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THE EFFECT OF HALAL AWARENESS AND CONSUMER DEMOGRAPHICS ON INTENTION TO PURCHASE HALAL FOOD: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM AND UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

Consumer demographics and their level of awareness are important factors as determinants towards the foods they consume. The study aimed at comparatively examining the effect of Halal awareness and consumer demographics on intention to purchase Halal food in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda. In execution, it used a correlational research design to ascertain whether research variables were related, and the nature and strength of effects. The study's discoveries led to conclusions that Halal awareness efforts like government support policies, certification, health expert approvals, and individual exposure alongside religiosity significantly boost one's intention to purchase Halal food up to 25% in Brunei and up to 51.6% in Uganda, respectively. It is also concluded that the effect was greater in Uganda compared to Brunei. The study thus empirically recommended that the Ugandan government should support the Halal industry to boost consumers' intention to purchase such products. The study further recommended that marketers and sales agents of Halal products should concentrate on Muslim-dominated regions to entice more public willingness to purchase. Religiosity was found to be a significant catalyst towards one's intention to buy Halal products. For Uganda, the study also recommended that Halal food certification should be spearheaded by governments other than private organizations to streamline such efforts, boost public trust, and fund the relevant processes to significantly impact this particular sub-sector.

Keywords: *Food Safety, Government role, Halal certification, Individual exposure.*

1. Introduction

Historically, the Qur'an decrees in Surah Al Maidah verse 88 that:

"And eat of the clean and lawful things that Allah has given you and have piety towards Allah in whom you believe."

Such Islamically permitted foods are commonly referred to as Halal food(Park & Lee, 2021). Halal products have been gaining significance for some time now (Rarick et al., 2012). Although it was opined that the demand for Halal food products was increasing among both Muslims and consumers from other religions (Kawata et al., 2018), some markets have remained untapped with various challenges (Hassan & Sengupta, 2019). This analysis of consumer behavioural aspects related to purchasing Halal products remains a very interesting topic to avail solutions on how Halal products can penetrate all sections of humanity (Setiawan & Mauluddi, 2020). Surely, challenges of Halal food products have encountered several bottlenecks in the existence of informal SMEs in Indonesia which are difficult to certify (Amalia et al., 2020), limited availability of Halal service providers has affected related purchase intentions in China (Hong et al., 2020). Additionally, non-Muslim Malaysians' intention to purchase Halal products was reported to be affected by the perceived low quality of such products (Shyue Chuan et al., 2021).

Even though factors affecting the intention to purchase Halal products might be many, low awareness challenges have been documented by many scholars as the cardinal blockage in Spain (Pradana et al., 2020), Philippines (Datucali et al., 2020), Turkey (Haque et al., 2021), Indonesia (Alexander et al., 2021). To boost and ensure the sale of Halal food, history remembers that Brunei Darussalam has enacted several legislations such as the Halal Meat Act (CAP 183) of 1998, the Halal Certificate and Halal Label of 2005, and the Halal Certificate and Halal Label (Amendment) Order of 2012 (Raden & Haqqi, 2017), among others.

Interestingly, however, although there are high Halal food awareness levels among university students in Brunei Darussalam, there were still low purchase intentions towards such products (Abdullah & Abdul Razak, 2020). This seems to disagree with opinions that Brunei Darussalam is a country whose majority population are Muslims and thus faces relatively low challenges regarding Halal issues compared to other countries (Miskam et al., 2018). It was additionally reported that there are still internal and external factors constraining the growth of Halal supply chains in Brunei Darussalam (Ab Talib, 2020), which still calls for further research to intensify the consumption of such food products. This is because it was revealed that Halal consumption catalysts like certification processes by the Islamic Religious Council of Brunei Darussalam (MUIB) were found to have strict requirements, very long and did_not adequately avail specific data available regarding the Halal industry, which makes local Halal products expensive compared to the imported products that consumers conceive to be unreasonably overpriced (Oh et al., 2018). More evidence from consumers claims that the main factor for the sluggish growth of the Halal industry in Brunei Darussalam is the lack of local Halal products advertising and promotion (Oh et al., 2018).

