

Research Paper

The effect of non-verbal messages on Muslim tourists' interaction adaptation: A case study of Halal restaurants in China

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ABSTRACT

Halal tourism, an under-researched area, has gained significant popularity in recent years. The present study develops a research model of Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages to tourists that lead to their offensiveness and their interaction adaptation, which determine their behaviors. In particular, this paper examines (1) how non-verbal messages—defined as those that are not delivered face-to-face—trigger consumers' interaction adaptation; (2) how experience and credence attributes moderate the relationship between interaction adaptation and consumers' offensiveness; and (3) the relational outcomes. This model is applied to Chinese settings, where data were collected from 622 Muslims tourists who visited Halal restaurants in three of China's cities (Beijing, Shanghai, and Xian). The findings reveal a positive effect of visual and audio messages on Muslim tourists' interaction adaptation and the likelihood of their offensiveness. The paper also found that tourists' responded to their offensiveness in the form of negative electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and lowered continuance purchase intentions. The experience and credence attributes positively moderate the relationship between interaction adaptation and consumer offensiveness.

1. Introduction

The notion of 'Halal' is defined as "things or actions that are permissible under Islamic Sharia Law" (Al-Qaradhwai, El-Helbawy, Siddiqui, & Shukry, 2013; p. XXV). In the tourism context, anything in the tourism industry that Islamic Law permits Muslims to use or engage with is called Halal tourism (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Wardi, Abror, & Trinanda, 2018). Halal tourism is an emerging concept that includes components like Halal hotels, Halal travel packages, Halal food, and tourism (El-Gohary, 2016). In today's tourism market, Halal restaurants attract Muslim tourists with their Halal food standards called MS1500:2004 (Carboni & Idrissi Janati, 2016). Halal restaurants deal with Muslim consumers to address their needs as per Sharia law in providing hospitality and food services (Mohsin, Ramli, & Alkhulayfi, 2016).

The Muslim population was estimated to be 1.8 billion in 2015, which was 24.1% of the world's population, and it is projected to increase to 3 billion, or 31.1% of the world's population, by 2060 (Lipka & Hackett, 2017). The tourism market included 117 million Muslim people in 2015 and is projected to rise to 168 million Muslim people by 2019 (Crescentrating, 2016). Moreover, the Muslim population spent

US\$151 billion on global tourism in 2015, which was 11% of the money spent on global tourism, and it is expected to spend US\$220 and US\$243 billion by 2020 and 2021, respectively (Travel Bulletin, 2017). Muslim tourists spent US\$1.292 trillion on Halal food and beverages in 2013, a number that is expected to reach US\$2.537 trillion by 2019 (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

Muslim tourists who are concerned about the availability of Halal products and services often face difficulties in non-Muslim countries (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Halal tourism focuses on fulfilling the needs of Muslim consumers, such as access to restaurants that are gambling-free, beverages that are alcohol-free, and foods that contain Halal meat (Henderson, 2016). Organizations that are affiliated with Halal tourism offer tourism packages to Muslim tourists that feature Halal restaurants, Halal food, and Halal food-related information (Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018). It has become essential that Halal food restaurants offer food services that Muslim tourists can use with a high level of confidence. In addition, non-Muslim countries engage with Halal hotels, Halal resorts, Halal restaurants, Halal trips, Halal products and services, and Halal foods to encourage Muslim tourists to visit. For instance, Muslim tourists who arrived in Japan had been facing difficulties in offering prayers and finding Halal food. In response, the government of Japan

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facilitated Muslim travelers with prayer rooms and Halal dining at Kansai International Airport (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Wardi et al., 2018). Moreover, the Japanese Chambers of Commerce and Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA) promote their tourism industries to satisfy the needs of Muslim tourists by providing facilities for Muslim tourists at airports and restaurants (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Halal is known as 'Qingzhen: 清真' in China, where Muslim owners usually run Halal restaurants and hire Muslim staff to cook Halal foods (Bangla, 2016). Halal certification from the local Religious Affairs Office (ROA) or a mosque is required to run a Halal restaurant in China. The owner should also be Muslim and must fulfill certain other conditions (Travel, 2018).

Muslim tourists have more concerns about their interaction adaptation in response to the non-verbal messages of Halal restaurants. Hodge (2003) and Mixdorff, Hönemann, Rilliard, Lee, and Ma (2017) defined as those that are not delivered face-to-face but are sent through such means as brochures, booklets, photographs, symbols of Halal foods, voice messaging, voicemail greetings, and voice-recorded messages. Halal hotels, Halal travel packages, and Halal food all present visual and audio messages that play a key role in Muslim tourists' decision-making about non-verbal communication (El-Gohary, 2016). Moreover, in the Halal tourism context, Yin, Zhu, and Cheng (2013) and Ahmad and Sun (2018a) found that social media is a low-effort, convenient, and option for communicating with tourists using functions like audio and video calls, voice messaging, text messaging, photographs, and videos. Chang, Tsai, Wong, Wang, and Cho (2015) found social media messages that employ rational and emotional types of appeals to encourage consumers to interact and adapt messages for further behavioral outcomes. The present study examines the effect of non-verbal messages on consumers' behavioral outcomes related to their experiences with Halal restaurants.

The extant literature has not examined empirically the antecedents of tourists' interaction adaptation (i.e. visual and audio messages) or their consequences (consumers' offensiveness) in the form of their behavioral intentions. Consumers of Halal restaurants are likely to use social media messages in their decision-making (i.e. WeChat, Weibo, QQ, Mobile Fetion, and RenRen), so researchers must investigate the reasons for consumers' interaction adaptation how to adopt non-verbal messages to appeal to Muslim consumers, and how to attract displeased consumers. In addition, Halal tourism websites (i.e. <https://www.halaltrip.com>, www.islamichina.com, www.beijingholiday.com, <https://www.muslim2china.com>) seek to understand what influences consumers' interaction adaptation when consumers see Halal restaurants' messages so they can build strategies to enhance the likelihood of consumers' interaction adaptation and increase the likelihood that they will visit Halal restaurants.

The primary aim of our study is to fill a gap in the literature by presenting a research model to investigate Muslim consumers' interaction adaptation in response to non-verbal messages, defined as those that are not face-to-face. Specifically, this paper (1) investigates consumers' perceptions of the role of Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages in developing their interaction adaptation, (2) examines the effect of interaction adaptation on consumers' offensiveness, (3) investigates the negative responses of consumers offensiveness in the form of negative electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and continuance purchase intentions, and (4) investigates the moderating effect of experience and credence attributes in the relationships between consumers' offensiveness and information quality, empathy, and responsiveness.

The present study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it presents and validates an interaction-adaptation model in the electronic environment and explores its antecedents and consequences for Halal tourism. Second, it contributes to the literature by taking a unique research approach to examining tourists' interaction adaptation from the perspective of Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages on social media. Third, based on the extant literature, it examines the first-stage outcome of consumers' interaction adaptation in the form of consumers'

offensiveness that engages consumers' in negative e-WOM and affects continuance purchase intentions. Fourth, it offers insights into the role of experience and credence attributes as moderators between consumers' offensiveness and information quality, empathy, and responsiveness. Finally, it outlines the effect of non-verbal messages on consumers' interaction adaptation in China's rapidly growing tourism market. From a practical perspective, the research findings can help Halal restaurants and Halal tour operators develop effective non-verbal messages by focusing on Islamic laws related to consumer interactions, which can help to overcome the risk of offensiveness of Muslim consumers.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Burgoon's interaction adaptation theory

