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In-Text Citation: (Antara et al., 2023)
To Cite this Article: Antara, P. M., Musa, A. H., Idris, A. R., Selamat, S. M., Baharuddin, F. N., & Abedin, N. F. Z. (2023). Intention to Use Social Media Influencers in Halal Food Promotional Activities: A Proposed Conceptual Model using the Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *13*(3), 978 – 988.

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Intention to Use Social Media Influencers in Halal Food Promotional Activities: A Proposed Conceptual Model using the Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction

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Abstract

The growth of the Halal sector is driven by young Muslim asserting their values. However, some young Muslims are not sensitive towards Halal status. There is a need to cater to the young Muslim market, especially iGeneration since they are future demand setters. iGeneration lives with technology and social media. Halal food producers should use social media influencers to cater to this market. This paper proposes the conceptual framework towards the intention to use social media influencers in Halal food promotional activities among Small and Medium Enterprises. The Integrative Model of Behavioral Prediction was adapted to achieve the said objectives. The proposed framework provides insight into the study of the factors affecting the intention to use social media influencers in promotional activities among Halal food producers. This proposed conceptual framework is also hoped to help contribute to the body of knowledge as references for scholars. Besides, it is hoped to significantly impact Halal food producers and policymakers upon the project's completion.

Keywords: Halal, Social Media, Social Media Influencer, Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction, SME.

Introduction

The global Halal industry is a rapidly growing market estimated to be worth over USD 5.0 trillion in 2050 (HDC, 2020). The Halal industry refers to producing and distributing products and services permissible under Islamic law. Halal products and services include food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, financial services, fashion, books, media, travel and sports (Dinar Standard, 2020; Ismail et al., 2017). One of the main drivers of growth in the global Halal industry is the increasing demand for Halal products and services from the world's 1.8 billion Muslims. This is due to the growing awareness of Halal requirements and the increasing number of Muslims seeking to live according to their religious beliefs (Dinar Standard, 2020). Additionally, non-Muslim consumers are becoming more aware of Halal products (Loo, 2010)

and choosing them for various reasons, including health, quality, and ethical considerations (Quantaniah et al., 2013). The Halal food sector is the largest segment in the Halal industry, accounting for over 50% of the market (DinarStandard, 2022). This segment is expected to grow, driven by the increasing demand for Halal food products, especially in regions with large Muslim populations, such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East (Reuters, 2016). Halal food refers to food that is permissible according to Islamic law and is a crucial aspect of the daily life and culture of Muslims around the world. The demand for Halal food has been proliferating in recent years, driven by a combination of population growth, rising incomes, and increased awareness of the importance of halal food to the Muslim community. In the global market, the Halal food industry is estimated to be worth over USD 1.27 trillion in 2021 and is projected to continue to grow to USD 1.67 trillion in 2025 (DinarStandard, 2022). The increasing number of certified Halal food products and the growth of the Halal tourism industry facilitates the industry's growth.

The global Halal industry offers significant opportunities for growth and development. The Halal industry has the potential to contribute to the development of sustainable and inclusive economies, as well as to the improvement of people's quality of life, and it will likely continue to be a significant area of growth and development in the coming years. However, some Muslims, especially young Muslims, avoid and are not sensitive towards Halal status (Norman & Wahid, 2017; Ayub, 2012; Obeidat, 2016). Muslims still have low awareness and knowledge of certain Halal products (Ernawati, 2019). Young Muslims are attracted more to lower prices, attractive packaging, and brand popularity than the Halal status (Nik-Wan et al., 2015). One generation that can impact the purchasing of Halal products is Generation Z, called iGeneration.