From Uganda's perspective, however, the food industry is often unaware of the requirements of its Muslim consumers (Nakyinsige et al., 2012). Further, despite the presence of several studies on other Halal-certified products like banking and finance in Uganda and Brunei Darussalam (Ali et al., 2018; Bananuka et al., 2019; Hussein Kakembo et al., 2021), the performance and intention to purchase Halal food in both countries have attracted little or no interest from scholars. Further, previous studies have not clearly explained the effect or demonstrated how government role, religious beliefs, certification practices, health expert approvals, and consumer exposure on Halal awareness levels and ultimately intention to purchase Halal food. More to this, there is still a research gap to establish the effect of consumer demographic compositions such as religious affiliation, education and income levels towards one's intention to purchase Halal food. This calls for a thorough comprehensive study to examine the effect of such factors on Halal awareness and intention to purchase Halal food, using a comparative analysis of Brunei Darussalam and Uganda.

1.1 Problem Statement

Ideally, it is hypothesized that low awareness challenges have greatly affected the intentions to purchase Halal food by the target audiences, leading to suggestions, calls, and recommendations to boost Halal food awareness levels (Alexander et al., 2021; Haque et al., 2021; Pradana et al., 2020), even among university students in Brunei Darussalam (Abdullah & Abdul Razak, 2020). While in Uganda, the food industry and its consumers were largely reported to be unaware of Halal certification requirements (Nakyinsige et al., 2012). But despite such suggestions to increase Halal awareness levels, no explicit study has attempted to

clearly explain the role of government, religious beliefs, certification practices, health expert approvals, and consumer exposure towards Halal awareness levels and intention to purchase such food. This study, therefore, aims at bridging that gap by examining the effect of Halal awareness on the intention to purchase Halal food. This will avail comprehensive and executable recommendations not only in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda but globally to deepen the consumption of Halal food and related products.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in both Brunei Darussalam and Uganda. It used a quantitative research approach to derive findings, and conclusions and avail robust recommendations. A correlational research design was used as it helps in ascertaining whether research variables are related and if so, to additionally establish the nature and strength of effects (Apuke, 2017; Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019). This perfectly agrees with the main objective of the study since it aims at comparatively examining the effect of Halal awareness and consumer demographics on intention to purchase Halal food in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda.

To effectively collect data, the study used online questionnaires and interviews, where respondents were targeted using the available online platforms like emails and social media platforms.

For data analysis, data were initially checked for completeness and accuracy using Microsoft excel 2016 to address missing data cases, outliers, and straight-lining cases before any further significant analysis and reporting (Leiner, 2019; Sullivan et al., 2021), later, the study generated preliminary descriptive observations using SPSS to avail descriptive frequency findings and insight into the research variables by establishing the extent to which respondents agreed/disagreed with given research opinions, and to attain inferential findings, the study transferred quantitative data to Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) software to examine the effects among research variables through bootstrapping technique (Hall et al., n.d.).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Response Rate and Respondents' Demographic Composition

The study intended to obtain a sample of 768 respondents from Brunei Darussalam and Uganda. However, the study managed to obtain an overall response rate of 635 (82.6%) from both contexts. Specifically, the study obtained 83.8% and 81.5% response rates from Brunei Darussalam and Uganda respectively. This implied that the study's response rate was sufficient as it was above the 50% threshold suggested by (Brick & Williams, 2012) while alerting academic researchers against non-response bias. This was also supported by the recommendations of (Hall et al., n.d.), that a response rate of above 60% was considered sufficient. Major results and findings shall be highlighted in the subsequent parts.

Demographically; 31.4% of respondents from Brunei Darussalam were male whereas 68.6% of them were female. In addition, 49.5% of respondents from the Ugandan context were male while 50.5% were female. This demonstrated that the study was not gender-biased since both genders were considered.

Further, the study reported that 89.2% of respondents from Brunei Darussalam had attained diplomas, degrees, and postgraduate academic qualifications and 83.7% of those from

Uganda also had at least diploma education levels. This implied that the study ensured to sample of respondents with adequate education levels who could ably read, interpret and respond to research questions. This agreed with (Saunders et al., 2019)who advised that it was essential for social science researchers to involve respondents with satisfactory levels of literacy to understand and interpret content in the research tools.

In regards to income levels, respondents from all income levels and categories were sampled from both Brunei Darussalam and Uganda. Those with less than 500BND to above 2,000BND and less than 108,000UGX to above 1,080,000UGX were sampled. This further confirmed that the study was not biased in relation to their income levels since all individuals make purchase decisions every day irrespective of their income levels.

