

His faith, her consumption: halal food decisions in UK interfaith family households

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to investigate how religious obligation, Halal purchase decision and spousal decision-making jointly shape Halal food consumption within interfaith marriages, specifically focusing on non-Muslim wives married to Muslim men in the United Kingdom.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey of 103 non-Muslim wives in interfaith households was conducted. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to assess direct and indirect relationships among religiosity, spousal decision-making, Halal purchase decision and gendered consumption. Necessary condition analysis (NCA) was also used to identify non-compensatory conditions for gendered consumption.

Findings – The results indicate that religiosity and spousal decision-making significantly influence both Halal purchasing and gendered Halal consumption. Halal purchase decisions partially mediate the effect of religiosity and spousal influence on consumption outcomes, revealing that religious obligation is enacted through relational processes within the household. Furthermore, NCA confirms that both religiosity and spousal decision-making are non-compensatory preconditions for high levels of gendered Halal consumption, reinforcing their essential role in shaping domestic religious practices.

Practical implications – Marketers should recognise that non-Muslim partners are active agents in religious consumption and tailor Halal messaging accordingly, highlighting the theme of shared domestic practice.

Originality/value – To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is among the first to examine Halal food practices as relational and gendered outcomes of religious commitment in interfaith households. It contributes to further understanding the theory of family buying decisions by integrating value asymmetry and moral salience into domestic consumption models.

Keywords Gendered consumption, Halal purchase decisions, Spousal decision-making, Religiosity, Non-Muslim wives, Interfaith households

Paper type Research paper

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1 Introduction

Household consumption decisions are rarely neutral or equally negotiated; rather, they are shaped by deeply embedded beliefs, roles and values (Elhoushy and Jang, 2021; Christopher, 2024). This is particularly evident in households navigating religious diversity, where competing moral frameworks influence everyday practices (Markowitz and Avieli, 2022; Almås *et al.*, 2023). In interfaith relationships, consumption becomes a site where identity, power, and cultural difference are actively expressed and co-produced (Filimonau *et al.*, 2022; Stauder and Röhlke, 2022). Among such relationships, those involving a Muslim husband and a non-Muslim wife pose unique questions for the management and negotiation of religious practice in domestic life, particularly around Halal food consumption (Bukhari *et al.*, 2022; Van Niekerk and Verkuyten, 2018; Bakhshizadeh Borj *et al.*, 2025). Halal dietary laws are not simply food preferences; they are encoded religious obligations, embedded with ethical, spiritual, and cultural meaning (Haji, 2023; Ibrahim *et al.*, 2024).

As such, Halal consumption within interfaith households raises a broader question: how are religious obligations lived, negotiated and institutionalised within everyday household decision-making? (Michopoulou and Jauniškis, 2020; Reddy and van Dam, 2020; Markowitz and Avieli, 2022). Existing scholarship highlighted several gaps. Firstly, Halal consumption has largely been treated as a matter of individual religious behaviour or as a consumer trend in Muslim-majority markets (Elmali-Karakaya, 2022). However, this perspective overlooks the relational and situational complexity that emerges when religious dietary obligations enter pluralistic, interfaith domestic settings (Screti *et al.*, 2024). In these households, Halal consumption is not only shaped by one partner's religious commitment but by the other partner's willingness or resistance to accommodate it (Rachman and Amarullah, 2024).

Secondly, studies on interfaith family life reinforce this relational perspective (Becker, 2022). Studies across sociology and psychology show that interfaith couples regularly negotiate identity, obligation and household boundaries, often developing partial or situational alignments with each other's practices rather than full convergence or rejection (Colaner *et al.*, 2022; Soliz and Colaner, 2015). These negotiations frequently take place through everyday routines, where spouses balance relational harmony with divergent moral commitments (Shoaf *et al.*, 2022; Miller, 2018). Such insights underline that Halal consumption in interfaith marriages cannot be understood solely through religious obligation; it emerges from ongoing identity mitigation between partners who hold unequal stakes in compliance (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025).

Thirdly, anthropological and sociology-of-religion scholarship further emphasises the importance of everyday boundary-development in shaping religious practice (Tranby and Zulkowski, 2012). Rather than framing religion as a fixed doctrinal system, this literature highlights how moral expectations and obligations are enacted through practical coordination within the home (Martinez *et al.*, 2016; Becker, 2022; Bhatoo and Bhowon, 2018). Foodwork serves as a primary site where religious boundaries are sustained, softened or renegotiated (Torkkeli *et al.*, 2022). These perspectives strengthen the conceptual foundations of this study by demonstrating that the enactment of Halal norms in interfaith households depends not only on gendered divisions of labour but also on the couple's ongoing management of moral and relational boundaries (Noor *et al.*, 2026). The observant partner's religiosity imposes non-negotiable parameters, reshaping the decision space and challenging the assumption that joint decisions emerge from symmetrical negotiation (Elmali-Karakaya, 2022). Instead, one partner's beliefs may define acceptable options before negotiation even begins (Stauder and Röhlke, 2022). This raises a broader theoretical question: how does spousal religiosity structure family consumption? (Ambler *et al.*, 2021; Acosta *et al.*, 2019; Rojas-de-Gracia *et al.*, 2018).

Fourthly, while the concept of religiosity, defined as the degree to which individuals integrate religious commitment into everyday practice, has been shown to influence consumer choices (Elhoushy and Jang, 2021). Yet religiosity, in interfaith households, cannot be understood in isolation (Becker, 2022). It must be examined in relation to the gendered structures of care and authority that determine who plans meals, who prepares food, and who decides how religious obligations are translated into daily routines (Maduku and Mbeya, 2024; Shobande, 2025). In many cultural and religious traditions, men are positioned as spiritual leaders, while women manage food preparation and household logistics (Calder, 2020; Christopher, 2024). These role expectations become unstable, contested, or reconfigured when interfaith partners attempt to live together under divergent frameworks of religious discipline and gender norms (Harrison-Walker and Mead, 2022; Liu and Kwon, 2023).

Finally, despite growing attention to religious consumption in marketing and sociology, research has yet to theorise how religious obligations structure interpersonal negotiations within intimate domestic units, where power, care and identity are daily enacted (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025). Moreover, while prior work in consumer behaviour and family studies has acknowledged the role of specialisation and influence in household decisions (Maduku and Mbeya, 2024; Stanford *et al.*, 2025), few studies have integrated this framework with the religious and gendered dimensions of consumption (Maduku and Mbeya, 2024; Qureshi *et al.*, 2023; Usman *et al.*, 2022). The theory of family buying decisions, which emphasises the dynamics of joint decision-making, role differentiation and interpersonal influence, provides a valuable yet underutilised lens for analysing how interfaith couples manage competing beliefs and responsibilities (Screti *et al.*, 2024). In particular, it allows us to conceptualise Halal food consumption not as a fixed practice, but as an outcome of dynamic relational processes, shaped by differing levels of religiosity, gendered expectations and negotiated authority (Maduku and Mbeya, 2024). Thus, this study aims to examine how religious obligations influence Halal purchasing, consumption and negotiation within Muslim-non-Muslim interfaith households in the UK.

This study focuses on interfaith marriages between Muslim men and non-Muslim women in the United Kingdom (UK), a context that is theoretically distinct from both Muslim-majority societies and other Western settings for several reasons. Firstly, in Muslim-majority contexts, Halal food is institutionally embedded and socially normative, reducing the need for domestic negotiation. In contrast, some Western contexts treat religious practice as largely individualised or privatised, limiting its influence on shared household routines. Secondly, the UK occupies an intermediate position: it combines a sizeable Muslim minority (4 million, 6% of the UK population) (Muslim Council of Britain, 2025), a highly developed Halal food market, and strong legal and cultural commitments to religious pluralism (Jawad and Elmali-Karakaya, 2020; Annabi and Ibdapo-Obe, 2017). This configuration creates a setting in which Halal consumption is neither taken for granted nor marginal, but instead actively negotiated within everyday domestic life. As a result, the UK provides a particularly appropriate context for examining Halal consumption as a relational and gendered practice, rather than as an expression of individual religiosity alone, similar to studies (e.g. Ibrahim *et al.*, 2024; Annabi and Ibdapo-Obe, 2017; Elseidi, 2018). At the same time, the findings should be understood as contextually situated within a Muslim-minority setting, where regulatory conditions, market structures, and everyday negotiations may differ from those found in Muslim-majority societies and in other minority-Muslim contexts across Europe, North America and Asia.

