It is also important to note that the three components' AVE is 0.894, 0.865, and 0.831, respectively. Therefore, it is appropriate for further research. The proposed measurement model in a path diagram is shown in Figure 3, and the confirmatory factor analysis consisted of 8 exogenous factors, 28 correlations, 54-factor loadings, 54 measured scales, and 54 error terms.

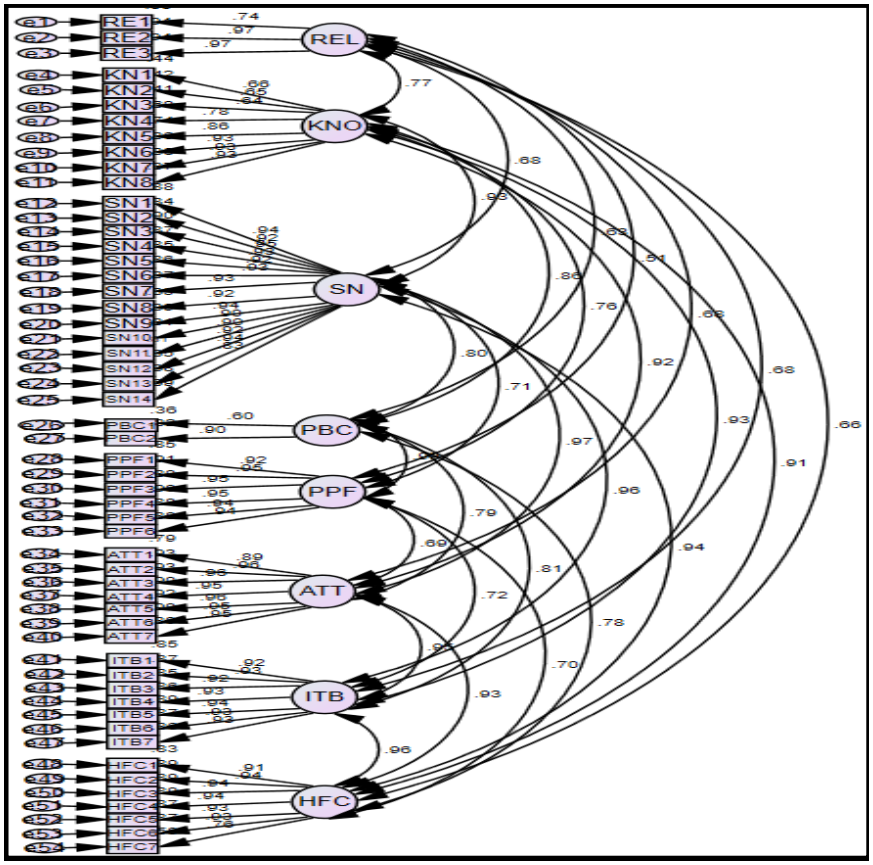


Figure 3. Proposed model with corresponding indicators

The results from AMOS version 22 are presented in Table 3. The value of x^2 is 6337.5, and *df* is 1349. This yields a significant p-value of 0.000. In a chi-square (x^2) test comparing the difference between estimated and observed covariance matrices, Hair et al. (2014) claim that a large p-value (0.05) confirms the model as a representation of the data. Considering that there were other indicators to assess the model, it was used for further evaluation. When taking into account RMSEA of 0.08, which tries to correct the tendency of x^2 to reject the proposed model because of its smaller p-value, SRMR of 0.046, which is important in comparing fit across models, normed x^2 of 4.698, and CFI of 0.899, which identifies the incremental fit of the model, the model was found to be a good fit. The SRMR must also be taken into account, even if a statistical threshold level cannot be established. Hair et al. (2014) added that smaller numbers indicate better fit, whereas bigger values indicate worse fit.

Standardized loadings are, moreover, one of the methods used to assess the accuracy of the research. A value greater than 0.7 is desirable, while variables with values of 0.50 to 0.70 are regarded as reliable. Measurement scales like K1, K2, K3, and PBC1 may be disregarded since they do not meet the requirements and do not make a significant contribution to model fit. The variance may be explained by the remaining indicating variables of a factor greater than 0.5, which is the maximum allowed. The variance of constructs may be explained, on average, by values greater than 0.7. The frameworks work well and may be used to further in-depth analysis.

