Product standardisation in the food service industry: post-purchase attitudes and repurchase intentions of non-Muslims after consuming halal food

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ABSTRACT
In order to satisfy the Muslim market segment, many restaurant and fast food companies in Western countries have standardised their products by switching to halal. The purpose of this research is to discover the extent to which non-Muslim consumers in non-Muslim countries experience cognitive dissonance when they think about restaurants and fast food outlets having likely served them halal-produced food, and the extent to which these consumers intend to repurchase halal food. A quantitative survey method using structural equation modelling was adopted. Data came from a total sample of 1,097 non-Muslim consumers in Canada, Spain and the United Kingdom. Consumer religious identity and interest in animal welfare were found to significantly predict the consumer cognitive dissonance associated with unintended consumption of halal food. The full model, with religious identity, ethnic identification and interest in animal welfare as antecedents of cognitive dissonance, explained 35% of the variance in consumers' repurchase intentions. Our findings suggest that many non-Muslims do not have a particular issue with consuming halal food, but they may react negatively if they unintentionally consume halal food and perceive that they have been deprived of information, or worse still, deliberately deceived. The research makes a number of contributions to marketing knowledge with regard to the negative spillover effects that can result from faith-based product standardisation, and the influences of consumer interest in animal welfare and deprivation of product information on consumer behaviour.

KEYWORDS
Marketing strategy; product standardisation; faith-based marketing; Islam; halal; consumer cognitive dissonance

Introduction
Consumers that live in cosmopolitan multi-cultural cities or regions worldwide may be consuming halal products regularly, and other individuals may consume halal when they visit these cities and regions for vacations or business. This occurs because many restaurant and fast food chains now offer halal products in order to satisfy the Muslim market segment. However, in order to satisfy this market segment, these firms generally standardise their entire menus to halal. As a result, non-Muslim customers also consume halal products, perhaps unaware that they are doing so. This research investigates the attitudes and intended buying behaviours of these non-target consumers, i.e., the non-Muslims that live in non-Muslim majority countries.

Of all the marketing mix components, the product element is the most often standardised, particularly in large and multinational enterprises (Birnik & Bowman, 2007; Vrontis, 2003). Standardisation may be defined as an activity that establishes a limited set of solutions to actual or potential problems, which are repeatedly or continuously used to benefit the parties involved (De Vries, 1999). Product standardisation exists in both industrial and consumer markets. The main motive of firms for standardising products is to minimise costs by simplifying production, administration and marketing processes. For standardisation to be effective, close collaboration and cooperation is required between the operations and marketing

functions (Piercy, 2007). In practice, it often involves layers of adaptation in which firms use multi-dimensional standardisation/adaptation configurations in order to satisfy the needs of multiple cultural groups within one national context (Poulis & Poulis, 2013). The product standardisation strategies of firms are influenced by product, market and organisational factors (Powers & Loyka, 2007). Zou and Cavusgil (2002) suggest that standardisation is one of the most influential aspects in international marketing. However, Schilke et al. (2009) note that recent studies have found that standardisation does not always enhance performance outcomes.

Product standardisation is the norm among firms that operate restaurants or fast food outlets in multiple locations. In fact, product standardisation lies at the very core of the business models of firms such as McDonald's, KFC, Nando's and Pizza Hut. Consumers can depend on these organisations to deliver a standardised product. Consumers know what to expect in terms of product and service delivery, as well as the physical environment and atmosphere in the restaurants. Although these firms offer value that is based on reliability and dependability rather than product quality attributes, gourmet/high-end restaurant chains also exist, such as Benihana, Morton's Steakhouse and PF Changs. Most firms with standardised products target mass markets, where there is limited scope for consumer customisation. These firms typically aim to simultaneously satisfy multiple market segments. However, product standardisation can be problematical when the needs and wants of a particular market segment are different.

Islam dictates that Muslims consume only halal food. In Arabic, halal simply means permissible. To be halal, an animal has to be slaughtered in a ritual way known as Zabihah or Zibah, which involves a blessing in the name of Allah. Zabihah requires that an animal should not be dead prior to slaughter; a Muslim should perform slaughter; and any flowing blood of the carcass should be completely drained (halalfoodauthority.com). Any food that is not halal is haram (forbidden). Faithful Muslims consume only halal food. Like many consumers, Muslims often prefer to eat food that they perceive as traditional and authentic, which they purchase from trusted sources (Bryła, 2015).

Muslims account for nearly a quarter of the world's population (Yuhas, 2015), and many Muslims nowadays live in non-Muslim countries. In order to satisfy the Muslim market segment, many restaurant and fast food companies now sell halal products in non-Muslim countries. When a food service company decides to offer halal, it is usually necessary to switch the whole menu to halal, in order to preserve economies of scale and to avoid cross-contamination between non-halal and halal food. Faithful Muslims generally avoid or boycott firms that offer both halal and non-halal products because they worry about the possibility of cross-contamination or that they may be deliberately or accidentally sold non-halal food (Warikoo, 2013).

Muslims that want to find out which organisations serve halal food can easily access this information from the websites of the organisations. Specialist websites such as *zabihah.com* also provide lists of restaurants and food outlets that serve halal food in towns and cities worldwide. However, most of the restaurant and fast food chains that serve halal produce do not mention this fact on menus or on signage at their premises. Thus, it is highly likely that many non-Muslim consumers at these outlets are unaware they are consuming halal produce.