To examine non-verbal communication at the individual behavior level, Burgoon proposed an interaction adaptation theory that has been tested across a wide spectrum of interpersonal communication, including cross-cultural and intercultural communication, as it measures interactions that influence behavioral responses (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999). Burgoon's theory also examines the effect of cognitive expectations of communication behavior and outcomes after interaction adaptation. The violation of expectations produces unpleasant communication and results in the greatest effect on interaction adaptation (Le Poire & Yoshimura, 1999). This interaction adaptation theory is an extension of prior work on expectancy violations theory (White, 2008). Burgoon, Stern, and Dillman (2007) identified nine principles of interaction adaptation theory, classified into five core concepts in their theory of interaction adaptation: (1) requirement (R), (2) expectations (E), (3) desire (D), (4) interaction position (IP), and (5) actual behavior (A). Communication factors are comprised of an actor's interaction position and are organized as $R + E + D = IP$. Expectation refers to the degree to which non-verbal communication patterns (i.e., visual and audio) evolve during social conversations and to processes of interaction that can increase or decrease an individual's interaction adaptation. In interaction adaptation between a sender (i.e. Halal restaurants) and a receiver (i.e. Halal restaurant consumers), the receiver needs information quality to create a comfort level with adaptation. With desire (D) an individual's expectations about non-verbal messages (i.e. visual and audio) depend on his or her subsequent evaluations, which can lead to empathy as an outcome of interaction adaptation in response to non-verbal communication. In addition, the interaction position (IP) reflects an individual's initial behavior in an interaction and his or her exhibited behavior, which explain the individual's actual response to initial behavior and results in interaction adaptation. This argument lends support to employing consumer offensiveness as a negative outcome of interaction adaptation and an antecedent of consumers' exhibited behavior.

Most studies have examined the effect of interaction adaptation in interpersonal communications (Hubbard, 2015). Burgoon's (1999) theory of interaction adaptation has been used primarily to explain dyadic interactions and their resulting behavioral adjustments. Burgoon used a classroom experiment with teacher and student interactions to develop the interaction adaptation theory. This theory has not been applied as a measure of consumers' interaction adaptation in response to non-verbal messages in Halal restaurants, although Ramirez and Burgoon (2004) suggested its use as a framework in the electronic environment and Halal restaurants. Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages are becoming increasingly important in light of the need for the need to understand the role of non-verbal communication and interaction adaptation in consumers' responses. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no study has employed Burgoon's theory to examine Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages on social media and consumers' interaction adaptation and behavioral responses to their experiences with these restaurants. Interaction positions (IP) and actual

behavior (A) are important factors of interaction adaptation that differ in non-verbal communication as compared to interpersonal communication. This framework is used to theorize about the role of Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages in interaction adaptation and consumer behavioral responses to their experiences with those restaurants.

3. Research framework and hypotheses development

3.1. Visual message and consumers' interaction adaptation

Non-verbal messages are a form of communication that uses encoded transactions to influence others (Hodge, 2003). The information quality of a visual message can enhance consumers' interaction with it and increase the message's value over that of a verbal message (i.e. 'a picture is worth a thousand words'). Kim, Bailly, and Davis (2018) examined two types of visual messages, auditory-visual and visual prosody, and their effects on interaction adaptation. For example, visual messages, such as those in brochures, booklets, photographs, and symbols of Halal foods, are more likely to create interaction adaptation than are purely verbal messages (Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007). Visual messages that include animated images present information that motivates consumers to perform a desired action (Lewandowska & Jankowski, 2017). In the context of Halal restaurants, visual information about foods improves the likelihood of consumers' interaction adaptation. However, visual design of message is classifying the information that helps consumer in judgment and decision making (Robins, Holmes, & Stansbury, 2010). Therefore it can be argued that high-quality visual messages provide highly informational images and infer that they encourage consumers of Halal restaurants to engage in interaction adaptation. Furthermore, visual orientation encourages consumers to develop empathy with the visual message and to make causal attributions in their interaction adaptation processes (Önder & Öner-özkan, 2003). Xiao, Kim, and Ding (2013) found that firms use eye-tracking data to determine what visual information creates empathy. Likewise, the visual appeal of restaurants shown on social media provides information about the intangible aspect of services to develop consumers' empathy and willingness to engage in interaction adaptation (Kirillova & Chan, 2018). Therefore, this paper argues that Halal restaurants' visual messages develop empathy among consumers and that this is particularly important in developing countries (e.g. China), where Halal restaurants seek to attract consumers with non-verbal messages to create empathy and increase Halal tourism. In addition, image-oriented messages are more 'fluent' than textual messages and are more effective in eliciting a positive response (Yoo & Kim, 2014). Further, the design of a visual message (e.g. font style of visual, colors, shape, size, and graphics) can improve its aesthetics, which produces better results in terms of consumers' responding positively (Shaouf, Lü, & Li, 2016). Therefore, the current study examines Halal restaurants' visual messages as non-verbal messages that can affect consumers' interaction adaptation. Therefore, the following hypothesis is postulated:

H1. Halal restaurants' video messages lead to consumers' greater interaction adaptation by (a) information quality, (b) empathy, and (c) responsiveness.

3.2. Audio messages and consumers' interaction adaptation

Researchers have neglected the role of aural communication in consumer interaction adaptation and decision-making related to Halal restaurants. Audio messages convey emotions better than textual messages, and consumers interact more thoroughly with them (Lang et al., 2015). Audio messages can influence receivers' interaction adaptation and elicit behavioral responses through changes in pitch, repetition, and changes in the message's location (Potter, Jamison-Koenig, Lynch, & Sites, 2016). However, some studies have found that audio messages that include music can detract from information quality and lose

empathy because of the low sound of the music and the high pitch of the voice (Lu, Chen, Li, & Huang, 2013). Good audio quality and clear information leads to efficient interaction adaptation and enhances information-processing, which is necessary to affect consumers' behavior (Newman & Schwarz, 2018). The current study demonstrates the role of Halal restaurants' audio messages in consumers' interaction adaptation. Audio messages involve emotion, expression, and vocal cues that improve interaction adaptation and develop the empathy (Kraus, 2017), that Halal restaurants' audio messages must elicit to engage consumers in interaction adaptation. Marketing scholars have found that 80% of human communication is non-verbal, and audio messages foster consumers' responses and develop emotional interactions with the messages (Caldwell, Henry, & Alman, 2010). Studies have found that auditory messages cause a cognitive response that accelerates the information required for interactional responses by using a clear voice and qualitative information (Potter, 2000). Furthermore, audio messages increase consumers' attention through the influence of voice pitch on information processing by developing a concrete interaction for the consumers' response (Potter et al., 2016). The message's emotional tone also attracts listeners' cognitive response to the message (Bolls, Lang, & Potter, 2001). Regarding audio messages, various features of audio messages, such as the announcer's voice, a speed that is faster than typing, and the opportunity to add emotional tone, affect listeners and can provoke an automatic interaction adaptation. For example, when a person hears a commercial message for a Halal restaurant's product or service and intends to buy in the near future, the restaurant can observe the consumer's interaction adaptation and determine whether the information provided by the audio message was effective. Drawing on these arguments, we argue that consumers interact with audio messages and engage in adaptation that affects their behavioral exposure to Halal restaurants. Therefore, this study employs a broad interaction adaptation model to measure how audio messages from Halal restaurants engage consumers with information quality, empathy, and responsiveness to encourage interaction adaptation and postulates the following hypothesis:

H2. Halal restaurants' audio messages induce consumers' greater interaction adaptation by (a) information quality, (b) empathy, and (c) responsiveness.

3.3. Consumer interaction adaptation and consumer offensiveness

Consumers' interaction adaptation in response to non-verbal messages plays an influential role in the likelihood that consumer's offensiveness influence in decision-making about behavioral responses. In a seminal work, Perloff (1963) found that consumer psychology affects the effectiveness of advertisements and communication, which determines the likelihood that consumers will become offensive. Likewise, Zourrig, Chebat, and Toffoli (2009) found that unfairness, outrage, fakery, and exhaustive information lead to revenge and avoidance behavior. Technical informational quality also indirectly affects consumers' behavior and often triggers offense and anger (Greer, Russell-Bennett, Tombs, & Drennan, 2014). In addition, anti-human information, breaches of moral or social values, gratuitous use of violence, and disgusting images cause consumers offensiveness (Chan, Li, Diehl, & Terlutter, 2007). Dawson, Soper, and Pettijohn (1992) found that irrationality, aggression, low product knowledge, and lack of interaction adaptation lead to a low level of empathy that negatively influences consumer offensiveness. Campos, Butori, and Le Nagard (2018) found that vindictive messages on social media lead to feelings of revenge and offensiveness among consumers. Considering these arguments, it can be argued that when empathy is lacking, interaction adaptation tends to result in consumers' offensiveness to Halal restaurants.

