

## Exploring Determinants of Consumers' Online Purchasing Behavior for Halal Products in Melbourne

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### ABSTRACT

This study seeks to explore the elements that impact consumers' intentions to purchase halal products online in Melbourne. The variables examined include performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, and perceived control. A quantitative research approach was employed to assess the impact of these variables on online purchasing behavior. Data were gathered via a survey questionnaire filled out by 96 residents from the Greater Melbourne region. The findings revealed that four factors—performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social impact, and hedonic motivation—were significant. These key factors can be utilized by businesses as recommendations to attract more customers. In contrast, facilitating conditions and perceived control were found to have no significant impact.

## INTRODUCTION

The advent of the internet over recent decades has significantly reshaped human life, particularly within the realm of business technology. Technology has revolutionized economic activities and consumer behavior, transitioning from traditional methods to online platforms (Al-Banna, 2019). For consumers, online shopping has alleviated common inconveniences such as crowded stores, long checkout queues, limited business hours, and inadequate parking (Ahmad, Omar, & Ramayah, 2010). Shoppers can now effortlessly and swiftly access a wide array of goods and services from various sellers online.

The halal industry, in particular, has garnered attention for its potential growth and development (Yunus et al., 2015). The demand for halal products in Australia has surged with the increasing number of Muslims residing, working, and studying in the country (Kabir, 2014). E-commerce advancements have led grocery stores and food retailers to enhance their online presence, offering a range of products, including halal items, through user-friendly websites and secure payment options for customer convenience. Despite extensive research on online shopping, the specific area of halal product purchases remains underexplored. There is a notable gap in the literature regarding consumers' online purchase intentions for halal products in non-Muslim countries, particularly in Melbourne, Australia.

To bridge this knowledge gap, this study will examine the factors influencing individuals' intentions to purchase halal products online, utilizing an adaptation of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model to understand consumer preferences in online shopping. The main research inquiry is: What elements impact consumers' inclination to buy halal products via online platforms in Melbourne? Subsidiary inquiries encompass: Does the anticipation of performance sway consumers towards online purchases of halal products? Does the ease of effort influence consumers in their online acquisition of halal goods? Does social persuasion play a role in consumers' choices regarding online halal product purchases? Are the conditions that aid in the process affecting consumers' decisions in online shopping for halal items? Does the pursuit of pleasure motivate consumers to engage in online transactions for halal products? Does the perceived ability to control the situation affect consumers' intentions to buy halal products online?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Performance Expectancy*

Liu and Forsythe (2011) describe performance expectancy as the belief that a new product or change will enhance the user's performance and be beneficial. In the business context, a new product must convince customers of its utility by demonstrating benefits that competitors cannot offer. For online halal product shopping, ensuring customers receive the app is crucial as it is seen to enhance customer service and business performance. Additionally, customer expectations of the practical value gained from using online shopping technology significantly drive online purchase intentions (Zhou et al., 2007). Similarly, Chong et al. (2012) found that performance expectancy strongly predicts customer intention. This leads to the formulation of the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The expectation of performance positively influences the intention to purchase halal products online in Melbourne.

### ***Effort Expectancy***

Effort expectancy refers to the anticipated ease of performing a task. In the business world, emphasizing the simplicity of a new service to potential customers is vital (Karulkar et al., 2019). Mandilas et al. (2013) reported significant links between perceived ease of use and customers' intention to shop online. For halal products online shopping, services should be less effortful compared to other options. Therefore, the second hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: The ease of effort positively influences the intention to purchase halal products online in Melbourne. Theory explanation can be provided here.

### ***Social Influence***

San Martin and Herrero (2011) define social influence as the impact of social systems, such as norms, factors, and image, on individual preferences. Venkatesh (2016) describes it as external motivation driving decision-making. Vithayathil et al. (2020) suggest that social media has transformed the social environment, particularly for millennials, by influencing their thoughts and actions. In online shopping, social influence is often exerted by family, friends, and colleagues (Chong et al., 2012). Several studies have examined the impact of social influence on online shopping intentions, with Ingham et al. (2015) supporting its significant effect. Thus, the third hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 3: Social persuasion positively influences the intention to purchase halal products online in Melbourne.

### ***Facilitating Conditions***

Facilitating conditions refer to the availability of technical support and resources that affect consumers' preferences when using a system to purchase products online (Korulkar et al., 2019; San Martin & Herrero, 2011). Williams et al. (2015) found a significant relationship between facilitating conditions and behavioral intention in various contexts, such as internet banking and e-learning. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 4: Favorable circumstances positively affect the intention to purchase halal products online in Melbourne.

