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## Factors that Influence Consumer's Attitudes and Decision-Making in Shopping for Halal Food

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### Abstract

This study aims to investigate the factors that influence consumers' attitudes and decision-making in shopping for halal food. These factors include halal logo certification, social influence (word of mouth), and religious beliefs. The sample of consumers in this study is from Sibul, Sarawak targeting 300 random respondents via the questionnaire. Findings were assessed in terms of descriptive analysis, reliability test, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression. Results indicate that halal logo certificate, social influence (word of mouth), and religious belief have a significant positive relationship in the attitude and decision-making of consumers in shopping for halal food. The results provide some perspective to the industry players with information that will influence customers' behavior and decision-making regarding Halal food.

**Keywords:** Halal, Purchase Intention, Social Influence, Religious Belief

### Introduction

Halal refers to anything that is regarded as permitted or lawful to consume. In Islam, the phrase Halal applies to more than simply foods and drinks, it also relates to clothing materials, cosmetics, and interpersonal ties between Muslims and non-Muslims. Halal foods are now in high demand from both Muslim and non-Muslim nations and they have evolved as a niche industry, particularly in Halal cuisine (Ayyub, 2015). Halal food is defined as "cleaner, healthier, and tastier" (Alam & Sayuti, 2011). According to Fischer (2010), Halal has been referred to as the "gold standard" for food safety and quality assurance. There are approximately 16 million Muslim customers with disposable income who are seeking products that fulfill Islamic requirements (Ariffin, 2007). This demonstrates that most Muslim consumers are prepared to spend as much as possible for a product that complies with Shariah law.

There are more than 300 organizations worldwide that offer Halal certification, however, only 15% are recognized by Malaysia's Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) (Said et al., 2014). It is critical to entice Muslim consumers to purchase Halal products with JAKIM's certified certification as this ensures that the product is completely Halal, a holistic quality health and sanitary system that includes following Islamic regulations for slaughtering, processing, and other associated activities. It verifies the quality, cleanliness, and safety of raw

materials, ingredients, and finished goods. This broad-based system certification covers a wider range of consumer goods, including medicines, toiletries, cosmetics, and confectionary in addition to meals and poultry.

Food safety is influenced by consumer familiarity with ingredients and quality as well as the safety of the food ingredients. Consumers need to know about product ingredients since they gave the potential to be Muslims and to be rejected throughout the purchase decision process. Wandel (1997) states that the majority of customers are highly interested in understanding what they eat and this information is usually obtained through food labeling. The Halal logo is used by Malaysian manufacturers and food companies to ensure consumers that the foods and products they produce are halal-compliant. The Halal Certificate gives customers a direct guarantee that their food is halal. The Malaysian government has made JAKIM's halal certification mandatory for food and items that are labelled as halal. JAKIM is a shortened form for Malaysia's Department of Islamic Development which is part of the Prime Minister's Department and is the only institution in the nation that is permitted to grant and supervise halal certification.

Rahman et al (2015) stated that consumer knowledge when combined with the right consumer attitudes toward halal products has the potential to boost consumer purchase intentions towards halal items. Because consumers who like halal products have more positive sentiments, they are more likely to purchase halal food products (Abu-Hussin et al., 2017). However, consumer knowledge is not sufficient for customers to have a positive opinion about a product (Rahman et al., 2015), and there must be a prior consumer attitude variable and consumer knowledge outcome, that is, a consumer perception variable. The objective of this study is to identify the factors that influenced consumer attitudes and decision-making on the purchase of halal food which is halal logo certification, social influence word-of-mouth and religious beliefs.