Several lines of research specify that the response to a message predicts consumer offensiveness (Kerr, Mortimer, Dickinson, & Waller, 2012). Further, humor in messages is negatively related to the distrust,

anger, insecurity, and sadness that are likely to cause consumers' offensiveness (Zanten, 2005). Social media messages that evoke negative emotions like anxiety and sadness tend to increase the chance of consumers' offensiveness (Chang et al., 2015). These arguments lend support to a link between interaction adaptation and consumers' offensiveness to Halal restaurants. Therefore, this paper argues that, in the presence of non-verbal message and interaction adaptation, consumers are more likely to be offensive to Halal restaurants. The following is postulated:

H3. Creating consumers' interaction adaptation by (a) information quality, (b) empathy, and (c) responsiveness – is negatively associated with consumers' offensiveness.

3.4. Consumers' offensiveness and behavioral intentions

Studies have demonstrated that behavioral responses show how consumers respond to an offensive non-verbal message (Alexandrov, Lilly, & Babakus, 2013). e-WOM and continuance purchase intentions are two major responses that have been widely examined in the literature (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Ahmad & Sun, 2018b; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017). Negative e-WOM refers to unfavorable feedback or opinions in response to feelings of injustice, dissatisfaction, and frustration (Balaji, Khong, & Chong, 2016; Van Steenburg, Spears, & Fabrizze, 2013). Continuance purchase intention refers to consumer retention and their intention to repurchase the same product or services (Khalifa & Liu, 2007). Wakefield and Wakefield (2018) found that consumers regularly share negative e-WOM after receiving messages that create anxiety. Such negative emotions create feelings of revenge, frustration, and offense and lead to the consumer's desire to vent their frustration through negative words (Chang et al., 2015).

Negative e-WOM can be a result of negative interaction adaptation to Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages. Research has shown that consumers who are offensive minimize their continuance purchase intentions and spread negative e-WOM (Elbeltagi & Agag, 2016). Therefore, it can be argued that offensive consumers will demonstrate negative responses to Halal restaurants when the restaurants do not match consumers' expectations. In the Chinese context, consumers intend to disseminate negative e-WOM after bad interactions to save face (Li, Qiu, & Liu, 2016). Further, marketing research has identified a strong relationship between consumers' offensiveness and their behavioral responses, including negative e-WOM and lowered repurchase intentions (Wilkins, Beckenuyte, & Butt, 2016). More specifically, consumers' negative behavior is based on feelings of injustice and displeasure and is expressed in negative words and lowered repurchase intentions (Balaji et al., 2016). Taking these arguments into consideration, it is postulated that consumers' offensiveness to a Halal restaurant increases their use of negative e-WOM on social media and low continuance purchase intentions. Therefore, the following hypotheses are postulated:

H4. Consumers' offensiveness is positively associated with their engagement to negative e-WOM.

H5. Consumers' offensiveness is negatively associated with their continuance purchase intentions.

3.5. Experience and credence attributes

Search, experience, and credence attributions apply particularly to products. Nelson (1970) classified products and services into two attributes, search and experience attributes, based on consumers' ability to evaluate them. Search attributes refer to the attributes before a purchase, whereas experience attributes are those that can be verified only after consumption of the goods or services. Darby and Karni (1973) added another kind of attribute to the Nelson list: credence

attributes. Credence attributes refer to those that cannot be evaluated even after consuming a product or a service because of the lack of technical expertise. For example, consumers of Halal restaurants have to accept that food products are formulated as they are supposed to be, unless they have particular 'inside information' or technical expertise.

Floyd and Burgoon (1999) and Nelson (1970) examined the consumer's ability of information and their judgment of expectations and actual performance engages consumer's in further reactions. Therefore, it is proposed that experience and credence attributes, conceptualized as restaurant consumers' interaction adaptation in response to non-verbal message, are the cause of consumers' offensiveness, and that influences consumers' attitude in the context of Halal restaurants. It can be argued that experience attributes rely on interaction adaptation to evaluate consumers' offensiveness after purchasing food, since the low amount of technical expertise cannot help the consumers to verify the food's Halal attributes. It has already been established that interaction adaptation has a direct effect on consumer offensiveness (H3), but this association requires consumer reactions to be considered that accelerate an independent effect of credence on behavioral responses (Alford & Sherrell, 1996). Furthermore, consumers can immediately evaluate experience attributes, but not credence attributes even after consuming the product or service several times. For example, purchasing from a Halal restaurant allows the consumer to evaluate the quality of food, and repurchase decisions can be based on that evaluation. In contrast, consumers are not able to judge the aspects of a restaurant's food and services that require technical expertise (Alford & Sherrell, 1996). Information search, which has an effect on consumer psychology through interaction adaptation, and unobservable constructs of credence attributes engage consumers in behavioral outcomes (Alford & Sherrell, 1996). Simply put, in the present research settings, experience and credence attributes affect the likelihood that consumers' offensiveness and these attributes can be controlled by Halal restaurants through high-quality information, adherence to Shariah laws, and Halal food certifications. Consumers make inferences through experience and credence attributes such that poor information quality and low levels of interaction adaptation lead to their offensiveness. Based on this notion, the current study deduces that classification attributes (i.e., experience, credence) mediate the relationship between consumers' interaction adaptation and their offensiveness. Briggs, Sutherland, and Drummond (2007) found that consumers' offensiveness is related to their feelings about experience and credence interactions, and expectations are related to the degree of relationship between experience and credence attributes and poor interaction adaptation.

Consumers' being offensive, whether caused by experience or credence, affects their behavioral intentions to continuance purchase and generate negative e-WOM (Briggs et al., 2007). For example, Halal restaurants provide low-fat milkshake for consumers, but the fat quality can be evaluated only after consumption and even after normal consumption, the consumer cannot measure the credence attributes. Given the experience and credence attributes of Halal restaurants, the chance that the consumers perceive the causes of offensiveness as being the classification attributes of experience and credence is high. Good experience can lower offensiveness and lower degree of credence can higher offensiveness that are negatively related, and increases negative e-WOM and decreases continuance purchase intentions. More important, consumers gather more information to interact by becoming offensive through experience and credence attributes, which decrease interactions (Mazaheri, Richard, & Laroche, 2012). In this way, consumers' experiences can strengthen the relationship between interaction adaptation and consumers' offensiveness against Halal restaurants that minimizes the chance that they will be offensive. On the other hand, credence attributes can weaken the association between interaction adaptation and consumers' offensiveness against Halal restaurants that increases the chance that they will be more offensive. Based on these theoretical and empirical arguments, the following hypotheses are formulated:

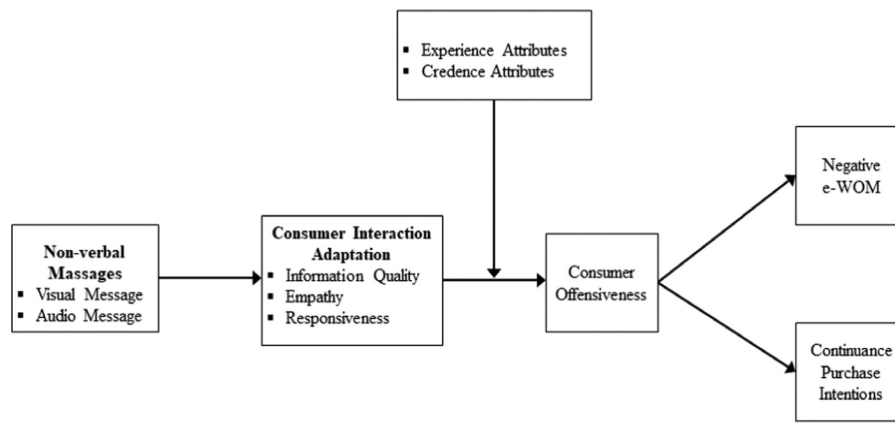


Fig. 1. Conceptual structure.