In addition, despite the growing visibility of interfaith families in the United Kingdom, there have been limited studies examining how religious obligations shape everyday consumption within these households (Jawad and Elmali-Karakaya, 2020). Existing research

on Halal consumption has primarily examined Muslim consumers or individual-level piety, while studies of interfaith marriage have focused on identity negotiation, parenting or social integration rather than routine household practices. As a result, we lack an understanding of how unequal moral commitments, particularly where one partner's religious duties are non-negotiable, structure domestic food decisions. This study, therefore, aims to examine how religiosity, gender roles and interpersonal negotiation shape Halal food consumption in interfaith households. In doing so, it shifts the analytical focus from Halal consumption as an individual or market phenomenon to a relational, embedded and negotiated practice (Filimonau *et al.*, 2022). This move responds to broader calls in marketing and sociology studies to better understand how religion, gender and identity are enacted in the intimate, everyday practices that sustain social life (Ambler *et al.*, 2021; Rinallo *et al.*, 2023).

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge Islamic jurisprudential debates on interfaith marriage (Elmali-Karakaya, 2022). Islamic jurisprudence sets clear boundaries on the permissibility of interfaith marriage. Muslim men are generally permitted to marry women of Ahl al-Kitab [people of the book] (i.e. Jews and Christians), though even this allowance carries conditions regarding faith, practice and the upbringing of children (Qaradawi, 1994). Marriages with women outside these traditions are typically regarded as impermissible (Jawad and Elmali-Karakaya, 2020). In contemporary multicultural contexts such as the United Kingdom, interfaith households may include unions that diverge from these prescriptions (Jawad and Elmali-Karakaya, 2020). Our study does not seek to adjudicate the theological validity of such marriages; rather, it examines the sociological realities and everyday consumption practices that emerge within existing interfaith households. By acknowledging this normative framework while focusing on empirical household realities, we aim to situate our contribution responsibly within both Islamic and sociological debates.

This study makes three contributions to the field of household consumption and relational decision-making. Firstly, it shows that religious obligation can restructure household consumption not through mutual preference alignment, but through value asymmetries, that is, situations in which one partner's commitments carry greater normative weight than the other's and thereby limit the household decision space (Ambler *et al.*, 2022; Liu *et al.*, 2019). Specifically, a Muslim husband's religiosity shapes not only purchasing but also consumption behaviours of his non-Muslim wife, demonstrating that religious commitment functions as a normative constraint within domestic decision-making.

Secondly, the study contributes to further understanding of existing models of family consumption by discussing, within, the concept of moral salience as a structuring force that interacts with gendered roles. The findings reveal that non-Muslim wives, as primary food providers, enact their spouses' religious commitments through provisioning work, highlighting how gendered responsibility serves as the conduit through which religious norms are embedded in household routines.

Thirdly, the study reinterprets spousal influence as a form of relational adaptation grounded in obligation rather than authority or persuasion. By showing how asymmetric commitments shape behaviour even in the absence of shared belief, this research extends a culturally embedded understanding of consumption, one that centres identity, care and moral responsibility as key drivers of everyday economic behaviour in interfaith households.

2 Conceptual framework and hypotheses development

The Halal purchase decision within interfaith households presents a unique case for extending existing models of household consumption (Hasford *et al.*, 2018; Van Niekerk and Verkuyten, 2018). Sheth's (1974), theory of family buying decisions provides a foundational framework for understanding how purchasing decisions are distributed, influenced and

negotiated among family members. In particular, the model is well-suited to explaining decisions in which preferences are negotiable, influence is reciprocal and disagreement can be resolved through persuasion, bargaining or role-based authority (Chikweche *et al.*, 2012). However, when applied to interfaith households facing religiously governed consumption practices, the explanatory attributes of the model become limited. Sheth (1974) conceptualises product importance as a situational attribute that varies in degree, whereas Halal compliance operates as a categorical moral requirement for observant individuals, rendering certain options unacceptable rather than merely less preferred.

Moreover, while Sheth (1974) assumes that influence is exercised within a shared evaluative framework, interfaith households are characterised by competing moral logics that are asymmetrically binding across partners. As a result, spousal influence in such contexts does not function primarily through preference alignment or negotiated compromise, but through the invocation of normative legitimacy grounded in religious obligation (Screti *et al.*, 2024; Ghouse *et al.*, 2025). This divergence highlights a critical gap in Sheth's framework as it does not account for situations in which the decision space is constrained by non-negotiable moral commitments. The present study addresses this limitation by extending family decision-making theory to incorporate moral asymmetry and religious salience as structuring conditions under which traditional influence mechanisms operate differently (Cabano *et al.*, 2024; Hurka, 2010).

While the concepts of household role differentiation and gendered labour are well-established in sociological research, their interaction with religious obligation introduces an additional layer of normative constraint that has not been empirically modelled (Becker, 2022; Afzal *et al.*, 2022). In this study, value asymmetry refers to the unequal moral weight partners assign to Halal compliance, such that one partner treats compliance as morally binding while the other may regard it as optional, symbolic or negotiable (Hurka, 2010; Stauder and Röhlke, 2022), and moral salience is reflected in the extent to which religious duty frames everyday purchasing decisions as non-negotiable (Yaprak and Prince, 2019; Ambler *et al.*, 2022; Liu *et al.*, 2019).

Religiosity introduces a fundamental shift in how consumption decisions are framed and evaluated (Filimonau *et al.*, 2022). For observant individuals, religious obligations such as adherence to Halal are non-negotiable, rooted in spiritual discipline and religious doctrine rather than individual preference or utilitarian need (Qureshi *et al.*, 2023). When such commitments are brought into a shared domestic setting involving a partner from a different religious or secular background, the decision is no longer a matter of mutual preference alignment (Van Niekerk and Verkuyten, 2018). Instead, the decision space becomes structured by one partner's commitment to compliance with religious law, which elevates the salience of the decision and narrows the range of acceptable outcomes (Usman *et al.*, 2022). This introduces an asymmetry in perceived importance, where one partner views the decision as morally binding while the other may see it as optional or symbolic (Koc *et al.*, 2025; Hurka, 2010). Sheth (1974)'s concept of product importance can accommodate this shift, but only if extended to include moral or spiritual salience alongside functional or economic considerations.

Within this restructured decision space, spousal decision-making plays a key role. Influence strategies such as persuasion, bargaining or authority are no longer exercised on a neutral field (Shobande, 2025). Instead, the religious partner often enters the negotiation with pre-defined boundaries based on religious doctrine, thereby constraining the options available to the other partner before deliberation begins (Bögenhold and Naz, 2018; Noor *et al.*, 2026). In such cases, influence is exercised not only through interpersonal tactics but through the invocation of religious legitimacy. This alters the balance of power in joint

decision-making and challenges the notion that household consumption outcomes emerge from mutual adjustment or compromise (Addison-Akotoye *et al.*, 2024). Rather, the negotiation becomes shaped by a logic of compliance and accommodation, where the religious partner defines the normative boundary of the decision, and the non-religious partner must navigate the implications (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025).

The gendered structure of domestic life further complicates the enactment of these decisions (Wei *et al.*, 2025). In many interfaith households, religious authority is concentrated in one partner, often the male, while the responsibility for sourcing, preparing and serving food falls to the other, often the female (Bögenhold and Naz, 2018). This division creates a structural separation between the normative imposition of a religious obligation and its practical implementation. While Sheth (1974)'s theory accounts for role specialisation, it does not address the moral asymmetries that emerge when the burden of enacting religious compliance falls disproportionately on one partner. Gendered consumption practices thus moderate how religiosity translates into actual purchasing behaviour. The decision may be jointly endorsed in principle but executed unilaterally in practice, with one partner carrying the emotional and logistical labour of compliance. This gap between symbolic authority and material responsibility introduces a layer of gendered complexity that has not been sufficiently addressed in models of household consumption (Shobande, 2025). This study reconceptualises the Halal purchase decision not as a site of preference alignment but as a structured outcome of asymmetrical commitments and uneven responsibilities. This approach foregrounds the role of moral authority, relational negotiation and gendered labour in shaping household consumption. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework.

