

## ASSESSING HALAL MEAT CONSUMPTION PATTERNS AMONG MUSLIMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PAKISTAN AND CHINA

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### ABSTRACT

This study explored the factors influencing halal meat purchase intention in Pakistan and China, achieving its objectives by analyzing how food quality, health perceptions, food safety concerns, societal norms, moral obligations, and cultural differences shape consumer behavior. A quantitative approach was employed, using multiple regression analysis and independent sample tests for data analysis through SPSS. The findings highlight distinct cross-cultural differences. In Pakistan, food safety concerns are the primary drivers of purchase intention, reflecting consumers' heightened sensitivity toward hygiene and quality. Conversely, Chinese consumers are more influenced by positive perceptions and awareness of halal meat, suggesting that educational initiatives can foster greater market acceptance. The study contributes to existing knowledge by revealing that while religious beliefs strongly influence decisions in predominantly Muslim regions like Pakistan, they are less impactful in non-Muslim majority areas like China. To enhance market penetration, firms in Pakistan should prioritize transparent supply chains and safety certifications, while Chinese companies can leverage educational campaigns and partnerships with health influencers. Future research could further explore the comparative behavior of Muslim and non-Muslim consumers in China to gain deeper insights into the role of cultural and religious factors in shaping halal meat consumption patterns.

**Keywords:** Halal meat consumption, food safety concerns, purchase intention, consumer behavior, cross-cultural analysis, Pakistan, China.

### INTRODUCTION

A nation with a predominately Muslim population, Pakistan, derives a rich culinary culture from both religion and the decidedly linked realm of food. The dietary practices of a largely Muslim populace are dictated by the principles of their faith—principles that are decidedly proscriptive and prescriptive in nature and that cover a wide range of food-related matters (Sabreen, 2021; Sohaib & Jamil, 2017). Even though the Muslim population (about 96% of the total) dominates, the very small (but present) minority of non-Muslims (about 4% of

the total) is significant in that its food practices are shaped by the religious/cultural dietary norms of the very different faiths that are practiced by these groups (Ayyub et al., 2013). Traditional Pakistani cuisine contains a remarkable variety of dishes, many with meat as the centerpiece, that are deemed to be halaal (permissible).

Conversely, Muslims make up about 2% of the populace in China (Chuah, 2004). The Chinese culture is heavily predicated upon a wide variety of foods, with an abundance of ingredients.

There is an emphasis on balance and flavor and on the careful preparation of dishes, especially in areas like Xinjiang, where the Muslim Uighur population is concentrated (Sai & Fischer, 2015). In markets and restaurants in China, where halal food is available, there is great attention paid to the balanced meals that are served.

The worldwide halal food industry has grown considerably and holds great potential for future growth. The demand for halal products now extends far beyond Muslim populations, as consumers across diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are increasingly aware of and interested in the kinds of food they consume (Sai & Fischer, 2015). While many people may not know exactly what "halal" means, the number of consumers who are aware and who actively align their food choices with the appearance of being religiously motivated (such as the consumption of "clean" and "healthy" foods) is on the rise. These factors make the potential for future growth in the halal food sector considerable (Hong et al., 2019; Ali et al., 2018). Halal food consumption in developing countries reflects awareness at the global level concerning health, safety, and the ethical nature of what is being consumed. Implicated in this pattern are a yearning for genuinely healthful sustenance and a heightened sense of the overall nature and character of the food supply (Bukhari et al., 2021; Ayyub et al., 2013). This second issue encompasses, even more intensely than in the past, the various dubious means employed to manufacture, process, and deliver food. Halal food could carry a ton of spiritual significance for practicing Muslims, but the kind of food one consumes also impinges upon one's mental and physical well-being. That's a centerpiece of any health argument (Sohaib & Jamil, 2017; Magsi et al., 2021).

Even if the halal food industry has drawn the global spotlight and several studies have been conducted on the consumption patterns of this kind of food, especially in countries with a majority Muslim population (like Pakistan and China), we still have an insufficient understanding of the kinds of subtle, nuanced factors that (sometimes in ways that are difficult to detect) influence this very specific kind of food consumption (i.e., the consumption of meat that is ritually slaughtered according to Islamic precepts) (Awan et al., 2015; Bukhari et al.,

2021). Otherwise, most of our research has either employed a within-country or a region-based framework.