H6. Experience service attributes positively moderate the effect of (a) information quality, (b) empathy, and (c) responsiveness on consumers' offensiveness such that the chance that consumer offensiveness is weaker when experience attributes are stronger than when they are weaker.

H7. Credence service attributes positively moderate the effect of (a) information quality, (b) empathy, and (c) responsiveness on consumers' offensiveness such that the chance that consumer offensiveness is stronger when credence attributes are stronger than when they are weaker (Fig. 1).

4. Methodology

4.1. Research settings in China

China was selected as the setting for this research because it is a fast-growing tourism market. In the first half of 2017, China had US\$69.5 million in tourism, an increase of 2.4% from the same period in the previous year. In addition, the Muslim population in China is estimated to be 20 million, and the Muslim tourism market exceeds US\$600 billion (World Tourism Alliance, 2017). Chinese tour operators have signed tourism contracts with their counterparts in more than twenty countries that are worth US\$490 million for promotion of Halal tourism (Xinhua, 2013). Along with the growth in Halal tourism, the Halal restaurant industry is also growing in China. Chinese Muslims prefer foods that are made in accordance with Islamic law as provided in the Holy Quran (Muslim, 2018). Therefore, Halal restaurants like Khan Baba, Yijunyuan restaurant, and Istanbul Turkish restaurant are building chains of restaurants in China that serve only Halal and non-alcoholic foods (Muslim2China, 2018). China is also an appropriate setting for this study because the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and provincial governments have developed a policy of encouraging local and international Muslim tourists, which includes protecting consumers by requiring Halal certification from local governmental bodies and associations. The Halal logo in advertisements on social media encourages Halal tourists, and social media for Muslim users has grown rapidly in China in the last few years through such applications as QQ, RenRen, WeChat, Mobile Fetion, and Weibo. Mobile internet users in China reached 752.6 million in 2017, 57.34 million more than the previous year (Statista, 2017).

4.2. Questionnaire design

Scales were adapted from existing literature to measure our constructs. All constructs were anchored on five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (=1) to strongly agree (=5). To measure visual messages, four items were used from Cox & Cox, 2002, and to measure

audio messages, four items were adapted from Carpenter and Green (2017). Information quality, empathy, and responsiveness were measured with three items from Balaji, Roy, and Lassar (2017). Consumer offensiveness, negative e-WOM, and continuance purchase intention were measured with four items each that were borrowed from Wilkins et al. (2016), Alexandrov et al. (2013), and Khalifa and Liu (2007), respectively. Finally, four items from Mano and Oliver (1993) were used to measure experience attributes and four items from Eighmey (1997) to measure credence attributes.

The survey questionnaire had three sections: Section (1) had one open-ended question related to the research description, Section (2) had 37 closed-ended questions related to research variables, and Section (3) had eight closed-ended questions about the respondents' demographic information. The questionnaire contained five pages, as shown in the Appendix A. The instrument was developed in English and then translated into Chinese and back-translated into English by a bilingual professor of marketing to ensure the accuracy of the Chinese-language version (Vijver & Tanzer, 2004). Some questions in Chinese were reworded to improve their reflection of the original meaning of the questions in English. A pilot study was conducted ($n = 74$) to test the content validity of instrument, and the data collected from the pilot study showed scale consistency, with Cronbach's alpha (α) values > 0.70 .

4.3. Sampling and data collection

Tourists who had used Halal restaurants in China were chosen as the study's population. At the beginning of the survey, respondents were asked a confidential question about their religion, as the purpose of the study was to examine consumer behavior for Halal tourism. It was also confirmed that all respondents had been tourists in any of three metropolitan cities, Beijing, Xian, and Shanghai because of their rapid growth in tourism and Halal restaurants (Beijing has 17 Halal restaurants, Shanghai has nine, and Xian has five (Muslim2China, 2018)).

English and Chinese versions of questionnaire were both used for the offline survey. Data were collected from a convenience sample, with respondents approached at Muslim cafes in universities, at Halal restaurants, and at Muslim restaurants in Beijing, Xian, and Shanghai (Muslim2China, 2018). Nine doctoral students were trained to conduct the offline surveys. The questionnaire took approximately 25 mins to complete. The critical incident technique was employed as the basis of the survey Seckler, Heinz, Forde, Tuch, and Opwis (2015), which began with an open-ended question: 'Please think a moment about a time when you were offended when using Halal restaurant services. Try to describe that experience in as comprehensive a manner as you can.'

The purpose of this open-ended question was to remind consumers of an offensive and unpleasant experience. Data were collected during the period from January 2018 to April 2018. Upon completion of

survey, respondents were thanked for their cooperation. Overall, 850 qualified respondents were approached for participation in this study, and out of 850 distributed questionnaires, 782 were returned, which represents the response rate of 92%. After discarding incomplete and extreme values, such as all fives or ones, 622 valid responses remained, representing a response rate of 79.5%.

Seckler et al. (2015) identified two conditions for the use and validation of convenience sampling: whether the study is exploratory in nature and whether the items in the questionnaire are appropriate and relevant to the respondents who answered the questions. To this point, the present study's constructs have not been investigated in prior literature to determining what causes consumers offensiveness to Halal restaurants, so the research is exploratory. The questionnaire's items are relevant to its respondents because we chose real consumers of Halal restaurants who are Muslim tourists who used Halal restaurants in keeping with their Islamic faith and Shariah law (Al-Qaradhwai et al., 2013; p. XXV; Mohsin et al., 2016). Therefore, the present study satisfies the conditions for using convenience sampling.

5. Data analysis and results

5.1. Profile of respondents

The highest number of respondents fell into the range of 30–35 years of age (37.9%, $M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.07$), and 51.1% were male. Most respondents had been educated past secondary school (81.1%). Almost half (49.2%) had visited Halal restaurants, and more than half (53.5%) were married. Visual messages were the major source (51.6%) of information when they searched for Halal restaurants. Almost half (47.9%) were students, and the rest were government officials (18.2%), business persons (20.9%), and scholars (13%) in various fields. The main purpose for traveling was study (47.9%), 57.8% with stays of one year or more, whereas only 18.3% stayed about six months. A large proportion (46.6%) traveled solo, while others were day tourists (18.6%) or traveled on university trips (17.7%) or on package tours (17.4%). WeChat users comprised 45.7% of our respondents. The largest group of respondents were Pakistani (22%), followed by Indonesian (10.8%) and Yemeni (9.8%) (Table 1).

5.2. Measurement model evaluation

This study used a two-step statistical analysis approach to test the research framework with confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Before examining the hypothesized relationships, reliability and validity tests of the measurement model and path analysis of the structural model were carried out. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to examine the validity of the latent constructs. The results of the measurement model revealed good model fitness indices: ($\chi^2 = 840.642$, $df = 584$, $\chi^2/df = 1.439$, $p = 0.000$; GFI = 0.933, CFI = 0.983; IFI = 0.983; RFI = 0.940; NFI = 0.948; TLI = 0.981; PCFI = 0.862; PNFI = 0.831; RMR = 0.054, RMSEA = 0.027). Model fit indices indicate that all constructs are appropriately measured by their variables, which demonstrates that the items' loadings fit the model well. In addition, to ensure convergent validity, we examined the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) scores to show how items are related to each other. As shown in Table 2, all of our model's constructs were above the cutoff value of 0.70 except one item (CI1), which had a value of 0.670. This item's value was validated by using the threshold value of > 0.60 suggested by Bagozzi, Yi, and Phillips (1991). The CR values exceeded the threshold values of 0.70, and AVE values ranged from 0.50 to 0.71, surpassing the recommended cutoff value of 0.50 and establishing convergent validity (Hair, 2010). As Table 2 shows, all of the model's constructs were above the cutoff value except audio message and repurchase intentions, which had values of 0.43 and 0.47, respectively. We validated these values using the threshold value

Table 1
Respondent profile ($n = 622$).

