



Tourists Intention to Choose Halal Restaurants in Malaysia: A Conceptual Paper

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ABSTRACT

Muslims around the world are concerned about the halal concept. Consumers are becoming more aware of health, making halal food interest in today's business. Today has huge potential in capturing non-Muslim as the target market. Halal food has gone far beyond the values of only about religion. The restaurant industry must explore the concept of halal in more detail. In the restaurant industry, halal represents hygiene, cleanliness and the quality of the food consumed. This study examines the influence of the halal concept on customers' intention in choosing a restaurant as their preferred eating place. By using the intercept survey method, data were collected in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The present study confirms previous findings on the relationship between attitudes towards halal intention. Customers with high halal attitudes concern are more willing to purchase from halal-certified restaurants. The present study also found a positive and significant relationship between halal awareness and intention to choose Halal restaurants among tourists.

Keywords: Tourists Intention, Halal Restaurant, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Every day, the tourism industry has a significant impact on many people. As a global industry, it is expected to bring in money for the country. Hotels, airlines, cruise lines, and food and beverage establishments all fall under the umbrella of the tourism industry. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), there will be 1.8 billion international tourists by 2030, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO). The Asia and Pacific regions are expected to gain most of these visitors. Global interest in Muslim-focused tourism is driving the need for new research into the long-understudied relationship between Islam and tourism. As a result of Malaysia's booming halal food industry. Food preferences have also changed significantly over the years. The halal food industry is gaining in popularity daily as Malaysia strives to become the world's halal hub (Wahab & Kamarubahrin, 2019). In addition, more than 60.4 percent of Malaysians are Muslim, making them a dominant group in a pluralistic society (Chakraborti 2021). Halal has become a significant concern for all Muslims worldwide when it comes to Muslims' daily lives.

The world's Muslim population is expected to grow by 30 percent by 2025, reaching 1.6 billion people. It is estimated that one out of every four people on the planet is a Muslim and that there are approximately 1.3 billion Muslims worldwide. In addition, there is a 0.2 billion gap between Halal consumers and Muslims in Muslim-majority countries, such as Indonesia and Bangladesh, where most foods are Halal (Yun et al., 2020).

The non-Muslim community's interest in food can be exploited through the halal concept (Moshin et al., 2020) even though halal is most closely associated with Muslims. "Food" refers to anything consumed or taken orally into the body to supply energy to cells and organs. In addition, because food is a basic human need, the market potential is even more promising, even though people of various cultural and religious backgrounds and beliefs have varying perspectives on food. Because of the growing emphasis on health in modern society, halal food is becoming increasingly popular because it encompasses the entire concept of eating food free of contaminants to improve one's health. Consumers today recognise the value of eating well and are on the lookout for foods that can help them stay healthy, fight disease, and enhance their moods and general well-being (Rana & Paul, 2017; Pham et al., 2019; Xhakollari et al., 2019).

The concept of halal is now widely understood by Muslims in Malaysia, and this understanding has spread through certification bodies to individual consumers. Food is an

important part of many religious and spiritual rituals, including Islam (Moufahim & Lichrou, 2019). A standard and universally recognised symbol is used to meet the needs of Muslims when it comes to food labelling content. In Arabic, the logo for this company is known as the Halal logo. Islamic Development (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia or JAKIM), the country's central Islamic authority, has compiled guidelines based on Quranic interpretations by the Mazhab Maliki, Hambali, Syafie, and the Hanafi. Consumers may be less likely to purchase a product if it does not bear the halal-logo displayed on the packaging.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food items that are "Halal" not only adhere to Islamic law, but they are also healthy for human consumption because of the preparation and processing methods used. Because of the possibility of food adulteration, all "Halal" food may not be perceived as "Halal" until they are endorsed by "Halal food certifications" or "Halal food clerics." A religious obligation for Muslims is to eat food that is permissible to eat under Islamic law and referred to as "Halal" by Muslims. Almighty Allah's commandments and the teachings of Prophet Mohammad are generally referred to as "Halal" in Islam (may peace be upon him). The term "Halal" refers to foods and products that are permissible, lawful, and unobjectionable to eat under Islamic law, known as "Shariah." Food items that are forbidden, prohibited, and punishable in an Islamic country are referred to as "Haram" in the context of Halal, which is the opposite of "Halal."

Almighty Allah clearly states:

“He has forbidden you only the Maitah (dead animal), and blood and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols, on which Allah’s Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits,- then is no sin on him. Truly, Allah is Oft-forgiving Most Merciful.”

(Qur'an 2:173, pp, 34 Hilali & Khan).

It is an obligation on the part of a Muslim to adhere to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as recorded in the Quran and Sunnah (traditions). Dietary laws are among them. Muslims are obligated to eat halal avoid eating haram food under this law. Precisely what is halal and what is haram? Legal, permissible, allowable, permissible and admissible are just words used to describe halal in Arabic (Ariffin et al., 2017; Mahmud, 2020). Muslims are permitted to eat any food they choose, as long as it does not fall into the

category of haram or forbidden in the Holy Quran and Hadith. Islamic guidelines and rules govern Muslim customs and religion, so it's impossible to have halal food without a Muslim. One of the rules for good health is adherence to dietary guidelines for food consumption. These rules are clearly stated in the Holy Quran and Prophet Muhammad's Sunnah (Traditions).

