



## Understanding Consumer Perception of halal foods: A Conceptual Framework Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response Model

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### Abstract

The global halal food market, valued at USD 1.91 trillion in 2023, reflects the growing intersection of religious adherence and consumer trust. In Muslim-majority countries like Bangladesh, consumers often assume that the food they consume is halal by default, given the strong religious identity of the population. However, issues such as food adulteration, fraudulent labeling, and inadequate certification systems raise concerns that consumers may unknowingly consume haram (forbidden) products, despite their confidence in the halal status of their food. This study investigates consumer perception in the halal food sector using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, focusing on Bangladesh as a case study. The research addresses two key questions: (1) Which factors contribute to the development of consumer perception of halal food? and (2) How does the perception of halal influence the purchase intention of Muslim consumers in Bangladesh? Key constructs—knowledge, religious commitment, trust, and awareness—are examined as stimuli influencing perception, which mediates purchase intention. The findings reveal that these four factors contribute to shape the Muslim consumers' consumer perception regarding halal food in Bangladesh, along existing literature examined the positive relationship between perception and purchase intention. By developing a conceptual framework, this research bridges gaps in existing theoretical models and offers actionable insights for policymakers and marketers to strengthen consumer confidence in halal products. The study contributes to the evolving discourse on Islamic marketing and provides a foundation for targeted strategies to improve market transparency and integrity.



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## Introduction

Religion as a construct of culture influence consumer in purchasing decision particularly within the context of halal food consumption. According to Islamic law, which is based on principles laid out in the Quran (Al-Qaradawi, 2013; Shah Alam & Mohamed Sayuti, 2011), Muslims must adhere to strict dietary restrictions that go beyond mere personal taste. According to the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (2005), these dietary laws help Muslim consumers stay in line with Shariah, which emphasizes the importance of halalness in everyday life. This has led to a meteoric rise for the worldwide halal food industry, which was valued at \$1.91Trillion in 2023 and will reportedly reach \$7.54Trillion by 2032, an increase of 16.5% CAGR (Expert Market Research, 2024).

Despite this growth, significant challenges persist in ensuring the integrity of halal food products, particularly in Muslim-majority countries like Bangladesh. Consumers in Bangladesh often assume that the food they consume is halal by default, given the country's strong religious identity. However, this confidence may be misplaced. Recent studies have highlighted issues such as food adulteration, fraudulent halal labeling, and inadequate certification systems, which raise concerns that consumers may unknowingly consume haram (forbidden) products (Rahman, 2021; Akter *et al.*, 2021). For instance, incidents of porcine DNA found in confectionery products and the widespread use of harmful chemicals like formalin in food processing have eroded trust in the halal food supply chain (Rahman, 2017; Rahman *et al.*, 2017; Ashraf, 2019). Despite these sensitive challenges Muslim consumers of Bangladesh are perceiving they are consuming halal throughout. These challenges underscore a critical gap between consumer perception and the reality of halal compliance. Hence this study wants to explore what factors actually shaping this positive perception among Muslim consumer of Bangladesh. These systemic issues necessitate a deeper understanding of how consumers form perceptions of halalness and how these perceptions influence their purchase intentions.

Consumer perception, defined as the process of organizing and interpreting external stimuli, plays a pivotal role in shaping purchasing decisions (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997). It influences the

relationship between external influences and consumer behavior, acting as a cognitive filter that determines how consumers evaluate products (Riaz, 2015). Consumer perception is influenced by a multitude of factors that shape how individuals view and interact with products. These factors encompass sensory characteristics, personal attributes, environmental influences, and marketing strategies. Sensory attributes, such as taste and quality, are pivotal in shaping consumer perception (Rai *et al.*, 2023; Tamilmani & Jeyalakshmi, 2020), while visual elements, including packaging design, color schemes, and branding, further enhance product appeal (Pellegrino, 2024). Personal characteristics, such as knowledge (Rai *et al.*, 2023), social norms, family traditions, and ethical considerations, also significantly influence perception (Kumar *et al.*, 2024). Environmental and economic factors, including food processing practices (Rai *et al.*, 2023), rapid globalization, and changing lifestyles, exert additional influence (Rai *et al.*, 2023). In the context of halal food, perception is shaped by various constructs, including knowledge, religious commitment, trust, and awareness, which collectively influence consumer confidence in product authenticity and compliance with Islamic dietary laws (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012; Ambali & Bakar, 2014). However, despite its critical role, the formation and implications of halal perception remain underexplored, particularly in theory-driven research.

