

Concept of Halal among Non-Muslim Community in Malaysia

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Abstract

This study explores understanding of halal among non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia, highlighting factors influencing their purchase intentions. Findings indicate halal awareness, certification, marketing, and knowledge significantly impact non-Muslim consumers' willingness to buy halal products. Increased halal awareness enhances trust in product safety and quality, while effective marketing strategies improve perceptions and broaden appeal. The study identifies a growing acceptance of halal products among non-Muslims, driven by health consciousness and ethical considerations. Additionally, halal certification is recognized as a vital trust signal, assuring compliance with high standards. Educational initiatives are essential for addressing misconceptions and fostering a deeper understanding of halal principles. Ultimately, this study underscores importance of halal in promoting cultural diversity and inclusivity within Malaysian society, positioning it as a valuable concept transcends religious boundaries.

Keywords: Halal products, Non-Muslim Consumers, Purchase Intention, Halal Certification, Halal Marketing, Halal Knowledge.

Introduction

In Malaysia, concept of halal goes beyond dietary restrictions and includes a larger understanding appeals to both Muslim and non-Muslim populations (Xiong and Chia, 2024). Understanding non-Muslim consumers' motives and actions is crucial as halal business overgrows due to their increased demand (Siregar, Elfindri, et al., 2022). Non-Muslims frequently prefer halal products over non-halal ones because consumers consider halal products to be of higher quality, safer, and cleaner (Ramli, Razak et al., 2023). This trend suggests a shift toward greater market adoption across various industries (Zolas, Nikolas, et al., 2021).

Halal certification and manufacturing guidelines still need to be made familiar to a large number of non-Muslim consumers, despite this rising interest (Ramli, Abd Razak et al.,

2023). This ignorance can give rise to false beliefs about halal methods, especially when it comes to moral issues involved in halal production (Anuar and Xin, 2024.). Halal products are often linked to ethical production practices prioritize environmental sustainability, animal care, and high standards of quality (Abderahman, Karim, et al., 2021). Businesses may increase knowledge of ethical consumption and adjust marketing techniques by looking into how these ethical qualities affect non-Muslim purchase intentions (Billah, Rahman, et al., 2020).

Moreover, communal harmony and cultural integration can be promoted by having an awareness of non-Muslim perspectives on halal (Izudin, Isnanto et al., 2024). Respect for one another is fostered among various groups and cultural identity is preserved when variations in purchasing habits are acknowledged and fulfilled (Cleveland, Papadopoulos, et al., 2022).

Businesses must create engaging marketing plans appeal to non-Muslim consumers as halal sector grows rapidly on a worldwide scale (Tarofder, Sultana, 2022). Businesses may draw consumers from a broader demographic by highlighting advantages of halal products go beyond religious boundaries, such as their health benefits and ethical sourcing (Rejeb, Rejeb, et al., 2021). This strategy promotes halal products as a part of Malaysia's rich cultural history, which boosts local economies and promotes cultural tourism (Yusuf, Djakfar, et al., 2021).

Literature Review

What is Halal?

Halal refers to products and services are permissible or allowed in Islam (Khan and Haleem, 2016). Halal concept provides guidelines for Muslims in their daily lives, encompassing food consumption, business conduct, and social interactions (Butt, 2020). Opposite of halal is "haram," which denotes what is forbidden or unlawful. Halal standards are rooted in Islamic dietary principles as defined in Quran and Hadith (Halim and Salleh, 2020).

Halal has an impact on a variety of businesses, including banking, travel, and cosmetics, while being most often linked with food (Azam and Abdullah, 2020). For Muslims, halal certification is essential since it guarantees food products adhere to Islamic dietary regulations (Bustami, 2021). According to these principles, certain foods must meet certain requirements to be categorized as halal (Fuseini et al., 2016).

Non-Muslims increasingly view halal-certified food as a symbol of superior quality and health standards (Ramli et al., 2023). Additionally, concerns about health, sustainability, and animal welfare resonate with non-Muslim consumers, highlighting halal's market potential (Kim and Seock, 2009). Halal practices foster cultural respect and understanding in multicultural societies (Wilkins and Stephen et al., 2019).

Halal market's growth, especially in non-Muslim countries, offers commercial opportunities and promotes cultural exchange (Chukwu et al., 2023). Learning about halal principles enhances non-Muslim consumers' insights into Islamic traditions, fostering respect for Muslim community (Gayatri et al., 2023).

Halal dietary guidelines are strict, specifying permissible foods and beverages (Johan and Plana, 2023). These rules prohibit certain items, such as pork, improperly slaughtered animals, and alcohol (Visciano et al., 2021). Moreover, humane treatment of animals during slaughter reflects value placed on life in Islamic teachings (Kader, 2021).

