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TABLE of CONTENTS

The Impact Of The Learning Organization And Personal Development On The Personal Perfromance Of Immigration Department In Thailand: A Pilot Study For Reliability And Validity Of Instruments **1 - 11**
Tunwarat Kongnun, Chumphon Kaewsom, Azhar Harun, Rohana Yusof

Role Model And University Role Towards Entrepreneurship Inclination **12 - 23**
Shahnaz Ismail, Nadia Md Nawi, Mahirah Zainol Abidin, Tengku Farrah Maimunah Mohd Yusof

Multichannel Retail Environment: Opportunities And Challenges **24- 44**
Norzieiriani Ahmad, Muhammad Rizwan

Employability Skill Among Engineering Graduate In Malaysia **45 - 51**
Nurul Aqila, Noraini Nordin

Assessing The Challenges And Opportunities For Small And Medium Enterprises (SMEs) In Thailand Online Retail Market **52 - 62**
Kwanrudee Prachaseree, Norzieiriani Ahmad, Normalisa Md Isa

Revalidation of Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Rating Scale in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria **63 - 72**
Kabiru Jinjiri Ringim, Bello Sabo, Mukhtar Yusuf Abubakar & Nasir Abdullahi

Halal values and attitude among Muslim worldwide: Does it affect the adaptation of marketing program strategy? **73 - 89**
Hazlinda Hassan, Jamil Bojei

Innovation and firm performance of SMEs in food and beverage industry in southern Thailand **90 - 119**
Farida Sasha , Noor Hazlina Bt Ahmad, Zurina Mohaidin

Investigating the Influence of Lean Six Sigma Practices on Quality Performance in Medical Device Manufacturing Industry **120 - 130**
Sim Choon Ling, Muhammad Shahar Jusoh, Noormaizatul Akmar Ishak

Work And Family: Role-Identity Variations Among Malay Ethnic **131 - 136**
Azelin Aziz , Nor Azimah Chew Abdullah , Awanis Ku Ishak ,
Bidayatul Akmal Mustafa Kamil

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Halal values and attitude among Muslim worldwide: Does it affect the adaptation of marketing program strategy?

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the influence of Halal values and attitude on marketing program adaptation. A self-administered survey has been distributed to a sample of 110 Malaysian Halal exporters that involved in variety of product categories. The results of SEM-PLS analysis show that Halal values and attitude have significant and positive influence on the marketing program adaptation. The study was limited to the examination of the socio-cultural factors pertinent to the Halal industry on the adaptation strategy of marketing program among Malaysian exporting firms that dealing with Halal certified products. In practice, the understanding of the role of Halal values and attitudes on marketing program adaptation will contributes to exporters and policy makers in their efforts to improve marketing effectiveness and export performance of Halal products in global Halal market through the development of product that is closely adapted to export market specificity. In theory, the investigation of standardization versus adaptation issue in Halal market has contributed to the body of knowledge of international marketing strategy by adding single industry values.

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1. Introduction

The global Halal market is large, and the size is increasing annually in tandem with the growing Muslim population worldwide and the increased awareness of a responsibility to consume only Halal products. Furthermore, the growing concern of health and safety issues has raised the demand for Halal products among non-Muslim consumers, especially those who are concerned with the cleanliness and wholesomeness of the product (Golnaz, Zainalabidin, Mad Nasir, & Eddie Chiew, 2010). It is expected that the global expenditure of Muslim consumers on food and lifestyle sectors will reach at USD3.7 trillion by 2019, at a compound annual growth rate of 10.8 per cent (Rasid, 2016). This indicates that a huge demand for Halal products exists globally and is fast becoming an important category in global food development. The growth of the Halal market represents a significant demand potential for international companies, not only in Muslim countries but also in non-Muslim countries among which Halal observance is on the rise.