The term "iGeneration" is used to describe the current generation of young people who have grown up with technology and the internet as a central part of their lives. The iGeneration is also sometimes referred to as "Generation Z" or "Post-Millennials," and includes those born between 1995 and 2012 (Singh, 2014). Growing up in a digital world, iGeneration is considered to be the most tech-savvy generation to date (Linnes & Metcalf, 2017). They are comfortable with using technology for communication, entertainment, and education and are often referred to as "digital natives." They have grown up with access to the internet, smartphones, and social media, and they use these tools on a daily basis to connect with friends, stay informed, and express themselves. The iGeneration is also highly connected in terms of their relationships with others and their access to information. They use social media to stay connected with friends and family and have a vast network of online contacts. This has led to a culture of sharing and collaboration, where young people are eager to share their experiences, opinions, and ideas with others. The iGeneration is also highly influenced by social media, which plays a significant role in shaping their opinions, values, and beliefs. For many young people, social media is their primary source of news and information, and it has the power to shape the way they view the world. This is particularly true for young people who are exposed to a diverse range of perspectives and ideas through social media.
Therefore, there is an opportunity to use social media as a promotional tool, especially social media influencers (SMI), to promote Halal food in targeting the iGeneration. However, there are still limited studies focusing on the factors in choosing SMI for Halal food promotional activities among SMEs. This paper proposes a framework that could be used to examine the

factors affecting the intention to use SMI among SMEs in their Halal food promotional activities.

Review of Related Literature
Social Media Influencers as Promotional Tools

Social media has become an increasingly popular tool for businesses to promote their products and services, reach out to customers, and build brand awareness. Companies are using social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to interact with their target audience, engage with customers, and ultimately drive sales and increase profits. One of the key benefits of using social media for promotional activities is its ability to reach a large, targeted audience (Ellison et al., 2017). With billions of users on social media platforms (GWI, 2022), businesses have access to a vast pool of potential customers. This allows them to target their promotional activities to a specific demographic, such as age, location, and interests, which can increase the effectiveness of their campaigns. Another advantage of social media is its ability to provide businesses with real-time feedback and insights into their audience (Hollingsworth, 2021). This allows companies to respond quickly to customer needs and preferences and to adjust their promotional activities accordingly. This level of customer engagement and interaction is also a valuable opportunity for businesses to build brand loyalty and positive associations with their products or services. Businesses can also use social media to create and share content that engages their audience and promotes their products or services. This can include blog posts, videos, images, and infographics that educate and entertain their target audience. By creating valuable and engaging content, businesses can build relationships with their customers and increase the chances of them becoming loyal customers and brand advocates.

Another way companies can use social media for promotional activities is to leverage influencer marketing (Ellison et al., 2017). By partnering with influential individuals on social media, businesses can reach a large, engaged audience and promote their products or services in a more authentic and relatable way. Social media influencers can be independent third-party endorsers who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and other social media (Freberg et al., 2011). They can include opinion leaders, celebrities, and social leaders (Harifawati et al., 2019). Influencer marketing has proven to be a highly effective way for businesses to build brand awareness, drive sales, and increase profits. The usage of social media influencers in the halal food industry has become increasingly popular in recent years (Rahim et al., 2021). Influencer marketing, where brands partner with individuals who have a large following on social media to promote their products, has become a widely used strategy in the halal food industry due to its ability to reach a large and engaged audience. Social media influencers typically specialise in a specific niche, such as fashion, beauty, travel, or lifestyle, and their content reflects this specialisation. They use their platform to share their opinions, experiences, and perspectives on their area of expertise, and their followers trust their recommendations and insights. One of the key reasons that businesses and brands are drawn to social media influencers is their ability to reach a large, targeted audience. Influencers typically have thousands or even millions of followers on social media, and these followers are highly engaged with the influencer's content. By partnering with an influencer, a business or brand can access this engaged audience and promote its products or services to a group of potential customers who are already interested in their niche. Another advantage of working with social media influencers is their ability to provide a level of authenticity and credibility

that traditional advertising cannot. Influencers are seen as trusted sources of information and recommendations, and their followers are more likely to trust their opinions and recommendations than those of a brand. This makes influencer marketing an effective way for businesses to build brand awareness and establish themselves as trusted, credible sources of information in their industry. Influencer marketing can take many different forms, from sponsored posts and product reviews to collaborations and brand ambassadorship programs. The type of influencer marketing that a business or brand chooses to pursue will depend on its goals and target audience, as well as its budget and resources.

