Awareness of Halal Food Consumption among Muslim Community

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Abstract

The Malaysian government has carried out many steps to promote Halal consumption and become one of the biggest concerns of Muslim. Even so, the identification of fraud or deceptive practices and the amount of deception which are related to Halal food may become complicated to be inspected. Thus, understanding and knowledge of halal food are important for Muslim consumers. This study was carried out to determine the relationship of understanding and knowledge towards awareness of Halal food consumption of consumers in Pengkalan Chepa, Kelantan. This research is using quantitative method by distributing questionnaires to all respondents. Data were collected from 375 Muslim respondents in Pengkalan Chepa city. The results showed that understanding and knowledge among the customers are significantly correlated towards the awareness of Halal food consumption. This study able to shed some lights to the Muslim consumers on awareness of the consumption of Halal food in their daily lives. It also notifies the government the importance of providing and ensuring that food produced by producers and sellers comes from Halal sources to Malaysians. The study suggested that Islamic regulators should continually seek solutions to increase and create awareness on Halal food, while the legislature should also enhance their crucial function in law enforcement and sanctions to dishonest market player.

Keywords: Understanding, Knowledge, Awareness, Halal Food

Introduction

Religion manipulates one of the greatest significant roles in food selection in many communities. Religion's effect on food consumption depends on the religion itself and the degree to which people adhere to their faith's instructions. Usually, other viewpoints were defined or limited by beliefs, including the use of food. For Muslims, the food they eat must be Halal and Muslim consumers are known to be very specific and prudent in terms of the Halal of the food they eat (Yusoff & Adzharuddin, 2017)

In Malaysia, the Muslim buyer usually searches for the true Halal authentication distributed by the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM). The certificate of Halal food has been performed since 1974 by JAKIM in Malaysia. The panel is likewise dependable to

enable the business parties to allot for Halal testament and to guarantee that they get Halal endorsement effectively as indicated by the prerequisite. However, there are few aspects that drive to the failure of receiving the Halal certification such as, they may be unaware, not totally comprehend the Halal concepts, unclear of the regulations, and the procedure of applying for Halal certification. Individuals can be taught through customary methods of correspondences (for example, Paper, TV, radio) and the Internet or some other medium of correspondences (Osman & Aziz, 2019).

This study discusses the knowledge and understanding in making awareness towards the Halal food. The targeted respondent in this study focuses on youngsters since they are the demeanor of youthful buyers, particularly youthful Muslim shoppers will decide the eventual fate of the Halal business in the nation.

Literature Review
According to Farhana et al. (2023), awareness refers to having knowledge and understanding of a particular issue or situation. In the context of halal, awareness involves not only familiarity or exposure to the topic but also staying informed about current developments or challenges related to halal food, beverages, and products. Therefore, halal awareness reflects the extent to which Muslim consumers are fully, partially, or even subconsciously mindful of the issues associated with the halal aspects of what is permitted by Allah.

In this study, there are 2 hypotheses was proposed:
H_1: There is a positive relationship between understanding of Halal compliance and the awareness of Halal food consumptions.
H_2: There is a positive relationship between knowledge in Halal food and the awareness of Halal food consumption.

A clear understanding of halal or Islamic branding is essential. According to Rafiki et al. (2024), without continuous engagement and reinforcement, halal may risk being perceived merely as a cultural symbol rather than a lasting religious standard. For Muslim consumers, branding cannot be separated from their faith, as all actions, including consumptions where all should align with Islamic principles. This means that their attitudes and behaviours toward brands should be guided by devotion to Allah. According to Ab Rashid & Bojei (2019), the production that produce Halal foods must have a very cautious understanding throughout the supply chain. The reason is Muslim nowadays are very concern and want to guarantee that the foods they consume are authentically Halal and Toyyiban. In addition, according to Parvin Hosseini et al. (2023), to ensure the validity of Halal certification must understand the importance of animal slaughtered, Halal logo, and food quality in shaping Muslim consumers' willingness to pay for Halal food. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed;

H_1: There is a positive relationship between understanding of Halal compliance and the awareness of Halal food consumptions.