Religiously, 99.1% of respondents from Brunei Darussalam were Muslims while 0.9% of them were non-Muslims. Also, 88.8% of respondents from the Ugandan context were Muslims with only 11.2% of them non-Muslims. This implied that the study was dominated by views from Muslim respondents.

3.2 Descriptive findings on All Research Variables

Before analysing the effect of predictor variables on intention to purchase halal food, it was important, to begin by presenting the extent to which Bruneians (Table 1) and Ugandans (Table 2) intend to purchase halal food using descriptive analysis as presented below;

Table 1: Intention to purchase Halal food in Brunei Darussalam

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Checking for halal ingredients before purchasing	9 (2.8%)	26 (8.1%)	23 (7.1%)	155 (48.1%)	109 (33.9%)
Intention to purchase/buy/pay for Halal food	-	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	16 (5.0%)	304 (94.4%)
Intention to recommend Halal food to others	1 (0.3%)	-	10 (3.1%)	37 (11.5%)	274 (85.1%)
Perceptions that Halal food is good for its consumers' health	-	5 (1.6%)	8 (2.5%)	54 (16.8%)	255 (79.2%)
Views towards only purchasing food with Halal logo/certification	1 (0.3%)	13 (4.0%)	9 (2.8%)	105 (32.6%)	194 (60.2%)
TOTAL	**322 (100%)**				

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 2: Intention to purchase Halal food in Uganda

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Checking for halal ingredients before purchasing	10 (3.2%)	14 (4.5%)	27 (8.6%)	84 (26.8%)	178 (56.9%)
Intention to purchase/buy/pay for Halal food	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	19 (6.1%)	24 (7.7%)	268 (85.6%)
Intention to recommend Halal food to others	2 (0.6%)	3 (1.0%)	11 (3.5%)	31 (9.9%)	266 (85.0%)
Perceptions that Halal food is good for its consumers' health	1 (0.3%)	-	12 (3.8%)	16 (5.1%)	284 (90.7%)

Views towards only purchasing food with Halal logo/certification	12 (3.8%)	23 (7.3%)	54 (17.3%)	101 (32.5%)	123 (39.3%)
TOTAL			**313 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

The study generally observed that although Brunei Darussalam is a Muslim country whose citizens expressed unquestionable willingness and intention to purchase halal food, it was also discovered that their counterparts in Uganda had almost equal intentions towards purchasing halal food even if they reside in a non-Muslim dominated environment. These observations were in line with findings from Cape Town, South Africa, where it was found that even non-Muslim consumers were aware of the health-related benefits of Halal food products as recommended by health experts and thus were ready to purchase such products (Bashir, 2020).

In relation to halal food awareness in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda, the study found that participants from both Brunei Darussalam and Uganda demonstrated an absolute understanding of the concept of 'Halal', believed that halal food was of high quality, and its consumption was sanctioned by their religious affiliations (Islam). Therefore, there was no significant difference between residing in a Muslim-dominated country like Brunei Darussalam and living in a Muslim-minority environment like Uganda when it comes to halal food awareness among Muslims. Results of halal food awareness in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda have been shown in Tables 3 and 4 respectively.

Table 3: Halal food awareness in Brunei Darussalam

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Respondents' levels of understanding of what 'Halal' means	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.6%)	58 (18.0%)	260 (80.7%)
Respondents' views as to whether Halal food is of high quality and wholesomeness	2 (0.6%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.6%)	7 (2.2%)	310 (96.3%)
Respondents' views regarding consuming halal food as a religious obligation	-	6 (1.9%)	36 (11.2%)	91 (28.3%)	189 (58.7%)
TOTAL			**322 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 4: Halal food awareness in Uganda

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Respondents' levels of understanding of what 'Halal' means	3 (1.0%)	1 (0.3%)	17 (5.4%)	28 (8.9%)	264 (84.3%)
Respondents' views as to whether Halal food is of high quality and wholesomeness	2 (0.6%)	7 (2.2%)	32 (10.2%)	54 (17.3%)	218 (69.6%)
Respondents' views regarding consuming halal food as a religious obligation	8 (2.6%)	5 (1.6%)	16 (5.1%)	11 (3.5%)	273 (87.2%)
TOTAL			**313 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

Furthermore, the study found out that, the Bruneian government had instituted commendable efforts to promote citizens' awareness of Halal food, adopted laws that support its consumption, gave financial support to its manufacturers, and ensured that ordinary citizens were provided with sufficient information relating to such products (Table 5). However, the government

efforts in Uganda were discovered to be poor since such processes were still handled by non-governmental organizations (Table 6).