2.1 Spousal decision-making and halal purchase decision

In households shaped by religious difference, spousal decision-making becomes a critical site through which moral obligations are negotiated and operationalised (Sumadi and Rahajeng, 2025). While prior frameworks emphasise role differentiation and influence strategies in joint consumption, these models often assume a degree of value alignment or discretionary choice (Hasford *et al.*, 2018; Almås *et al.*, 2023). In interfaith relationships involving Halal dietary observance, this assumption is untenable (Harrison-Walker and Mead, 2022; Becker, 2022). The religious partner may treat food consumption not as a preference but as a domain governed by divine injunction. This introduces asymmetries in decision salience, where one

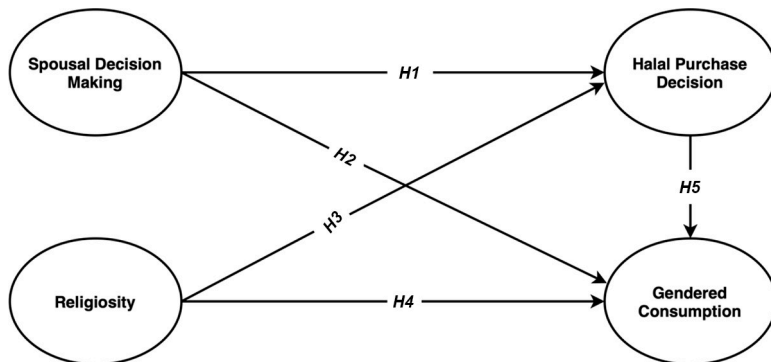


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Source: Authors' own work

partner approaches the issue from a position of moral necessity while the other may view it as symbolic, optional or externally imposed (Hunt and Acton, 2022).

Such value asymmetry reconfigures how spousal influence operates (Ambler *et al.*, 2022; Liu *et al.*, 2019). Rather than negotiation among equals, the religious partner frames certain choices as non-negotiable, asserting normative boundaries rooted in religious authority (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025). In this setting, spousal decision-making is not merely about influence tactics or persuasion, but about the invocation of sacred obligation (Almås *et al.*, 2023). The resulting dynamic places the non-observant partner in a position where accommodating the observant partner's needs becomes a condition of relational harmony. This is especially consequential when consumption decisions fall within gendered domains of household labour (Bansal *et al.*, 2025).

Food provisioning and preparation remain highly gendered practices in many cultural contexts. Even within egalitarian partnerships, women often retain primary responsibility for sourcing and preparing meals (Liu and Kwon, 2023; Wellington, 2022). When the female partner in an interfaith household is non-Muslim, and the male partner insists on Halal observance, her role as the primary food decision-maker becomes the site where religious accommodation is enacted. Although she may not share the religious commitment, the enactment of religiously compliant behaviour, such as sourcing Halal-certified products, becomes embedded in her everyday practices (Usman *et al.*, 2022). In this way, the religious salience introduced by one partner interacts with the gendered division of consumption labour to shape the final outcome (Minton and Cabano, 2024). Drawing on family decision-making theory, spousal decision-making would typically be expected to influence household purchasing outcomes (Sheth, 1974). However, in interfaith households characterised by religious asymmetry, such influence is not driven by preference alignment but by moral constraint (Liu and Kwon, 2023). Accordingly, in interfaith households where male partners observe Halal and female partners manage food procurement, the presence of joint decision-making increases the likelihood that non-Muslim wives purchase Halal food, even when they do not share the same religious commitments (Wang *et al.*, 2014). Hence, we propose:

- H1.* In interfaith marriages, spousal decision-making positively influences non-Muslim wives' purchases of Halal food products.

2.2 Spousal decision making and gendered consumption

Although non-Muslim wives often hold significant influence over food-related decisions due to their primary responsibility for provisioning and meal preparation, such influence is rarely exercised in isolation (Wellington, 2022). Instead, it is relationally structured, taking into account the preferences and commitments of their spouses (Afzal *et al.*, 2022). In interfaith households, wives frequently accommodate their husbands' religious dietary needs, not solely out of deference, but due to considerations of relational harmony, practical efficiency and household-level coordination (Liu and Kwon, 2023; Becker, 2022). Prior studies suggest that consumption sacrifices, where one partner adapts to the other's preferences, are common within close relationships and can serve as expressions of care and commitment (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025). In contexts where Halal food is viewed by the observant spouse as spiritually or morally significant, the non-observant partner may find it both relationally and economically expedient to align consumption behaviour, particularly when doing so reduces the logistical burden of preparing separate meals (Stauder and Röhlke, 2022). These relational, moral and instrumental considerations converge to structure gendered consumption practices (Afzal *et al.*, 2022). As such, the spousal decision-making influence of Muslim husbands is likely to positively shape the Halal purchasing behaviour of their non-Muslim wives, not simply

through direct persuasion but through routinised, relational adaptation embedded in shared domestic life (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025). Thus, we posit:

- H2. The decision-making influence of non-Muslim wives positively impacts their gendered consumption of Halal food.

2.3 Religiosity and halal purchase decision

Religiosity functions not only as a set of internalised beliefs but also as a normative structure that governs behaviour and relational expectations within households (Elhoushy and Jang, 2021). Prior research has established that religious commitment significantly shapes individual consumption patterns, particularly when products carry symbolic or spiritual significance, as in the case of Halal-certified food (Elseidi, 2018; Jalees *et al.*, 2024; Islam and Chandrasekaran, 2019). However, within interfaith households, religiosity does not remain an individual-level determinant (Bansal *et al.*, 2025). Instead, it operates relationally, shaping how partners define acceptable consumption and negotiate everyday practices (Amer, 2024).

In particular, the religiosity of a Muslim husband can act as a moral constraint within the decision-making space, elevating the salience of Halal food as a non-negotiable requirement rather than a discretionary preference (Islam and Chandrasekaran, 2019). When one partner frames a consumption practice as a religious obligation, this reframes the domain of decision-making not as one of mutual accommodation, but as one shaped by normative asymmetry (Cabano *et al.*, 2024). In such cases, the observant partner sets the moral parameters within which decisions are made, and the non-observant partner often adapts to those constraints, not necessarily out of shared belief, but out of respect, commitment or pragmatic convenience (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025; Becker, 2022).

This adaptation is particularly evident in food-related decisions, where gendered norms often allocate responsibility for meal planning and provisioning to women (Kanbur, 2018). In households where non-Muslim wives are primarily responsible for food procurement and preparation, they become the operational agents through which religious dietary rules are enacted. Although they may not share their partner's religious commitments, their behaviour is shaped by the influence of those commitments, especially when maintaining relational harmony or avoiding conflict is valued (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025). Over time, this leads to routinised alignment with religious expectations, including the regular purchase of Halal food. Hence, we propose:

- H3. A Muslim husband's religiosity is positively correlated with his non-Muslim wife's likelihood to purchase Halal food products.

2.4 Religiosity and gendered consumption

Religious commitment is not solely an individual expression of belief but often operates as a normative force that shapes expectations within close relationships (Sanner *et al.*, 2024; Islam and Chandrasekaran, 2019). In marital contexts, especially interfaith ones, religiosity frequently structures the terms of cohabitation and domestic coordination, particularly around consumption practices that carry moral or spiritual significance (Koc *et al.*, 2025; Hochstein *et al.*, 2025). Halal food, as an extension of Islamic ethical practice, represents one such domain in which religious observance extends beyond the believer to influence the shared routines of the household (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2024).

Within heterosexual partnerships, food provisioning has long been characterised as a gendered responsibility, with women often assuming the role of primary decision-makers

and providers for household meals (Minton and Cabano, 2024). This role gives women not only operational control over food choices but also makes them the agents through which familial preferences and values are translated into daily practice (Hasford *et al.*, 2018; Noor *et al.*, 2026). In the context of an interfaith marriage in which the male partner adheres to Halal dietary rules, the female partner is often responsible for implementing these standards, even if she does not share the underlying beliefs (Islam and Chandrasekaran, 2019).

Importantly, food is not just purchased, it is consumed. When the wife prepares meals according to Halal standards for her husband, alignment in purchasing often leads to alignment in personal consumption (Wang *et al.*, 2014). This alignment may occur for practical, relational or symbolic reasons. Regardless of the motive, the behavioural outcome is that the non-Muslim wife adapts her own consumption patterns in ways that reflect her husband's religious commitments (Addison-Akotoye *et al.*, 2024). As such, the husband's religiosity becomes a structuring force not only in household food provisioning but in the wife's personal consumption practices (Bögenhold and Naz, 2018). Therefore, we propose:

- H4. A Muslim husband's religiosity is positively correlated with his non-Muslim wife's Halal food consumption.

2.5 Halal purchase decision and gendered consumption

Household consumption practices are not only expressions of individual preference but sites of relational coordination, moral accommodation and gendered responsibility (Almås *et al.*, 2023). When a non-Muslim wife purchases Halal food in recognition of her husband's religious commitment, she is not merely accommodating a belief system, she is embedding that commitment into the shared material practices of the household (Addison-Akotoye *et al.*, 2024). The act of purchasing Halal food initiates a consumption environment structured around religious discipline, even in the absence of personal belief (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2024). In this way, the purchasing decision functions as both an act of care and a process of institutionalisation: the religious standard becomes the default provisioned norm (Maduku and Mbeya, 2024).

