PREDOMINANT FACTORS OF MALAYSIA–MIDDLE EAST RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL RELATIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HALAL FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

Dr. Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor
University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
E-mail: m_roslan@um.edu.my

Kashif Latif
PhD Scholar - Faculty of Business and Accountancy, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
E-mail: level5foru@gmail.com

Dr. Mohd Nazari Ismail
Faculty of Business and Accountancy, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Dr. Mohammad Nazri Mohd Nor
Faculty of Business and Accountancy, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Abstract

Religious and cultural relations are important to build economic and political bonding. On the foundations of religious and cultural relations more robust economic relations can be formed to achieve desired results. This study will unveil predominant factors which are important for Malaysia-Middle east religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain. For this study, data were gathered and analyzed which depicted that spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity, communal Islamic trade market bonding have a positive effect and impact on Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. This study have the implication of three prong strategy means along with Halal food entrepreneurs, political and economic (Trade and commerce) relations can also be strengthened by pursuing, focusing on these factors as they have common ground and base camp for building blocks.

Keywords: Spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, Communal goal of Halal integrity, Communal Islamic trade market bonding, Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations, Halal Food Supply Chain

Introduction

In recent years religion has been recognized as a momentous macroeconomic persuade on performance differentials and trade links between nations (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2003; McCleary & Barro, 2006). A small but growing literature within investigational economics has since examined the outcome of religion on individual behaviour to try to account for these findings (Hoffmann, 2013). Religious dissimilarity can cause bigotry (Jackson & Hunsberger, 1999) while common religion may stimulate in-group favoritism (Irons, 2001). (Tan & Vogel, 2008) figured out communally better trust among more highly religious Christian subjects. In study by (Chuah, Fahoum, & Hoffmann, 2013) Muslim and Hindu communities, for instance in Mumbai trusted their religious in-group members more. While culture has received awareness in public relations scholarship, religion has established little extant attention in public relations research (Tilson, 2011). There is prevalent agreement the Middle East is an understudied area in public relations literature (Taylor, 2001). Of regional treatments, (Alanazi, 1996) posits that

public relations practice is comparatively new in the Middle East while (Kruckeberg, 1996) argues public relations is a culturally bound practice that has a history dating back thousands of years to era of Mohammed (S.A.A). Therefore a study needed for the issue to figure out key factors which influence and have an impact on Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain.

A key assert made by some theorists of 'Islamic society' is that Islam provides a total model of society. In their view Islam allows no severance of social spheres and thus no differentiation of political and religious authority (Hefner, 1998; Thompson, 2003). It has been argued by (Harun, 2009) that early on relations between Malaysia and the Middle East originated around the religion of Islam which continued to outline their interactions throughout the centuries until the 20th century. It was through Islam that Malay society was exposed to the political and social developments in main Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Developments in these countries, especially in the early 20th century, predisposed many Malay thinkers and the religious elite of the country. Egypt and Saudi Arabia have since a long time been favorite countries for Malays to study, mainly religious studies as early as the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Muslim population consists of 1.7 billion people in 2014 and is anticipated to rise to 2.2 billion by 2030. The total Muslim population continues to mount at 1.5 percent annually, which is approximately double the growth rate of non-Muslim populations (Reuters & Standard, 2014). Food and drink utilization of Muslims must be according to Islamic dietary laws. The Qur'an has many injunctions that inculcate Muslims to consume only Halal food. The word "Halal" literally means permitted and is translated as lawful (Al-Qaradawi, 2007). In terms of food, Halal food is imperative to assure Islamic principles on food and uphold the quality of Halal food. The quality of Halal food consists of cleanliness or hygiene, safety, preparation, storage, and purification aspects, which are called "tayyib," meaning wholesome or limpidness, healthy, and safe (Kamaruddin & Jusoff, 2009). The existence of Halal and tayyib ensures that Halal food is safe and healthy (Hasnah Hassan, 2011; Muhammad, 2007). The rising demand for Halal food in the international market is prospect for countries to compete and take part in the lucrative global Halal market (Zakaria & Abdul-Talib, 2010). The size of the global Halal food industry is projected to be worth USD 1.292 billion in 2013 and is anticipated to become as high as USD2.537 billion by 2019 (Reuters & Standard, 2014).

Islam instruct Muslims to use Halal foods and avoid haram ones (Al-Qaradawi, 2007). However, the majority parts of the food supply chain, including farming, food manufacturing, restaurant logistics, and retail chains are owned by non-Muslim countries and businesses (Tieman, 2015). Therefore, to guarantee the Halalness of food products, a Halal certification body is desirable to scrutinize food processes, from preparation, slaughtering, ingredients used, cleaning, handling, and processing, down to transportation and distribution, before finally certifying that a food product is based on Halal standards (Latif, Mohamed, Sharifuddin, Abdullah, & Ismail, 2014). With the augment in the Muslim consumers' knowledge of their religion, they have become more meticulous of the type of product and services that they consume or use. Manufacturers and marketers use Halal certification, signified by a Halal logo, as a way to enlighten and assure their target consumers that their products are Halal and sharia compliant (Shafie & Othman, 2006).