Under the Third Industrial Master Plan (IMP3), Malaysia has the vision to become a Global Halal Hub and play a primary role in exporting Halal products. With enormous potential in the Halal industry, the trading of Halal products in the local and global markets is expected to become a significant contributor to the economic growth of the country (IMP3, 2006-2020). However, Malaysia's involvement in the global Halal food industry is still insignificant compared to Thailand, which is fast emerging as a Halal hub (Patton, 2006). Although Malaysia is ranked in the top ten by the World Competitiveness Scoreboard regarding its competitiveness in the Halal food industry, some weaknesses have been identified that hamper local food firms from performing successfully in the global Halal food market. One of the weaknesses is the lack of legal, social, and cultural knowledge of international consumer markets (Bohari, Hin, & Fuad, 2013). Abdul Latif (2008) also noted that one common issue Malaysian exporters have faced is the ability to comply with importing country requirements, which has given some indication of their marketing adaptability in meeting target market specifications.

Marketing Halal products in an international setting is complex as it involves marketing efforts beyond national borders. With regard to product attributes, Muslim consumers are sensitive to the issue of Halalness because authentic Halal status is an obligation for every Muslim to fulfil. Apart from that, macroenvironmental factors also have created serious deterrents for implementing standardized strategies due to differing political-legal, economic, socio-cultural, and technological factors in each country (Katsikeas, Samiee, & Theodosiou, 2006; Theodosiou & Leonidou, 2003). To be able to succeed in a foreign market, firms need to have deep knowledge and full awareness of various aspects and trends in international marketing environments.

With regard to the Halal industry macroenvironment, specific factors closely related to the industry context such as the values and attitudes toward Halal in the target market should be considered because they might not only provide significant influence in securing product Halalness but also impact the performance of the firms at the international level. Furthermore, Sungkar and Hashim (2009) indicated that Halal markets are dissimilar to other markets because Halal markets are fragmented by ethnicity, location, income, Halal awareness, and understanding, and many other determinants. As Halal products are mainly demanded by Muslim consumers, the heterogeneity also exists among Muslim markets worldwide, and this unique condition must be understood properly so as to prevent international firms from offending or alienating these markets (Sandıkcı, 2011; Sandıkcı & Ger, 2011; Sandıkcı & Rice, 2011).

Despite the increasing importance of Halal market and Muslim consumers worldwide, very scarce international marketing issues such as standardization versus adaptation has been investigated in relation to the peculiarities of the market (Prokopec & Kurdy, 2011). According to Sungkar and Hashim (2009), one-size-fits-all strategy simply cannot work as it is subject on specific conditions of the export market. Based on this scenario, it is highly suggested that firms who wish to export their product to global Halal market should pursue adaptation strategy so as to meet the specific demand of the market.

While a wealth of empirical research identifying the determinant factors responsible for successful export performance exists, studies that focus on examining the impact of environmental factors on the marketing adaptation strategy are quite limited (e.g., Hultman, Robson, & Katsikeas, 2009; Johnson & Arunthanes, 1995; Sibanda & Erwee, 2009). With inadequate literatures exploring the industry context, there are no clear guidelines for international marketers to determine the critical factors of export performance associated with socio-cultural factors of Halal industry for effective export marketing strategy. Therefore, the objectives of the study is to examine the influence of Halal values and attitudes on marketing program adaptation strategy.

2. Literature Review

Each market might have different views of the Halal concept, which can influence the level of acceptance of Halal products. For the Muslim market, besides the quality aspect, the Halalness issue is crucial in determining buying decisions. Meanwhile, for the non-Muslim majority market, the aspect of product quality is very critical for enticing them to buy the product. Therefore, the socio-cultural factors of the Halal industry environments in the study discuss the Halal values and attitudes that consist of the following dimensions:

2.1 Understanding the meaning of Halal

A true understanding of the meaning of Halal concept is vital among Muslims so as to ensure they make correct decisions in selecting products and services that are compliant with Shariah principles. The ability to differentiate permissible (Halal) from forbidden (Haram) goods and services is known as Halal literacy (Imam Salehudin, 2010). Imam Salehudin (2010) indicated that Halal literacy differs among Muslims due to various interpretations of Islamic laws. He examined the relationship between Halal literacy and switching intention for purchasing products with or without the Halal label. The study found that consumers with a low Halal literacy score had less intention to switch from product without Halal label than consumer with a moderate to high literacy. This finding highlighted the potential of using consumer education in increasing the market share of Halal industries in Muslim countries. Other field studies in many parts of the world also revealed that the perceived meaning of the terms Halal and Haram are neither static nor homogenous (Sungkar, 2010). Sungkar (2010) stated that the meaning is dynamic and heterogeneous, or socially constructed during a particular time period. As a result, different meanings of Halal and Haram concepts are present across races, ethnicities, cultures, and countries. What is acceptable for one country may not be considered to be acceptable by another country. Even within an individual country or society, different ethnic or cultural groups might understand, perceive, and respond to these concepts differently, depending on regional situations, ethnic backgrounds, and socio-economic situations. Among consumers, the different interpretations of Halal meaning can significantly impact their reactions toward Halal products (e.g., Abd Aziz et al., 2010; Amri Sofi, 2010; Golnaz, 2008, Golnaz et al., 2009, 2010; Imam Salehudin, 2010; Lada et al., 2010; Ogilvy & Mather, 2010; Omar et al., 2012; Sungkar, 2010). Among certification bodies, the different interpretations of Halal concept have brought into existence many Halal standards across the world with difference sets of requirements for Halal products (Sungkar & Hashim, 2009; Wan-Hassan, 2007).

2.2 Awareness toward Halal concept

The present Islamic resurgence and growing complexities of consumer markets have led to the increasing awareness of the contents, processes, sources, and other determinants of consumer products. Among non-Muslims, the increased level of awareness of the Halal concept is due to the growing concerns of natural, safe, and healthy products. The level of awareness of the Halal concept is essential because it could influence the purchasing decisions and behavior. Although awareness of the Halal issues is on the rise, the variations can be seen with respect to several issues, especially related to types of product. Research conducted by the World Halal Forum has indicated that the awareness level has expanded beyond meat and meat-based products to other food products, even to cosmetics and pharmaceutical products. The survey, which was conducted in selected Halal market regions in Europe (Germany, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands), Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, and Oman) and Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand) between July 2007 and March 2008, showed the opinions of thousands of Muslim consumers on what products they thought should be considered Halal, and whether they would make any effort to find these products (Sungkar, 2008). As depicted in Figure 2.1, the results show that Muslims generally have the highest awareness level on Halal meat/meat-based products (94-98%), followed by processed food (40-64%), pharmaceuticals (24-30%), and cosmetics/personal care (18-22%). Among Muslims, the greater awareness of meat/meat-based products was due to a high level of exposure to Shariah principles with respect to slaughtering of animals, production, and processing. Furthermore, other empirical studies have also reported that meat/meat-based products were associated highly with Halal values (e.g., Bonne & Verbeke, 2006, 2008a; Hashim & Othman, 2011; Ireland & Rajabzadeh, 2011).

