

Halal Food Awareness Among Consumer in Selangor

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The issue of halal food is one of the issues debated at the international level, especially in Malaysia because it has a majority Muslim population. Furthermore, the halal market is in high demand due to its recognition of safety, hygiene and quality assurance. This study focuses on investigating the relationship between the factors of halal certification logo, health reason and religion belief to the halal food awareness among consumer. To measure the relationship between the dependent and independent variable, each variable has been tested. In collecting the data, 155 respondents participate in filling up the questionnaire given. The respondents are the people lives in Selangor. From the correlation analysis, the findings clearly indicate that religion belief is the main factor that contribute to halal food awareness among consumer in Selangor.

Keywords: Halal Certification, Halal Food Awareness, Health Reason, Muslim Consumer, Religious Belief.

1. INTRODUCTION

As we know, Malaysia has a variety ethnic and race in their population. By the year 2020, Malaysia has their motion track towards to become a developed country compare to another country. Thus, with such a huge vision, Malaysia should not depend on the single sector but has various economic generations that can contribute to the country's wealth and economic growth. One of the most important sectors in economic generators is Halal food or Halal product sector. This sector is no longer a small industry which only complies with the religious requirement but already become an economics force in domestically and internationally. That is the reason why Malaysian has been said will drive to be a Halal hub in a next few years.

According to Termizhan et al. 2000, as Muslim nowadays had becomes more knowledgeable and informative regarding their religion, it is become the reason why they have been more alert and selective

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towards the food, products, and services that they are consuming. The Malaysian food market, in general, and the Muslim market has suffered from several food scares, the most recent being the non-*halal* bakery oil scandals. Under the full glare of media attention, consumer halal concerns erupted causing widespread alarm, (reported in Malay Mail, 2006).

In addition, the demand rates for *halal* food market around the world has increased with the expansion of 2.1 billion Muslim populations. According to World Halal Forum 2011, the size of halal food market is around USD661 billion compare to Mariam (2010) said, the size of the halal sector which throughout the world is about the USD2.1 trillion. While Dewan Ekonomi (2011) has estimated that the growing of halal market is 25% per year.

As a Muslim, they are mandatory to follow the guideline that state in the Holy Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, in Quran, it is clearly noted that Muslim must consume only *halal* foods and avoid *haram* foods. Halal can describe as an Arabic word which means lawful, legal, licit, legitimate, permissible, allowable, permitted, allowed, and admissible, unprohibited (Baalbaki, 1997). This is directly derived from verses in the Holy Quran which Muslim compulsory to eat only halal food. The following verses from Holy Quran which specifies of the injunction on consuming halal food: Eat of that which Allah has bestowed on you as food lawful and good and keep your duty to Allah in whom he is believers (Surah 5 Verse 88).

All the food that consumed by Muslims is lawful or permitted unless, the food being categorized in Holy Quran and Hadith as haram or forbidden. Halal food and Muslim is inseparable because Muslim custom and religion are governed by the guidelines and rule based on Islamic Law. Normally, if the food does not contain any pork, carrion, alcohol, blood and urine ingredients, the food is considered halal.

Malaysia's halal industry has been a change in halal dietary practice. However, it is still not sufficient and a paradigm shift needs to be speeded up by the parties whether the job, industry or consumers in enhancing their knowledge on halal food to conform to the requirements of syarak and the applicable standard (Burhanuddin et. Al, 2016).

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2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are: first, to examine the relationship between halal certification logo, health reason and religious belief towards halal awareness and to determine the significance factors that influence in halal food awareness among consumer in Selangor.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Halal Food

In Islam, all foods or products for consumption should be halal except for the pork and its by-products, an animal which improperly slaughtered or already dead before slaughtering, an animal that killed in the name of other than the name of Allah (SWT) and drinks that intoxicate such as alcohol and other intoxicants. Haram also comprises carnivorous animals, birds of prey and land animals without external ears, blood and blood by-products and foods "contaminated" with any of the above-mentioned products as Muslims are raised to eat or drink halal hygienic and safe foods or products (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

3.2 Halal Certification logo

Halal certification can be simply defined as a display of information regarding some products in its package. According to Ahmad et al., (2013), the extent of information about halal food or products which must be impacted by the label is governed by the relevant safety in Muslim societies such as Malaysia. Thus, the enforcement for labelling and logo can serve as important influencing mechanisms in triggering Muslim's level of awareness on halal food or products. This is because they need to justify the products and foods' status either by its logo or by its labelling as halal or non-halal before purchasing or consuming it (Ambli & Bakar, 2012).

