

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON RETAIL
PATRONAGE BEHAVIOUR
IN MALAYSIA

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**THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON RETAIL PATRONAGE
BEHAVIOUR IN MALAYSIA**

By

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ABSTRACT

Although culture and subcultural norms have been subjected to increased scrutiny in recent years as explanatory constructs for various dimensions of consumer behaviours, religion as a subsystem of culture has received only slight attention in the marketing literature. The purpose of this study was to examine the religious influences on some selected aspects of consumer behaviour. Utilising consumer behaviour model of retail patronage as a framework, religious influences on the following aspects of consumer behaviour were examined: lifestyle, use of information source, shopping orientation, store attribute importance and store patronage. Consistent with previous research, religion was viewed from two different perspectives namely religious affiliation and religiosity. Religious affiliation is the adherence of individuals to a particular religious group while religiosity, or religious commitment, is the degree in which beliefs in specific religious values and ideals are espoused and practiced by an individual.

Fieldwork for this study was carried out in Malaysia where the populace contains sizable percentages of adherents to four of the world's leading religions, namely Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity. The research data was collected by means of a survey through personal interviews with a structured questionnaire. Out of three hundred respondents targeted, two hundred and twenty-six questionnaires were deemed usable for statistical analysis. Statistical tests were calculated using statistical procedures of SPSS version 11.5. The main statistical techniques used include exploratory factor analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA), multivariate ANOVA and multiple linear regression analysis.

Findings indicated significant differences between religious affiliation groups in the areas of lifestyle, store attributes and store patronage. Significant differences between religiosity groups were also revealed in the areas of lifestyle, information source, shopping orientation and importance of store attributes. The usefulness of religious variables was further tested using multiple linear regression analysis with demographics and lifestyles were entered as extraneous variables. Results indicated that when the effect of other predictor variables were explicitly controlled (i.e. held constant) during the regression analysis, religious affiliation appeared to influence the

perceived importance of store attributes. Intrapersonal religiosity, when controlling for the effect of other predictor variables, appeared to influence the use of information source, shopping orientation and perceived importance of store attributes. Similarly, interpersonal religiosity, when controlling for the effect of other predictor variables, was found to influence the use of information source, shopping orientation and importance of store attributes.

Overall, findings indicated that consumer religiosity, as compared to religious affiliation, was more useful in predicting aspects of retail patronage activities. Thus it is suggested that religiosity variable should be given consideration in future patronage behaviour model building and research efforts. The implications of these results for theories of consumer behaviour along with the practical implications of the findings were discussed and opportunities for future research were provided.