The majority Muslim population in Pakistan follows strictly the dietary regulations of halal food. However, non-Muslim communities in Pakistan also contribute to diverse food consumption practices. Contrarily, China, which harbors a very small Muslim population, has a complex halal consumption context that is shaped by governmental policies and the ethnic identities of its Muslim minority (Shahzad et al., 2021). In China, very few, if any, studies have been conducted that focus on the halal dietary practices of its Muslim community. Therefore, research comparing Pakistan—a country with a large Muslim population—to China, the Islamic Republic with a very small Muslim population, is virtually non-existent, particularly regarding the halal buying practices of either country's Muslim population (Awan et al., 2015). Moreover, such unexplored, comparative research holds the potential to illuminate not only the halal but also the food-safety buying practices of a bygone era. This research is aimed at analyzing the consumption patterns of halal meat among Muslims in Pakistan and China. More specifically, it was planned to look at the impacts of food quality, health perceptions, food safety, societal norms, and moral obligations on purchase intentions. Efforts were made to ascertain the potential impacts that religious beliefs and cultural context might have on halal consumption and to identify the factors having the most influence in the two countries being studied. This was a two-pronged project and, as such, allows for contrasting insights from two very different environments. The consumption of halal meat in Pakistan is in stark contrast to that in China, so the study will reveal much about the dynamics of both nations.

#### Research Objectives:

1. To investigate how food quality, health perceptions, and food safety concerns influence purchase intentions for halal meat among Muslims in Pakistan and China.
2. To evaluate the impact of perceived behavioral control, societal norms, and moral obligations on halal meat

consumption patterns among Muslims in both countries.

3. To analyze the extent to which cultural differences shape halal meat consumption behaviors in Pakistan and China.

### Literature Review

Permissible under Shariah law is what Islam calls halal, with its opposite being haram (Ali et al., 2020). Halal principles apply to more than just food, but when it comes to meat, there are methodical guidelines that strictly dictate how it must be slaughtered. Those who do the slaughtering must be of the Islamic faith; they must use a sharp instrument, say a short prayer before they do the act, and treat the animal with kindness before and during the act itself. Americans who purchase halal meat can take comfort in the fact that this process is not only in line with Islamic teachings but also with ethical and sustainable practices when it comes to animal husbandry.

Many people view halal meat as a more healthful choice due to the mandated way of killing the animal, which allows for complete drainage of blood. This, they say, reduces the risk of contamination (Ayyub, 2015). And what is true for halal is also true for other meat that is prepared according to religious guidelines. Not only does the slaughtering method count, but the consumption of non-impure (non-kosher or non-halal) substances also counts. So, what counts in making meat healthy? Here is a summary.

The likelihood of a consumer buying a product is termed as intent to purchase, and it can be formed in not-so-obvious ways. For instance, it can be pushed along by religious teachings. Ayyub et al. (2013) suggest that if one is raised in a faith that is pro- or anti-buying certain things, one's purchase intents will be favorably or unfavorably shaped, respectively, by that faith. Halal purchasing, or intents thereto, might be a serendipitous outcome of such a faith-based pro-buys for all things halal, including food.

The influences that explain these behaviors are well understood, thanks in part to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). TPB holds that three factors shape behavior: (1) attitude, (2) subjective norms, and (3) perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). When it comes to making halal food consumption decisions, individuals are

influenced by strong religious norms and attitudes that drive their purchasing and consumption patterns—their adherence to halal principles is reinforced in this process (Bukhari, n.d.). But religious influences aren't the whole story when it comes to who buys halal food.

### Theoretical Development of Hypotheses

The global demand for halal meat is growing, and this has brought the attention of both academics and the food industry to bear on the issue. Understanding the halal meat consumer seems a necessary thing to do if one intends to develop marketing strategies that have any hope of achieving a favorable result. Consumers of halal meat have a range of motivations that lead them to make those purchasing decisions. Those motivations relate not just to dietary preference but also to religious belief, cultural practice, and what seems to be an increasing emphasis on good, clean, and fair food.