3.3 Health reason

Health reason is one of the reasons why the consumer is choosing halal food. They know and considered that halal food is safety and coming from healthy resource or material. According to Bonne et al., (2007), all Muslim will choose the halal food because they offer healthy ingredients. This then will lead to a level of awareness on halal food. For example, Ambali and Bakar (2012) and Ahmad et al. (2013) found in they study the association between health reason and Muslims' awareness of halal consumption.

3.4 Religious belief

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (1997), the decision to eat, drink or using any product is influenced by their religious belief, orientation, their knowledge, and self-belief. In addition, religiosity also can be defined as the intrinsic orientation. Its means, which religion provides the individual with all those meaning-framework in order which life is going to understood. The individual is more on spiritual. The higher level of the religious belief in the individual, the more likely for them to engage on activities that respect high ethics and morale.

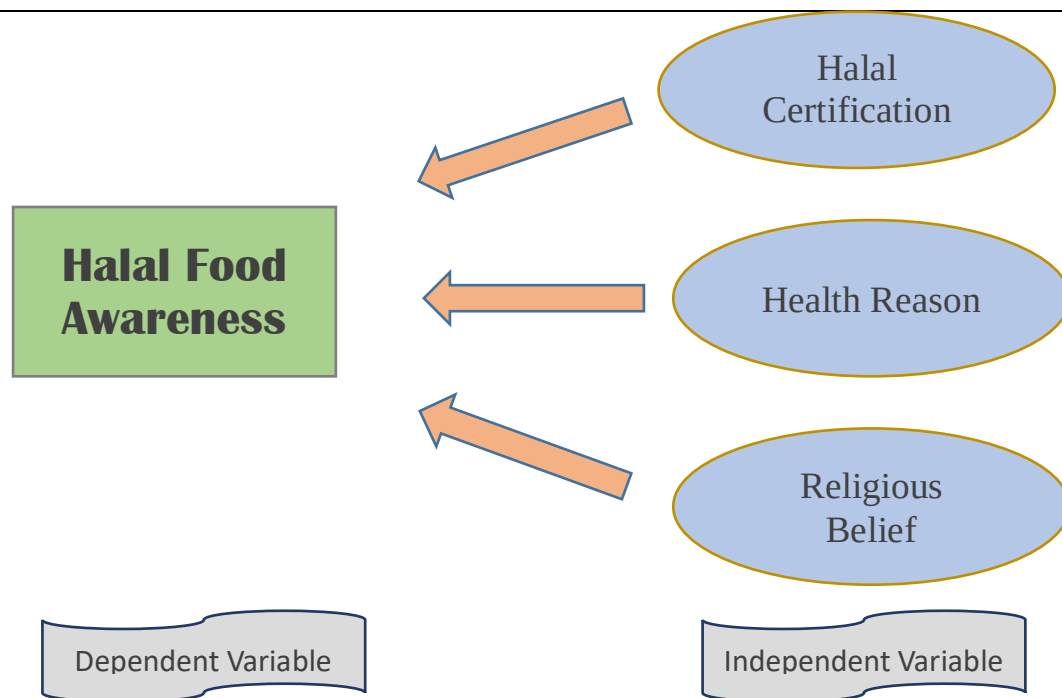
3.5 Halal Awareness

The word 'awareness' in the context of halal means having literally means having a special interest in having experience in something and being well informed regarding the current issues on halal foods and products. As such, awareness can describe a human cognitive reaction and perception towards of what they eat, drink and use. Nizam (2006), awareness had provided the raw material to create the subjective idea regarding the experience that that related to something.

4. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Based on the given factors found in the literature that can contribute to the level of people's awareness about halal consumption, it is important to empirically study to identify the actual significant roles played by each as a determinant of halal food awareness among consumer around Selangor. Based on the review of the literature, the theoretical framework is developed by the researcher.

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In this conceptual framework, the halal food awareness among consumer is considered as the dependent variable which is to be influenced by the independent variables in terms of the role played by halal logo certification, health reason and religious belief.

5. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire can be described as a structures framework which consists set of questions to create and produce the primary data (Hair et al. 2007). For this research, the primary instrument selected questionnaire as the medium to collect the data. In having a set f data, the researcher has distributed 155 set of questionnaires to the respondents by using convenience sampling. The population elements only focus on consumers around the city of Selangor, Malaysia.

The questionnaire is using the Likert scale which all respondents must fit only one answer. The answer categorizes on how they strongly agree or disagree with the statement (Saunders, 2009). The questionnaires separated by three sections which are Section A – demographic questions, Section B – construct measurement on three independents variable which are Halal Logo Certification, Health Reason, and Religious Belief. While the last Section C – is solely on Halal Food awareness among consumer which is the dependent variable.

Descriptive analysis is the transformation of the raw data into the information which can describe a set of factors in each information (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). While Pearson Correlation Analysis is used to measure the relationship between the variables. The significance level is 0,05 and its mean that 95% of the confidence level. The hypothesis is accepted when the result consist significant value of less than 0.005 (Malhorta, 2010).

Multiple Regression Analysis can be defined as a statistical technique that is used by the researcher to estimate the respondents score on one variable towards other respondents (Brace, Kemp & Snelger, 2009). With the analysis, the researcher will not only get identify which independent variable will affect the score of the dependent variable, but also can able to determine the interrelated strength between the independent variable (Hair et al. 2006).

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6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Summary of Demographic Profile

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Profile

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percent (%)
<u>Age</u>		
20 or under	29	19.33
21-25	56	37.33
26-40	34	22.67
41 or older	31	20.67
<u>Gender</u>		
Female	34	22.7
Male	116	77.3
<u>Language</u>		
Arabic	6	4.0
English	26	17.3
Malays	101	67.3
Other	17	11.3
<u>Ethnic</u>		
Chinese	25	16.7
Malay	79	52.2
Indian	12	8.0
Other	34	22.7
<u>Occupation</u>		
Government Servant	78	52.0
Private Sector	29	19.3
Self Employed	9	6.0
Student	28	18.7
Others	6	4.0
<u>Income</u>		
Below RM1,500	28	18.7
RM1,501-RM3,000	9	6.0
RM3,001-RM4,500	53	35.3
RM4,501-RM6,000	55	36.7
RM6,000 and above	5	3.3

Based on the above summary, the respondent's demographic profile shows that most the respondents' ages are between 21 to 25 years old range which consists 37.33%. The smaller portion for the age group is 20 years old or below with only 19.33%. Then, most the respondent is male which consists 77.3% compared to female respondents with 22.7%.

Most the respondent are using Malays as their language which consists 67.3%. The smaller portion for the language is Arabic which consists only 4.0%. The higher ethnic from the respondent are Malay with 52.2% and the lowest are Indian which 8.0% is only. By looking at their occupation, most the respondents are Chinese from the Government Servant with 52.0% and the other is consist 4.0% is the lowest percentages base on the occupation. Respondents are mostly earned RM4,501 to RM6,000 which consist 36.7% while the lowest percentage only consist 3.3% for RM6,000 and above based on their income.

