

Factors Impacting Purchase Intention toward *Shariah* Compliant Hotels: An Empirical Investigation on Muslim Consumers' Hotel Patronizing Behaviour

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Abstract

With the increasing number of Muslim tourists, the implementation of Shariah Compliant Hotels (SCH), in the hospitality and tourism industry, has emerged as an important issue. Shariah compliance has become an integral factor that affects Muslim consumers' choice of hotels. Henceforth, the current research has been crafted primarily to investigate the factors that may affect Muslim consumers purchase intention of Shariah compliant hotels. Particularly, this study attempts to determine the association between halal image, halal awareness, religiosity, service quality and purchase intention of Shariah compliant hotels. For the purpose of attaining these objectives, a conceptual framework has been derived in accordance to the findings of prior literature. Later on, as the study is quantitative in nature, primary data have been collected through the employment of self-structured questionnaire from Muslim travelers in Malaysia particularly, Kuala Lumpur. The collected data were later analyzed through the means of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). From the statistical analysis a number of meaningful findings were derived. The outcomes of the study revealed that halal image, halal awareness as well as religiosity are significantly related to Muslim consumers purchase intention toward Shariah compliant hotels whereas; service quality is not significantly associated to purchase intention. The findings of the study will be of great importance to marketers and hoteliers for developing effective strategies in order to cater to the needs of the Muslim consumers. From an academic perspective, the study will open the door for conducting more researches on Shariah compliant hotels in the future.

Keywords: Shariah compliant hotels, purchase intention

INTRODUCTION

In recent time, there has been a growing interest in trying to understand the association that exists between Islamic principles and the consumption patterns of the Muslim consumers. This has paved that way for a strong interest in Islamic marketing among academicians and researchers. Much effort is being invested by marketers in different parts of the world in order to tailor their products as well as services for meeting the needs as well as demands of the Muslim market. One of the main reasons for such occurrence relies on the reason that, the Muslim market has been identified as an emerging market that is relatively untapped. Therefore, this respective group of consumers reflect a viable segment that has much potential to be further served by marketers. The needs of the Muslim consumers that are shaped by their religious beliefs significantly affect the aspect of tourism as well (Henderson, 2003). Muslims

are obligated to remain committed to the principles of *halal* and *haram* in their daily lives as well as when they are travelling. For Muslim travellers compliance with religious obligations is of immense importance even when they are away from home, particularly in terms of accommodation. For this reason, Islamic values and principles have been applied in the hotel industry in order to meet the demands of the Muslim travellers. The concept of *Shariah* compliant hotels has become as a vital element of Islamic tourism. *Shariah* compliant hotels are generally known as hotels that are created in order to meet the needs and demands of the Muslim consumers by providing them services that are in line with *Shariah* principles.

The tourism industry is experiencing intense competition in recent time. With the growing number of Muslim travellers, the aspect of accommodation has become an important issue for Muslim travelers. Muslim consumers encounter various problems in the event of traveling to foreign countries and they are in great need of hotels that have been created following the principles of Sharia. The inability to adhere to their religious obligations when travelling may create a dilemma for Muslim travellers (Zamani-Farahani and Henderson, 2010). When destination hosts are unable to provide Islamic facilities and attributes it discourages Muslim consumers from visiting certain destinations (Battour and Battor; 2010). In order to retain the emerging Muslim segment, satisfying their religious needs by delivering services that are *Shariah* compliant has become a necessity for tourism service providers and destination marketers. However, as a review of literature has revealed that there is a scarcity of studies when it comes to Muslim consumers purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels. When it comes to the purchase intention of Muslim consumers, the aspects of *halal* image, *halal* awareness, and religiosity are of utmost importance. Moreover, service quality also plays in integral role in influencing purchase intention. However, limited are the studies that have investigated the effects of these factors on Muslim consumers purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels. Moreover, the concurrent effect of *halal* image, *halal* awareness, religiosity and service quality is yet to be examined on purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels. Hence, in order to fill this gap in contemporary literature, the current study has been developed with the main purpose of investigating the factors that may affect Muslim consumers purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the effect of *halal* image on purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels
2. To examine the effect of *halal* awareness on purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels.
3. To assess the effect of religiosity on purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels.

