

# Assessing Awareness of Halal Food Premises: Issues and Strategic Solutions

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## ARTICLE INFO

### *Article history:*

Received 1 June 2025

Revised 19 September 2025

Accepted 20 March 2026

Published 31 March 2026

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### *Keywords:*

consumer perception

food premises

halal awareness

halal certification

halal compliance

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### *DOI:*

<https://doi.org/10.24191/jhsmr.v2i1.11147>

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## ABSTRACT

In the contemporary era, the food and beverage industry grown rapidly. This can be observed through the rise in the number of premises that have been established currently. This growth provides consumers many types of options. However, this industry is always facing thousands of problems regarding the disobedience of the halal and haram concept, whether during the preparation of the food or its consumption. Therefore, this study aims to measure the awareness among society towards the halal status of premises, analyse the factors of premises not having halal certification and to identify the solution to encourage premises owners to apply for halal certificates. This study used a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. A survey was conducted on 50 respondents by using Google Forms while qualitative data were obtained through the analysis of journals and articles. The findings show that most of the respondents were concerned about the halal certification of the restaurant. Majority also believe that a sign of 'no pork' and 'no alcohol' do not guarantee halal compliance due to there being other factors that can influence the halal status. Additionally, three major factors of premises were founded as contributing to the absence of halal certification, which are the strict procedures required by Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), the complicated documentation process and financial problems. As a result, effective solutions are proposed including applying halal certification through MYeHALAL, ensuring raw

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materials used in the premises have a halal certification or supporting documents from the authority, sending the internal staff to halal training provided by JAKIM to avoid hiring outsiders as halal executives and give a financial support to the premises that want to apply for halal certification.

## INTRODUCTION

Halal is an Arabic word meaning something that is permissible and acceptable, meanwhile haram is something that is strictly forbidden and prohibited to use (Gunardi et al., 2022). Halal can also be identified as something that is *mubah* and allowed by *syara'*. It includes every aspect of life, including products, food and beverages, and services (Azhar & Abdul Wahab, 2017).

Application of halal and *tayyib* concept is very important for every Muslim since it is the rule from *syara'* as mentioned in the Quran:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلْالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

Translation: "O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy"

(al-Quran 2:168)

Consuming halal and *tayyib* food is a must. For this reason, everything that had been consume by human will become part of the flesh and blood, and the essence will merge with the body (Osman, 2020). Two criteria must be prioritised during consuming food which are lawful and permitted (Halal) and clean and good (*tayyib*) because it will have effects physically and spiritually on humans (Yahaya & Ruzulan, 2020).

In the hadith, the concept of halal and haram is stated by the prophet PBUH and these things need to be understood correctly by the Islamic community because it is the lifestyle of a Muslim not only involves the aspect of food but entire aspects of human life. On the authority of Abu 'Abdullah al-Nu'man bin Bashir (R.A) who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah says:

‘ الْحَلَالُ بَيِّنٌ، وَالْحَرَامُ بَيِّنٌ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا مَشَبَهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا كَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ... ’

Translate: "The halal is clear and the haram is clear, and between them are matters unclear that are unknown to most people..."

(Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab: *al-Iman*, Bab: Faḍl min istibra' li dīnih, Hadīth no.59)

This hadīth encourages man to protect oneself from doubtful things and to avoid forbidden things, and it can be understood that the advice to avoid forbidden food and drink is for one's own benefit. Hence, the preparation and selection of the food need to be emphasised as it should follow every procedure and criteria required by Islamic law to prevent any contamination or doubtful elements in foods especially industrial food produced currently. Thus, this study aims to examine awareness of people about the halal status of a premise, to analyze the factor of the premises not having halal certificates and to identify the solution to encourage premises owners to apply for halal certificates.

## METHODOLOGY

This research used mixed-method research design, consisting of quantitative survey and qualitative document analysis to obtain the data and information. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online by using Google Form. That survey contained several questions regarding

the title of the study. Respondents were selected using a convenience sampling method, by distributing the link to individuals. The respondents include 50 students and staff from different public universities. This sample size is considered adequate for small-scale study to explore public awareness of halal food premises.