## Literature Review

### *The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)*

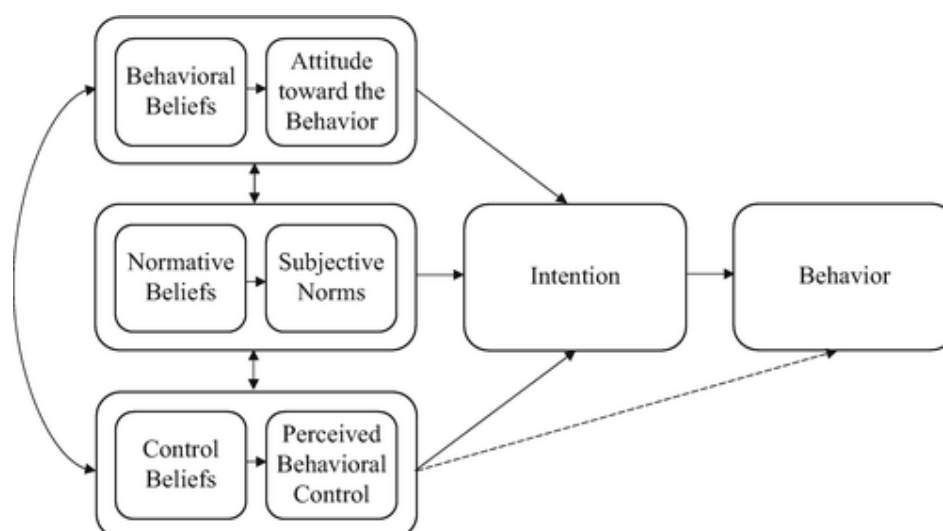


Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The theory of planned behavior (TPB; Ajzen, 1991) is used as a basic underpinning theory in this study to establish the link between the halal concept and other antecedents and consumer intention to purchase. TPB has been extensively acknowledged and used in food-

related research (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992) as well as halal food research (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). Previous research on halal purchasing intent has also used the TPB as a theoretical framework (Alam & Sayuti, 2011). According to TPB, there are three primary components that impact human behavior. Attitude, subjective norms, and behavioral control are the three components. TPB provides suggestions for evaluating human social behavior.

In the context of this study, it is expected that while purchasing halal food, individuals would react according to a projected framework (Ajzen, 1991). Although the suggested research framework does not exactly translate the TPB, it does assist in understanding how individual human ideas or perceptions are determined or impacted by the individual's desire to execute the action. The attitude toward the behavior component of TPB is the most important. As a consequence, a positive attitude toward action resulting from a collective behavioral belief, such as the belief that the product is halal can lead to positive attitudes and the desire to purchase. Subjective norms or felt social pressure to engage or not engage in a certain behavior is another function of belief.

#### *Attitudes Towards Halal Food*

Attitude is a factor to consider while engaging in particular activities that are related to the goal of the attitude such as purchasing goods (Afendi et al., 2014). The moral evaluation of consumer behaviors is influenced by one's attitude toward halal food (Mainchum et al., 2017). A person's attitude has an impact on their product: a positive attitude should lead to positive behaviors, whereas a bad attitude should lead to poor conduct. As a result, if a Muslim consumer has a positive attitude toward the halal idea and believes in it, he or she is more inclined to purchase halal-labeled goods (Mukhtar & Butt, 2012).

#### *Effect of Halal Awareness on Attitude Towards Halal Food*

Halal awareness plays a huge role in explaining why people choose to buy halal products (Aziz & Chok, 2013). Ambali and Bakar (2014) found that the importance of halal certification, religious views, health reasons, and exposure played a significant part in developing Muslim consumers' knowledge of halal goods in Malaysia. Consumers are increasingly concerned with clean and healthful food, thus they are more cautious and discriminating about what they eat. Although each Muslim has varying degrees of compliance or devotion to Halal products, in general, a Muslim should have a favorable attitude toward everything that is halal. Furthermore, Muslim consumers who are becoming more aware of the necessity of purchasing and eating halal food are helping to grow the worldwide halal food sector (Azam, 2016).

#### *Effect of Attitude Towards Halal Food on Purchase Intention*

Alam and Sayuti (2011) study found that attitude toward halal foods has a considerable and beneficial impact on the desire to purchase halal meals. Similarly, Khalek (2014) research found a beneficial impact of mindset on halal food purchase intentions among Malaysian students. A similar finding was reached among non-Muslim customers in their study (Mainchum et al., 2017) discovered that attitudes regarding halal food had the biggest direct effect on the purchase intention of halal food among young non-Muslim customers in Thailand. The most crucial element affecting customers' intentions to buy halal food is their mindset. Halal food is more likely to be bought by people who have a favorable attitude.