4. To determine the effect of service quality on purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels.

LITERATURE REVIEW

***Halal* Image and Purchase Intention**

Halal is an Arabic word which denotes permissibility under the religion of Islam (Deuraseh, 2009). From a marketing perspective, the term *halal* is often used in order to disclose the permissibility of a particular product (Lada et al., 2009) or service (Suki and Salleh, 2016) in accordance to the principles prescribed in the Holy Quran and *Shariah*. The aspect of *Halal* is highly taken into account by Muslims as statistics have reported that the *halal* standard is followed by 70% of Muslim consumers globally (Lada et al., 2009). When it comes to consumers' decision making process from an Islamic perspective, *halal* image refers to the perceptions that are held by consumers regarding the brand characteristics that are retained in their memory in regards to their religious concept, and later on it directs their purchasing habits (Suki, and Salleh, 2016). Prior studies have demonstrated that when consumers possess favorable perceptions towards a particular organization there is a higher probability that they will remain loyal to the very organization (Nguyen and Leblanc, 2001). Likewise, permissibility in Islam is strongly taken by Muslim consumers as Islamic values have profound impact on Muslim societies which in turn affect their social etiquette along with choice of consumption (Khraim, 2010). Past research has indicated that Muslim consumers revealed a profound desire to associate their purchasing patterns with *halal* images by refraining from any act that is related to non-*halal* images (Suki and Salleh 2016). The findings of the study undertaken by Suki and Salleh (2016) revealed that when it comes to Muslim consumers the aspect of *halal* image is meaningfully correlated to their intention of patronizing to *halal* stores. Taking into account the findings of prior studies, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: Halal image has a positive effect on purchase intention of Shariah compliant hotels.

***Halal* Awareness and Purchase Intention**

The term *Halal* awareness refers to anything that is considered to be acceptable as well as permissible for Muslims (Eliasi and Dwyer, 2002; Awan et al., 2014). According to Azam (2016) the term awareness refers to a person's knowledge as well as understanding of a given situation or matter. It has been further explained by him that when it comes to the notion of *halal*, the word awareness literally denotes possessing special interest or being experienced with something as well as well-informed regarding certain occurrence in relation to consumer

decision making pertaining to consumption of halal products. When making a purchase Muslim consumers are highly aware of different aspects associated with the product which includes the contents, processes along with other sources as well as determinants associated with it (Said and Hassan, 2014). With greater awareness as well as knowledge about *halal* consumption it is believed that Muslims in current time are living a life that is more holistic, as a result of which marketers are no longer able to just print a halal logo of the packaging of their product and get away with the issue (Said and Hassan, 2014). Therefore, awareness is one of the leading aspects that is highly taken into consideration by Muslim consumers in the event of consuming halal label products, particularly in Muslim countries like Malaysia (Teng and Wan Jusoh, 2013). Similar findings were also demonstrated by other researchers as they found that Muslim consumer's awareness is significantly associated with their intention to purchase products along with their religious beliefs and halal certification (Majid et al., 2015). The results of the study undertaken by Yunus et al., (2015) demonstrated a meaningful congruency between the facets of *halal* awareness and Muslim consumers' willingness to purchase *halal* packaged food manufactured by non-Muslim organisations. A positive relationship between awareness and intention of purchasing *halal* branded products was also found by Ghadikolaei (2016). In view of this, the next hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Halal awareness has a positive effect on purchase intention of Shariah compliant hotels.

Religiosity and Purchase Intention

Religiosity, or in other words an individual's religious commitment, is referred to as the degree to which a person is devoted to the principles his or her religion which in turn, is mirrored in their attitude as well as behaviour (Ramly et al., 2008). Religious commitment is indeed the key influencer for both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers' consumption pattern as it guides individuals' behaviours throughout their lives and assists them in making the correct decisions (Salman and Siddiqui, 2011). Therefore, religion plays a crucial role in the field of consumer behaviour (Sun et al, 2012). As stated by Rehman and Shabbir (2010), religion helps people to differentiate between the prohibited and non-prohibited products. The behaviour and attitude of the consumers toward the selection, purchase and consumption of products depends on how committed they are to their religion (Kharim, 2010). The findings of prior studies demonstrated that Muslim consumers' religiosity is one of the most vital elements that is associated to their intention of purchasing products as well as services (Shaari and Mohd Arifin, 2009; Said and Hassan (2014), Jamal and Sharifuddin (2015); Mukhtar and Butt (2012), Borzooei and Asgari

