

AWARENESS OF THE USE OF HALAL LABELS ON PRODUCTS AMONG MUSLIM CONSUMERS IN MIRI, SARAWAK

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Article history

Received date : 20-8-2024
Revised date : 21-8-2024
Accepted date : 15-9-2024
Published date : 30-9-2024

To cite this document:

Miasin, S., Abdul Rasol, L., Ibrahim, N., Ibrahim, R. A., Md Baharudin, M. H. A., & Mahmud, M. (2024). Awareness of the use of halal labels on products among muslim consumers in Miri, Sarawak. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development (JISED)*, 9 (66), 9 – 25.

Abstract: *This study investigates Muslim consumers' perceptions of halal food products and logos in Miri, Sarawak, highlighting the high level of awareness and sensitivity towards the halal logo among consumers. The research supports the extended Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), emphasizing the role of religiosity and halal awareness in shaping consumer behavior. A quantitative evaluation methodology was employed, with data collected through questionnaires distributed to Muslim consumers in both urban and rural areas of Miri. The purposive sampling method targeted a relevant sample of 110 participants, and data analysis was conducted using SPSS software to reveal significant trends and insights. The findings underscore the importance of maintaining rigorous halal certification processes and suggest practical applications for industry stakeholders and policymakers, including enhancing consumer education, improving certification transparency through advanced technologies like blockchain, and fostering collaboration for standardized global halal certification processes. Addressing the misuse of halal logos through stringent legal measures and public awareness*

campaigns, as well as engaging with local communities and religious institutions, are also recommended. Despite limitations such as potential biases in self-reported data and a sample size that may not fully represent the broader population, the study provides a solid foundation for future research. Future studies should aim to address these limitations and explore new avenues for enhancing the transparency and reliability of halal certification processes. The study's insights contribute to the broader discourse on halal food governance, consumer education, and the development of more effective halal certification systems.

Keywords: *Halal certification, consumer behavior, halal awareness, religiosity*

Introduction

The concept of halal food, deeply rooted in Islamic principles, has evolved beyond mere permissibility to encompass a comprehensive framework that governs the entire food supply chain, from sourcing to consumption. This evolution is particularly significant in the context of rapid technological advancements and globalization, which have dramatically altered the landscape of food production, distribution, and consumption (Hamaideh et al., 2024; Basso et al., 2024). The Quranic injunctions, such as "O, humanity! Eat from what is halal and good on earth" (Surah al-Baqarah 2:168), underscore the religious imperative for Muslims to adhere to halal dietary laws. However, the contemporary halal food industry faces multifaceted challenges that extend beyond traditional interpretations of Islamic law (Nurul Lia Febriati et al., 2024). These challenges include the complexity of global supply chains, the proliferation of food additives and processing technologies, and the increasing demand for halal products among non-Muslim consumers, which has transformed halal certification into a global quality assurance standard (Islam et al., 2023).

In Malaysia, a country at the forefront of the halal industry, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and State Islamic Religious Departments (JAIN) serve as the authoritative bodies for halal certification, reflecting the government's commitment to maintaining the integrity of halal products (Muhammad et al., 2020). Despite these regulatory efforts, the halal food market faces critical issues, including the misuse of halal logos, consumer misconceptions, and the challenge of ensuring halal compliance throughout complex production processes (Osman et al., 2020). The concept of halal extends beyond mere permissibility to encompass the notion of 'tayyib' (good, pure, and wholesome), necessitating a holistic approach to food safety, quality, and ethical production (Norkumala, 2021; Arifin et al., 2021). This comprehensive understanding of halal is particularly crucial in the face of emerging food technologies and the global expansion of the halal market, which is projected to reach USD 5 trillion by 2030 (Azam & Abdullah, 2020). The rapid growth of this market presents both opportunities and challenges, as it attracts diverse stakeholders, including non-Muslim consumers and producers, potentially complicating the maintenance of halal integrity.

In Malaysia, where Muslims constitute the majority population, the issues surrounding halal food certification and consumer awareness are particularly pressing. Despite the stringent regulations and the presence of authorized halal logos, there is a growing concern about consumer behavior and understanding regarding halal certification. Some Muslim consumers continue to patronize establishments without proper halal certification, while others may be misled by unauthorized or counterfeit halal logos (Sumpin et al., 2019). This situation is exacerbated by the increasing complexity of food products, which may contain ingredients or undergo processes that are difficult for the average consumer to assess for halal compliance.