In Malaysia, Halal rations are under the authority and command of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), a government agency. In adding up to having been entrusted to employ the relevant acts, laws, and regulations pertaining to Halal requirements in Malaysia, this certification body also plays a leading role in the international scene through its Halal standards such as MS 1500:2009 (Tieman & van Nistelrooy, 2014). With the mounting scope of the Halal industry and its supply chain around the world, the need for designing a precise place to provide as the world Halal hub is progressively felt. A Halal hub would facilitate the groups that are directly implicated in the Halal industry, including Halal manufacturers, Halal traders,

Halal suppliers, Halal logistics service provider, Halal certification bodies, and Halal buyers, to trade and collaborate more effectively. As of now, no particular place has been premeditated to serve as the world Halal hub. In order for a country to be recognized as the world Halal hub, that specific country must make sure that it can provide an appropriate place for connecting the global Halal supply chain and the certification bodies for Halal assurance (Abdul Rahman, Rezai, Mohamed, Shamsudin, & Sharifuddin, 2013). Malaysia is such a country because: Malaysia has a strategic location; Malaysia has better infrastructure compared with other Islamic countries (Abdul Rahman et al., 2013); Malaysia is one of the few countries today that are in the third phase of the Halal evolution, the "Halal supply chain" (Tieman, 2011) and Halal certification issued by JAKIM is well-recognized worldwide which have impact on other Muslim countries specifically of Middle-East countries because of their religious and cultural relations, ties and bonding (Latif et al., 2014). In Halal food supply chain, the key goal is not only to ensure that contentment of the customer is achieved but also to make sure that the Halal status of the food product remains intact throughout the whole process of the supply chain (Bahrudin, Illyas, & Desa, 2011).

The veracity of the Halal food product must be secluded by all means and all necessary steps must be taken by all parties involved in the supply chain to avoid any cross contamination that will escort to product becoming non-Halal, or Haram. The food products must not only be Halal at the supply chain starting point but all the way through the supply chain until it reaches its final destination. The prospect of becoming non-Halal is greater when the food product wants to travel a greater distance whereby a lot of handling points will be involved (Zulfakar, Anuar, & Ab Talib, 2014). According to the researchers (Assen, van Amstel, & de Vaan, 2010; Christopher, 1998; Ploos van Amstel & Van Goor, 2001) as cited by (Tieman, van der Vorst, & Che Ghazali, 2012). Halal needs a supply chain approach where the value chain and its supply chain actions entirely line up with the Syariah requirements. Escalating the demand for Halal products should also influence the demand of other Halal services particularly in Halal transportation and warehousing since all products must use these services. Due to that stuff, logistic service providers were created a service called as Halal supply chain services to meet the demand from Halal industries throughout the world (Jaafar, Endut, Faisol, & Omar, 2011).

If conventional supply chain services can be defined as a succession of process wherein raw material are transformed into final products, then delivered to the end customers (Manzouri et al., 2011), whereas Halal supply chain can be defined as the incorporation of business process and actions from the point of derivation to the point of consumption according to the Islamic law known as Syariah (Omar & Jaafar, 2011). The distinction between conventional supply chain and Halal supply chain is that, the conventional supply chain focus on cost reduction whereas Halal supply chain concern on to uphold the Halalness of Halal product. The activities of both supply chain may be looks alike, but paradoxically, they are dissimilar because of the difference in their objectives. There is no assurance that Halal products are truly Halal at the point of consumption without applying Halal supply chain services. Even researchers like (Tieman, 2011) and (Bahrudin et al., 2011) depicted that it is very significant to the manufacturers to uphold the Halal reliability in throughout the supply chain as a primary effort to prevent consumer fraud regarding Halal quality of the products. Not all of Halal manufacturers obtain the issue as a serious matter. Since their products previously certified as Halal by Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), most of the manufacturers are not alarmed about how their products are being moved and stored. But, in the late 2000 Muslims begin to realize that the Halal concept is not only restricted to food or other products, but also swathe the process of handling, packaging, storing and delivering. In other words, if the food is not handled or stored accordingly, it would not be measured as Halal (Shah Alam & Mohamed Sayuti, 2011).

Literature Review
Spiritual Quality

Spirituality is an imperative element of human life, and the impact of faith and philosophy in society extends to food security. This is because some religious doctrines steer the production and distribution of food, as well as the socio-economic and political factors allied with those actions (Farouk et al., 2015). Their interdependence was experiential by Farb and Armelagos (1980): "Food to a large scope is what holds a society together and eating is closely connected to deep spiritual experiences". An estimated 55% of the world populace is associated with Abrahamic faiths, the spiritual state of food should be considered when measuring and assuring global nutritional sanctuary (Farouk et al., 2015). Permissions and prohibitions predetermined in the Torah, Bible and Quran are explained, along with interpretations and delve into from contemporary literature (Farouk et al., 2015).

Religious traditions have implications for modern ways of food production, predominantly when meeting the wants of consumers who depend on Jewish kosher (fit or proper) and Islamic halal (lawful) meat supply. That model relegates religious concerns to the locale. Yet, for the devoted, food that does not convene the standards of 'spiritual quality' in its production or preparation is inappropriate for consumption, and may as well be not present from the marketplace (Farouk et al., 2015). Given that, likely 5.8 billion adults and children are religiously associated, in lieu of greater than 80% of the world population (Hackett et al., 2012), it is discreet to incorporate religious perspectives in the dialogue on global food security. Islam prohibits the use of the meat of asses, mules, pigs, and rodents. Horse meat is regarded as repugnant (makrooh) but not illicit (haram) by many Muslims. This foliage cattle, sheep, goats, bison, deer, carabeef buffaloes and birds as the main commercially appropriate meat sources suitable to Jewish kosher (fit or proper) and Islamic halal (lawful) spiritual quality (Farouk et al., 2015). The spiritual connotation of food and the significance of its sustainable production are set out in the Quran and the Hadiths, which edify that food, eating and spirituality entangled. If a person eats with the objective to get the strength to do any good accomplishment commanded by Allah, then the eating is well thought-out an act of worship (Al Ghazali & Hasanah, 1991). To accentuate this relationship, the Prophet (PBUH) put meals in the framework of rituals and vice versa. He said, "If the supper is served for any one of you and the call for prayers is pronounced, begin with the supper and don't be in rush till you finish it". In another unfolding, he said, "If anyone of you is having his meals, he should not scuttle till he is content even if the prayer has been started" (BuHārī & Khan, 1984). As meat is enviable and highly valued, it is strongly coupled to many Islamic rituals, and Muslims are still keen patrons of meat today.