Once Halal products enter the household as the primary or sole source of food, the wife's own consumption is shaped less by intentional agreement and more by practical and symbolic alignment (Becker, 2022). Preparing and eating the same food reinforces efficiency, relational cohesion, and domestic harmony (Addison-Akotoye *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, the wife's role as the enactor of religiously compliant meals means that participation in Halal consumption is not merely reactive, it becomes embedded in her everyday routine (Almås *et al.*, 2023). This is consistent with theories of gendered consumption that emphasise the performative nature of provisioning work, where food choices reflect the management of moral, emotional and relational obligations (Horowitz and Mohun, 1998; Charles and Kerr, 1987; Becker, 2022).

Therefore, the purchase of Halal food by a non-Muslim wife is not a neutral market transaction; it is a gendered, relational act that reshapes her own consumption patterns (Elmali-Karakaya, 2022). Over time, this leads to a convergence between what is purchased and what is consumed, not through ideological alignment, but through routine domestic integration and embodied relational practice (Addison-Akotoye *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, we hypothesise:

- H5. In interfaith marriage, Halal purchase decision of non-Muslim wives has a direct effect on gendered consumption of Halal food.

3 Methodology

3.1 Sample and data collection

This study aims to examine the factors that influence gendered consumption in interfaith marriage (non-Muslim wives and Muslim husbands) in the UK. An online survey was distributed for data collection with full ethical approval. The survey development followed a tailored design method (Dillman *et al.*, 2014). This study focused on a convenience sample of non-Muslim wives of Muslim husbands located in the UK. The survey also included several demographic questions and one pre-requisite question confirming that respondents identified as female non-Muslims and are married to Muslim men.

The sample was recruited primarily through online community groups and social media platforms oriented towards interfaith families. While this approach enabled access to a hard-to-reach population, it may over-represent individuals who are digitally active and more open to discussing interfaith relationships. As such, the sample should not be interpreted as representative of all Muslim-non-Muslim interfaith households. Rather, the findings reflect relational dynamics among couples who are sufficiently engaged to participate in online communities, which may also be associated with more reflexive or negotiated forms of household practice.

The original sample 257 respondents, applying the inclusion criteria (Bernerth *et al.*, 2021), we excluded 50 respondents indicted as Muslim wives, 40 non-married, 20 respondents for rapid completion, 5 for consent rejections, 21 for incomplete responses, and 18 for failing an attention check (“Please choose the colour blue from the options below”), we obtained a usable sample of 103 respondents.

Out of the final sample, 103 respondents were female, with the majority aged between 29 and 36 (34%) and between 18 and 29 (29.1%). Approximately 59% of the respondents reported to have between one and two children. A *t*-test revealed no statistically significant differences between these early and late respondents groups in all the constructs. Thus, our analysis found no evidence of response bias. Although the final sample comprised 103 respondents, each respondent represents a distinct interfaith household, effectively capturing data from 103 family units. Given the study’s focus on non-Muslim wives in Muslim-non-Muslim interfaith marriages, a minority-within-minority group that is sociologically bounded and demographically specific, this sample size is considered adequate for structural modelling and relational behavioural analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2024).

It is important to note that our survey did not collect detailed information regarding the specific religious background of non-Muslim wives (e.g. Christian, Jewish or other faiths). This is a limitation of the study, as Islamic jurisprudence differentiates between marriages with *Ahl al-Kitab* and those with adherents of other faiths or secular backgrounds (Jawad and Elmali-Karakaya, 2020). Our research, however, is concerned with the empirical dynamics of consumption in existing households rather than with evaluating the permissibility of the marriages themselves (Minton and Cabano, 2024). For clarity, the number of interfaith marriages in the UK is not entirely accurate, as on several occasions, these marriages take place as ceremonial “*Nikkah*”, which may not register as civil marriage, and the religious denomination of marriage is not collected (Office of National Statistics, 2024).

3.2 Measures

All constructs were measured using multi-item scales drawn from established literature. Respondents rated their agreement with each statement on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 7 (“strongly agree”). Table 1 presents the full list of items and their corresponding sources.

Table 1. Measurement of constructs including validity and reliability

Construct and items	Factor loading
<i>Spousal decision making</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.887$, CR = 0.923, AVE = 0.751)	
SDM_1: I have more influence over household activities than my husband does	0.894
SDM_2: I am more persuasive than my husband when making household decisions	0.911
SDM_3: I generally have more power than my husband does within household decisions	0.896
SDM_4: I have more authority over household meal choices than my husband does	0.755
<i>Halal purchase decision</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.899$, CR = 0.937, AVE = 0.832)	
HPD_1: I buy Halal products because they are readily available	0.910
HPD_2: I buy Halal products because there are a lot of choice possibilities within the Halal product line	0.943
HPD_3: I buy Halal Products because of the information on halal meat products is clear	0.882
<i>Religiosity</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.932$, CR = 0.944, AVE = 0.679)	
Rel_1: Islam has a strong presence in the home i.e. prayer mats around the home	0.806
Rel_2: My husband has a strong Islamic belief i.e. daily	0.768
Rel_3: My husbands' religious beliefs affect my daily life	0.782
Rel_4: My husband regularly teaches me Islamic practices	0.835
Rel_5: I enjoy fulfilling my husband's religious beliefs	0.882
Rel_6: My husband's religious happiness is important to me	0.872
Rel_7: I am happy to practice elements of the Islamic faith despite having no Islamic beliefs, i.e. eating Halal meat	0.833
Rel_8: I consider my husband's religion with any household purchase	0.806
<i>Gendered consumption</i> (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.714$, CR = 0.873, AVE = 0.775)	
GC_1: Eating halal meat is a personal choice that I make	0.910
GC_2: Eating halal meat is something that I do without reasoning	0.850

Source(s): Authors' own work

Religiosity. Religiosity was operationalised as the degree to which respondents' spouses (Muslim husbands) incorporate religious principles into their everyday life and decision-making. Recognising that religiosity is a multidimensional construct shaped by both belief and practice, and that in interfaith marriages such commitments are embedded within relational negotiations, we used an eight-item scale adapted from [Essoo and Dibb \(2004\)](#). This scale has been widely used to measure the salience and behavioural enactment of Islamic religious values in consumer contexts. Items reflect both the cognitive and behavioural aspects of religiosity (e.g. adherence to religious principles in daily life, prioritisation of faith in family matters). While religiosity is often conceptualised as an individual attribute, in the context of interfaith households, it is enacted relationally through everyday practices and accommodation ([Elhoushy and Jang, 2021](#)). Accordingly, the religiosity measure in this study captures the salience and enactment of the husband's religious obligations as experienced within the household, rather than doctrinal belief alone. Items such as "I enjoy fulfilling my husband's religious beliefs" reflect the extent to which religious obligations are operationalised through spousal accommodation, which is theoretically consistent with the study's focus on relational decision-making rather than individual piety. The scale demonstrated high internal consistency in this study ($\alpha = 0.932$).

Spousal decision-making. Spousal decision-making was defined as the extent to which household consumption decisions, specifically related to food, are made collaboratively, reflect mutual influence or involve deference to one partner's preferences. We adopted four

items from [Hasford et al. \(2018\)](#), which capture the negotiation dynamics, influence balance and joint nature of household consumption decisions. The scale reflects both instrumental and affective components of decision-making, and exhibited acceptable reliability ($\alpha = 0.887$) in this study.

Halal purchase decision. Halal purchase decision was conceptualised as the respondent's behavioural tendency to purchase food that complies with Islamic dietary laws. This construct captures not only stated preference but also purchasing action within a shared household context. We used a three-item scale adapted from [Bonne and Verbeke \(2008\)](#), originally developed to assess Halal purchasing in Muslim and non-Muslim populations. Items were adapted to reflect the interfaith nature of this study's sample. The scale showed strong internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.899$).

Gendered consumption. Gendered consumption was defined as the extent to which household food choices and preparation responsibilities reflect traditional gender roles, particularly with respect to women's responsibility for enacting culturally or religiously significant food practices. A four-item scale was adapted from [Bonne and Verbeke \(2008\)](#) to reflect the gendered dimensions of food provisioning and consumption in domestic contexts. The items assess role expectations, actual task division, and alignment of consumption behaviour with caregiving roles. Reliability for this scale was satisfactory ($\alpha = 0.714$).