Table 5: Government's role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Brunei Darussalam

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Not sure	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
Respondents' views regarding the government promote citizens' awareness of halal food	2 (0.6%)	8 (2.5%)	34 (10.6%)	94 (29.2%)	184 (57.1%)
Respondents' views regarding government laws support the consumption of halal food	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	20 (6.2%)	49 (15.2%)	249 (77.3%)
Respondents' views about the government giving financial support to halal food manufacturers	2 (0.6%)	5 (1.6%)	151 (46.9%)	69 (21.4%)	95 (29.5%)
Respondents' views regarding the government providing sufficient information about halal and haram food products	2 (0.6%)	24 (7.5%)	35 (10.9%)	148 (46.0%)	113 (35.1%)
TOTAL			**322 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 6: Government's role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Uganda

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Not sure	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
Respondents' views regarding the government promote citizens' awareness of halal food	57 (18.2%)	58 (18.5%)	71 (22.7%)	83 (26.5%)	44 (14.1%)
Respondents' views regarding government laws support the consumption of halal food	30 (9.6%)	49 (15.7%)	60 (19.2%)	88 (28.1%)	86 (27.5%)
Respondents' views about the government giving financial support to halal food manufacturers	75 (24.0%)	40 (12.8%)	124 (39.6%)	34 (10.9%)	40 (12.8%)
Respondents' views regarding the government providing sufficient information about halal and haram food products	92 (29.4%)	67 (21.4%)	68 (21.7%)	43 (13.7%)	43 (13.7%)
TOTAL			**313 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

Study findings revealed that the majority of Bruneians (Table 7) and Ugandans (Table 8) intimated that they had adequate information about halal certification logos, were being attracted to halal food due to halal certification logos, absolutely believed that halal-certified food products were genuine of high quality, and presence of halal certificates given to and displayed by manufacturers and businesses made them feel safe to consume foods from such sellers.

Table 7: Halal certification role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Brunei Darussalam

	Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Not sure	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree
Respondents' views regarding having adequate information about Halal certification/logo.	1 (0.3%)	23 (7.1%)	41 (12.7%)	138 (42.9%)	119 (37.0%)
Respondents' views regarding being attracted to halal food due to Halal certification/logo.	5 (1.6%)	15 (4.7%)	25 (7.8%)	96 (29.8%)	181 (56.2%)

Respondents' views regarding the belief that Halal-certified products were genuine (High quality)	-	9 (2.8%)	27 (8.4%)	115 (35.7%)	171 (53.1%)
Respondents' views on whether a Halal certificate makes me feel safe to consume the product	-	2 (0.6%)	4 (1.2%)	45 (14.0%)	271 (84.2%)
TOTAL			**322 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 8: Halal certification role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Uganda

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Respondents' views regarding having adequate information about Halal certification/logo.	27 (8.6%)	20 (6.4%)	47 (15.0%)	107 (34.2%)	112 (35.8%)
Respondents' views regarding being attracted to halal food due to Halal certification/logo.	20 (6.4%)	14 (4.5%)	30 (9.6%)	77 (24.6%)	172 (55.0%)
Respondents' views regarding the belief that Halal-certified products were genuine (High quality)	4 (1.3%)	6 (1.9%)	23 (7.3%)	72 (23.0%)	208 (66.5%)
Respondents' views on whether a Halal certificate makes me feel safe to consume the product	4 (1.3%)	3 (1.0%)	18 (5.8%)	44 (14.1%)	244 (78.0%)
TOTAL			**313 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

Findings of health experts' approval role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda have been shown in Tables 9 and 10 respectively. It was found that the majority of respondents from both Brunei Darussalam and Uganda agreed that ingredients, hygiene/cleanliness, and safety of halal food were recommended by health experts and hence played key roles towards promoting halal food awareness.

