

Modeling the Effects on the Attitude of Young Adult Urban Muslim Women towards Halal Cosmetic Products: New Insights for Championing the Halal Economy

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Abstract

Plethora of cosmetic products in the marketplace are fighting vigorously for the consumers' wallets; the local brands appear to capture their own niches by projecting themselves as "Islamic" brands via their creative product offerings. The purpose of this paper is to identify a behavioral matrix which classified Malaysian into the appropriate quadrant in the Spiritual Intelligent Matrix and hence will be proposed. The results generated from this study could afford new insights in order to design strategies and policies in branding and positioning halal values to the cosmetic products manufactured in Malaysia. The paper highlights new frameworks which will modify the Planned Behavior Theory (TPB), develop new scales to measure spiritual intelligence in the TPB theoretical framework to explore how the variable could influence consumer attitude towards Halal cosmetic produced in Malaysia. The new measurement scale is used to unravel underlying dimensions of spiritual intelligence from the perspective of the Muslim which is deemed imperative. It is envisaged that it could explicate the effects of spiritual intelligence, spiritual congruence, product involvement and product image of the consumers' attitude towards purchasing halal cosmetics and in turn to reaffirm intention to consume halal cosmetic.

Keywords – Attitude, spiritual intelligence, spiritual congruence, product involvement, product image

1. Introduction

Currently, the demand for Halal products is rapidly increasing since the consumers are more religious and concerned towards halal (Lada, 2010) matters and will ensure the product is not only safe to eat and of high quality, but also expect the product to be produced and processed in a manner that is safe for the environment (Kim and Chung 2010). The issue becomes an important area of research as there is growth in participation towards halal industry in Malaysia. This business is struggling and competing with each other to capture the unique consumer segment with the values, ethics and trust as Malaysia is the key mover of halal industry (Mahathir, 2010). Financial and food are the strongest sectors that capture the Islamic societies compare to the other sectors. Nonetheless, Halal cosmetics and toiletries industry are expected to be the next vigorous segment to bounce attention as this sector has been forecast to have great potential to drive the halal economy (Mahathir, 2010).

Having 60% of the population being Muslim, Malaysia has been responsible in developing standard for the halal industry and establishing the requisite to ensure that the standard meet the international best practices and envision championing halal economy. Even non-Muslim countries perceive halal market as significant focus and have a chance to increase the global market as consciousness and availability of the halal product have arisen. Demanding high quality product that meets the Shariah compliance is increasing (Bidin, 2009). Those who are hygienic and tidy will get respect from others. Being clean and tidy is not only referring to the outside appearance (clothing), but also referring to parts of the body as well. Therefore, *apart from wearing acceptable clothings, the adornment used must also be halal* (Lada, 2009). Today, with the speed of trade globalization in science and technology, the process of product preparation can be abridge and incessant. Thus the marketers (food and non-food product categories) should understand enough about the halal concept as the consumers today are more religious and conscious towards halal product (Baker, 2010). They will request for products that not only can satisfy their preferences, but also balances their harmonious and peaceful living (Aziz, 2010).

Thus, a new measurement scale to unravel the underlying dimensions of spiritual intelligence from the perspective of the Muslim is deemed imperative. Besides, it is to investigate that it could explicate the effects of the spiritual congruence, product involvement and product image construct. Hence, it could influence the attitude towards young adult Muslim women which lead to their intention to consume halal cosmetics product in Malaysia. Besides, the study is to explore the antecedents of TPB (subjective norms and perceived behavior control) towards the intention to consume halal cosmetics.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theory Planned Behaviour (TPB)

TPB is an extension of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1985). It is more robust since the model is much broader and applicable in various contexts such as marketing (Netemeyer, 1993), leisure activities (Ajzen and Driver, 2000), attending sports events (Cunningham, 2003) and consumer behaviour (Choi and Geitfeld, 2004). Perceived behaviour control (PBC) is added to the TPB model to explain situations where individual has less than complete control (volitional control) over the person behaviour, and reflects the difficulty of performing behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The study used TPB and decision for the use of the theory is due to certain reasons. Firstly, the theory has been used by researchers due to the flexibilities controlled by the model which makes it easier for its application to different situation (Ramayah et. al. 2009, 2010). Moreover, a study by Kim and Chung (2011) has successfully extended the theory in a context of organic skin care and has proven that it is applicable to examine intention to consumer purchase intention for organic personal care products from the perspectives of the United States (US) consumer behavior. Secondly, the study has considered to indicate the theory as it has been tested by several prior studies and claimed that the antecedents of the theory are valid to be extended into various contexts. Thus, the authors have decided for the inclusion of the model in the current research.