Most of them are from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), respectively from Shah Alam, Kota Bharu, Machang and Seri Iskandar campuses. Most of the respondents are from the Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS). However, a few of the respondents are from the College of Engineering, the Academy of Language Studies, the Faculty of Applied Sciences, and the Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences. In addition, several respondents represented Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), and Politeknik Kota Bharu. All the respondents are Muslims and have a basic knowledge about halal. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire. All the responses were kept confidential.

Additionally, qualitative methods have been used to collect and analyze the information through secondary sources, including journals, articles, and Manual Prosedur Pensijilan Halal Malaysia (Domestik) 2020 (MPPHM). The data were analyzed using the document analysis method to achieve the objective of this study. The result we got from the data collection is analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, and this research was elaborated by using interpreter frequency and percentage that is shown in the table (Suhaili et al., 2022).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Awareness of The People About the Halal Status of a Premise

This study involved 50 respondents consisting of the public. Table 1 shows the respondents' awareness and knowledge of the halal and *tayyib* concepts.

Table 1: Knowledge about halal and *tayyib* concept

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	47	94
No	3	6
Total	50	100

Source: Google Forms by the authors

Table 1 suggests that a large proportion of respondents know the concept of halal and *tayyib*. Most respondents understand that halal can be defined as something that is permissible by Islamic laws, while *tayyib* means something that is delicious, good and safe to consume. However, the remaining respondents are still unsure about the halal and *tayyib* concept. This may happen due to different levels of public knowledge regarding the comprehensive concept of halal. The results presented in Table 1 reveal that a large proportion of respondents are familiar with the concept of halal and *tayyib* with 94% indicating awareness of this concept. This indicates that halal and *tayyib* is widely known among the public. In Malaysia, religious teachings strongly influence food consumption behaviour as Islam strongly emphasises the consumption of lawful and permissible food. Furthermore, the government has taken initiatives to increase public awareness of halal by establishing halal certification from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) in 1974. As a result, consumers tend to verify and ensure the products are authorized as halal before consumption. This finding is in line with previous studies conducted by Nor

‘Azlan & Hamid (2025) which reported that Malaysian consumers generally demonstrate adequate knowledge and relatively high level of awareness in halal food consumption. Similarly, Noor (2025) found that Muslim consumers today are more proactive in seeking information about the halal status of products that are available in the market, particularly when they are uncertain or concerned about the ingredient used. Nevertheless, a small proportion of respondents were still uncertain about halal and *tayyib* concepts, possibly due to variations in individual understanding. Previous studies suggest that misunderstanding may occur due to differences in halal standards across countries. In addition, some consumers assume that food is halal simply because it does not contain pork or alcohol, even though halal also encompasses food preparation processes and hygiene that comply with Islamic law (Ali & Ahmad, 2023).

Table 2: Respondent Demography

Variables		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24 years old	40	80
	25-31 years old	2	4
	32-38 years old	1	2
	39-45 years old	2	4
	45 years old and above	5	10
Occupation	Student	39	78
	Worker	11	22

Source: Google Forms by the authors

Table 2 indicates that most respondents (80%) aged between 18-24 years old which consists of teenagers and young adults. Meanwhile, the rest of the respondents are among adults that are aged 25 to 45 and above. Most of the respondents (78%) equivalent to 39 respondents are students while 22 workers equivalent to 22% out of total respondents. This shows that young generations particularly students possess a certain level of awareness regarding the halal concept. This is consistent with previous halal awareness studies where their awareness level regarding halal issues is relatively high as they are mostly exposed to halal information via education, social media and digital platforms (Rizal & Ab Latif, 2025). Other findings indicates that younger customers are often more informed and critical in their food choices compared to older adults, especially in terms of product authenticity and compliance with halal standards as they are more likely to research whether products are halal-certified and whether halal principles are implemented during production (Nor ‘Azlan & Hamid, 2025).

