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## The Factors that affect Halal Food and Food Products Awareness and Different Challenges: an overview

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### ABSTRACT:

The growing concern about food and drink safety, hygiene, and quality has increased interest in halal products worldwide. These products, prepared according to Islamic dietary laws, are becoming more acceptable to Muslim consumers and those of other religions. This study examines the challenges faced by Malaysia in implementing halal food and food products. Despite some consumer skepticism about halal certifications, the industry has found that such certifications can be a helpful marketing tool for businesses. The study calls for cooperation between the private and public sectors to overcome these challenges. The study looks at the sources of Muslim knowledge consumers have about halal food and products. The results show that halal certification and awareness positively impact purchase intentions for halal food products. The study also provides a framework for examining factors that affect the integrity of the halal food supply chain and halal Islamic marketing, such as traceability, asset quality, quality assurance, and trust and commitment. The study also notes that halal and Islamic marketing is not limited to food but includes other product categories such as medicine, cosmetics, fashion, education, and entertainment. The study finds that Knowledge, halal certification, and Religiosity all play a role in shaping the halal awareness of business people.

**KEYWORDS:** halal issues, halal awareness and marketing, halal food, halal traceability, halal certification, halal logos

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## INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is now on track to becoming a developed country in the world. Thus, with that vision, Malaysia is not dependent on one single sector but has several economic generators that can contribute to the wealth and economic development of the country. One of the most important sectors is the halal food/products sector, which is no longer just an industry that meets religious requirements to feed around 60% of Muslims in Malaysia. However, it is becoming a national and global economic power in Malaysia's push to become a halal hub. Given the Third Industrial Master Plan, the Malaysian government has taken it upon itself to make Halal Hub a reality within a few years. Government efforts have been underway since 2006, but much remains to be done to educate Muslim consumers about what they eat, drink and wear in terms of halal and sharia compliance.

According to the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority reports, part of the government's effort has identified special tax incentives for halal food products. Companies that invest in halal food production and have already obtained halal certification from the Department of Malaysia are eligible for a 100% investment allowance within five years (Amanda, 2012). A significant blow to

Malaysia's dream of becoming a halal hub country lies in the issue of logos and halal certificates for products manufactured outside Malaysia that are sold locally. The lack of a global standard halal authority intensifies this difficulty.

Regarding the importance of health traceability that helped improves food products' quality and safety and some opposition to it (Matevi & Jones, 2016; Folinis et al., 2006). Few studies examine the significance of halal traceability from an industrialist's standpoint, thus indicating the need for further research (Abd Rahman et al., 2017). If we see the world the top 5 halal food countries that follow the halal rules and services (Uae, Malaysia, Brazil, Oman, Jordan). Malaysia is the 2nd Best County (salaamgateway.com, 2019).