(2013). The findings of the study undertaken by Shaari and Mohd Arifin (2009) demonstrated that in the event of purchasing halal products consumers' religious beliefs are one of the most vital elements as there was a significant association between the two respective facets. From a similar standpoint, religious commitment has also been proven to be significantly affiliated with halal consumption based on the study done by Said and Hassan (2014). In regards to the above discussion the hypothesis stated below has been derived:

Hypothesis 3: Religiosity has a positive effect on purchase intention of Shariah compliant hotels.

Service Quality and Purchase Intention

Researchers have asserted that in the intensely competitive environment of the modern time, the aspect of service quality has emerged as a vital strategic element for organizations trying to prosper as well as attain long term survival (Hume, 2008; Chaker and Jabnoun, 2010). Under such circumstances, it has been claimed that the elements of customer satisfaction and retention share a favourable relationship with the level of service quality that is offered to the customers whereby, superior level of service quality carry positive effects on customer satisfaction as well as retention (Chaker and Jabnoun, 2010). One of the most renowned models that is used to gauge service quality is widely known as the SERVQUAL model was initially developed by Parasuraman et al., (1985). This model is universally recognized as the most extensively employed model in terms of assessing service quality (Chaker and Jabnoun, 2010) and it has been applied in the different sectors of the service industry (Amin and Issa, 2008). The SERVQUAL model comprises of a total of five respective dimensions namely, reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy explained (Chaker and Jabnoun 2010). Research has indicated that in the area of hospitality and tourism service quality is an important antecedent of customers' behavioural intentions (El-Garaihy, 2013; Yunus et al., 2014). In a study conducted by El-Garaihy (2013) it was found that service quality is favourably associated to consumers' purchase intention towards hotels in Saudi Arabia. A model was developed by Gonzalez et al. (2007) in order to comprehend the relationship that exists between service quality and behavioural intention specifically focusing on the tourism industry. The outcomes of their study confirmed the presence of a meaningful relationship between consumers' perception of service quality and their behavioural intention. Furthermore, similar findings were also reported by Kuruuzum and Koksals (2010) as it was determined that the aspect of service quality carries a strong influence on hotel customers behavioural intention. Moreover,

it has been mentioned by Yunus et al., (2014) that the aspect of expected service quality is found to have profound impact on consumers' intention toward purchasing *Shariah* compliant hotels. Thus, in regards to the discussion based on past researches the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Service quality has a positive effect on purchase intention of Shariah compliant hotels.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The framework of this particular study has been developed on the basis of prior finding. This framework focuses on Muslim consumers purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels based on the variables extracted from the literature particularly, *halal* image, *halal* awareness, religiosity and service quality. The framework illustrates the connection among the variables. Figure 1 provides a representation of the conceptual framework of the study. By referring to figure 1 it can be seen that the model comprises of four dependent variables (*halal* image, *halal* awareness, religiosity and service quality) and one independent variable (purchase intention). Moreover, the hypothesized relationships among the constructs have also been demonstrated.

