



# Muslim Consumer Behavior: Understanding Their Service Requirements and Purchase Intentions

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### 論文内容の要旨

This dissertation examines issue that has gained more attention from researchers and practitioners; that is marketing to Muslim consumers. The strong interest of Muslim consumers is mostly due to their increasing visibility, the rise of middle class in Islamic markets and a global halal phenomenon. Over the last decade, a growing number of studies that focus on Muslim consumers or Islamic markets and halal (permissible, according to Islamic law) product have appeared not only in *Journal of Islamic Marketing* but also in other journals such as *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Marketing Theory*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Business Research* and *Journal of Consumer Behavior*.

In the field of consumer behavior, although religion is considered as an important cultural element that influences consumer beliefs and values, it received little attention from consumer researchers due to the assumptions that religion cannot be examined scientifically and that, its influences on consumer behavior are indirect; that is relating to value formation and attitude. This dissertation addresses important issues to the topic of Muslim consumer behavior; that are whether or not Muslim consumers are a homogenous or heterogeneous market, the influence of their religious identity on belief and behavior and other determinants of their purchase intention toward a product or service in a specific context. Specifically, it focuses on Muslim consumers' religion-based product requirements and purchase intention of *halal* food in Japan. The rationales of focusing on Muslim consumers who are living and/or visiting Japan include the followings; 1) Japan is becoming an attractive destination for Muslim consumers; 2) increasing availability of Muslim friendly products and services; 3) Japanese hospitality and cultural values in which Muslim consumers appreciate and can identify with.

The main objectives of this dissertation are; 1) to demonstrate how religion influences Muslim consumer behavior and the existence of heterogeneous and homogeneous aspects of Muslim consumers; 2) to analyze religion-based requirements of hotel services and products for Muslim consumers, using Kano model; 3) to analyze determinants of their purchase intentions towards the consumption of *halal* food, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Figure 1 depicts the framework of this research.