Bangladesh, the third-largest Muslim-majority country with over 90% of its 174 million people adhering to Islam, presents a unique context for studying halal consumer behavior (World Population Review, 2024). Despite the population's high religious commitment, the halal food market faces significant challenges. Rampant adulteration, including the use of harmful chemicals such as formalin and carbide, erodes trust in the food supply chain and raises serious concerns about the integrity of halal certification (Rahman *et al.*, 2017; Rahman *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, limited awareness of halal certification processes exacerbates the problem, leaving consumers reliant on superficial indicators such as Islamic symbols or Arabic-sounding names rather than verified certifications (Shafie & Othman, 2006).

The lack of a standardized halal certification system in Bangladesh further compounds these issues,

creating uncertainty about product authenticity and compliance with Islamic laws (Ashraf, 2019). While consumers are increasingly aware of halal principles, they often lack the detailed knowledge required to make informed decisions. This gap between consumer expectations and the realities of the market underscores the importance of studying how perception is shaped by constructs such as knowledge, religious commitment, trust, and awareness. Understanding these dynamics can provide actionable insights for addressing consumer mistrust and improving market transparency.

Existing studies on halal consumer behavior have largely focused on purchase intention, often neglecting the antecedents and mediating role of perception (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). While constructs such as trust and awareness have been studied individually, their combined influence on perception remains underexplored, particularly in South Asian contexts like Bangladesh (Said *et al.*, 2014; Rana, 2022). Moreover, most research adopts a descriptive approach, lacking the theoretical rigor required to develop comprehensive models for understanding consumer behavior. This gap calls for a theory-driven framework that integrates these constructs, providing a holistic understanding of how perception influences halal purchase intentions. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors are shaping the positive perception of halal food among Muslim consumers in Bangladesh?
2. Does the perception of halal influence the purchase intention of Muslim consumers?

## Literature Review

### Conceptualization of Halal Food

Halal (halāl) signifies what is lawful or permissible under Islamic law, particularly in dietary practices outlined in the Quran and Hadith (Shah Alam & Mohamed Sayuti, 2011). The Quran commands, "O, ye men! Eat of what is in the earth, lawful and wholesome, and follow not the footsteps of Satan; for verily he is an open enemy to you" (Al-Baqara 2:168). It further establishes that all foods are halal except those explicitly prohibited as haram. Similarly, the Hadith clarifies, "Halal and Haram are clear. Whoever leaves out doubtful matters protects their religion and honor" (Tirmidhi, 1205).

Halal food is defined as food and beverages that comply with Islamic law by excluding haram substances, such as pork and alcohol, and adhering to ethical and procedural standards. These include invoking bismillah during slaughter, ensuring no adulteration, and maintaining hygiene throughout processing, presentation, and storage (Burhanuddin & Chusaemah, 2023).

For Muslims, consuming halal is not merely a dietary preference but a fundamental aspect of their faith, underscoring its paramount importance in their consumption decisions. What shapes the consumer Halal food holds particular significance for Muslim consumers as it represents a credence quality—a characteristic that cannot be easily verified but is inherently trusted based on religious principles (Zailani *et al.*, 2018). This perception drives sensitivity among Muslim consumers, compelling them to ensure that their food aligns with Islamic guidelines. The growing adoption of halal certifications and labeling reflects its critical role in building consumer trust, demonstrating not only religious adherence but also a commitment to ethical and hygienic practices (Iranmanesh *et al.*, 2020).

### Perception in Consumer Behavior

Perception is a central psychological factor influencing purchasing decisions, reflecting an individual's process of interpreting and organizing environmental stimuli (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). It operates through the senses—vision, hearing, taste, smell, and touch—and is inherently subjective, shaped by personal experiences and context (Crane & French, 2021). Perception determines consumer behavior by interpreting information, which subsequently influences attitudes and actions (Mullins *et al.*, 2014).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasizes perception is not merely sensory but a lived experience that actively constructs meaning. For example, the same staircase may serve as a passageway for some and an obstacle for others, depending on their physical abilities. This "primacy of perception" highlights its role in constituting truths and values, making it central to understanding human behavior (Bredlau, 2019). This emphasizes perception's contextual and subjective nature, making it an essential construct in understanding consumer decision-making (Bredlau, 2019).