There has been a paucity of research that has considered the attitudes of non-Muslims to consuming halal food, and the studies that have been completed were mostly undertaken in Muslim countries (e.g. Aziz & Chok, 2013; Haque et al., 2015), where consumers can *expect* to be served halal produce. Shoham and Gavish (2016) analysed the simultaneous effects of national identification, ethnocentrism, consumer animosity and racism on consumption behaviours in a religious context, but the study was not specifically about halal. Recent studies by Rauschnabel et al. (2015) and Schlegelmilch et al. (2016) considered the attitudes of non-Muslims to religious labelling and endorsements – which included halal – but these studies did not specifically consider the *unknowing consumption* of halal products.

For any good or service, consumers typically undertake some form of post-purchase evaluation, which often involves comparing the purchased item with the alternatives that were available (Powers & Jack, 2013). When the comparison is unfavourable, the consumer may experience psychological discomfort and feelings of anxiety, uncertainty or doubt, in addition to feelings of regret or remorse (Kim, 2011; Wilkins et al., 2016). Sometimes, contradictory cognitions, known as cognitive dissonance, may emerge based on

the conflicting beliefs, recommendations and experiences. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to discover the extent to which non-Muslim consumers in non-Muslim countries experience cognitive dissonance when they think about restaurants and fast food outlets having likely served them halal-produced food, and the extent to which these consumers intend to repurchase halal food. A conceptual model consisting of possible antecedents and consequences of cognitive dissonance was developed and tested using structural equation modelling. The data were obtained from non-Muslim consumers that live in Canada, Spain and the United Kingdom (UK).

In the following section, we discuss relevant aspects of halal food and product standardisation in the food service industry. We then explain why consumers may experience cognitive dissonance when they discover that they have likely consumed halal food. We also provide details of our prestudy, which, in addition to the literature review, was used to develop a conceptual model and its associated hypotheses. After the method section, we present the results of our data analysis. The paper ends with a discussion and conclusion that explains and analyses the key findings, and which highlights the key implications for firms in the food service industry.

Halal food and product standardisation in the food service industry

In recent years, all consumers have shown an increased interest in food quality, and these consumers are increasingly interested in provenance, taste and other product characteristics that are attributed to a specific origin or production method (Bryła, 2015). Tradition and authenticity are product characteristics that are increasingly sought and valued by consumers (ibid.), and for faithful Muslims this means consuming halal-produced food. Some 16% of all food consumption worldwide is halal, which represents a global market worth $632 billion annually (Power, 2009). The halal concept applies not only to food, but to all products, from banking and insurance to fashion and entertainment. Muslims can easily recognise halal products because they are usually clearly labelled or certified as such, and approved accreditation agencies exist worldwide, including in non-Muslim countries (Jamal & Sharifuddin, 2015). Accreditation agencies have logos that are widely used on product packaging and on organisational websites in diverse consumer markets. However, in the restaurant and fast food sectors, firms appear reluctant to display the halal accreditation logos on menus, promotional materials or restaurant signage.

There may be several reasons why firms prefer to keep their halal offerings low key. For example, they may want to avoid debate or demands from non-Muslim religious groups or they may want to avoid getting caught up in the Islamophobia that is sweeping across much of the Western world. Testing the quality, robustness and effectiveness of market segments are among the most difficult tasks that marketers have to undertake (Dibb & Simkin, 2010; Foedermayr & Diamantopoulos, 2008). Nevertheless, there is little evidence to suggest that any of the international restaurant or fast food groups have undertaken any significant market research to ascertain the attitudes of non-Muslims in non-Muslim countries to consuming halal food.

It is common practice for multinational food chains to localise their products in international markets, in order to accommodate the religious or regulatory requirements in a particular country. Typically, these chains do not offer diverse product ranges within a particular national market. For example, in Muslim-majority countries, fast food chains like KFC and McDonald's offer third party halal-certified food and they do not serve pork. In Malaysia, McDonald's offers a standardised halal menu (all products halal certified and no pork), despite the fact that there is a large minority of non-Muslim Chinese Malaysians, who regularly consume pork. Many of these Chinese Malaysians would probably love to see the McRib on the McDonald's menu. Similarly, in India, many firms do not offer beef, which most Hindus do not eat. In fact, India has the largest Muslim minority population in the world, but fast food chains in most parts of India do not offer halal certified food.

Despite the possibility of offering both halal and non-halal food in countries where non-Muslims are the majority or a significant part of population, international food chains usually stick with their policy of one country, one menu. From a pure marketing perspective, this is quite puzzling considering the fact that a plethora of available research exists on the intended and unintended effects of targeting in a multi-ethnic society (Poulis & Poulis, 2013). Possible reasons for the homogeneity in product offerings in non-Western

markets is that these are often collectivist cultures that generally score high on uncertainty avoidance. Also, in these countries, there is a tendency for a dominant ethnic group to dictate the socio- political culture of the country.