Furthermore, the global nature of food supply chains introduces additional layers of complexity in ensuring halal integrity from farm to fork. The problem is compounded by the varying standards and certification processes across different countries, potentially leading to confusion and mistrust among consumers. In light of these challenges, there is a critical need for research that examines consumer perceptions, knowledge, and behavior regarding halal food products and certification in specific local contexts. This study focuses on Muslim consumers in Miri, Sarawak, a diverse region in East Malaysia, to investigate their understanding of and attitudes towards halal food products and logos. The research aims to explore the factors that influence consumer decision-making when selecting halal food products, the level of trust in halal certification processes, and the potential gaps between consumer expectations and market realities. By examining these aspects, the study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on halal food governance, consumer education, and the development of more effective halal assurance systems.

The findings of this research have the potential to inform policy-makers, industry stakeholders, and religious authorities on strategies to enhance consumer confidence in halal products, improve the effectiveness of halal certification processes, and address the unique challenges faced by Muslim consumers in navigating the complex landscape of modern food production and distribution. Moreover, this study is timely in the context of Malaysia's ambition to become a global halal hub, as understanding local consumer perspectives is crucial for developing strategies that can be scaled to meet international demands while maintaining the integrity of halal principles. By focusing on Miri, Sarawak, the research also addresses the often-overlooked perspectives of Muslim consumers in more diverse and less centralized regions of Malaysia, potentially uncovering unique insights that could inform more inclusive and comprehensive halal policies and practices. Ultimately, this research aims to bridge the gap between the theoretical understanding of halal principles and the practical realities faced by consumers, contributing to the development of a more robust, transparent, and consumer-centric halal food ecosystem.

Literature Review

The halal food industry has emerged as a significant global market, driven by the growing Muslim population and increasing awareness among non-Muslim consumers about the quality and ethical standards associated with halal certification. This literature review examines the multifaceted aspects of halal food consumption, certification, and consumer behavior, with a particular focus on the Malaysian context, where halal certification has become a benchmark for food quality and safety. The concept of halal, derived from Islamic law, extends beyond mere permissibility to encompass ethical production, hygiene, and quality assurance. As Kirihara (2021) note, halal certification has evolved from a religious obligation to a global standard for food safety and quality. This evolution is particularly evident in Malaysia, where the halal logo, introduced in the early 1970s and standardized in 1994, has gained international recognition (Zuhudi & Dolah, 2021). The Malaysian halal certification system, overseen by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and State Islamic Religious Councils (MAIN), has become a model for other countries, reflecting the government's commitment to positioning Malaysia as a global halal hub (Yakub & Zein, 2022).

The theoretical underpinnings of halal food consumption behavior can be understood through several frameworks. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), as applied by Billah et al. (2020), provides insights into the factors influencing halal food choices. This theory posits that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral

control. In the context of halal food consumption, religious beliefs act as a significant predictor of attitudes and intentions. Ajzen's (1991) original TPB model has been extended by researchers like Alam and Sayuti (2011) to include additional constructs such as religiosity and halal awareness, enhancing its explanatory power in the halal food context. Empirical studies have consistently shown the importance of religiosity in shaping halal food consumption patterns. Mohd Suki and Abang Salleh (2018) found that religious belief was the strongest predictor of intention to purchase halal food among Malaysian consumers. This finding aligns with earlier research by Mukhtar and Butt (2012), who demonstrated that religious self-identity significantly influenced attitudes towards halal products. However, the relationship between religiosity and halal food consumption is not straightforward. Jamal and Sharifuddin (2015) discovered that while religiosity positively influenced perceived behavioral control and subjective norms, its direct effect on purchase intention was not significant, suggesting the presence of mediating factors.

The role of the halal logo in consumer decision-making has been a focus of numerous studies. Zulfakar, Anuar, and Talib (2014) highlighted the importance of halal certification as a signal of quality and trustworthiness for Muslim consumers. Their research revealed that the presence of a recognized halal logo significantly influenced purchase intentions, particularly for processed foods where the halal status is not immediately apparent. This finding is supported by Rezai, Mohamed, and Shamsudin (2012), who found that Malaysian consumers were willing to pay a premium for products with halal certification, indicating the economic value of halal logos.