Abrahamic Faith Bonding

Judaism, Christianity and Islam, these three religions are well thought-out Abrahamic faiths, because they draw their derivation to a common spiritual father, the Prophet Abraham. The faiths deem that there is only one God, the All Knowing Creator, who gives the laws for virtuous living through revelation to prophets, which are recorded in the scriptures (Farouk et al., 2015). Within each religion, there are denominations and twigs that differ somewhat in their interpretation and realization of the scriptural laws (Farouk et al., 2015). Researchers have tried to cave in the plentiful supply- and demand-side issues into fewer manageable categories. (Keating, Herrero, Carberry, Gardner, & Cole, 2014) outlined three 'food wedges', which are pathways that aim reducing food stipulate, mounting food production, and sustaining the productive competence of food systems. For many cultures, the supply of meat is fundamental to food security. It nourishes and delights the enormous preponderance of the world's population (Fayemi & Muchenje, 2014). Camel meat is frenzied in the Middle East, North and Central Africa. The full multiplicity of the animal realm is not available to all consumers, because personal state of affairs of physiology, philosophy or religion may confine the consumption of meats (Farouk et al., 2015).

Communal goal of Halal integrity

The laws that administrate the day to day actions of Muslims, what they eat, and their relations with others and their ambiance are resultant from the sources of Quran, Sunnah or Hadiths, Ijma (consensus of scholars) and Qiyas which is analogy (Beekun & Badawi, 2005).

The two prime sources proffer wide principles and guidelines that are not subject to nullification or change for all times and places (Farouk et al., 2015). Some of the principles outlined in the Quran are put into apply by the Prophet (PBUH) in the Hadiths. Laws urbanized for new situations and problems are based on correspondence (Qiyas) to situations dealt with in the main sources (Farouk et al., 2015). Food Halal integrity for Muslims is pretentious by permissions and prohibitions on use. Muslims are obligatory to eat what is lawful, healthy, pure, wholesome, and secure (Quran 2:168; 5:87) and not what is detestable or stinking (Quran 7:157) based on three basic principles: 1) Allah alone has the right to decide what is permissible or prohibited to be eaten, and everything is allowable for use apart from that which is prohibited by Allah or through His Prophet (PBUH); 2) things are forbidden because they are contaminated and harmful; and 3) need dictates immunity (Farouk et al., 2015). Those doctrines have been explained in detail by (Hussaini, 1993). They accentuate that Allah forbidden very few things while giving alternatives that are better, easier and more contented for people. Islam teaches that all animals are made by Allah (Quran 24:45), and a number of these animals are particularly produced for man to use (Quran 36:71) so that man can domesticate them for transportation as well as food (Quran 23:21; 40:79). One imperative state of man's right to kill and eat the flesh of animals is to speak the name of Allah during the slaughtering (Quran 6:121; 22:36), (Farouk et al., 2015). This announcement is synonymous to obtaining consent from the Creator to take the life of another creature. The slaughterer is declaring that his proceeding is not belligerence against the universe or of repression of the animal, but purely an act necessitated by a need satisfied in the name of Allah (Quran 6:121; 22:36), obtaining and affording satisfactory supply of Halal (lawful) slaughtered meat is critical for all Islamic-dominated countries (Farouk et al., 2015).

Communal Islamic Trade market Bonding

Since the incorporation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1969, there have been many initiatives between member countries in promoting economic and trade collaboration under the OIC scaffold (Abidin & Sahlan, 2013). The need to collaborate on the economic arena among them has increase its momentum in the 1974, start at the second Islamic Summit Conference, and afterward with the implementation of the General conformity for Economic, Technical, and Commercial Co-operation between the member states of the OIC (Abidin & Sahlan, 2013). The realization of the Trade Preferential System among OIC member countries (TPS-OIC) as a means of establishing the Islamic Common Market (ICM), the formation of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the subsistence of seminars and forums such as the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIFE), and the resolutions of the Makkah summit in 2005, which is to augment intra-OIC trade to 20 per cent by the year 2015 are some examples of programmes, polices, and initiatives made that are particularly meant to promote, develop, and strengthen their relationship economically. In addition, in light of the current on-going world economic and financial crises, there is critical need for Malaysia to expand its export destinations away from its conventional trading partners, and one of these destinations is the OIC region (Abidin & Sahlan, 2013).