### *Safety and Hygienic Food in the Context of Halal*

Hygiene is highly emphasized in Halal and covers all components of one's own body, clothing, and equipment as well as the working environment for food, beverages, and products. The aim is for foods of all kinds to be safe, healthy, and to be safe for human consumption. In the context of halal, hygienic foodstuffs, drinks and goods are free from pollution and harmful micro-organisms. Halal is therefore obvious in terms of dietary considerations, notably in keeping us clean and our things in order to prevent disease. As a result, when a safe food, drink, or product is manufactured and/or eaten as intended, it does not harm Muslim or non-Muslim customers. In order to protect our safety, producers should take the necessary steps to comply with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygiene Practices (GHP). Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) refers to the use of a mix of manufacturing and quality control processes by manufacturers to guarantee that their goods are consistently made to their specifications and the Halal Certification Body's halal prescriptions (Ambali & Bakar, 2014). The Codex Principles for Food Hygiene and the Malaysian MS1514 Standard for Food Hygiene establish a solid foundation for hygienic practice in food hygiene (Sumali, 2009). This is absolutely in line with Halal's objectives. In other words, when fully applied, the General Principles of Food Hygiene support the halal objective. As a result, the JAKIM's halal certification procedure's Guidelines and other specific and suitably assigned hygienic norms of practice can be used internationally.

### **Hypotheses Development**

#### *The relationships between the Halal certification logo and Muslim's purchase intention of Halal foods*

Given the number of certification systems in the food business, it is surprising that there are just a few research methods of certification economics. Halal certification refers to the established body's formal acknowledgment of the orderly process of preparation, slaughtering, cleaning, diagnosis, and treatment such as JAKIM in Malaysia. A firm must be certified as having a Halal certification or Halal logo as the proof of religious integrity of its products under the Holy Qur'an (Guntalee & Unahannda, 2005). As part of their religious obligations, Muslims must consume certified halal foods. Due to its widespread acceptance by Muslims and non-Muslims, the concept of halal has become more popular than it used to be. All across the world, the Halal concept is being viewed as the standard of choice for these two groups (Golnaz et al., 2005). The Halal logo by means of complete authentication is displayed on its container of packaging of information about a product. The extent of information about food or products to be affected by a label depends on the safety of Muslim societies such as Malaysia (Ahmad et al., 2013). Etiquette and enforcement of branding can therefore be key methods for affecting the degree or awareness of Muslims on food and products. This is because the items and the status of the food must be justified either by their logo or by their labeling as halal or non-halal before buying or drinking (Ambali & Bakar, 2012).

*H1: Halal certification will have a positive effect on Muslim consumers' decision-making in purchasing halal food.*

#### *The relationships between social influence (word of mouth) and Muslim's purchase intention of Halal foods*

Word-of-mouth communication is defined as spoken and unwritten recommendations given by a consumer to other prospective customers in the form of endorsement or criticism



while obtaining a product or service. Word-of-mouth is used as a moderating variable in this study. Consumers' intent to purchase is influenced by word-of-mouth communication, according to studies. Word-of-mouth was found to affect purchase intention indirectly via subjective norms in research involving family Takaful (Islamic insurance) consumers (Husin et al., 2016). This finding is confirmed by Jalil et al (2012) who conducted a comprehensive assessment of the influence of word-of-mouth on tourists' travel intention and found it to be substantial. Muslim communities have a strong feeling of collectivism and are regarded as close together (Jamal, 2003). As a result, word-of-mouth about Halal food status may spread fast throughout communities (Ahmed, 2008). Those who obtain more positive word-of-mouth recommendations are more likely to be influenced by Halal marketing concepts, Halal awareness, Halal certification, and religious beliefs which will influence their purchase intention. It is because individuals prefer to believe the information they get from their friends, family, and significant others. It is predicted that this sense of trust would encourage individuals to have a higher level of purchase intention.