4 Results

4.1 Structure equation modelling analysis and results

This study used partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the measurement model and test the proposed hypotheses. PLS-SEM handles complex relationships and mitigate factor ambiguity in moderated-mediation models ([Hair et al., 2024](#)). This variance-based technique enhances the prediction of endogenous constructs while providing superior statistical power, making it well-suited for our analysis ([Hair et al., 2022](#)). It is particularly valuable for investigating the intricate effects of spousal decision making, religiosity, Halal purchase decision and gendered consumption. The method's flexibility accommodates diverse measurement models and yields precise insights into variable interactions. By using PLS-SEM, we rigorously examine the interrelationships among variables and robustly test our hypotheses within a moderated-mediation framework.

In addition, the decision to use PLS SEM reflects both the nature of our research questions and the characteristics of the dataset. PLS SEM is well established for situations where theory is still developing, constructs are multifaceted, and the objective includes explaining variance and generating reliable predictions ([Hair et al., 2022](#)). These conditions align closely with the aims of this study. The number of structural paths leading to the focal endogenous construct is well below ten, indicating that a sample of 103 meets the widely applied ten times criterion for minimum sample size in PLS SEM. Simulation based evidence also shows that samples of approximately 100 observations are adequate for achieving stable estimates when effect sizes fall within a medium range ([Goodhue et al., 2012](#); [Reinartz et al., 2009](#)), a position reinforced by recent methodological syntheses ([Hair et al., 2022](#)). Given these considerations, PLS SEM offers a rigorous analytical approach that accommodates the sample constraints typical in studies of underrepresented populations while still supporting robust inference ([Acosta et al., 2019](#); [Richter et al., 2020](#)).

4.1.1 Measurement model. [Table 1](#) indicate that all items had loadings greater than 0.702. Several other items were removed for low loading > 0.40 , or to their effect on composite reliability ([Hair et al., 2022](#)). The minimum Cronbach's alpha (0.735) and CR (0.853) values in [Table 1](#) indicate acceptable construct reliability for each reflective construct examined. In addition, all constructs have AVE values above the 0.5 threshold (minimum

AVE = 0.663), demonstrating good convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Hair *et al.*, 2022). The Fornell–Larcker criterion shows that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its highest correlation with other constructs, as shown in Table 2. The maximum HTMT value of 0.890, as illustrated in Table 3, which is below the threshold of 0.9, further supports discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2022).

4.1.2 *Controlling for common method bias testing.* To address common method bias (CMB), we adopted four strategies. Firstly, we conducted a pilot study to refine the clarity of the survey items, using established measures from the literature. Secondly, we also interspersed questions on predictors, mediators and outcomes throughout the survey to minimise bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2024). Thirdly, Harman’s single-factor test revealed that the first factor accounts for less than 26% of the variance, further indicating that CMB is unlikely to be a significant concern (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2024). Finally, we performed a full collinearity test, as recommended by Kock (2017). Table 4 shows all inner variance inflation factor (VIF) values are below 3.3 (maximum inner VIF = 3.284), confirming the absence of CMB.

4.1.3 *Analytical model.* We evaluated the significance of path coefficients in the PLS-SEM inner model using a 5,000-subsample bootstrapping method (Hair *et al.*, 2022). Table 5 shows that

Table 2. Fornell–Larcker criterion for discriminant validity

No.	Variable	1	2	3	4
1	Gendered consumption	<i>0.880</i>			
2	Halal purchase decision	0.573	<i>0.912</i>		
3	Religiosity	0.518	0.402	<i>0.824</i>	
4	Spousal decision making	0.448	0.447	0.320	<i>0.866</i>

Notes(s): Italic diagonal elements are the square root of average variance extracted (AVE)

Source(s): Authors’ own work

Table 3. Heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) values for discriminant validity

No.	Variable	1	2	3	4
1	Gendered consumption				
2	Halal purchase decision	0.706			
3	Religiosity	0.614	0.427		
4	Spousal decision making	0.551	0.492	0.339	

Source(s): Authors’ own work

Table 4. Inner variance inflation factor (VIF) values for full collinearity test

No.	Variable	1	2	3	4
1	Gendered consumption		1.543	1.599	1.743
2	Halal purchase decision	1.372		1.604	1.518
3	Religiosity	1.224	1.380		1.395
4	Spousal decision making	1.281	1.269	1.352	

Source(s): Authors’ own work

Table 5. Structural equation modelling results

Endogenous construct	R^2					
Gendered consumption	0.454					
Halal purchase decision	0.275					
			CI 95%			
Structural path	Coefficients	SD	LCI	UCI	f^2	p -value
Spousal decision making → gendered consumption	0.179	0.086	0.012	0.349	0.049	0.030
Spousal decision making → halal purchase decision	0.353	0.093	0.157	0.521	0.156	0.000
Religiosity → gendered consumption	0.312	0.096	0.122	0.502	0.145	0.001
Religiosity → halal purchase decision	0.298	0.090	0.117	0.472	0.103	0.001
Halal purchase decision → gendered consumption	0.374	0.104	0.170	0.569	0.177	0.001
<i>Indirect effects</i>						
Religiosity → halal purchase decision → gendered consumption	0.112	0.048	0.031	0.215		0.030
Spousal decision making → halal purchase decision → gendered consumption	0.134	0.056	0.040	0.253		0.018

Notes(s): Two-tailed test. SD = Standard deviation; CI = Confidence interval; LCI = Lower confidence interval; UCI = upper confidence interval
Source(s): Authors' own work

the R^2 values for gendered consumption ($R^2 = 0.454, p < 0.001$) and Halal purchase decision ($R^2 = 0.275, p < 0.001$) all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.10 (Sarstedt et al., 2023).

We assessed our model's fit using several key indices. The standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) was 0.076, below the 0.08 threshold for good fit. We also calculated the Unweighted Least Squares discrepancy (d_ULS) at 0.883 and the Geodesic discrepancy (d_G) at 0.555. Together, these indices suggest an acceptable model fit (Hair et al., 2024). The SRMR, in particular, indicates a good fit between observed and predicted correlations.

We evaluated the model's out-of-sample prediction errors using the cross-validated predictive ability test (CVPAT), using k-fold cross-validation to mitigate overfitting or underfitting in PLS-SEM (Liengaard et al., 2021). Table 6 compares the average loss values of PLS-SEM predictions against naive indicator averages (IA) and linear model (LM) forecasts. A negative difference in average loss values indicates superior predictive performance of the PLS-SEM model compared to both benchmarks (Sharma et al., 2023). As shown in Table 6, our PLS-SEM, demonstrates superior predictive performance.

H1 proposed that spousal decision-making positively affects gendered consumption. The results in Table 5 confirm a significant positive relationship between spousal decision-making and gendered consumption ($\beta = 0.179, p < 0.031, f^2 = 0.049$). H2 posited that spousal

Table 6. Results of out-of-sample predictive relevance (CVPAT)

Variable	CVPAT PLS-SEM vs IA		CVPAT PLS-SEM vs LM	
	Average loss difference	p -value	Average loss difference	p -value
Gendered consumption	-0.918	0.004	-0.581	0.002
Halal purchase decision	-0.676	0.040	-0.320	0.075
Overall	-0.773	0.006	-0.424	0.002

Source(s): Authors' own work

decision-making positively affects Halal purchase decisions for spouses. This hypothesis was also supported, with the results indicating a significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.353$, $p < 0.000$, $f^2 = 0.156$).

H3 proposed that religiosity affects gendered consumption. Our findings confirm that religiosity has a positive and significant effect on gendered consumption ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.145$). Moreover, *H4* suggested that religiosity affects Halal purchase decisions. This hypothesis been also supported showing a positive and significant relationship ($\beta = 0.298$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.103$).

H5 suggested that Halal purchase decision directly affect gendered consumption. The results showed that Halal purchase decision has a positive significant effect on gendered consumption ($\beta = 0.374$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.177$). Our findings also confirmed a partial mediation relationship through a significant indirect effect between religiosity and gendered consumption through halal purchase decision is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.112$, $p < 0.029$). Moreover, the findings confirmed a positive and significant indirect effect between spousal decision-making and gendered consumption through halal purchase decision ($\beta = 0.134$, $p < 0.021$). This partial mediation shows that while religiosity and spousal decision-making directly affect gendered consumption, part of this relationship operates via its influence on Halal purchasing decisions. This confirms the dual pathways through which religiosity shapes gendered consumption, reinforcing the importance of Halal purchase decisions in mediating this relationship.