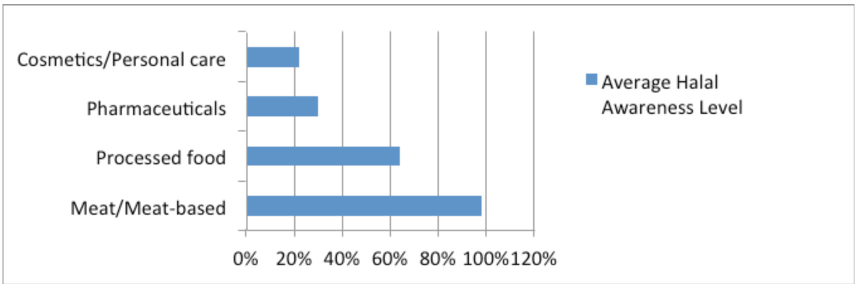

Figure 2.1: Average Halal awareness level among product ranges

Sources: Amri Sofi (2010) cited in The Halal Journal Mar/Apr 2010

2.3 Perception of Halal quality

The rising demand on Halal products is due to the association of the Halal logo with certain qualities. As demanded by Islamic rulings, Halal is a holistic concept which is highly attached with modern ethical values such as fair trade, organic, natural, wholesome, environmentally friendly, animal welfare, and social responsibility. Therefore, Halal brand is very popular and highly accepted among non-Muslim consumers especially those who have shown a great concern for these issues and also for those who are looking for high quality standards. Apart from that, Kosher, natural, and organic consumers also purchased Halal food since the Halal brand is perceived in line with their quality standards. For example, in the Philippines, non-Muslims tend to prefer foodstuff stamped with the Halal logo for health reasons as they perceived the product to have particular attributes (Muhammad, 2007). Furthermore, Sumali (2006) noted that Halal has become more than a religious issue because the Halal logo highly relates to consumer rights and a mark of unquestioned conformance for a credible stamp of hygiene, safe, and high quality standards. Therefore, industries globally are looking at the Halalan Toyyiban concept as a new tool for marketing since it becomes a benchmark for high quality products (Yaakob, 2008). Product with the Halal logo is perceived and recognized as a symbol of cleanliness, safety, and high quality (Merican, 1995; Sumali, 2006). With regard to export marketing strategies, since Halal is perceived as having a good quality image, a strong Halal brand can add value to a product, thus allowing the manufacturer to enjoy the ability to command a higher product price.

2.4 Attitudes toward Halal products

The impact of attitudes in determining the behavioral intention of purchasing Halal products has been documented in past empirical studies (e.g., Abd Aziz et al., 2010; Hashim & Othman, 2011; Lada et al., 2010; Imam Salehudin & Luthfi, 2010). This indicates that Muslim consumers have become more religious in making buying decisions and also more Halal conscious. As for non-Muslims, their purchase decisions for Halal-certified products are commonly guided by their quest for high-quality products because Halal is being associated with safe, clean, and wholesome qualities created through stringent procedures of Halal standard (Golnaz et al., 2010). However, the attitudes and behavior toward Halal can be seen to be diverse across religions, cultures, ethnicity, and even among the Muslims. Thus, from an international marketing perspective, the variations in attitudes toward Halal might create business opportunities and also influence export marketing decisions across markets.

2.5 Practices/norms toward Halal

The divergent views of the Halal concept among Muslims in different parts of the world have generated variations of Halal practices, especially among market regions. For example, apart from emphasizing the integration of Halal values in food products, Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia appear to be well aware that cosmetics should also be included under the Halal concept; this is not the case with Muslims in the Middle East. Hashim and Othman's (2011) study of 211 Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims living in Malaysia showed that non-Arab Muslims are more careful when purchasing food products compared to Arab Muslims. This might be due to the norms and practices of Arab Muslims as they normally place greater concern on Halal aspect with regard to meat/meat-based products but are more flexible in other product categories.

2.6 Halal values and attitude and Marketing Program Adaptation

The significant link between socio-cultural factors and marketing program adaptation has been established in previous researches (e.g., Calantone et al., 2006; Hill & Still, 1984; Huliyeti, Hasimu, Marchesini, & Canavari, 2008; Hultman, 2008; Hultman et al., 2009; Katsikeas et al., 2006; Moon & Park, 2011; Park, Kim, Jeong, & Huh, 2007; Roth, 1995; Sibanda, 2008; Sibanda & Erwee, 2009; Sousa & Lengler, 2009). It has been proposed that the basic values, preferences, perceptions, and behaviours towards certain issues must be taken into consideration as it can affect a firm's marketing decisions (Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong, 2005). This is because the underlying values and attitudes of different cultural groups can influence the behaviours of those groups as well as the nature of decisions they make (Hofstede, 1980; Tayeb, 1994). What underlies the various attitudes and traditions in different cultures is, in many cases is religion and it may influences the firms when taking the decision to what degree the marketing mix should be standardized or adapted (Doole & Lowe, 2004). Religion is part of cultural dimensions that plays one of the most influential roles on purchase decisions (Terpstra & Sarathy, 2000) especially in relation with food products (Dindyal, 2003; Musaiger, 1993). With regards to Islam, Islamic values have strong forces to the various actions and behaviours of individual Muslim. If the firms fail to understand the religious issues and the sensitivity of Muslim markets, firms might face problems in getting acceptance by this community. For example, the case of using product logo that resembles the word 'Allah' in Arabic script has made the Nike Inc. diverted all the supplies away from Islamic states and discontinued the production (Cited in Temporal, 2011a). On the other hand, if the company understand the need of Muslim markets, firms will gain the trust and also capable in winning the market. NewBoy FZCO for instance, the company has taken the initiative to design 'Fulla' as alternative to Mattel's Barbie Doll in response of their understanding on Islamic values that strongly concern on the modesty of woman outfits and actions. As a result, the product has been highly accepted in Arab markets, and also being sold to other countries (Cited in Temporal, 2011a). The impact of religious values on international marketing adaptation decision can also be seen in Hill and Still (1984) study as they reported that one of the companies involved in the study had substituted the vegetable shortening in the cake mixes it sells in the Middle East due to Islamic law that forbids the use of animal fats.