Unlike Eastern societies, Western cultures tend to promote and celebrate diversity and multiculturalism. Thus, it is fair to assume that it is less complicated for firms to tailor their products according to the needs of different segments, including minority groups. However, the fall of new liberal school of economics coupled with the 'war on terrorism' has dramatically changed the way many people in Western societies want to deal with multiculturalism. This is evident in recent public responses to terrorism and immigration, such as Brexit (the UK voting to leave the European Union) and the United States (US) presidential elections (in which Donald Trump was elected president based on a campaign focusing on immigration). This has opened a Pandora's box for multinational food chains that want to accommodate small but significant Muslim minority populations in the West by offering halal food. Firms are likely influenced by the new wave of intolerance and so-called Islamophobia sweeping through many countries. The outcome is that many firms do offer products that satisfy the needs of Muslims, but they do it in such a way that minimises the possibility of non-Muslim customers noticing.

Consumer cognitive dissonance

A consumer in Granada, Spain, may be served halal food in a restaurant offering Indian, Italian or Thai cuisine, and a consumer in London, UK, may be served halal in a 'British' pie café (zabihah.com). It is possible that consumers who unknowingly consume halal food will experience some degree of cognitive dissonance upon discovering the fact. Cognitive dissonance comprises of cognitive and emotional dimensions. The cognitive dimension is concerned with a person's recognition after the purchase has been made that their beliefs are inconsistent with the decision, while the emotional dimension is related to the person's post-purchase psychological discomfort (Sweeney et al., 2000). Consumer cognitive dissonance is often associated with consumer dissatisfaction. Restaurant and fast food operators risk losing repeat custom if consumers experience cognitive dissonance. Additionally, dissatisfied customers may engage in negative word of mouth, which can have negative consequences for any service organisation, such as loss of customers and damage to reputation.

Researchers have paid less attention to cognitive dissonance in recent years, probably due to the increased interest in satisfaction as a post-purchase evaluative construct (Wilkins et al., 2016). However, Koenig-Lewis and Palmer (2008) claim that an individual's emotional state can be a better predictor of repeat buying behaviour than measures of satisfaction. In other words, consumer dissatisfaction resulting from cognitive dissonance may have a stronger influence on repurchase intentions than consumer satisfaction. In this research, it is possible that a consumer experiences cognitive dissonance not because they regret eating halal food but because they feel disappointed or deceived by the organisation that tried to hide the fact that they were serving halal. This provides the rationale for including cognitive dissonance in our conceptual model.

Prestudy

Given the paucity of literature on non-Muslim consumer attitudes to halal, two focus groups, each with six non-Muslim participants (three male, three female) were set up in the UK to investigate opinions, beliefs and attitudes to halal food. The self-selecting participants were believed fairly representative of the UK population in terms of age (they ranged from 18 to 70) and socio-economic background. Three of the twelve participants were not UK nationals. Each group engaged in discussion for 45-55 minutes. The discussions were recorded, transcribed and coded. Contributions that were similar were initially grouped together, and then later categorised. Eventually, several themes emerged.

The first theme was connected with *religious identity*. One participant said, "As a practising Christian, I am somewhat concerned that my food has been blessed. I don't think this is right, really", while another said, "I would classify myself as an atheist, so I am not particularly bothered about the religious significance of eating halal." The second theme was connected with *ethnic identification*. Several participants, including those not born in the UK, mentioned being proud of being British, or at least feeling British. Most

participants admired the British culture and British values. One participant said, "I think most British people like traditional British food. Who doesn't like a traditional Sunday roast?" The third theme to emerge was related to *animal welfare*. About two-thirds of the participants knew that halal meat production involved ritual slaughter. There was some debate in one group about whether or not the animals were conscious at the time of slaughter. The consensus in the group was that the slaughter was acceptable if the animals were unconscious, but unacceptable if they were still conscious. There was discussion in the other group about the health and safety aspects of halal. One participant said. "I am not particularly bothered about eating halal. The meat industry in Britain is well-regulated, so I am satisfied that what I eat is safe." Another participant said, "To be honest, I don't like to think at all about where my meat came from. So, I don't really care if it's halal, or not."

Having identified these three themes, they were used as keywords to search the literature, in order to develop a conceptual model.

Literature review and hypotheses development
Religious identity
Religious role-identity refers specifically to religious group membership and feelings of close belonging to the in-group (Wimberley, 1989). Like in any other context, religious groups expect certain forms of role performance from their members, such as ritual behaviours, holding to certain beliefs about a deity, experiencing certain spiritual, cognitive, or emotional status, and so on. When taken together and internalised, these role expectations constitute a person's identity as a member of a specific religion (Weaver & Agle, 2002). Theories of cognitive consistency (e.g. Festinger, 1957) suggest that if a person has a high degree of religious identity salience, violation of religious expectations forces the individual to face a great deal of cognitive dissonance (Wimberley, 1989). Such discomfort manifests itself in feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, doubt, regret or remorse, which negatively affect the consumer's psychological balance (Montgomery & Barnes, 1993).

