

## Do Muslims Purchase Muslim Products? Muslim Centric Ness: An Exploratory Study

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**Abstract.** Consumer ethnocentrism has been recognised to influence consumers or an individual's choice orientation. This paper is an extension to the concept of ethnocentrism by specifically taking the followers of the Islamic religion as a group and investigating the level of Muslim Centric Ness. The scale primarily was developed to measure the Muslims tendency to purchase Muslim products. The Muslim Centric Ness measurement scale developed was tested for its reliability and validity to the Muslims in Malaysia. The measurement scale tested to be a reliable and valid scale to be used to the Muslim consumers. The relationship between the level of Muslim Centric Ness and Purchase intention was examined. The research results indicated that Muslims have an orientation to purchase Muslim made products.

**Keywords:** Muslim Consumer Behaviour, Measurement scale, Purchase Intention

### 1. Introduction

Muslims are one the fastest growing consumer market in the world. Muslims constitute 24 per cent of the world population, or 1.65 billion people. This is expected to increase by over one percentage point each decade, reaching one out of four by 2020 and one out of three by 2075 (Houssain 2010). The largest Islamic body, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, reported that all the 57 countries have a combined GDP of nearly US\$8 trillion (Bakr 2010). Despite the size and growth rate of the population and the growing wealth of the Islamic countries, research on consumer behaviour specific to Muslims are concentrated more towards religiosity and its effect on consumer behaviour. Little is known about the influence of religion on consumer decision making behaviour in marketing areas (Nazlida and Mizerski 2010).

### 2. Ethnocentrism

Consumer ethnocentrism has been defined as "the beliefs held by consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing foreign made products" (Shimp and Sharma 1987, p. 280). Studies done in Asian countries such as Thailand, India and Indonesia have shown that consumers have the preference for domestic products as compared with foreign products (Hamin 2006; Kinra 2006; Pinkao and Speece 2000). With reference to Malaysia, Malaysian consumers' attitude in making choice of products in the marketplace is greatly influenced by their ethnocentric sentiment (Safiek et al., 2001). Safiek et al. (2001) found that in Malaysia highly ethnocentric consumers tend to be Malays who are Muslims. Nazlida and Razli (2004) found and confirmed the findings of Safiek et al. (2001) that the level of ethnocentrism of Malaysian consumers has a significant relationship to buying preferences and domestic products' evaluations. Nazlida and Razli (2004) study also found that demographic variables of age, gender, income and education have no significant relationship with consumer ethnocentrism (Nazlida and Razli 2004). Md Nor et al. (2008) research showed in their study on urban Malaysian consumers that ethnocentric consumers tend to be Malay, married, female, and are mostly blue collar. They also found that the ethnocentric consumers tend to be family and home concerned as well as price conscious. Contrary to Nazlida and Razli (2004) they found out

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that ethnocentric consumers tend to have a low income. Although the level of ethnocentrism has been shown to have a positive influence on purchase intention, no studies have been found by the researchers to investigate the effect of Muslim Centric Ness on purchase intention. Muslim Centric Ness refers to the beliefs held by Muslim consumers about the appropriateness, indeed morality, of purchasing Muslim made products. The researchers hypothesise that there is a positive relationship between Muslim Centric Ness and purchase intention.

## **2.1. Purchase Intentions**

Purchase intent has been referred to as a consumer's intention to purchase a product, or to patronise a service firm (Shao et al., 2004). Purchase intentions have been proposed by Dodds et al. Grewal (1991) as the willingness to buy. Gruber (1971) suggest that intention provides a link between consumers' reaction to product and their acquisition or use of product. The consumer's intention to purchase a product or service provided by Muslims was used as the dependent variable in this study.

## **3. Research Objectives**

The difference among various group of consumers and their behaviour is important for firms in order to develop appropriate marketing strategies. The degree of the Muslim consumer to be Muslim centric and its effect in their purchase intention are important to academicians as well as marketers. This study intends to contribute to the academic literature by extending the dimensions of identity from an ethnic perspective to religious perspective specifically Islamic religion. The research seeks to determine the relationship between Muslim centric ness with the purchase intention to buy Muslim products and services. Specifically, the objectives of the research are (1) To examine the Muslim Centric Ness tendency among Muslims in Malaysia; (2) To examine the relationship between Muslim Centric Ness and purchase intention of products made by Muslims and (3) To explore the relationship of demographic variables with the level of Muslim Centric Ness.

