

# THE EFFECT OF RELIGIOSITY AND TACIT SELF-DECLARE HALAL CUES ON SKEPTICISM AND PATRONAGE INTENTION OF SELF-DECLARE HALAL RESTAURANT: AN EXTENDED ABSTRACT

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**Abstract:** *The halal food industry exhibits significant consumer segmentation in countries that are in the process of developing the halal industry. However, not all businesses within this industry employ authentic halal logo, mainly due to the absence of halal certification. As an alternative, they make self-declared halal claims to provide halal confirmation to consumers. This research aims to contribute to the marketing communication literature by offering a deeper understanding of how religiosity and tacit self-declared halal cues influence skepticism and drive patronage intention among consumers of self-declared halal restaurants. An online questionnaire was used to collect information from 297 respondents. The findings revealed that religiosity and tacit self-declare halal cues had a negative impact on skepticism toward self-declare restaurants. Moreover, further explains the indirect relationship through mediation analyses. A mediation model was developed to shed light on the mediating role of skepticism and attitude towards halal restaurants. As a result, the study found that skepticism positively mediated the relationship between religiosity and tacit self-declared halal cues on patronage intention.*

**Keywords:** *Tacit Self-Declare Halal, Skepticism, Attitude Towards Halal, Attitude Towards Restaurant, Patronage Intention*

## Introduction

Indonesia, as a Muslim-majority country, is firmly ingrained in Islamic beliefs, which define its societal standards and daily routines. The Muslim community in the country exhibits a great dedication to piety, which includes completing religious requirements and refraining from behaviors that violate their beliefs. As a result, Indonesia is a highly potential market for the halal food and beverage business, as halal products adhere to the religious beliefs of its Muslim consumers (Ghazali et al., 2022).

Halal has become a recognized and trusted brand in society, signifying safety and reliability in consumption. Obtaining halal certification provide as clear proof that a restaurant's production procedures and raw materials adhere to halal requirements. Halal certification is critical in assuaging customer worries about the halal status of food goods (Khan & Khan, 2019).

Halal restaurants can be easily identified by checking for halal certification or authentic halal logos displayed within the premises. The absence of halal certification for restaurants results in the absence of the Halal Indonesia logo, which serves as a guarantee of the halal food served. In this case, some restaurants will self-declare halal or make an independent halal statement. These halal self-declarations can take several forms, including textual assertions, self-designed halal logos, or oral affirmations, which are frequently transmitted directly or through marketing and social media platforms owned by the restaurant. While the purpose of halal self-declaration remains the same as halal certification - giving consumers with a sense of trust - the important distinction is that the restaurant carries out the self-declaration, creating issues about its halal credibility.

The prevalence of self-declared halal restaurants in Indonesia often leads Muslim consumers to be skeptical of the claims made. Although previous studies have explored the impact of skepticism on consumer behavior towards specific brands, the role of skepticism as a mediating factor in the context of self-declared halal restaurants remains largely unexplored. In Indonesia, investigating the influence of consumer skepticism on halal claims is essential to gain a deeper understanding of its impact on persuasive communication employed by restaurants.

## Literature Review

Religiosity refers to the extent to which an individual embraces Islamic values and ideals (Sardana et al., 2018). Religious individuals' beliefs are shaped by Islamic principles, which, in turn, influence their moral and value systems. Religiosity plays a crucial role in the transmission of Islamic values and the formulation of individual identities. The assumption is that when an individual incorporates religion into their identity, it significantly influences their values and behaviors (Kusumawati et al., 2019). Tacit Self-Declare Halal Cues is a construct that measures consumer perception of the halal status of restaurants based on both implicit and explicit halal signals present in the restaurant. With the absence of Halal Indonesia as an authentic halal certification, consumers assess the halal status of a restaurant using these cues (Khan & Khan, 2019).