Consumers with a strong religious identity will endeavour to avoid cognitive dissonance and may, on the other hand, reap rewards for adhering to religious expectations (Wimberley, 1989). Individuals who have strong faith are more likely to engage in behaviours that complement their religious beliefs, values and practices (Minton et al., 2015). They will also refrain from other behaviours that contradict their religious beliefs. This idea can also be understood in terms of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which suggests that belonging to an in-group encourages the individual to discriminate in favour of their in-group in order to achieve positive group distinctiveness, which enhances the individual's self-esteem. Based on this logic, we hypothesise that the stronger a person's identification with a non-Muslim faith, the stronger their cognitive dissonance when they eventually realise that they have consumed halal food. Hence:

H1. Non-Muslim religious identity is positively related to cognitive dissonance.

Ethnic identification
Ethnic identification may be regarded as an individual's enduring association with their ethnic background (Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001). Ethnic identification is a socially defined categorisation based on a common culture or nationality, which may include dimensions such as language, customs, values and traditions, as well as cuisine. Ethnicity is the enduring and systematic communication of cultural differences between groups considering themselves to be distinct. It appears whenever cultural differences are made relevant in social interaction. Ethnic identification is quite different to national identification. For example, British Muslims may consider themselves British but still recognise that they have a distinct ethnic identity that is different to indigenous British citizens.

Research has found that the strength of an individual's ethnic identification can have a strong influence on the amount of attention they give to ethnic consumer information and their willingness to purchase ethnic products (Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001). Individuals acquire certain mental and behavioural outcomes through their interaction with socialisation agents, such as religion and societal or family norms

and expectations (Xu et al., 2004). Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) applies to ethnic identification as it does to religious identity. Individuals tend to favour their in-group, and products associated with their in-group, while they may shun products associated with other groups. Most of the research on ethnic identification has focused on the purchase decision-making of ethnic minorities (e.g. Donthu & Cherian, 1994; Simpson et al., 2000), but little research has considered how the ethnic majority might react to products associated with an ethnic minority.

Consumers with high national identification tend to consider country-of-origin as an important feature in their purchase decision process (Shoham & Gavish, 2016), so it is logical to believe that consumers with high ethnic identification will think and act similarly. If consumers feel that they have been deprived of the necessary information needed to make a rational purchase decision that fits with their beliefs and identity, they may experience a degree of cognitive dissonance upon discovering that they have purchased and consumed a product associated with an out-group ethnic identity. Thus:

H2. Non-Muslim ethnic identification is positively related to cognitive dissonance.

Consumer interest in animal welfare

Animal welfare, and more specifically livestock production, have increasingly become issues of concern among key stakeholders, which include consumers, retailers, governments and animal welfare groups (Nocella et al., 2010; Vanhonacker et al., 2007). Animal welfare is an emotional subject about which many individuals and groups have strong feelings. Consumers assess animal welfare in terms of the animals having natural lives and humane deaths, where slaughter is performed quickly and painlessly. Although some consumers may be concerned about the well-being of the animals, very often animal welfare is used as an indicator of other product attributes such as food safety, quality or healthiness (Harper & Henson, 2001). Issanchou (1996) argues that under normal conditions, the majority of consumers are not anxious about meat safety, although a certain fear is always present in a latent state.

Halal food production emphasises purity in substance and prescribes that products be closest to their natural state (Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016). Halal food is generally free of pesticides, preservatives and antibiotics, and it is not genetically modified. Many halal food producers and retailers market halal to both Muslims and non-Muslims as a safe, natural and healthy option. In addition, it is widely recognised that halal products are subjected to thorough inspection, to ensure a clean, safe and hygienic manufacturing process. Halal food has become popular in many non-Muslim countries worldwide, including parts of the Philippines and Russia (Golnaz et al., 2010).

Farouk et al. (2016) claim that despite the merits of halal, animal welfare abuses occur throughout the supply chain of halal meat – which includes before and during transportation to the abattoir, and at the abattoir itself. The most contentious issue has been whether or not animals should be stunned unconscious prior to slaughter. Traditionally, halal slaughter has been performed without any form of pre-stunning. In most countries, including the US, UK and most countries in Europe, slaughter without prior stunning is permitted. In the UK, about 16% of the animals slaughtered by the halal method are not pre-stunned (RSPCA, 2015). Organisations such as the British Veterinary Association, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe are unanimously opposed to animal slaughter without pre-stunning, as they argue that not doing so likely causes unnecessary pain to the animals.

When considering the welfare of animals in halal meat production, consumers may be influenced by a number of things, which include the scientific evidence and the opinions of experts, such as veterinarians; their ethical viewpoint regarding what is the 'right' thing to do; and their own religious beliefs. Some consumers demand more information about animal welfare so that they can make informed purchase choices, while others prefer to engage in voluntary ignorance, because they find the topic distasteful or in order to avoid taking any responsibility for animal welfare (Harper & Henson, 2001). Animal rights groups around the world lobby governments and organise public protests in their bid to end halal slaughter, or at least slaughter where animals are not pre-stunned (Havinga, 2010). There have been similar calls in the

media. Given the discussion above, it is reasonable to assume that consumers with an interest in animal welfare may experience cognitive dissonance if they hold negative views about halal slaughter. Therefore:

H3. Interest in animal welfare is positively related to cognitive dissonance.

Consumer repurchase intention

Cognitive dissonance is an unpleasant experience, which, in a consumer consumption context, can easily lead to dissatisfaction. Consumers who experience cognitive dissonance are likely to avoid the cause of it in future, thus:

H4. Consumer dissonance is negatively related to repurchase intention.