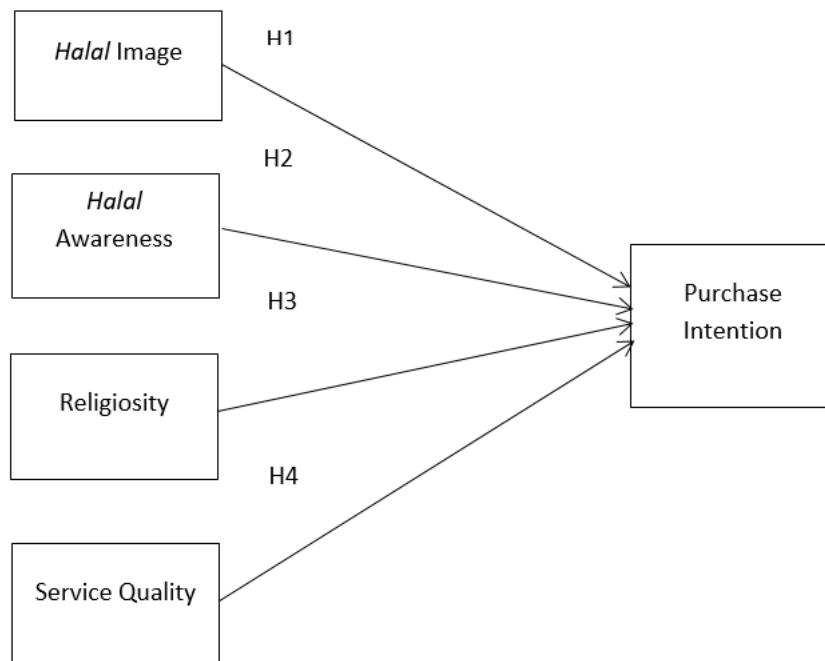


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHODOLOGY

This research falls under the quantitative research method and attempts to gain further insights regarding the antecedents of purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels of Muslim consumers. For this reason, Muslim consumers from different tourist destinations in Malaysia make up the target population of the current study. For the current study, data were collected from a total of 426 participants through the employment of survey strategy. A convenience sampling method was used for the purpose of collecting the required data. The major reason for using this particular sampling approach is that it allows researchers to collect data from respondents who are easily available as well as able to provide appropriate information regarding the issue being investigated (Hair et al., 2009). Moreover, convenience sampling was also used as it is considered to be the most efficient way of collecting data in a less time consuming and cost effective manner (Hair et al., 2009).

Therefore, for the present study data were collected by following convenience sampling method from a number of tourist destinations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur has been selected for the reason that this city has the majority of the tourist destinations in the country. A self-administered questionnaire was developed and the participants were requested to answer the questions of a 5 point Likert scale whereby 1 denoted strongly disagree and 5 represented strongly agree. In order to ensure the issues of convergent, construct and lastly face validity (Zainudin, 2012). Questionnaire items have been adapted from prior studies and were later modified so that they suit the nature of this particular study. Moreover, the multidimensional construct of service quality has been measured with five respective indicators namely, reliability, responsiveness, tangibility, assurance and empathy. The underlying reason for measuring the construct of service quality with these five indicators is that according to literature service quality is generally measured on the basis of these dimensions as they are the most prominent dimensions of service quality (Chaker and Jabnoun, 2010; Amin and Issa, 2008; Parasuraman, et al., 1985).

Additionally, operationalization of variables is a vital process for transforming abstract concepts into constructs that can be adequately measured. Hence, for this study all the key variables have been operationalised. *Halal* image refers to consumers' perception regarding *Shariah* compliant hotels on the basis of the associations held in their memories about *Shariah* compliant hotels (Awan et al., 2015; Yunus et al., 2014). *Halal* awareness is consumers' knowledge and familiarity with *Shariah* compliant hotels (Awan et al., 2015; Azam, 2016). Religiosity indicates consumers' commitment toward their religion along with religious beliefs

and values (Rehman and Shabbir, 2010). Service quality refers to customers' evaluation of the services that are provided by *Shariah* compliant hotels on the basis of how appropriately the services met their expectations. Service quality comprises of important dimensions namely, reliability, responsiveness, tangibility, assurance and empathy (Amin and Isa, 2008). Purchase Intention refers to consumers' willingness to patronize *Shariah* compliant hotels (Haque et al., 2015; Yunus et al., 2014; Lada et al., 2009). Table 1 depicts the sources from where the items have been adopted.