Demographic information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	318	51.1
Female	304	48.9
Marital status		
Single	289	46.5
Married	333	53.5
Age		
20–25	51	8.2
26–30	131	21.1
31–35	236	37.9
36–40	144	23.2
Over 40	60	9.6
Qualification		
High school	118	19.0
Higher than secondary school	143	23.0
Bachelor's degree	112	18.0
Master's degree	126	20.3
Doctorate	123	19.8
Occupation		
Student	298	47.9
Government official	113	18.2
Business person	130	20.9
Scholar	81	13.0
Type of travel		
Solo travel	290	46.6
Day tour	114	18.3
University tour	110	17.7
Package tour	108	17.4
Length of stay		
Two weeks	56	9.0
One month	92	14.8
Six months	114	18.3
One year	119	19.1
More than one year	241	38.7
Type of social media used		
WeChat	284	45.7
QQ	99	15.9
Weibo	94	15.1
Mobile Fetion	80	12.9
RenRen	65	10.5
Information source		
Visual	321	51.6
Audio	301	48.4
Halal restaurant experience		
Experience	306	49.2
No experience	316	50.8
Nationality		
Pakistani	137	22.0
Malaysian	54	8.7
Indonesian	67	10.8
Yemeni	61	9.8
Bangladeshi	48	7.7
Nigerian	51	8.2
Iranian	36	5.8
Uzbekistani	46	7.4
Afghanistani	52	8.4
Other Islamic country	70	11.3

of < 0.50 suggested by Fornell, Larcker, and Roos (1990) and Johansson and Yip (1994). Two tests were also used to ensure discriminant validity: first, the diagonal elements (square root of AVE) of the corresponding row and column should be greater than all other entries; and second, no item should load higher than another variable than it did with its related variable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

5.3. Common method bias

Because of the cross-sectional nature of this study, common method bias might be an issue, so Harman's single-factor test was employed (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). An exploratory factor analysis of all 10 constructs with eigenvalues above 1.0 was carried out.

Table 2
Confirmatory factor analysis ($n = 622$).

Constructs	Items	Statement	SFL
Visual message $\alpha = 0.89$, CR = 0.92, AVE = 0.51, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.71$	VM1	I think the product description of this message is appropriate.	0.832***
	VM2	I think the visual message bring to mind concrete images or mental pictures of Halal restaurant services.	0.821***
	VM3	I think visual message provide features to help you imagine using the product.	0.833***
	VM4	This visual message provides information that includes features of Halal restaurant services that helped me visualize a product trial.	0.827***
Audio message $\alpha = 0.86$, CR = 0.88, AVE = 0.43, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.66$	AM1	This audio message brings concrete listening to me via social media.	0.772***
	AM2	Audio message use enhances my knowledge about Halal restaurant services.	0.808***
	AM3	The audio message includes a user's experience.	0.747***
	AM4	I generally hear audio messages by following social media.	0.794***
Information quality $\alpha = 0.83$, CR = 0.83, AVE = 0.63, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.79$	IQ1	Social media messages keep me well informed about its offerings.	0.814***
	IQ2	Social media messages provide clear and accurate details about restaurant services.	0.723***
	IQ3	Social media messages provide sufficient information about the services.	0.846***
	EM1	I feel warmth in the interactions.	0.826***
Empathy $\alpha = 0.87$, CR = 0.87, AVE = 0.70, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.84$	EM2	Social media messages relate well with message interactions.	0.842***
	EM3	I would feel enjoy interacting with the message provider.	0.856***
Responsiveness $\alpha = 0.88$, CR = 0.88, AVE = 0.71, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.84$	RP1	The social media message shows a willingness to help.	0.842***
	RP2	The social media message shows a willingness to keep promises made.	0.853***
Consumer offensiveness $\alpha = 0.89$, CR = 0.91, AVE = 0.50, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.70$	RP3	The social media message shows a willingness to assist me.	0.838***
	CO1	After interacting with the social media message, I felt disappointed.	0.868***
	CO2	After interacting with the social media message and restaurant experience, I felt annoyed.	0.788***
	CO3	The information in the social media message makes me feel guilty.	0.799***
Experience attributes $\alpha = 0.90$, CR = 0.92, AVE = 0.52, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.72$	CO4	The social media message is genuinely concerned about post-purchase hotel services, and it makes me self-critical.	0.860***
	EXP1	I am satisfied with my decision to experience this Halal restaurant.	0.873***
	EXP2	I am sure it was the right decision to buy from this restaurant.	0.830***
	EXP3	My choice to buy from this restaurant was a wise one, and in near future I will go again.	0.800***
Credence attributes $\alpha = 0.90$, CR = 0.93, AVE = 0.56, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.75$	EXP4	This is one of the best brands I could have experienced.	0.827***
	CRE1	I dislike this restaurant's services.	0.828***
	CRE2	I react unfavorably to this restaurant's services.	0.895***
	CRE3	This restaurant's services are unattractive.	0.883***
Negative e-WOM $\alpha = 0.91$, CR = 0.93, AVE = 0.53, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.73$	CRE4	I feel negative toward this Halal restaurant's services.	0.748***
	NEWOM1	I would be likely to complain to other people about this Halal restaurant and my bad experience with it.	0.864***
Continuance purchase intentions $\alpha = 0.88$, CR = 0.90, AVE = 0.47, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.69$	NEWOM2	I intend to say negative things to people I know about my bad experience with this Halal restaurant.	0.870***
	NEWOM3	I would be likely to bad-mouth this Halal restaurant to other people.	0.808***
	NEWOM4	It is likely that I will express negative feeling and never return again.	0.848***
	CI1	I anticipate continuing follow this Halal restaurant's social media messages in the near future.	0.670***
	CI2	It is likely that I will continue to go to this Halal restaurant.	0.878***
	CI3	I expect to continue following this Halal restaurant's social media messages in the near future.	0.807***
	CI4	I am satisfied with my decision to go to this restaurant and will go again in the future.	0.905***

Note: SFL = standardized factor loadings, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted, α = Cronbach's alpha, $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ = discriminant validity.

*** $p < 0.001$.

The results showed that the first two constructs account for 47.24% of the variance, with the first factor accounting for 29.68% of the overall variance and the second factor explaining an additional 17.55%. It was therefore concluded that common method bias is not likely to be a factor in the study.

5.4. Structural model evaluation

The research model was tested using SPSS Amos Graphics version 18.0. SEM was employed to test the hypothesized relationships. The results of the model exhibit goodness of fit for our sample: $\chi^2 = 915.582$, $df = 365$, $\chi^2/df = 2.508$, $p = 0.000$; RMSEA = 0.049; GFI = 0.905 (MacCallum & Hong, 1997), CFI = 0.949; IFI = 0.950; RFI = 0.910; NFI = 0.919; TLI = 0.944 (Hu & Bentler, 1999); PCFI = 0.853; PNFI = 0.826 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The χ^2/df was significant because of the large sample size, and other fit indices were highly satisfactory and indicated good fit with the model. Overall, the results demonstrated that the proposed model structure efficiently characterizes the relationships among the variables (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011).

5.5. Hypotheses results

The study employed SEM to test the hypotheses and found support for most of them. A check was made for potential multicollinearity issues in the data by performing a variance inflation factor (VIF) test and obtaining values from 1.04 to 2.64, all of which were below the recommended range of 3.0. Thus, multicollinearity is not likely to be an issue in the model (Table 3). The results of the hypotheses tests indicated that visual messages had a positive impact on information quality (coefficient = 0.278, $t = 5.950$, $p < 0.001$), empathy (coefficient = 0.294, $t = 6.440$, $p < 0.001$), and responsiveness (coefficient = 0.135, $t = 2.943$, $p < 0.01$), so H1 was supported. Hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c were also supported, indicating a positive relationship between audio messages and information quality (coefficient = 0.153, $t = 3.282$, $p < 0.01$), empathy (coefficient = 0.137, $t = 3.010$, $p < 0.05$), and responsiveness (coefficient = 0.143, $t = 3.050$, $p < 0.05$). H3 was partially supported, as a negative relationship was found between information quality and consumer offensiveness (coefficient = -0.097 , t -value = -2.179 , $p < 0.05$), empathy had an insignificant relationship with consumer offensiveness (coefficient = -0.034 , $t = -0.792$, $p > 0.10$), and responsiveness had a positive and significant impact on consumer offensiveness (coefficient = 0.316, $t = 7.123$, $p < 0.001$). H4, which proposed a

Table 3
Descriptive statistics and evidence of discriminant validity.