The level of cognitive dissonance experienced by non-Muslim consumers when thinking about their consumption of halal produce is likely influenced by: (1) their *knowledge* about halal in food production, and (2) their *awareness* about halal product use in restaurant and fast food chains. Moderation analysis was undertaken to discover the strength of these possible influences. We also tested for possible moderating effects among a number of other variables, namely the country in which the consumer lives, and the consumer's gender, age and highest level of education. Based on the above discussion and proposed hypotheses, we propose the following conceptual model (Figure 1).
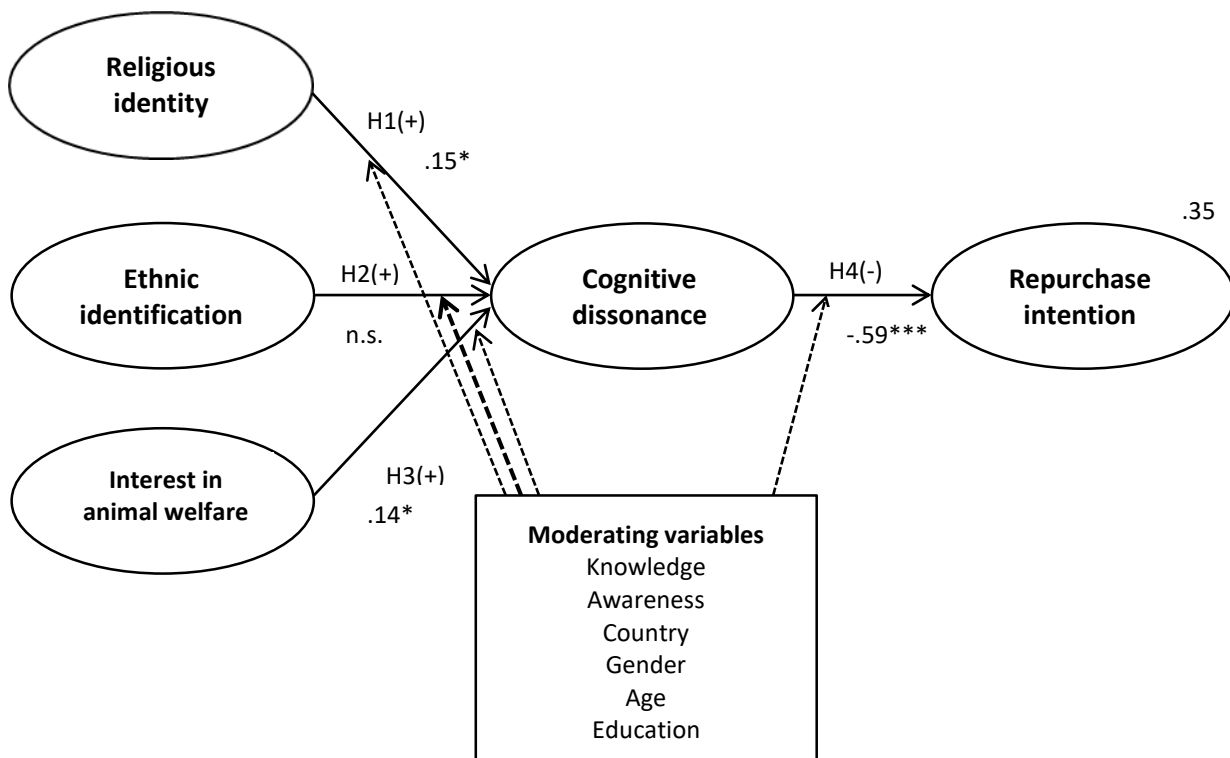
Figure 1. Proposed conceptual model.
*Notes: * p < .05; *** p < .001*

Method
Measures
A survey questionnaire was used to collect our data. Three country-specific versions of the questionnaire were developed for distribution in Canada, Spain and the UK. The Spanish version was carefully translated from English into Spanish, with extra attention to wording to make sure that all of the items conveyed the same meanings. All of the latent constructs in the conceptual model were measured using a seven point

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Likert scale, where 1 was associated with strong disagreement and 7 with strong agreement. All of the scales had been previously validated in the literature. However, when articulating the statements, we took into account the context of the study (food consumption) and the fact that the potential participants were non-Muslims living in three different Western countries. Our scale for cognitive dissonance used only items from the 'emotional' component of Sweeney et al.'s (2000) scale. The items related to 'wisdom of purchase' and 'concern over deal' did not seem suitable for food products or our research context. Table 1 summarises the multi-item measures used in this study along with examples of statements and the sources from which they were adopted.

Table 1. Sources of scales and examples of items.