*H2: Social influence (word of mouth) will have a positive effect on Muslim consumers' decision-making in purchasing halal food*

#### *The relationships between religious belief and Muslim's purchase intention of Halal foods*

Religious belief is described as a person's level of conviction in practicing his religious ideas. Individuals' attitudes and behavior will be influenced by their religious views. In determining whether a specific action is right (good deeds) or wrong (sins), Muslims are largely governed by the command of Allah in the Quran and Hadith of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). Those who have a higher level of religion are said to be careful in the selection of the right product since their consumption will impact their ability to act well and prevent unlawful sins. In fact, Sharia-compliant Muslims are worried about the halal of the materials of clothes they wear, the ingredients of the perfumes, cosmetics, and lotions they use, and even the toothpaste and mouthwash they use. Morality is viewed as a collection of objective facts by religious people (Shariff, 2015). They think that if their negligence caused them to use or consume prohibited or "haram" goods, their good actions will not be rewarded and that they will accrue sin. According to the study of Muslim, Christian, and Hindu customers in Essoo and Dibb (2010), the purchasing behavior of consumers who are "religious" or "incidentally" religious differences is considerable. The Muslims who devote themselves to food are more cautious and uncertain about its halal certification. In comparison with their "less devoted" colleagues, they tend to take the greatest vigilance on the halal status of the food that they plan to eat. Consumers' suspicion or cynical behavior can be used as a psychological defense mechanism for purchasing of specific items (Chylinski & Chu, 2010). Consequently, religious belief is likely to determine the buying intent of Muslim buyers.

*H3: Religious belief will have a positive effect on Muslim consumers' decision-making in purchasing halal food*

## **Methodology**

### *Population and Sampling Procedures*

Muslim local customers in the Sibu region of Sarawak are the target group for this study. The 300 responses were adequate for the whole population to represent (Saunders et al., 2012). The survey will thus be performed in Sibu Sarawak with a total of 300 Muslim

representatives. The data from the questionnaire survey will be evaluated to see if the hypothesis is correct. Certain data analysis approaches, such as hypothesis testing with correlation analysis and reliability testing, will be used in this study. There are two sorts of data collection methods: primary data collection and secondary data collection but this research will only be using primary data.

#### *Descriptive Analysis*

The essential characteristics of inspection data are described using descriptive analysis. They provide a brief summary of the results and metrics. These are the basis of almost all quantitative data analysis and simple graph analysis (Trochim, 2020). This process involves transforming the raw data into a more accessible and understandable format.

#### *Reliability Analysis*

According to Zikmund (2003), the purpose of reliability testing is to check consistency and stability when assessing the cross-correlation of data. According to the same study, Cronbach's alpha is, among other things, a measure of reliability that shows how well variables are associated. The higher the Cronbach's alpha value, the more reliable the test results. According to Goforth (2015), the measurements within the group share the same covariance, and the higher Cronbach's alpha value, the more likely it is.

<b>Cronbach Alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>	<b>Indication</b>
$\alpha$ value between 0.81 ~ 0.95	Very good reliability
$\alpha$ value between 0.71 ~ 0.80	Good reliability
$\alpha$ value between 0.61 ~ 0.70	Fair reliability
$\alpha$ value < 0.60	Poor reliability

Source: Cheng, Wee, Leow, and Yeo (2014)

#### *Pearson's Correlation Analysis*

According to Tan et al (2018), Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to determine the direction and degree of association between the independent and dependent variables. The range of coefficients ranges from a positive "1" to a negative "1" (Hair et al., 2007). According to Tan (2015), the value of a perfect positive correlation is +1 and the value of a perfect negative correlation is -1. As a result, Table 3.8 shows the rules of thumb for the correlation coefficient that establishes the strength of the connection between the variables.

#### *Multiple Regression*

Multiple regression analysis is used to determine the statistical significance of the association between two sets of variables and is used to find patterns in large amounts of data. This model is useful for examining relationships between sets of variables. For each dependent "y" variable, multiple uses of "x" are evaluated using a single predictor from the basic linear regression (Andale, 2014).

