

A Study on the Factors Influencing Students' Sensitivity Towards Halal Certification In Consuming Halal Food At UiTM Kota Bharu, Kelantan

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Abstract. It is an obligation for Muslims to make sure daily life food consumption is halal. Therefore, Muslims should be more critical and sensitive towards the selection of food and product to meet this important requirement seriously. This study aims to study the students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal food at UiTM Kota Bharu, Kelantan. 263 samples of UiTM Kota Bharu students from several programmes were selected using stratified sampling technique. Self-administrated questionnaire survey was used to obtain information from the 263. The factors studied in this study are attitude, knowledge, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. From the analysis, factors attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control have significant influence on students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal food at UiTM Kota Bharu, Kelantan but the knowledge factors is not significant. The results also showed that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents towards students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal food at UiTM Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

Introduction

Most people have preferences in food consumption in their daily life with some of them may prefer to eat Kosher, vegetarian and Halal. Muslims are mainly consumed Halal foods as a part of Islamic dietary teaching which the foods that are allowed within Islamic faith. Lawful or permitted is the definition of Halal in an Arabic word. The 'Halal' words are related mostly in foods but it does not restricted to the type of foods only but it also related to drinks, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and other products and how the way the Halal products is handled. In other words, Halal foods are the dietary advice for body as prescribed in the Qur'an or Hadith. All Halal foods are halal except the foods that are specifically mentioned as 'Haram' are clearly mentioned in Qur'an. Haram means the foods that are forbidden, unlawful or prohibited.

In Malaysia, the certification of Halal foods has been conducted since 1974 by JAKIM. The Muslim consumers in Malaysia are commonly looking for the authentic Halal certification issued by the Malaysia Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) when they want to select and purchasing products because they know that the Halal certification issued from JAKIM are trusted. It is important for Muslim consumers to have sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming foods because it is a part of religious obligation. The main interest of this study is to identify the factors influencing students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods at UiTM Kota Bharu, Kelantan. There are several factors have been listed which are attitude factor, knowledge factor, subjective norms factor and behavioural control of consumers factor.

Attitude

Islamic ruling of Halal consumption and the attitude of Muslim consumers possibly linked. The word "tayyib" and Halal has been mentioned together several times in Quran. The word "tayyib" means pure, good and healthy and it reflects the characteristics of Halal products as healthy and do not harm the consumers. According to Khalek [2], the positive or negative attitude is also influencing the intention to consume or to purchase Halal foods. In Malaysia, Halal certification that verified and issued by JAKIM is closely associated with attitude of the Muslim consumers. To increase the understanding of Muslim consumers in Malaysia in order to consume Islamic foods, the introduction of Halal certification is very important. A study done by Alam and Sayuti [3] showed that an attitude has a significant impact on the intention to purchase Halal foods. A mass media and religious can be the factors that influence the Muslim consumer's attitude in consuming Halal foods. The trust of Muslim consumers towards Halal certification in Malaysia indirectly reflects by the

attitude towards Halal certification. Next, a study done by Khalek et al., [5] also shows that the most important factor of the Muslim consumers on the intention in consuming Halal foods is the positive attitude towards Halal foods.

Knowledge

Muslim consumers use Quran as their main source in gaining their knowledge about Islam including the ways in consuming Halal foods. The amount of people that following the dietary laws imposed by Islam is quietly sustainable wherever Muslim chooses to live, it is because they are still aware about the consumption of Halal foods due to their religious knowledge and believe. For example, the Muslim consumers that migrants in United States are still follows the Islam dietary laws even United States is famous with the western cultures. The knowledge of Muslim consumers on the Halal certification will increase their awareness in consuming Halal foods. Based on the study done by Saabar and Ibrahim [1] where they found that knowledge have a significant influence in purchasing Halal foods. Their knowledge on the Halal logo and certification issued by the Malaysia Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) increase their confident to buy Halal food products. According to the Alhazmi and Khalid [6] stated that the obstacles in purchasing Halal foods happens when the Muslim consumers have a poor knowledge and understanding of what is termed as Halal and what is termed as Haram. The lack of these aspects causes the Muslim consumers lose their appreciation in Halal and sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods.

