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Religiosity and Involvement in Purchasing Convenience Foods: Using Two-Step Cluster Analysis to Identify Heterogenous Muslim Consumers in the UK

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Abstract : The paper focuses on the impact of Muslim religiosity on convenience food purchases and involvement experienced in a non-Muslim culture. There is a scarcity of research on the purchasing patterns of Muslim diaspora communities residing in risk societies, particularly in contexts where there is an increasing inclination toward industrialized food items alongside a renewed interest in the concept of natural foods. The United Kingdom serves as an appropriate setting for this study due to the increasing Muslim population in the country, paralleled by the expanding Halal Food Market. A multi-dimensional framework is proposed, testing for five forms of involvement, specifically Purchase Decision Involvement, Product Involvement, Behavioural Involvement, Intrinsic Risk and Extrinsic Risk. Quantitative cross-sectional consumer data were collected through a face-to-face survey contact method with 141 Muslims during the summer of 2020 in Liverpool located in the Northwest of England. proportion formula was utilitsed, and the population of interest was stratified by gender and age before recruitment took place through local mosques and community centers. Six input variables were used (intrinsic religiosity and involvement dimensions), dividing the sample into 4 clusters using the Two-Step Cluster Analysis procedure in SPSS. Nuanced variances were observed in the type of involvement experienced by religiosity group, which influences behaviour when purchasing convenience food. Four distinct market segments were identified: highly religious ego-involving (39.7%), less religious active (26.2%), highly religious unaware (16.3%), less religious concerned (17.7%). These segments differ significantly with respects to their involvement, behavioural variables (place of purchase and information sources used), socio-cultural (acculturation and social class), and individual characteristics. Choosing the appropriate convenience food is centrally related to the value system of highly religious ego-involving first-generation Muslims, which explains their preference for shopping at ethnic food stores. Less religious active consumers are older and highly alert in information processing to make the optimal food choice, relying heavily on product label sources. Highly religious unaware Muslims are less dietary acculturated to the UK diet and tend to rely on digital and expert advice sources. The less-religious concerned segment, who are typified by younger age and third generation, are engaged with the purchase process because they are worried about making unsuitable food choices. Research implications are outlined and potential avenues for further explorations are identified.

Keywords : consumer behaviour, consumption, convenience food, religion, muslims, UK
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