The model specification is as followed

$$PI_i = \alpha + \beta_{1i}HLC_i + \beta_{2i}SI_i + \beta_{3i}RB_i + \varepsilon_i$$

$PI$  = Purchase Intention

$HLC$  = Halal Logo Certificate

$SI$  = Social Influence

$RB$  = Religious Belief

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  = coefficients of  $HLC, SI$  and  $RB$

$\alpha$  = Intercept

## Results and Discussion

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to random respondents over the age of 18 until 60 via various platforms. The questionnaires are divided into three (3) sections: Section A, which asks for respondents' demographics, and Section B which asks general questions, and section C, on the other hand, covered each variable individually; Halal Awareness, Halal Logo Certificate, Social Influence (Words of Mouth) and Religious Belief.

Table 1

### Demographic Profile

	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	125	41.7
	Female	175	58.3
Age	18-30	225	75
	31-40	34	11.3
	41-50	22	7.3
	51-60	19	6.3
Occupation	Student	142	47.3
	Employee	98	32.7
	Self Employed	17	5.7
	Retired	10	3.3
	Unemployed	33	11
Marital Status	Single	221	73.7
	Married	74	24.7
	Divorce/Separated	2	0.7
	Widowed	2	0.7
	Couple	1	0.3

According to Table 1, there are 300 responses to the survey. The majority of the respondents are female, with 175 women answering the survey, or 58.3 percent, while the number of men who answered the survey is 125, or 41.7 percent. A total of 224 respondents (or 75 percent) are between the ages of 18 and 30, followed by 34 respondents (or 11.3 percent) between the ages of 31 and 40. The remaining minority group consists of 22 respondents (7.3 percent) aged 41 to 50 years old and 19 respondents (6.3 percent) aged 51 to 60 years old. Other than that, looking at the occupation, most of the respondents were students which shows a big number of 142 respondents or 47.3%. Followed by the employee which consists of 98 respondents or 32.7%, 17 respondents, or 5.7% who are self-employed, 10 retirees, or 3.3%, and 33 unemployed respondents, or 11%. Aside from that, when it came to occupation, the majority of the respondents were students, representing 142 or (47.3 percent) of the total. Employees come in second with 98 respondents (32.7 percent), followed by self-employed people with 17 respondents (5.7 percent), retirees with 10 respondents (3.3 percent), and unemployed people with 33 respondents (11 percent). Moving on to marital



status, 221 single respondents (73.7 percent) responded to the survey, followed by 74 married respondents (24.7 percent), 2 divorced or separated individuals (0.7 percent), 2 widowers (0.7 percent), and just 1 couple (0.3 percent).

Table 2

*Reliability Test Results*

Variable	Number of Measurement Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Purchase Intention	6	0.936
Halal Awareness	6	0.918
Concern and Safety	6	0.967
Halal logo Certification	5	0.928
Social Influence (Word of Mouth)	5	0.934
Religious Belief	4	0.960

Table 2 shows the result of the reliability test that had been run using SPSS. Purchase intention has a total of six (6) items and received a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.936. The second one, halal awareness has the lowest Cronbach's alpha value of 0.918, with a total of six (6) items, while the third one, concern, and safety, has a total of six (6) items and received the highest Cronbach's alpha value of 0.967. Next, the first independent variable, a five (5) items halal logo certificate, has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.928, while the second independent variable, social influence (word of mouth), has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.934. Religious belief is the third independent variable, which contains four (4) items and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.960.

Table 3

*Pearson Correlation between Purchase Intention and Halal Logo Certificate, Social Influence and Religious Belief*

		Purchase Intention	Halal Logo Certification	Social Influence (Word of Mouth)	Religious Belief
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.878***	0.664***	0.739***
	Sig. (2 tailed)	-	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	300	300	300	300

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

The Pearson Correlation between purchasing intention and halal logo certificate, social influence and religious belief is shown in Table 3. The correlation coefficient between purchasing intention and halal logo certificate is 0.878 at 1% significance level. The correlation coefficient between purchasing intention and social influence (word of mouth) is 0.664 at 1% significance level. While the correlation coefficient between purchasing intention and religious belief is 0.739 at 1% significance level. The association between the dependent variable and the independent variable is quite strong, according to the Pearson Correlation coefficient range.