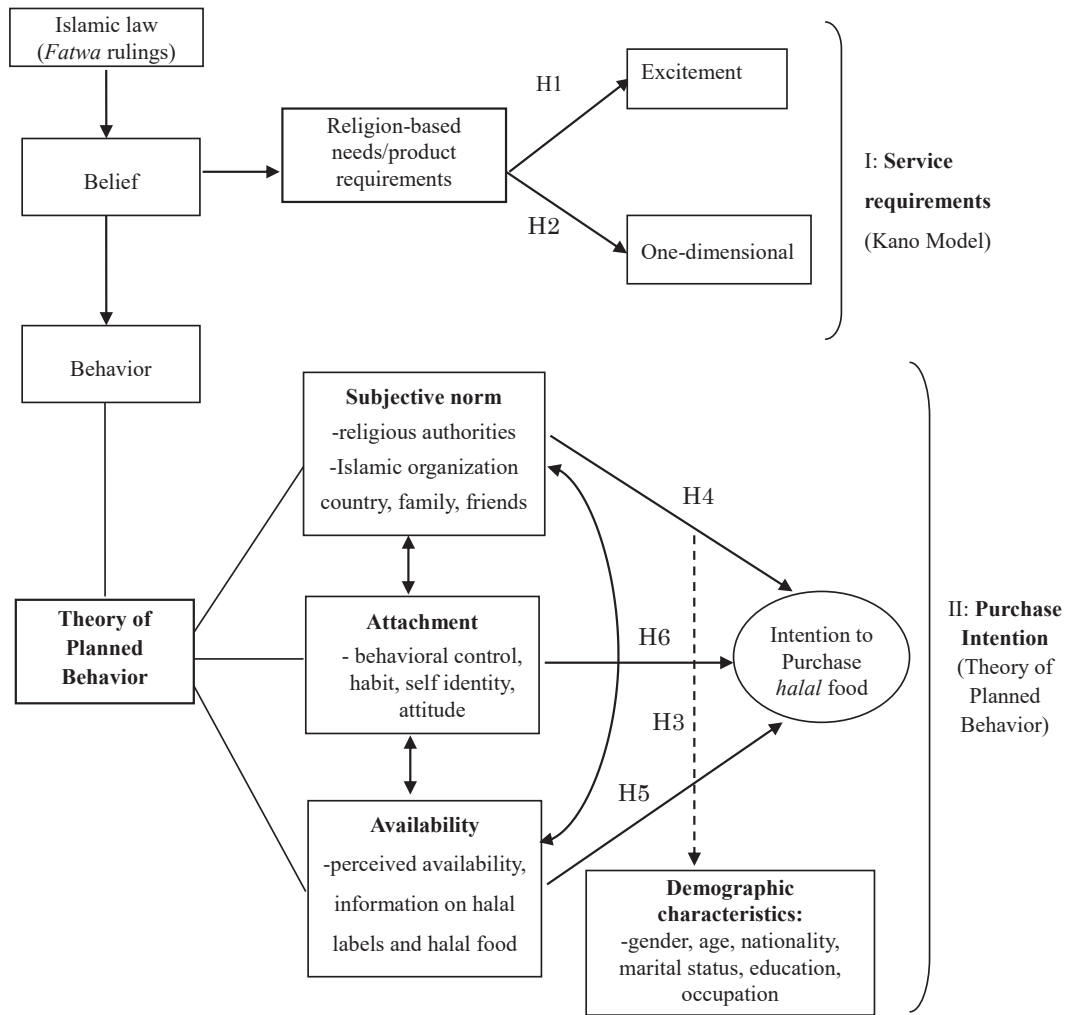


Figure 1: Research Framework

This dissertation employs two surveys in its methodology. The first survey follows Kano model method to identify and categorize service attributes of hotel accommodations, and examines the relationship of each category with customer satisfaction. Prior to the survey, interviews with Muslim consumers are conducted to identify various product requirements for hotel services. Results from the interviews serve as the basis for developing questionnaires of the survey (26 product attributes). Analysis of Kano model is based on the following hypotheses; *H1: Requirements that address the specific needs of Muslim consumers, such as halal food, and prayer facilities are considered as excitement attributes;* and *H2: Convenience of the online reservation system, staff attitude and English translation are considered as one-dimensional attributes.* The findings support both hypotheses and show that Muslim consumers appreciate religion based-needs of hotel services. Providing *halal* food and prayer facilities to Muslim consumers are categorized as attractive attributes, which is provision of which exceeds customer expectations and lead to higher satisfaction. In addition, these findings also indicate that similar to other consumers, Muslim consumers look for the same attributes such as convenience and staff attitude in their choice of hotel accommodations regardless of their religious affiliation, age, gender, and nationality.

The second survey adapts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by Bonne *et. al* (2007) to identify determinants of purchase intention for *halal* food among Muslim consumers in Japan. It develops and examines several hypotheses of TPB model using factor analysis, regression, moderator analysis and structural equation modeling. These analyses

aim to determine the influence of attachment, subjective norms and availability as independent variables, on purchase intention as the dependent variable. The hypotheses relevant to TPB include; *H3: Demographic characteristics of the respondents have no effect on Muslim consumers' intentions to consume halal food; H4: Subjective norms have a higher influence on Muslim consumers' intention to consume halal food; H5: Perceived availability has a higher influence on Muslim consumers' intention to consume halal food than subjective norms; and H6: Muslim consumers' intention to consume halal food is positively influenced by their attachment to halal food thus affecting their decision-making.*

While the results support H6, both H4 and H5 are rejected. The latter indicate that although halal food is currently a global phenomenon, its availability is still relatively low in Japan. Most importantly, although religious affiliation is assumed to have an influence on consumer belief, subjective norms and other environmental factors also shape individual belief and behavior. One of the key findings supports H6; this indicates that 'attachment' plays a significant role in influencing Muslim consumers' intention towards the consumption of *halal* food. The overall findings of TPB analysis confirm the role of religion as central to decision-making behavior and purchase intentions of Muslim consumers in the context of *halal* food purchase intention. This study also found that Muslim consumers are not a homogenous market due to regional/country differences in practices, cultural norms and individual religious knowledge and observance, however, when it comes to *halal* food, Muslim consumers are homogenous. This indicates that although Muslim consumers differ in their knowledge and practices or adherence to Islamic law, their basic belief influenced by the primary source of the law i.e. the Qur'an, is similar.

In the context of Muslim consumers, the basic assumption of this research is that religion plays an important role on their product requirements and purchase intentions of specific products or services. It aims to provide understanding of how religious beliefs interact and influence Muslim consumer behavior and discusses the sources of Islamic law and religious rulings that have a direct influence on consumer knowledge and beliefs. These beliefs are argued to influence Muslim consumers' needs and behavior. The data accrued via the implementation of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Kano model of service quality, diverges thus; the TBP Model deals with behavioral intention and the Kano Model identify service requirements or religion-based needs of hotel services. Analyses of this research also add demographic characteristics to the modified model of TPB (Figure 1, H3) to show their influence on behavioral intention.

This dissertation responds to the lack of research that examines the influence of religion on consumer belief and behavior; it specifically focuses on Muslim consumer behavior in Japan. As there are various efforts by the Japanese government and companies to promote Muslim-friendly facilities/services such as Halal Media Japan, the annual *halal* expo and Japan Halal Certification as well as the growing number of Muslim tourists to Japan in the recent years and expected to increase in the future, this research provides deeper understanding of religion-based needs for Muslim consumers and the factors that influence their purchase intention of *halal* food. Understanding of the heterogeneous and homogenous characteristics of the Muslim consumers from various countries is essential for companies to match their offerings with the specific needs and preferences of this market.