One key determinant is the perceived quality of food. As consumers evaluate food products, the quality of the meat often plays a significant role in their purchase decision-making process. The notion of food quality encompasses several dimensions such as taste, freshness, texture, and nutritional value (Sohail et al., 2020). For many Muslim consumers, halal meat is not only a religious obligation but also an assurance of higher quality compared to non-halal meat (Ali et al., 2021).

This perception may stem from the idea that halaal meat is prepared under strict guidelines that ensure the humane treatment of animals and the proper slaughtering process, thereby contributing to its perceived superiority (Sajid et al., 2019). If the quality of halal meat is perceived to be high, consumers are more likely to intend to purchase it, making food quality a central factor in shaping purchase intentions (Sohail et al., 2020).

H1: Food Quality positively influences the purchase intention of halal meat.

Consumer purchasing decisions have also been influenced by health consciousness. Meat (especially certain kinds of red meat) is often perceived as unhealthy and a contributor to many health problems. Despite this, we have seen that overall meat consumption, and red meat in particular, has not diminished. Americans consumed 5.2% more beef in 2019 than in 2018

(Jahari et al., 2021). Nevertheless, as American consumers become increasingly health conscious, they are looking for healthier alternatives to many of the products long associated with poor health. Consumers are migrating toward organic foods and looking for more natural sources of nutrition. Halal meat may serve all these health-related desires (Zahid & Akhtar, 2021). Despite the perception that red meat is unhealthy, halal meat may change that perception. By using healthier animals and slaughtering them in a way that minimizes the chance of the meat harboring pathogens, halal meat offers a healthier alternative to conventional red meat.

H2: Positive health attitude toward halal meat influences purchase intention of halal meat.

One of the factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions toward halal meat is food safety. In today's world, where food safety issues related to food contamination, foodborne diseases, and ethical sourcing are at the core of consumer concerns, halal meat is often viewed as a safer alternative. This is largely due to the strict regulations associated with halal slaughtering and processing methods. As Sajid et al. (2019) note in their research, "...halal meat is seen as a safe alternative due to these strict guidelines and the assurance that the meat has not been contaminated with harmful, forbidden, or dangerous substances."

For Rao and Avula (2022), halal certification is about food safety and trust. In their research, they contend: 1. Halal certification ensures that meat does not contain harmful additives and chemicals; 2. Consumers concerned about food safety view halal slaughtering methods and processing as more credible than methods used in conventional meat production.

H3: Food Safety Concerns positively influence the purchase intention of halal meat.

Another important factor influencing purchase intention is perceived behavioral control. Perceived behavioral control refers to the ease or difficulty with which individuals believe they can perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This concept is articulated in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which says that people are more likely to do something if they think they can control it. When it comes to buying halal meat, perceived behavioral control involves stuff like this: Is halal meat available? Is it affordable? And can I find it in the local market or grocery store? (Riaz et al.,

2020). If consumers find it hard to access halal meat, then, of course, their purchase intention could be negatively impacted. As Jahari et al. (2021) point out, 'On the other hand, when halal meat is widely available and affordable, consumers are more likely to buy it.' So a perceived increase in behavioral control almost certainly leads to a purchase intention for halal meat.

H4: Perceived behavioral control positively influences the purchase intention of halal meat.

The intention to purchase is influenced by psychological factors, and one key area is motivation to comply with others. This is about individuals' motivation to act by social norms, peer pressure, and the seemingly never-ending list of expectations that family, friends, and community members put on individuals. (Ajzen, 1991).

Halal meat consumption is a case in point—when it comes to this, family members and the broader Muslim community can exert pressure that has a major (and positive) influence on an individual's decision pathway leading to the act of purchasing halal meat (Lada et al., 2009).

Of course, for many 'consumers' of any food, including Muslims and those who conform to the dietary guidelines of halal meat, the act of consuming food is more than just a personal choice; at least in the Muslim community, it's a social performance that's closely tied to religious identity (Bonne et al., 2007).

Thus, a lot is going on at both the individual and social levels that make memes about food choices and those who make them influential.

H5: Motivation to comply with others positively influences the purchase intention of halal meat.

Consumer purchase intentions are significantly shaped by moral obligation. For numerous Muslim consumers, the act of purchasing halal meat is not simply a decision made out of personal preference or social influence; it is a kind of moral imperative. Consuming halal meat is not just something that many contemporary Muslims do; it is seen as a religious duty and a means of aligning with (or not aligning with) one's faith and set of ethical values. This is the way many Muslim consumers view the halal food movement (Haque et al., 2015; Mukhtar & Butt, 2012).