Muslim customers are concerned about the availability of halal food in the market because it is an Islamic obligation to eat halal food. When it comes to purchasing food, Muslims will look to the halal symbol. Manufacturers and retailers may misuse the halal certification and logo because of the lucrateness of the halal market. Because of this, some consumers are becoming more cautious when it comes to making food purchases. Customers need to be aware of halal food because Malaysian food products come from various ethnic groups and are produced and managed by all ethnic groups (Supian & Rashid, 2018). Muslims identify the halal logo and certification on the premises or food packaging to make their food choices. JAKIM certified approximately 116 028 products, 2,629 food establishments, and 28 abattoirs in 2012, according to a press release. Food producers in Malaysia can apply for halal certification and the corresponding logo. Because 60.4 percent of Malaysians are Muslim, companies with halal certification and logos have an advantage in capturing a larger market share.

Muslim customers in Malaysia, however, were not solely concerned with halal food but also environmental surroundings, price, taste, and affordability when deciding what to buy (level of income and purchasing power). Price is an important consideration when deciding what type of food to buy (Dieterle, 2020). Each customer may have a different level of disposable income, which could influence their decision to purchase food. Personal feelings or tastes about food may accompany consumption, which can influence the product a person chooses, as Jaeger et al. (2018) demonstrate. However, as a person's income rises, they may become less concerned about the cost of goods and services (Beck & Hensher, 2020).

It's also possible that consumers, in general, are more inclined to opt for healthy and wholesome food. There are many foods on the market, each with its unique flavour, packaging, and presentation. As a result, food safety and food hygiene are becoming more important factors in deciding to eat food. Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) in food safety and hygiene may help reduce the risk of food-borne illness. Food safety and hygiene aren't enough for Muslim customers, however. It entails that only halal food can be consumed. Raw materials, processing

equipment, processing aids, packaging, storage and distribution must all be safe and halal for the food chain to function properly. As a result, the Malaysian government has implemented Malaysian Standard MS 1500 for halal guidelines and MS 1480 and MS 1514 on food safety and food hygiene in tandem (Hasbullah et al., 2017).

The government has a crucial role in guaranteeing the Halal food supply chain's integrity. The government has been shown to play an essential role in safeguarding the integrity of the halal food supply chain via planning, development, implementation, regulation, and promotion. Consequently, the government must establish institutions and oversight authorities to supervise and control all areas of halal certifications, audits, and standards. According to Rashid and Bojei (2019), the suppliers must follow government requirements to safeguard customers from dangerous and contaminated goods.

The government should also create agencies, interact with other governmental authorities, and educate expert auditors to guarantee a trustworthy halal food supply chain. According to Abdullah and Oseni (2017), the Department of Syariah Affairs of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Brunei is authorised to handle Halal problems and is assisted by the Halal Food Control Division (HFDC). The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), a regulating organisation sponsored by numerous government departments, oversees halal certification in Malaysia.

The Malaysian government founded the Halal Sector Development Corporation (HDC) in September 2006 to promote and grow the Halal industry. This agency will aid to organise and facilitating Halal activities between the government, companies, and consumers to maintain the Halal industry's integrity. The formation of such an organisation is laudable because it guarantees that the demands of all parties engaged in the Halal business are properly recognized on a national and worldwide level.

If the government is involved enough, illegal and immoral commercial practises such as forging Halal certifications and selling non-Halal items as Halal may be minimised and regulated. This may be accomplished by enacting and implementing appropriate rules, such as Malaysia's Halal Act and comparable legislation in several US states. As a consequence of this step, confusion will be avoided, and customers' faith in Halal goods will increase.

METHODOLOGY

We'll collect the information we need for this study (demographic, attitude, subjective norm, and intention). Inklung Valley, Malaysia, will be the setting for several of the surveys (i.e. KFC restaurants, local restaurants, supermarkets and wet markets). Convenience sampling methods and self-administered surveys will be used to collect data during the research process. To complete the questionnaire, respondents will be asked whether or not they are willing to participate in the study. Afterwards, the questionnaire will be given to the participants to fill out, and the researchers will collect the questionnaire once it's done. Respondents will also be given an incentive to motivate and show gratitude for participating in the research. The questionnaire will be taken from relevant studies and reworked (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975; Ajzen, 1985, 1991). It is expected that the respondents will be asked to rate their level of agreement with statements using seven-point scales ranging from "Strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly agree" (7). The survey will be available in two languages: English and Malay. The questionnaire's language will be translated using back-translation (Ting, 2006). First, ten questionnaires will be distributed to conduct a pilot study in the Klang Valley with consumers in the areas selected. It is critical to conduct a pilot study to identify any issues with the instruments that will be used in the study.

CONCLUSIONS

The Halal food industry's fundamental principle is that the food is halal in intention. Measures must be made to guarantee that the food items are safe for consumption even after travelling a great distance and through several processing activities in the supply chain. All parties engaged in the supply chain must take responsibility for their activities to guarantee Halal food items are not tainted deliberately or accidentally. A single entity cannot handle these vast obligations. Halal food consumers must be given considerable attention to the importance of the halal standard, halal certification halal traceability, Halal devoted assets, trust and obligations amongst supply chain participants. This research has analysed and produced a preliminary conceptual model for the characteristics that attract visitors to pick Halal food supply chains. Future Halal food supply chain and industry researchers may find this conceptual framework interesting. The link between these components may be examined to comprehend them better in future studies.

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