Constructs	Mean	SD	VIF	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Visual message	3.47	1.19	2.649	0.720									
Audio message	3.53	1.21	2.603	0.618	0.660								
Information Quality	3.59	1.08	1.916	0.245	0.240	0.790							
Empathy	3.39	1.19	2.185	0.267	0.219	0.642	0.840						
Responsiveness	3.44	1.20	1.464	0.122	0.118	0.467	0.433	0.840					
Offensiveness	3.63	1.13	1.398	0.013	−0.065	0.037	0.045	0.232	0.700				
Experience attributes	3.22	1.17	1.132	0.163	0.127	0.512	0.619	0.471	0.081	0.730			
Credence attributes	3.71	1.10	1.101	0.220	0.219	0.151	0.126	0.114	0.099	0.101	0.710		
Negative e-WOM	3.63	1.16	1.795	0.019	−0.040	0.000	−0.024	0.148	0.497	0.039	0.082	0.720	
Continuance purchase intentions	3.78	1.04	1.077	0.093	0.032	0.102	0.091	0.060	0.269	0.074	0.038	0.269	0.690

Note: 1 = visual message, 2 = audio message, 3 = information quality, 4 = empathy, 5 = responsiveness, 6 = offensiveness, 7 = experience attributes, 8 = credence attributes, 9 = negative e-WOM, 10 = continuance purchase intentions.

The bold numbers in the diagonal are square roots of AVE.

Table 4
Results of hypotheses tests.

Path	Standardized estimates	t-Statistics	Relationship
H1a Visual → Information Quality	0.278 ^{***}	5.950	Supported
H1b Visual → Empathy	0.294 ^{***}	6.440	Supported
H1a Visual → Responsiveness	0.135 ^{***}	2.943	Supported
H2a Audio → Information Quality	0.153 ^{**}	3.282	Supported
H2b Audio → Empathy	0.137 [*]	3.010	Supported
H2c Audio → Responsiveness	0.143 [*]	3.050	Supported
H3a Information Quality → Offensiveness	−0.097 [*]	−2.179	Supported
H3b Empathy → Offensiveness	−0.034	−0.792	Not Supported
H3c Responsiveness → Offensiveness	0.316 ^{***}	7.123	Not Supported
H4 Offensiveness → Negative e-WOM	0.555 ^{***}	13.290	Supported
H5 Offensiveness → Continuance purchase intentions	0.302 ^{***}	6.720	Not Supported
H6a Experience × Information → Offensiveness	0.082 ^{**}	2.049	Supported
H6b Experience × Empathy → Offensiveness	0.072	1.799	Not Supported
H6c Experience × Responsiveness → Offensiveness	0.187 ^{***}	4.736	Supported
H7a Credence × Information → Offensiveness	0.096 ^{**}	2.395	Supported
H7b Credence × Empathy → Offensiveness	0.095 ^{**}	2.375	Supported
H7c Credence × Responsiveness → Offensiveness	0.223 ^{***}	5.689	Supported

*** $p < 0.001$.

** $p < 0.01$.

* $p < 0.05$.

positive relationship between consumer offensiveness and negative e-WOM, found support since the results showed a positive significant relationship (coefficient = 0.555, $t = 13.290$, $p < 0.001$). However, H5 was not supported, as consumer offensiveness had a positive impact on consumer continuance purchase intentions (coefficient = 0.302, $t = 6.720$, $p < 0.001$). These results are shown in Table 4. The predictive power (R^2) of total variance in the dependent variable because of changes in the independent variables was identified, and the results demonstrated a 12% change in information quality, 12.3% in empathy, 4.7% in responsiveness, 10.5% in consumer offensiveness, 30.7% in negative e-WOM, and 9.1% in continuance purchase intentions. A recommended R^2 of 60% of total variance in all dependent variables is acceptable (Hair et al., 2011). The study also followed (Cohen, 1988) in examining effect size (f^2) to check for the substantial effect of the present model. (Cohen, 1988) recommended that small, medium, and large threshold values of f^2 should be 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 respectively, referring to the degree to which an object is present in the population. The present research model suggests that information quality ($f^2 = 0.1363$), empathy ($f^2 = 0.1402$), responsiveness ($f^2 = 0.049$), consumer offensiveness ($f^2 = 0.1173$), and continuance purchase intentions ($f^2 = 0.1001$) have a medium effect size, and negative e-WOM ($f^2 = 0.4430$) has a large effect size (Fig. 2).

5.5.1. Moderation effect

SPSS was used to examine the moderating relationships through interaction effects. First, the main direct effects of the independent

variables and moderator variables on the dependent variable were examined, doing so separately for information quality, empathy, and responsiveness because the experience and credence attributes separately moderate their relationships with consumer offensiveness. The direct effect of information quality on consumer offensiveness was insignificant, which is an ideal condition (coefficient = 0.037, $t = 0.916$, $p > 0.10$), and the interaction effect between information quality and experience (information quality × experience) on consumer offensiveness was significant (coefficient = 0.082, $t = 2.049$, $p < 0.05$). Further, for credence, it was found that the interaction effect between information quality and credence (information quality × credence) on consumer offensiveness (coefficient = 0.096, $t = 2.395$, $p < 0.05$) is significant. It was found that the main direct effect of empathy on consumer offensiveness is insignificant (coefficient = 0.045, $t = 1.121$, $p > 0.10$), and there was an insignificant interaction effect between empathy and experience (empathy × experience) on consumer offensiveness (coefficient = 0.072, $t = 1.799$, $p > 0.10$). The interaction effect between empathy and credence (empathy × credence) on consumer offensiveness was also examined and significant effect was found (coefficient = 0.095, $t = 2.375$, $p < 0.05$). The study found a significant direct effect of responsiveness on consumer offensiveness (coefficient = 0.232, $t = 5.935$, $p < 0.001$) and that the interaction effect between responsiveness and experience (responsiveness × experience) on consumer offensiveness was significant (coefficient = 0.187, $t = 4.736$, $p < 0.001$). There was a significant interaction effect between responsiveness and credence (responsiveness × credence) on

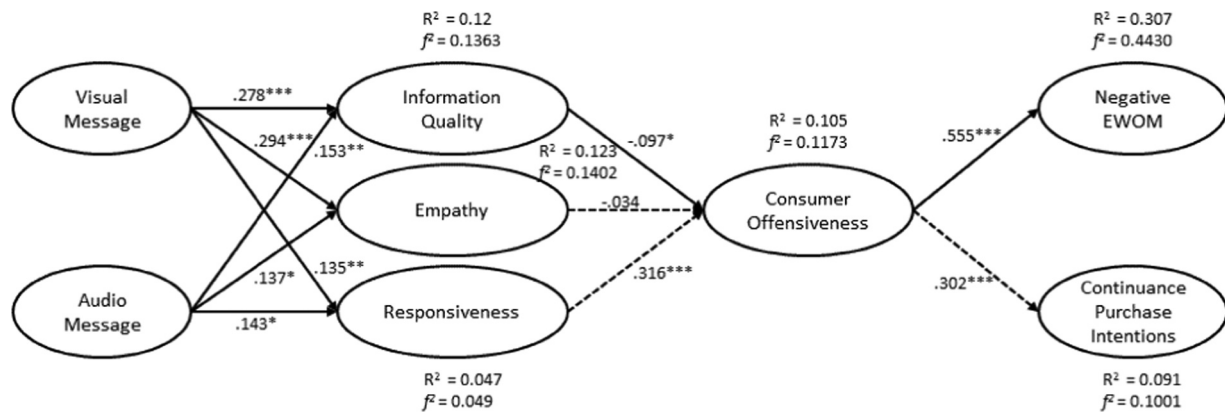


Fig. 2. Standardized structural equation parameter estimates.

consumer offensiveness (coefficient = 0.223, $t = 5.689$, $p < 0.001$).