In fact, the moral obligation to follow Islamic dietary laws and to consume only halal food is

something that is deeply embedded in both the religious and cultural identity of many Muslims (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Alam & Sayuti, 2011). And this sense of moral duty, which can also be partially understood in the context of the kind of 'ethics' that undergird halal food, heavily influences the food choices of these consumers.

For these consumers, buying halal meat is both a religious obligation and an ethical choice that is in line with their values and beliefs (Shah Alam & Mohamed Sayuti, 2011). They see the slaughter process as more humane and in line with ethical treatment standards compared to conventional slaughter methods. Their perception of the halal slaughter process as more humane reinforces their moral obligation to purchase halal meat (Awan et al., 2015). This perceived halal as a more humane business model drives sales, as consumers feel morally required to choose halal over non-halal when it comes to meat (Wilson, 2014).

H6: Moral Obligation positively influences the purchase intention of halal meat.

Finally, awareness is a crucial factor that can influence the purchase intention of halal meat. To make informed decisions, consumers must be aware of the availability, benefits, and characteristics of halal meat (Lada et al., 2009). Awareness encompasses both general knowledge about halal food and specific information

regarding halal certification, slaughtering practices, and the health and ethical benefits associated with halal meat (Ambali & Bakar, 2014). In many regions, consumers may not be fully aware of the halal meat options available to them or the benefits of consuming halal food (Ali et al., 2017).

Increasing consumer awareness through education, marketing, and communication can play a significant role in encouraging the purchase of halal meat (Bashir, 2019). Research suggests that higher awareness levels are associated with greater confidence in halal certification systems, leading to stronger purchase intentions (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). When consumers are well-informed about halal food standards and their importance, they are more likely to develop a preference for halal meat over non-halal alternatives (Teng & Wan, 2016). As consumers become more knowledgeable about halal meat and its benefits, they are more likely to include it in their regular food choices (Rezai et al., 2012). Thus, it is hypothesized that awareness positively influences the purchase intention of halal meat, with greater awareness leading to higher purchase intentions (Shah Alam & Mohamed Sayuti, 2011).

H7: Awareness positively influences the purchase intention of halal meat.

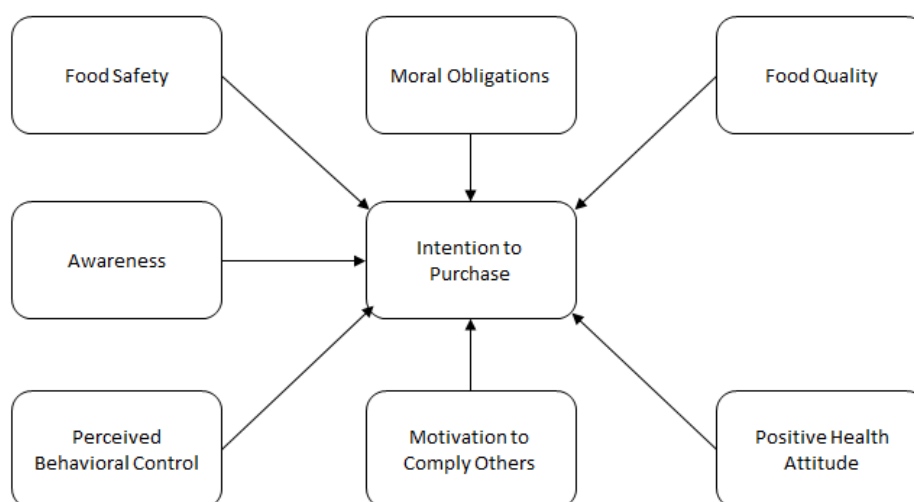


Figure 1 Conceptual Model



### Methodology

This research used a quantitative design and employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to look at which factors influence the consumption of halal meat. A cross-sectional survey was carried out in two countries, Pakistan and China, and data was collected from consumers in these two cultures. A deductive methodology of research was used to test the defined hypotheses and ensure that this research was guided by previous studies. The research had a firm foundation upon which to build. The defined population consisted of Muslims in both countries and convenience quota sampling was used to ensure that the sample had

representation from both countries, with a total of 200 participants across the two research sites. From previous studies (Hasan & Khan, 2020; Ambali & Bakar, 2014; Awan et al., 2015), a structured questionnaire was adopted to obtain the data. The past studies had already assessed the areas of product quality, health attitudes, food safety concerns, perceived behavioral control, motivation to comply, moral obligation, and awareness. Therefore, these areas were included in the current study's data collection instrument. A Likert scale was used for the responses, and a pilot study was conducted to ensure that the data collection instrument was clear and reliable. Multiple regression was used to analyze the data.

