Halal Food Products Adoption in Bangladesh: A Study Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action

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ABSTRACT

The key objective of this study is to measure the influence of the factors of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) on the adoption of halal-certified food products among Bangladeshi Muslim consumers. Based on data from 558 respondents in Dhaka shopping malls, the researcher has identified the key findings regarding the adoption of Halal food products in the context of Bangladesh. The study reveals that the adoption of halal-certified food is significantly and positively influenced by attitudes and subjective norms as a component of the TRA model. Eventually, the study's results can help a marketer come up with a way to take advantage of Bangladesh's hugely promising and growing market by introducing a variety of halal product brands that appeal to the country's growing population.

Keywords: Halal Food Products, Adoption, Attitude, Subjective norms, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

Islam, Sariah, Halal are not simply a money-making concept or fancy commercial terms. All these are the religious, universal, and classical phenomenon. But the use of these religious terms can overwhelm the Muslim consumers to make their purchase decision due to a strong emotional and spiritual attachment for the quest of spiritual incentive with worldly benefit in everyday life (International Trade Center, 2015). 148.6 million Muslim people of Bangladesh which represent 90.4% of the country's total population (Nisha & Iqbal, 2017) has validated this trend through welcoming and responding positively towards Islam, Shari'ah Halal, Amanah, Sadiq and other religious terms in banking, food and beverage, products, healthcare, education, pharmaceuticals, tourism, fashions, and other business fields. Halal food products is an important aspect of the food industry in Bangladesh, as the country has a large Muslim population. According to Thomson Reuters (2022), Bangladesh was the 2nd halal food products consumer market and valued $125.1 billion and in 2023-2024, valued $137 billion which is increasing.

Top five Halal food products consumer markets

In the year of 2022			**In years of 2023-2024**		
Country Name	**Market Size (US Dollars)**	**Position**	**Country Name**	**Market Size (US Dollars)**	**Position**
Indonesia	$ 146.7 billion	1st	Indonesia	$ 149.8 billion	1st
Bangladesh	**$ 125.1 billion**	**2nd**	Egypt	$ 143 billion	2nd
Egypt	$ 120.1 billion	3rd	**Bangladesh**	**$ 137 billion**	**3rd**
Pakistan	$ 87.7 billion	4th	Nigeria	$ 87.4 billion	4th
Nigeria	$ 86.2 billion	5th	Iran	$ 87.4 billion	5th

State of the Global Islamic Economy Report (2022 p.49,2023/2024 p.97)

The increasing demand for halal food products in Bangladesh is driven by consumer awareness of the benefits of halal certification, such as food safety and quality (Zafar et al., 2024). Despite this growing trend, the halal food industry continues to struggle with positioning and is unable to figure out how to entice people to ensure consistent patronization; the factors that might stimulate adoption are still ambiguous. However, in Bangladesh, the food industry is faced with several challenges, including food adulteration and weak enforcement of regulations, that can create a negative perception of the food industry among consumers. In this context, understanding consumer intentions to adopt halal food products in Bangladesh is crucial for the development and promotion of the halal food product industry. Note that the idea of a consumer wanting to buy halal-labeled food in Bangladesh is fluid and changes over time due to many factors. The goal of this study is to look into the factors that affect consumer wanting to buy halal-labeled food in Bangladesh, including the effects of the theory of reasoned action model on the adoption of halal-certified food in Bangladesh.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the adoption of halal-certified food products among Bangladeshi Muslim consumers. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the impact of key factors from the Theory of Reasoned Action on the adoption of halal-certified food in Bangladesh.
2. To offer recommendations for promoting the adoption of halal-certified food in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Halal food products in Bangladesh