With regards to industry context, the concept of Halal is viewed differently due to polarizations among various ethnics, culture-related groups or countries as Muslims live in different geographical locations in the world (Sungkar, 2010). The variations of Halal concept might influence the trends and beliefs of Muslims towards certain issues. This scenario would have implications on designing the export marketing program since the values and attitudes toward Halal concept play important roles in determining the purchase intention of consumer as evidenced in past empirical studies (e.g., Abd Aziz, Amin, & Isa, 2010; Golnaz, Zainalabidin, Mad Nasir, & Eddie Chiew, 2009, 2010; Hassan, 2011; Lada, Tanakinjal, & Amin, 2009; Omar, Mat, Imhemed, & Ali, 2012; Soesilowati, 2010). Due to differing level of awareness, understanding, perceptions, attitudes, and practises towards Halal among consumer worldwide, adaptation of marketing program elements might be necessary so as to get better acceptance in foreign markets. Thus, the Halal values and attitude are proposed to have influences in adapting the overall marketing program elements

H1: Halal values and attitude has significant influence on the degree of overall marketing program adaptation.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

The sampling frame was taken from Malaysia Exporters of Halal Products and Services Directory 2010-2011 that listing 228 firms (MATRADE/HDC/JAKIM, 2010). Excluding the companies that involved in services (i.e., 13 companies), 215 questionnaires have been distributed during MIHAS and Halfest since most of the listed companies in the directory involved in the events as it was being organized by MATRADE. Out of the 215 questionnaires distributed, only 68 were collected during MIHAS and 44 during Halfest. Of the total 112 questionnaires, two were discarded because they were not fully completed, leaving 110 representing a response rate of 51.2%. Only person in charge or with good knowledge of company's export marketing practices of Halal certified product is qualified to complete the survey.

3.2 Measurement and Data Analysis

The questionnaire was designed to measure exporters' perception on the extent of agreement on the importance of Halal Values and Attitude (HVA) in influencing the adaptation of marketing program elements through the use of 5-point numerical scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The items were adapted from previous studies (e.g., Sibanda, 2008; Sibanda & Erwee, 2009; Sibanda et al., 2011). For the Marketing Program Adaptation strategy (MPA) construct, the respondents need to state the degree of adaptation of marketing program elements of main export venture as compared to the local market by using 5-point differential scale from (1) no adaptation to (5) substantial adaptation which is adapted from Lages and Lages (2003) and Lages, Abrantes, & Lages (2008). Both HVA and MPA constructs were pretest and validated with few experts and practitioners in Halal industry since previous studies that explain the concepts in Halal industry context have not been examined.

The unit of analysis of the study is the main export ventures which refer to the selected product or product line that has been exported to the selected export country. The product-market venture level analysis is used in order to associate marketing mix adaptation more precisely with its antecedents and outcomes since simultaneous use of different products and markets will lead to inaccurate measures (Lages et al., 2008).

The Partial Least Squares version 3 (SmartPLS 3.0) of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used to check on the goodness of the measurements and also to test the hypothesis of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Main Export Ventures Profiles

The profile of main export venture describes the product categories and market segments involved in the study. As illustrated in Table 1, the product or product line investigated cover both food and non-food product categories with the highest product categories obtained for non-meat-based (42.5%), followed by beverages (17.2%), ingredients (11.5%), healthcare/ pharmaceuticals (11.5%), meat/meat-based (10.3%), and cosmetics/skincare (6.9%). Meanwhile, the five major Halal market segments is led by Asia (49.4%), followed by Middle East-Africa (26.4%), Europe (12.6%), Australasia (6.9%) and America (4.6%) respectively. From the survey responses, the specific export countries include Brunei, Cambodia, China, Vietnam, Arab Saudi, Africa, Dubai, Kazakhstan, Makah, United Arab Emirates, Belgium, Ireland, London, Paris, Russia, United Kingdom, America, Australia and New Zealand. Based on this profile, the main export venture of the study is dominated by non-meat based product category and Asia market segment.