### Data Analysis

**Table 1: Respondent Profile**

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	120	60.0
	Female	80	40.0
Country	Pakistan	100	50.0
	China	100	50.0
Age Group (Years)	18 - 24	40	20.0
	25 - 34	60	30.0
	35 - 44	50	25.0
	45 - 49	30	15.0
	50 and above	20	10.0
Education	Bachelors	80	40.0
	Masters	90	45.0
	PhD	30	15.0
Religion	Muslim	200	100.0

The profile of the respondents ensures an even and effective representation of the study, half of which (50%) are from Pakistan and half from China (50%). This allows the study to gather useful insights from participants who can think across the spectrum of halal meat consumption, from very basic to the most complex levels of cognition. A majority of the participants (60%)

are male. We know from previous research that decision-making regarding food purchases is mostly a male prerogative in some cultures (Hasan & Khan, 2020). Overall, the sampling allows thorough insight into halal meat cognition across a cross-section of a predominantly Muslim population in Pakistan and China.

**Table 2: Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	200	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	200	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

The Case Processing Summary indicates that all 200 replies were legitimate, with no absent information, as certified by 0% exclusions. This suggests effective data gathering and whole participation. The use of listwise deletion guarantees precise analysis, as only cases with whole information were included, maintaining reliability.

**Table 3: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on N of Items
.950	.950 26

The study's Cronbach's Alpha of 0.950 reflects excellent internal consistency across the 26 items. This high reliability indicates that the survey items measured the intended constructs consistently. The strong Cronbach's Alpha value

enhances the credibility of the findings and supports the reliability of the applied scales for further analysis.

**Table 4: Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
Purchase_Intention	Equal variances assumed	5.775	.017	2.609	198	.010	-.276	.106	-.485 -.067
	Equal variances are not assumed.			2.603	186.009	.010	-.276	.106	-.485 -.067

The outcomes of an independent samples t-test are laid out in Table 4. They are presented here to compare purchase intentions for halal meat between Pakistan and China. This comparison addresses the study's objective of analyzing cultural differences. The independent samples t-test makes several assumptions. One is that the two groups being compared have roughly equal variances. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances assesses whether this assumption has been met. For our comparison of Pakistan and China, this

test indicated that the assumption of equal variances was not met ( $F = 5.775$ ,  $p = .017$ ). Therefore, when conducting the independent samples t-test, we did not assume equal variances. The t-test we used was more robust and allowed us to reach an overall conclusion with less potential for error. The results revealed that there was a significant difference between the mean of both purchase intention in Pakistan and purchase intention in China for halal meat.

**Table 5: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.932 <sup>a</sup>	.869	.859	.313

a. Predictors: (Constant), Positive\_Attitude, Perceived\_Behavioral\_Control, Food\_Safety, Moral\_Obligations, Motivation\_to\_Comply, Awareness, Food\_Quality

b. Country = Pakistan

Table 5 provides a summary of the models from the multiple regression analyses conducted in Pakistan to assess the factors influencing the purchase intention of halal meat. The high R Square value of .869 from Model 1 suggests that the predictors in the model explain well (86.9%)

the variance in individuals' intentions to purchase halal meat.

**Table 6: ANOVA<sup>b,c</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	59.033	7	8.433	86.215	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	8.901	91	.098		
	Total	67.935	98			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Positive\_Attitude, Perceived\_Behavioral\_Control, Food\_Safety, Moral\_Obligations, Motivation\_to\_Comply, Awareness, Food\_Quality

b. Country = Pakistan

c. Dependent Variable: Purchase\_Intention

Table 6 presents the ANOVA results for the multiple regression analysis conducted for Pakistan. The significant F-statistic (F = 86.215, p = .000) indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This confirms that the

selected independent variables collectively explain a substantial variance in purchase intentions for halal meat, supporting the study's objective.