The adoption of halal food products in Bangladesh has been increasing recently due to growing consumer awareness. Halal products comply with Islamic laws and principles, ensuring ethical, health, and quality benefits. The demand for halal products is rising globally, particularly in Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. Bangladesh, with a predominantly Muslim population, presents a large market for halal products. According to the 2022 census, Muslims constitute 91.04% of Bangladesh's population, creating a substantial market for halal products (Population and Housing Census 2022). Awareness of halal certification is expanding beyond food to include cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. The growing demand for halal food in Bangladesh is driven by religious adherence, health consciousness, and ethical considerations. Halal food is increasingly viewed as a symbol of quality and ethical consumption in Bangladesh. A study by Nekmahmud (2016) indicates that halal is not just a religious obligation but also a quality standard. Research by Jannat and Islam (2019) highlights factors influencing Bangladeshi consumers' purchase intentions toward halal-certified foods. The halal food market in Bangladesh is still underdeveloped, presenting significant growth opportunities. Currently, the market mainly focuses on meat and poultry, but there is potential for expansion into processed foods, snacks, and beverages. The Bangladeshi government has introduced policies to facilitate halal certification for food, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics. Despite opportunities, challenges include inadequate halal certification and consumer mistrust due to unclear labeling. Limited research on the halal market in Bangladesh creates difficulties for businesses in targeting the right consumers. Businesses and marketers now view halal certification as a competitive advantage (Yeo et al., 2016). Undoubtedly, Halal-certified products are a new marketing wave. Since consumer concerns on the subject of halal cosmetics vary from country to country (Fathi et al., 2016), it is essential to conduct some empirical work in Bangladesh due to its existing position and potentiality (Abd Rahman et al., 2015; Musa, 2014). Even though there are several research studies performed in other nations throughout the world, they were not performed in Bangladesh. Eventually, to bridge the contextual gap in the literature, researchers need to do studies in an Islamic country like Bangladesh (Ali et al., 2016). Numerous studies have focused on the Islamic banking industry while investigating issues in a wider context. Studies on halal food products in Bangladesh remain scarce, despite increasing interest in the sector. More empirical research is needed to

explore halal adoption beyond food, including cosmetics, finance, and pharmaceuticals. Addressing gaps in research will help better understand consumer behavior and market potential in Bangladesh's halal industry.

Theoretical Framework

According to Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), human conduct is characterized by purpose, impacted by attitudes, and subjective norms. Several studies have examined consumer purchasing decisions through the lens of this theory, which states that attitudes and subjective norms impact behavioral intentions (Koraag et al., 2024; Wilujeng et al., 2019; Garg & Joshi, 2018; Lada et al., 2009; Fahmi, 2017). In the context of halal food products, attitudes reflect personal evaluations, while subjective norms indicate social pressure to comply with halal standards. People widely use TRA to understand their purchasing decisions for ethical products, including halal goods. Studies in Malaysia, Indonesia, and other Muslim-majority countries confirm its effectiveness in predicting consumer behavior in halal markets.The objective of this study is to examine the factors influencing the adoption of halal products in Bangladesh, which is grounded in the widely applied Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model. The present research deals with the behavioral intention of halal product adoption, which is one of the disciplines in social science. The proposed model expresses the adoption of halal products as the dependent construct and includes two determinants—attitude and subjective norms—as independent constructs. The primary goal of this research framework is to streamline the study by determining what variables are impacting the widespread adoption of halal food options in Bangladesh.

The role of attitude for adoption of halal food products

Attitude, the first construct in the TRA model, plays a decisive role in the adoption of halal food products in Bangladesh. According to Lada et al. (2009), Bonne et al. (2007), and Mukhtar & Butt (2012), "If a Muslim consumer has a positive attitude towards halal products based on his or her positive and strong beliefs, then the consumer is more likely to buy halal-labeled food." Additionally, numerous studies have noted that studying the behavior and attitudes of Muslim consumers regarding halal products from diverse cultures and nations is an essential and vital subject for exploration and study (Bonne et al., 2007). The many studies that have looked into the connection between attitude and adoption are as follows: Koraag et al., 2024; Ardiyanto et al., 2024; Wibowo et al., 2024; Puspita, 2023; Nurkhin et al., 2023; Hasyim & Purnasari, 2021; Vanany et al., 2020; Bashir et al., 2019; Jannat & Islam, 2019; Ashraf, 2019; Wilujeng et al., 2019; Fahmi, 2017; Lada et al., 2009. A person's attitude towards adopting halal food items reflects how positively or negatively they feel about consuming halal food.According to the findings of the study, the perspectives of customers are significantly impacted by their beliefs regarding the safety, ethics, and quality of halal food items, which in turn influences the manner in which they accept these sorts of products. This study posits that Muslim consumers with strong positive attitudes are more likely to adopt halal food products, which in turn shapes their actual behavior. Therefore, investigating consumer attitudes is essential for understanding adoption behavior and forms the basis for the study's hypotheses.