The measuring model was re-specified in order to create the final set of constructs and measured scales. Three trials and 2 re-specifications were completed, and measurement scales that were possible for exclusion were consistent, thus, deleted to determine the final measurement model. Figure 4 shows the path diagram of the re-specified model and shows the comparison between the two, a subscript following the applied measure, like a *prop*, indicating the proposed

and *resp*, indicating the re-specification were used. The results demonstrated a considerable improvement in absolute fit indices. With RMSEAprop = 0.084 and RMSEAresp = 0.072, the proposed model and re-specified version fit well. The normed x^2 remains adequate for both models. However, SRMR improves significantly from 0.084 to 0.028, and CFI improves from 0.899 to 0.934. This indicates that following the second re-specification, the suggested measurement model is more acceptable.

Table 3. Proposed Measurement Model (PMM) Constructs Output

	Criteria	
	(n=519, m = 54)	**PMM**
1. Absolute fit		
x^2 statistic	At least 0.05	x^2 is 6337.5; df is 1349; *p-value* is 0.000
RMSEA	0.03 to 0.08	0.08
SRMR	< 0.05	0.046
Normed x^2	< 5.0	4.698
2. Incremental fit		
CFI	> 0.9	0.899
3. Construct validity		
Standardized loadings	> 0.5 - 0.7	> 0.5
Construct reliabilities	> 0.7	> 0.7
Discriminant validity	> 0.5	K1 is 0.438 K2 is 0.420 K3 is 0.412 PBC1 is 0.358

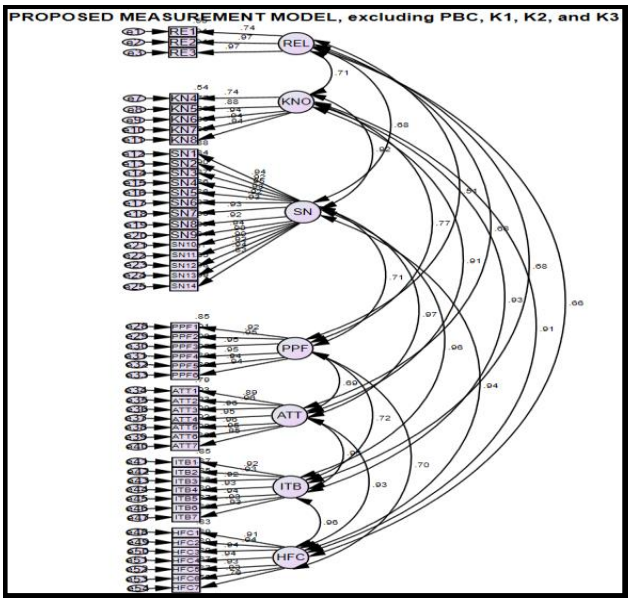


Figure 4. Re-specification of PMM, excluding PBC, K1, K2 and K3

The path diagram was organized following the framework conceptualized for SEM. Variables were treated as exogenous (independent) and endogenous (dependent), and the relationships of latent constructs were redefined. The normed x^2, CFI, and PNFI indicators, together with the x^2statistic, were used to assess the model fit. The recommended structural paradigm for looking at millennial consumer behavior in BARMM is shown in Figure 5. The three measured scales of knowledge construct, as well as the PBC construct, are no longer part of the model.