4.1.4 Post hoc analysis. To further assess whether religiosity, Halal purchase decision and spousal decision-making serve as necessary prerequisites for gendered consumption, we conducted a necessary condition analysis (NCA) as a complementary technique to the PLS-SEM results. NCA enables the identification of bottlenecks or constraints in outcome attainment, providing insight into whether certain predictors must reach a minimum threshold for the outcome to occur (Dul et al., 2021). This approach is particularly valuable for detecting non-compensatory relationships, where the absence of a condition cannot be offset by other variables.

Following the guidelines of Richter et al. (2020), we first computed latent variable scores from the validated PLS-SEM model. These scores served as inputs for the NCA. To avoid imposing linearity assumptions and to accommodate potential non-linear relationships between predictors and outcomes, we applied the ceiling envelopment-free disposal hull (CE-FDH) method. CE-FDH uses a non-decreasing step function to delineate the upper boundary of the data, allowing us to identify the minimum necessary levels of predictor variables required for a given level of the outcome (Dul et al., 2021).

The results (see Table 7) indicate that religiosity and spousal decision-making are necessary conditions for gendered consumption. Both constructs yielded medium-to-large effect sizes ($d \geq 0.1$) and were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that high levels of

Table 7. Necessary condition analysis effect sizes

Condition	Gendered consumption	
	CE-FDH	Permutation p -value
Halal purchase decision	0.000	0.000
Religiosity	0.206	0.000
Spousal decision making	0.392	0.000

Source(s): Authors' own work

gendered consumption are unlikely to occur unless these two conditions are present to a minimally sufficient degree.

Interestingly, while the Halal purchase decision showed a strong and significant predictive effect in the PLS-SEM model ($\beta = 0.374, p < 0.001$), its necessity effect size was zero ($d = 0.000$), indicating that it is not a necessary condition for gendered consumption. The permutation test yielded a significant p -value ($p = 0.000$), confirming the statistical robustness of this finding. This suggests that Halal purchase decision does not emerge as a necessary condition for gendered Halal consumption, despite being a significant predictor in the structural model. This finding suggests that while purchasing Halal products facilitates consumption, it is not sufficient on its own to explain gendered consumption outcomes. From a theoretical perspective, this suggests that consumption compliance may be achieved through routinised household practices, such as prior stockpiling or reliance on external provisioning (e.g. family networks or shared shopping arrangements), rather than through active purchasing decisions by the non-Muslim spouse. Practically, this implies that Halal consumption within interfaith households can be sustained even when purchasing authority or responsibility is unevenly distributed, reinforcing the argument that religious compliance operates through accommodation and routine rather than continuous decision-making.

To further interpret these findings, we conducted a bottleneck analysis (Table 8), which estimates the minimum thresholds of necessary conditions required to achieve specific levels of the outcome. To reach 100% gendered consumption, religiosity must exceed 44.33% and spousal decision-making must exceed 25.19%. These thresholds underscore religiosity as the most critical constraint among the three constructs, reinforcing its role as the primary driver of gendered consumption in interfaith households.

Figures 2, 3 and 4 provide visual representations of these necessary conditions and bottlenecks. Together, the NCA results augment the PLS-SEM findings by showing that while Halal purchasing is sufficient to predict gendered consumption, only religiosity and spousal decision-making represent non-substitutable conditions, without which high levels of gendered consumption are unlikely to be observed.

5 Discussion and theoretical implications

This study offers a contextual refinement of how religious obligation, gendered domestic roles and spousal dynamics jointly structure household consumption within interfaith marriages. The findings indicate that a Muslim husband’s religiosity significantly shapes both the Halal

Table 8. Bottleneck table (CE-FDH-Values)

Condition percentage	Gendered consumption	Halal purchase decision	Religiosity	Spousal decision making
0.000	1.000	NN	NN	NN
10.000	1.600	NN	1.550	1.974
20.000	2.200	NN	1.550	1.974
30.000	2.800	NN	1.550	1.974
40.000	3.400	NN	1.550	1.974
50.000	4.000	NN	1.550	1.974
60.000	4.600	NN	1.550	2.229
70.000	5.200	NN	2.774	2.519
80.000	5.800	NN	2.774	2.519
90.000	6.400	NN	4.433	2.519
100.000	7.000	NN	4.433	2.519

Source(s): Authors’ own work

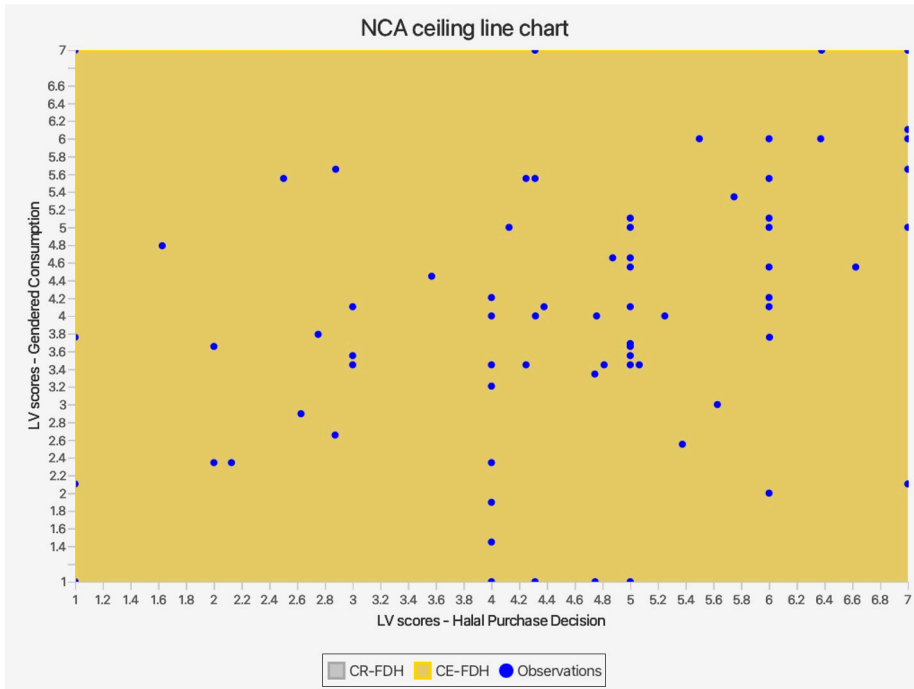


Figure 2. Scatterplot of halal purchase decision versus gendered consumption

Source: Authors' own work

purchasing and consumption behaviours of his non-Muslim wife. Importantly, this influence does not arise from shared beliefs or mutual preference alignment, but from the normative asymmetry introduced by religious obligation. In this context, moral salience functions not as a stronger preference but as a structuring condition that reshapes the household decision space. These findings complement relational accounts of consumption sacrifice (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025), by showing that relational adaptation may be driven not only by interpersonal closeness or affective motivation, but also by moral salience, particularly religious obligation, rather than preference convergence alone.

Conventional theories of family consumption assume that decision-making unfolds through negotiated influence, typically grounded in expertise, role differentiation or aligned values (Sheth, 1974; Screti *et al.*, 2024). Our findings indicate that in modern family decision models, morally regulated consumption contexts, negotiation is often displaced by moral constraint. Specifically, to this study, the results indicate that a Muslim husband's religiosity shapes halal purchasing and consumption behaviours even in the absence of shared beliefs or reciprocal persuasion. Rather than engaging in explicit negotiation or preference trade-offs, non-Muslim wives adapt their purchasing, preparation and serving practices to conform to halal requirements as part of routine food provisioning (Noor *et al.*, 2026). In this context, the purchase of halal food is not the outcome of preference convergence or joint decision-making, but the relational enactment of a religious standard that defines the boundaries of acceptable choice. Influence is therefore exercised not through persuasion or expertise, but