There are several fields and opportunities for augmentation of joint trade relations. It is therefore vital to scrutinize and evaluate the on-going Malaysia-OIC Export relation in this perspective (Abidin & Sahlan, 2013). In recent years, it is in the interest of the Malaysian government to more strengthen its export market to the Middle Eastern countries (ABU-HUSSIN, 2010). (Bendjilali, 2000) examined main determinants of intra-OIC trade relationship with gravity model and instigate that trade is correlated positively with the size of their economies. (Al-Atrash & Yousef, 2000) stated that intra-Arab trade and Arab trade with rest of the world are

lower than what the gravity equation would be predicted. The results recommended that there is substantial scope for regional integration. (Hassan, 2002) stated that the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers under the OIC block countries that can escort to some profitable intra-regional trade channels. In addition, he pointed out that it is critical to make the privileged trade agreements more effectual among the OIC member countries by mounting private sector participation rather than through preferential trading arrangement. He also suggested that the OIC member countries should strengthen the backward and forward linkages in production and investment to obtain the economies of scale. (Khalifah, 1993) analyzed the formation of intra-Muslim countries trade and revealed that the trade contributions of the high income Muslim countries are larger than the lower and upper middle income countries. She stated that any type of trade integration among the Muslim countries must include countries especially from the Middle East. In her investigation, she tinted the political complexities on that region and uniting them is not an easy undertaking. (Ab Rahman & Abu-Hussin, 2009) investigated and stated that Malaysia's trade relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries which consist of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait. They gave suggestions on how to advance Malaysia-GCC trade relations in the future such as to accelerate the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) enterprise, and focusing on niche areas which they have relative advantage at such as Halal Food services. Several policy implications can be formed, for one it is imperative for Malaysian policy makers to play an important role to take advantage of the vast market of the OIC region, such as focusing on the African region, accelerating the endeavor to establish the Islamic Common Market (ICM), liberalizing the economy further, and escalating activities in restricting corrupt practices (Abidin & Sahlan, 2013).

Research Question

Main Question

What impact spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity, communal Islamic trade market bonding have on Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain?

Sub Questions

1. What influence spiritual quality has on Malaysia–Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain?
2. What is the impact of Abrahamic faith bonding on Malaysia–Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain?
3. What is the impact of communal goal of Halal integrity on Malaysia–Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain?
4. What influence communal Islamic trade market bonding has on Malaysia–Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain?

Methodology

Research Design

A survey based research design had been implemented by following the sampling technique depicted below.

Sampling Technique and Sample

For this study 377 questionnaires were sent to diverse respondents and 252 we've received from respondents. Respondents were both male and female, and of numerous different cultural and educational backgrounds. The age range of the Halal food entrepreneurs who participated in this study was from 25 to 60 years old. As you can see, there was a broad variety of participants in this survey. The entrepreneurs who owned Halal food business in Malaysia which involve all the supply chain of Halal food were asked to voluntarily participate.

Dependent Variable is Malaysia–Middle East religious and cultural relations and independent variables are spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity, communal Islamic trade market bonding.

Participant data was gathered thorough in one survey with 5- point likert scale only from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The survey enclosed a total of 20 questions and unfinished survey was not incorporated in the survey.

To make analysis of data we used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software in which analysis had been done in to two parts where part one will escort to descriptive statistics that will be used to describe and abridge data and include measures of central tendency (average) and part two will direct to inferential statistics that will be used to identify differences between groups, look for relationships between attributes and form models in order to be able to make predictions. The methodology that we've pursued is discussed below one by one:

In order to get the overall summary of variable we've used descriptive statistics in which we came to be acquainted with about the nature of response that we got from respondent like the value of maximum, minimum, mean and standard deviation. To confirm the overall picture for identifying the relationship between dependent and independent variable we've used scatter-plots. This matrix showed all the possible two dimension plots of the variables. Correlation had been used to find the relationship between variables as well as check the strength of the relationship of different variables. Regression analysis had been done to find out the effect size of independent variable on dependent variable that how much change will take place in dependent variable due to change in independent variable by using regression equation for analysis. Value of R square was also focused to see the contribution level of variable mean as how much independent variable contribute in changing the value of dependent variable.

Since the objective of this study is to check the impact of spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity, communal Islamic trade market bonding on Malaysia–Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal Food supply chain. So below is the devised model and here in this study ordinary least square (OLS) method of simple regression had been used to find such equation which could be used to find the impact of spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity, communal Islamic trade market bonding on Malaysia–Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal Food supply chain.

Model and Equation

Following model figure 1 had been formed which also depicting the relationship of dependent variable and independent variables and an equation had been derived which will be discussed below.
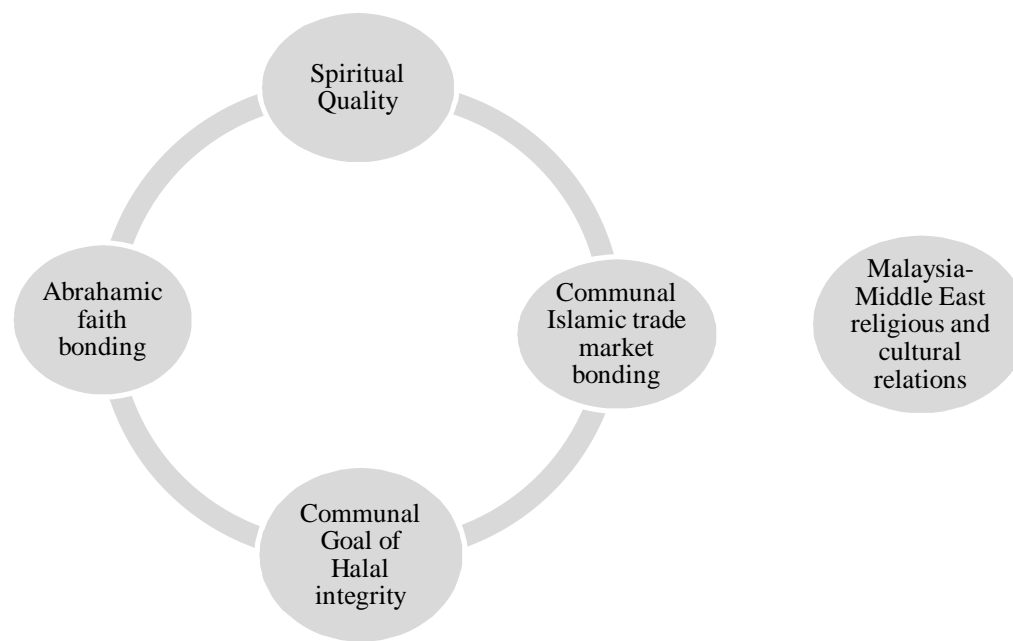
Fig. 1: Model