One common approach to influencer marketing is to sponsor posts on social media (Geyser, 2023). This involves paying an influencer to promote a product or service on their platform. These posts can take the form of product reviews, tutorials, or demonstrations, and they typically include a call-to-action, such as a link to the brand's website or a discount code. Another approach to influencer marketing is to collaborate with an influencer on a content project (Newberry, 2022). This might involve creating a video or a blog post together or co-hosting a social media event. This type of collaboration provides a unique opportunity for businesses and brands to build relationships with their target audience and increase their visibility on social media. Some businesses and brands opt to establish a long-term relationship with an influencer through a brand ambassadorship program. In these programs, the influencer acts as a representative of the brand and promotes its products or services over a set period of time. This type of relationship can provide a more sustained level of exposure for the brand and help to build relationships with the influencer's followers.

Theory of Reasoned Action
The theory of reasoned action (TRA) is a social psychological theory that aims to explain an individual's behaviour and the factors that influence it. Developed by Icek Ajzen and Martin Fishbein in 1975, the theory has been widely used to predict and understand human behaviour in various domains, such as health behaviour, consumer behaviour, and organisational behaviour. The central premise of the theory is that behaviour is driven by a person's intention, which is, in turn, shaped by their attitudes and subjective norms, as shown in Figure 1. Attitudes refer to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a particular behaviour, while subjective norms refer to the perceived expectations and social pressure from significant others, such as friends and family, to engage in a particular behaviour. According to the theory, an individual's intention to perform a specific behaviour directly results from their attitudes and subjective norms towards that behaviour. The stronger a person's positive attitude towards behaviour and the stronger the perceived social pressure to perform that behaviour, the more likely they are to intend to perform it. In turn, the stronger a person's intention, the more likely they are to actually perform the behaviour.
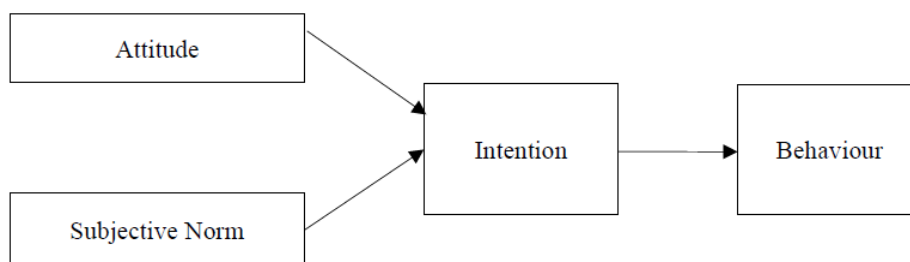

Figure 1. The Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

TRA has been widely used to understand and predict human behaviour in various domains. For example, it has been used to predict individuals' intentions to engage in healthy behaviours, such as exercising or eating a balanced diet. In the context of consumer behaviour, TRA has been used to understand the factors that influence an individual's intention to purchase a product or service, such as their attitudes towards the brand or product and the influence of significant others. One of the strengths of the theory is its empirical grounding. Numerous studies have provided evidence for the validity of the theory, and its ability to predict human behaviour has been well established. Additionally, the theory is widely applicable and can be used in a variety of contexts, making it a versatile tool for researchers and practitioners. However, the theory also has some limitations. For example, it does not account for other factors that may influence behaviour, such as habit, past behaviour, or situational factors. Additionally, the theory assumes that individuals are rational and make decisions based on their attitudes and subjective norms, which may not always be the case.