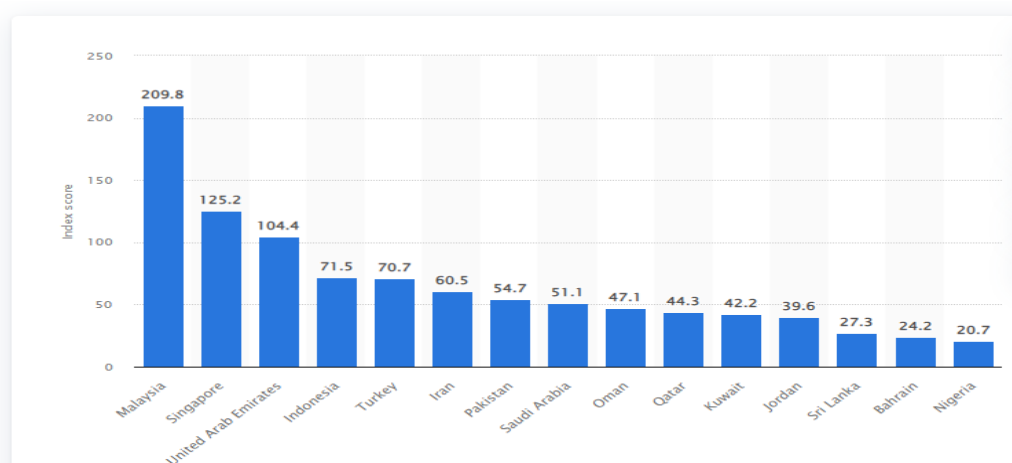


Figure 1: Index score of the leading halal food markets worldwide in 2021

In 2021, global leader Malaysia obtained a halal Food Indicator (HFI) index score of 210.6, based on factors including the trade of halal food products, regulations, public awareness, and product pricing (statista.com. 2021).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Concept of Halal in Islam*

The concept of halal appears in the Islamic religion's holy book. (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 88). As a Muslim, he is not allowed to do, eat or drink everything. The products that Muslims prefer under the points mentioned in the Quran are called halal products. We use only halal products (Abd Rahman et al., 2015).

According to Islamic principles outlined in the Qur'an and Hadith, Muslims are prohibited from consuming certain foods and beverages such as pork and pork-based products, alcohol, blood-based products, certain animals that are carnivorous or hunters, and animals that have not been slaughtered according to Islamic practices. Islam cannot use dead animal products (The Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am, verse 145). Due to the religious beliefs in the consumption of their products, Halal products are of great importance in large markets worldwide. The concept of halal explains the allowed or permitted food products in Islam (Abdul Aziz & Ahmad et al., 2013). Halal is a global trend that caught many countries' attention today. Halal is a standard in Muslim regions. It's considered part of compliance and lifestyle choices for Muslim communities in business, commerce, or other areas (Golnaz et al., 2010). For Muslims, the halal symbol was a quality

indicator indicating the product was free from danger and had been prepared sanitary (Golnaz et al., 2010; Ambali & Bakar, 2014).

Products certified as halal must also help consumers live longer and better lives. Halal lifestyle is one of the main elements and has become a global concern in the concept of halal and focuses more on how a person lives (Abdul Aziz & Ahmad, 2018). A halal way of life encompasses several aspects, including halal food, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, halal travel, halal media and amusement, modest clothing, and Islamic banking (Indonesian Development Planning, 2019). According to Rachman (2019), Indonesia has good potential and creativity related to the halal industries.

This research analyzes and develops a wide-ranging understanding of halal food product awareness. It is done by finding factors that are both influenced by and influence halal awareness. Ambali & Bakar (2014) studied the determinants of halal awareness: halal certification, Knowledge, Religiosity, and halal certification. Purchase intent and traceability are halal awareness outcomes (Khan et al., 2018; Aziz & Chok, 2013).

### *Islamic marketing or halal marketing*

Halal marketing is essential because it addresses the needs and preferences of Muslim consumers, who constitute a significant and growing market segment worldwide. Halal products must meet specific standards and guidelines for production, preparation, and labeling, and consumers often seek these products for religious or cultural reasons. Halal marketing can also appeal to non-Muslim consumers looking for natural, healthy, and ethically-sourced products. As a result, it can be beneficial for businesses to consider halal marketing strategies to tap into this growing market and appeal to a broader range of customers (Islam, T., & Chandrasekaran, U. 2013).

Islamic marketing or Halal marketing assumes that religion influences consumer behavior and therefore follows Islamic laws, concepts, and standards in making, advertising, and providing products and services to consumers." When you add the word "Islamic" to marketing, you must follow Shariah-compliant practices. It means that you are following the teachings of Islam in all aspects of the trade, using Islamic business principles, and following the rules of the business as established by Sharia law (Bakr Ahmad Alserhan, 2011). Islamic marketing satisfies demands through Halal products and services, with the permission of both sellers and purchasers, to achieve spiritual and material prosperity in this world and the future (Alom & Haque, 2011). A body of thinking whose moral compass points primarily to the ethical principles and ideals of Islam as understood by Muslims, whose cultural backgrounds and experiences vary widely (Wilson. 2012).