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6.2 Reliability Test

Table 2: Result for Reliability Test

No.	Construct(s)	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items	Result (Sekaran, 2003)
1.	Halal Logo Certification	0.861	5	Very Good
2.	Health Reason	0.888	5	Very Good
3.	Religious Belief	0.898	5	Very Good
4.	Halal Food Awareness	0.931	5	Very Good

N = 150

From the above table shows that the reliability analysis and the result of the overall study of the independent variables and dependent variable. It is more reliable when it closer to 1.0. In this case, the number of item for each variable is five. Halal food awareness gets the highest Cronbach Alpha value which consists 0.931 which categorized as very good on the strength of consumer awareness. Then follow by Religious Belief, Halal Logo Certification and Health Reason which also belong to very good strength on Cronbach's Alpha value. It can be interpreted that all the item variables are reliable and consistent for this study.

6.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis

		Halal Logo Certification	Health Reason	Religious Belief	Consumer Awareness
Halal Logo Certification	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1			
Health Reason	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.736* .000	1		
Religious Belief	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.488* .000	0.497* .000	1	
Consumer Awareness	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-0.126* .000	0.35** .000	0.803* .000	1

N = 150

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the study, the hypothesis of the independent variables (Halal Certification Logo, Health Reason, and Religious Belief) have been tested by using Pearson Correlation Analysis, based on the above table, the correlations of all independent variables are significant at 0.01 (2-tailed) to the dependent variable. This shows that they are correlated and does have a positive relationship with the dependent variable. The strongest correlation with the consumer awareness in religious belief at 0.803, health reason 0.35 and the lowest is halal certification logo at -0.126.

Table 3 shows that halal certification logo has negative relationship with halal awareness towards consumer in Selangor. Thus, it explained that halal certification logo is not one of the factors that influence halal awareness among consumers in Selangor.

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For health reason and religious belief, there are positive relationship with halal food awareness. It shows that consumers in Selangor are very particular in health and religious when choosing the halal foods.

6.4 Coefficient

Table 5: Coefficient Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standard Coefficient
	B	Std. Error	Beta
1 (Construct)	.567	0.015	
HL	-.951	0.004	-0.636
HR	-.117	0.005	-0.068
RB	1.874	0.003	1.147

Table 5 shows the findings of the three independent variables were significant to the halal food awareness. All the independent variables have below 0.05 significant levels (95% confidence level). But refer to Beta result, it is clearly shown that religious belief is the most significant factor that effects halal food awareness towards consumer in Selangor. Therefore, from the findings, we can conclude that religious belief is the most important factor in halal food awareness among consumers in Selangor.

6.5 Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

H1 There is a positive relationship between halal certification logo and halal food awareness among consumer.

HO There is no relationship between halal certification logo and halal food awareness among consumer.

Reject HO if $p < 0.05$

Based on Table 5, the p-value for halal certification logo is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05. Thus, H0 rejected. We can conclude that there was a significant relationship between health reason logo and halal food awareness among consumer.

Hypothesis 2

H1 There is a positive relationship between health reason and halal food awareness among consumer.

HO There is no relationship between health reason and halal food awareness among consumer.

Reject HO if $p < 0.05$

Based on Table 5, the p-value for health reason is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05. Thus, H0 rejected. We can conclude that there was a significant relationship between halal certification logo and halal food awareness among consumer.

Hypothesis 3

H1 There is a positive significant relationship between religious belief and halal food awareness among consumer.

HO There is no relationship between religious belief and halal food awareness among consumer.

Reject HO if $p < 0.05$

Based on Table 5, the p-value for halal certification logo is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05. Thus, H0 rejected. We can conclude that there was a significant relationship between religious belief and halal food awareness among consumer.

7. Conclusion

For the conclusion, this research had achieved and fulfilled their objectives which are to study regarding factors that affect halal food awareness and the relationship between halal certification logo, health reason, and religious belief towards halal food awareness among consumer. It also indicates that which factor has the most significant relationship towards the consumer's awareness.

The levels of awareness towards halal food and product consumptions among consumers in Selangor, Malaysia are gaining impetus. The final findings of the research show that the growing demands for halal consumptions are aided by several potential factors that are identified, which include religious belief, health reason and the role played by halal certification via the halal logo. This paper also highlights some past and current issues for future direction guidelines of food and product policies in Malaysia.

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