From the perspective of above model the specified regression equation will take the following form.

$$MRCRi = C + \beta_1 SQ_i + \beta_2 AFB_i + \beta_3 CGH_i + \beta_4 CIT_i + \epsilon_i$$

The above equation depicting that **MRCRi** is the dependent variable and **C** is the value of constant, $\beta_1 SQ_i + \beta_2 AFB_i + \beta_3 CGH_i + \beta_4 CIT_i$ are the values of independent variables shows the partial regression coefficient represents the change in dependent variable due to one unit change in independent variable. ϵ_i is the error term.

Analysis and Results
Descriptive Summary

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Spiritual Quality	252	1.45	5.00	3.6045	.95545
Abrahamic Faith Bonding	252	1.40	4.75	3.3565	1.02335
Communal Goal of Halal Integrity	252	1.35	4.65	3.6165	.90221
Communal Islamic Trade Market Bonding	252	1.20	4.75	3.5250	.91558
Malaysia-Middle East Religious and Cultural Relations	252	1.40	4.85	3.5525	.92457
Valid N (listwise)	252				

Above Table 1 depicted descriptive statistics that show the overall picture of all the five variables. There were scales of 5 responses that direct to the options (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). Number of annotations of each variable is 252. In the above table the mean values and the values of standard deviation of all the 5 variables had been depicted. Mean value give the idea about the central tendency of the values of a variable. The mean value of the variables spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity, communal Islamic trade market bonding, Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural

relations are 3.60, 3.36, 3.62, 3.53 and 3.55 respectively as an independent variable that characterizes positive Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. If we examine that all the variables the average response rate of respondent lie within the option 3-4 (3 is for neutral and 4 is for agree).

The minimum option that is selected by respondent is 1 and the maximum option that is selected by respondent is 5. Standard deviation confers the idea about the dispersion of the values of a variable from its mean value. So, if we examine then in the response rate for the variable of communal goal of Halal integrity has value of standard deviation (S.D.902) which is the lowest value as contrast to other variable values. Which demonstrate that most of the respondent answers were same for the variable of communal goal of Halal integrity and have uniformity in their response rate but if we examine then for Abrahamic faith bonding the value of standard deviation is (S.D 1.023) which is quite high as contrast to other variables which clearly showed that the response regarding Abrahamic faith bonding of most respondents were not the same and they don't have consistency in their answers.

Scatter Plots

It had been inferred from the results of scatter plot matrix that there is positive relationship or association between spiritual quality and communal Islamic trade market bonding. It suggest that if there will be increase in spiritual quality then there will be increase in communal Islamic trade market bonding as well. If there will be no increase in spiritual quality then there will be no increase in communal Islamic trade market bonding. Therefore Ho rejected, H1 accepted means there is positive relationship between spiritual quality and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

Hypothesis 1

H_1: There is a relationship between spiritual quality and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

H_o: There is no relationship between spiritual quality and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

It had been inferred from the results of scatter plot matrix that there is positive relationship or association between spiritual quality and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. It means that if there is increase in spiritual quality then there will be increase in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations as well. If there will be no increase in spiritual quality then there will be no increase in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. Therefore Ho rejected, H1 accepted means there is positive relationship between spiritual quality and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Hypothesis 2

H_1: There is a relationship between spiritual quality and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

H_o: There is no relationship between spiritual quality and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

It had been derived from the results of scatter plot matrix that there is positive relationship or association between Abrahamic faith bonding and communal Islamic trade market bonding. It means that if there is increase in Abrahamic faith bonding then there will be increase in communal Islamic trade market bonding as well. If there will be no increase in Abrahamic faith bonding then there will be no increase in communal Islamic trade market bonding. Therefore Ho rejected, H1 accepted means there is positive relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

Hypothesis 3

H_1: There is a relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

H$_o$: There is no relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

It had been inferred from the results of scatter plot matrix that there is positive relationship or association between Abrahamic faith bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. It means that if there is increase in Abrahamic faith bonding then there will be increase in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations as well. If there will be no increase in Abrahamic faith bonding then there will be no increase in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. Therefore Ho rejected, H1 accepted means there is positive relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Hypothesis 4

H$_1$: There is a relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

H$_o$: There is no relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

It had been inferred from the results of scatter plot matrix that there is positive relationship or association between communal goal of Halal integrity and communal Islamic trade market bonding. It means that if there is increase in communal goal of Halal integrity then there will be increase in communal Islamic trade market bonding as well. If there will be no increase in communal goal of Halal integrity then there will be no increase in communal Islamic trade market bonding. Therefore Ho rejected, H1 accepted means there is positive relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

