

# Sobel Statistical Test on the Mediation Effect of *Halal* Image toward Intention to Patronage Retail Stores

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**Abstract**—The term “*halal* image” may often be referred to any images which are perfectly fit to describe Islamic decency and wholesomeness. As Islam teaches its followers on what foods are good (*halal*) and bad (*haram*) for consumption the attachment of Islamic decency and wholesomeness onto retail services is expected to spur store patronage. This research study tries to investigate the power of *halal* image in maneuvering Muslim consumers toward patronizing retail stores that are guided by the law of syari’ah. In this study, three independent variables (attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control) have been examined against the intention to patronage retail stores while letting the *halal* image to intervene. Results of the research study found that the mediating effect of *halal* image do exist in the relationship between consumers’ attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention to patronage retail stores. This suggests that consumers may perceive *halal* image as an important part in an indirect positive relationship between independent variables (e.g. attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral intention) and behavioral intention, thus giving support to the mediating effect of *halal* image. A possible explanation for this mediating effect is probably due to the high degree of dependency on *halal* image among Muslim consumers.

**Index Terms**—*Halal* dietary law, behavioral intention, *halal* retail stores, *halal* image.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Muslim consumers’ projection toward becoming a major driving force to the world economic growth seems to be promising in the near future. Identified as the fourth-billion market segment [1], Muslim consumers whose population stand at 1.5 - 1.8 billion could give much greater impact in comparison to other billions (India - 1.195 billion, China - 1.342 billion and Women – consists about half of the world’s adult population). According to [1], such a contribution is planned due to certain exceptional qualities which subsist in the segment. First, Muslim consumers are found to exist in economically feasible numbers in many countries worldwide. Second, Muslim populations are the youngest along with all other populations. Finally, a stern support can be clearly seen from quite a number of multinational companies such as McDonald, KFC, Unilever, Nestlé, L’Oreal, Baskin Robbins, Campbell and numerous

others who put in great effort in the *halal* market.

The significant of *halal* images to marketers should not be taken for granted. High call for *halal* foods and other *halal* products is acknowledged not only in Islamic countries but also in the non-Muslim nations where Muslim communities become more apparent. Most Muslim countries are quite well advanced in ensuring more *halal* foods and products are circulating in their markets. *Halal* certification seems to be the most demanding instrument being applied to guarantee that food and non-food products are prepared according to the law of syariah [2]. For instance, *halal* logo will be produced to the manufacturer, food operators, and many others who seek the *halal* certification. The logo signifies that the foods or products available are *halal* compliant and sacredly good for Muslim consumption [3] and absolutely, this will grant superb *halal* confidence to consumers.

*Halal* images are not only restricted to the conformed *halal* certified products lay in the retail shelves but more than that the images are seen to take in the stores’ internal as well as external looks. Apart from *halal* logo and *halal* certification, *halal* images may also pop up from various identifications such as Muslim store owners, Muslim staffs, composition of Muslim consumers patronizing the stores, hygienic handling, and management of non-*halal* items, to name a few.

This research study is carried out to examine the relationship between attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and consumers’ behavioral intention. In addition, *halal* image is attached in the study’s theoretical framework to function as a mediator. Both internal and external looks of the stores contribute to the formation of retail stores’ *halal* image while *halal* knowledge is to largely contribute to the development of consumer’s ideal *halal* perception. A well balance matching between consumers’ ideal *halal* perception and retail stores’ *halal* images is projected to yield a strong feeling toward intention to patronage the retail stores in the future.

## II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This research study seeks to investigate the potency of *halal* image affecting consumers’ behavioral intention. Hence, two research objectives are proposed:

- To investigate the relationship between attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control toward behavioral intention to patronage retail stores.
- To examine the mediating effect of *halal* image toward the relationship between attitudes, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control on

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consumers' behavioral intention to patronage retail stores.