2.1.1 Attitude

Attitude towards the behavior refers to the individual evaluation being favorable or unfavorable to perform the behavior. According to Ajzen (1985), an individual is more likely to undertake a certain behavior if he/she has a positive attitude toward undertaking the behavior. Numerous studies support the positive relationship between consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions for halal product purchasing (Sundqvist, 2005). Attitude is the main construct in this study whereby to investigate the effect towards the intention of the consumer to consume and the required intention to consume in the future.

2.1.2 Subjective Norms

According to TPB, individual who has a positive attitude towards halal cosmetic might not have assurance to buy the halal cosmetic (Lutz, 1991) because, the decision making will be influenced by the subjective norms (social influence) which can be their peers, families or others whom the individual is close with (Lutz, 1991). As a result, the individual could not create a positive attitude towards the halal cosmetic which generates incongruence between his/her attitude and the social influence expectations that may lead his intention to buy halal cosmetic (Lutz, 1991).

2.1.3 Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

Several studies have proven that those individuals, who have a favorable attitude towards certain behavior, will not accomplish to do so as they found difficulties to achieve (Chen, 2007). Relationship between consumer's attitude and intention is inconsistent because purchase intention for halal cosmetic may be influenced by certain factors. It is expected that the positive relationship between attitude and intention may be moderated by the degree of perceived behavior control. The positive attitude towards buying halal cosmetic product may not always lead to intention to purchase the products.

2.2 Spiritual Intelligence

SI is an assortment between spirituality and intelligence (Amran, 2007). It shows the intensity of the individual's spiritual level when he/she lives in a way that blends spirituality into their daily life (Nasel, 2004) which reflected their attitudes and behavior in making

the best decision in his lives (Nasel, 2004). However, there is little research of measurement of SI instrument that has been developed and validated (Amran, 2007). There is lack of research on attitude towards halal products to investigate the relevance of spiritual intelligence in verbalizing such attitudes (Emmons, 1999). Thus, this research will investigate the degree of spiritual intelligence in predicting young adult Muslim women (user or non-user) attitude towards their intention to consume and having intention to consume the halal cosmetic in future. The present research model was based on the postulates of theory of planned behaviour (TPB). Previous study has suggested that Muslims who are becoming more spiritual, their consumption behavior will be influenced by integrated values which should be in congruence to the Islamic principles and *they become more concern about what, when, where, how, from who, and how much to consume* (Baker, 2010).

2.3 Spiritual Congruence

Spiritual congruence, spiritual intelligence and self-congruity have been used interchangeably in marketing literature to indicate the congruence between both variables. There are four variants of self-congruity namely actual self- congruity, ideal self-congruity, social self-congruity, and ideal social self-congruity. The greater the match between the product or brand user-image and patron image with the consumer's self-image, the more likely that consumers will infer that the use of the product, brand or visit at the store should meet their need for self-esteem (Sirgy, 1998).