Table 1: Questionnaire Items

Variable	Source
<i>Halal</i> awareness	Awan et al., (2015); Azam (2016)
<i>Halal</i> image	Awan et al., (2015); Yunus et al. (2015)
Religiosity	Rehman and Shabbir (2010)
Service Quality	Amin and Isa (2008)
Purchase Intention	Haque et al., (2015); Yunus et al. (2015);Lada et al. (2009)

After collecting all required primary data, SPSS was used for analysing the data. The process of data analysis started through inserting the data into SPSS. Afterwards, descriptive analysis was done. Later on, as recommended by Hair et al (2010) exploratory factor analysis was conducted. At the final stage the hypotheses were verified through regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Information

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were statistically assessed through performing a number of descriptive statistics particularly frequencies, measures of central tendencies along with dispersion. Table 2 depicts the results of the descriptive statistics based on the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	289	67.8
Female	137	32.2
Age		
18 to 25 years	38	8.9
26 to 35 years	143	33.6
36 to 45 years	129	30.2
46 to 59 years	97	22.8
60 and above	19	4.5
Marital Status		
Married	284	66.7
Unmarried	127	29.8
Divorced	15	3.5
Employment		
Government	24	5.6
Private	181	42.5
Self-Employed	126	29.6
Student	47	11.0
Housewife	39	9.2

Others	9	2.1
Monthly Income		
RM2,000 and below	92	21.6
RM2,001 - RM3,000	27	6.3
RM3,001 – RM5,000	123	28.9
RM 5,001 – RM 7,500	106	24.9
RM 7,501- RM10,000	56	13.1
Above RM10,000	22	5.2

Reliability Coefficient

The primary reason for the purpose of conducting reliability test is to verify the presence of consistency in a data set. Hence, assuring the reliability is of utmost importance as it allows researchers to check whether there is consistency among the items included in a scale. Reliability is assessed on the basis of Cronbach's alpha whereby, a minimum value of .7 is required (Pallant, 2010).

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha

Component	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Halal Image	.802	6
Halal Awareness	.846	5
Religiosity	.798	5
Service Quality	.819	5
Purchase Intention	.872	6

Table 4: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.865
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2341.750
	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is basically employed in order to gauge the proportion of variance persisting among the variables. It has been suggested by Tabachnick et al. (2001) that a KMO value of 0.6 is required with a significant result for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < 0.5$). Hence, in case of the present study it can be seen that the requirements for both these respective tests were met as shown in table 4. This in turn indicates that the researcher can proceed with exploratory factor analysis EFA.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

EFA is regarded as one of the most widely utilised statistical techniques primarily for assessing the dimensions in multivariate data analysis. EFA is considered to be an exploratory technique as in this respective stage researchers do not have prior knowledge regarding whether the items are able to gauge the intended factors therefore, it becomes necessary to explore the degree to which each of the observed variables are affiliated to their factors (Byrne, 2010). EFA helps researchers in shrinking a large number of variables into manageable number prior to employing the variables in other types of analyses through exploring the data set and examining the interrelationships that takes place among a set of variables (Pallant, 2010; Costello and Osborne, 2005). According to Hair et al. (2010) any loading that has a value higher than 0.60 is regarded to be significant. Table 5 demonstrates that in the present study all the items managed to load with a value greater than the cut-off value of 0.60.

Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix

Item	(F1)	(F2)	(F3)	(F4)	(F5)
Halal Image					
HI1	.845				
HI2	.827				
HI3	.791				
HI4	.689				

HI5	.654				
HI6	.637				
Halal Awareness					
HA1		.863			
HA2		.895			
HA3		.752			
HA4		.667			
HA5		.642			
Religiosity					
RL1			.874		
RL2			.856		
RL3			.778		
RL4			.764		
RL5			.736		
Service Quality					
SQ1				.845	
SQ2				.832	
SQ3				.754	
SQ4				.724	
SQ5				.684	
Purchase Intention					
PI1					.867
PI2					.861
PI3					.858
PI4					.795
PI5					.658

PI6					.642
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.					
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.					

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses that were derived for the purpose of the current study were verified through the means of regression analysis. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), one of the major reasons for the employment of regression analysis is the fact that it helps researchers to predict the strength all the independent variables in terms of predicting the dependent variable. At the same time, it also reveals among all the factors which one has the greatest influence of the dependent variable (Pallant, 2010). The outcomes for purchase intention are illustrated in table 7, 8, 9. The results of the current study showed that the four IVs (*halal* image, *halal* awareness, religiosity, service quality) together explained 64% of the variance in consumers' purchase intention. As a result of which, the model can be regarded to be appropriate for verifying the hypotheses by using t and p value statistics.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.726(a)	.663	.654		.49641268

a Predictors: (Constant), *halal* image, *halal* awareness, religiosity, service quality