### III. HALAL IMAGE AND THE CONCERN FOR HALAL PURCHASING

Anxiety of Muslim consumers with regard to *halal* status declared by many food producers were seen as an important driver to avoid the non-*halal* and at the same time to strictly get complied with *halal* dietary laws. A study by [4] was such a good example of work research in endorsing the effects of *halal* principle over consumers' behavior. His research finding revealed that Muslim consumers tend to go for the *halal* and stay away from the haram. The same research finding was found in a study conducted by [5] who disclosed that Muslim consumers are highly supportive about consumption of *halal* foods. Such tendency was also recorded in [6].

A similar concern was explained by [7] who found out that Muslim consumers in actual fact care about the *halal* status of their purchases. This was further supported by [6] who noted that Muslim consumers, as compared to their non-Muslim counterparts, tend to purchase products labeled with *halal* logo. A study done by [8] also emphasized *halal* logo as one of the factors to influence customer preference. The important of *halal* logo was further demonstrated by [9] who disclosed that Muslim and non-Muslim consumers do consider *halal* products as clean, safe, nutritious and strictly follow the Islamic dietary law.

[10] explored behavior of Muslim consumers with respect to buying *halal* meat from *halal* butchers and supermarket. Buying influences were identified and further examined to spot preferences. The study discovered that most Muslims favour local shops when buying *halal* meat and thus, do not trust big supermarkets. [11] run a more technical study to explore the production and processing of *halal* meat throughout its supply chain. Islamic dietary prescriptions and the *halal* meat chain consists of quite a number of key points identified as *halal* breeding, animal welfare, stunning, knife, slaughter person, slaughter method, invocation, packaging and labelling, and retailing. Uncertainty regarding *halal* status of a product is lessen as *halal* principles are met at each of these points.

### IV. ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION

The role of attitude in justifying consumers' behavioral intention can be found in many research studies. Among them were the research works of [3] and [12] who disclosed that attitude hold a significant and positive effect on *halal* food purchasing intention. The study noticed that greater intention to purchase *halal* food products is to be drawn from consumers' positive attitude toward *halal* food. This was further supported by [13] whose study explored about the non-Muslims' awareness of *halal* principles. The research result suggested that positive attitudes towards *halal* principles contributed to the intention of purchasing *halal* food products.

Other interesting study in relation to attitude and behavioral intention can be found in [14] who supported the

idea that attitude leads to intention. The researcher noted a positive and significant relationship between attitude and behavioral intention to patronage *halal* restaurants. Research studies by [10] and [15] discovered that most Muslim consumers favour local shops or *halal* butchers when buying *halal* meat as they consider authenticity to be the most essential factor. A similar pattern of attitude was found in [16] who recorded that the intention to take *halal* meat is significantly related to consumers' positive attitude towards the consumption of *halal* meat.

### V. SUBJECTIVE NORM AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION

There is very strong common belief that those who committed to their religious group are more liable to normative influences. Research investigation by [16], for example, had unveiled a significant relationship between peer pressures and behavioral intention. This was further supported by [17] and [12] whose research finding showed that subjective norm was the most influential predictor to consumers' behavioral intention. Research results in [14] provide additional support to such relationship. The study demonstrated that consumers' intention to patronage foodservice premises was found out to be positively associated with subjective norm. The same conception was further discussed in [3] that social pressure is remained essential in influencing consumers' intention to purchase *halal* food.

Other relevant examples can also be obtained from different research settings. For an instance, the role of subjective norm can effectively be seen in the use of Islamic credit card research study conducted by [18]. The research results disclosed that subjective norm (e.g. financial recommendation) was found to be significant determinant factor for consumers to pursue with Islamic credit card. A study on the non-Muslims' awareness of *halal* principles which was carried out by [13] suggested that the pressures of others (e.g. living in the Muslim society) rouse the intention to buy *halal* food products. In [19], the understanding of non-Muslim toward *halal* principles was facilitated by factors such as mixing with the Muslims and the existence of *halal* food advertisement.