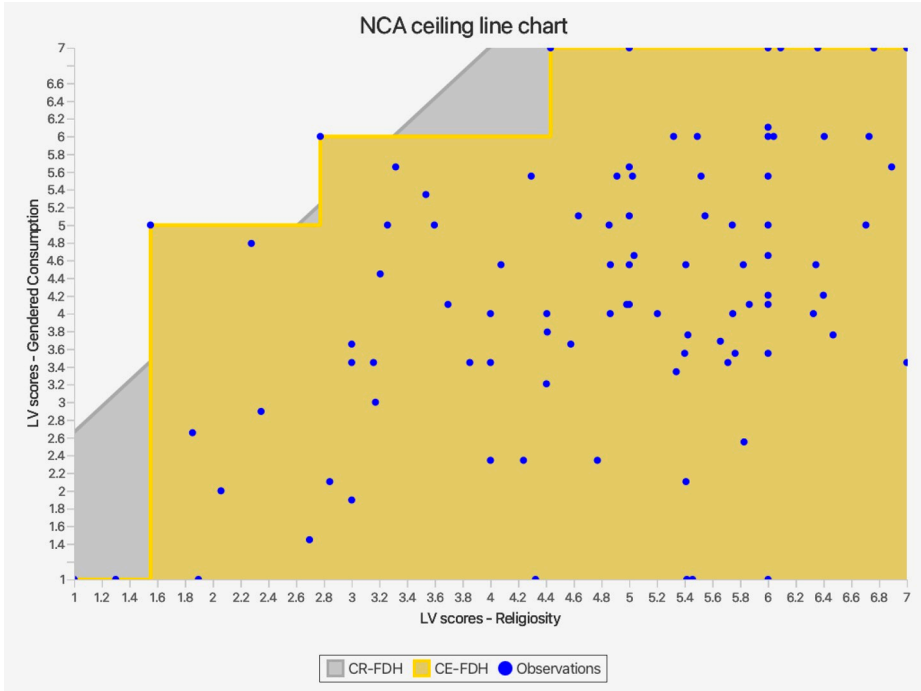


Figure 3. Scatterplot of religiosity versus gendered consumption
Source: Authors' own work

through the moral legitimacy attached to religious obligation, which constrains the decision space within which household choices are made. This insight contributes to research on gendered consumption by clarifying how caregiving roles function as mechanisms through which moral norms are institutionalised, rather than merely distributed (Minton and Cabano, 2024; Liu and Kwon, 2023).

The findings should also be interpreted with sensitivity to the distinction between religious law and lived social practice (Sandikci, 2021). Some of the households in this study may not align with traditional definitions of permissible interfaith unions, which constrains the generalisability of the results to Muslim-majority settings. Nonetheless, these households demonstrate how Halal observance is understood, negotiated and embedded within everyday domestic life and contemporary family structures (Minton and Cabano, 2024). This divergence between normative prescription and empirical reality underscores the importance of viewing religious consumption not solely through theological compliance but also as a reflection of relational adaptation and cultural context (Sandikci, 2021). In addition, while these findings highlight how relational obligation influences Halal consumption in interfaith households, it is important to recognise that this pattern reflects the experiences of a small and specific group, non-Muslim wives married to Muslim men in the UK. As such, the dynamics observed here may not extend to all interfaith configurations or cultural contexts, and should be interpreted as context-dependent rather than universally generalisable.

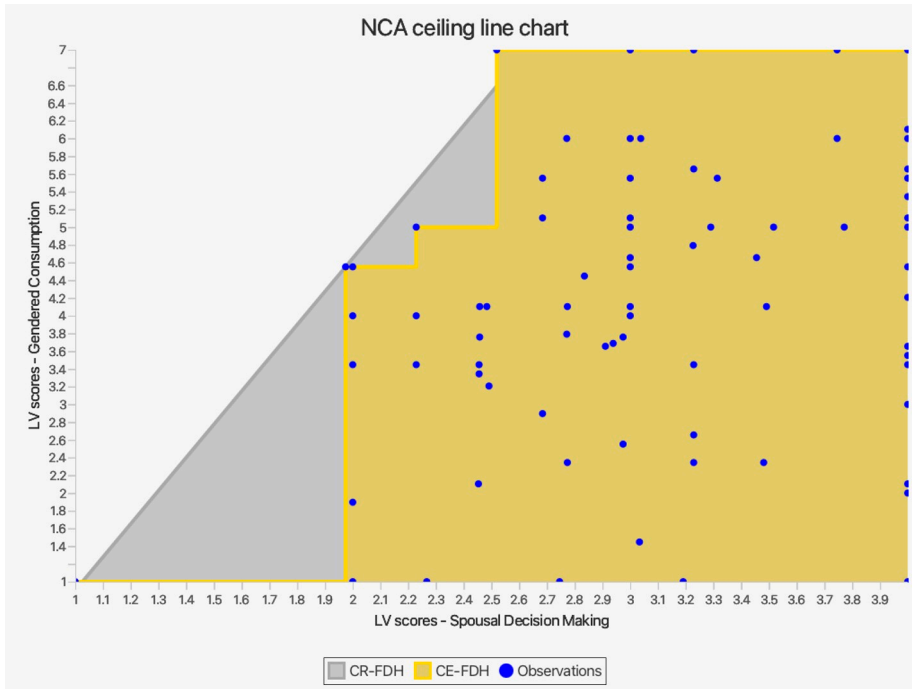


Figure 4. Scatterplot of spousal decision making versus gendered consumption

Source: Authors' own work

Crucially, the link between Halal purchasing and consumption behaviour among non-Muslim wives illustrates how religious norms become institutionalised within domestic life. The act of preparing and serving Halal food transforms one partner's religious commitment into the embodied, routinised practice of the other, even in the absence of shared conviction. This dynamic highlights the performative nature of gendered consumption, where the wife's caregiving role serves as the conduit through which her husband's religious values are materially enacted and sustained (Horowitz and Mohun, 1998; Charles and Kerr, 1987; Minton and Cabano, 2024). These practices reflect processes of doing gender (West and Zimmerman, 1987), whereby everyday household actions reproduce socially recognised expectations of femininity, care, and marital responsibility, while also normalising religious norms within domestic life.

It also highlights how caregiving is not simply logistical, but morally encoded, embedding one partner's values into the fabric of everyday routines (Liu and Kwon, 2023; Chatzidakis and Maclaran, 2020). In this context, consumption becomes a form of relational adaptation, where accommodation is not grounded in shared belief but emerges from the pursuit of household harmony and care (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025; Addison-Akotoye *et al.*, 2024; Noor *et al.*, 2026). This study contributes to existing theories of family buying behaviour (Sheth, 1974) and gendered consumption (Horowitz and Mohun, 1998; Minton and Cabano, 2024) by showing that moral commitments, such as religious obligations, are not only privately held but domestically enacted, institutionalised through gendered labour and normalised via asymmetrical responsibility (Becker, 2022).

These findings contribute to the interpretive understanding of value asymmetry, a relational condition in which one partner's commitments (in this case, religious obligations) carry greater normative weight in shaping household consumption (Hurka, 2010; Stauder and Röhlke, 2022). While not directly measured, this asymmetry is interpreted in how one partner's moral framework defines the boundaries of acceptable choices, which are then enacted through the relational and often gendered labour of the other (Afzal *et al.*, 2022). This dynamic aligns with broader research on intra-household inequality and constrained decision spaces, particularly in contexts marked by gendered responsibilities and uneven normative authority (Ambler *et al.*, 2021; Shobande, 2025).

Extending this interpretation, research on family practices suggests that couples often rely on tacit coordination to preserve relational stability under conditions of normative difference, rather than resolving disagreements at the level of explicit belief (Shoaf *et al.*, 2022; Miller, 2018). The influence observed in this study does not manifest through overt persuasion or formal authority, but through the normative legitimacy of one partner's commitments and the embedded expectation of compliance within gendered caregiving roles' authority (Shobande, 2025; Almås *et al.*, 2023). In such cases, the non-religious partner often undertakes the emotional and logistical labour of sustaining values they may not personally hold, thereby transforming individual moral commitments into shared domestic practice (Kanbur, 2018; Colaner *et al.*, 2022). By showing how asymmetric normative commitments structure both purchasing and consumption, this study contributes to the understanding of household decision-making as a site of relational obligation, rather than a domain of preference negotiation or resource-based bargaining (Kanbur, 2018). In doing so, it contributes to a culturally embedded, relational model of consumption, one that foregrounds care, identity and moral commitment as core drivers of economic behaviour within pluralistic family contexts (Afzal *et al.*, 2022).

Furthermore, the demographic profile of the sample provides further context for understanding the relational mechanisms identified in this study. Most respondents were between 29 and 36 and 18 and 29 years of age, life-course stages typically associated with the consolidation of household routines and the negotiation of stable domestic roles (McCarthy *et al.*, 2013). Interestingly, age and the presence of children do not exert a consistent influence on gendered Halal consumption outcomes. This suggests that the effects observed in this study are not merely a function of life-stage or parental responsibility, but are instead driven by relational dynamics and moral asymmetry between partners.