Table 3: Frequency of Respondents Visiting Viral Restaurants

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	12	24
No	10	20
Rarely	28	56
Total	50	100

Source: Google Forms by the authors

As shown in Table 3, most respondents (56%) rarely visit viral restaurants, while 12 out of total respondents (24%) tend to visit them more frequently. This shows that the social media trends alone are not sufficient to influence consumers to dine at viral restaurants. Instead, consumers continue to prioritise the halal status of the premises before considering visiting and trying the food. This result is consistent with

the findings of Ibrahim et al. (2023), which reported that Muslim consumers tend to prioritize the halal certification logo over the taste as they emphasized the authenticity and certification over popularity.

Table 4: Elements that they consider before entering a restaurant

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	37	74
No	13	26
Total	50	100

Source: Google Forms by the authors

Based on Table 4 indicated a significant number of respondents (74%) consider the cleanliness and halal certification before dining at a restaurant. Meanwhile, the remaining respondents which is 13 respondents consider the other elements such as the taste of the food, the service provided to customers and many more. This finding shows that halal certification and cleanliness are the important considerations for many consumers while others still emphasise other factors. This study shows that consumers commonly consider cleanliness and halal certification before entering food premises. This reflects the relationship between halal principles and hygiene. The concept of halal is closely linked with tayyib which emphasizes cleanliness and safety of food preparation. Previous research also identified the halal certification and cleanliness as a crucial element influencing Muslim consumers' choices (Azhar et al., 2025).

Table 5: Confirmed the restaurant has a halal certificate before entering it

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	46	92
No	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Google Forms by the authors

As shown in Table 5, most of the respondents (92%) ensure that the premises they want to go to have a halal certificate before entering it. This shows that the respondents are concerned about the halal nature of food and its environment. In contrast, the remaining respondents (4 respondents) do not consider this matter before entering the premises. Some people think that if the employee is Muslim, then the food and drinks that are provided by them must also be halal. This shows that there are still a few people in the community who do not understand the role of halal certificates. Majority respondents also ensure that the premises possess halal certification before entering. This result demonstrates that verified halal certification functions as a key source of Muslims' trust and confidence towards all the requirements. It serves as a guarantee that the whole process complies with Islamic requirements. Studies on consumer behavior also state that halal certification plays a significant role in building consumer confidence and purchasing decisions (Nor 'Azlan & Abd Hamid, 2025).

Table 6: Eat at a restaurant that has no halal certificate, but the employees are Muslims

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	7	14

No	43	86
Total	50	100

Source: Google Forms by the authors

Based on the data presented in Table 6, it reveals that 14% out of total respondents still eat at premises that have Muslim employees even if they do not possess a halal certificate. This may be due to perception that the premises are in the process of applying for a halal certificate, meanwhile others consider that not all premises can afford to apply for halal certificate, and they are confident that the food preparation process is free from *haram* elements. While the most of respondents (43) do not eat at shops that do not have a halal certificate even if the employees are Muslim. Some people think that halal certificates are a guarantee that the method of preparation of the food and its source comply with Islamic law. Nevertheless, the findings in Table 6 reveal that a minority of respondents are still willing to eat at premises without halal certification if the employees and ownership are Muslims. This result shows a common perception among some consumers that Muslim employees automatically show halal compliance. This misconception has also been documented in previous studies which mentioned that the restaurant run by Muslims without halal certification is usually perceived as halal and consumption at the premises is based on mutual trust (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

Table 7: Restaurant with 'no-pork' and 'no-alcohol' signs are considered halal

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	7	14
No	39	78
Doubtful	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Google Forms from the authors

Table 7 conveys that a significant number of respondents (7 respondents) consider the premises to be halal because they did not serve prohibited things. Only a small number of respondents consider the premises with a non-pork and non-alcohol sign is halal. This is due to many other factors that can contribute to something being unlawful. For instance, chicken is halal source of food. However, if it is not slaughtered according to Shariah, it will be a carcass. While the remaining respondents (4 respondents) are doubtful about the restaurant's halal status because it does not have a halal certificate. Not serving prohibited things does not guarantee that the premises is halal.