However, the effectiveness of halal logos in guiding consumer choices is contingent on consumer awareness and understanding. A study by Yusoff, Adzharuddin, and Bolong (2014) revealed varying levels of awareness among Malaysian Muslims regarding halal products and logos. Their research highlighted a knowledge gap, particularly among younger consumers, regarding the specific requirements of halal certification. This finding underscores the need for ongoing consumer education and awareness campaigns. The global expansion of the halal food market has introduced new challenges and opportunities. Tieman (2011) explored the concept of halal supply chain management, emphasizing the need for halal integrity throughout the entire supply chain. His research highlighted the complexities of maintaining halal compliance in global food networks, where ingredients may be sourced from multiple countries with varying halal standards. This complexity is further compounded by the emergence of new food technologies and processing methods, which require ongoing scrutiny from Islamic scholars and halal certification bodies (Kamali, 2010).

Consumer trust in halal certification systems is crucial for the integrity of the halal food market. Alom and Haque (2011) found that trust in halal certification bodies was a significant predictor of purchase intention for halal food products. However, incidents of halal logo misuse and fraud have raised concerns among consumers. Norman and Abd Wahid (2017) documented cases of unauthorized use of halal logos in Malaysia, highlighting the need for stricter enforcement and consumer vigilance. The halal food industry's growth has also attracted attention from non-Muslim consumers and producers. Golnaz, Zainalabidin, Mad Nasir, and Eddie Chiew (2010) found that non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia associated halal certification with food safety and quality, indicating the potential for halal products to appeal to a broader market. This trend is also observed globally, with halal food gaining popularity among health-conscious consumers who perceive it as cleaner and more ethically produced (Bergeaud-Blackler, 2007).

The application of technology in halal certification and verification processes represents an emerging area of research. Blockchain technology, for instance, has been proposed as a solution for enhancing traceability and transparency in halal supply chains (Tieman & Darun, 2017). Such innovations have the potential to address consumer concerns about halal integrity and reduce the incidence of fraud. Cultural and regional variations in halal food perceptions and practices present another area of scholarly interest. A comparative study by Wilson and Liu (2010) highlighted differences in halal food consumption patterns between Muslim communities in various countries, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive approaches to halal marketing and certification. The psychological aspects of halal food consumption have also been explored. Bonne and Verbeke (2008) applied the concept of self-congruity to halal food choices, finding that consumers were more likely to purchase halal products when they perceived them as congruent with their self-image. This research highlights the complex interplay between religious identity, personal values, and consumer behavior in the halal food context.

The economic impact of the halal food industry has been substantial, particularly in Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia. Thomson Reuters (2018) projected the global halal food market to reach USD 1.9 trillion by 2023, underscoring its economic significance. This growth has spurred innovation in product development and marketing strategies, with companies increasingly targeting the "halal lifestyle" segment that encompasses not only food but also cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and tourism (Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016). In conclusion, the literature on halal food consumption and certification reveals a complex interplay of religious, cultural, economic, and technological factors. While religious beliefs remain a primary driver of halal food choices, other factors such as quality perception, trust in certification systems, and global market trends play increasingly important roles. The evolution of halal certification from a religious requirement to a global quality standard reflects broader shifts in consumer expectations and market dynamics. Future research should focus on addressing the challenges of maintaining halal integrity in complex global supply chains, enhancing consumer education and awareness, and exploring the potential of new technologies in halal verification and traceability. Additionally, more cross-cultural studies are needed to understand the diverse interpretations and practices of halal consumption in different Muslim communities worldwide.

Research Methodology

The research design for this study uses a quantitative, exploratory approach to investigate consumer knowledge about the importance of the halal logo, factors that influence food selection, and perceptions among Muslim consumers in Miri, Sarawak. Using purposive sampling, as described by Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim (2016), the study targeted a sample of 110 participants, exceeding the minimum recommended sample size of 100 for descriptive research (Bujang & Adnan, 2016). Data collection was facilitated through an online questionnaire using Google Forms, structured into four sections that addressed demographic profiles, consumer perceptions, contributing factors, and the importance of the halal logo. This instrument mainly uses closed questions and a 5-point Likert scale, as recommended by Bhandari & Nikolopoukou (2023) to capture nuanced attitudes and behaviors. The use of SPSS software for data analysis, focusing on the calculation of means and percentages, ensures a close examination of the data collected.