### ***Hedonic Motivation***

Hedonic motivation involves consumption behaviors aimed at seeking pleasure, fantasy, and enjoyment (To, Liao, & Lin, 2007). Fard, Alkelani, and Tamam (2006) noted that in the context of online shopping, hedonic motivation is the desire for enjoyment derived from browsing and purchasing products online. Previous research has recognized hedonic motivation as a crucial factor in technology use related to consumer behavior (Childers et al., 2002). Liao, Fei, and Chen (2007) also found that hedonic motivation influences online purchase intentions. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 5: Pleasure-driven motivation positively influences the intention to purchase halal products online in Melbourne.

**Perceived Control**

Perceived control, based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB), is defined as an individual's confidence in their ability to control their behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In online purchasing, consumers who feel in control tend to have a better mood (Ward & Barnes, 2001). The perception of control is crucial for consumer responses to the shopping environment. Although consumers have limited direct control over purchasing situations, the convenience of time and place can enhance their desire to complete the purchase (Sembada & Koay, 2019). Enhancing perceived control in an innovative context is likely to increase purchase intentions (Li, Xu, & Xu, 2018). Therefore, the sixth hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 6: The perception of control positively influences the intention to purchase halal products online in Melbourne.

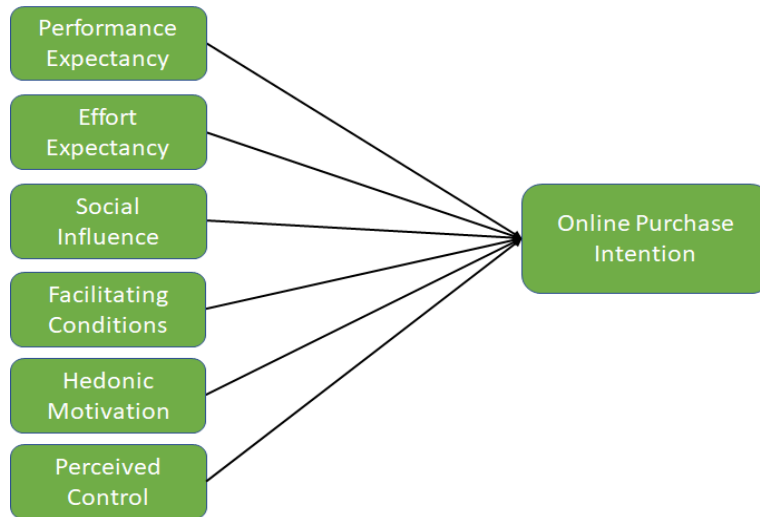


Figure 1. Adaptation of UTAUT Model

**METHODOLOGY**

The study employed various sampling methods to select a group representative of the general population. The targeted population for this research consisted of Muslims residing in Melbourne. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select participants likely to meet the study's criteria. The study involved 171 respondents, a sample size determined by the constraints of limited resources and time.

To collect data, an online survey was conducted using Google Forms, which is effective for reaching a broad population. The survey comprised questions of both open-ended and closed-ended formats. Closed-ended questions facilitated easy coding for statistical analysis, while open-ended questions allowed for detailed responses from participants.

## RESEARCH RESULT

### 1. *Socio-Demographic Information*

A total of 171 individuals were engaged in this study. However, 75 surveys, accounting for 43.9%, were disqualified due to various issues like incomplete data or participants' lack of familiarity with online halal product purchases. Consequently, only 96 responses, constituting 56.1%, were deemed appropriate for analysis. Among the total participants, the majority were male, making up 51% of the sample. Concerning marital status, 61.5% reported being married, while 34.4% had never been married. The remaining participants were either separated, in de facto relationships, or widowed, with proportions of 1%, 1%, and 2.1%, respectively. The respondents were segmented into six age categories, with the highest concentration falling within the 20-30 age group. Notably, 52.1% identified themselves as students. Furthermore, the majority of respondents, representing 41.7%, reported incomes ranging between A\$20,001 and A\$50,000, while the minority had incomes exceeding A\$150,000. (Tables 1)

*Table 1. Socio-demographic distribution of respondents*

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age (yr)</b>	20 - 30 years old	50	52.1%
	31 - 40 years old	37	38.5%
	41 - 50 years old	7	7.3%
	51 - 60 years old	1	1.0%
	61 - 70 years old	1	1.0%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	49	51.0%
	Female	47	49.0%
<b>Marital status</b>	Married	59	61.5%
	Never married	33	34.4%
	Separated	1	1.0%
	De facto	1	1.0%
	Widowed	2	2.1%
<b>Occupational</b>	Student	55	57.3%
	Full-time employed	16	16.7%
	Part-time employed	17	17.7%
	Part time student	1	1.0%
	Entrepreneur	1	1.0%
	Casual	1	1.0%
	Housewife	1	1.0%
	Retired	1	1.0%
	Seeking opportunities	3	3.1%
<b>Group Income</b>	A\$ 20,000 & under	36	37.5%
	A\$ 20,001 - 50,000	40	41.7%
	A\$ 50,001 - 80,000	12	12.5%
	A\$ 80,001 - 100,000	4	4.2%
	A\$ 100,001- 150,000	3	3.1%
	Over A\$150,000	1	1.0%

2. **Hypotheses Testing**

Table 2 displays the probability values and the significance of F for all variables, indicating their accuracy.