Construct	Source	Number of items	Examples of items
Religious identity	Verkuyten and Yildiz (2007)	6	My religious identity is an important part of myself; I am proud of my religion
Ethnic identification	Josiassen (2011)	5[a]	I consider myself to be British/Canadian/Spanish; The British/Canadian/Spanish culture has a positive impact on my life
Interest in animal welfare	Vanhonacker, Verbeke, Van Poucke and Tuyttens (2007)	6	Information should be given about the rearing conditions of animals; Animal welfare should be controlled more strictly; Information about animal welfare influences my meat consumption
Cognitive dissonance	Sweeney, Hausknecht and Soutar (2010)	7	I *resent* having consumed halal produce without realising; I feel *disappointed* in myself for not checking what I eat; I feel *frustrated* by the lack of information about halal food served in restaurants
Repurchase intention	Michaelidou and Hassan (2008)	5	I will likely consume halal-produced meat in restaurants in the future; I would be happy to consume halal produce in future; In future, I will avoid restaurants that serve halal-produced meat (reverse-coded question)

[a]The comparative item that compared two ethnic identities was not used.

Prior to launching the final survey, a prestudy was conducted, in which eighteen British consumers participated. Selective sampling was used for this phase of the study. Thus, a sample of non-Muslims with diverse backgrounds was used, which was believed to be representative of the British population. All of the candidates completed the draft questionnaire and then participated in individual semi-structured interviews with one of the researchers. The participants' responses were subsequently compared and contrasted. Although the results of this analysis did not lead to any major changes, the articulation of some statements were altered to make them more comprehensible.

Sampling and data collection

For each version of the survey (Canadian, Spanish and British), we developed a hard copy and a soft copy, using online survey tools. We issued some 500, 150 and 320 paper-based questionnaires in Canada, Spain and the UK respectively. These were distributed in the food courts of shopping malls, in some residential areas and on university campuses. From the total of 970 hard copies, we received 696 usable responses (71.7% response rate). The electronic versions were also launched simultaneously and distributed through email, social media (LinkedIn, Twitter) and some text messaging applications (Telegram and WhatsApp). We used the chain-referral sampling technique (also known as snowballing), which allowed each participant to invite others to take part in the study. Therefore, people who received the link to the online survey could repost it and invite their friends, relatives and acquaintances to take the survey. Using this

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method makes it difficult to state an accurate estimation of the number of people who received the link. However, we received 401 completed online surveys, which increased the total number of respondents to 1097 (392 in Canada; 374 in Spain; and 331 in the UK).

Table 2 provides a summary profile of the respondents. The respondents comprised of 50.2% males and 49.8% females. The Canadian and UK samples were slightly biased towards males and the Spanish sample towards females. However, there was no significant difference between our UK sample gender distribution and the UK population gender mix (χ^2 = 1.984, p = 0.159) (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Some 12.4% of our respondents were younger than 20 years old; 71.5% were between 20 and 49 years old; and 16.1% belonged to the category of respondents older than 49. Although our samples were slightly less representative of people aged 50 and above, it should be noted that this age group may consume less fast food. As 72.9% of our total sample had either an undergraduate or graduate education, our sample is over-representative of people with a degree in each of the three countries. However, the busy lifestyles of these educated individuals may actually make our sample more representative of the actual consumers of fast food and casual dining. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked about their knowledge of halal food. While 47.9% reported that they had no knowledge about halal, 44.4% had some knowledge and 7.7% claimed to be knowledgeable about halal.

Table 2. Summary profile of respondents (*n* = 1,097).

	Canada	Spain	United Kingdom
Sex			
Male	224	152	175
Female	168	222	156
Age			
Under 20	73	11	52
20-49	261	317	206
50 and above	58	46	73
Education			
High school	27	21	110
Technical/Vocational	31	59	49
Undergraduate	221	226	156
Postgraduate	113	68	16

Results

IBM SPSS Statistics and SPSS Amos (version 23.0) were used to analyse the data. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to establish the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement scales used in this study. The model displayed an excellent fit to the data. Table 3 presents the results of the CFA for the overall data from the three countries as well as each individual country.

Table 3. Overall and countrywise CFA results.

Model	χ^2	*df*	*p*	χ^2/df	CFI	NFI	IFI	RMSEA
1. Overall	924.27	309	.001	2.99	.97	.96	.96	.043
2. Canada	600.16	309	.001	1.94	.96	.93	.96	.049
3. Spain	624.14	309	.001	2.02	.96	.93	.96	.052
4. UK	342.65	309	.001	1.10	.99	.96	.99	.018

Table 4 presents the average variance extracted (AVE) and construct reliability (CR) for each construct in the research model. The values for AVE (>.50) and CR (>.70) were well above the cut criteria, providing statistical evidence of convergent validity of the scales used in this study. Using Fornell and Larcker's (1981)

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test, we established the discriminant validity of the scales. The results presented in Table 4 show that all constructs in our model have acceptable discriminant validity, as the lower bound square root of AVEs (.77) was higher than the highest correlation (.58). Based on the final measurement model, the results of reliability tests show the following Cronbach's alpha scores: religious identity (RI) = .91; ethnic identification (EI) = .88; interest in animal welfare (AW) = .88; cognitive dissonance (CD) = .94; and repurchase intention (RPI) = .92, indicating acceptable internal consistency for the scales.

Table 4. Reliability and validity results.

	CR	AVE	Alpha	RI	EI	AW	CD	RPI
Religious identity	.93	.84	.91	*.92*				
Ethnic identification	.88	.60	.88	-.01	*.77*			
Interest in animal welfare	.88	.59	.88	.05*	.02	*.77*		
Cognitive dissonance	.96	.76	.94	.14**	-.02	.14**	*.87*	
Repurchase intentions	.92	.71	.92	.06*	-.03	.05*	.58***	*.84*

Notes: Values in italics on the diagonal are the square roots of AVE; *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p<.001.