### **Antecedents/Factors Affecting Perception of Halal Foods**

Across product categories, factors like brand, quality, and safety significantly shape perceptions. In FMCG, taste, variety, and brand image dominate, while nondurable goods rely on price, source credibility, and warranty (Tamilmani & Jeyalakshmi, 2020). For food products, sensory attributes, individual characteristics (e.g., health and religion), and environmental factors (e.g., economic conditions) are critical, alongside product-specific attributes like safety and nutrition in organic foods (Rai *et al.*, 2023; Mukul *et al.*, 2013).

Halal food perception adds complexity, influenced by cultural, religious, and informational dimensions. Non-Muslims' perceptions are shaped by attitudes and subjective norms while Muslim consumers value processing methods, safety, and religious beliefs (Hussain *et al.* 2016). Awareness and media coverage also play pivotal roles in shaping perceptions of halal products (Rahim & Shahwan, 2013).

Despite substantial research on halal purchase intention, gaps remain in understanding the role of perception and its antecedents. Much of the existing literature has focused on individual elements such as consumer attitudes (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012), religious commitment (Garg & Joshi, 2018; Asnawi *et al.* 2018), and knowledge (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Foundational studies such as Said *et al.* (2014) highlight the importance of trust, religious commitment, and knowledge in shaping perception, while subsequent works (Awan *et al.* 2015) explore perception within the Theory of Planned Behavior framework. Research in Muslim-majority countries has identified additional factors such as religiosity, halal certification, and branding, alongside perceptions of safety and exclusivity, as key determinants of halal food perception (Akin & Okumuş, 2021; Hasan, 2016).

### **The Role of Knowledge in Shaping Perception**

Knowledge plays a fundamental role in how consumers perceive and evaluate products, particularly in halal consumption. It consists of two key dimensions: objective knowledge (factual understanding) and subjective knowledge (self-assessed expertise), both of which shape decision-making (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Gregory, 1997).

In halal markets, this knowledge includes awareness of Islamic dietary laws—such as prohibitions against pork, blood, and improperly slaughtered meat (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:173)—as well as certification processes and product attributes (Nurhayati & Hendar, 2020). Such understanding guides consumer attitudes and reinforces halal compliance (Öztürk, 2022). Perception, while initially driven by sensory input (Rock, 1985), is refined by prior knowledge. Fodor's (1985) modular theory suggests that while perception operates independently, stored knowledge helps interpret ambiguous information—much like how visual illusions (e.g., Rubin's vase) are decoded through experience. In consumer behavior, familiarity and expertise act as filters, shaping how product information is processed (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

For halal products, knowledge serves as a critical authenticity checkpoint. Well-informed consumers assess compliance more accurately, reducing uncertainty (Bauer, 1967). Studies confirm that halal knowledge—covering religious principles, certification, and labeling (Nurhayati & Hendar, 2020; Öztürk, 2022)—strengthens perception, enabling confident purchasing decisions. Thus, while perception begins with sensory cues, knowledge deepens interpretation, helping consumers navigate halal markets with greater assurance.

### **The Role of religious commitment in Shaping Perception**

Religious commitment—the degree to which individuals incorporate faith into daily life (Worthington *et al.*, 2011)—fundamentally shapes Muslim consumers' perceptions of halal products. For observant Muslims, Islamic dietary laws (Quran and Hadith) mandate halal consumption, making religious values a primary lens for evaluating food choices (Mohamed *et al.*, 2008). This commitment heightens sensitivity to authenticity, where even minor deviations from halal standards raise concerns (Othman *et al.*, 2010). Highly committed consumers treat religious principles as a filter, prioritizing compliance in purchasing decisions (Mohamed *et al.*, 2008). Commitment theory (Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2005) supports this, showing that strong beliefs increase willingness to act—though practical factors (e.g., cost) may moderate behavior. Religion's role in shaping ethics (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997) is especially pronounced in halal markets,

where devout Muslims often reject non-compliant products outright (Rahman *et al.*, 2015).

Empirical evidence confirms this link: deeper religiosity correlates with stricter halal adherence (Mukhtar & Butt, 2011) and stronger trust in certified products (Iranmanesh *et al.*, 2020). By aligning consumption with faith, religious commitment reinforces both perception and behavior (Sitasari, 2008), ensuring purchases reflect spiritual values.