**Table 2. Significance F**

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	6	35.155	5.859	29.225	0.0000000000000000000043508

**Table 3. Terms Used**

Variables	Name
Online Purchase Intention	OPI
Performance Expectancy	PE
Effort Expectancy	EE
Social Influence	SI
Facilitating Condition	FC
Hedonic Motivation	HM
Perceived Control	PC

Table 3 presents the terminology used in this research study.

**Table 4. Regression Results**

Variables	$\beta$	t-value	p-value
Performance Expectancy	0.185	2.122	0.037
Effort expectancy	0.310	2.950	0.004
Social influence	0.247	3.603	0.001
Facilitating condition	-0.195	-1.892	0.062
Hedonic motivation	0.237	3.080	0.003
Perceived control	0.185	1.859	0.066

For a comprehensive breakdown of the regression analysis results, see Table 4. This analysis addresses the robustness of the association between our proposed variables and Melbourne consumers' propensity to purchase halal food online, which is a treasure trove of insights into how these factors are influencing the shaping of consumer behavior in the dynamic space of online halal shopping.

## DISCUSSION

The study's results indicate that only the hypotheses with p-values less than 5% were accepted, suggesting a significant influence on OPI. The two hypotheses with p-values greater than 5% were rejected. Therefore, the findings show that PE, EE, SI, and HE significantly influence OPI among consumers living in Melbourne.

### *Significant Role of Performance Expectancy (H1)*

This study investigated H1, how performance expectations (PE) affect consumers' intention to buy halal products online in Melbourne (OPI). Notably, as shown in Table 4, the results revealed a significant and positive association between PE and OPI, where the P value for PE was 0.037, well below the conventional significance level of 0.05. Furthermore, the results confirmed H1 regarding OPI among Melbourne consumers with a  $\beta$  coefficient of 0.185 and a T value of 2.122. This finding highlighted the significant impact of performance expectations on consumers' intention to buy online in Melbourne's diverse market.

### *The Significant Role of Effort Expectancy (H2)*

Figure 4 brings forward an energizing disclosure: the p-value for exertion anticipation could be an exceptional 0.004, certainly outperforming the routine noteworthiness level of 0.05. This stellar result solidly underpins H2, demonstrating a considerable and positive association between exertion anticipation and the energy to buy halal items online among Melbourne inhabitants. Such discoveries not as it were rouse certainty but moreover shed light on the significant part that ease of use plays in driving online obtaining eagerly within the dynamic commercial center of Melbourne.

### *The Significant Role of Social Influence (H3)*

Figure 4 shows an interesting finding. The p-value for social influence is surprisingly low at 0.001, well above the limiting value of 0.05. As a result, H3 is highly rated and proudly supported by solid evidence showing a significant and positive association between social influence and enthusiasm for online Halal product purchasing in Melbourne. This groundbreaking finding not only fits seamlessly with previous studies by Martins et al (2014) and Oye et al (2014), but also supports the undeniable power of social influence in shaping online purchasing behavior. Moreover, the notable coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.247 for social influence in Table 4 underlines a clear message: a one-unit increase in social influence on a five-point Likert scale corresponds to a notable 0.247-unit increase in purchase intention on the same scale. Such compelling findings reinforce the important role of social influence in consumer decision-making in the digital marketplace.

### *Lack of Correlation with Facilitating Condition (H4)*

H4 explores the effect of facilitating conditions (FC) on online purchase intention (OPI). As appeared in Table 4, the values for FC (p-value = 0.062, which is more prominent than 0.05;  $\beta$  = -0.1950; t-value = -1.890) recommend that there

is no critical and positive impact of FC on OPI. Thus, H4 isn't bolstered within the setting of buyers in Melbourne.

**Significant Role of Hedonic Motivation (H5)**

A significant positive correlation was found between hedonic motivation (HE) and OPI among Melbourne consumers. According to Table 4, the p-value for HE is 0.003, which is below the threshold of 0.05;  $\beta = 0.237$ ; t-value = 3.080. These results support H5, confirming that there is a significant and positive relationship between HE and OPI for Melbourne consumers.

**Lack of Correlation with Perceived Control (H6)**

Perceived control (PC) was the final variable examined for its impact on OPI. As shown in Table 4, PC has no significant impact on OPI as can be seen from the p-value of 0.066 which is above the threshold of 0.05;  $\beta = 0.185$ ; t-value = 1.859. This suggests that PC does not have a significant and positive relationship with OPI among Melbourne consumers. These results contradict Ajzen (1991) who asserted that perceived behavioral control as a key element of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is very important in different industries.