Result of Analysis

Demographic Profile

Table 1 showed demographic data analysis reveals several significant trends within the sample population (n=110). Notably, there is a substantial gender imbalance, with females comprising 70% of the sample. Age distribution indicates a concentration in young adulthood, with 40.9% falling within the 21-23 years. The ethnic background data points to a relatively homogeneous population, with Malay (61.8%) and Kedayan (26.4%) ethnicities dominating, which may have implications for cultural diversity initiatives. Marital status findings show a predominance of single individuals (70.9%), correlating with the younger age distribution. Employment status data reveals a highly engaged population, with 49.1% employed and 40% pursuing education. Collectively, these demographic characteristics depict a young, predominantly female, culturally homogeneous population with high levels of engagement in employment or education, potentially reflecting broader societal shifts towards increased female participation in the workforce and higher education, as well as changing norms regarding marriage and family formation.

Table 4.1: Demographic analysis

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	33	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Female	77	70.0	70.0	100.0
Age	18 - 20 years	11	10.0	10.0	10.0
	21- 23 years	45	40.9	40.9	50.9
	24 - 26 years	17	15.5	15.5	66.4
	27 years and above	37	33.6	33.6	100.0
Ethnic	Malay	68	61.8	61.8	61.8
	Kedayan	29	26.4	26.4	88.2
	Melanau	10	9.1	9.1	97.3
	Kayan	1	0.9	0.9	98.2
	Bidayuh	1	0.9	0.9	99.1
	Dusun	1	0.9	0.9	100.0
Status	Single	78	70.9	70.9	70.9
	Married	32	29.1	29.1	100.0
Occupation	Student	44	40.0	40.0	40.0
	Employed	54	49.1	49.1	89.1
	Unemployed	12	10.9	10.9	100.0

Muslim Consumer Perceptions

The data presented in the table 4.2 indicates respondents' perceptions about the issuance of valid Halal logos by JAKIM (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia). With a sample size of 110 individuals, an overwhelming majority (65.5%) strongly agree with the statement, reflecting a significant level of confidence in JAKIM's authority and the authenticity of its Halal certifications. Additionally, 17.3% agree with the statement, cumulatively revealing that 82.8% of respondents positively affirm JAKIM's exclusive role in Halal certification.

On the other hand, a minority of respondents express either dissent (4.5% disagree) or strong dissent (3.6% strongly disagree), indicating a slight level of skepticism or lack of awareness about JAKIM's role. The 9.1% of participants who remain uncertain represent a segment that might benefit from increased informational outreach and education about the processes and significance of Halal certification by JAKIM. The cumulative percent column illustrates the growing agreement with the statement as we ascend the Likert scale, culminating in complete agreement by all respondents at the 'Strongly Agree' level. This ascending cumulative percentage reflects a general consensus on the validity of the Halal logo being an exclusive issuance by JAKIM among the majority of respondents.

From this data, it can be inferred that JAKIM's certification is widely recognized and trusted among the surveyed population. However, there remains an opportunity for JAKIM and other stakeholders to address the concerns of the dissenting and uncertain individuals through enhanced communication, educational initiatives, and transparency, further solidifying the public's trust in the Halal certification process.

Table 4.2: The Proportion of Muslim Users Who Consider The JAKIM-Only Halal Logo to Be Valid

The valid Halal logo is only issued by JAKIM.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Likert Scale	Strongly Disagree	4	3.6	3.6	3.6
	Disagree	5	4.5	4.5	8.2
	Uncertain	10	9.1	9.1	17.3
	Agree	19	17.3	17.3	34.5
	Strongly Agree	72	65.5	65.5	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 displays responses from a survey that measures the extent to which participants are reassured that a product is halal based on its certification and logo usage. According to the Likert scale categories, firstly, a very small number of respondents (2.7%) are uncertain about the reassurance provided by halal certification and logo usage. Secondly, 18.2% agree that the halal certification and logo usage reassure them that a product is halal. Thirdly, a significant majority (79.1%) strongly agree with the statement, demonstrating a high level of confidence in halal certification and logo usage as indicators of a product's compliance with halal standards.