## **4. Research Instruments**

The Muslim Centric Ness measurement scale was constructed based on the CETSCALE developed by Shimp and Sharma (1987). The reliability and validity of the CETSCALE has been demonstrated by past researchers (Mohammed and Shamseen 2008). Eight items were selected from the CETSCALE developed by Shimp and Sharma. Consequently, a 7 point multi-item Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree) was developed to measure Muslim Centric Ness. All six selected questions were modified to fit the local content and translated into the Malay language considering that the sample would be taken only from Muslims which the majority is made up of Malays in Malaysia. Consequently the questionnaires had questions both in Malay and English. Purchase intentions for products measurement was adapted and modified from MacKenzie et al. (1986) and include statements such as 1) It is probable that I would buy a product made by an Islamic country 2) It is likely I would buy a product made in an Islamic country 3) It is possible I would buy a product made in an Islamic country 4) It is probable that I would buy a product made by Muslims 5) It is likely that I would buy a product made by Muslims, and 6) It is possible I would buy a product made by Muslims. A convenience sampling method using the personal administered interview where possible and self-administered and drop off technique was applied on the research. Samples were taken from people in the state of Selangor area. The sample was taken from the Selangor area primarily due to the fact that Selangor is the most industrialised state in Malaysia with the largest number of retailers thus representing the greatest competition for marketing and distribution of products. The respondents consisted of Muslims with different demographic profiles with the aged between 18 and above.

## **5. Sample Characteristics**

A total of 214 questionnaires were collected and deemed to be suitable for data analysis. The entire respondents sampled were all Muslims with 53.7 per cent male respondents as compared with 46.3 per cent females. In terms of age, majority are young respondents between the age of 26 and 30 years old. Single respondents made up 43 per cent of the respondents while 57 per cent were married. With reference to

income, 60 per cent were in the income bracket of RM1500 (US\$483) to RM2500 (US\$806) per month. Table 1 shows the distribution of the socio economic factors.

Table 1: Respondent characteristics

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	<i>Male</i>	115	53.7
	<i>Female</i>	99	46.3
<b>Marital status</b>	<i>Single</i>	93	43.4
	<i>Married</i>	121	56.5
<b>Age</b>	<i>&lt;25</i>	37	17.3
	<i>26-30</i>	50	23.4
	<i>31-35</i>	44	20.6
	<i>36-40</i>	34	15.9
	<i>41-45</i>	30	14.0
	<i>46-50</i>	12	5.6
	<i>&gt;50</i>	7	3.2
<b>Income level of respondents</b>	<i>&lt;RM1,500</i>	46	21.5
	<i>RM1,500-RM2,500</i>	60	28.0
	<i>RM2,501-RM3,500</i>	48	22.4
	<i>RM3,501-RM4,500</i>	25	11.7
	<i>RM4,501-RM5,500</i>	16	7.5
	<i>&gt;RM5,500</i>	19	8.8

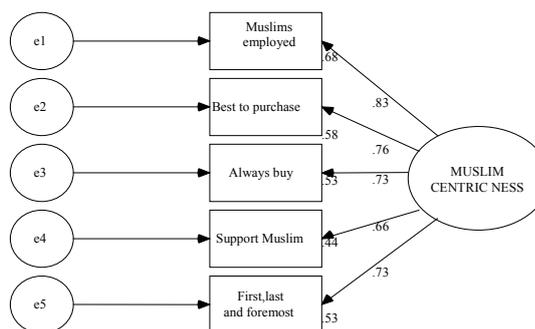
## 6. Data Analysis

As proposed and in line with the suggested procedure for scale development as suggested by Churchill (1979) and De Vellis (2003) the data have first to be analysed in terms of internal consistency, inter-item correlation, items to total correlation and factor analysis procedures. The inter item correlation of the 8 items measuring Muslim Centric Ness were first examined to identify items that were not strongly correlated with each other. An item to total correlation was also done on the 8 items and items having a correlation of less than 0.5 were dropped from the scale. One item was dropped for failing to meet the requirement. The Cronbach Alpha was calculated with the remaining seven items giving a value of .88. These estimates exceed the criteria of 0.70 or higher recommended by Nunnally (1978), suggesting strong internal consistency. Further data purification was done on the Muslim Centric Ness measurement scale to determine its reliability and validity. First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) and the Bartlett test of sphericity from the seven items were first examined to see the appropriateness of factor analysis. The MSA score was 0.87 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant and deemed to be appropriate for factor analysis. An exploratory factor analysis was then applied to the seven remaining items. The aim of the factor analysis was twofold, first to assess if the items measuring Muslim centric ness grouped into one distinct unitary factor. The second aim is to assess if the appropriate items loaded substantially on their hypothesised factors. All the items of the Muslim Centric Ness load into one single factor with a variance extracted of 58.8 percent suggesting the items are measuring a single factor indicating unidimensionality.