The following (Table 5 and Figure 2) provides a summary of the results from the tested hypotheses proposed in this study.

**Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results**

No.	Hypothesis	Result
H1	There is a significant and positive relationship between performance expectancy and intention to purchase halal products by consumers.	Supported
H2	There is a significant and positive relationship between effort expectancy and intention to purchase halal products by consumers.	Supported
H3	There is a significant and positive relationship between social influence and intention to purchase halal products by consumers.	Supported
H4	There is a significant and positive relationship between facilitating condition and intention to purchase halal products by consumers.	Not supported
H5	There is a significant and positive relationship between hedonic motivation and intention to purchase halal products by consumers.	Supported
H6	There is a significant and positive relationship between perceived control and intention to purchase halal products by consumers.	Not supported

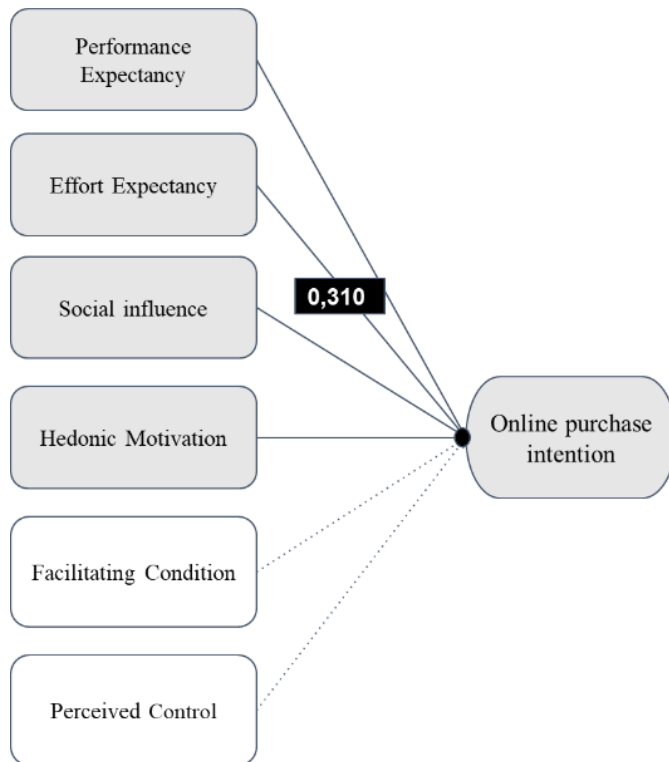


Figure 2. Connection between Independent and Dependent Variables

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study findings revealed four important factors that significantly influence consumers' online purchasing behaviour of halal products in Melbourne, namely performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and hedonic motivation. Meanwhile, facilitating conditions and perceived control were not found to be significant. Our study concludes that the UTAUT model effectively identifies the key factors that influence consumers' online purchasing decision of halal products in Melbourne. This is supported by the results of the regression analysis, which shows a significance level of less than 5% (refer to Figure 4).

Based on the four essential elements, we suggest the following strategies for grocery stores to encourage potential customers to purchase halal products online. Firstly, leveraging performance expectancy involves providing comprehensive information about halal products on their online platforms to facilitate easier decision-making for customers. Secondly, enhancing security measures in online payment systems can instill greater confidence and trust among customers. Thirdly, improving user interface and system functionality on websites aligns with efforts to enhance effort expectancy, ensuring a more user-friendly experience for accessing halal products online. Fourthly, emphasizing hedonic motivation entails designing attractive packaging for halal products, incorporating elements such as the halal logo or certification. Lastly, tapping into social influence involves offering discounts and promotions to incentivize customers to purchase more halal products online.

## ADVANCED RESEARCH

Every study encounters limitations, and this research is no exception. Firstly, our use of convenience sampling restricted the participant pool to individuals within our network, potentially limiting the generalizability of our findings. Secondly, due to COVID-19 restrictions in Melbourne, we were constrained to conducting an online survey using Google Form, disseminated through platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook, which hindered direct interaction between researchers and respondents. Thirdly, the compressed timeframe of approximately three weeks from planning to survey closure limited the depth and breadth of our data collection efforts.

To develop future investigation in this range, a few suggestions can upgrade the quality and profundity of examinations. First, utilizing likelihood examining procedures will produce more agent experiences into online buy eagerly for halal items in Melbourne. Second, joining more open-ended questions within the questionnaire will empower respondents to supply point by point reactions, improving the information for examination. Thirdly, allocating more time for survey administration and reaching a broader audience can improve the scope and validity of the study. Fourthly, to mitigate non-valid responses, researchers can consider including images of halal products at the beginning of the questionnaire to aid respondents' understanding. Lastly, expanding the study to include other regions in Australia can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the halal industry and lifestyle across the country.

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