The study also looked for simple effects to determine the nature of interactions. The study followed (Aiken, West, & Reno, 1991) recommendation to divide the moderator data into two dummy groups, high and low. First, experience was checked at the high level and it was found that information quality had a positive effect (coefficient = 0.132, $t = 2.133$, $p < 0.05$), empathy had an insignificant effect (coefficient = 0.073, $t = 1.182$, $p > 0.10$), and responsiveness had a positive effect (coefficient = 0.186, $t = 3.048$, $p < 0.05$) on consumer offensiveness when consumers had a high level of experience. When experience was checked at a low level, it was found that information quality had a negative significant effect (coefficient = -0.129 , $t = -3.250$, $p < 0.001$), empathy had negative effect (coefficient = -0.117 , $t = -2.922$, $p > 0.05$), and responsiveness had a negative insignificant effect (coefficient = -0.009 , $t = -0.225$, $p > 0.10$) on consumer offensiveness when consumers had low level of experience. Second, the credence attributes were checked at the high level and it was found that information quality had a positive and significant effect (coefficient = 0.104, $t = 1.686$, $p < 0.05$), empathy had an insignificant effect (coefficient = 0.095, $t = 1.525$, $p > 0.10$), and responsiveness had a positive effect (coefficient = 0.140, $t = 2.270$, $p < 0.05$) on consumer offensiveness when consumers had a high level of credence attributes. When the credence attributes were examined at a low level, it was found that information quality, empathy, and responsiveness had negative, insignificant effects (coefficient = -0.053 , $t = -0.856$, $p > 0.10$; -0.056 , $t = -0.894$, $p > 0.10$; and -0.058 , $t = -0.926$, $p > 0.10$, respectively). Therefore, the experience and credence attributes positively moderate at a higher level of credence attributes, so Hypotheses 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b, 7c were accepted, and Hypothesis 6b was rejected (Figs. 3 and 4).

6. Discussion and implications

6.1. Major findings

The present study provides several unique theoretical insights into consumers' interaction adaptation with respect to non-verbal messages about Halal restaurants. Consumers' interaction adaptation, as a result of interaction with visual and audio messages from Halal restaurants, adds a major perspective to when consumers are offensive, which furthers the critical process of behavioral outcomes.

This study of Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages adds value to China's restaurant industry, as well as to the international Halal restaurant industry, given that the Halal restaurants have seen fast growth in China over the past few years. Moreover, the study offers insights for Halal restaurants, as many consumers use non-verbal information in choosing Halal restaurants and reacting to their experiences. This study was conducted to clarify how Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages influence consumers' interaction adaptation and how consumers' offensiveness leads to negative responses. Attributes related to experience and credence serve as important determinants in consumers' offensiveness. Drawing on the literature of non-verbal messages and consumer interaction adaptation, the present study has several major findings, which are as follows.

First, visual and audio messages significantly determine consumers' interaction adaptation to non-verbal messages from Halal restaurants, but visual messages play a larger role in interaction adaptation. Our results on visual and audio messages are consistent with those of the marketing literature (Lang et al., 2015; Önder & Öner-özkan, 2003). Further, the results of the present study show that Halal restaurants' visual messages have more influence on information quality and empathy. Xiao et al. (2013) provided literature-based evidence that visual, colorful, and informational elements have a significant influence on

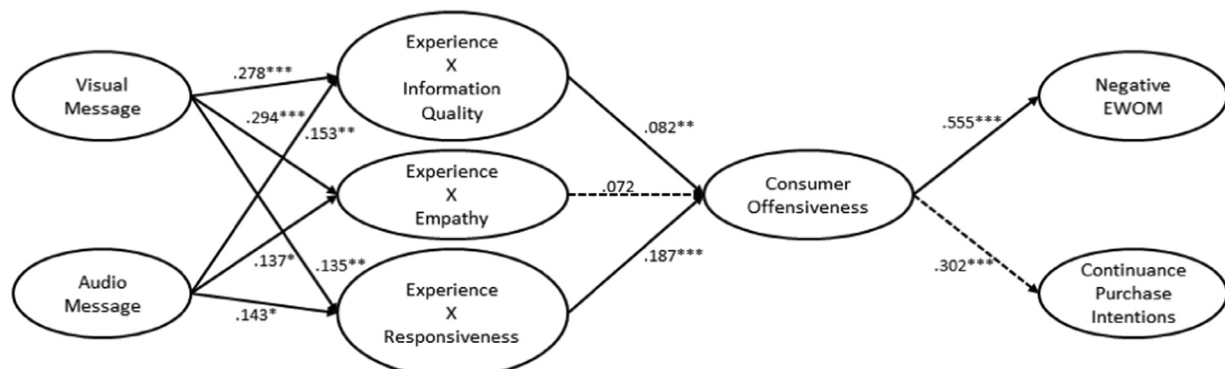


Fig. 3. Moderation effect of experience attributes.



Fig. 4. Moderation effect of credence attributes.

consumers' interaction adaptation.

Second, consumer interaction adaptation can provoke offensiveness, which plays a major role in developing behavioral responses. The results of this study confirm that negatively adopted information has a significant effect on consumers' offensiveness and that consumers' adapted responses from non-verbal messages are positively related to their offensiveness, which validates prior literature (Zanten, 2005).

Third, the findings indicate that consumer offensiveness has a significant impact on consumers' negative e-WOM. When consumers perceived the information quality as negative and had a bad experience with a Halal restaurant, they attempted to decrease their losses through negative e-WOM. The study found that positive responsiveness was unlikely to create offensiveness and that it had a significant positive effect on continuance purchase intentions. These findings validate the arguments of Balaji et al. (2016) and Van Steenburg et al. (2013) in that a consumer's state of frustration expresses their behavioral intentions and can evoke negative e-WOM and revenge intentions. The main reason for this result is that consumers focus on high responsiveness in Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages, rather than on low responsiveness.

The fourth finding of this study is related to the moderating role of experience and credence attributes. The literature has suggested that experience attributes are more reliable in influencing consumers' perceptions, but this study found that credence attributes, unlike experience attributes, have negative outcomes (Mazaheri et al., 2012). The results suggest that a good experience with a Halal restaurant minimizes consumer offensiveness and accounts for positive continuance purchase intentions. On the other hand, a bad experience increases consumer offensiveness and leads to more negative e-WOM. Likewise, a higher level of credence attributes decreases consumer offensiveness, but a low level of credence attributes has no effect, and consumer offensiveness remains the same as at the higher level. Notably, it was found that the effects of low credence attributes on information quality, empathy, and responsiveness were insignificant, compared to when they are high.

6.2. Theoretical implications

The current research makes several important contributions to the marketing literature. First, to best of the researchers' knowledge, this empirical study is the first to examine Burgoon's (1999) theory of interaction adaptation to support a research framework in the context of Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages. The marketing literature has used interaction adaptation in studies of interpersonal communication (Floyd & Burgoon, 1999), but such research has not used an interaction adaptation model in the electronic environment or in Halal restaurants. The present study extends the arguments for Burgoon's (1999) theory of interaction adaptation and examines consumer offensiveness after interacting with Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages. The study provides strong evidence of the influence of Halal restaurants' non-verbal

messages on interaction adaptation.

Second, while interaction adaptation was theoretically well-established by Floyd & Burgoon (1999), in interpersonal communications, but it is less well understood in the context of social media. The present study takes a unique approach in examining consumers' interaction adaptation from the perspective of non-verbal messages on social media and finds a positive effect of Halal restaurants' visual and audio messages on consumers' interaction adaptation.