2.4 Product Involvement

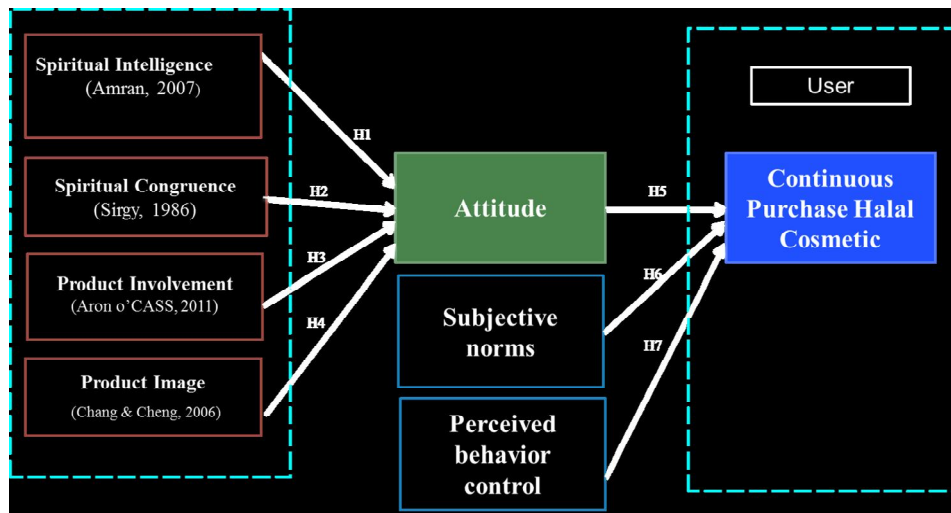
In the context of consumer behavior study, some scholars have considered that the product involvement is vital in order to understand the characteristics and behavioral trends of the several consumer groups. However, PDI assessed close to the time of purchase as it started the proposed measure of mindset of the consumer in making the decision. For instance, low purchase involvement evolves to the women consumers when purchasing cosmetic as it differs to which brand that they may purchase (Mittal, 1989). There are abundance of views and perspective in evaluating the construct. This study highlights the major concern of product involvement and construct towards the attitude which leads to intention to consume halal cosmetic. High or low the product involvement is, depends on the consumer's part in the product involvement, as it is best based on the consumer attributes (Joseph, 1984).

2.5 Product Image

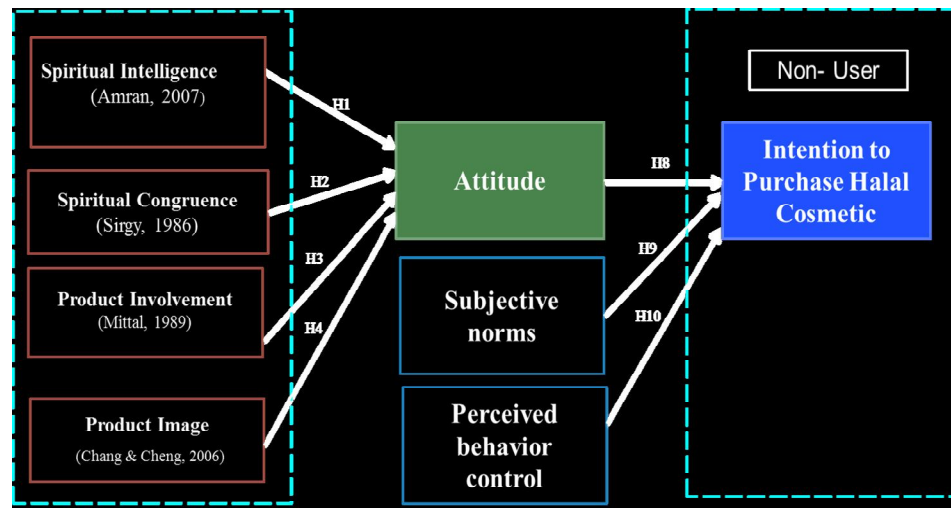
Presently, the experts recognize that it is vital in marketing to convey desired consumer's perception towards the product itself (Engel et.al., 1995). Cultivating product image in the consumer's mind is important as it creates a strong image and useful when purchasing the product (Wilkie 1994). According to Hawkins et al. (1998) product image may result in boasting the product activity. The customers are willing to pay more for the product that has higher quality. Even the retailer is courageous enough to charge higher price for a good product image. Lacking in the study is to understand the product images in the context of consumer based (Wilkie, 1994). Thus, this study is to investigate the product image towards the attitude which leads to the intention of the consumer to consume halal cosmetic.

3. Research model and hypotheses

Below are the research model used, the study is using the Multi-group analysis groups which was further defined by narrowing it into two focus group according to specific profile of the respondents (user and non-user of Halal cosmetic product). Users are those who consume halal cosmetic product while non-user is vice versa.



Group A: User of Halal Cosmetic



Group B: Non-user Halal Cosmetic

Figure 1. A Schematic diagram Conceptual Framework

Based on the review of existing literature, research objectives and the model following the hypotheses were developed.