Understanding halal is crucial for non-Muslims to make informed decisions aligned with their values (Altinyelken, 2021). Interest in halal principles continues to grow among non-Muslims, reflecting a broader appreciation for diverse dietary practices (Billah et al., 2020).

Concept of Halal in Malaysia

Malaysia is first country to establish Malaysian halal standards with various halal products (Arshad, Khan et al., 2022). The country prioritizes raising public awareness of halal standards for non-Muslim consumers (Hasnizam, Shaari et al., 2020). This is achieved through educational initiatives, campaigns, and religious institutions to ensure non-Muslims understand concept of halal in their daily lives (Musa, Ghadas et al., 2021). Underlying objective of these halal awareness programs is to educate non-Muslims about criteria governing halal products (Ramli, Abd et al., 2023).

In Malaysia, halal has gained traction across various sectors, such as food, banking, tourism, and cosmetics (Azam and Abdullah, 2020). Halal certification ensures products meet specific Islamic criteria, promoting ethical consumption (Qadri, 2023). Non-Muslims increasingly view halal-certified products as symbols of quality and health standards (Ramli et al., 2023), recognizing its market value (Wilkins Stephen et al., 2019).

Malaysia has established itself as a halal hub, with Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) overseeing certification processes (Bashir et al., 2020). This certification opens doors to local and international markets, enhancing consumer trust and loyalty (Cahyono et al., 2023). Government actively supports halal industry through initiatives promote awareness and accessibility for both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers (Azam and Abdullah, 2020).

Halal products appeal not only to Muslims but also to health-conscious non-Muslims who appreciate transparency in production methods (Ng, Pei Chi et al., 2022). Diverse Malaysian culinary landscape further enriches appeal of halal offerings (Abidin et al., 2020).

Halal Concept in Malaysia Communities

Concept of halal extends beyond dietary restrictions; it is integral to Malaysian identity and culture (Lim et al., 2022). In Malaysia, adherence to Islamic dietary regulations is highly valued, making halal essential in daily life (Adinugraha et al., 2021). Its significance influences both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers in various ways (Billah et al., 2020).

Halal guarantees daily nourishment adheres to Islamic guidelines for Malaysia's Muslim majority population (Saleh et al., 2023). Food and goods must follow these spiritual guidelines, as required by Quran, which promotes tolerance and understanding across groups (Ikomatussuniah and Wani Maler, 2021).

Malaysia's halal certification, overseen by JAKIM, is renowned for its rigor (Osimani, 2018). Halal labels signify authenticity and adherence to high production standards, instilling confidence in product quality and safety for all consumers (Hassan and Hamdan, 2013). Halal is not limited to religious practices; it encompasses various aspects of daily life, business, and culture (Bashir, 2020).

Diverse Malaysian culinary landscape reflects its multicultural society, offering halal options appeal to both Muslim and non-Muslim palates (Abidin et al., 2020; Ahmad-Fauzi and Saad, 2023). Halal-friendly tourism further promotes inclusivity, attracting both Muslim visitors and non-Muslims seeking clean and ethical services (Peristiwo, 2020; Jia and Chaozhi, 2020).

Malaysian government actively raises public awareness about halal through educational initiatives in schools and community workshops (Mardhiyah et al., 2023; Al-Teinaz and Al-Mazeedi, 2020). Digital platforms also play a crucial role in disseminating accurate halal information (Mostafa, 2021).

Consumer Purchase Intention Theory

Purchase intention measures a consumer's willingness to acquire a product or service (Maharsi et al., 2021). This intention is influenced by psychological, social, and rational factors (Akram et al., 2021) and is shaped by both internal and external variables (Buhalis and Gonzalez, 2020). Non-Muslims may initially lack understanding of halal products (Bashir, 2020), but education through marketing and cultural exchange can raise awareness, creating a new consumer base (Nurhayati and Hendar, 2020).

Understanding halal beyond mere religious conformity can lead non-Muslim consumers to appreciate its health and quality implications (Nugraha et al., 2022). Halal products resonate with health-conscious consumers, particularly as global trends emphasize clean eating (Mokhtar et al., 2021). Many non-Muslims view halal certification as an indicator of food safety and quality (Billah et al., 2020), further driving interest in halal options.