Hypothesis 5

H$_1$: There is a relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

H$_o$: There is no relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

It had been inferred from the results of scatter plot matrix that there is positive relationship or association between communal goal of Halal integrity and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. It means that if there is increase in communal goal of Halal integrity then there will be increase in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations as well. If there will be no increase in communal goal of Halal integrity then there will be no increase in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. Therefore Ho rejected, H1 accepted means there is positive relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Hypothesis 6

H$_1$: There is a relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

H$_o$: There is no relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

It had been derived from the results of scatter plot matrix that there is positive relationship or association between communal Islamic trade market bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. It means that if there is increase in communal Islamic trade market bonding then there will be increase in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations as well. If there will be no increase in communal Islamic trade market bonding then there will be no increase in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. Therefore Ho rejected, H1 accepted means there is positive relationship between communal Islamic trade market bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Hypothesis 7

H$_1$: There is a relationship between communal Islamic trade market bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

H₀: There is no relationship between communal Islamic trade market bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Correlation

Correlation is used to confirm the mutual relationship among variables. For examining the relationship we will make two hypotheses: null (H0) and alternative (H1). We construe the findings on the acceptance or rejection of the hypothesis. We used correlation matrix to confirm the mutual relationship of different variables. The hypothesis which had been generated is given below.

Hypothesis 1

H₁: There is a relationship between spiritual quality and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

H₀: There is no relationship between spiritual quality and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

Hypothesis 2

H₁: There is a relationship between spiritual quality and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

H₀: There is no relationship between spiritual quality and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Hypothesis 3

H₁: There is a relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

H₀: There is no relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

Hypothesis 4

H₁: There is a relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

H₀: There is no relationship between Abrahamic faith bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Hypothesis 5

H₁: There is a relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

H₀: There is no relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and communal Islamic trade market bonding.

Hypothesis 6

H₁: There is a relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

H₀: There is no relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Hypothesis 7

H₁: There is a relationship between communal Islamic trade market bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

H₀: There is no relationship between communal Islamic trade market bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Table 2: Correlations[a]

		Spiritual Quality	Abrahamic Faith Bonding	Communal Goal of Halal Integrity	Communal Islamic Trade Market Bonding	Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations
Spiritual Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.790**	.788**	.893**	.785**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
Abrahamic Faith Bonding	Pearson Correlation	.790**	1	.885**	.812**	.902**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
Communal Goal of Halal Integrity	Pearson Correlation	.788**	.885**	1	.881**	.915**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
Communal Islamic Trade Market Bonding	Pearson Correlation	.893**	.812**	.881**	1	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations	Pearson Correlation	.785**	.902**	.915**	.895**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

a. Listwise N=252

The above table (Table 2) of correlation depicted the level of relationship. According to our point of view if the value of Pearson correlation test is close to 1.00 and value of significance is less than significance level 0.05 then there is strong positive relationship between that variable. All the Ho hypothesis rejected and H1 accepted.

There is relationship between spiritual quality and communal Islamic trade market bonding because significance is .000. Table shows (.893**) strong relationship between the spiritual quality and communal Islamic trade market bonding. Abrahamic faith bonding (.812**) shows also strong relationship because close to 1.00. Communal goal of Halal integrity (.881**) shows also strong relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and Communal Islamic trade market bonding, also having the significance values less than significant level 0.05 showing the relationship of variables.

There is relationship between spiritual quality and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations because significance is .000. Table shows (.785**) strong relationship between the spiritual quality and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. Abrahamic faith bonding (.902**) shows strong relationship because close to 1.00. Communal goal of Halal integrity (.915**) shows the strong relationship between communal goal of Halal integrity and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. Communal Islamic trade market bonding (.895**) shows the strong relationship between communal Islamic trade market bonding and Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations, also having the significance values less than significant level 0.05 showing the relationship of variables.

Regression

Regression had been used to check the effect size of independent variable to dependent variable. Let's discuss the results of regression:

Dependent Variable: Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations
Independent Variables: Spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, Communal Goal of Halal integrity, Communal Islamic trade market bonding

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.958[a]	.925	.934	.25433

Above model summary table (Table 3) depicted that the contribution of independent variables in percentage to change the dependent variable. In this table value below the Adjusted R Square is .934, it means that the contribution is 93%.

Table 4: ANOVA[b]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	92.502	4	22.475	306.285	.000[a]
	Residual	8.698	104	.075		
	Total	101.200	110			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, Communal goal of Halal integrity, Communal Islamic trade market bonding

b. Dependent Variable: Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations

Above ANOVA table (Table 4) depicting significance level value .000 which is less than the 0.05 shows that Ho rejected and H1 Hypothesis accepted.

Table 5: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.454	.115		-3.395	.001
	Spiritual Quality	.354	.054	.290	5.000	.000
	Abrahamic Faith Bonding	-.325	.078	-.392	-5.055	.000
	Communal Goal of Halal Integrity	.768	.079	.745	10.575	.000
	Communal Islamic Trade Market Bonding	.375	.071	.374	5.385	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations

The above table coefficients (Table 5) depicted the impact of spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity and communal Islamic trade market bonding on Malaysia-Middle east religious and cultural relations. Since obtained value is 0.00<0.05. Therefore we rejected the Ho and accepted H1 that means there is effect and impact of spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity and communal Islamic trade market bonding on Malaysia-Middle east religious and cultural relations.