### **The Role of Awareness in Shaping Perception**

Awareness serves as a critical cognitive foundation for consumer perception, particularly in halal food consumption. Defined as an individual's knowledge and understanding of specific situations (Summers-Effler, 2004), halal awareness enables Muslims to identify permissible products and assess their compliance with Islamic principles (Ambali & Bakar, 2014). This awareness operates similarly to brand recognition, helping consumers quickly identify and evaluate halal items in the marketplace (Akin & Okumuş, 2021). The cognitive process works through several mechanisms. Bermudez (2015) explains how awareness allows consumers to differentiate products, while Føllesdal's (2020) object perception model demonstrates its role in evaluating intrinsic qualities. When awareness is lacking, perception becomes fragmented, requiring consumers to "fill in gaps" (Ramsøy & Overgaard, 2004). In halal contexts, this translates to an ability to spot authentic products and avoid questionable ones (Ambali & Bakar, 2014; Nurhayati & Hendar, 2020).

Empirical studies confirm awareness' practical impact. Aziz and Chok (2013) found it helps overcome skepticism about non-Muslim producers, while Öztürk (2022) showed how it aligns purchasing decisions with religious values. Ultimately, awareness serves dual roles: it educates consumers about halal standards while shaping their perceptions of product authenticity and trustworthiness.

### **The Role of Trust in Shaping Perception**

Trust plays a pivotal role in Muslim consumers' evaluation of halal products, serving as a psychological mechanism to overcome the inherent uncertainty in verifying religious compliance (Ahmed, 2008; Abdul *et al.*, 2009). Since halal attributes represent credence qualities that cannot be verified even after purchase (Grunert, 2005),

consumers must rely on trust in certification bodies and producers to ensure authenticity (Rahman *et al.*, 2021). The cognitive model of trust (Foddy *et al.*, 2009) explains how four interconnected factors shape perception: (1) consumer characteristics (e.g., religious values), (2) institutional reputation, (3) relational dynamics, and (4) social norms. This trust framework reduces perceived risk (Mayer *et al.*, 1995) and enhances information credibility (Robbins, 2016), particularly in ambiguous purchasing situations (Petty & Cacioppo, 2012).

In practice, Muslim consumers demonstrate different trust patterns - showing inherent confidence in Muslim-owned businesses while depending on formal certification for other sellers (Abdul *et al.*, 2009). The integration of *Toyyib* (wholesomeness) principles further strengthens this trust by linking religious and quality perceptions. Market cues like halal logos and Arabic branding serve as critical trust signals (Shafie & Othman, 2006), though violations (e.g., false certification) can severely damage confidence (Tieman & Ghazali, 2014). Ultimately, trust functions as both a risk mitigator and value enhancer, directly influencing purchase decisions (Hasan, 2016) by transforming abstract religious requirements into tangible product attributes.

### **The Influence of Consumer Perception on Purchase Intention**

Purchase intention serves as a critical indicator of consumer behavior, reflecting a deliberate willingness to purchase specific products that is strongly influenced by prior perceptions and attitudes (Bashir *et al.*, 2019). As Kotler & Armstrong (2010) establish, this intention reliably predicts actual buying decisions, forming through an evaluative process where consumers weigh product attributes against their needs and values (Mirabi *et al.*, 2015). The strength of purchase intention directly correlates with conversion likelihood, as demonstrated by Soebahar *et al.* (2021) and Malik *et al.* (2013) in various consumer contexts.

In halal markets, purchase intention carries additional religious significance, representing more than mere transactional decisions. Shafie and Othman (2006) emphasize that for Muslim consumers, the intention to purchase halal products stems from spiritual obligations that intertwine with daily consumption practices. This faith-based

dimension transforms ordinary purchasing into acts of religious observance, where products must align with both divine commandments and personal ethical standards (Rajagopal *et al.*, 2011; Miftahuddin *et al.*, 2022). The transition from perception to purchase intention occurs through several interconnected mechanisms. Consumer perceptions of product quality and halal authenticity, often shaped by certification labels and branding (Tieman, 2013), create the foundational trust necessary for purchase consideration (Riaz, 2015). Malik *et al.* (2013) further demonstrate how positive perceptions reduce the inherent uncertainties in halal verification, while Miftahuddin *et al.* (2022) reveal their role in aligning products with consumers' religious identities. These perceptual evaluations ultimately determine whether products progress from being merely acceptable to becoming preferred choices in the consumer's consideration set.