The cumulative percent column progresses from the lowest level of certainty to the highest, culminating at 100% at the 'Strongly Agree' response. This progressive nature implies that as the level of agreement intensifies, the more respondents are accounted for, cumulatively. From these results, one can infer that there is a substantial trust within this surveyed population that halal certification and logo usage are effective indicators of a product's halal status. The overwhelming majority of 97.3% (combining agree and strongly agree responses) suggests that the halal certification process and its logos are powerful tools in influencing consumer perception and trust in the halal market. However, it also indicates a potential area for improvement in addressing the concerns or doubts of the few who remain uncertain. Building upon this trust through education and awareness campaigns could help in converting uncertain individuals into the agreeing categories, further endorsing the effectiveness of halal

certification.

Table 4.3: The Percentage of Respondents Who Believe the Logo and Halal Certification Serve to Guarantee That the Product Is Halal

Halal certification and logo used, reassure that product is halal					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Likert Scale	Uncertain	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Agree	20	18.2	18.2	20.9
	Strongly Agree	87	79.1	79.1	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The data presented in the table 4.4 reflects survey responses to the statement "I am always aware of the logo's halal issue" and is structured according to a Likert scale, providing insights into the awareness levels of the respondents regarding halal logos. The majority of the respondents, 62.7%, strongly agree that they are always aware of the halal status of logos, which demonstrates a high level of consumer consciousness about this particular aspect of halal products. This level of awareness is reinforced by a combined 85.4% (adding those who agree and strongly agree) of respondents showing affirmative recognition toward the issue.

On the other end of the spectrum, a minority—2.7% strongly disagree and 5.5% disagree—reflects a segment of the population that is either not adequately informed or perhaps unconcerned with the halal logo's status. The 6.4% of respondents who are uncertain may represent a group that is occasionally aware of halal logos but lacks consistent knowledge or attention to this issue. The cumulative percent column incrementally adds the percentages of respondents as it progresses up the scale of agreement, ultimately encompassing 100% at the 'Strongly Agree' response, indicating a cumulative pattern of growing awareness and concern among the surveyed population.

From these findings, one can deduce that there is considerable cognizance of halal logo integrity among the survey participants, with a significant majority indicating consistent awareness. The data suggests that while overall awareness is high, there continues to be an opportunity for stakeholders in the halal industry to target the less informed or indifferent groups through education and awareness drives, ensuring a universally high level of attention to the integrity and authenticity of halal logos, which is critical for maintaining consumer trust in halal-certified products.

Table 4.4: The Proportion of Users Who Are Concerned About the Halal Logo

I am always aware of the logo's halal issue					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Likert Scale	Strongly Disagree	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Disagree	6	5.5	5.5	8.2
	Uncertain	7	6.4	6.4	14.5
	Agree	25	22.7	22.7	37.3
	Strongly Agree	69	62.7	62.7	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The data presented indicates that out of 110 respondents, a substantial majority are well aware of the existence of halal logos or certificates on food products in the market. Specifically, 70.9% of participants 'Strongly Agree,' while 27.3% 'Agree' with the statement regarding their awareness, totaling an impressive 98.2% affirmative response rate. This high level of awareness suggests that halal certification is prominent and well recognized among consumers, signifying its importance in the food industry and to the individuals surveyed.

On the other end of the spectrum, a minimal 0.9% of respondents 'Disagree' and another 0.9% are 'Uncertain,' representing only 1.8% of the total, indicating a negligible count of individuals who either lack awareness or are unsure about the presence of halal logos or certificates. The cumulative percent column clearly reflects the consolidation of these sentiments, with nearly the entire population surveyed affirming their awareness by the time we reach the 'Strongly Agree' category.

The overwhelming consensus here could be attributed to effective communication and visibility of halal certifications on product packaging, possibly through labeling efforts by food manufacturers and certification bodies. The insight that can be drawn from this data is that halal certification authorities and food producers might continue focusing on sustaining high visibility and awareness of halal logos, as it is evidently important to a vast majority of consumers. Additionally, the data serves as a reinforcement of the perceived value and recognition of halal certification in the market. Given the minimal disagreement and uncertainty, efforts to educate and inform those unaware could be relatively easy to implement for further solidification of the credibility and recognition of halal-certified products.