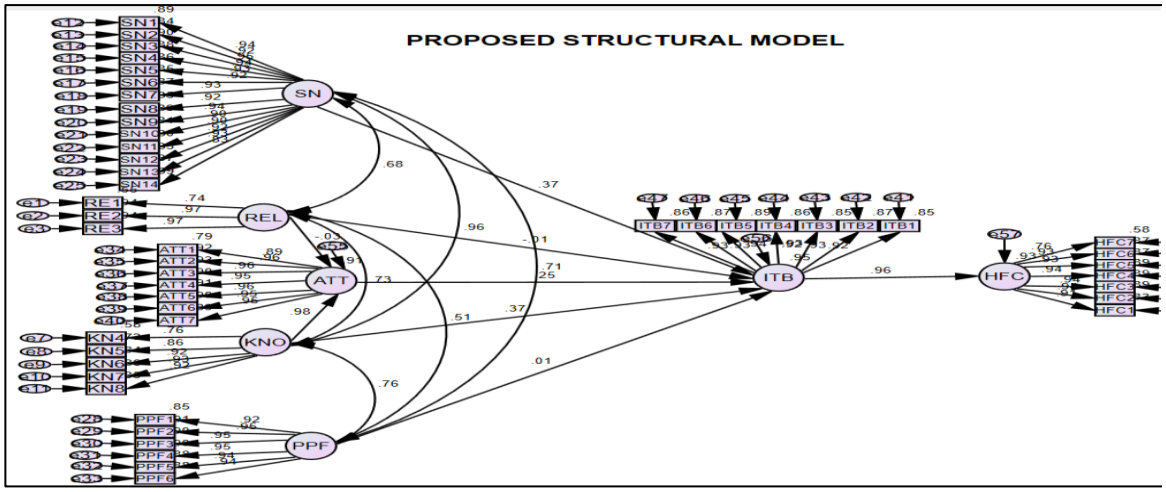


Figure 5. Proposed Structural Model of TPB in the local setting

Findings revealed that the proposed structural model has a small p-value, signifying the statistical difference between the observed and the estimated matrices. As mentioned earlier, the model should have no statistical difference in the matrices, and a large p-value of 0.05 is acceptable to have a better model fit. Other measures are considered to test the acceptability of the model. As shown in Table 4, the model is acceptable given the RMSEA of 0.076, SRMR of 0.031, and normed x^2 of 3.992. There is a high value of CFI (0.927) observed and PNFI (0.856) in comparison with the tolerance limit of 0.90 and 0.50, respectively. Hence, the acceptability of the proposed model was observed.

Table 4. Goodness-of-fit (GOF) of the Proposed Structural Model (PSM)

GOF (n=519, m = 54)	Criteria	PSM
1. Absolute fit		
x^2 statistic	At least 0.05	x^2 is 4443.1; df is 1113; p-value is 0.000
RMSEA	0.03 – 0.08	0.076
SRMR	< 0.05	0.031
Normed x^2	< 5.0	3.992
2. Incremental fit		
CFI	> 0.9	0.927
3. Parsimony fit index		
PNFI	> 0.5	0.856

Table 5 reflects the relationships and standardized loadings. Table depicting the interaction

of external and endogenous components. The results showed that knowledge is positively related and statistically significant to attitude. It was observed that 0.975 of attitude was explained by knowledge. Knowledge, subjective norms, and attitude positively relate and are statistically significant to the intention to buy. The latter construct was highly explained by subjective norms (0.373), followed by knowledge (0.370) and attitude (0.253). On the other hand, the halal food consumption of millennials was highly explained by the intention to buy (0.963), which can be attributed to the constructs pertaining to it.

This is supported by the study of Nurhayati and Hendra (2019), which states that knowledge is a critical factor in the intention to buy and actual purchasing behavior, especially in foods (Maichum et al., 2017). In nations with a majority of Muslims and those with minorities, there is an increased awareness of halal products and demand for them (Abu-Hussin et al., 2017). According to Muhamad et al. (2016), the relevant information is used to ascertain whether the products are legitimately halal before being purchased and from where the consumer can get the products.

In addition, Mukhtar and Butt (2012) found that subjective norm is a significant determinant in the selection of halal products, and as emphasized by Alam and Sayuti (2011) and Garg and Joshi (2018), attitude significantly influences buying intent and buyers who have a higher favorable attitude also have a higher purpose of buying. If halal products were promoted to all, then the opinion of individuals and their own understanding may improve their consumption. Social media platforms in raising awareness and increasing knowledge of halal concepts and principles may help its promotion, especially since millennials are highly exposed to it.