Table 9: Health experts' approval role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Brunei Darussalam

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Respondents' views on whether ingredients of Halal food are recommended by health experts	-	9 (2.8%)	89 (27.6%)	95 (29.5%)	129 (40.1%)
The hygiene/cleanliness of Halal food products is recommended by health experts	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	61 (18.9%)	78 (24.2%)	181 (56.2%)
The safety of Halal food products is recommended by health experts	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.6%)	62 (19.3%)	87 (27.0%)	170 (52.8%)
TOTAL			**322 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 10: Health experts' approval role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Uganda

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Respondents' views on whether ingredients of Halal food are recommended by health experts	5 (1.6%)	9 (2.9%)	71 (22.7%)	60 (19.2%)	168 (53.7%)
The hygiene/cleanliness of Halal food products is recommended by health experts	6 (1.9%)	6 (1.9%)	45 (14.4%)	68 (21.7%)	188 (60.1%)
The safety of Halal food products is recommended by health experts	5 (1.6%)	12 (3.8%)	56 (17.9%)	71 (22.7%)	169 (54.0%)
TOTAL			**313 (100%)**		

Source: Field data (2021)

Also, the study found that citizens' exposure to information about Halal food from either television, radio adverts, or the internet, family, and their friends boosted Bruneians' (Table 11) and Ugandans' (Table 12) awareness towards halal food products.

Table 11: Individual exposure's role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Brunei Darussalam

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Citizens get information about Halal food from either television, radio adverts, or the internet	2 (0.6%)	21 (6.5%)	25 (7.8%)	124 (38.5%)	150 (46.6%)
My family has exposed me to Halal food products	1 (0.3%)	14 (4.3%)	8 (2.5%)	75 (23.3%)	224 (69.6%)
My friends have exposed me to Halal food products	3 (0.9%)	13 (4.0%)	24 (7.5%)	101 (31.4%)	181 (56.2%)
TOTAL	**322 (100%)**				

Source: Field data (2021)

Table 12: Individual exposure's role towards promoting Halal food awareness in Uganda

	Strongly Disagree	**Slightly Disagree**	**Not sure**	**Slightly Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Citizens get information about Halal food from either television, radio adverts, or the internet	19 (6.1%)	34 (10.9%)	24 (7.7%)	90 (28.8%)	146 (46.6%)
My family has exposed me to Halal food products	13 (4.2%)	17 (5.4%)	17 (5.4%)	61 (19.5%)	205 (65.5%)
My friends have exposed me to Halal food products	4 (1.3%)	24 (7.7%)	14 (4.5%)	95 (30.4%)	176 (56.2%)
TOTAL	**313 (100%)**				

Source: Field data (2021)

3.3 Inferential Analysis to Answer Research Questions

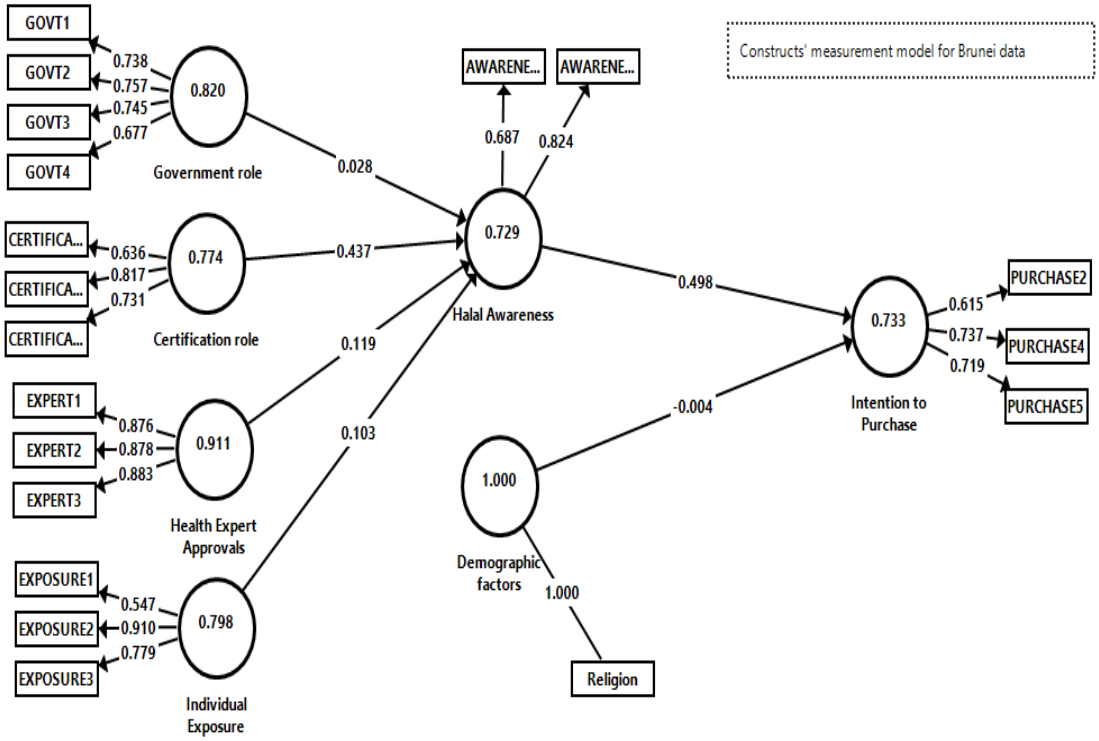
After the descriptive analysis to reveal the extent to which respondents agreed/disagreed towards different research questions, it was necessary to trace the effect of predictor variables on intention to purchase halal food in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda.