**Table 7: Coefficients<sup>a,b</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	-.289	.172		-1.675	.097
	Food_Safety	-.061	.070	-.059	-.877	.383
	Moral_Obligations	.044	.063	.050	.704	.483
	Food_Quality	.064	.095	.067	.671	.504
	Awareness	.299	.077	.296	3.868	.000
	Perceived_Behavioral_Control	.145	.070	.151	2.075	.041
	Motivation_to_Comply	-.018	.067	-.019	-.272	.787
	Positive_Attitude	.607	.044	.640	13.728	.000

a. Country = Pakistan

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase\_Intention



Table 7 shows the outcomes of an examination of multiple regression factors related to the intent to purchase halal meat in Pakistan. The independent variables of the model account for more than half of the variation in purchase intent. The R-squared value of 0.869 indicates that attitude, awareness, perceived behavioral control, and the other four prescriptive conditions account for 86.9% (or approximately 87%) of the variance. Among the eight prescriptive conditions and independent

variables, the variables attitude, awareness, and perceived behavioral control emerged as significant predictors. Attitude had the highest path coefficient by far, signaling its role as the strongest predictor of halal meat purchase intentions. Awareness was the second strongest predictor and perceived behavioral control was in third place. The conditions of food safety, quality, and other prescriptive conditions were not associated with significant differences.

**Table 8: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.683 <sup>a</sup>	.467	.427	.496

a. Predictors: (Constant), Positive\_Attitude, Food\_Safety, Motivation\_to\_Comply, Awareness, Food\_Quality, Moral\_Obligations, Perceived\_Behavioral\_Control

b. Country = China

Table 8 offers a glimpse into the multiple regression model factors that influence the purchase intention of halal meat among Chinese consumers. This model acts as a not-so-thin veil that covers around 46.7% of the intent to buy ( $R^2 = 0.467$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), which is neither too baggy nor too tight in fit with the data. Should we perform the sharia-compliant act of comparing

this model to a similar one in Pakistan, we might say that the one in China is somewhat inferior, probably because the predictive power of the variables is not as good, and also because there may be some additional variables in Pakistan that are predictive of purchase intention but don't exist in the Chinese model.

**Table 9: ANOVA<sup>b,c</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.085	7	2.869	11.646	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	22.914	93	.246		
	Total	42.999	100			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Positive\_Attitude, Food\_Safety, Motivation\_to\_Comply, Awareness, Food\_Quality, Moral\_Obligations, Perceived\_Behavioral\_Control

b. Country = China

c. Dependent Variable: Purchase\_Intention

Table 9 contains the ANOVA results for China. They are full of statistical significance, meaning they indicate something quite clear: the model works. More specifically, we can say with absolute assurance that the factors up there – the predictors, as we call them – have some degree of explanation for why people in China are likely to say they intend to buy halal meat.

**Table 10: Coefficients<sup>a,b</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1	(Constant)	1.243	.351		3.544	.001
	Food_Safety	.226	.093	.230	2.438	.017

**Table 9: ANOVA<sup>b,c</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.085	7	2.869	11.646	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	22.914	93	.246		
	Total	42.999	100			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Positive\_Attitude, Food\_Safety, Motivation\_to\_Comply, Awareness, Food\_Quality, Moral\_Obligations, Perceived\_Behavioral\_Control

Moral_Obligations	.004	.113	.005	.040	.968
Food_Quality	.001	.122	.001	.009	.992
Awareness	0.450	0.070	0.480	6.429	.000
Perceived_Behavioral_Control	-.011	.154	-.011	-.070	.944
Motivation_to_Comply	.048	.111	.053	.430	.668
Positive_Attitude	.399	.058	.573	6.905	.000

a. Country = China

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase\_Intention

The multiple regression analysis for China, presented in Table 10, evaluates the impact of various predictors on purchase intention. Awareness exhibited a significant and strong positive effect ( $B = 0.450$ ,  $\beta = 0.480$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that increased awareness strongly enhances halal meat purchase intention. Positive attitude also showed a substantial positive impact ( $B = 0.399$ ,  $\beta = 0.573$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), reflecting its critical role in influencing consumer decisions. Food safety significantly contributed to purchase intention ( $B = 0.226$ ,  $\beta = 0.230$ ,  $p = 0.017$ ), underscoring its importance for consumers in China. However, other variables like moral obligations, food quality, perceived behavioral control, and motivation to comply did not show significant effects ( $p > 0.05$ ).