### VI. PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION

The connection between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention proposes that consumers who feel to hold certain degree of control over behavior might possibly engage with the behavior. On the contrary, those who feel to hold no control would try to ignore the behavior. Perceived availability of *halal* foods, for example, may facilitate the purchasing of *halal* and avoiding the non-*halal*.

Such relationship had been explored and successfully explained in many research studies. A study carried out by [13] on the non-Muslims' awareness of *halal* principles suggested that perceived behavioral control (e.g. food safety, environmentally friendly, and fair trade) contribute to the behavioral intention of purchasing *halal* food products. A similar finding was reported in the research work of [3] that

perceived behavioral control is an important factor to be hold before purchasing *halal* food. In this study, a significant relationship came out to exist between perceived behavioral control and the *halal* food purchasing intention.

Consistent to these research results was the one produced by [16] who found out that consumers' perceived control over consuming the meat is significantly related to their intention to consume *halal* meat. Likewise, the research results also conformed to [14] that a significant relationship do present between perceived behavioral control and the intention to repatronage foodservice premises.

VII. METHODOLOGY

A. Samples of the Research Study

Samples of this research study are drafted solely from the city of Kuching, Malaysia. Data for this study are obtained through a structured questionnaire and the whole questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A concerns about respondent's background wherein details about gender, religious faction, age, monthly income, education, residential, and occupation are recorded. Subsequently, section B consists of questions about attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, *halal* image, and behavioral intention. Participants in this study is meant to age above 20 years old since these groups of ages possess the tendency to liberally choose which retail stores to go for shopping and thus, making an independent purchasing decision. To be in line with the purpose of the study respondents must have come into contact with some retail shopping experience as this may turn out to be a strong basis in evaluating their intention to patronage retail store.

B. Statistical Analysis

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires a pilot study was performed and a number of interview sessions were conducted to conform to the needs of adjustment done. The participants in the interview were in the category of religiously knowledgeable individuals. Basic analysis to respondents' answers and comments leads to several adjustments and corrections of the questionnaire. This was especially true in the case of wording used, unclear statement, and misleading questions.

The employment of factor analysis in this study is to summarize patterns of correlations among observed variables and to manifest if variables under study can be explained entirely in terms of a much smaller number of variables. Several runs of factor analysis were carried out and the output of the final run was found to produce six factors with Eigenvalues greater than one, explaining 29.22%, 8.51%, 6.26%, 5.34%, 4.51%, and 3.98% of the variance respectively. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was valued at 0.888 and the Bartlett's test score was significant at 0.000. Therefore, factor analysis has produced values of KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) greater than 0.60 while Bartlett's tests were recorded steadily at  $p < 0.05$ . The results also demonstrated that the correlation matrix of the variables showed at least some correlations of  $r = 0.30$  indicating the data suitability for factor analysis. Kaiser's criterion Eigenvalue readings were greater than 1.0 for the first six

factors and this was further supported by an inspection of the screeplot that revealed a clear break after the sixth factor. Factors provided under this factor analysis were named after attitude (ATT), subjective norm (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), *halal* principle knowledge (HPK), *halal* image (HI) and behavioral intention (BI).

Values of Cronbach's Alpha for each variable are illustrated in Table I of which all variables have the reliability values of 0.6 and more, ranging from 0.635 to 0.849. Lower Cronbach values which are recorded by "perceived behavioral control" (0.635) and "behavioral intention" (0.666) do not at all affect the internal consistency of the scales as further checks on the inter-item correlation for both scales revealed the values of more than 0.2. This is clearly in agreement with [20] who recommends that the inter-item correlation values should be within the range of 0.2 and 0.4. Therefore, the Cronbach values for all variables in this research study are acceptable. This implies that the survey's questionnaire is a reliable tool to consistently measure the proposed constructs.