3.3.1 Measurement model assessment (Factor analysis)

3.3.1.1 Indicator Reliability

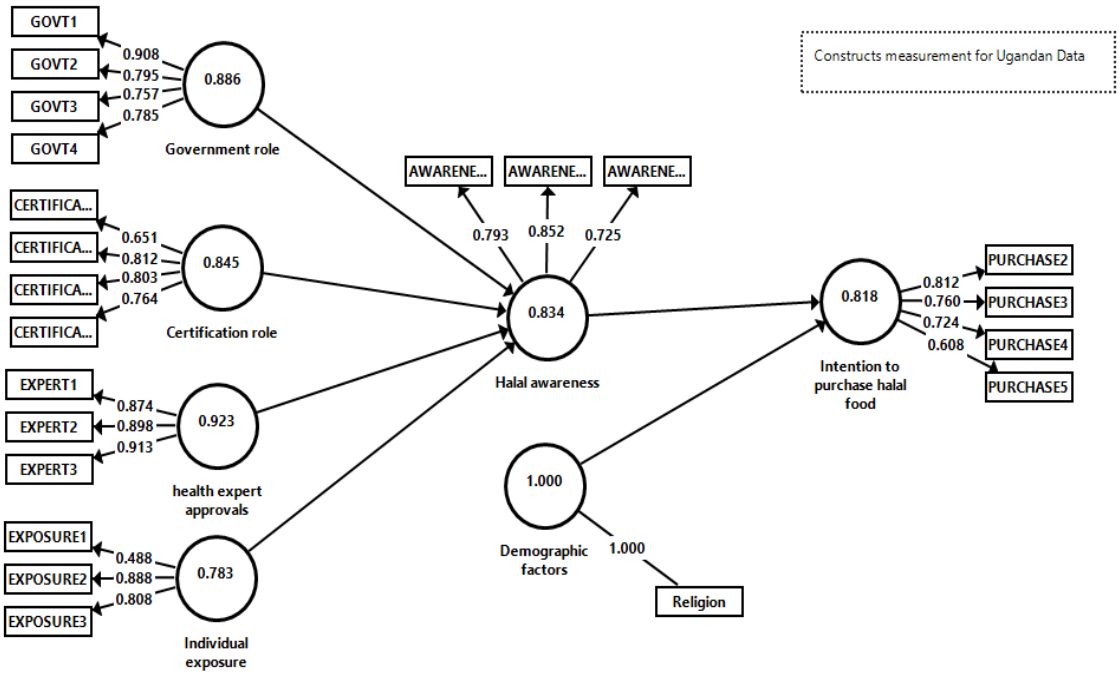
As a requirement of path analysis during structural equation modelling, the study started by examining indicator reliability and eliminated insignificant items from its models. The study ensured that all remaining questions in the model had factor loadings above the 0.5 thresholds and hence considered to be significant to the study (Hair et al., 2017)as illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 below for Bruneian and Ugandan models