Growing awareness among non-Muslim consumers regarding ethical purchasing considering environmental impact and animal welfare also influences their choices (Billah et al., 2020). Globalization has exposed consumers to diverse cultures, leading to varied eating habits (Chironi et al., 2021). Social influences from friends and family can encourage non-Muslims to try halal products (Naim, 2023), especially when they perceive these products as high-quality due to rigorous certification processes (Farhan and Sutikno, 2022).

Presentation and accessibility of halal products significantly affect purchase intentions (Khan et al., 2021). Non-Muslims are more likely to view halal products favourably when they are prominently displayed in supermarkets and online platforms (Bashir, 2020). Individual values also play a crucial role; many non-Muslims align halal products with their preferences for natural ingredients (Halimi et al., 2022).

Curiosity about new culinary experiences can drive non-Muslim consumers to explore halal cuisines, especially with increased global travel (Hassani and Moghavvemi, 2020).

Additionally, those with dietary restrictions may find halal options safer or more suitable (Zin et al., 2020). Businesses promoting halal products often engage in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives resonate with non-Muslim consumers (Bukhari and Isa, 2020).

Education about halal can extend beyond Islamic dietary laws through various marketing initiatives and cultural programs (Kassim et al., 2023). Positive attitudes toward halal certification viewed as a mark of quality and ethical sourcing can enhance purchase intentions among non-Muslims (Billah et al., 2020). Influential figures like chefs and social media personalities can further improve consumer understanding of halal as a superior option (Freedman, 2021).

Methodology

Population and Sampling

Study focuses on non-Muslim consumers in Petaling, Selangor, which had a population of 2,298,130 in 2020 according to Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM). Primary data will be collected through a survey distributed to respondents in this region. Population in Petaling is composed of 36.5% Chinese, 10.1% Indians, and 0.8% Others. This place was chosen for its large and diverse non-Muslim population, enhancing study's representativeness and generalizability.

Proposed framework emphasizes need to understand diverse consumer profiles to tailor halal marketing strategies effectively (Saleh, and Wahab, 2024). Stratified sampling will be used to ensure representative samples from different subgroups. Population is divided into three strata: Others (0.8%), Indians (10.1%), and Chinese (36.5%). Formula for calculating sample size for each stratum as:

$$n_h = (N_h/N) * n$$

In this formula n_h is sample size for h th stratum, N_h is population size of stratum, N is total population, and n is desired overall sample size (Keskinturk and Sebnem, 2007). According to Krejcie and Morgan, total sample size needed is 384, distributed proportionally: 3 for Others, 39 for Indians, and 140 for Chinese.

Krejcie and Morgan's table (1970) suggests for a population of 182, a sample size ensuring a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error is sufficient for representativeness. This method ensures each non-Muslim household in Petaling has an equal chance of being chosen, thereby enhancing validity and generalizability of study findings.

Results

Halal Awareness

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for Halal awareness (HA) with mean values ranging from 3.55 to 3.96. The analysis of halal awareness among respondents reveals highest acceptance for HA10 "Halal awareness promotes diverse cultural understanding", with a mean of 3.96. The lowest level of acceptance for HA2 is "It doesn't matter whether product is halal or not", which has a mean of 3.55.

Table 1

Descriptive analysis of Halal Awareness

Code	Items	N	Mean	Std.Dev
HA1	Understand basic principles of halal food. (Hygiene & safety)	182	3.74	0.967
HA2	It doesn't matter whether the product is halal or not	182	3.55	0.949
HA3	Halal awareness a important in today's multicultural society, even for non-Muslims	182	3.65	0.871
HA4	Awareness of halal certification increase consumer trust in food labeling.	182	3.70	0.874
HA5	Halal awareness promotes respect for various cultural and religious practices.	182	3.58	0.936
HA6	Halal awareness influence my purchase intention behavior when purchase halal certified products.	182	3.77	0.910
HA7	Awareness programs on halal are necessary for non-Muslim consumers.	182	3.81	0.868
HA8	Halal awareness promotes a deeper understanding of Islamic dietary laws.	182	3.68	0.884
HA9	Use digital platforms or devices to learn more about halal products.	182	3.78	0.851
HA10	Halal awareness promotes diverse cultural understanding.	182	3.96	0.897
HA11	Recommend halal-certified products for other people based on your halal awareness.	182	3.65	0.944
HA12	Actively seek information on the halal status of products.	182	3.73	0.866
Valid N (listwise)		182		

Halal Certification

Table 2 shows descriptive analysis of Halal certification (HC) reveals mean values ranging from 3.24 to 3.76. Respondents strongly agreed with HC3 "Halal certification verifies specific requirements are met during food manufacturing," with a mean of 3.76. At the same time, HC8 is the lowest agreement, indicating "More campaigns are needed to educate non-Muslim consumers about halal certification," with a mean of 3.24.