In addition, although most respondents (39 respondents) disagreed with the assumption that restaurants displaying "no pork" and "no alcohol" are halal, some respondents considered the signs as sufficient evidence of halal status. This finding highlights the differences of public understanding regarding the comprehensive scope of halal certification, which includes the source of ingredients, slaughtering methods, food handling and cross contamination prevention. Research from Ali and Ahmad (2023) revealed that a lack of understanding regarding halal guidelines contributes to a lack of awareness towards the halal requirements.

From all data that have been collected from the google forms, most respondents rarely went to viral restaurants, and they considered halal and cleanliness first before entering the restaurant. Most of them also understand the halal and *tayyib* concept and consider whether the restaurant has a halal certificate or not

before eating there. Nearly all of them also choose to not eat at a restaurant that does not own halal certificate even though all the employees such as the chef, waiters are all Muslims. They also believe that restaurants with 'no pork' and 'no halal' signs are not considered as halal as there may be another factor that can affect the halal status of the item. It can be concluded that most of the respondents concerned about the halal status of a premise since most of them involved young adults. Besides, only a few of them seem to be vague about halal status and details.

### **Factors of The Premises Not Possessing Halal Certificates**

Based on analysis, the strict procedure of halal certification being one of the factor sellers did not apply the certification for their premise. The strict requirement by JAKIM is indeed reasonable to make sure that the halal certification follows all the standards of shariah law (Basarud-din, 2013). For these reasons, the premise must fulfil all the procedures, followed by an auditing process by the officer who possesses competence in the field of Islamic affairs. During auditing, the auditor has the authority to collect all the doubtful sample products and take pictures of the product and the raw material for lab analysis. Failure during the auditing process may affect the halal certification process as well. In addition, the implementation of scheduled post-certification audits on premises that have been granted the halal certification shows the strictness of the requirements. This is to ensure that the premises consistently align with the halal standard, and all the products remain halal. (Sofian et al., 2023). This proved that Malaysia is very strict about the procedure to apply halal certification because everything must follow the criteria that has been mentioned by *syara'* to prevent *syubhah* among the consumers.

According to research by Hassan et al. (2023), the process of documenting also challenges the owner of the premise to apply the halal certification. Documentation is a complicated process moreover when it comes to the processed product. The owner of the product will face a challenge to get the documents of raw materials that they used from their suppliers. Generally, the raw materials that had been used for production must be supported by halal certification and supporting documents including the lab reports. According to Manual Prosedur Pensijilan Halal Malaysia (MPPHM), all the processes must follow the guidelines and need to be documented including the raw material as mentioned before, processing, equipment etc. It needs to be free from contamination and not have any doubtful elements.

Lastly, financial problems can be the most crucial challenge for owners to apply the halal certification for their premises (Saima et al., 2024). Many aspects that the owner needs to comply with due to the strict procedures required. The procedure to be followed is to specify dedicated premise to avoid any contamination of the product. Suitable utensils need to be used during the entire production process, and the raw material must be high-quality to produce the product (Hassan et al., 2023). Additionally, small premises will face a financial burden due to additional manpower required for a shift supervisor. According to the Malaysia Halal Management System (MHMS, 2020), micro and small premises only require a halal supervisor and worker at the processing place during the operation time or shift. However, the problem arises when the production time takes a longer period, the premises' owners need to hire more than one supervisor and worker to work on it. Furthermore, documentation and recordkeeping also raise financial problems. According to MHMS (2020), the document and records need to be stored and consistently updated to ensure easy reference during auditing or monitoring of Malaysia Halal certification. This includes workers' records, raw material purchase records, processing records, and other related records. Storing and keeping all the documents and records may be hard to do by only one worker; hence, the owner needs to hire more to ensure the process goes smoothly. By adding too many workers for shift production, documentation, and recordkeeping, the premises owner could incur higher salary expenditures. Although the halal certification application is generally not burdensome, the operational and implementation costs may put financial pressure on micro and small premises owners.

## **Solutions To Encourage Premises Owners to Apply for Halal Certificates**

The initiative that had been taken by JAKIM to overcome the strictness in the halal certification procedure was by developing the MYeHALAL system. The purpose of this application is to make it easier for premise owners to apply for halal certificates, as they just need to fulfill the application online (Arif et al., 2023). According to Othman & Nawi (2022), the use of technology also can help simplify the halal application procedure. This system comprehends Malaysia's halal processes in their entirety, as it already covers Malaysia's halal processes and standards comprehensively. This system can also attract the attention of international markets to also apply for halal certification, especially Islamic countries.