Theory of Planned Behaviour
The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is an extension of the TRA and widely-used social psychological theory that explains the relationship between an individual's beliefs and behaviours. It suggests that people's intention to perform a behaviour is the best predictor of whether or not they will actually engage in that behaviour. The theory was first developed by Icek Ajzen in the 1980s. According to TPB, an individual's intention to engage in a behaviour is influenced by three factors: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control, as shown in Figure 2. Similar to the TRA, attitude refers to a person's positive or negative feelings toward the behaviour. It encompasses their beliefs about the consequences of the behaviour and the evaluation of those consequences. If a person thinks that behaviour will lead to positive outcomes and they find those outcomes desirable, they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards that behaviour. Subjective norm refers to the perceived social pressure to engage in a behaviour. This includes the beliefs about what others think about the behaviour and the perceived social pressure to conform to these expectations. If a person believes that important others in their life think that the behaviour is desirable, they are more likely to engage in that behaviour. Perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's perceived ability to perform the behaviour. This includes their beliefs about their personal resources (such as skills, knowledge, and time) and the perceived presence of obstacles that may prevent them from engaging in the behaviour. If a person thinks that they have the resources and abilities to perform the behaviour and that there are no significant barriers in the way, they are more likely to have a strong perceived behavioural control.
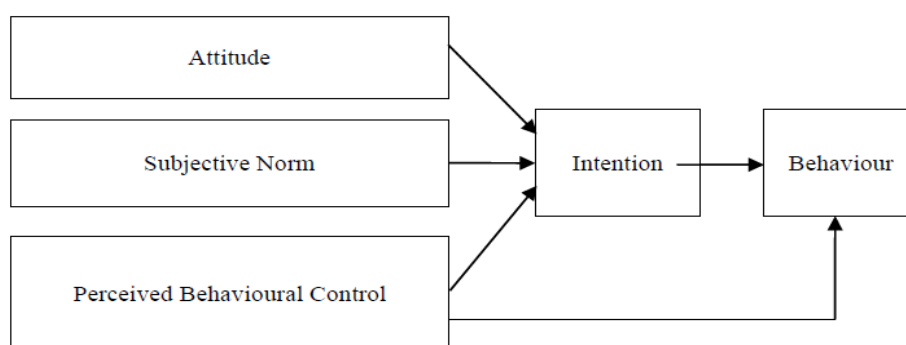

Figure 2. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1985).

TPB proposes that these three factors work together to influence a person's intention to engage in a behaviour. Intention, in turn, strongly predicts actual behaviour. TPB suggests that the more positive the attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control, the stronger the intention to engage in the behaviour, and the more likely the behaviour will be performed. TPB has been widely tested and has been found to be a useful theory in understanding human behaviour across a range of domains. It has been used to explain and predict health behaviours, such as exercise and diet, as well as environmental behaviours, such as recycling and energy conservation. TPB has also been applied in fields such as marketing, communication, and public health to help design effective interventions.

The Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction
Later, Fishbein extends the TPB into the Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction theory. The IMBP is based on the assumption that human behaviour is influenced by both personal and situational factors and is designed to help researchers and practitioners understand the complex relationships between these factors and their impact on human behaviour. IMBP consists of three key elements: beliefs, attitudes, and norms. According to Fishbein, beliefs are defined as a person's knowledge or understanding of a particular object or situation, whereas attitudes are evaluative judgments about it. Norms refer to the social rules or expectations that dictate how people should behave in a particular situation. The IMBP proposes that attitudes and norms play a critical role in predicting behaviour. Fishbein argues that attitudes can be used to predict behaviour because they are closely related to people's beliefs about a particular object or situation. In other words, attitudes reflect an individual's evaluation of the beliefs they hold about an object or situation and can therefore be used to predict how they will act in response to it. Similarly, norms are considered an important predictor of behaviour because they dictate how people should act in a given social context and can therefore influence the actions of individuals even if they hold different beliefs or attitudes. To further understand the impact of beliefs, attitudes, and norms on behaviour, Fishbein introduced the concept of behavioural intentions, which are defined as a person's conscious plans or desires to engage in a particular behaviour. According to Fishbein, behavioural intentions are a product of the influence of beliefs, attitudes, and norms on an individual's thoughts and feelings about a particular object or situation. The FIMBP posits that behavioural intentions serve as the direct antecedent of behaviour and therefore play a critical role in predicting and explaining human behaviour.
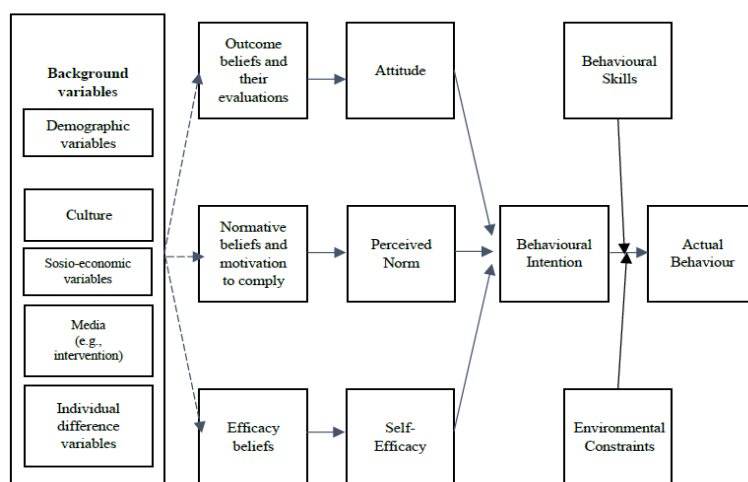

Figure 1. The Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction (Fishbein, 2000).

The IMBP has been widely tested and supported by empirical research in a variety of domains, including health behaviour, marketing, and environmental psychology. For example, studies have found that individuals who hold positive attitudes and beliefs about healthy eating are more likely to engage in healthy dietary behaviours and that people are more likely to engage in environmentally sustainable behaviours when they hold positive attitudes and beliefs about the environment, and when they perceive strong normative pressure from their social network to act in an environmentally responsible manner. This paper proposed the conceptual paper based on the IMBP framework.

Proposed Conceptual Framework
This paper aims to develop the conceptual framework that determines the factors affecting the intention to use social media influencers in Halal food promotional activities among SMEs. The conceptual model in Figure 4 shows the relationship among variables. Therefore, the study proposed:

H1: There will be a positive relationship between Outcome Beliefs and Attitude towards using SMIs in promotional activities.
H2: There will be a positive relationship between Normative Beliefs and Perceived Norms towards using SMIs in promotional activities.
H3: There will be a positive relationship between Efficacy Beliefs and Self-Efficacy towards using SMIs in promotional activities.
H4: There will be a positive relationship between Attitude and Intention to use SMIs in promotional activities.
H5: There will be a positive relationship between Perceived Norms and Intention to use SMIs in promotional activities.
H6: There will be a positive relationship between Self-Efficacy and Intention to use SMIs in promotional activities.
H7: There will be a positive relationship between Behavioural Intention and Actual Behaviour to use SMIs in promotional activities.
H8: The positive relationship between Behavioural Intention and Actual Behaviour will be stronger when Behavioural Skills are high.
H9: The positive relationship between Behavioural Intention and Actual Behaviour will be weaker when Environmental Constraints are high.
H10: There is a different effect on the IMBP constructs in the usage of SMIs in promotional activities based on background factors.
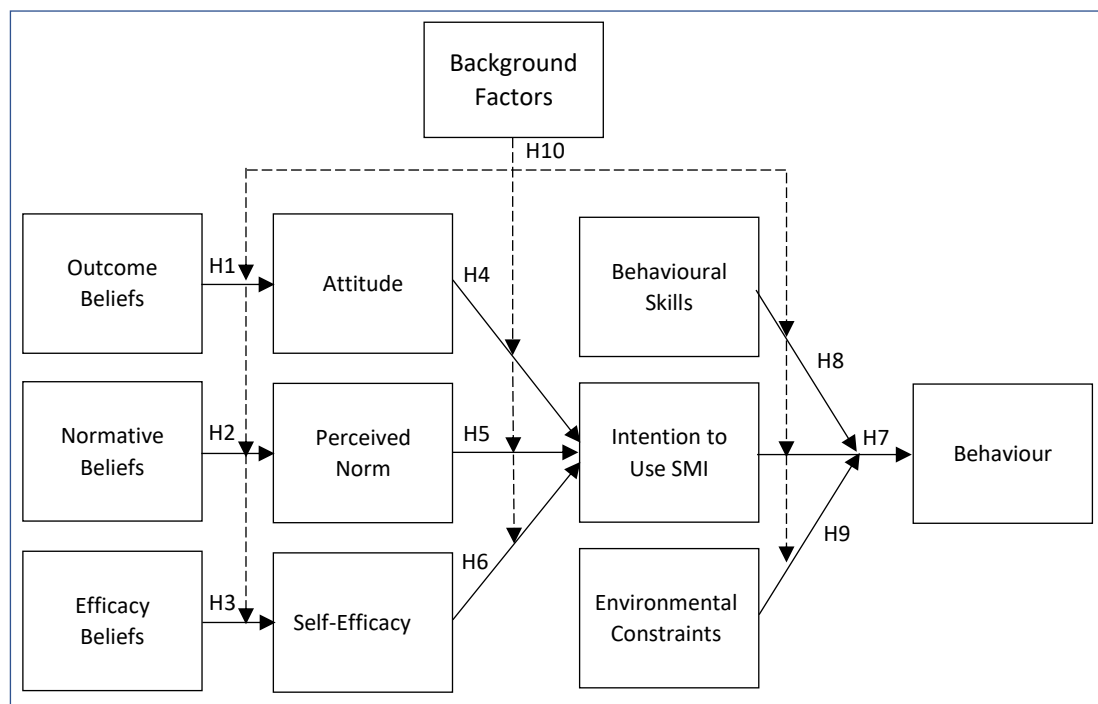
Figure 1. The Proposed Conceptual Framework of the Study.

Methodology

The Integrative Model of Behavioural Prediction (IMBP) is a theory that helps to explain why people make certain decisions and predict their future behaviour. It is a framework that combines the concepts of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to better understand the factors that influence behaviour. The proposed conceptual framework was adapted from the IMBP. The first step in applying the IMBP is to identify the behaviour that you want to predict. This behaviour could be something as simple as whether a person will buy a halal food product or not. In this paper, the behaviour was set to the intention to use social media influencers in Halal food promotional activities. Next, you need to identify the beliefs that are relevant to the behaviour of interest. For example, when predicting whether someone will buy a halal food product, you need to identify their attitudes and beliefs about halal food and its availability. In this proposed study, there is a need to identify salient beliefs towards intention to use social media influencers in promoting Halal food among SMEs. An elicitation survey needs to be conducted to elicit the salient outcome, normative and efficacy beliefs. Eight questions will be asked during the elicitation survey. The steps in eliciting the salient beliefs will be adapted from (Yzer, 2012). After the final set of salient beliefs is identified, the beliefs will be integrated into the IMBP framework. The final survey will be conducted by including the final set of salient beliefs elicited in the elicitation survey.

Conclusion

This proposed conceptual framework can contribute to the body of knowledge. Besides, it can be a guide for scholars in examining the factors influencing Halal food SMEs in choosing social media influencers in their promotional activities. On the other hand, this paper hopes to help Halal food SMEs implement effective and efficient social media influencer marketing.

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