Subjective Norms

Malaysia as a predominantly Muslim country, the expectations from others in the society are very important for them. In general, the expectations from others such as friends, families and societal norms are influencing the human behavior. Muslims who acquired religious education are more concerned about Halal foods compared to those who did not received formal religious education. According to the research done by Khalek and Ismail [7], it was found that subjective norms are significant in choosing Halal foods among the Muslim consumers. It is possibly related to the characteristics of Muslim consumers in Malaysia that practiced the collectivistic culture in the society. In the research conducted by Khalek [2] the subjective norms was also significant in choosing Halal foods. It shows that the family plays an important role in promoting and influencing in choosing Halal food among the family members. It was also supported by the study done by Alam and Sayuti [3] where it was found that the subjective norms was positively related to intention in purchasing Halal foods. It is common for the Western cultures where people perceived themselves as an independent and autonomous of the group and prioritize the personal goals over collective goals. It leads to a higher use of personal attitude over subjective norms in behavioral decisions. It is different compared to Muslim cultures, where they perceived themselves as interdependent and tend to strive for in-group compared to their personal goals.

Perceived Behavioural Control of Consumer

Perceived behavioural control is defined as the ability and availability to purchase and consume the Halal foods. There are two aspects in the perceived behavioural control which are how much a person has control over behavior and how confident a person feels about being able to perform or not perform the behavior. According to Alam and Sayuti [3], they found that perceived behavioural control have a positive and significant influence on the intention of purchasing Halal foods. This positive relationship shows that the greater impact of control in explaining variability in behavior is usual. The increasing on the effort to achieve the goals are influenced by the behavior that directly affected by the perceived behavioural control. A study done by Khalek and Ismail [7] also found that perceived behavioural control is significantly influences the intention in consuming Halal foods. This study also stated that the availability and the price of Halal foods are important in the perceived behavioural control.

Sensitivity Towards Halal Certification in Consuming Halal Foods

The awareness among the Muslim on the importance of consuming manufactured products or engaging in services that follow Islamic guidelines and principles are generated by the introduction of Halal logo and certification by Malaysia's Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM). According to Ambali and Bakar [8] Halal logo and certification are important sources because the foods can be trusted in terms of Halal, safety and hygiene. However, there are some issues related to Halal logo and certification in Malaysia since there are some manufacturers are not adhering to Halal procedures despite being certified Halal. Moreover, Muslim consumers in Malaysia are concerned and more sensitive about the Halal logo and certification and whether their foods fully meet Halal requirement. It is also supported with the study done by Hashim and Musa [9] where they found that the Muslim consumers have become more sensitive and aware towards Halal requirement. One of the big issues in Malaysia regarding this problem is about the Halal status of Cadbury. In 2014, pig Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) in samples taken from Cadbury's Daily Milk Hazelnut and Dairy Milk Roast Almond products are detected by the Health Ministry. This situation causes to the boycott from Muslim consumers. In order to overcome this problem, JAKIM plays the important roles to clarify this problem. According to *The Malaymail Online [10]*, JAKIM said that an analysis by the Chemistry Department of samples of these two products taken directly from Cadbury's factory showed no traces regarding pig DNA. So, JAKIM pointed that Halal logo and certification of Cadbury are valid and legal in Malaysia.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive research as the study design since the researchers want to know what factors influencing students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods. Data are mostly collected through questionnaire survey. In total 263 samples are collected through proportionate stratified sampling technique from respondents in different programme at UiTM Kota Bharu. The questionnaire contains closed-ended questionnaire divided into six sections. Section A contains queries about respondents' demographic status, whereas Section B, C, D, E and F are based on the variables studied. These five sections (B, C, D, E and F) designed with questions to measure respondents answer on five-point Likert-type scale. The test is conducted through the commonly used statistical tools of percentage and regression. Since the Cronbach's alpha value for certain variables are lower than acceptable value of 0.6 (Sekaran & Bougie [11]), the questionnaire was reconstruct until it meets the acceptable value. For analysing and presenting data, SPSS 20.0 software was used. Theoretical framework was developed to show the relationship between the factors that influencing students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods at UiTM Kota Bharu Kelantan.