Based on Putri et al. (2018), the most influential factor in Muslim consumers' choices to buy Halal food is the level of knowledge about dealing with the product. Othman et al. (2018) said awareness in the context of Halal foods can be correlated to the informing process to enhance the degrees of consciousness toward the permitted for Muslims to consume.

According to Wafaretta (2019), the Halal knowledge possessed by an individual can boost the purchase intention of Halal products. Halal knowledge is essential for all consumers to help them to decide whether they should buy the products or not. The consumers must have adequate the Halal knowledge about how the products can be classified as Halal based on Al Quran or Al Sunnah. On top of that, Putri (2019) has proven that the increasing of knowledge will tend to affect the intentions of someone. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed;

H_2: There is a positive relationship between knowledge in Halal food and the awareness of Halal food consumption.

Materials and Methods
The study uses a quantitative method in order to identify the respondents' behavior concerned on Halal food. To measure the respondents' behavior towards Halal food, a questionnaire method is chosen as a tool to collect data. Before distributing the questionnaire, the respondents were asked if they consume Halal food because it is the main purpose of the study. The study is targeting the consumers that stay in Pengkalan Chepa, Kelantan, Malaysia.

The population of people in Pengkalan Chepa city is about 14,000 (Lat Long, n.d). By using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), 375 sample size was selected from Muslim in the city. To complete the research a series of questionnaires was distributed to the respondents. There are four main sections in the questionnaire namely section A, B, C and D. The section A consists of demographic question while the other section include questionnaire consist of the dependent variables (Awareness of Halal Food), and the independent variable (Understanding of Halal Food and Knowledge of Halal Food).

The total sample size is 375 respondents participated in this study using the convenience sampling technique. In preparation for conducting the main survey, a pilot study was carried out to assess the reliability of each questionnaire item. All data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29.0. The methods of data analysis included Reliability Analysis using Cronbach's Alpha, Frequency Analysis, Descriptive Analysis, and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

Findings
Reliability Analysis Cronbach's Alpha
Reliability test method is important to measure the consistency of the research's study measure. Reliability method is carried out to ensure the consistency of an instrument item is calculated. The Cronbach's alpha measurement test method is used as in the internal types of consistency reliability. Before the actual data collection, 30 questionnaires were distributed for the purpose of the pilot study to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Then, questionnaires were distributed to 375 respondents. Table 1 below show the reliability analysis result.

Table 1
Reliability Analysis (Pilot Test)

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Understanding	5	0.804
Knowledge	5	0.743
Awareness	5	0.844

The results show that the range of the Cronbach's Alpha after the reliability test is 0.743 to 0.844 indicating each variable are counted as acceptable by following the Cronbach's alpha coefficient thumb rule. This clearly shows that all the questionnaires are understood by the target respondents and can be used for data collection in this analysis.

Frequency Analysis
Table 2 shows the demographic distribution of 375 respondents who answered the questionnaire.

Table 2
Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Study Respondents

Category	Sub Category	Frequency (n=375)	Percentage (100%)
Gender	Male	140	37.3
	Female	235	62.7
Age	Below 20 years old	53	14.1
	21-30 years old	255	68.0
	31 years old and above	67	17.9
Education	SPM/STPM/Matriculation	70	18.7
	Diploma	60	16.0
	Bachelor	230	61.3
	Master	10	2.7
	PhD	5	1.3
Status	Single	290	77.3
	Married	78	20.8
	Widow	7	1.9
Income	Below RM1000	257	68.5
	RM1001-RM3000	78	20.8
	Above RM3001	40	10.7

Based on the data in Table 2, the respondents demonstrate a varied data. Despite this diversity, a significant portion of the respondents are female (62.7%), 30 years old and below (82.1%), and possess a Bachelor's degree (61.3%). This demographic overview is crucial for gaining a clearer understanding of the respondents' background and serves as a foundation for further analysis.