Table 4.5: The Percentage of Consumers Who Are Aware of The Existence of a Halal Logo or Certificate on Food Products Available in The Market

I am aware of the existence of logos or halal certificates on food products available in the market					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Likert Scale	Disagree	1	0.9	0.9	0.9
	Uncertain	1	0.9	0.9	1.8
	Agree	30	27.3	27.3	29.1
	Strongly Agree	78	70.9	70.9	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The data presented in the table provides insights into public perceptions about the legitimacy of halal logos not recognized by JAKIM (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia). The survey asked respondents to rate their agreement with the statement: "Products that have a halal logo but are not recognized by JAKIM are not halal for use".

The results show that opinions are varied, firstly, the 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' responses account for 23.6% of the participants, which suggests that nearly a quarter of the respondents do not believe that JAKIM's recognition is necessary for a product's halal status, or they may trust other certification bodies. Secondly, a notable 30% of respondents are 'Uncertain', indicating a significant level of ambiguity or lack of knowledge about halal certification processes or the importance of JAKIM's endorsement. Thirdly, the combined

'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' categories represent 46.3% of respondents. This indicates that just under half of the survey population trusts that for a product to be legitimately halal, it must be recognized by JAKIM. This implies confidence in JAKIM's authority and standards within the halal certification domain.

The cumulative percent column reflects how certainty about the significance of JAKIM's recognition grows progressively with the most agreement at the higher end of the scale ('Agree' and 'Strongly Agree'), totaling 100%. The data suggests a fragmented view on the importance of JAKIM's recognition for halal products. While there is a significant portion of the respondents who rely on JAKIM's certification, the uncertainty and disagreement shown by other respondents point to potential gaps in public understanding or acceptance of JAKIM's role as the definitive halal authority. It suggests a need for better communication and public education to clarify JAKIM's role and to build more consensus on what constitutes reliably halal products.

Table 4.6: The Proportion of Users Who Claimed That Products Bearing a Halal Logo but Lacking JAKIM Certification Are Not Suitable for Use

Products that have a halal logo but are not recognized by JAKIM are nothala for use					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Likert Scale	Strongly Disagree	8	7.3	7.3	7.3
	Disagree	18	16.4	16.4	23.6
	Uncertain	33	30.0	30.0	53.6
	Agree	26	23.6	23.6	77.3
	Strongly Agree	25	22.7	22.7	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The provided table represents survey data concerning individuals' willingness to pay more for food products with an authentic Halal logo. A vast majority of the respondents (74.5% when combining 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree') are inclined to spend extra for the assurance that they are purchasing authentic Halal food products. This indicates a high valuation of Halal certification among these individuals, potentially reflecting the importance of dietary laws and personal or cultural values linked to Halal products.

Specifically, 'Strongly Agree' constitutes half of the responses (50%), signifying a substantial segment of consumers with a strong commitment to authenticity in Halal food products. A fifth of the respondents are 'Uncertain' (20%), representing a notable proportion that might be influenced by additional information or assurance regarding the benefits and authenticity of Halal certification. Those who 'Disagree' or 'Strongly Disagree' with the willingness to pay more amount to a small minority (5.4%), suggesting that there is a relatively small group of consumers who do not place the same premium on the Halal logo.

The cumulative percent column helps to understand how willingness to pay more accumulates as we move up the scale of agreement. Starting with 1.8% at 'Strongly Disagree', it rises gradationally with each successive category, ultimately including all respondents at 'Strongly Agree' reaching a full 100%. This data implies a significant market segment that values Halal

certification highly enough to impact their spending habits, presenting food producers and certifiers with the implication that investing in Halal certification can be advantageous. Additionally, it highlights an opportunity to educate and capture the segment of consumers that remains uncertain, potentially expanding the market further.