Table 2

Descriptive analysis of Halal certification

Code	Items	N	Mean	Std.Dev
HC1	Concept of halal certification helps informed decisions when purchasing food products.	182	3.40	0.885
HC2	Halal-certified products are subject to higher quality standards compared to non-certified ones.	182	3.51	0.962
HC3	Halal certification verifies that specific requirements are met during the food manufacturing.	182	3.76	0.913
HC4	Product has halal certification strongly influences purchase decision strongly.	182	3.48	0.973
HC5	Presence of halal certification makes a difference when comparing similar products.	182	3.28	0.863
HC6	Lack of a halal certification label provides doubt on the product quality.	182	3.55	0.919
HC7	Halal certification builds trust and confidence in the food industry.	182	3.30	0.905
HC8	More campaigns are needed to educate non-Muslim consumers about halal certification.	182	3.24	0.938
HC9	Halal certification promotes honesty and integrity in food labeling.	182	3.37	0.862
HC10	Halal certified products are suitable for global market.	182	3.49	0.927
HC11	Halal certification help to create confidence and credibility.	182	3.61	0.944
HC12	Clear labelling and information about halal certification on products facilitate informed purchasing decisions.	182	3.57	1.005
HC13	Halal certification contributes to global food safety standards, benefiting consumers worldwide.	182	3.42	0.959
Valid N (listwise)		182		

Halal Marketing

Descriptive analysis of Halal marketing (HM) is presented in Table 3 with mean ranging from 3.36 to 3.88. The highest agreement is with HM11, which states "Effectiveness of halal marketing campaigns influences recommendation of halal products to friends and family," with a mean of 3.88. The least acceptance is with HM4, "Marketing campaigns highlight benefits of halal certification are informative," with a mean of 3.36. This means respondents believe halal marketing campaigns are quite effective at influencing recommendations, but they are slightly less convinced of informative nature of campaigns focused on halal certification benefits.

Table 3

Descriptive analysis of Halal Marketing

Code	Items	N	Mean	Std.Dev
HM1	Halal marketing campaigns play a significant role in shaping my purchasing decisions.	182	3.51	0.933
HM2	Companies should prioritize transparency in their halal marketing efforts.	182	3.42	0.868
HM3	Halal marketing strategies help me feel more connected to diverse cultural and religious practices.	182	3.76	0.884
HM4	Marketing campaigns that highlight the benefits of halal certification are informative.	182	3.36	0.835
HM5	Marketing campaigns for halal products should target non-Muslim consumers as well.	182	3.59	0.922
HM6	Marketing for halal products has encouraged people to experiment with new products and foods.	182	3.38	0.888
HM7	Information about halal certification increases consumer confidence in the authenticity of the brand when it appears in advertising.	182	3.50	0.872
HM8	Halal marketing campaigns educate consumers about the principles and process behind halal certification.	182	3.63	0.868
HM9	Halal marketing campaigns to be inclusive and welcoming towards non-Muslim consumers.	182	3.60	0.915
HM10	Halal marketing campaigns have made more aware of the religious significance behind halal products.	182	3.57	0.942
HM11	Effectiveness of halal marketing campaigns influences of recommending halal products to friends and family	182	3.88	0.894
Valid N (listwise)		182		

Halal Knowledge

According to Table 4 shows a descriptive study of respondent's Halal knowledge (HK), with mean values ranging from 3.37 to 3.90. The highest level of acceptance is with HK4, which claims, "Understanding halal and its importance in Islamic dietary habits expands perspective of other cultural traditions," with a mean of 3.90. Furthermore, the lowest agreement is with HK6, "Understanding requirements in halal certification improves impression of product quality and safety," with a mean of 3.37. This implies respondents strongly believe in importance of halal education in extending cultural perspectives.

Table 4

Descriptive analysis of Halal knowledge

Code	Items	N	Mean	Std.Dev
HK1	Have a good understanding of what the term "halal" means.	182	3.57	.982
HK2	Familiar with the basic principles and requirements of halal food production.	182	3.45	.895
HK3	Understand that halal certification extends beyond food products.	182	3.73	.848
HK4	Understanding halal and importance in Islamic dietary habits expands perspective of other cultural traditions.	182	3.90	.868
HK5	Actively seek information about halal certification to make informed decisions when purchasing food products.	182	3.60	.859
HK6	Understanding the requirements in halal certification improves impression of product quality and safety.	182	3.37	.906
HK7	Better education can help clear up misunderstandings about halal certification.	182	3.67	.941
HK8	Introducing halal knowledge into educational programs initiatives will help society by encouraging diversity and equality.	182	3.53	.877
HK9	Believe that in school and institutions should include information on halal knowledge.	182	3.43	.948
HK10	Public education campaigns are necessary to clear up common misconceptions about halal certification.	182	3.65	.955
Valid N (listwise)		182		