Table 1: Main Export Ventures Profiles

	(N = 110)	(%)		(N = 110)	(%)
Product category			**Market segment**		
Meat/meat-based	11	10.0	Asia	60	54.5
Non-meat-based	52	47.3	Middle East-Africa	26	23.6
Beverages	20	18.2	Europe	10	9.1
Halal Ingredients	10	9.1	America	4	3.6
Cosmetics/Skincare	3	2.7	Australasia	10	9.1
Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals	14	12.7			

4.2 Firm Profile

The general profiles of firm were described with regards to state of operation, numbers of workers, annual sales, years of operating and years of exporting. As depicted in Table 2, majority of firm operates in state of Selangor (40.9%), followed by Pulau Pinang (11.8%), Johor (10.9%), Melaka (6.4%), Kuala Lumpur (6.4%), Kedah (5.5%), Sabah (5.5%), Negeri Sembilan (4.5%), Kelantan (1.8%), Pahang (1.8%), Perak (1.8%), and Terengganu (0.9%).

Table 2: Firm Profile

	(N=110)	(%)		(N=110)	(%)
State of operation			**Number of workers**		
Johor	12	10.9	< 5 workers	12	11.0
Kedah	6	5.5	5-50 workers	64	58.7
Kelantan	2	1.8	51-150 workers	18	16.5
Melaka	7	6.4	> 150 workers	15	13.8
Negeri Sembilan	5	4.5			
Pahang	2	1.8	**Annual sales**		
Pulau Pinang	13	11.8	< RM 250,000	11	10.0
Perak	2	1.8	RM 250,000 – 10,000,000	55	50.0
Selangor	45	40.9	RM 10,000,001 – 25,000,000	32	29.1
Terengganu	1	0.9	> RM 25,000,000	12	10.9
Sabah	6	5.5			
Sarawak	2	1.8	**Years of exporting**		
WP Kuala Lumpur	7	6.4	< 5 years	58	52.7
			≥ 5 years	52	47.3
Years of operating					
< 10 years	45	40.9			
≥ 10 years	65	59.1			

With regard to the number of employees, majority of the firms in the sample have workers between five (5) and 50 (58.7%) with annual sales between RM 250,000 and RM10 million (50.0%). In terms of size, majority of the firms are small and medium enterprise (SME) based on MITI definition under 'Manufacturing' categories (i.e., sales turnover between RM10 million and RM25 million or full time employees between 51 and 150). As for the age, 59.1% of the firms in the sample have existed for 10 years and above compared to only 40.9% that have existed less than 10 years. The distribution implies a fair representation of both young and older firms in the sample. Regarding the duration of involvement in exporting, 52.7% of the sample started exporting less than five years, whilst 47.3% have been doing so for five years and above.

4.3 Measurement model

The analysis of measurement model was found satisfactory with the evidence of adequate convergent validity, discriminant validity, construct validity and composite reliability.

4.4 Construct validity

The respective loadings and cross loadings were assessed in order to determine if there were problems with any particular items. Following a cut-off value for loadings at 0.5 as significant as suggested by Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson (2010), any items which had a loading of higher than 0.5 on two or more factors were deemed to be have significant cross loadings. Based on Table 3, the observation can be made that all the items measuring a particular construct loaded highly on that construct and loaded lower on the other constructs, thus, confirming construct validity.

Table 3: Loadings and Cross loadings

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4.5 Convergent validity

Following Hair et al.'s (2010) recommendations, factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used to assess convergence validity, which require the loadings for all items to exceed the value of 0.5. CR is used to explain the degree to which the construct indicators indicate the latent, whereas, AVE measures the variance captured by the indicators relative to the measurement error. As shown in Table 4, most item loadings were larger than 0.5, ranging from 0.573 (lowest) to 0.870 (highest). CR values ranged from 0.873 to 0.922, exceeding the recommended value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010). Meanwhile, the AVE values ranged from 0.502 to 0.703, greater than 0.50 to justify using a construct (Barclay, Thompson, & Higgins, 1995).