H1. Consumer' more favorable attitude towards halal food products, the higher likelihood to adopt halal food products in the context of Bangladesh.

The role of subjective norms for adoption of halal food products

The second predictor of the TRA model, subjective norm, refers to social influences on an individual's decision-making (Ajzen, 1991). It reflects perceived pressure from family, friends, colleagues, and community members to adopt certain behaviors (Charsetad, 2016; Sukato, 2008; Hee, 2000). Subjective norm reflects social pressure to adopt or avoid behaviors (Awan et al., 2015) and is shaped by informative and normative influences (Kuan et al., 2014). Muslim families prioritize collectivism over individualism, fostering integration (Daneshpour, 1998). In Bangladesh, societal norms, including religious and cultural collectivism, play a crucial role in adopting halal-labeled products. Muslim consumers prioritize subjective criteria to align with Shariah principles (Mohd Suki & Abang Salleh, 2018). The influence of religious

scholars and social circles is particularly strong, making subjective norms a key factor in the adoption of halal cosmetics. Muslim consumers prioritize subjective criteria to align halal cosmetics with Shariah principles (Mohd Suki & Abang Salleh, 2018; Azmi et al., 2010). A good number of researchers have explored the relationship between attitude and adoption in various studies (Ardiyanto et al., 2024; Wibowo et al., 2024; Puspita, 2023; Nurkhin et al., 2023; Hasyim & Purnasari, 2021; Vanany et al., 2020; Bashir et al., 2019; Jannat & Islam, 2019; Ashraf, 2019; Wilujeng et al., 2019; Garg & Joshi, 2018; Fahmi, 2017; Lada et al., 2009). In Bangladesh, subjective norms strongly influence halal product adoption, driven by social pressure from family, friends, religious leaders, and community figures. In such a scenario, the significant indicator may be the subjective norm, and Bangladesh's Muslim customers would be more likely to adopt halal cosmetics if they perceive other people follow.

H2. Consumers' higher influence of Subjective norms towards halal food products, the higher likelihood to adopt halal food products in the context of Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research approach. A questionnaire, designed based on relevant literature and expert input, was used for data collection. The survey employed a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) to ensure reliability and validity (Weijters et al., 2010; Sullivan & Artino, 2013; Habidin et al., 2018). The unit of analysis was individual buyers from various shopping malls in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The target population comprised male and female buyers purchasing halal products. Due to the large population size, a convenient mall intercept sampling technique was adopted (Rice & Hancock, 2005) and data was collected from different supermarkets from different locations. The questionnaire measured attitude (five items), subjective norms (five items), and halal product adoption (five items). These measures were adopted and adapted from Loussaief et al. (2024), Jannat and Islam (2019), Briliana and Mursito (2017), Al-Hajla (2017), Ayuniyyah et al. (2017), and Prerna & Joshi (2018). The minimum sample size should be more than 45 (3x10+15), coming from the well-established formula (10*number of variables+1*number of items) for this study as recommended by Hair et al. (2012). Moreover, according to Roscoe (1969), sample sizes that are larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most studies. The analysis concluded with a total of 558 responses. Data analysis included both descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing. PLS-SEM 4.0 was used to check for measurement reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, model explanatory power, predictive power, and collinearity. SPSS 23.0 was used for descriptive analysis. Finally, model testing was conducted to evaluate the hypothesized relationships.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

A summary of the gathered data is given by descriptive statistical analysis, which also sheds light on the sample's characteristics. Table I displays the descriptive statistics for the variables employed in this investigation. PLS-SEM, being a nonparametric statistical approach, does not depend on distributional assumptions (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). The statistical features allow for reliable model estimates whether the data follow a normal or significantly non-normal distribution (Hair et al., 2017; Reinartz, Haenlein, & Henseler, 2009).