Third, the literature has examined the direct effect of interaction adaptation on consumers' behavior, particularly for word-of-mouth intentions and purchase intentions (Balaji et al., 2016). This study extends interaction adaptation's effects by examining its direct relationship with consumers' offensiveness and its indirect relationships with consumer responses (i.e. negative e-WOM and continuance purchase for Halal restaurants). Consumer offensiveness refers to consumers' frustration, anger, anxiety from poor information quality and absence of empathy. The information this research provides about consumers' final behavioral responses contribute to the tourism literature by looking into consumers' mindsets after interaction adaptation.

Fourth, the literature has suggested that consumers evaluate messages' experience and credence attributes by keeping in mind their emotions and the elements of the product or service (Angulo, Pergelova, Cheben, & Angulo, 2016). The present study takes a step toward clarifying what causes consumers offensiveness and behavioral intentions using the Halal restaurants' experience and credence attributes. The approach used in this paper employs the role of moderating variables in consumers' offensiveness, and consumers' higher-level experiences decrease the chances of offensiveness and improve consumers' attitudes about Halal restaurants. When these restaurants lack expertise, the resulting low credence attributes strengthen the likelihood of consumers' offensiveness, a factor that has been overlooked. Overall, the present study extends the role of experience and credence as moderating variables and in the context of Halal restaurants.

Fifth, the literature has identified that consumers' negative behavior is based on feelings of injustice and displeasure and is expressed in negative words (i.e. e-WOM) and negative continuance purchase intentions (Balaji et al., 2016; Wilkins et al., 2016). This study finds a positive relationship between consumer offensiveness and continuance purchase intentions. Muslim tourists continue to focus on Islamic laws, beliefs, and Halal foods even when they feel offensiveness after a bad experience.

Sixth, with China the fastest-growing tourism industry market (World Tourism Alliance, 2017), the Halal restaurant industry in that country is also growing to meet the needs of Muslim tourists. Therefore, understanding consumers' behavior and eating habits based on Islamic law and Muslim culture should increase the value of Halal restaurants in China that seek to expand their businesses. Since the present study's findings are derived from the largest Halal restaurant chains in the world, they can be generalized to a large population.

6.3. Practical implications for Halal restaurants

This study has several implications for industry practitioners and tourism policy-makers. First, consumers had positive interaction adaptation in response to non-verbal communication that increases continuance purchase intentions. However, contrary to (Balaji et al., 2016; Wilkins et al., 2016), the study found a strong impact of interaction adaptation on negative e-WOM. The study posits that, a consumer having a high-level experience decreases the likelihood that the consumer offensiveness improves the consumer's attitude about Halal restaurants. Therefore, it is suggested that China's government encourage Halal certification as an indication of quality to attract Muslim consumers.

Second, non-verbal messages were found had a strong effect on consumers. The study confirms that non-verbal messages are a key factor in Halal restaurants' success. Therefore, it is suggested that restaurant managers should maintain high-quality visual and audio messages to attract consumers. These restaurants should pay attention to the features of non-verbal messages and develop distinctive messages that offer Halal-quality foods based on Sharia laws. Furthermore, the Halal restaurant industry should promote Halal awareness through non-verbal messages on social media apps like WeChat, RenRen, QQ, Mobile Fetion, and Weibo.

Third, visual messages had a positive effect on interaction adaptation: a finding that is in line with (Kim et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be suggested that managers of Halal restaurants use Halal logos and certification in their visual messages, on their restaurants' websites, and on social media because this certification attracts consumers. For example, the word 'Halal' is not sufficient for promoting Halal foods and restaurants, so Halal restaurants should get Halal certifications, follow Sharia laws, and share in visual images of Halal foods on social media.

Fourth, this study found that poorly constructed audio and visual messages had an insignificant influence on consumers' empathy and responsiveness, which is contrary to the findings of the study by Kraus (2017). Therefore, Halal restaurant managers are advised not to post poor, suspicious, or non-Halal-oriented messages if they want to retain consumers in the long run. Consumers' limited understanding of credence attributes involves short-term purchases, but with experiences with non-Halal attributes, consumers lose their involvement in their purchase. Halal restaurant managers must customize their visual and audio messages by focusing exclusively on Halal food choices.

Fifth, consumer interactions with non-verbal messages were found to be among the most important factors in the development of Halal tourism. As Jalilvand, Salimipour, Elyasi, and Mohammadi (2017) found, consumers' personal interactions cumulatively enhance trust, commitment, satisfaction, and positive WOM. Therefore, the present study's findings contradict previous findings by determining that offensive consumers spread more negative e-WOM. As a strategy, managers should pay attention to client-oriented behavior, and offer surprises like a free sweet dish after the meal or a Halal restaurant membership card to create positive e-WOM.

Sixth, managers of Halal tour operators should develop strategies to customize consumers' Halal choices and spread these choices through social media (i.e. visual and audio) messages and WOM communication to encourage customers. This finding relates to those of Jalilvand et al. (2017), and confirms that radio advertisements and print media allow Halal restaurants to achieve more with less through positive WOM by acquire customers for a lifetime of continuance purchase intentions.

Seventh, most of the respondents in this study were Muslim students between the ages of 25–40 who were studying for their Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate degrees. Managers should note the attractiveness of this particular market, as the duration of their stays in China tends to be more than six months, and Halal restaurants offer low-cost meals.

Eighth, with China, the fastest-growing social media market with a large number of active users (Kraus, 2017), marketers can derive

marketing implications from our findings. Most (53.4%) of this study's respondents use tour operators for their travel and experiences with Halal restaurants, so it is suggested that Halal restaurants and Halal tour operators develop home pages on social media to provide appropriate information for potential customers. These pages can also be helpful in handling complaints and developing trusting relationships with consumers so Halal restaurants and Halal tour operators can retain more consumers.

7. Limitations and future research directions

The present study has several limitations that provide some suggestions for future research. First, the current research is limited to non-verbal messages and finds a significant effect of Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages on consumer interaction adaptation. Future scholars could examine the influence of other variables (e.g. video messages, textual messages) to identify any variances in their effect on interaction adaptation. Second, the current study is limited to three types of interaction adaptation (e.g. information quality, empathy, and responsiveness), so it is suggested that future researchers should explore other types of interaction adaptation, such as the pressure to adjust psychologically or to match and reciprocate behavior. Third, this study focus on experience and credence attributes and provides an opportunity for future scholars to use the information search attribute to develop a new framework for understanding non-verbal messages. Fourth, the current study used cross-sectional data, but future research could incorporate a longitudinal approach to validate the causal mechanisms. Fifth, this study focuses on three cities in China, but the potential differences in the Muslim population, culture, Halal foods, and restaurants could be clarified by future studies that incorporate comparison-based research because consumers will respond differently in different markets. To generalize the results of this study into other countries, future researchers could establish the validity of the research model across national boundaries and draw comparisons between Chinese Muslim tourists and other Muslim tourists. Finally, the present research included only one industry, Halal restaurants, so future research could check robustness of the model in other Halal service industries, such as Halal hospitality, Halal transportation, and Halal tour packages.

8. Conclusion

The present study concludes that Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages are the foundation of the interaction adaptation that influences the outcome of consumer offensiveness. Specifically, the research contributes theoretically and practically to the Halal tourism literature by explaining how Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages affect consumer interaction adaptation and consumer offensiveness, which leads to negative behavioral intentions. A moderating effect was found of the experience and credence attributes of Halal restaurants on the relationship between interaction adaptation and consumers' offensiveness. These associations suggest that consumers depend on Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages as heuristics to enable interaction adaptation. As a whole, the research model provides a comprehensive examination of and useful insights into Halal restaurants' non-verbal messages effect on interaction adaptation-related outcomes in the context of Halal restaurants, which have not been examined in previous literature. The study's results have valuable implications for Halal restaurants and Halal tour operators. By adopting this study's recommendations, the Halal restaurant industry can develop better strategies for non-verbal message to offer value-added attributes for current and potential consumers.

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Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found in the online version at [doi:10.1016/j.jdmm.2018.10.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2018.10.001).

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