### **Why Studying Halal Perception through Knowledge, Religious Commitment, Awareness, and Trust Matters in Bangladesh**

Halal food authenticity is a pressing global issue, with mislabeling, fraudulent certifications, and adulteration increasingly common (Maifiah *et al.*, 2022). While Southeast Asian Muslims show strong halal awareness (Rahim, 2016), Bangladeshi consumers reveal a striking contrast: lax domestic halal scrutiny versus heightened concern abroad (Rahman, 2021). This paradox highlights a gap in understanding how knowledge, awareness, religious commitment, and trust shape their halal choices. Beyond avoiding non-halal ingredients, halal consumption demands ethical sourcing and transparency (Shafie & Othman, 2006). Yet, in Bangladesh, limited knowledge, deceptive practices, and weak regulations fuel doubts about compliance (Hasan, 2016; Latif *et al.*, 2014). Local trust leans toward Muslim-run butcheries over certified supermarkets (Ahmed, 2008), while incidents like porcine DNA in sweets (Akter *et al.*, 2021) and global meat scandals (Ruslan *et al.*, 2018) underscore the need for better awareness and oversight.

Bangladesh's halal sector struggles with inconsistent standards, fraudulent labeling, and scant consumer education, despite growing certification demand (Rahman *et al.*, 2017; Ashraf, 2019). Past studies on halal behavior in tourism (Bhuiyan & Darda, 2018), banking (Fatema *et al.*, 2018), and general

attitudes (Ashraf, 2019) lack a unified focus on perception's antecedents (Kabir & Ali, 2020). This study fills that gap by exploring how knowledge empowers halal evaluation (Said *et al.*, 2014), religious commitment drives adherence (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012), trust counters fraud (Rahman *et al.*, 2017), and awareness aligns expectations with reality (Ambali & Bakar, 2014). Examining these constructs offers vital insights into consumer behavior, strengthening market integrity and Islamic compliance in Bangladesh's evolving halal landscape.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study adopts a qualitative, conceptual approach to develop a framework for understanding consumer perception of halal food products using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. The purpose of the research is to propose an integrated framework to explain the dynamics of consumer perception in halal contexts. This paper adopts a model-building approach, as outlined by Jaakkola (2020), to develop a conceptual framework predicting relationships between constructs. The model aims to create a nomological network around consumer perception, identifying antecedents, outcomes, and contingencies. Drawing on existing theoretical insights (MacInnis, 2011), the framework explicates how perception mediates the effects of external stimuli (knowledge, religious commitment, trust, and awareness) on behavioral responses, such as purchase intention. The study is grounded in secondary data collected from open-source academic databases, including Google Scholar, Wiley, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science, ensuring a comprehensive review of existing literature. The data collection process involved screening peer-reviewed articles, books, and conference papers published between 1960 and 2024, with a focus on studies that examined consumer behavior, perception, and halal food consumption. The inclusion criteria prioritized studies that explored consumer perspectives, excluding research focused on producers, suppliers, or other non-consumer stakeholders. Key constructs such as knowledge, religious commitment, trust, and awareness were identified through this process, supported by foundational theories from the 1960s to 2000s (e.g., Bauer, 1967; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1997; Alba & Hutchinson, 1987), which remain relevant for understanding consumer perception in the halal

context. These theories were retained to provide a strong theoretical foundation for the proposed framework, while more recent studies (e.g., Rahman, 2021; Akter *et al.*, 2021) were incorporated to address contemporary challenges such as food adulteration and fraudulent labeling.

The proposed SOR model has since been widely adopted across various disciplines, including retail and consumer behavior, to elucidate the decision-making processes of consumers (e.g., Sohaib & Kang, 2015; Rose *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, the model's constructs and relationships were cross-validated with empirical findings from recent studies (e.g., knowledge by Bar, *et al.*, 2006;) religious commitment by Newaz *et al.*, 2016; awareness by Rana, 2022; trust by Todaro *et al.*, 2023; and purchase intention by Purwanto and Sudargini, 2021) to ensure its relevance and applicability in contemporary contexts.