These results suggest that awareness campaigns and promoting positive attitudes towards halal meat can effectively drive purchase intentions. Key differences in consumer behavior between Pakistan and China emerged from the cross-cultural analysis of purchase intentions for halal meat. In China, the awareness and positive attitudes of potential consumers came out as the strongest predictors of purchase intentions. This is in line with Lada et al. (2009) and Teng & Wan (2016), who found that education, as well as positive perceptions, play a large role in non-Muslim-majority markets when it comes to halal purchase decisions. What these findings suggest is that the kind of rudimentary informational

exposure that potential consumers in Pakistan receive about halal meat consumption leads to a very different kind of purchase intention formation than what is happening in China.

On the other hand, in Pakistan, the intention to purchase was significantly affected by food safety. This is in line with the work of Sohail et al. (2020) and Sajid et al. (2019), who placed this notion in the context of predominantly Muslim countries where halal is thought to be the same as clean and safe because the processing is done ethically. This finding suggests that the Pakistani consumer prioritizes food safety over awareness of the halal status of a food product.

In both countries, moral obligation and perceived behavioral control were not significant. This is in contrast to Mukhtar & Butt (2012), who suggested that moral commitment was a key driver. In China, the lack of significance for moral obligation might be due to halal being a niche market, where the purchase is driven by practical benefits, as opposed to being motivated by religious duty. In Pakistan, it might be that since consuming halal is not just a personal choice, but something that is required by all citizens in their daily lives, the authors may not have been able to adequately measure the impact of such a "norm" on individual purchasing decisions.

The study confirms that social norms (motivation to comply) played a limited role in both countries when contrasted with research (Rezai et al, 2012).

Research probably is the only thing out there providing evidence that sheds light on how this pressure supposedly works. Rezai et al. (2012) work emphasized in their study that there is something to be said about societal pressure when it comes to food choices. Most of that study's content focused on where food choices supposedly are made under duress. In contrast, the present work shines light on where and how food choices are made with no pressure at all. The findings show that food safety is the top priority in Pakistan, while in China it is awareness and fostering a positive attitude that will help expand the consumption of halal meat. These differences in culture and what is deemed most important should inform marketing strategies in both countries.

### Conclusion and Future Directions

This research examined the elements influencing the purchase intentions of halal meat in Pakistan and China. Its goals included an appraisal of the effects of food quality, health perceptions, food safety concerns, societal norms, moral obligations, religious beliefs, and cultural differences on consumer behavior. The results indicate that these two countries are quite distinct in terms of the influences driving their purchase decisions. In Pakistan, food safety concerns were the most significant driver, reflecting heightened consumer sensitivity to sanitary standards. Meanwhile, Chinese consumers exhibited a stronger response to awareness and favorable attitudes toward halal meat. This suggests that initiatives aimed at improving education and awareness could be a key strategy for market expansion.

The contributions of the research to theoretical frameworks are already apparent. The researchers demonstrate that market dynamics can be different in regions of varied cultural backgrounds. Their work also holds relevance in today's discussion about the influence of various worldviews on consumer behavior. Not all Muslims have the same understanding or even the same interest in understanding what is halal or haram when it comes to meat.

In Pakistan, business entities can build customer trust by making supply chains transparent and certifying food safety visibly. Partnering with regulatory bodies to reinforce quality standards would enhance market credibility for Pakistani

businesses. In China, businesses targeted marketing could change consumer perceptions about halal meat and make it seem like a more normal food choice. Targeted, high-budget marketing could make the business argument that consuming halal meat is a safe choice.

The purchasing behavior of Muslim and non-Muslim consumers in China could be the focus of comparative studies that would build on these findings and expand them. Such work could take different forms. One way would be to conduct studies across provinces, where non-Muslim populations vary, examining each area's distinctive behaviors in regard to halal. Another approach would be to conduct a between-group study in a single location with sufficient population numbers to ensure comparability, say, in Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province, home to 2.3 million Muslims.

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