Islamic marketing is a relatively recent subject of value study, although Shariah-compliant techniques have existed for longer. Muslims worldwide have ensured that they consume Halal products and services by inquiring about constituents and rejecting goods and services that don't adhere to their religious beliefs. As a result of liberalization and globalization, many multinational corporations are recognizing the advantages and necessity of studying this expanding market area.

### *Halal Awareness and Knowledge*

Awareness focuses on how a person comprehends, observes, and feels about a specific event or item. People's views, understanding, and feelings about facts and circumstances are aware. Understanding halal awareness requires first examining how people interpret and view the idea of halal. Business people and customers must be attentive to halal practices (Amarul et al., 2019; Aziz & Chok, 2013). Halal refers to things that are allowed or permissible according to Islamic law. In

the context of food, it pertains to meat and other animal products that Islamic dietary laws have prepared. This includes the requirement that the animal is killed in a specific manner and that it is not a prohibited animal (such as pork). Halal awareness and Knowledge are essential for individuals who follow the Islamic faith, as it ensures that they can maintain their dietary restrictions and adhere to their religious beliefs. It is also vital for businesses, particularly in the food industry, to be aware of and knowledgeable about halal guidelines to properly serve and cater to Muslim customers (Aziz & Chok, 2013).

Halal traceability is a way for businesses to ensure that everything in the supply chain is halal-compliant. So, consumers are happy when there is a high level of awareness and halal traceability (Khan et al., 2018). This study also found halal labeling is a vital determining factor in purchase intention (Khan et al., 2020). Halal awareness is also essential for tourists, ensuring they purchase halal items (Bashir, 2019). So, halal labeling affects the intention of the people who make halal food and other products (Setyaningsih & Marwansyah, 2019).

Halal awareness can aid consumers in purchasing and consuming halal items, so all people (Muslims and Non-Muslims) can produce halal products. For businesspeople, halal awareness refers to utilizing a halal procedure in product production. To highlight halal as an essential component, entrepreneurs must ensure the collaboration and contribution of diverse partners in the product supply chain (Yunus et al., 2014; Amarul et al., 2019). Many studies have shown that Halal awareness positively affects consumers' buying intention and the halal traceability of businesses. Ambali and Bakar (2014) also identified elements that can influence a person's awareness to gain a more profound knowledge of halal consciousness. The facts, experiences, and feelings someone knows about are also called Knowledge (Briliana & Mursito, 2017; Rahman et al., 2017).

Knowledge is essential to customer decision-making. After obtaining information and remembering different facts, the level of Knowledge of a person can show their understanding of something (Said et al., 2014). Understanding halal issues can help raise one's sensitivity to halal issues (Akin & Okumuş, 2020). Ardyanti (2013) also found that Consumers' Knowledge of the halal concept influences their halal awareness. Consequently, stakeholders must thoroughly understand their clients or business partners to promote halal awareness. Therefore, Knowledge significantly improves customers' and business people's halal awareness. Based on the study by Mutmainah (2018), the growth of the Halal industry is evident in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Increased awareness among Muslim consumers of Halal products and the growing Muslim population and communities drive the demand for the Halal industry. The study findings primarily indicate religious belief, attitude, Halal certificate, and Halal logo give an impact on awareness (Rahman et al., 2022).

### ***Factors Affecting Halal Awareness***

Several factors can affect halal awareness: A lack of education and understanding of halal guidelines and requirements can lead to a lack of awareness. It can be addressed through educational programs and campaigns that increase Knowledge and experience about halal. Religion: A person's level of religious observance can also affect halal awareness. Those who are more devout and practice their religion more strictly are likely to have a higher level of halal awareness (Awan, H.M., Siddiqui, A.N., and Haider, Z. 2015).