Research limitations include generalization of the results from a rather small sample size as well as issues concerning questionnaires development such as the need for more meticulous measures of self identity. The latter is mostly credited to the complexities and sensitivity of religion's influences on belief and behavior among Muslim consumers. Nevertheless, this research makes theoretical contributions in terms of better understanding of various factors influencing consumer decision making, including the role of religion in their belief and behavior which to date, received little attention in consumer research. It also provides managerial implications for companies in Japan and other countries that wish to capitalize on *halal* phenomenon, and provide directions for further inquiry on marketing to

Muslim consumers.

## 論文審査結果の要旨

We, the committee, find that the research conducted by Ms. Wesam Eid and her dissertation document fulfills the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. Ms. Eid has successfully presented her research and defended her dissertation.

We find that her dissertation research has sufficiently addressed pertinent research issues in the fields of consumer behavior and marketing to Muslim consumers. Her research does not only add to better understanding of religion-based needs of a specific consumer segment but also capture the growing interest on global *halal* phenomenon and Muslim consumers. She has developed a conceptual framework that focuses on the influence of religious rulings on Muslim consumer belief and behavior. She has examined several research questions and developed hypotheses relevant to her research framework and has empirically analyzed these hypotheses by statistical analysis. We also find that her analysis of Muslim consumers' product requirements of hotel services in Japan, and their intention to purchase *halal* products is satisfactory. The contributions of her research are described below.

Her literature review discussed the influence of religion on consumer behavior; she identified the sources of Islamic law/religious rulings and underlined their influence on consumer product knowledge and behavior. She developed a conceptual framework that include Kano model for analyzing service requirements of Muslim consumers and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) for analyzing factors that influence their purchase intention of *halal* food. Using Kano model, she identified various attributes of hotel services and categorized them into Must-be attributes, One-dimensional attributes and Attractive attributes, and analyzed the relationship between each category and customer satisfaction. In her framework on factors influencing behavioral intention, she discussed TPB model developed by Ajzen (1985) and adapted Bonne *et. al* (2007)'s TPB analysis of *halal* food behavioral intention. The constructs of her TPB framework focused on subjective norms (religious authorities, Islamic organization and country), attachment (perceived behavioral control, attitude and self identity) and availability (perceived availability, information on *halal* labels and *halal* foods) as independent variables. She also included the effect of demographic variables (age, gender, education level, occupation and nationality) and examined whether these variables have an impact on Muslim consumers intention towards *halal* food. Her empirical testing of the model validates the use of these variables in TPB analysis of Muslim consumer behavioral intention and instigates future applications, extensions and improvements of TPB model in various contexts.

She demonstrates a clear understanding of how the constructs in her research framework and questionnaires development should be improved in the future. She also provides clear understanding of the conceptual, empirical and practitioner oriented implications of her research. Despite the need for bigger sample size and more meticulous development of questionnaires of some variables such as the "room rate" in Kano model and "self identity" in TPB model, her applications of Kano model and TPB as well as extensive empirical testing of her research framework contributes to better understanding of Muslim consumers behavior specifically on their religion-based needs of service requirements and determinants that influence their behavioral intention of *halal* food. Through her use of factor analysis, regression, moderator analysis and structural equation modeling, she was able to determine the influence of attachment, subjective norms and availability as independent variables, on purchase intention as the dependent variable.

In examining her dissertation, we recognize the complexities and challenges to identify and develop sound measures for religious affiliation and religiosity as variables for self identity. We strongly encouraged her not to shy away from these challenging tasks and to also consider both the direct and indirect influences of religion on consumer

behavior. To enhance the number of responses, we suggest that she consider a non-web based approach of data collection strategy in the future. These recommendations are particularly relevant if she pursues her current research and extended her examination of the influence of religion on consumer belief and behavior.

We also suggest that Ms. Eid continue her research in this emerging area, improve the questionnaires and collect more data. The responses from her survey on Muslim consumers that she received for her research was adequate for the current study and her use of factor analysis, regression analysis, moderator analysis and structural equation modeling were able to analyze and test in more detail her conceptual model. The constructs of her TPB model particularly on consumer self identity require more rigorous design of questionnaires and she recognizes the importance of considering appropriate measures of religiosity and other personality attributes in addition to religious affiliation for further inquiry. We believe that in the future, with more data and deeper understanding of the complexities of the effect of religion on customer belief and behavior, Ms. Eid will be able to improve and extend TPB model and apply it to the analysis of Muslim consumers and other consumer segments in various contexts.

We make the above suggestions and recommendations as part of our guidance for future research. We conclude that the current research as presented contributes to the field of marketing and customer behavior, and recommend that Ms. Eid's dissertation be accepted for the requirements of the Ph.D. degree.