TABLE I: RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Variable	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha
ATT	4	0.849
SN	6	0.819
PBC	4	0.635
HPK	4	0.710
BI	4	0.666
HI	6	0.740

A multiple regression analysis was performed with behavioral intention to patronage retail stores functions as dependent variable while attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and *halal* principle knowledge serve as independent variables. The coefficient of determination  $R^2$  of 0.409 (adjusted  $R^2$  is 0.404) connoted that the independent variables have together explained 41% of the variance in the dependent variable (see Table II). In other words, there are other additional variables in explaining behavioral intention to patronage retail stores and have not been considered in this study, which offers suggestion for future research directions.

TABLE II: MODEL SUMMARY

Model Summary <sup>c</sup>							
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.640 <sup>a</sup>	.409	.404	.33629	.409	82.225	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), *Halal* Principle Knowledge, Perceived Behavioral Control, Attitude, Subjective Norm  
 b. Dependent Variable: BehavioralIntention

The F value in the ANOVA test is 82.225 and is significant at the level of 0.000, which indicates that the model is suitable for the collected data. In addition, values of variance inflation factors (VIF) for the variables in the study are all less than 10: attitude (1.410), subjective norm (1.609), perceived behavioral control (1.320), and *halal* principle knowledge (1.270), thus validated that there is no multicollinearity issue among independent variables. This is

further supported by the tolerance values of more than 0.10 for each independent variable: attitude (0.709), subjective norm (0.621), perceived behavioral control (0.758), and *halal* principle knowledge (0.787). Therefore, this fitted model is an adequate one for the collected data.

An examination of the t-values (see Table III) shows that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are significantly related to consumers' behavioral intention to patronage retail stores implying the relationships are fully supported by the data. Scores on the regression hold the subjective norm ( $\beta_2 = 0.397$ , t-value 8.877, and  $p < 0.05$ ) to possess the biggest standardized beta coefficient, suggesting that subjective norm is the most important factor claimed by the respondents to influence their intention to patronage retail stores. This is trailed by the attitude ( $\beta_1 = 0.227$ , t-value 5.424, and  $p < 0.05$ ) signifying the second most important factor. Perceived behavioral control has shown significant impact on consumers' behavioral intention to patronage retail stores at  $\beta_3 = 0.158$ , t-value 3.909, and  $p < 0.05$ , inferring the third most important factor to affect respondents' behavioral intention. Further investigation was carried out on the effect of *halal* principle knowledge upon the consumers' behavioral intention to patronage retail stores. The regression analysis, however, has established that *halal* principle knowledge failed to affect consumers' behavioral intention to patronage retail stores ( $\beta_4 = 0.026$ , t-value 0.661, and  $p > 0.05$ ).

TABLE III: REGRESSION RESULTS ON BEHAVIORAL INTENTION

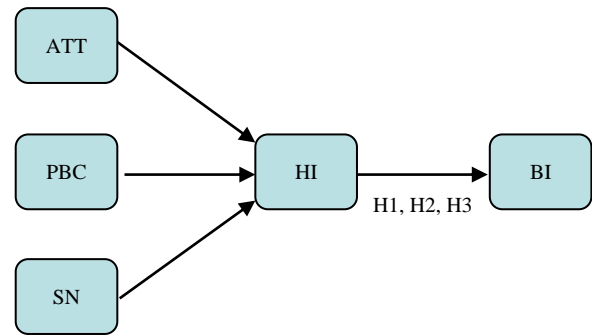
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tol	VIF
(Const)	0.581	0.488	-	1.191	0.234	-	-
ATT	0.381	0.070	0.227*	5.424	0.000	0.709	1.410
SN	0.376	0.042	0.397*	8.877	0.000	0.621	1.609
PBC	0.105	0.027	0.158*	3.909	0.000	0.758	1.320
HPK	0.045	0.067	0.026 <sup>n.s.</sup>	0.661	0.509	0.787	1.270
R	0.640						
R Square	0.409						
Adj R Sq	0.404						
F	82.225						
Sig.	0.000						

Dependent Variable: Behavioral intention, \* $p < 0.05$  and significant, n.s. = non significant

VIII. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Grounding on the previous research studies, this research has proposed a theoretical framework which was adapted from the work research of [21] and [22]. The framework has also introduced *halal* image as an integration to the Theory of Planned Behavior (see Fig. 1). Application of the Theory of Planned Behavior in this study is to facilitate the author's attempt to answer some doubts about the roles of stores' *halal* image in promoting retail patronage among Muslim consumers. This is in line with [23] who suggested that religious belief is one of the areas in which the theory can possibly be extended. Therefore, the relationship between attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, *halal* image and behavioral intention is proposed in the

research framework (see Fig. 1).