Table 4: Result of measurement model

Construct	Item	Loading	CR[a]	AVE[b]	Construct	Item	Loading	CR[a]	AVE[b]
Halal Values & Attitudes (HVA)	Hva1	0.870	0.922	0.703	Promotion adaptation (PRM)	Prm1	0.721	0.880	0.512
	Hva2	0.844				Prm2	0.711		
	Hva3	0.836				Prm3	0.717		
	Hva4	0.827				Prm4	0.808		
	Hva5	0.815				Prm5	0.662		
						Prm6	0.782		
Product adaptation (PRD)	Prd1	0.767	0.882	0.520		Prm7	0.784		
	Prd2	0.848							
	Prd3	0.735			Distribution adaptation (DIS)	Dis1	0.641	0.911	0.597
	Prd4	0.685				Dis2	0.699		
	Prd5	0.731				Dis3	0.824		
	Prd6	0.679				Dis4	0.718		
	Prd7	0.574				Dis5	0.790		
						Dis6	0.864		
Price adaptation (PRC)	Prc1	0.826	0.873	0.502		Dis7	0.845		
	Prc2	0.796							
	Prc3	0.578							
	Prc4	0.573							
	Prc5	0.583							
	Prc6	0.804							
	Prc7	0.740							

4.6 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity was assessed by examining the correlations between the measures of potentially overlapping constructs. Items should load more strongly on their own constructs in the model, and the average variance shared between each construct and its measures should be greater than the variance shared between the construct and other constructs (Compeau, Higgins, & Huff, 1999). As shown in Table 5, the calculated square root of the AVE (ranging from 0.708 to 0.839) exceeded the inter-correlations of the construct with the other constructs in the model, indicating adequate discriminant validity (Chin, 1998, 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 5: Discriminant validity

	DIS	HVA	PRC	PRD	PRM
DIS	**0.773**				
HVA	0.588	**0.839**			
PRC	0.268	0.635	**0.708**		
PRD	0.408	0.679	0.476	**0.721**	
PRM	0.575	0.748	0.642	0.569	**0.716**

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the average variance extracted while the other entries represent the squared correlations

4.7 Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and the Composite Reliability (CR) scores were used to validate the construct reliability under study. As presented in Table 6, CA values of all constructs ranged from 0.831 to

0.894, which are above 0.6 as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Meanwhile, CR values ranged from 0.873 to 0.922, which are considered acceptable as it has exceeded the recommended value of 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As such, we can conclude that the measurements are reliable.

Table 6: Reliability

Constructs	**Measurement Items**	**Cronbach's Alpha (CA)**	**Composite Reliability (CR)**
Halal values and attitudes	HVA1 - HVA5	0.894	0.922
Product adaptation	PRD1- PRD7	0.843	0.882
Price adaptation	PRC1- PRC7	0.831	0.873
Promotion adaptation	PRM1- PRM7	0.840	0.880
Distribution adaptation	DIS1 - DIS7	0.885	0.911

4.8 Results and discussion of finding

Based on PLS results, Halal values and attitudes were found to have a significant and positive influence on the marketing program adaptation ($b = 0.283$, $p < 0.05$), which suggest that socio-cultural issues of the Halal industry such as an awareness level of the Halal concept, understanding the meaning of Halal, perception of Halal quality, attitudes toward Halal product, and practice toward Halal were capable of explaining the variations in the degree of the overall marketing program adaptation. The findings are in line with previous studies that acknowledged the impact of socio-cultural factors on the marketing program adaptation strategy (e.g., Calantone et al., 2006; Hill & Still, 1984; Huliyeti et al., 2008; Hultman, 2008; Hultman et al., 2009; Katsikeas et al., 2006; Moon & Park, 2011; Park et al., 2007; Roth, 1995; Sibanda, 2008; Sibanda & Erwee, 2009; Sousa & Lengler, 2009).