Table I: Summary of Descriptive Analysis

	N	Mini.	Maxi.	Mean	Std. Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis
ATT	558	3.60	7.00	5.6495	.68678	.590	-.024
SBN	558	2.20	7.00	4.8018	.95496	-.084	.292
AHF	558	2.00	7.00	5.4147	.89811	-.985	1.725

PLS-SEM Analysis Results

Over the past decade, the volume of PLS-SEM applications has increased considerably (Hair et al., 2022). PLS EM analysis is divided into two distinct stages. In the first step, the researcher receives the measurement model output, which aids in evaluating the quality of the data in terms of internal consistency, reliability, and discriminant validity (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Heseler et al., 2015). Initially, the researcher obtains the measurement model output, which facilitates the evaluation of internal consistency, reliability and discriminant validity (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Henseler et al., 2015) to ascertain data validity. Subsequently, the significance and relevance of the path coefficients, along with the explanatory and predictive capabilities of the structural model, are assessed (Shmueli et al., 2016; Hair et al., 2020). The hypothesized model, developed using Smart PLS software version 4.0, is illustrated in Figure I below.

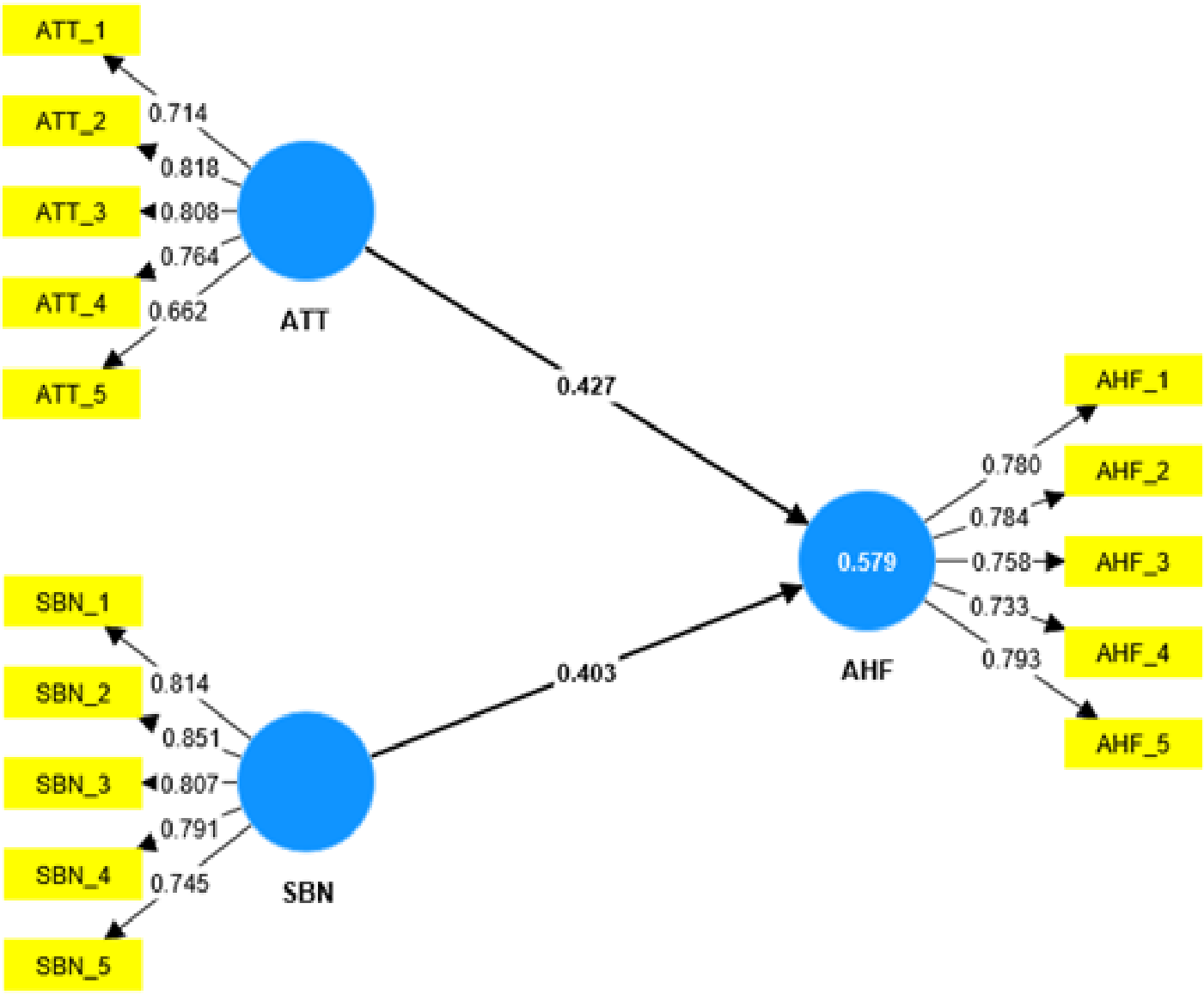

Figure I: Measurement Model

Reliability Test

Hair et al. (2022) assert that all constructs must have Cronbach's alpha values over 0.70 for reliability, and composite reliability values should surpass the 0.70 threshold (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The permissible range for reliability metrics is 0.70 to 0.90, with a ceiling of 0.95 to prevent indication redundancy (Hair et al., 2019). As shown in Table II, all of the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency and validating each of the study's constructs.

Table II: Measurement Properties of PLS Measurement Model.

Constructs	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Attitude (ATT)	**ATT_1**	0.714	**0.811**	**0.869**	**0.571**
	ATT_2	0.818			
	ATT_3	0.808			
	ATT_4	0.764			
	ATT_5	0.662			
Subjective Norms (SBN)	**SBN_1**	0.814	**0.861**	**0.900**	**0.644**
	SBN_2	0.851			
	SBN_3	0.807			
	SBN_4	0.791			
	SBN_5	0.745			
Adoption Halal food products (AHF)	**AHF_1**	0.78	**0.828**	**0.879**	**0.593**
	AHF_2	0.784			
	AHF_3	0.758			
	AHF_4	0.733			
	AHF_5	0.793			

Convergent Validity

Based on the results of this study, the convergent validity of the data is checked using the factor loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE) of the variables. All of the AVE values in Table II are above 0.50, which means that the constructs are convergent because they meet the requirement of AVE > 0.50 (Sarstedt et al., 2021). Furthermore, item loadings of 0.60 or higher affirm the convergent validity of the study's constructs.