Figure 1: Factor analysis results of the Bruneian model



Source: PLS-SEM

Figure 2: Factor analysis results of the Ugandan model



Source: PLS-SEM

3.3.1.2 Construct/Variable Reliability

Likewise, it was demonstrated that all item factor loadings of the study variables were significantly reliable since all their composite reliability values were above the 0.7 threshold, which was deemed satisfactory (McNeish, 2017). Composite reliability was employed by the study because of the criticisms against Cronbach's Alpha such as; it is believed that it presents low values of reliability which is considered as an underestimation, hence the application of Composite Reliability Indices which offers a more rigorous alternative reliability test (McNeish, 2017). Indeed, Table 13 below confirmed that all the 7(seven) research variables in the model had composite reliabilities higher than the 0.7 thresholds and hence considered as reliable (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 13: Reliability Results for Variables

Variables	Composite Reliability	
	Brunei Darussalam	**Uganda**
Government role	0.820	0.886
Certification role	0.774	0.845
Health expert approvals	0.911	0.923
Individual exposure	0.798	0.783
Halal awareness	0.729	0.834
Demographic factors	1.000	1.000
Intention to purchase	0.825	0.818

Source: PLS-SEM Results after factor analysis

3.3.2 Assessment of the structural model

After affirming that the study's measurement model was reliable, it was prudent to advance to carrying out the structural model assessments (Hair et al., 2017), by assessing the effect sizes, their significances, and goodness of fit (R^2) as presented below:

Bootstrapping: The study used bootstrapping technique at a significance level of 0.05 (Aguirre-Urreta & Rönkkö, 2017; Hair et al., 2017) to execute a multiple regression analysis and avail effect sizes and their significances. This was aimed at testing the hypothesized effects among research constructs/variables since the study largely intended to examine the effect of multiple independent variables on the dependent one in the same model (Hall et al., n.d.).

It was consequently discovered that there was a significant positive effect of Halal awareness on intention to purchase Halal food in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda since their effect sizes were 0.498 and 0.523 respectively, with P-values at 0.000 as illustrated in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Path coefficients of the model

Research constructs/variables	Effect Size & P- Values		Remark
	Brunei	**Uganda**	
Effect of Halal awareness on intention to purchase Halal food in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda;	0.498 (0.000)	0.523 (0.000)	Accepted
Effect of consumer demographics on intention to purchase Halal food in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda.	-0.004 (0.000)	-0.246 (0.000)	Rejected

Source: PLS-SEM Results after bootstrapping

This implied that combined government roles, certification, health expert approvals, and individual exposure enhances consumer halal awareness, which resultantly attracts a 49.8% and 52.3% effect on people's intention to purchase halal food in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda respectively. These findings agreed with previous scholars who observed that although there were high Halal food awareness levels among university students in Brunei Darussalam, there were still low purchase intentions towards such products compared to other countries due to low awareness challenges (Abdullah & Abdul Razak, 2020; Miskam et al., 2018). That's why the study stressed the increase in halal awareness would drive consumers' intention to purchase halal food in both Brunei Darussalam and Uganda.

It was also evidenced that only religion was a significant demographic factor which affected people's intention to purchase halal food since education level, gender, and income differences were rendered insignificant as expressed prior in Figures 1 and 2 above for both Bruneian and Ugandan models. This partly agreed with prior research observations that the demand for Halal food products was increasing among both Muslims and consumers from other religions (Kawata et al., 2018), this was because this current study strongly observed that belief in Islamic principles determines one's intention to purchase halal food.

That aside, the study correspondingly followed the criticisms (Hahn & Ang, 2017) that *P*-values were inadequate measures to determine a model's significance power and the study additionally analysed R^2 to add on the earlier *P*-values and effect sizes as fronted by (Hair et al., 2020). It was conclusively observed that halal awareness efforts like supporting government policies, certification, health expert approvals, and individual exposure alongside belief in Islamic teachings boost one's intention to purchase halal food up to 25% in Brunei Darussalam and up to 51.6% in Uganda as envisaged in Table 15 below. Such observations disagreed with opinions that even though non-Muslim consumers in Cape Town (South Africa) did not have an adequate understanding of Halal food principles, they were positively aware of Halal food (Bashir, 2020). This was because this current study reaffirmed that knowledge of Islamic-related principles was a key driver towards the intention to purchase halal food in both Brunei Darussalam and Uganda.