Table 5. Proposed Structural Model and its Relationships and Standardized Loadings

Relationship	Estimate	p-value
ATT ← REL	-0.030	0.246
ATT ← KNO	**0.975**	**0.000**
ITB ← REL	-0.013	0.536
ITB ← KNO	**0.370**	**0.000**
ITB ← SN	**0.373**	**0.000**
ITB ← PPF	0.006	0.779
ITB ← ATT	**0.253**	**0.000**
HFC ← ITB	**0.963**	**0.000**

Religiosity was not statistically significant. This indicates that attitude and purchase intention are not determined by the religious concept. Halal, according to Rezai et al. (2015), governs every aspect of what constitutes permissible eating behavior for Muslims. But, according to Putri and Windasari (2022), the higher the consumer's awareness of their religion, the more probable it is that they will deliberately choose to use halal items since it gives them the security and fulfillment they need to live out their religiosity. High-awareness consumers are more likely to make suitable product purchases to show their positive concern. Contrarily, the ideas for non-Muslim acceptance are nutrition, the qualities of halal products, and safety (Haque et al., 2015). As halal is a way of life for Muslims, the respondents do not believe that religion matters because they will look for it to

comply with moral requirements. Nonetheless, as long as it is safe and beneficial, non-Muslims will participate regardless of religion.

On the other hand, perceived political forces were also not statistically significant. However, the authenticity of halal food products is a problem for Muslims and even non-Muslim consumers because they cannot confirm it even after eating (Ali et al., 2018). Fathi et al. (2016) went on to advise that in order to ensure halal integrity, sellers and certifying organizations should cooperate and support one another because doing so will boost consumer confidence and propensity to purchase. This initiative may support the government to work closely with the implementation of halal standards compliance.

The model was re-specified to discover the optimal fit that may describe the consumption of BARMM millennials on halal. The double-headed arrow that was colored blue in the path diagram reflected the re-specification completed. A subscript of *prop* and *MOD*, following the applied measure, was used to see the changes in the results. It represented the proposed structural model and model re-specification, respectively. Using the modification indices, it was done one at a time.

Both models satisfied the model fit. Slight improvement in RMSEA ($RMSEA_{prop}$ = 0.076, $RMSEA_{MOD1}$ = 0.074); SRMR ($SRMR_{prop}$ = 0.028, $SRMR_{MOD1}$ = 0.031); CFI (CFI_{prop} = 0.927, CFI_{MOD1} = 0.931); and PNFI ($PNFI_{prop}$ = 0.856, $PNFI_{MOD1}$ = 0.859) were observed for the model 1.

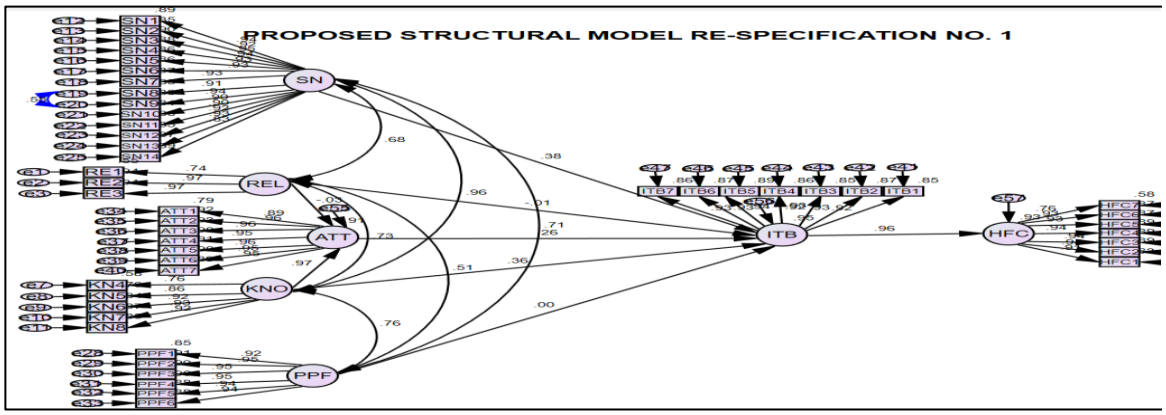


Figure 6. Re-specified Structural Model No. 1 (MOD1)

Table 6 compares the suggested TPB model with MOD1. Findings revealed that knowledge, subjective norms, and attitudes about purchasing and consuming halal food were statistically significant. The fact that subjective norms and knowledge assessment increased while the others barely changed was also observed.