Government policies can play a role in promoting halal awareness. Governments can set up halal certification bodies, create regulations, and launch promotional campaigns to increase halal awareness. The representation of halal in the media can affect halal awareness. Positive words

about halal in the media can raise awareness and understanding, while negative representation can discourage it (Othman, B., Md. Shaarani, S. and Bahron, A. 2017).

Economic factors such as the availability and affordability of halal products can affect halal awareness. If halal products are not readily available or are more expensive than non-halal products, it can make it more difficult for individuals to maintain a halal diet and be aware of halal options (Syukur, M., & Nimsai, S. 2018). Social factors such as social and cultural norms can also affect halal awareness. In some societies, halal awareness is highly valued and prioritized, while in others, it may be less so.

They measured awareness and understanding of halal food among Pakistani consumers. In addition, a preliminary investigation was conducted to uncover the relationship between Religiosity and consumer behavior and how the former affects the latter. Based on the empirical data analysis findings, we infer that: (a) Religion is the primary source of religious beliefs for Muslim consumers. (b) Beliefs are closely tied to religious commitments. (c) Highly religious people may not necessarily have a high awareness of halal food. (d) Attitude toward halal food is closely related to beliefs (Salman, 2011).

The growing number of Muslims worldwide and the increasing awareness among their descendants are two of the main reasons behind the recent trend of changing attitudes among Muslim consumers (Swid et al., 2010). As Muslims are aware of the prohibition of alcohol, pork, and other related items, this may result in a rapidly rising demand for halal cosmetics and personal care products. In Malaysia, the cosmetics and toiletries market recorded sales of approximately RM 3 billion in 2003, with an annual growth rate of 13% (Mission to Malaysia. 2005).

According to a source, over 60,000 cosmetics are available in the local market in Malaysia. Some popular cosmetic companies in the country include Avon, Cosway, and Maybelline for the mass market, and Estee Lauder, Clinique, Shiseido, Body Shop, Sasa, and Roche for the franchise chains. The cosmetics and toiletries industry has also been impacted by the increasing global awareness of halal products, resulting in a rising demand for halal cosmetics worldwide (Lowe, 2010). As a result, marketers seek halal certification to tap into this growing market. The halal cosmetics and toiletries market is projected to grow by 8.5% globally by 2014, making it one of the few markets showing steady growth (Ahmad, 2015).

### ***Religiosity belief***

Religion provides the foundation for a person to act following religious principles. In this context, Religiosity might be defined as a person's dedication to their religious practice (Said et al., 2014). This dedication will be evident in their attitudes and behavior (Sungkar, 2010, Said et al., 2014). Thus, religion influences a person's behavior in many areas, including food consumption, cosmetics, and life insurance (Majid et al., 2015; Abdul Rahim & Junus, 2012; Sudan & Jubair, 2015; Abdul Rahman & Razzaq, 2014).

On the other hand, people can be more religious, less religious, or somewhere in between. So, a person's money spending tends to show how religious they are (Dali Yousafzai & Hamid, 2019). Additionally, Religiosity can impact consumer behavior. Consumers will buy or consume things that don't break their philosophies. Many kinds of research have focused on Religiosity's influence on food consumption. (Said et al., 2014; Khan et al., 2017; Razzaque & Chaudhry, 2013; Jamal & Sharif Uddin. 2015). Religious belief's significance influences religious individuals' behavior (Said et al., 2014).

Halal awareness among consumers plays a vital role in raising Religiosity. The level of religious observance impressively impacts a person's Knowledge of halal issues. For businesspeople, Religiosity motivates them to be more conscious about integrating halal practices in their manufacturing and affects usage behavior (Ramadan et al., 2018; Amalia et al., 2020; Ambali & Bakar, 2014; Dali et al., 2019). Thus the hypotheses are Religiosity favorably affects customers' and business people's halal Knowledge and awareness.