- Hypothesis 1: SI has a significant positive effect on attitude
- Hypothesis 2: Spiritual Congruence has a significant positive effect on attitude
- Hypothesis 3: Product Involvement has a significant positive effect on attitude
- Hypothesis 4: Product Image has a significant positive effect on attitude
- Hypothesis 5: Attitude has a significant positive effect to consume halal cosmetic
- Hypothesis 6: Subjective Norms has a significant positive effect to consume halal cosmetic
- Hypothesis 7: PBC has a significant positive effect to consume halal cosmetic
- Hypothesis 8: Attitude has a significant positive effect intention to consume halal cosmetic
- Hypothesis 9: Subjective norms has a significant positive effect intention to consume towards halal cosmetic
- Hypothesis 10: PBC has a significant positive effect on intention towards halal cosmetic

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Sample and instrument

The data was collected using a self-administered structured questionnaire. The first section gathered information about respondents demographic, the second part measured consumer attitude, subjective norms and PBC to choose halal products. The final section encompasses the measures of spiritual intelligence. The questionnaire was distributed based on the quota sampling of the shopping population in four major cities in the Klang Valley. These cities were generally having higher number of shopping malls and most of the shopping activities take place. Besides, drop off and collect technique was being used and distributed in the office. This technique has proven that it can minimize non-response errors (Joseph, 1984).

Subjective norm, PBC (the independent variables), intention to consume halal cosmetic were measured using seven items. The items of these constructs were adapted from previous researches in various situations: attitude (Kim, and Chung, 2011; Lada et al., 2009; Md. Taib et al., 2008); subjective norms and PBC (Taib et al., 2008; Ramayah and Mohd Suki, 2006); intention to consume (Ramayah, 2007). The items of these constructs were phrased in the form of statements in eliciting a participant's views on the present research subject matter. In all these measures, a Likert-type scale of 1-7 was employed. A score of 1 indicates "strongly disagree" with the statement whereas a score of 7 indicates "strongly agree" with the statement. As noted earlier, the questionnaire was designed based on a review of the literature relating to TPB. The ISIS (Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale) comprises 45 items. A six-point Likert scale was developed to address the seven dimensions of spiritual intelligence; rarely or almost never; very infrequently; somewhat infrequently, somewhat often; very frequently; and always or almost always. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the items about spiritual intelligence.

4. Data Analysis

The proposed hypotheses will be tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM is a comprehensive statistical approach to testing hypotheses on the relations between observed and latent variables (Hoyle, 1995). Latent variables represent theoretical constructs that cannot be observed directly and sometimes regarded as factor. Thus, it cannot be measured directly. SEM is a unique combination of these two techniques as the SEM foundation lies in two familiar multivariate techniques which are factor analysis and multiple regression analysis (Hair, Black, Babin and Henderson, 2010). In this study, AMOS will be used to conduct the SEM. AMOS has been developed in such an interesting aspect with the Microsoft windows interface and has gained increasing acceptance recently as it is an additional to the SPSS statistical programme (Arbuckle, 1997). Prior researchers believed that the execution of SEM is easy with AMOS as it provides rapid model specification with its graphical interface which includes the drag-and-drop drawing features. Additionally, it accepts path diagrams as a model specification and display parameter estimates graphically on a path diagram. Generally, most of the modeling can be performed within the diagrams and no programming skills are required.

5. Discussions and Future Research Directions

As the main construct of attitude; this study is to investigate the attitude component towards intention to consume halal cosmetic. Further expand, there is observation on the spiritual intelligence, spiritual congruence, product involvement and product image construct to investigate its role in influencing the young adult Muslim women intention to consume halal cosmetic. The context of this research will give a big impact and good platform to many other studies in the same area, especially those that are focusing and interested in learning and understanding the purchase consumer behaviour of halal cosmetic product among the Muslim urban female in Malaysia.

Those Muslims who have a thorough basic knowledge about Islam is familiar with the term halal. Thus this research indicates that it creates halal awareness and they will pursue for products that not only satisfy their needs and preferences, but also giving them peace while consuming the product. The manufacturers, producers and marketers should not only think on how to increase the return, but also they should understand essentials on the grounding about halal to encourage them to produce innovative products that are truly halal. Hence, this study will be able to guide them in formulating operative marketing strategies and automatically create a competitive advantage in the market place. Thus, it is vital to investigate the young adult Muslim women attitude towards the halal cosmetic products. Since this study only investigates the young Muslim female attitude towards halal cosmetic in general, in future research, it can be broken down on the product of different categories and gender to make a more precise picture of the issue.

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