Table 6. Comparison between PSM and MOD1

Relationship	PSM		MOD1	
	Estimate	p-value	Estimate	p-value
ATT ← REL	-0.030	0.246	-0.030	0.295
ATT ← KNO	**0.975**	**0.000**	**1.084**	**0.000**
ITB ← REL	-0.013	0.536	-0.013	0.537
ITB ← KNO	**0.370**	**0.000**	**0.337**	**0.000**

ITB◄—SN	**0.373**	**0.000**	**0.423**	**0.000**
ITB◄—PPF	0.006	0.779	0.004	0.829
ITB◄—ATT	**0.253**	**0.000**	**0.247**	**0.000**
HFC◄—ITB	**0.963**	**0.000**	**0.838**	**0.000**

Based on the results, the following equations were developed:

*Attitudes towards halal = -0.151 + 1.084*Knowledge* (1)

*Intention to buy halal food = 0.039 + (0.377*Knowledge) + (0.423*Subjective norms) + (0.247*Attitude)* (2)

*Halal food consumption = 0.263 + 0.838*Intention to buy* (3)

The recommended TPB model and MOD1 are contrasted in Table 6. The findings demonstrated the statistical significance of knowledge, subjective norms, and attitudes toward acquiring and consuming halal food. It was also interesting to see how subjective norms and knowledge assessments improved while the others scarcely altered.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed measurement model was modified and re-specified. The models are accurate and adhere to the necessary restrictions of a sound model. The SEM step involved specifying and assessing the structural model validity. Eleven models resulted from the re-specifications. Only the first model, nevertheless, managed to achieve the desired results while also improving them slightly. Other elements from the initial structural model were less significant due to the subsequent re-specifications. The following conclusions were drawn from the analysis:

1. Knowledge was the only factor associated with a halal mindset that was statistically significant. The knowledge construct in the model accounted for 91% of the attitude;
2. The intention to buy halal food was statistically predicted by knowledge, subjective norms, and attitudes. The accounted 95% of the inclination to purchase halal food items could be explained using the three (3) model's constructs; and
3. The probability that someone would buy halal foods was statistically significant. The 93% of those who eat halal food were described in the model, which included all factors that affect the intention to buy.

By taking into account different areas, it is possible to assess knowledge, subjective norms, and attitude as factors impacting purchase intention. The initiatives on halal promotion may increase the demand for the products, especially since knowledge of halal is highly significant and also the significant influence of family, friends, peers, and other people in consuming it. This is relevant to industry players to consider the production and selling of halal-certified food products in response to its increased awareness and growing demand.

The enhanced applicability of the TPB model in BARMM enables researchers to conduct research while taking additional behavioral dimensions into account. The final model includes knowledge, subjective norms, attitude, purchase intention, and consumption of halal food. The constructs have a strong model fit and are statistically significant. Moreover, the congeneric rule was met. This suggests that the model can be applied to understand millennial consumers in BARMM. A noteworthy finding is that, despite the area's predominance by Muslims, religion has no bearing on one's inclination to purchase halal food items. This suggests that regardless of their religious commitment and beliefs, millennial consumers in the area want to look for halal items.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The paper aimed to understand halal consumers; however, it was limited to millennial consumers, which represented only one (1) age group. That is why it is recommended to include participants that are at least 18 years old to capture the behavior of potential consumers of halal. This may provide an understanding of the behavior of consumers with different age groups, which may introduce different requirements for consuming halal food products.

It is also possible to study knowledge, attitude, and subjective norms as factors influencing the intention to buy in other areas. It can include a religiosity construct but in a non-Muslim dominant location. The additional elements of the TPB model can be employed in a variety of contexts, but they are still linked to behavioral research to test its generalizability. Lastly, the Akaike and Bayesian Information Criteria should be considered when analyzing the goodness-of-fit of the models. This criterion is important in identifying the best model fit, especially since it accounts for model complexity. It also explains how well the model fits the data in proportion to its number of parameters.

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