### ***Halal Certification***

In Islam, the word halal means something Muslims can eat (Henderson, 2016); food and all other items and services are included (Rejaini & Arianfar, 2016). However, halal certification represents the quality of products according to Islamic Sharia principles. Therefore, Halal certification helps Muslims choose foods that adhere to Islamic standards (Muhammad et al., 2017). Moreover, although halal certification suggests food acceptable for Muslim consumption, it also indicates safe and appropriate use.

Halal certification helps consumers trust that items are safe and clean (Ambali & Bakar, 2014; Ghadi kolaei, 2016). The manufacturers of halal-certified items are responsible for ensuring that their products are safe for consumption (Aff et al., 2014). Nasution and Rossanty (2018) say that the country of origin of halal certification affects a consumer's choice of purchasing food and food products from another country.

Previous studies show that halal certification is part of halal awareness (Ramadania et al., 2018; Ardyanti et al., 2013; Ambali & Bakar, 2014). Halal certification was a crucial determinant of purchase intent (Khan et al., 2020). Pradana et al. (2020) discovered that the halal concept and certifications influenced the purchase intentions of Spanish tourists. Halal certification is used to identify permissible foods for Muslims. Consequently, manufacturers and customers must be conscious of halal labelling on items. We assume that Halal certification enhances customers' and entrepreneurs' understanding of halal products.

### ***The positive effect of halal awareness on behavior***

Halal means what is considered permissible or halal, which is allowed to be eaten. In Islam, the term halal focuses on food and drink. It focuses on all matters of daily life, such as the fabric of clothing, cosmetics, and relationships among people, whether with Muslims or non-Muslims (Ismail et al., 2016). Exposure to halal issues has become a hot topic to debate as it is vital for religious issues (Golnaz et al., 2010). The halal point is gaining ground and attention, significantly impacting the market, especially in most Islamic countries. Among halal matters that have arisen are improper hygienic practices at processing premises and the expiration of halal certification (Karishna et al., 2017).

Islamic consciousness is crucial in enlightening the food industry about halal production requirements. As Muslims, we must be familiar with halal and haram; we cannot rely exclusively on tradition or authority. For example, Muslim consumers should note their food ingredients or products while shopping (Yusoff & Adzharuddin, 2017). A study of halal awareness among consumers in South Africa provides evidence of the significant relationships between halal awareness and buying behavior and an important relationship between consumers' attitudes and purchases (Bashir et al., 2019).

### *The excellent effect of Religious orientation on attitude*

Religion is perhaps one of the essential social factors affecting the lives of its adherents. It works as an accountant that unifies, divides, and amalgamates social groups (McCullough et al., 2009). For most Muslims, religion is a system of beliefs and practices that dictates individual reactions and interpretations of supernatural and sacred things. Generally, halal is expected to be less relevant in countries with a small non-Muslim population (Johnstone, 1975).

However, this research indicates that Muslims assumed that Halal is less relevant in countries where non-Muslims are a tiny fraction of the population. However, this research suggests that Muslims in these countries are conscious of and have a very positive attitude toward Halal products fraction of the population (Mukhtar & But et al., 2012). There is a significant result for the moderating behavior of religious orientation in the relationship between trustworthiness and brand credibility. It indicates that the brand is a substantial result of the moderating behavior of religious orientation in the relationship between reliability and brand credibility. It suggests that the brand credibility of customers is influenced by trustworthiness (Ali et al., 2017).

### *Halal Challenges*

The government's purpose was to establish Malaysia as the international halal center to promote the growth of halal-related products and services for such a global community (Muhammad et al., 2009). According to many experts, used a Halal verification system to develop strategic marketing and supply chain orientation. In addition, he suggested that the Malaysian halal certification is in line with other qualifications, such as the Malaysian standard MS1500 and the general guidelines for the preparation, preparation, handling, and storage of halal foods, which are the most recognized and Comply with established standards. GMP and GHP to further enhance their capabilities. The halal value chain includes feed and farm management, ingredients, manufacturing or processing, logistics, technological development and research financing, and publicity or promotion. Muslim producers must understand the supply chain and production process (Muhammad et al., 2009; Noordin et al., 2009).