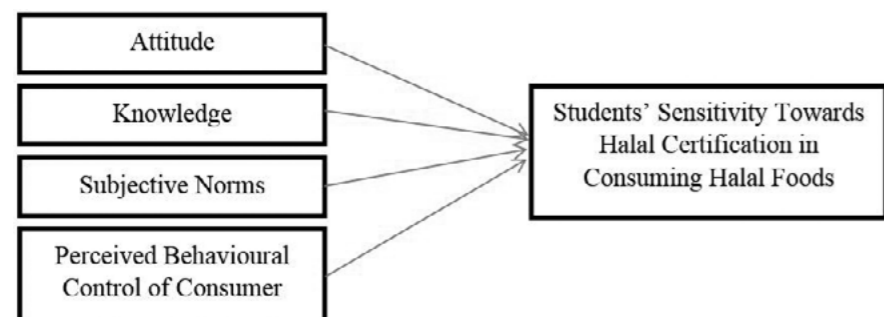


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Data Analysis and Findings

Data of 263 respondents in this study were analysed. Male respondents are 59 and 204 are female respondents. Most of respondents are from CS241 with 58.2% of respondents. Then, it followed by the respondents from BM242 with 18.6% of respondents, followed by BM240 with 10.3% of respondents then followed by the respondents from BM249 with 9.1%. The lowest of respondents is from BM250 with 3.8% of respondents. For the semester, it shown that most of the respondents are come from semester 6 and above with total 108 students with 41.1%. Then it followed by semester 5 with 62 of respondents with 23.6% and followed with semester 4 with total 59 students with 22.4%. The lowest of respondents are come from semester 3 with total 34 students with 12.9%.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	59	22.4
	Female	204	77.6
Programme	BM240	27	10.3
	BM242	49	18.6
	BM249	24	9.1
	BM250	10	3.8
	CS241	153	58.2
Semester	3	34	12.9
	4	59	22.4
	5	62	23.6
	6 and above	108	41.1

From the table 2, the result shows the Cronbach's Alpha for all the dependent and independent variables. The value of Cronbach's Alpha for all variables is above 0.6. The range of Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables is 0.763 to 0.878. Hence, the questionnaire is acceptable to be used to collect the data for the study.

Table 2: Testing Reliability of All Variables

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Decision
B : Attitude	7	0.878	Acceptable
C : Knowledge	5	0.763	Acceptable
D : Subjective Norms	6	0.800	Acceptable
E : Perceived Behavioural Control	4	0.852	Acceptable
F : Students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods	3	0.776	Acceptable

Table 3 shows that there is no significant mean difference in students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal food between genders; male and female (T=-0.035, significant value=0.972>0.05)

Table 3: Result of Independent t-test

Hypothesis 1	t-test for equality of means			
	t	df	p-value. (2-tailed)	
There is significant difference in students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods at UiTM Kota Baharu between male and female.	Equal variance assumed	0.035	261	0.972

Table 4 illustrates that all independent variables (attitude, knowledge, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control of consumer) having significant relationship towards dependent variable (students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal food). There is a weak positive relationship between students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal food and knowledge and there is moderate positive relationship between attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural towards students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal food. (Significant value<0.05).

Table 4: Result of Pearson's Correlation

Variables		Attitude	Knowledge	Subjective Norms	Perceived Behavioural Control
Students' sensitivity	Pearson correlation	.621**	.495**	.548**	.516**
	Significant value	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

From the table 5, the value of R-squared is 0.469 which indicates that 46.9 % of the total variation in students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal food can be explained by the changes in the independent variables, attitude, knowledge, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. While, the remaining of 53.1% of total variation are explained by the other factor that are not included from the model.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.469	0.460

Table 6: Coefficient of All Significant Independent Variables

Variable	Parameter Estimates	T statistic	p-value
Constant	0.130	0.412	0.681
Attitude	0.454	7.737	0.000
Subjective Norms	0.216	2.449	0.015
Perceived Behavioural Control	0.276	3.265	0.001

From the stepwise regression analysis, three independent variables were identified to affect the students' sensitivity on halal certification. It is consist of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. All significant independent variables are positively effects the students' sensitivity towards Halal certification. Khalek and Ismail [7], Alam and Sayuti [3] supported the result of the effect of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control towards sensitivity of halal certification, but for knowledge, research by Saabar and Ibrahim [1] found a contradict result.

Discussion

Based on the result and findings, the researchers can conclude that there is no difference on the level of sensitivity towards halal certification in consuming halal foods at UiTM Kota Bharu between male and female student. Three factors (attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control) contribute significantly towards students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods' at UiTM Kota Bharu. Muslim consumers with the high positive attitudes appeared to have greater intention in consuming Halal foods as long as there is Halal logo and certification at the food products. Their knowledge on the Halal logo and certification issued by the Malaysia Department of Islamic Development (JAKIM) increase their confident to buy Halal food products.

The recommendation for future research, the other researchers can use this research to determine the students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods of their university or others academic places. Since this study only in small population, other researchers can choose large population and more sample to get more accurate result about the factors that contributed to students' sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods.

However, the researchers also can choose others sample in the population of the university because students from different course may have different factors that influence them to the sensitivity towards Halal certification in consuming Halal foods. In addition, more items can be added in the questionnaire and other independent variables in construct for better results.

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