Table 4.7: The Percentage of Consumers Who Are Willing to Pay More for Food Products with An Authentic Halal Logo

I am willing to pay more for food products with an authentic Halal logo					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Likert Scale	Strongly Disagree	2	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagree	4	3.6	3.6	5.5
	Uncertain	22	20.0	20.0	25.5
	Agree	27	24.5	24.5	50.0
	Strongly Agree	55	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

This table presents data from a survey asking respondents about their views on the necessity of halal logos on food products, particularly in the context of whether consumers can distinguish between halal and haram (permissible and forbidden according to Islamic law) food without such logos. A majority of respondents, accounting for 67.3% (74 individuals), 'Strongly Disagree' with the statement, indicating they believe that halal logos on food are necessary for consumers to identify halal food. An additional 12.7% (14 individuals) 'Disagree' with the statement, which, when added to the 'Strongly Disagree' percentage, brings the total proportion of those who believe in the necessity of halal logos to 80%. Those who are 'Uncertain' make up 10.9% (12 individuals), suggesting that a small percentage of the survey population is unsure about the role that halal logos play in helping consumers to differentiate between halal and haram food. Only a minority are in agreement with the statement that halal logos are not necessary: 6.4% (7 individuals) 'Agree' and 2.7% (3 individuals) 'Strongly Agree', cumulatively adding up to 10% of respondents who seem to think consumers can differentiate without the need for logos.

The cumulative percent column shows the accumulated percentages of respondents who at least as much as the listed level of disagreement or agreement. For example, 80% of respondents at least 'Disagree', 90.9% at least 'Uncertain', and so on. The cumulative nature emphasizes an overwhelming consensus (90.9% cumulatively) that halal logos are considered necessary, or there is some doubt about consumers being able to discern halal from haram foods on their own. The data suggests that halal logos are an essential tool in assisting a vast majority of consumers in differentiating halal products from non-halal ones. Consequently, food producers and certifying organizations might want to maintain or increase the visibility of halal logos to continue meeting consumer needs and expectations.

Table 4.8: The Proportion of Consumers Who Believe It Is Unnecessary to Use the Halal Logo on Food Because They Can Tell the Difference Between Halal and Haram Food

For me, the use of halal logos on food is NOT necessary because consumers know the difference between halal and haram food					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Likert Scale	Strongly Disagree	74	67.3	67.3	67.3
	Disagree	14	12.7	12.7	80.0
	Uncertain	12	10.9	10.9	90.9
	Agree	7	6.4	6.4	97.3
	Strongly Agree	3	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

This survey data presents a distribution of responses to the question, "Are you a consumer who is still confused by the halal logo or certificate found on a product?" From this data, it is discernible that a total of 44.5% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they are confused by halal logos or certificates, suggesting that almost half of the surveyed group feels they have a clear understanding of the logos or certifications they encounter on products. On the other end, 30.9% (combining "Agree" and "Strongly Agree") appear to have some level of confusion regarding the logos or certifications, which could reflect issues such as inconsistency in logo/certificate appearance, lack of awareness or understanding of what the logo/certificate signifies, or possibly a mistrust in the halal certification process. A quarter of the respondents (24.5%) are uncertain, about whether they are confused by the halal logo or certificate, indicating a significant segment of the population that might benefit from more information or education on the halal certification process.

Overall, the data suggests there is a notable amount of confusion or uncertainty regarding halal logos or certificates among consumers. This presents an opportunity for stakeholders in the halal certification process to improve consumer education and standardize halal logos or certificates to reduce confusion.

Table 4.9: The Proportion of Consumers Who Are Still Confused by The Halal Logo or Certificate That Is Present on A Product

Are you a consumer who is still confused by the halal logo or certificate found on a product?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Likert Scale	Strongly Disagree	25	22.7	22.7	22.7
	Disagree	24	21.8	21.8	44.5
	Uncertain	27	24.5	24.5	69.1
	Agree	14	12.7	12.7	81.8
	Strongly Agree	20	18.2	18.2	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Discussion

The study aimed to investigate Muslim consumers' perceptions of halal food products and logos in Miri, Sarawak. The findings revealed that a significant majority of respondents were highly aware of the halal logo and its importance in their food selection process. Specifically, 70.9% of respondents strongly agreed that they are aware of the existence of halal logos or certificates on food products available in the market. Additionally, 62.7% of respondents strongly agreed that they are always aware of the halal logo issue, indicating a high level of sensitivity towards halal certification. However, there was also a notable proportion of respondents who expressed uncertainty or disagreement regarding the necessity of the halal logo, suggesting that while awareness is high, there are still gaps in understanding and trust.