Discriminant Validity

According to recent debates, the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio) should be used to evaluate discriminant validity rather than the Fornell-Larcker criterion or cross-loadings (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019; Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2015). For a more accurate assessment of discriminant validity, Henseler et al. (2015) suggest to use the HTMT. A threshold value above 0.90 of HTMT indicates a lack of discriminant validity between conceptually similar constructs. For constructs that are conceptually distinct, a more conservative threshold of 0.85 is advised. As a result of the fact that the HTMT values ought to be lower than 0.85 for conceptually distinct conceptions, this research substantiates the criteria (Henseler et al., 2015; Franke & Sarstedt, 2019).

Table III: Discriminant Validity Assessment (HTMT ratio)

	AHF	ATT	SBN
AHF			
ATT	0.845		
SBN	0.819	0.800	

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The most important phase in the examination of the structural model is to determine the extent to which the model can explain explanatory power. The coefficient of determination, also known as R^2, offers insight into the extent to which the exogenous factors are responsible for explaining the variance in the endogenous

variables. For the purpose of this investigation, the R^2 value for the adoption of halal food products (AHF) is 0.579. The R^2 value of 0.579 indicates that the independent factors are responsible for explaining 57.9% of the variance in AHF. Based on established guidelines (Hair et al., 2011; Moosbrugger et al., 2009), an R^2 value of 0.75 indicates a strong impact, a value of 0.50 indicates a moderate effect, and a value of 0.25 indicates a weak effect. Consequently, the R^2 value of 0.579 in this study supports the moderate impact, indicating that the influence is sufficiently substantial.

	R-square	**R-square adjusted**
Coefficient of Determination (R^2) for AHF	**0.579**	**0.577**

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

A method called predictive sample relevance (Q^2) is used in PLS-SEM analysis to check how well the model can predict the future (Stone, 1974; Geisser, 1974; Fornell & Cha, 1994; Chin, 2010). Using the blindfolding procedure, this study found a Q^2 value of 0.337 for the adoption of halal food products (AHP). Since the Q^2 value exceeds zero, it indicates that the model has predictive relevance (Moosbrugger et al., 2009).