Halal food and products are readily available in Malaysia, making it a popular destination for Muslims. All aspects of the halal industry, from farming to consumption, are covered. The Halal Product Lifecycle plan now includes recommendations for executing the regulation and verification of halal animal feed, food ingredients, manufacturing, logistics, research development, financing, and communications and brands, among other things. Nevertheless, the government of Malaysia views halal not only from the perspective of its religious significance but the goal of making Malaysia's halal industry a role model for businesses in other countries, which is considered very ambitious (Zakaria, 2008). The role of food manufacturers in meeting halal regulations has been discussed in the literature. All food producers must be monitored and regulated by the government.

According to Talib (2008), the marketing of halal products requires the implementation of total quality management practices, but mainly food industry focuses only on halal certification procedures. Consequently, quality management and suitability can raise the demand for such products. According to Hasan et al. (2009) important principle, ensure that products are free from contamination and contain no haram components at the preparation, production, and storage stages before they are released into circulation. According to Ismoyowati (2015), Muslims are more likely to purchase Halal food because of its superior aesthetics, flavor, variety, labeling, safety, accessibility, quality, and availability.

Moreover, halal raw materials, particularly meat, are declining in places where around 70 percent of food manufacturing raw resources are supplied. Those claims are supported by the findings of

(Bohari et al., 2013), who found that Malaysia's raw material supply has become a significant issue. Regulations and an unstable environment for agricultural production will make it difficult to obtain raw materials. Penang has comparative advantage issues, unlike other regions with numerous natural resources. Suppliers should always contact the Malaysian Certification Body to verify that these essential ingredients meet Malaysian halal requirements. The real challenge is enforcing halal logos certified by JAKIM officials, which raises public suspicion (Shafi & Othman, 2008).

The lack of cooperation from the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs adds to the problem and has led to skepticism among Muslim consumers about the validity of the Halal certification process among the world's Halal certification authorities. In addition, accelerating the launch of halal logos is another challenge that faces the Malaysian department (JAKIM). It does not have a complete investigation and improvement unit for analysis and on-site inspection.

Obstacles to the development of the halal industry are that there is no limited halal standard acceptable to all Muslims worldwide since every nation has different standards. The mentality of Muslim consumers toward halal products is a further barrier to the halal sector. According to Liow (2012), it is not enough for a product to be "pork and alcohol-free" or to have been manufactured and prepared by Muslims for it to be considered halal; the idea of halal must also assure that the product is healthy. There is a strong connection between the notion of halal and traceability. In numerous implementation platforms since the Trade Details Act 2011 by Malaysian authorities, many food businesses and restaurants used unrecognized halal certificates on their products or packaging (Ibraheim et al., 2012).

## CONCLUSION

Understanding and awareness of halal influences consumers' demand for authenticity in food and products, and a crucial factor is access to halal items, which affects the entire purchasing process. Religiosity also plays a role in the purchasing process. Factors such as halal awareness, attitudes, perceived risks, logos, and certifications can impact consumers' intent to purchase halal products. Raising awareness and Knowledge about halal products is essential to increase consumer confidence. The availability of halal products is essential for Muslims, making it necessary for the government to provide them. Additionally, promoting halal awareness and educating consumers on identifying certified products can help influence purchasing decisions. Future research should focus on the challenges faced by Muslims and non-Muslims worldwide when buying food to strengthen existing literature on halal further. Halal presents a significant commercial opportunity, particularly in categories beyond meat, such as medicines, cosmetics, tourism, fast-moving consumer goods, and fashion. Pursuing halal certification may also be an effective marketing strategy for green and vegetarian products that comply with Sharia laws.

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