Table 15: Model's overall goodness of fit (Effect size)

Overall effect size	R Square	
	Brunei	**Uganda**
Comparative effect of Halal awareness and consumer demographics on intention to purchase Halal food in Brunei Darussalam and Uganda	0.250	0.516

Source: PLS-SEM Results after bootstrapping

4. CONCLUSION

The study findings concluded that the Bruneian government had instituted commendable efforts to promote citizens' awareness of halal food, adopted laws that support its consumption, gave financial support to its manufacturers, and ensured that ordinary citizens were provided with sufficient information relating to such products. However, the government efforts in Uganda still lagged, as such processes were still handled by non-governmental organizations.

Despite that, respondents from both contexts expressed unquestionable willingness and intention to purchase halal food at all times. This conclusion was based on the observations that participants in both contexts were mindful of food ingredients before purchase, had higher

intentions to buy/pay, recommended to their closest, and believed that halal products were good for their health.

Furthermore, the study concluded that there was no significant difference between residing in a Muslim-dominated country like Brunei Darussalam and living in a Muslim-minority environment like Uganda when it comes to halal food awareness among Muslims. This was because the study found that participants from both Brunei Darussalam and Uganda demonstrated an absolute understanding of the concept of 'halal', believed that halal food was of high quality and that its consumption was sanctioned by their religious affiliations (Islam). After bootstrapping, it was resultantly concluded that there was a significant positive 49.8% and 52.3% effect of Halal awareness on intention to purchase Halal food in both Bruneian and Ugandan contexts resulting from a combination of factors like government roles, certification, health expert approvals, and individual exposures.

Demographically, the study concluded that Islamic religious values were a key demographic predictor of willingness and intention to purchase food in both Brunei Darussalam and Uganda.

This was because other demographic considerations like consumer's age, gender, education and income levels were discovered as insignificant predictors of intention to purchase halal food by both Ugandan Muslims and Bruneians.

Comparatively, the study concluded that halal awareness efforts like supporting government policies, certification, health expert approvals, and individual exposure alongside belief in Islamic teachings boost one's intention to purchase halal food up to 25% in Brunei and up to 51.6% in Uganda. The study thus concluded that where government efforts are supportive, certification is effective, the presence of approvals from health experts, and wide individual exposure levels enhance consumers' intention to purchase, recommend, and repeatedly buy halal food products, especially among Muslims in Uganda and Bruneians. The study, however, observed that the effect was greater in Uganda compared to Brunei, perhaps because Brunei had well-developed halal food legislation that had existed for a long time and Uganda presents a new opportunity for the development of the Halal food industry if the above factors are well developed and executed.

The study recommended that Brunei Darussalam and Uganda halal food practitioners and legislators should allocate more efforts to boosting awareness among citizens which would resultantly catalyse positive intentions to try, buy, repurchase, and recommend such products amongst themselves. However, more awareness and sensitization are needed in the Ugandan context in form of training practitioners on how halal food attracts consumer purchase intentions. This can be done by organizing seminars and mass information adverts on media platforms to further familiarize halal food information to even the non-Muslim population.

The study recommended that the Ugandan government should embrace practices that aim at certifying halal food to boost consumers' intention to purchase such products instead of the current state halal certification processes which are voluntary. This will attract more subscribers from manufacturers to avoid reprimands from the government and to catch up with competitors who would have already been certified.

Further still, halal food practitioners from Uganda ought to benchmark on practices of Bruneian halal food legislation processes to enhance awareness and cultivate penetration of

halal food products in the country. This recommendation is based on the conclusions that government role, certification, health expert approvals, and individual exposure levels of Bruneians were boosting citizens' intention to buy such products.

To add to that, the study also recommended that the Ugandan government should have a higher stake in the halal food certification process other than leaving it to NGOs, to streamline such efforts, boost public trust, and fund the relevant processes to significantly impact this particular sub-sector.

Finally, the study sampled largely Muslim respondents and generalizing these conclusions on non-Muslim contexts might yield insignificant outcomes. Therefore, future scholars are advised to sample non-Muslim respondents to further improve their willingness to buy and loyalty to halal food.

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