The common latent factor method test was applied to identify and address any potential common method bias in the data. Following this procedure, the standardised loading of the measurement model with a common latent factor present, and reflected by all the observed items, was compared with the standardised loading in the original measurement model. The results indicate that the difference between the two sets of standardised loadings range from -0.02 to 0.17, thus providing strong evidence that the data is free from common method bias. Based on the results of multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA), we were able to confirm the configural invariance of our group measurement model: χ^2 (927) = 1566.91, $p < .001$; χ^2/df = 1.69; CFI = .97; NFI= .94; IFI = .97; RMSEA = .025. The second type of measurement model invariance is the metric invariance measurement model, which required a comparison between unconstrained and constrained MGCFA models. Using change cut criteria of > .01 for CFI and > .015 for RMSEA, Table 5 provides statistical evidence that the factor structure across the three countries is invariant.

Table 5. Metric invariance of the measurement model (Canada, Spain and UK).

Model	χ^2	df	p	χ^2/df	Δ CFI	Δ RMSEA
1. Unconstrained	1566.91	927	.001	1.69	-	-
2. All factor loadings constrained	1844.97	971	.001	1.90	.008	.004

Using the Amos imputation function, composite variables of each latent construct were created. Table 6 presents the overall mean as well as the mean value for each country for all the five constructs in our model.

The results of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed with Bonferroni post hoc analysis found no significant difference in the strength of religious identity among the respondents across the three countries. For ethnic identification, the Canadian and Spanish samples did not differ significantly from each other, but they scored significantly higher than the UK respondents. For animal welfare, there was no significant difference between the Canadian and UK respondents, but both Canadian and UK respondents scored lower than the Spanish consumers. For cognitive dissonance, no significant difference was found between the Canadian and Spanish respondents, but they both scored significantly and considerably lower than the UK respondents. For repurchase intentions, all three groups differed significantly from each other, with the Canadian consumers having the highest repurchase intentions and the UK consumers having the lowest. The UK consumers had the significantly highest levels of knowledge of halal food production and

awareness of its use in food service companies, while the Spanish consumers had the lowest levels of knowledge and awareness.

Table 6. Mean scores and standard deviations.

	Overall n = 1097		Canada n = 392		Spain n = 374		UK n = 331	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Religious identity[a]	3.21	1.87	3.30	1.92	3.13	1.81	3.19	1.95
Ethnic identification[a]	4.22	1.32	4.40	0.93	4.34	0.86	3.87	0.80
Interest in animal welfare[a]	5.06	1.38	4.92	1.11	5.24	1.02	5.03	0.75
Cognitive dissonance[a]	2.70	0.89	2.39	1.35	2.20	1.43	3.63	1.55
Repurchase intention[a]	3.45	1.00	3.84	1.26	3.45	1.30	2.99	1.52
Knowledge about halal production[b]	1.60	0.62	1.61	0.69	1.34	0.50	1.85	0.55
Awareness about halal use[b]	1.38	0.38	1.33	0.60	1.09	0.32	1.78	0.71

Notes: [a]Measured on a 7-point scale where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree; [b]Measured on 3-point scale where 1=no knowledge/no awareness
and 3=strong knowledge/definite awareness.

The maximum likelihood estimation procedure was used to test our structural model. Following the criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2010), the data were split by randomly creating analysis and holdout samples using the SPSS random case selection function. This resulted in 553 cases for analysis and 544 cases for the holdout sample. The results of the main sample indicated that the data has a good fit with the proposed model: χ^2 (312) = 649.58, p < .001; χ^2/df = 2.08; CFI = .97; TLI = .95; NFI = .973; RMSEA = .044. In step two, the proposed structural model was tested with the holdout sample. The results of the holdout sample also indicated that the data has a good fit with the proposed model: χ^2 (312) = 647.12, p < .001; χ^2/df = 2.07; CFI = .97; TLI= .96; NFI = .95; RMSEA = .044. Finally, we ran a multigroup test to compare the structural paths of the analysis and holdout samples. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the structural paths of the two samples (see Table 7), thus providing an additional validation of our model. As the holdout sample validated our model, we merged the two files again to run rest of our analysis.

Table 7. Groupwise comparison of the structural paths based on main and hold out samples.

Model	χ^2	df	p	χ^2/df	Δ CFI	Δ χ^2	p	Δ RMSEA
1. Unconstrained	1296.72	624	.001	2.07	-			-
2. Constrained	1299.33	628	.001	2.06	.000	2.61	.62	.000

The results of structural model with the overall data set indicated that the data has a good fit with the proposed model: χ^2 (312) = 929.48, p < .001; χ^2/df = 2.97; CFI = .97; TLI= .97; NFI = .96; RMSEA = .042. Apart from the path from ethnic identification to cognitive dissonance, all the paths in the model were significant. The full model explains 35% of the variance in consumers' repurchase intentions (R^2 = 0.35). Table 8 presents the structural model results.