Skepticism, in general, denotes a tendency toward disbelief in information or claims (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 1998). In the context of this research, skepticism can be defined as the cognitive state of doubt or disbelief that consumers exhibit towards the halal claims made by restaurants. Attitude towards a halal restaurant refers to an individual's evaluation of such a restaurant based on their beliefs and feelings (Ghazali et al., 2022). Consumers gauge their attitude towards halal restaurants in comparison to authentic restaurants that possess a halal certification or Halal Indonesia. Patronage intention, within the scope of this research, refers to consumers' intention to patronize self-declared halal restaurants (Ghazali et al., 2022).

### **Research Methodology**

Indonesia was selected as the study context for its diverse population of multiple ethnicities and religions, with the Muslim community comprising the majority. The research approach used an online cross-sectional survey strategy with questionnaires specifically customized to adult Muslim customers. All constructs were measured using established and trustworthy scales, with required adjustments made to fit the specific context. To ensure the integrity of the data, eligibility criteria were established, whereby respondents had to be aged 18 years or above, identify as Muslim, and have dined in a self-declared halal restaurant in the past month. The study received 297 valid replies from qualified participants. Following that, the collected data was statistically analyzed using the SmartPLS 3 software program, a commonly used tool for doing structural equation modeling in research.

### **Result and Discussion**

This study investigated the relationship between tacit self-declare halal cues and religiosity on restaurant patronage intention. This study investigates the role of skepticism and attitude towards halal in this context. According to the findings of this study, both tacit self-declare halal cues and religiosity had a significant effect on skepticism and patronage intention. In other words, the perception of tacit self-declare halal cues and higher level of religiosity were able to influence consumer patronage intention towards self-declare halal restaurant. Furthermore, skepticism was discovered to serve a moderating role in the relationship between tacit self-declare halal cues and religiosity towards patronage intention in this study.

Higher levels of tacit self-declare halal cues and religiosity indicate lower consumer skepticism. The research yielded an interesting result regarding the relationship between tacit self-declare halal cues and attitude towards halal restaurant. While religiosity had a significant relationship on attitude towards halal, the relationship between tacit self-declare halal cues and attitude towards halal restaurants was not significant

Although patronage intention can drive by tacit self-declare halal cues, no mediation through attitude towards halal was found. A plausible interpretation of these findings is that consumers develop commitment in their patronage intention towards self-declared halal restaurant based on the tacit self-declare halal cues they found. In other words, people only need to believe that the restaurant they visit is halal to become patrons, without necessarily

requiring halal certification or having a favorable attitude toward halal restaurant.

### Conclusion

Previous studies have established a significant relationship between tacit self-declared halal cues and attitude towards halal (Ghazali et al., 2022). Interestingly, this study findings different result of relation between tacit self-declare halal and attitude towards halal. Specifically, the findings indicated no direct relation between tacit self-declared halal cues and consumers' attitudes towards halal restaurants. Similar findings have been reported in other studies, further supporting the notion that tacit self-declared halal cues do not directly impact consumer attitudes towards halal restaurants (Abd Rahman et al., 2015).

The findings of this study indicate to specific approaches for increasing restaurant patronage among Muslim customers. Based on the research findings, restaurants can target consumers with high religiosity in order to create a low level of skepticism toward the halal cues presented by the restaurant. Considering that low skepticism can increase consumer patronage intention, providing proper halal cues and implementing improved targeting can help restaurants in increasing customer patronage intention.

Restaurants can benefit significantly from having a halal environment that corresponds with consumer values. In terms of consumer perception, the restaurant's demographic location will also serve as a halal signal. Restaurants can hire Muslim employees, and setting dress requirements that match customers' religious beliefs can help to confirm the restaurant's halal status. That implementation enhances the intention of consumer to patronize the restaurant.

There were some limitations to this study. The findings of this study are based on a specific sample of Muslim consumers in Indonesia, consequently the results cannot be generalized to other geographic regions, particularly countries with a lower Muslim population. Future studies should seek data from a variety of countries or geographic regions. It would be beneficial to investigate the proposed framework in areas where Muslims are a minority.

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