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

Table 4

*Multiple Regression Analysis between Purchase Intention and Halal Logo Certificate, Social Influence and Religious Belief*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Halal Logo Certificate	0.878***	0.000
Social Influence (Word of Mouth)	0.664***	0.000
Religious Belief	0.739***	0.000

Notes: Dependent Variable Purchase Intention, \*\*\* indicates significance at 1% level

Based on the findings, it can be stated that the halal logo certificate has a considerable beneficial impact on consumers' attitudes and purchasing decisions when shopping for halal food. Evidence from Pakistan's Halal food market supports Awan et al (2015) findings in their study regarding factors influencing Halal purchasing intention. The study also supports the idea that halal certification is an excellent communication tool for food marketers to attract Muslim customers (Rajagopal et al., 2011). Social influence (word of mouth) has a significant positive impact on consumers' attitudes and purchasing decisions whenever shopping for halal food. Thus before the purchase occurs then the consumer will seek or collect information obtained from family, friends, or online reviews so that word of mouth is very influential on purchase intention. The results of this study are appropriate with research by (Hamouda & Tabbane, 2013).

Based on the analysis, religious beliefs can be said to have a significant positive impact on consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions when purchasing halal foods. A person's religious beliefs will make them obey their religious rules. Halal consumption practices are a manifestation of Muslim religious obligations. The influence of religion on the intention to buy Halal food may be due to the fact that the Islamic religion has evolved into a lifestyle in which all parts of his life are guided by his religious beliefs. A previous (Machali et al., 2013) in Brunei Darussalam, (Majid et al., 2015) in Pakistan and (Ahmad et al., 2015) supports the results of this study.

This study can provide a perspective to industry players with information that will influence their behavior and decision-making regarding food. As for the first variable, the halal logo certification, Halal products are known for their high quality. Meanwhile, the Halal logo has evolved into a high-quality product. As Islam is the foundation of public and private life in Islamic countries, global demand for Shariah-compliant halal foods will continue to grow. The concept of halal and haram (forbidden) is inseparable from Islam as a way of life. In addition to halal, cleanliness needs to be very important, especially when it comes to food and drink that Muslims consume. Another important of the Halal logo and certification is that it means that the food is safe for consumption. It points out that high-quality foods must be safe and must not adversely affect human health. When a product is recognized as halal, Muslims will be completely confident in their purchase and consumption. The certification acts as a sign that the item is being treated safely, cleanly, and in accordance with Islamic values. Secondly, as for social influence (word of mouth), this variable has a positive significant meaning that it is acceptable. As for word of mouth, this will enable to get the customer's insight views by buying some particular halal food or products and spreading about it to other consumers as well. By

doing that, other consumers may aware and know about halal food in their area or with brands and restaurants that they are not familiar with. Furthermore, if this contagious effect continues, more Muslim customers will know about halal food. Lastly is a religious belief. Religiosity is the appreciation of the symbols, beliefs, ideals, and actions of one's spiritually influenced religion. Customers' religious beliefs will surely influence the purchase of halal products, especially food. Similarly, religious people do not buy suspicious products. This finding is important because it can ensure that retailers and marketers do not have any concerns that could endanger halal statuses, such as food origin, product manufacturing process, logistics, and food handling. All of these uncertainties need to be communicated to the customer before they can purchase the item.

### Conclusion

This study examines the factors influencing consumers' attitudes and decision-making in shopping for halal food. All concepts and factors of Muslim's attitudes and decision-making to buy halal foods are based on previous empirical studies, on which hypotheses were made. The study included 300 participants and the data obtained were evaluated for normality, reliability, and multiple regression. Based on the analysis result, it can be concluded that all the independent variables which are the halal logo certificate, social influence (word of mouth), and religious belief have a significant positive relationship in affecting the attitude and decision-making of consumers in shopping for halal food. This study has the potential to significantly benefit both the industry's players and consumers. The global market for halal food products is enormous and rapidly developing due to its rising demand. This indicator is essential in order for the industry players to produce food products safely and export them to Muslim nations. Yet, this can also present a chance to expand the marketing of food products globally. The range of halal food options available to consumers allows them to select and taste foods that are not only halal but also delectable.

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