We then proceeded to investigate the differences between the structural paths in our conceptual model based on the respondents' halal knowledge, awareness of halal use, country, gender, age and education level. We tested six multigroup models. For each multigroup model, we compared the model with unconstrained structural paths with the model with structural paths constrained equal across groups. We used the change in the value of CFI and RMSEA to detect whether the structural paths in our model

Wilkins, S., Butt, M. M., Shams, F., & Pérez, A. (2019). Product standardisation in the food service industry: post-purchase attitudes and repurchase intentions of non-Muslims after consuming halal food. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 27(3), 210-226.

differed across groups. The results indicated that halal awareness moderated the relationships in our model. In other words, consumers who were not aware that they were consuming halal (possibly because firms supply insufficient information) were more likely to experience cognitive dissonance and less likely to repurchase halal. None of the other paths in our conceptual model varied across respondents grouped by halal knowledge, country, gender, age or education.

Table 8. Structural model results.

		Standardised estimates	Standard error	Critical ratio	Result
H1	Religious identity to Cognitive Dissonance	.151	.026	4.88*	Supported
H2	Ethnic identification to Cognitive dissonance	-.028	.054	-0.87	Not Supported
H3	Interest in animal welfare to Cognitive dissonance	.143	.050	4.38*	Supported
H4	Cognitive dissonance to Repurchase intention	-.591	.027	-19.59***	Supported

Notes: $*p < .05$, $***p < .001$.

Discussion and conclusion

Unlike many locally operated and thriving halal ethnic food outlets run by Muslim entrepreneurs in different parts of the world, multinational food chains have adopted a low key strategy when it comes to offering and promoting halal food in Muslim minority countries. This strategy exposes non-Muslim majority segments of Western societies to the risk of unintentionally consuming halal food. It should also be noted that this strategy is completely inconsistent with the policy of food service companies vigorously promoting the halalness of their products in Muslim dominant countries. Apart from religious and national sentiments, the question of business ethics should be considered. Our findings suggest that many non-Muslims do not have a particular issue with consuming halal food, but they may react negatively if they unintentionally consume halal food and perceive that they have been deprived of information, or worse still, deliberately deceived.

This study aimed to develop a model that can explain possible antecedents of consumer cognitive dissonance resulting from unintentional consumption of halal food. From our focus groups, we were able to identify that religious identity, ethnic identification and interest in animal welfare might predict the intensity of cognitive dissonance resulting from the consumption of halal food when it is not properly disclosed by a food chain. This led to the development of a conceptual model in which it was hypothesised that religious identity, ethnic identification and interest in animal welfare will positively influence consumer cognitive dissonance. Furthermore, it was proposed that consumer cognitive dissonance will negatively affect the consumer's repurchase intention.

Our results suggest that consumer religious identity and interest in animal welfare significantly predict the consumer cognitive dissonance associated with unintended consumption of halal food. However, we did not find any support for ethnic identification predicting consumer dissonance. As expected, cognitive dissonance had a very strong negative correlation with repurchase intention. This suggests that perhaps it is the experience of cognitive dissonance that shapes consumers' negative repurchase intentions rather than simply their pre-existing attitudes towards halal. To further test this interpretation, we tested an alternative model that comprised of the direct paths from the antecedents of cognitive dissonance to consumer repurchase intentions. The results indicated that both religious identity and interest in animal welfare are non-significant direct predictors of consumer repurchase intentions of halal food. This further validated our interpretation that consumers' behavioural intentions are influenced more by perceived feelings that their trust was breached rather than any predisposed bias towards halal food.

This study provides a validated faith-based marketing model that considers the influences of specific consumer attitudes and access to information (measured by awareness of halal use) on consumers' post-

purchase evaluation of halal food products. With minor modification, the model may also be applicable to minority religions other than Islam. The model represents a significant theoretical contribution to the scholarly literature on faith-based marketing as it helps us better understand the links between consumer attitudes and behaviours. Specifically, the study makes an original contribution to the literature in illustrating how product standardisation can have negative spillover effects in the context of faith-based marketing.

We tested the potential moderating effects of a number of variables, finding that halal awareness acted as a moderating variable in our model. This suggests that by not coming forward with clear product information many food companies are breaching consumer trust and generating negative emotions in consumers' minds. Based on our results, it appears that when firms must choose between providing clear information to the unintended consumer segment or limiting information due to the fear of backlash by openly offering halal food, it may in fact be wiser to disclose full information about the products offered.

Although this study has important implications for researchers and marketers, it is not, of course, without limitations. The study relied on convenience samples in only three countries, which limits the global generalisability of our findings. Also, we treated all non-Muslims as one homogenous group, but individuals following different faiths may have different attitudes and beliefs. However, we believed that it was unrealistic to seek a stratified sample based on religion, as to achieve this this would have been a very complex task. The consumer decision-making process is complex and can change over time and therefore further research is needed that considers other possible antecedents of cognitive dissonance. We acknowledge that there are other factors that may influence consumers' consumption behaviours, such as consumer ethnocentrism and animosity (cf. Shoham et al., 2016), and these could be incorporated into future models of consumer behaviour that result from faith-based marketing. Future research could also examine consumer attitudes to faith-based marketing in industries other than food service.

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