Descriptive Analysis
Each item in the questionnaire was evaluated using a 5-point Likert Scale. The mean score for each variable was analyzed to assess the overall trend in respondents' perceptions and awareness levels. Table 3 below presents the results of the descriptive analysis.

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of Independent Variable- Understanding

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Halal food should not made up of anything in its preparation, processing, transportation, or storage using means or facilities that is unlawful according to Islamic law	1	5	4.71	.639
I understand that the process of slaughtering animals should be done by Islamic method to ensure that it is permitted to eat	2	5	4.85	.432
All Haram products are forbidden for Muslims to consume in any form	1	5	4.82	.532
The component of the products is very crucial to be known by the consumers	2	5	4.81	.473
Without the Halal logo, I find it difficult to distinguish it from being Halal or Haram	1	5	4.76	.558

From the result, the highest mean is 4.85 which is consumer understand the process of slaughtering animals' accordance with Islamic ways of practice. It has proven that Halal food is safe to be consumed and the food hygiene is guaranteed. It is supported by previous study by Ali & Ahmad (2023) who found that halal certification and traceability systems significantly enhance consumer trust by ensuring food safety, hygiene, and compliance with Islamic standards.

Meanwhile, the lowest mean is 4.71, where the statement "Halal food should not be made up of anything that is unlawful according to Islamic law" received slightly lower agreement. This may be due to a lack of deeper understanding among some respondents about the full scope of halal requirements beyond ingredients, such as the preparation, handling, and logistics processes. This finding is supported by Mustapha et al. (2024), who highlighted that many individuals have limited awareness of the comprehensive nature of halal standards, especially regarding contamination risks and non-halal elements during food processing, transportation, and storage.

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis of Independent Variable- Knowledge

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I know that Islam is very concern in consuming Halal food among Muslim	1	5	4.86	.416
I know that Muslim are forbidden to eat food that has been mixed with pork or any preservatives that made from non-slaughtered animal fats	1	5	4.87	.412
I am well-informed that JAKIM will take action on all manufacturers who do not follow the Halal standard	1	5	4.72	.560
With a little knowledge, a person might be having issues in choosing Halal food	1	5	4.69	.631
As a Muslim consumer, I know that by consuming Halal food it will give us a healthy body	1	5	4.83	.454

From the result that been show at the table 4 result, the highest mean is 4.87 which is as a Muslim, they are forbidden to eat food that has been mixed with pork or any preservatives that made from non-slaughtered animal fats. These prove that Islam emphasizes each Muslim to consume food that is guaranteed to be clean and Halal Toyyiban. Meanwhile, the lowest mean is 4.69 which is with the little knowledge, a person might be having issues in choosing Halal food.

Table 5

Descriptive Analysis of Dependent Variable- Awareness

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I aware that Halal food is an obligatory for a Muslim	1	5	4.89	.401
I aware that all food and other consumer products must obtain the JAKIM Halal's validation	2	5	4.83	.442
I aware with the latest news about Halal products and issues in Malaysia	2	5	4.49	.770
I aware that the ingredients used in producing the products will influence the buying behavior	3	5	4.65	.583
I aware with the Halal restaurants in Malaysia	2	5	4.67	.564

From the table 5 results, the highest mean is 4.89 which is the consumer are aware that Halal food is an obligatory for Muslims. These prove that Muslims are only required to eat Halal food for the sake of seeking the pleasure of Allah SWT. Aside from that, the reason for Muslims eating Halal food is to allow them performing their responsibilities as a Muslim in this world and to get the blessing from the Creator. Whereas, the lowest mean is 4.49 which is the consumer are aware with the latest news and the arisen issues regarding Halal products

in Malaysia. The result shows that consumer tend to follow up with the current issue yet there are several consumers did not aware with the latest news.