A confirmatory factor analysis was applied to provide a more stringent test of the convergent validity of the eight indicators of Malay Centric Ness. The confirmatory factor analysis was performed using the Amos 6.0 software. The model fit for the proposed model was not very good thus the modification index was referred to obtain better model fit. The modification index suggested that the items 'there should be very little trading or purchasing of goods from non-Muslims unless out of necessity' and 'A real Muslim should always buy products made by Muslims' should be dropped to obtain a better fit. Consequently the items brand and product was drop based on statistical reasons and a good fit was obtained (Chi Square = 0.55, GFI = .99, NFI= .99, CFI=.97 and RMSEA=.00). Convergent validity was determined by examining the factor loadings. The items measuring Muslim Centric Ness had relatively high loading with four items having a loading of greater than 0.7 and a single item having a loading of 0.66. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and

Tatham (2006) recommend that standardised loading estimate should be 0.5 or higher and ideally 0.7 to indicate convergent validity. In addition the values were found to be significant. The results demonstrate that the Muslim Centric Ness have convergent validity. Average variance extracted was calculated for the items measuring the construct Muslim Centric Ness. The average variance extracted for the construct was 0.55. Hair et al. (2006) suggested that a variance extracted greater than 0.5 is a good rule of thumb suggesting adequate convergence. Another indicator of construct validity is the internal consistency. An existence of internal consistency indicates that the measures consistently represent the same latent construct. The value of construct reliability was also calculated. The value of construct reliability for Muslim Centric Ness was 0.75. The value is greater than the general rule of thumb figure of 0.7 recommended by Hair et al. (2006). Taking into account the high reliability and validity of the measurement scale measuring Muslim Centric Ness, the score of the five items were summated.

Figure1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Muslim Centric Ness



As is reflected in Table 2, the scores of the statement measuring Muslim Centric Ness indicate a high level of agreement towards each statement measuring Muslim Centric Ness. The summated score range from 22 to 35 from a possible range of 5 to 35. This seems to reflect that all the respondents in the sample were Muslim Centric. Similar to the procedure applied to items measuring Muslim Centric Ness, the six items measuring purchase intention were analysed in terms of inter-item correlations, items to total correlation, internal consistency, and factor analysis. An item to total correlation was also done on the 6 items and items having a correlation of less than 0.5 were dropped from the scale. One item was dropped for failing to meet the requirement. The Cronbach Alpha was calculated with for the five remaining items giving a value of .80. These estimates exceed the criteria of 0.70 or higher recommended by Nunnally (1978), suggesting strong internal consistency. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) and the Bartlett test of sphericity from the five remaining items were first examined to see the appropriateness of factor analysis. The MSA score was 0.72 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant deeming the data appropriate for factor analysis. An exploratory factor analysis was then applied to the five remaining items. All the items of the Purchase Intention load into one single factor with a variance extracted of 56.1 percent suggesting the items are measuring a single factor indicating unidimensionality. Based on the reliability score and exploratory factor analysis, the 5-item scale measures the Purchase Intention construct and therefore, the items were summed to measure the Purchase Intention to buy Muslim products of respondents.

Table 2: Descriptive score of five items measuring Muslim Centric Ness

		Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Buy products made by Muslims. Keep Muslims employed.	6.47	0.68
2	It is always best to purchase products made by Muslim people.	6.47	0.65
3	Muslims should always buy Muslim made products instead of others.	6.30	0.83
4	It may cost me in the long run but I prefer to support Muslim products.	6.17	0.78
5	Muslim products, first, last and foremost.	6.32	0.78

1-strongly agree, 2- disagree, 3- slightly disagree, 4- neutral, 5- slightly agree, 6-agree, 7-strongly agree

## 7. Results

A correlation analysis was applied to see the relationship between Muslim centric ness and Purchase Intention. The results of the correlations showed that there was significant positive relationship between Muslim centric ness and Purchase Intention. The correlation score obtained was 0.30. The positive relationship suggests that, the greater the Muslim centric ness the greater is the Purchase Intention to buy Muslim products. An independent t test was applied to determine if there were significant differences in Muslim centric ness based on gender and marital status. No significant differences were found. Additionally an ANOVA test was conducted to determine differences in the level of Muslim centric ness in terms of age and income. No significant differences in the level of Muslim centric ness based on age and income were found.

## 8. Discussion

The results indicated that Muslim centric ness is positively correlated to Purchase Intention to buy Muslim products. It might be fruitful for a retailer, supplier or distributor to highlight Muslim made products to Muslim customers in their transactions and promotion strategies. However, this study is limited by several factors that should be addressed in future research. First, the current research was conducted only in the state of Selangor and the sample was relatively small, which may reduce the generalizability of the results. Secondly, the study was not product specific in nature. The nature of the product will greatly influence the purchase intention. For instance, in financial services the concept of interest or 'Riba' or usury would play a major role in determining purchase intention. Additionally, the concept of 'Halal' or shariah (product or services that conform to Islamic law) compliant especially for food products is of great importance. However products such as clothing or furniture are more neutral in terms of religious injunctions. Finally, the study was conducted in Malaysia and to what extent if any the results of the study are generalised to all Muslims in the world would only be validated with studies done on Muslims from other nations. Future research should focus on a similar study of how Muslim Centric Ness affects purchase intention towards specific products such as Islamic finance, tourism, food or clothing. A comparison can then be made between the findings and the results of this study.

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