Prior research shows that partners in this phase often formalise everyday practices related to foodwork, caregiving and household organisation (Torkkeli *et al.*, 2022), which may help explain the strong alignment observed between Halal purchasing and consumption. Similarly, with almost 59% of the sample reporting one or two children, the presence of young dependants often intensifies the need for consistency in meal preparation and reduces the flexibility for parallel food routines (Murcott, 1998; Jackson and Viehoff, 2016). Children's involvement in family food practices is known to heighten the moral salience of household decisions and amplify the perceived responsibility of primary food providers (Ellis, 2018), potentially strengthening the enactment of the Muslim partner's religious commitments. While these demographic patterns were not reported in the structural model, they offer valuable contextual insight into how age, family structure, and gendered provisioning responsibilities intersect with value asymmetry and negotiated authority in shaping Halal consumption within interfaith households. Finally, the findings suggest that existing family decision-making models (e.g. Hasford *et al.*, 2018; Van Niekerk and Verkuyten, 2018; Sheth, 1974; Horowitz and Mohun, 1998; Minton and Cabano, 2024; Becker, 2022) are most applicable to negotiable consumption domains and require refinement when moral obligation defines the limits of acceptable household choice.

5.1 Practical implications

The findings of this study have practical implications for marketers, retailers, policymakers and hospitality providers operating in increasingly diverse and multi-faith consumer markets in the UK. We recommend that, rather than treating interfaith households as culturally sensitive exceptions, organisations should recognise them as part of the sociological reality of contemporary multicultural life, in which non-Muslim wives may act as the primary shoppers and food decision-makers (Noor *et al.*, 2026; Hochstein *et al.*, 2025).

Firstly, marketers targeting Halal markets should move beyond segmentation strategies based solely on religious identity and instead design campaigns around household use, relational roles and everyday food practices. Religious influence on consumption can extend through household responsibilities as well as personal belief (Filimonau *et al.*, 2022). In practice, this means addressing non-Muslim household members, particularly women in interfaith marriages, as active purchasers and consumers of Halal products, even when their participation is driven by care, routine and domestic coordination rather than by shared faith. Therefore, marketing strategies should reflect shared domestic routines rather than assume that religious identity alone drives demand (Rinallo *et al.*, 2023; Bakhshizadeh Borj *et al.*, 2025). For example, brand communications can explicitly portray Halal consumption as part of shared family meals, routine shopping and caregiving practices, rather than solely as an expression of individual religiosity, as illustrated by Sainsbury's Ramadan adverts (Wilson, 2018) and more recent campaigns such as Tesco's "Together this Ramadan", which centred Iftar, family gathering and inclusion.

Secondly, retailers and brand managers should make Halal purchasing easier to identify, trust and incorporate into ordinary shopping routines. Halal-certified food should be positioned in ways that reflect the dynamics of religious accommodation within an interfaith household (Usman *et al.*, 2022). This requires clearer in-store signage, more visible certification labels, online search filters and merchandising strategies that integrate Halal products into mainstream shopping journeys rather than isolating them as niche items. Messaging that foregrounds family unity, respect for difference, shared provision, and ease of preparation may resonate more strongly with interfaith households than messaging focused only on authenticity or compliance (Fuseini *et al.*, 2021). Retailers can also support this by curating Ramadan and Eid meal ideas, recipes and seasonal ranges that present Halal-related consumption as part of shared domestic life rather than a specialist exception. Tesco's Ramadan/Eid recipe and seasonal content provide a useful illustration of this more integrated approach.

Thirdly, policymakers and certification bodies should strengthen consumer trust by improving consistency, clarity and visibility in Halal standards. As non-Muslim consumers increasingly participate in Halal purchasing, often without detailed familiarity with religious requirements, clear labelling, trustworthy certification and visible supply chain integrity become critical for confident decision-making (Fuseini *et al.*, 2021; Hochstein *et al.*, 2025). Standardising certification frameworks and increasing their visibility across mainstream retail channels would reduce confusion, strengthen trust and broaden engagement beyond traditional religious boundaries (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2024; Fuseini *et al.*, 2021).

Finally, tourism and hospitality providers should recognise that Halal food needs in interfaith families are often negotiated collectively rather than individually (Ding *et al.*, 2022). Hotels, restaurants, airlines and tour operators should therefore reduce friction by offering clearly labelled Halal options, transparent sourcing information, flexible meal customisation and staff training in dietary sensitivity (Duman, 2020; Han *et al.*, 2019). These measures would better support both the Muslim partner's religious commitments and the non-Muslim partner's role as the primary food decision-maker, thereby reducing

the moral and logistical strain that may otherwise accompany travel for interfaith households (Senbeto, 2022).

6 Conclusion, limitations and future recommendations

This study aimed to investigate the Halal purchase decisions and consumption patterns of non-Muslim wives in interfaith marriages, specifically those married to Muslim men, in the UK. This study contributes to our understanding that religiously motivated consumption is not solely an individual practice, but a relational process embedded in ongoing negotiation, accommodation and identity work within the couple. The findings suggest that non-Muslim wives navigate the moral expectations associated with halal observance through relational accommodation, shaping patterns of food provisioning and consumption within interfaith households. By foregrounding the relational mechanisms through which religious norms are enacted in everyday life, the study contributes to the research on family decision-making and contributes to broader conversations on how moral forces operate within intimate partnerships (Elmali-Karakaya, 2022).

These contributions should be interpreted in light of several limitations, each of which also points to a specific direction for future research. Firstly, the sample consists of 103 non-Muslim wives recruited through specialised online groups in the UK. While this approach enabled access to an otherwise difficult-to-reach and understudied population, it necessarily limits the generalisability of the findings and may privilege the perspectives of individuals who are more digitally engaged or more reflective about interfaith identity. As a result, the patterns identified in this study should be understood as illustrative rather than representative of all interfaith households. Future research could address this limitation by adopting broader recruitment strategies, such as multi-site sampling or collaboration with community and faith-based organisations, to capture greater heterogeneity in household structures, migration histories, and geographical contexts.

Building on this, future research must focus on cross-cultural comparative research by explicitly comparing interfaith households in which non-Muslim wives and Muslim husbands live in Muslim-majority societies with those living in non-Muslim-majority contexts. Such comparisons would allow researchers to examine how societal norms, institutional support for halal consumption, and ambient religious expectations shape moral salience, caregiving practices and accommodation dynamics. This would clarify whether the relational patterns observed in the UK reflect minority-context adaptation or more general features of interfaith household decision-making.

Secondly, the analytical focus on non-Muslim wives, while theoretically motivated by their central role in food provisioning, constrains insight into reciprocal influence processes within interfaith couples. The perspectives of Muslim husbands and the potential for negotiation, resistance or mutual adaptation are not directly captured in the present framework. Future research should therefore adopt dyadic or couple-based approaches, such as paired surveys or joint interviews, to examine how moral obligation, caregiving responsibilities and decision rights are co-constructed, aligned, or contested within interfaith relationships. Such designs would enable analysis of not only accommodation outcomes, but also disagreement, silence and tacit coordination within couples.

Thirdly, the study did not collect detailed information on the religious background of non-Muslim wives. As a result, it is not possible to examine whether different religious affiliations or varying degrees of religious salience among wives shape how halal norms are interpreted, accommodated, or resisted. Future research could adopt comparative designs that explicitly differentiate between wives from different religious traditions (e.g. Christian, Jewish, Hindu, secular or non-affiliated) to assess whether and how religious proximity,

theological overlap, or prior familiarity with dietary rules influences moral accommodation and household practices.

Fourthly, while the study identifies clear patterns of adaptation, it does not capture more subtle forms of selective compliance or quiet resistance that may occur within households (Garcia-Rada *et al.*, 2025). Non-Muslim spouses may privately modify practices, negotiate exceptions, or express ambivalence in low-visibility contexts, particularly when balancing personal autonomy with relational harmony (Hasford *et al.*, 2018; Almås *et al.*, 2023). Future qualitative research, including in-depth interviews or household ethnographies, could illuminate these forms of moral boundary work, revealing how individuals manage identity preservation alongside caregiving and relational commitments.

Finally, the cross-sectional design provides a static snapshot of household dynamics that are likely to evolve over time. Religious commitment, caregiving roles and family structures may shift as relationships mature, children age or life-course events intervene. Longitudinal and ethnographic research would therefore be valuable in tracing how halal consumption practices and moral accommodation develop, stabilise or dissolve across time. For example, future studies could examine how moral salience fluctuates during periods such as Ramadan, following childbirth or during visits from extended family members. Complementary experimental or survey-based approaches could further test how moral concerns shift across relational and situational contexts, moving research beyond static accounts toward more processual explanations of religious consumption in interfaith households.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval for this research was obtained from the University of Hull Research Ethics Committee at the Hull University Business School, University of Hull.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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