Regression Equation
$$MRCRi = C + \beta_1 SQ_i + \beta_2 AFB_i + \beta_3 CGH_i + \beta_4 CIT_i + \epsilon$$
Putting Values in Equation:
MRCRi= .454 + .354 SQi + .325 AFBi + .768 CGHi + .375 CITi
MRCRi= .454 + .354(3.60) + .325(3.36) + .768(3.62) + .375(3.53)
MRCRi= .454 + 1.27 + 1.09 + 2.78 + 1.32
MRCRi= 6.914

Multiple Regression analysis had been conducted, afterward with the four factors as independent variables and overall Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations as dependent variable. From the above solved solution we conclude that if there is change in one unit of SQi there is change of .354 in Malaysia-Middle east religious and cultural relations. If there is change of 3.60 units in SQi then change of 1.27 occurred in Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. The inclusion of four factors correlates well with Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. Considering the factors spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity, communal Islamic trade market bonding are finding highly significant towards the Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain. It determined that variables related to these factors are important for Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations.

Conclusion
This study digs out predominant factors which influence Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain. It is evident from literature and from the analysis of this study that spiritual quality which is one of the predominant factors of Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations has a positive relationship and impact on Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. It is essential for Halal food entrepreneurs that they focus on spiritual quality so that they can reap the benefit for building long term religious and cultural relations with Middle East which will also strengthen their bonding of Islamic brotherhood and at the same time can attain political and economic gain with this.

It is also evident from literature depicted in this study and from analysis that Abrahamic faith bonding is another key factor and has a positive relationship with Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain. As there is different school of thoughts from the perspective of Islamic practices in different Middle East countries as compare to Malaysia. But this Abrahamic faith bonding is the glue which holds together all Middle East countries and their religious, cultural relations with Malaysia ultimately business, economic and political relations, so Halal food entrepreneurs and Malaysian political institutions have to focus on Abrahamic faith bonding.

For every Muslim country Halal integrity is important and they have to maintain it. It is evident from this study and analysis that communal goal of Halal integrity is another key factor and has a positive relationship with Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations. By focusing on it Halal food entrepreneurs with all supply chain and Malaysian political institutions can strengthen their religious and cultural relations with Middle East consequently economic fruitful results as well. It is evident from literature review and analysis that communal Islamic trade

market bonding is one of the predominant factors of Malaysia-Middle east religious and cultural relations. It has an impact and positive relationship with Malaysia-Middle east religious and cultural relations through which desired results can be achieved to build sound economic and political relations which ultimately will be fruitful for Halal food entrepreneurs together with all supply chain. After a long discussion, research, collection of data, reading articles, research papers, application of different kind of tests like descriptive, regression, correlation etc. we concluded that spiritual quality, Abrahamic faith bonding, communal goal of Halal integrity, communal Islamic trade market bonding have significant impact and effect on Malaysia-Middle East religious and cultural relations from the perspective of Halal food supply chain. So it is the ultimate need that Halal food entrepreneurs with all supply chain should focus on these stated factors to achieve their desired objectives and economic gains. It's not only gives economic gains but political agendas can also be achieved because once religious and cultural relations will be strengthened then it will build and strengthen economic and political relations as well. As Muslim countries have much commonalities which form and has an advantage to use this core competence for building bonding amongst them to achieve economic and political relations for betterment of them.

References

Ab Rahman, A. B., & Abu-Hussin, M. F. B. (2009). GCC economic integration challenge and opportunity for Malaysian economy. *Journal of International Social Research, 2*(9).

Abdul Rahman, R., Rezai, G., Mohamed, Z., Shamsudin, M. N., & Sharifuddin, J. (2013). Malaysia as global halal hub: OIC food manufacturers' perspective. *Journal of International Food & Agribusiness Marketing, 25*(sup1), 154-166.

Abidin, I. S. Z., & Sahlan, R. (2013). The determinants of exports between Malaysia and the OIC member countries: A gravity model approach. *Procedia Economics and Finance, 5*, 12-19.

ABU-HUSSIN, M. (2010). *Exploring international trade between Malaysia and GCC countries: Empirical analysis on trends, developments and challenges.* Durham University.

Al-Atrash, H., & Yousef, T. (2000). Intra-Arab trade: is it too little?

Al Ghazali, M., & Hasanah, U. U. (1991). Kayfa Nata'amalu Ma'al Quran: Mudarasah Bayna Alshaykh. *Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought*.

Alanazi, A. (1996). Public relations in the Middle East: the case of Saudi Arabia. *International public relations: A comparative analysis*, 239-256.

Assen, M. F., van Amstel, W. P., & de Vaan, M. J. (2010). *Praktijkboek Supply Chain Management: aanpak, concepten en modellen voor operational excellence in de keten*: Kluwer.

Bahrudin, S. S. M., Illyas, M. I., & Desa, M. I. (2011). *Tracking and tracing technology for halal product integrity over the supply chain.* Paper presented at the Electrical Engineering and Informatics (ICEEI), 2011 International Conference on.

Beekun, R. I., & Badawi, J. A. (2005). Balancing ethical responsibility among multiple organizational stakeholders: The Islamic perspective. *Journal of business ethics, 60*(2), 131-145.

Bendjilali, B. (2000). An Intra-Trade Econometric Model for OIC Member Countries: A Cross Country Analysis (Research Paper): The Islamic Research and Teaching Institute (IRTI).

BuHārī, M. I.-I. a.-., & Khan, M. M. (1984). *The translation of the meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: Arabic-Engl*: Kitab Bhavan.