Non-Muslim Consumers Intention to Purchase Halal Products

Table 5 provides a descriptive analysis of non-Muslim consumers intentions to purchase halal products, showing mean values ranging from 3.42 to 3.71. The highest mean is with statement NMC4, "Presence of halal on a product label influences my purchasing decisions positively," which has a mean of 3.71. Moreover, the lowest is with NMC8, "Halal certification is a significant aspect to consider when analyzing a brand's or company's trust," which has a mean of 3.42. This shows while presence of a halal label strongly affects purchasing decisions, role of halal certification in building brand trust is somewhat less influential for consumers.

Table 5

Descriptive analysis of Non-Muslim consumers intention to purchase halal products

Code	Items	N	Mean	Std.Dev
NMC1	Presence of a halal label significantly influences my decision to purchase a product.	182	3.51	1.007
NMC2	Prioritize halal certified products over non-certified ones when available.	182	3.65	1.012
NMC3	More likely to purchase products from companies known for producing halal food.	182	3.47	.845
NMC4	Presence of halal on a product label influences my purchasing decisions positively.	182	3.71	.955
NMC5	Halal certified products are safer and better quality than non-certified ones.	182	3.50	.968
NMC6	Purchasing halal certified products helps promote diversity in the market.	182	3.63	.816
NMC7	Offers might make me more likely to buy halal products.	182	3.49	.921
NMC8	Halal certification is a significant aspect to consider when analyzing a brand's or company's trust.	182	3.42	.795
NMC9	Ensure that the food I purchase meets halal standards by checking its ingredients.	182	3.53	.984
Valid N (listwise)		182		

Findings

This chapter summarizes significant findings of study, highlighting their relevance to study questions and objectives. Results indicate halal awareness, certification, marketing, and knowledge positively influence non-Muslim consumers' intentions to purchase halal products. High levels of halal awareness, driven by exposure to and understanding of halal certification, enhance consumer trust in safety and quality of these products.

The first objective was to identify relationship between halal awareness and non-Muslim consumers' intention to purchase halal products. Findings suggest awareness among non-Muslim consumers has been increasing, influenced by health consciousness, ethical consumption, and perceived quality (Ali and Ahmad, 2023). This growing acceptance is reflected in their perceptions of product quality, safety, and ethical sourcing (Rahman et al., 2020).

The second objective examined relationship between halal certification and purchase intention. Results reveal halal certification significantly influences purchase intentions among non-Muslim consumers. Presence of halal labels enhances trust and perceived quality, mitigating risks associated with unfamiliar products (Mohsin and Awan, 2021). Effective communication regarding benefits of halal certification is essential for increasing non-Muslim consumers' willingness to engage with these products (Wibowo et al., 2021).

The third objective focused on halal marketing strategies. Findings indicate marketing campaigns emphasizing ethical and health benefits resonate well with non-Muslim audiences, thus increasing their purchase intentions (Zailani et al., 2023). Social media and influencer

marketing effectively engage non-Muslim consumers by creating a positive perception of halal products.

The final objective addressed relationship between halal knowledge and purchase intention. The study found halal knowledge regarding halal products varies widely among non-Muslim consumers. Increased halal knowledge correlates with a higher intention to purchase as consumers become more informed about benefits and requirements of halal certification (Nasir et al., 2024). Educational initiatives are crucial for enhancing understanding and acceptance of halal products.

Conclusion

Significant insights into elements influencing purchasing behavior of non-Muslim customers are revealed by studies on their intentions to purchase halal items. The study emphasizes how important it is for halal awareness, certification, marketing tactics, and expertise to influence these goals.

The inclination of non-Muslim customers to purchase halal items is positively correlated with increased awareness. Health concerns, moral reasons, and idea halal items are of superior quality are what are driving this awareness.

The perception of product quality and consumer trust are greatly increased by presence of halal certification. Customers who are not Muslims are more likely to buy halal items because they believe they are safer and come from more ethical sources.

Marketing effectively highlights qualities, safety, and ethical sources of halal products is appealing to non-Muslim customers. Ads emphasizing inclusion and health advantages work especially well to increase acceptability of halal products.

The intention to buy halal items is directly correlated with one's level of understanding of halal principles. Beyond its religious significance, halal education may increase acceptance and promote wise shopping choices.

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