Source: Adapted from [21] and [22]

Fig. 1. Research framework.

Images of *halal* in retail premises should turn out to be an advantage to retailers who have proactively adapted to *halal* business concept. A study by [24], for example, disclosed that a favorable image influences repeating consumer patronage. This was further supported by [25] who revealed that a tendency for higher degree of consumer loyalty is to be present as favorable consumer perceptions toward an organization are well preserved. As it is now, Muslims are keen on attaching themselves with *halal* images and at the same time, tend to avoid or move away from the non-*halal* images. Thus, integrations of retail *halal* image within the consumers attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention, lead to the following hypotheses:

- H1 *Halal* image significantly mediates the relationship between consumer's attitude and their behavioral intention to patronage retail stores
- H2 *Halal* image significantly mediates the relationship between consumer's subjective norm and their behavioral intention to patronage retail stores
- H3 *Halal* image significantly mediates the relationship between consumer's perceived behavioral control and their behavioral intention to patronage retail stores

IX. SOBEL TEST

In this research study, Sobel test [26] is applied in order to know whether *halal* image could give effect to the relationship between attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control to behavioral intention. Table IV shows the mediation effect of *halal* image generated thru Sobel test.

TABLE IV: TEST STATISTIC FOR SOBEL TEST

	Test statistic	p-value
ATT	5.753	0.000
SN	5.135	0.000
PBC	5.176	0.000

Source: Adapted from [26]

H1 tested that *halal* image significantly mediates the

relationship between attitude and behavioral intention to patronage retail stores. The regression analysis of attitude and *halal* image produces the raw coefficient value of 0.780 with standard error of 0.079. Raw coefficient for the association between *halal* image and behavioral intention is recorded at 0.269 with standard error of 0.038 (see Fig. 2). Based on these values the test statistic for Sobel test is calculated and produces the 5.753, with an associated p-value of 0.000 (see Table IV). The p-value does fall below the established alpha level of 0.05 which specifies that the linkage between the attitude and the behavioral intention is reduced significantly by the insertion of the *halal* image in the model, inferring that there is evidence of mediation. Thus, H1 is maintained.

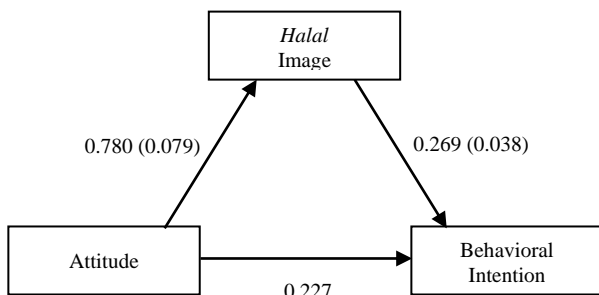


Fig. 2. *Halal* image significantly mediates the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention to patronage retail stores.

Next, H2 posits that *halal* image significantly mediates the relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intention to patronage retail stores. The regression analysis of subjective norm and *halal* image produces the raw coefficient value of 0.449 with standard error of 0.044. Raw coefficient for the association between *halal* image and behavioral intention is recorded at 0.208 with standard error of 0.035 (see Fig. 3). Based on these values the test statistic for Sobel test is calculated and it generates positive result for the subjective norm (see Table IV). Meaning that there is significant mediating effect of *halal* image on the relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intention (Sobel test = 5.135,  $p < 0.05$ ). Result shows that mediation of *halal* image exist between subjective norm and behavioral intention (see Fig. 3).