Furthermore, the study outlines potential empirical applications of the proposed framework. Future research could test the model through quantitative methods, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), to validate the hypothesized relationships between knowledge, religious commitment, trust, awareness, and consumer perception. Empirical studies could also explore the moderating effects of demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, income) and cultural contexts on the proposed relationships. This would provide practical insights for halal food marketers and policymakers, particularly in Muslim-majority countries like Bangladesh, where understanding consumer perception is critical for market success.

The model-building approach was chosen to synthesize diverse theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, enabling the development of a holistic conceptual model that bridges gaps in the literature. This approach is justified as it allows for the integration of historical and modern insights, providing a nuanced understanding of how consumer perception of halal food is shaped and how it influences purchase intention in a Muslim-majority context like Bangladesh.

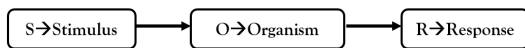
## **Theoretical Framework**

### **S-O-R Model-Conceptual Foundations of the Study**

The conceptual foundations of the proposed model and the related hypotheses are drawn from the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model (Figure-01). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, initially introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) in the field of environmental psychology, has since been widely adopted across various disciplines, including retail and consumer behavior, to elucidate the decision-making processes of consumers (e.g. Islam & Rahman, 2017; Sohaib & Kang, 2015; Rose *et al.*, 2012). At its core, the S-O-R paradigm posits that environmental stimuli influence an individual's cognitive and affective states (Organism), which subsequently drive behavioral outcomes (Responses) (Robert & John, 1982). Stimuli are broadly defined as external factors that evoke internal reactions in individuals. In the context of consumer behavior, these stimuli encompass not only marketing mix elements but also environmental cues such as store ambiance, visual aesthetics, accessibility, social interactions, customer service, and informational inputs (Bagozzi, 1986). These factors collectively shape the emotional and cognitive responses of consumers. The organism component of the S-O-R framework represents the internal psychological state that mediates the relationship between stimuli and behavioral responses.

In Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) original model, the organism was characterized by three emotional dimensions: pleasure, arousal, and dominance (PAD). However, this PAD framework has been critiqued, leading researchers to reconceptualize the organism as a combination of cognitive and affective states (e.g., Lee *et al.*, 2011). The affective state reflects the emotional reactions—such as pleasure and arousal—triggered by environmental stimuli, while the cognitive state pertains to the mental processes involved in acquiring, processing, storing, and retrieving information. Both cognitive and affective states have been consistently identified as critical determinants of consumer behavior and experience (e.g., Frow & Payne, 2007; Tynan &

McKechnie, 2009) and are often measured through attitudinal constructs (e.g., Lee & Yun, 2015). The final element of the S-O-R framework is the behavioral response, which is influenced by the individual's internal state. Responses are typically categorized as either approach or avoidance behaviors (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Approach behaviors encompass positive actions, such as purchase intentions, favorable word-of-mouth, or engagement with a setting, while avoidance behaviors include negative reactions, such as disinterest, unfavorable communications, or refusal to purchase (Vergura *et al.* 2020). This dichotomy underscores the importance of understanding how stimuli and internal states collectively shape consumer actions.



**Fig. 1: Stimulus-Organism-Response Model**

### Conceptual Framework

#### Proposed Conceptual Framework Based on S-O-R Model

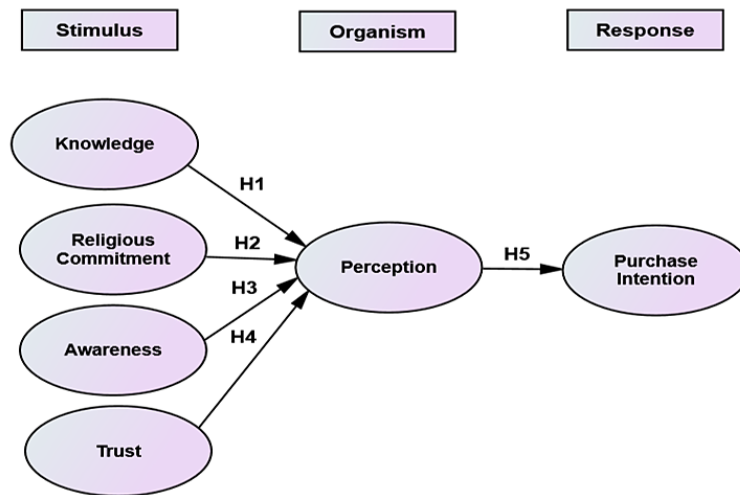
According to the S-O-R framework, the theoretical model in the present study divides consumer behavior into three components (Figure 02). The model's three interconnected components work sequentially to explain how external factors influence internal psychological processes that ultimately drive purchasing behavior.