The significant influence of Halal values and attitude on marketing program adaptation decisions among Malaysian Halal exporters was established due to the differing understanding, awareness, perception, attitudes, and practices toward Halal among consumers worldwide. As Doole and Lowe (2004) indicated, underlying values and attitudes of different cultural groups, in many cases of those which are based on religion, have been proven to impact decisions on standardizing or adapting the marketing mix strategy. In Hill and Still's (1984) study for instance, one company substituted product ingredients in response to Islamic values regarding Halal and Haram matters. Furthermore, with different levels of awareness, understanding, attitudes, perceptions, and practices toward Halal among export markets, adaptation of the marketing program elements is unavoidable. As Sungkar (2010) noted, the meaning of Halal is understood differently among various ethnic, cultural-related groups or countries. Moreover, different Muslim market segments behave differently due to varying degrees of Islamic adherence among Muslim populations worldwide (Temporal, 2011a, 2011b). As a result, expectations for Halal might differ from one market to another. For instance, Muslim consumers in the United Kingdom market emphasize ethical issues such as animal welfare, fair trade, environmentally friendly, and social responsibility, and these concerns should be integrated into Halal production (Sungkar, 2010). Apart from market segments, the values and attitudes toward Halal have been found to be diverse among product categories. Amri Sofi (2010) and Ogilvy and Mather (2010) reported that consumable products, especially meat/meat-based, were perceived to have a high level of exposure to Shariah principles, which reflects a greater demand for Islamic values toward this product category.

5. Conclusion, Implications and Suggestions

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Halal values and attitude play a role in determining the level of adaptation of overall marketing program of halal products. Thus, firms who wish to gain success in export market must aware with the understanding, awareness, perception, attitude, and practice of Halal among Muslims worldwide as it can help them to develop capabilities in adapting the right marketing strategy for each target market.

The findings of this study also contribute to the current literature on international marketing, more specifically, on international Halal business. By examining the peculiarities of Halal industry in the current research framework, this study filled up the gap by adding a single industry value to the existing body of knowledge of export marketing field. By successfully testing such connection empirically, this study shows that Malaysian Halal exporters had taking account of various perceptions of Halal industry macroenvironments among export markets when planning and executing their export marketing strategies. As the macroenvironmental factors of Halal industry is unique from one market to another, the dissimilarities of socio-cultural factors contribute to the distinctiveness of Halal industry that provide business opportunities for firms to exploit. The study suggests that by applying an appropriate adaptation of marketing program elements, firms may enhance their success in export venture.

Based on these findings, the results of the study are useful to public export agencies and Halal industry players in designing appropriate strategies to improve export performance. In general, the findings of the study suggest that a competent firm understands the idiosyncrasies of the export market and is able to respond to the local conditions by an adaptation strategy. In other words, understanding the unique macroenvironmental factors of Halal industry is essential in helping the exporting firms in developing effective export market strategies which facilitate them to perform better in export market.

Although the investigated research model relies on a strong theoretical foundation, it would be worthwhile for upcoming studies to repeat the study in qualitative manner to examine the underlying reasons behind the established relationships. To advance better understanding of marketing adaptation strategy in global Halal market, the examination of selected marketing mix component (i.e., product, price, promotion, and distribution) might be considered in forthcoming studies as the investigation on individual marketing components will provide detail explanations and suggestions on specific export marketing strategy. In future studies, it is suggested that the effect of contingency variables on each marketing program should be measured separately. Future studies could also investigate the contribution of specific dimension of marketing program in playing the mediating role between contingency variables and export performance.

It is also hoped that the framework that has been proposed and validated in this research will serve as a catalyst for action in Halal global markets by encouraging both researchers and practitioners to embrace Halal-related issues as a core factors in export marketing strategy decision. Thus, future studies could look deeper into these specific matters and advancing the Islamic perspective in international marketing strategy model. Through the understanding of how these dimensions influence the adaptation on each component of marketing program and performance in export venture, the findings may provide an inclusive guideline for developing an effective export marketing strategy for Halal product which can assist the exporting firms in identifying the critical dimensions of Halal features to certain product categories and market segments, the extent of modifications on each marketing mix elements, and the strategies related to improve their export performance.

As firms have to compete with international corporations from a wide range of markets that have the capacity to offer the best products in the world, marketing Halal products should account for the level of values and attitude toward Halal so as to develop the right adaptations of the marketing program elements and also to avoid misunderstandings among export consumers.

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