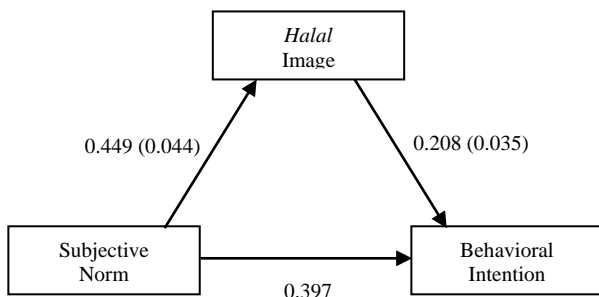


Fig. 3. *Halal* image significantly mediates the relationship between subjective norm and behavioural intention to patronage retail stores.

Finally, H3 postulates that *halal* image significantly mediates the relationship between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention to patronage retail stores. The regression analysis of perceived behavioral control and

*halal* image produces the raw coefficient value of 0.213 with standard error of 0.033. Raw coefficient for the association between *halal* image and behavioral intention is recorded at 0.312 with standard error of 0.036 (see Fig. 4). Based on these values the test statistic for Sobel test is calculated and further assessment of the mediation effect of *halal* image on perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention reveals the test score of 5.176 and the p-value is 0.000, implying moderation role of *halal* image is significant (see Table IV). Hence, H3 is retained of which *halal* image mediates the relationship between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention (see Fig. 4).

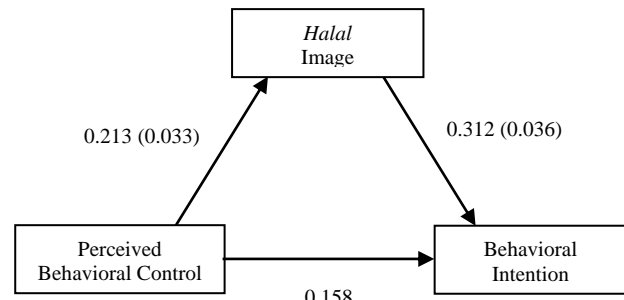


Fig. 4. *Halal* image significantly mediates the relationship between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention to patronage retail stores.

#### X. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result produced by Sobel test in relation to attitude and behavioral intention demonstrates that the mediation of *halal* image exists between the independent and dependent variable. This suggests that attitude does have an indirect positive relationship with behavioral intention when it is mediated by *halal* image. With *halal* image, consumers' attitude toward their intention to patronage retail stores can be further enhanced. Consumers with high attentiveness of the stores' *halal* image may possibly hold a positive impression toward the stores, a high motivation to patronage, and without any conditions, may follow through their intention to patronage the stores. On the contrary, those who are less aware about the stores' *halal* image may lack the motivation to patronage and may possibly not follow through their intention to patronage the stores.

Sobel test's result confirms that the relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intention can be influenced by the existence of *halal* images. This finding reveals that *halal* image successfully mediates the relationship between subjective norm and behavioral intention. In other words, with the intervention from *halal* image, social forces are easily prompting the consumers' behavioral intention. Family members or work colleagues, for example, may positively influence consumers to like the stores, but with the presence of stores' *halal* image, the consumers may be further encouraged to go on with their intention to patronage the stores. In the same way, the consumers may be negatively influenced by the absence of the stores' *halal* image. This may lead the consumers to engage less with the stores and as a consequence, consumers may not be well motivated to follow through their next intention to patronage the stores.

Sobel test also reveals that the impact of *halal* image, which plays a mediator to the relationship between perceived behavioral control and consumers' behavioral intention, is significantly present. With the existence of *halal* image, the consumers' intention to patronage retail stores can securely be predicted by the consumers' perceived control over the behavior. Consumers with better perceived behavioral control may find it easy to go along with the stores. However, *halal* image of the stores may highly reassure their intention to patronage the stores. In other setting, poorly perceived behavioral control and lack of *halal* image generated from the stores may cause the consumers to create a big gap toward the stores, not being motivated to patronage and may not continue with their intention to patronage the stores.