	SSO	**SSE**	**Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)**
Predictive Relevance (Q^2) -AHF	2790	1849.088	0.337

Collinearity

Lower VIF values, like 3, can cause collinearity problems (Becker et al., 2015; Mason & Perreault, 1991). VIF values should ideally be less than or near 3. The study's descriptive analysis, item loadings, composite reliability, AVE, and cross-loading all support the findings that the data are valid, reliable, and multicollinearity-free. As a result, we can move for hypothesis testing.

Constructs	**Item**	**VIF**
Attitude (ATT)	**ATT_1**	1.61
	ATT_2	2.081
	ATT_3	1.88
	ATT_4	2.009
	ATT_5	1.616
Subjective Norms (SBN)	**SBN_1**	2.031
	SBN_2	2.42
	SBN_3	2.021
	SBN_4	1.848
	SBN_5	1.622
Adoption Halal food products (AHF)	**AHF_1**	1.727
	AHF_2	1.681
	AHF_3	1.631
	AHF_4	1.537
	AHF_5	1.814

Assessment of Structural Model

After confirming the measurement model's validity and reliability, the researcher moved on to the structural model using the PLS-SEM approach. For the purpose of hypothesis testing, this resulted in path coefficient estimates that reflect the proposed relationships between the variables. This study has considered standard

errors, t-values, p-values, and path coefficients. A hypothesis is deemed accepted if it is significant at the 5% level (t-value > 1.96 or p < 0.05) (Henseler & Fassott, 2010).