Pearson Correlation Analysis
Table 6
Pearson Correlation Analysis between Independent and Dependent Variable

		Understanding	Knowledge	Halal Awareness
Understanding	Pearson Correlation	1	.743**	.762**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000	.000
	N	375	375	375
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.743**	1	.712**
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000		.000
	N	375	375	375
Halal Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.762**	.712**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	375	375	375
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

In this study, Pearson Correlation is used to analyze and evaluate the relationship between the independent variable which are understanding and knowledge and the dependent variable, which is awareness of halal food consumption.

Table 6 shows the relationship between awareness towards Halal food consumption and understanding towards Halal food consumption. The value of correlation coefficient is 0.762 indicated that there is a moderate to strong relationship between both of it. Based on the result of the significant value is (P<0.01); this shows that there is a relationship between factors influencing awareness towards Halal food consumption and understanding towards Halal food consumption. Meanwhile, the significant level shows that both variables have very strong to perfect correlation relationship between factors influencing awareness towards Halal food consumption and understanding towards Halal food consumption. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and H_1 is accepted.

Table 6 also shows the relationship between awareness towards Halal food consumption and knowledge towards Halal food consumption. The value of correlation coefficient is 0.712 indicated that there is a moderate to strong relationship between both of it. Based on the result of the significant value is (P<0.01); this shows that there is a relationship between factors influencing awareness towards Halal food consumption and knowledge towards Halal food consumption. Meanwhile, the significant level of shows that both variables have moderate to strong relationship between factors influencing awareness towards Halal food consumption and knowledge towards Halal food consumption. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and H_2 is accepted.

Discussions and Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between knowledge, understanding, and awareness of halal food consumption among Muslim consumers in Pengkalan Chepa. The findings revealed that both knowledge and understanding significantly influence awareness, as shown by a strong statistical relationship ($p < 0.01$). The highest mean scores of 4.85 and 4.87 show that respondents clearly understand the Islamic slaughtering process and that Muslims are prohibited from eating food mixed with pork or preservatives made from animals not slaughtered according to Islamic law. Meanwhile, the lowest mean scores of 4.71 and 4.69 suggest that respondents were slightly less confident about the halal aspects of food preparation, processing, and transportation and limited halal knowledge may cause difficulties in choosing halal food. This gap suggests that while consumers are confident about slaughtering, they may lack full knowledge about other halal-compliant procedures.

The results are consistent with previous studies. Alzeer (2018) emphasized the importance of understanding halal and toyyiban principles in ensuring Shariah-compliant products. Similarly, Wafaretta (2019) found that halal knowledge significantly influences purchase intention, and Othman et al. (2018) highlighted the role of Islamic education in shaping awareness. In this study, most respondents were aged 21–30 years, a group that is more likely to actively seek information and be aware of halal-related issues. The findings also suggest that halal logos and certifications, such as those from JAKIM, play an important role in guiding consumer choices.

The practical implication of this research is that increasing halal-related knowledge and understanding can lead to greater consumer awareness, confidence, and informed decision-making. This benefits not only researchers and academicians but also entrepreneurs, policymakers, and religious authorities. Efforts to improve public education on halal principles and to strengthen the visibility and credibility of halal certification processes are crucial.

Although the study was limited to Pengkalan Chepa with a sample size of 375, the insights gained offer valuable direction for future research and halal industry practices across Malaysia. The future study should also include on the modern technologies of foods which might affect the halal standard in the aspects of its processing or ingredients.

This study contributes the understanding and knowledge to awareness in the context of halal food consumption among Muslim consumers. It supports existing theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) where cognitive awareness and comprehension are key predictors of behavioral intention.

The study also adds values to the literature by empirically validating the positive correlation between halal knowledge, understanding of halal compliance, and awareness, thus enriching the theoretical discourse on religious consumption behavior. It helps bridge the gap between national halal policy efforts and grassroots consumer behavior, making it highly relevant for policymakers, educators, and halal certification authorities in Malaysia and similar socio-religious settings.

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