The findings of this study align with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Hagger et al., 2022). In the context of halal food consumption, religious beliefs act as a significant predictor of attitudes and intentions. The high level of awareness and sensitivity towards the halal logo among respondents indicates that religiosity and halal awareness are crucial factors influencing their food choices. This supports the extended TPB model proposed by Alam and Sayuti (2011), which includes additional constructs such as religiosity and halal awareness. The study also highlights the importance of perceived behavioral control, as consumers' trust in the halal certification process significantly impacts their purchasing decisions.

The use of quantitative evaluation methodology and the collection of data through questionnaires provided a comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions. The purposive sampling method ensured that the study targeted a relevant sample of Muslim consumers in Miri, Sarawak. The use of SPSS software for data analysis allowed for a detailed examination of the data, revealing significant trends and insights. However, the study's reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases, and the sample size, while adequate, may not fully represent the broader population of Muslim consumers in Malaysia.

The findings of this study offer several practical applications for industry stakeholders, policymakers, and halal certification bodies. Firstly, enhancing consumer education is paramount. Implementing comprehensive awareness campaigns that educate consumers about the significance of halal logos and the certification process can bridge the knowledge gap identified in the study. These campaigns can utilize various media platforms, including social media, to reach a broader audience, particularly younger consumers who may lack awareness. Secondly, improving the transparency and reliability of halal certification processes is crucial. Halal certification bodies should adopt advanced technologies such as blockchain to ensure the traceability and authenticity of halal products. This can help in maintaining the integrity of the halal supply chain and build consumer trust. Additionally, regular audits and stringent enforcement of halal standards can prevent the misuse of halal logos and ensure that only genuinely halal products carry the certification.

Thirdly, fostering collaboration between stakeholders can enhance the effectiveness of halal certification. Industry players, certification bodies, and religious authorities should work together to develop standardized halal certification processes that are recognized globally. This can help in addressing the varying standards and certification processes across different countries, which often lead to consumer confusion and mistrust. Fourthly, addressing the misuse of halal logos requires both legal and public awareness measures. Regulatory bodies

should impose stringent penalties on companies that misuse halal logos to deter such practices. Publicizing cases of misuse and the actions taken can also raise consumer awareness and discourage companies from engaging in fraudulent activities.

Lastly, engaging with local communities and religious institutions can reinforce the importance of halal compliance. Local community programs and collaborations with religious institutions can disseminate information about halal standards and certification, helping to build a culture of awareness and vigilance among consumers. By implementing these practical applications, stakeholders can enhance the integrity of halal certification processes, build consumer trust, and ensure that Muslim consumers can make informed choices about the food products they consume.

One of the primary limitations of this study is its reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Respondents may have provided answers that they believe are socially acceptable rather than their true opinions. Additionally, the study's sample size, while adequate for descriptive research, may not fully capture the diversity of Muslim consumers in Malaysia. The study also focused on a specific region, Miri, Sarawak, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different cultural and demographic characteristics. Future research should consider using a mixed methods approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions. Qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, can complement quantitative data by providing deeper insights into consumer attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, future studies should aim to include larger and more diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Cross-cultural studies can also provide valuable insights into the diverse interpretations and practices of halal consumption in different Muslim communities worldwide. Furthermore, research should explore the potential of new technologies, such as blockchain, in enhancing the transparency and reliability of halal certification processes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into Muslim consumers' perceptions of halal food products and logos in Miri, Sarawak. The findings highlight the high level of awareness and sensitivity towards the halal logo among consumers, underscoring the importance of maintaining rigorous halal certification processes. The study also supports the extended TPB model, emphasizing the role of religiosity and halal awareness in shaping consumer behavior. For industry stakeholders and policymakers, the study underscores the need for transparency and reliability in halal certification, as well as the importance of consumer education campaigns. While the study has some limitations, it provides a solid foundation for future research on halal food consumption and certification. Future studies should aim to address the limitations and explore new avenues for enhancing the transparency and reliability of halal certification processes.

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