Christopher, M. (1998). Logistics and supply chain management: Strategies for reducing cost and improving service.

Chuah, S.-H., Fahoum, R., & Hoffmann, R. (2013). Fractionalization and trust in India: A field-experiment. *Economics Letters, 119*(2), 191-194.

Farouk, M., Regenstein, J., Pirie, M., Najm, R., Bekhit, A., & Knowles, S. (2015). Spiritual aspects of meat and nutritional security: Perspectives and responsibilities of the Abrahamic faiths. *Food Research International*.

Fayemi, P., & Muchenje, V. (2014). Meat in African context: From history to science. *African Journal of Biotechnology, 11*(6), 1298-1306.

Guiso, L., Sapienza, P., & Zingales, L. (2003). People's opium? Religion and economic attitudes. *Journal of monetary economics, 50*(1), 225-282.

Hackett, C., Grim, B., Stonawski, M., Skirbekk, V., Potancokova, M., & Abel, G. (2012). The global religious landscape: A report on the size and distribution of the world's major religious groups as of 2010.

Harun, R. (2009). In pursuit of national interest: Change and continuity in Malaysia's foreign policy towards the Middle East. *Jurnal Antarabangsa Kajian Asia Barat, 1*, 23-38.

Hasnah Hassan, S. (2011). Consumption of functional food model for Malay Muslims in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 2*(2), 104-124.

Hassan, K. (2002). *An empirical investigation of economic cooperation among the OIC member countries*.

Hefner, R. W. (1998). Multiple modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a globalizing age. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 83-104.

Hoffmann, R. (2013). The experimental economics of religion. *Journal of Economic Surveys, 27*(5), 813-845.

Hussaini, M. M. (1993). *Islamic dietary concepts & practices*: "The" Islamic Food & Nutrition Council of America.

Irons, W. (2001). Religion as a hard-to-fake sign of commitment.

Jaafar, H. S., Endut, I. R., Faisol, N., & Omar, E. N. (2011). Innovation in logistics services– halal logistics.

Jackson, L. M., & Hunsberger, B. (1999). An intergroup perspective on religion and prejudice. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 509-523.

Kamaruddin, R., & Jusoff, K. (2009). An ARDL Approach in Food and Beverages Industry Growth Process in Malaysia. *International Business Research, 2*(3), p98.

Keating, B. A., Herrero, M., Carberry, P. S., Gardner, J., & Cole, M. B. (2014). Food wedges: Framing the global food demand and supply challenge towards 2050. *Global Food Security, 3*(3), 125-132.

Khalifah, N. A. (1993). The Structure of Intra-Muslim Countries Trade. *Malaysian Economic Journal, 27*, 57-84.

Kruckeberg, D. (1996). A global perspective on public relations ethics: The Middle East. *Public Relations Review, 22*(2), 181-189.

Latif, I. A., Mohamed, Z., Sharifuddin, J., Abdullah, A. M., & Ismail, M. M. (2014). A Comparative Analysis of Global Halal Certification Requirements. *Journal of Food Products Marketing, 20*(sup1), 85-101.

McCleary, R. M., & Barro, R. J. (2006). Religion and economy. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 49-72.

Muhammad, R. (2007). Re-branding halal. *The Halal Journal, 32*.

Omar, E., & Jaafar, H. (2011). *Halal transportation in the Food Industry-A Conceptual Model'*. Paper presented at the IEEE Symposium on Business, Engineering and Industrial Applications (ISBEIA), Langkawi, Malaysia.

Ploos van Amstel, W., & Van Goor, A. (2001). Van logistiek naar supply chain management. *Ten Hagen Stam*.

Reuters, T., & Standard, D. (2014). State of the global Islamic economy 2014-2015 report. *May, available at: http://halalfocus*. net/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SGIE-Report-2014. pdf.

Shafie, S., & Othman, M. N. (2006). *Halal Certification: an international marketing issues and challenges.* Paper presented at the Proceeding at the International IFSAM VIIIth World Congress.

Shah Alam, S., & Mohamed Sayuti, N. (2011). Applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in halal food purchasing. *International Journal of Commerce and Management, 21*(1), 8-20.

Tan, J. H., & Vogel, C. (2008). Religion and trust: An experimental study. *Journal of Economic Psychology, 29*(6), 832-848.

Taylor, M. (2001). Internationalizing the public relations curriculum. *Public Relations Review, 27*(1), 73-88.

Thompson, E. (2003). Public and private in Middle Eastern women's history. *journal of Women's History, 15*(1), 52-69.

Tieman, M. (2011). The application of Halal in supply chain management: in-depth interviews. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 2*(2), 186-195.

Tieman, M. (2015). Halal clusters. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 6*(1), 2-21.

Tieman, M., van der Vorst, J. G., & Che Ghazali, M. (2012). Principles in halal supply chain management. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 3*(3), 217-243.

Tieman, M., & van Nistelrooy, M. (2014). Perception of Malaysian food manufacturers toward halal logistics. *Journal of International Food & Agribusiness Marketing, 26*(3), 218-233.

Tilson, D. J. (2011). Public Relations and Religious Diversity: A Conceptual.

Zakaria, N., & Abdul-Talib, A.-N. (2010). Applying Islamic market-oriented cultural model to sensitize strategies towards global customers, competitors, and environment. *Journal of Islamic Marketing, 1*(1), 51-62.

Zulfakar, M. H., Anuar, M. M., & Ab Talib, M. S. (2014). Conceptual framework on Halal food supply chain integrity enhancement. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 121*, 58-67.