The external stimuli component comprises four well-established factors that shape consumer perceptions. Knowledge of halal standards forms the foundational stimulus, with early work by Macdonald and Sharp (2000) establishing its importance, followed by Said *et al.* (2014) demonstrating how knowledge enables accurate authenticity assessments, and more recently Hwang and Nam (2021) revealing how knowledge gaps can distort perceptions. Religious commitment emerges as another crucial stimulus, with Garg and Joshi (2018) and Asnawi *et al.* (2018) first establishing its role in consumption patterns, while Rahman *et al.* (2015) and Iranmanesh *et al.* (2020) later showed its specific impact on halal compliance scrutiny. Awareness constitutes the third key stimulus, identified by Bashir *et al.* (2019) as the strongest predictor of halal perception, with Aziz and Chok (2013) demonstrating its ability to overcome

skepticism about non-Muslim producers. Finally, trust in certification systems completes the stimulus package, first established as critical by Tieman and Ghazali (2014), with subsequent validation through Nurrachmi *et al.*'s (2020) mediation analysis and Talib *et al.*'s (2008) investigation of trust violations. While these four stimuli have been examined individually across various cultural contexts - including Malaysia (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012; Phang & de Run, 2007; Hasan, 2016), Pakistan (Awan *et al.*, 2015), and Turkey (Akin & Okumuş, 2021) - their combined effect remains particularly understudied in Bangladesh. This gap persists despite the demonstrated importance of religious values in Muslim-majority consumption patterns (Abdul *et al.*, 2009), and stands in contrast to findings from non-Muslim majority countries like France and Indonesia (Widodo, 2013) where health benefits rather than religious compliance dominate halal consumption motives.

The organism component represents the internal psychological state of consumer perception, which mediates between external stimuli and behavioral responses. El-Gohary (2016) and Fathi *et al.* (2016) demonstrate how this perception forms through continuous evaluation of product compliance with Islamic standards, while Elseidi (2018) specifically highlights how perceptions activate cognitive beliefs about halal authenticity. This perceptual mediation proves especially crucial in Bangladesh's unique context, where despite valuable sector-specific studies on tourism (Bhuiyan & Darda, 2018), Islamic banking (Fatema *et al.*, 2018), and general attitudes (Ashraf, 2019), comprehensive understanding of halal food perception formation remains limited (Kabir & Ali, 2020).

The response component captures the ultimate behavioral outcome of purchase intention. Empirical work by Hussain *et al.* (2016) and Mursid and Anoraga (2022) firmly established the conversion of positive halal perceptions into purchase intent, with Miftahuddin *et al.* (2022) later explaining the underlying cognitive mechanisms that facilitate this conversion. Vergura *et al.* (2020) provided further confirmation of this complete stimulus-perception-response sequence in religious consumption contexts, validating the model's applicability to halal food markets.



**Fig. 2: The proposed Conceptual Model**

Thus, the conceptual framework in this study positions knowledge, religious commitment, awareness, and trust as external stimuli that shape consumer perception. This perception, in turn, drives purchase intention, illustrating the interconnected nature of the S-O-R model in the context of halal food products which is presented in this study as follows:

### Hypothesis Development

The proposed adaptation of the S-O-R model generates five key hypotheses that structure the research inquiry. First, knowledge is posited to positively influence halal perception (H1), as demonstrated by studies showing how informed consumers make more discerning halal evaluations (Said *et al.*, 2014; Hwang and Nam, 2021). Second, religious commitment is hypothesized to strengthen halal perception (H2), consistent with findings that religiosity enhances compliance sensitivity (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). Third, awareness is expected to improve perception (H3), particularly in contexts where certification systems are weak (Rana, 2022). Fourth, trust is proposed as a critical perceptual enhancer (H4), building on evidence that credible halal logos increase consumer confidence (Tieman, 2013). Finally, positive halal perception is hypothesized to drive purchase intention (H5), completing the S-O-R sequence as observed in cross-cultural halal markets (Miftahuddin *et al.*, 2022). Together, these hypotheses are outlined as follows:

- **H1:** Knowledge of halal food has a positive and significant impact on consumers' perception of halal foods.
- **H2:** Religious commitment has a positive and significant impact on consumers' perception of halal foods.
- **H3:** Awareness of halal has a positive and significant impact on consumers' perception of halal foods.
- **H4:** Trust has a positive and significant impact on consumers' perceptions of halal foods.
- **H5:** Consumer perception has a positive and significant impact on the intention to purchase halal food products.