Table 7: ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	102.058	6	26.063	56.535	.000(a)
	Residual	41.942	134	0.238		
	Total	144.00	140			

a Predictors: (Constant), *halal* image, *halal* awareness, religiosity, service quality

b Dependent Variable: purchase intention

The hypotheses derived for the current study emphasize the individual effect of four variables on consumers' purchase intention toward *Shariah* Compliant Hotels. The extent of influence each independent variable has the dependent variable (purchase intention toward *Shariah* Compliant Hotels) has been addressed and the outcomes have been depicted in Table 8.

Table 8: Coefficients (a)

Hypothesis	Relationships	Standardize d Coefficient (β)	T	Sig.	Results
H1	Halal Image \longrightarrow Purchase Intention	0.172	2.436	0.014	Supported
H2	Halal Awareness \longrightarrow Purchase Intention	0.327	7.310	0.000	Supported
H3	Religiosity \longrightarrow Purchase Intention	0.181	2.364	0.012	Supported
H4	Service Quality \longrightarrow Purchase Intention	0.090	1.567	0.118	Not Supported

a Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Results of Hypotheses Testing

Based on the outcomes generated from the multiple regression analysis, halal image, halal awareness and religiosity are instrumental for enhancing consumers' intention to purchase *Shariah* compliant hotels as they were found to positively affect intention to purchase *Shariah* compliant hotels. These findings are supported by prior findings as similar results were derived in the past as well. First is the association between halal image and purchase intention. Based on the results of the hypotheses testing it can be observed that H1 is accepted, indicating that *halal* image is an essential factor in terms of Muslim consumers purchase intention toward *Shariah* compliant hotels. A meaningful association between the aspect of *halal* image and purchase intention has also been uncovered in the past by Suki and Salleh (2016). Next, is H2,

which stated that *halal* awareness is positively correlated to purchase intention of Shariah compliant hotels. Based on the outcomes of the present study it can be seen that this respective hypothesis is also supported. A relationship of this nature has also been found to be acknowledged in prior studies as well (Ghadikolaei, 2016; Majid et al., 2015; Yunus et al., 2015). Then comes H3, which emphasised the relationship between religiosity and Muslim consumers purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels. The results indicated the presence of a positive link amid these two aspects leading to the acceptance of H3. The congruency between religiosity and purchase intention was also endorsed in prior researches (Shaari and Mohd Arifin, 2009; Said and Hassan, 2014; Jamal and Sharifuddin, 2015; Mukhtar and Butt, 2012; Borzooei and Asgari, 2013). However, contradicting to the researchers' assumption service quality was not significantly associated to purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels thus, H4 is not accepted. An insignificant relationship between these two factors has also been found in the past (Wonggotwarin and Kim, 2017).

CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current study has identified the factors that are crucial when it comes to Muslim consumers purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels. As such, the role of *halal* image, *halal* awareness and religiosity are of utmost importance as the findings have demonstrated that these aspects are significantly associated to purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels. Such findings indicate that it is necessary for marketers and hoteliers to strive toward enhancing the *halal* image of *Shariah* compliant hotels. At the same time, more awareness should be created about *Shariah* compliant hotels through the employment of different types of marketing activities as awareness has been found to be significantly related to purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels. Additionally, since religiosity is was found to be significantly linked to Muslim consumers purchase intention, it is obligatory of marketers and hoteliers to be sensitive and respectful about the religious beliefs and values of Muslim consumers in the event of developing marketing strategies and activities.

Despite the fact that the current study contributes to an enhancement of knowledge through examining the factors affecting purchase intention of *Shariah* compliant hotels and fills the gap that exists in current literature, it still has a number of limitations. First and foremost, one of the major drawbacks of this study is the employment of convenience sampling. Hence, in the future the present study can be undertaken through utilising probability sampling methods. Moreover, data for this study has only been collected from Muslim consumers in Kuala

Lumpur, and this may impact the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, in the future data can be gathered from more regions across Malaysia so that, it provides a better representation of the entire population. At the same time, the current model can also be extended through the incorporation of mediating and moderating variables and replicated in the context of different industries.

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