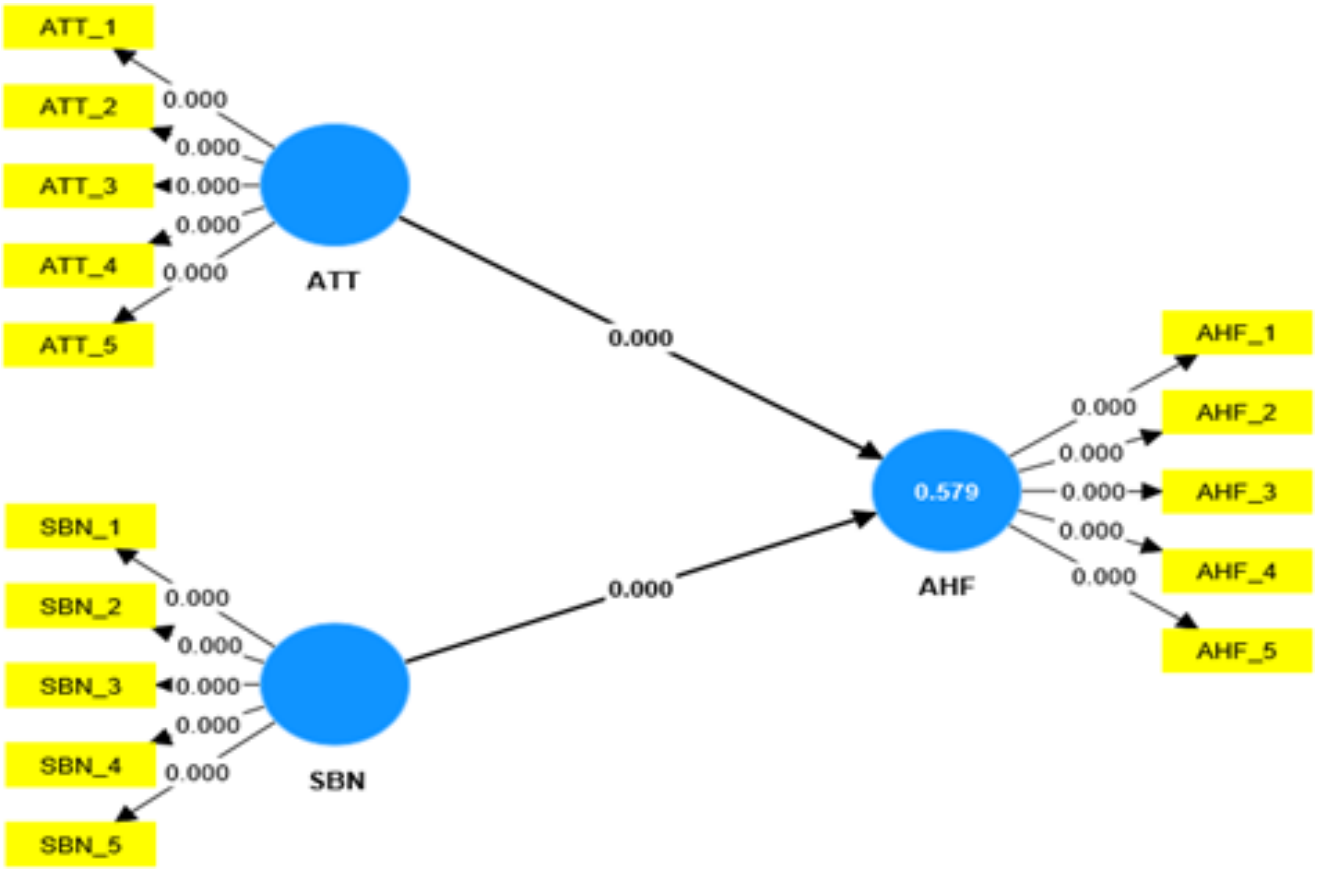

Figure II: The Structural Model

Table IV displays the results of the structural model used for hypothesis testing, with the corresponding output also recorded in Table IV. Figure II also presents the PLS structural model. The researcher assessed the significance of the proposed relationships in the path model through the application of the bootstrapping technique for hypothesis testing. The bootstrap involved a total of 1,000 resamples (Chin, 1998). The total count of bootstrap cases corresponded to the initial number of observations to produce standard errors and derive t-statistics (Hair et al., 2013). A significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$ or $t > 1.96$) was employed to accept any hypothesis (Hair et al., 2014).

Table IV: The Structural estimates

Hypothesized Relationship	Path Coefficients (β)	Standard Errors	T Statistics	P Values	Results
H1: ATT -> AHF	0.427	0.045	9.426	0.000	Supported
H2: SBN -> AHF	0.403	0.045	8.927	0.000	Supported

Note: At the 1% level, ***p<0.01 is significant.

The initial hypothesis investigates the positive and significant impact of attitude on the adoption of halal food products. Attitude has a positive and significant effect, as shown by a path coefficient (²) of 0.427 and a t-statistic of 9.426 ($p < 0.01$), which means it is significant at the 1% level. Therefore, we acknowledge that attitude positively influences the adoption of halal food products, thereby supporting H1.These findings align with previous studies (Koraag et al., 2024; Ardiyanto et al., 2024; Wibowo et al., 2024; Puspita, 2023; Hasyim & Purnasari, 2021; Vanany et al., 2020; Bashir et al., 2019; Ashraf, 2019; Wilujeng et al., 2019;

Fahmi, 2017; Lada et al., 2009). The results indicate that consumers exhibiting a more favorable attitude are more inclined to adopt halal food products.The second hThe second hypothesis explores the significant and positive influence of subjective norms on the adoption of halal food products.s indicate that subjective norms exert a significant positive influence, evidenced by a path coefficient (β) of 0.403, a t-statistic of 8.927, and $p < 0.01$. This finding corroborates Hypothesis 2, which anticipated a significant correlation between subjective norms and the adoption of halal food products. As with other studies (Ardiyanto et al., 2024; Wibowo et al., 2024; Hasyim & Purnasari, 2021; Ashraf, 2019; Wilujeng et al., 2019; Fahmi, 2017; Lada et al., 2009), subjective norms are the social pressures that people think they are under that make them decide to buy halal food. In Bangladesh, a collectivistic society, subjective norms significantly influence consumer adoption interest, highlighting their role in shaping the adoption of Halal food products within this specific context.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) accurately forecasts the adoption intentions of Bangladeshi Muslim consumers regarding halal food products. The research establishes that both attitude and subjective norms significantly predict buying decisions. Muslim consumers in Bangladesh are inclined to adopt halal products based on Islamic principles and values, moving beyond traditional concepts with strong aspirations. The findings provide valuable theoretical and practical insights for entrepreneurs, practitioners, policymakers, governments, and other stakeholders in understanding the size, dynamics, and drivers of this high-potential market. It is recommended that future studies investigate each predictor in further depth by making use of additional models, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI), and in other areas like halal cosmetics, halal supply chains, etc.

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