Result of the study suggests that consumers may perceive *halal* image as an important part in an indirect positive relationship between independent variables (e.g. attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral intention) and behavioral intention, thus giving support to the mediating effect of *halal* image. A possible explanation for this mediating effect is probably due to the high degree of dependency on *halal* image. Possessing the knowledge about the true *halal* image and realizing the essential of pursuing the *halal* commandment, Muslim consumers may be very cautious while dealing with retail stores. They become quite selective of where or what stores to patronage. To this extent, Muslim consumers have developed their own *halal* standard and this turns out to be their unique identity. As they go along in deciding which stores they should go for shopping, the least is that it must fit to this *halal* standard. With this in everybody's mind, *halal* image must be present to catch the consumers' attention and the key idea of *halal* image is to inform them that the store is complying with the consumers' *halal* standard.

## XI. CONCLUSION

Findings of this research study offer the managers and the bodies of authority a better understanding in dealing with Muslim consumers' consumption behavior. In a direct relationship, the study's results indicate that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control are strong determinants of consumers' behavioral intention. In an indirect relationship, the study's result reveals that *halal* image affects attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control in predicting consumers' behavioral intention.

For the sake of meeting or exceeding consumers' expectation, this study suggests that managers should start to concentrate on educating *halal* principles to consumers. For instance, retailers may publicly show videos concerning store safety, hygienic practice, food preparation process, *halal* certification, and the stores' *halal* policy, to name a few. Images of *halal* can also be presented in a form of graphic works such as a gigantic poster of chicken with a valid *halal* logo. Managers must ensure that the practice of *halal* is gazetted in the company's standard operating procedure so that it will become a business and a work culture. Educating consumers about *halal* principle means to fine tune their attitudes toward supporting the store.

Consumers with the right *halal* attitude are expected to spread this idea out to family members, colleagues, and friends. As their perceived control in purchasing *halal* goods is better, their intention to patronage the store is expected to be higher.

In order for marketing managers to increase store patronage, finding of the study suggests that the managers should keep their concerns in developing a positive Muslim consumers' perception to their stores. A comprehensive study on Muslim consumers' attitude, social outlook, and *halal* product availability may be a big help in establishing a more relevant marketing policies to anchor a better advertising campaigns, product pricing, merchandising displays, and consumers' safety, to name a few. On the contrary, ignoring consumers' belief in *halal* principle and paying no attention to consumers' values in *halal* consumption are not advisable as it might cause a detrimental effect on store patronage. Therefore, promoting these beliefs and values to the communities is noteworthy to the marketing managers as it incites willingness to repurchase, revisit, or recommend the stores to others.

Bodies of authority such as Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), local governments, and other supporting agencies should work very closely with retailers to ensure that the stores' *halal* practice or policies do not mislead consumers and other stakeholders. Realizing the power of *halal* images in attracting Muslim consumers, aggressively driven retailers may play foul. For example, some retail stores might be hiring Muslim workers to engage with the non-*halal* foods. In other case, retailers may instruct their non-Muslim workers to wear hijab so that the stores would come out Islamic. As this looks harmful to the Muslim society, the abovementioned bodies should gear up toward this kind of mess by the implementation of *halal* laws which need to be done in a more friendly, firm, and systematic way.

Therefore, the study proposes that a sincere adaptation of *halal* principle knowledge and *halal* image in retail stores is important for the reason that this will add value to retail business, increase Muslim consumers' patronage, and fulfil their corporate social responsibility to the Muslim communities.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Abang Sulaiman Abang Salleh is the main researcher and others are the co-authors who have played their respective assisting roles. Abang Sulaiman Abang Salleh had conducted the research and wrote the paper; Norazah Mohd Suki analyzed the data; Norzaihan Hashim, Abang Sulaiman Abang Naim, and Norlelawati Ismawi were the technical advisors; all authors had approved the final version.

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