### Results

The literature review identifies four key constructs—knowledge, religious commitment, awareness, and trust—as critical external stimuli shaping Muslim consumers' perception of halal food products. These constructs are particularly significant in Muslim-majority contexts like Bangladesh, where halal compliance is both a religious obligation and a driver of consumer behavior. Empirical evidence demonstrates that knowledge enhances consumers' ability to evaluate product authenticity, while insufficient knowledge can lead to misperceptions (Hamdan *et al.*, 2013; Said *et al.*, 2014). Religious commitment strengthens preferences for halal-compliant goods, with deeper faith positively influencing perceptions of authenticity (Rahman

*et al.*, 2015; Iranmanesh *et al.*, 2020). Awareness of halal standards and certification fosters trust and confidence, even in products from non-Muslim companies (Bashir *et al.*, 2019; Aziz & Chok, 2013). Finally, trust in halal certification and logos reduces uncertainty and enhances consumer confidence, driving purchase intentions (Tieman & Ghazali, 2014). These findings collectively validate the proposed model, positioning perception as the mediator between external stimuli and purchase intention.

### **Discussion**

This study integrates the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework to explore how external stimuli—knowledge, religious commitment, awareness, and trust—shape Muslim consumers' perception of halal products and influence purchase intentions. The findings highlight the centrality of perception as a mediator, bridging external stimuli and behavioral outcomes. This aligns with prior studies emphasizing perception's role in activating cognitive beliefs and driving purchase decisions (Elseidi, 2018)

Theoretically, this study contributes by offering a holistic framework that integrates multiple stimuli, addressing a gap in the literature on halal consumer behavior in Muslim-majority contexts like Bangladesh. It underscores the importance of cultural and religious factors, particularly in regions where religiosity significantly influences consumer decisions. Practically, the findings suggest that businesses and policymakers should prioritize educational campaigns to enhance halal knowledge, strengthen certification processes to build trust, and raise awareness through transparent labeling and marketing. Emphasizing the religious and ethical dimensions of halal products can further align strategies with consumer values. While the proposed model provides valuable insights, it is limited by its reliance on literature rather than empirical data. Future research should validate the model through quantitative studies to offer a more comprehensive understanding of halal consumer behavior.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the critical role of consumer perception in the halal food market, shaped

by knowledge, religious commitment, trust, and awareness. The findings demonstrate that perception acts as a pivotal mediator between external stimuli and purchase intention, providing a nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in this context. For Bangladesh, addressing the gaps in halal certification, combating food adulteration, and enhancing consumer awareness are imperative to building trust and fostering market integrity. Future research should focus on empirical validation of the proposed S-O-R model across diverse cultural and economic contexts to generalize its applicability. Longitudinal studies could explore how changes in awareness campaigns, regulatory frameworks, and market dynamics influence consumer perception over time. Additionally, examining the role of digital technologies, such as blockchain for halal certification transparency, could provide innovative solutions to existing challenges. These endeavors will not only refine theoretical models but also offer practical insights for advancing halal consumer behavior research.

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The authors declares no conflict of interest.

### **Data Availability Statement**

This statement does not apply to this article.

### **Ethics Statement**

This research did not involve human participants, animal subjects, or any material that requires ethical approval.

### **Informed Consent Statement**

This study did not involve human participants, and therefore, informed consent was not required.

#### Permission to Reproduce Material from other Sources

This study did not include any reproduced materials, hence permission to reproduced material from other sources was not required.

#### Author Contributions

- **Sakera Begum:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – Original and final Draft.

- **Mohammed Alamgir:** Visualization, Supervision, Project Administration.
- **Tanima Sharmin:** Data Collection, Formatting and editing.
- **Tayub Chowdhury:** Supervision and Proofreading.

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