Next, the owner of the premises must be smart in finding and ensuring the raw materials used for the food have a halal certificate or supporting documents that state that the raw materials come from halal sources (Ramli et al., 2024). For raw materials originated from Malaysia, the owner of the premises must ensure that it has a halal certification from JAKIM, Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri (JAIN), or Majlis Agama Islam Negeri (MAIN). While for raw materials originating from abroad, it must have a halal certification from foreign certification bodies recognized by JAKIM. This action is taken to ensure that the products produced are safe, pure, and guaranteed to be halal (Raes & Shamsuddin, 2025). According to Samia'an et al. (2022), it is also to prevent any doubts about the products and their supply chain.

Lastly, as mentioned, high costs are also one of the challenges faced by the premises to apply for halal certification. Therefore, JAKIM has provided an initiative by providing a comprehensive training that is related to halal. Premise owners only need to send the internal staff to undergo the training. It consists of two types of training, namely the Halal Executive Course and the Halal Internal Audit Course. With this, it can reduce the company's operating costs because they do not need to appoint outsiders as halal executives. Even though they only undergo training, their work is comparable to others who have formal education in the halal industry since they received a halal management certificate for joining the training (Hassan et al., 2023). Apart from providing training initiatives, authorities can also provide financial support to premises to apply for halal certification (Ramli et al., 2024). With this, small premises can use the capital to create a space that is separate from their homes and the equipment they use, thus qualifying them to apply for halal certification.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the data indicates that most respondents are aware the halal status of the food premise visited. Halal certificate, cleanliness of the premises and Muslim employees are among the consideration. However, not all the premises that are owned by Muslim have a halal certificate. This happens due to strict procedures to apply for halal certification. The premise required to comply all required procedures, which include a formal auditing process and the implementation of scheduled post-certification audits. Another factor relates to the challenges faced during the documentation process. For instance, the raw material used for production must be supported by halal certification and supporting documents. Financial constraints are also one of the factors affecting food premises for not applying the halal certificate. It mostly affected small premises as they may not have sufficient financial resources to comply with the requirement needed for halal certification. These issues can be overcome by providing a solution to encourage the owner of the premises to apply for a halal certificate, which is using the MYeHALAL system to apply for halal certification, as it is convenient. In addition, the premises owners also need to carefully ensuring the source raw materials sources are certified halal or supporting document to ensure the documentation is simplified. Moreover, premise owners may send their internal staff to halal training provided by JAKIM to minimise the need to hire external personnel as halal executives. Additionally, financial support by the authorities may be provided to help food premises overcome financial constraint to apply for halal certification.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The authors would like to appreciate Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia for providing facilities support on this research.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

There is no conflict of interest in this research.

## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

Nur Fadiah Qistina Audi Mohd Sharifuddin carried out the research by providing the question for Google Forms. Nur Masitah Zulkifli helped analysing the data got from the Google Forms. Nur Fadiah Qistina Audi Mohd Sharifuddin and Nur Masitah Zulkifli designed the research and supervised research progress. This article had been comprehensively reviewed and checked by Dr. Amiratul Munirah Yahaya, improved specific terms to ensure it aligns with the academic writing standard, including insert the article into the template, formatting and technical purposes. Meanwhile, Dr. Rusni Mohamad checked and reviewed the references and the status of the hadith in this article.

## **DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS**

During the preparation of this work, the authors do not used AI tools to clarify the content and rephrase the sentences and correct the grammar. Accordingly, no structured or content-generating prompts were employed. The authors further declare that AI tools were not used to generate the research data, conduct the analysis or produce the results presented in this manuscript.

## **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT/ SUPPLEMENTARY DATA**

The data for this study is available in open access at DOI and UiTM PTAR repository

## **ETHICS STATEMENT**

I testify that our submitted article followed ethical principle.

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