

# MUSLIM CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS 'PORK-FREE' AND 'NO PORK' SIGNS DISPLAYED AT NON-CERTIFIED HALAL RESTAURANTS IN SHAH ALAM, SELANGOR

Aini Sa'adah Md Idris<sup>1</sup>  
Nurul Hidayah Che Hassan<sup>2\*</sup>  
Lokman Abdul Rasol<sup>3</sup>  
Wan Azmi Wan Ahmad<sup>4</sup>  
Abu Bakar Jaafar<sup>5</sup>  
Nadisah Zakaria<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Academy Of Contemporary Islamic Studies (ACIS), Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Shah Alam, Malaysia (ainisaadah4@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Pahang, Malaysia (nurul\_hidayah@uitm.edu.my)

<sup>3</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Pahang, Malaysia (lokman\_87@uitm.edu.my)

<sup>4</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Pahang, Malaysia (wanazmi@uitm.edu.my)

<sup>5</sup>Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Kampus Pahang, Malaysia (drabubakar@uitm.edu.my)

<sup>6</sup> Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (nbintizakaria@psu.edu.sa)

\*Corresponding author: nurul\_hidayah@uitm.edu.my

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**Abstract:** *This paper investigates the consumer behaviour of Muslim consumers in Shah Alam, Selangor, towards signage 'Pork Free' and 'No Pork' in non-certified Halal restaurants. The study also explores the influence of awareness of the Halal concept on consumer behaviour in relation to such signage. A cross-sectional survey was conducted, collecting data from 384 respondents using a Likert scale questionnaire. Descriptive analysis was employed to summarize and interpret the data. The findings indicate that participants expressed a tendency towards agreement regarding the importance of knowing if an uncertified Halal restaurant serves pork and the significance of 'no pork' or 'pork-free' signs in choosing a restaurant. However, there was relatively lower agreement on the belief that such signage indicates a restaurant's Halal status. Recommendations are provided to enhance consumer awareness, encourage Halal certification, and foster transparent information sharing to address the 'pork-free' signage issue and promote responsible practices in the Halal food industry. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour and highlights the importance of informed dining choices among Muslim consumers' in Shah Alam.*

**Keywords:** *Muslim consumers', 'Pork Free', Halal, awareness, restaurants*

## Introduction

Halal is not just a term related to religion, but it also involves maintaining cleanliness and purity in all aspects of life, including the food we eat and the business transactions we make. In the restaurant industry, offering Halal food, drinks, services, and environments is important because it can affect the feelings, decision-making, perception, behaviour, and expectations of Muslim customers. In Malaysia, where the majority of the population is Muslim, ensuring that restaurant products are Halal is especially important and is a key factor in attracting and retaining Muslim customers' (Haroun, 2014).

Nevertheless, in Malaysia, which has a diverse population with multiple religions and ethnicities, not all restaurants are Halal. As a result, "Pork Free" restaurants, which do not serve pork, are becoming more common, especially in major cities (Muah, 2020). It is important to note that while "Pork Free" signs may attract Muslim customers', it does not necessarily mean that the restaurant is Halal-certified or that all of their products and services are Halal. In fact, some restaurants may use the "Pork Free" label as a marketing strategy to attract Muslim customers', even though they may serve other non-Halal items. This can be a concern for Muslim consumers' who prioritize the Halal status of the food they eat and the services they use (Haroun, 2014).

For instance, Fatiha (2020) has reported in Sinar Harian that there have been cases where restaurants advertise as "Pork Free" but are found to be serving non-Halal items, such as alcohol or non-Halal meat. This can be misleading and potentially harmful to Muslim consumers' who may unknowingly consume non-Halal items (Muah, 2020). Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate Muslims consumers' behaviour regarding "pork free" and "no pork" signs displayed at non-certified halal restaurants as it is important for Muslim consumers' to be aware of the Halal certification status of restaurants and to not solely rely on "Pork Free" or similar labels.

Additionally, it is important for restaurants to be transparent and honest in their marketing and advertising to ensure that Muslim consumers' are not misled or put at risk (Muah, 2020). The Quran teaches Muslims to produce and manage high-quality halal food, avoiding anything that is considered *syubhah* or haram. The positive impact of the halal industry comes from both consumer attitudes and the food industry's commitment to the principles of *Halalan-Toyyiban*, which refers to food and beverages that are permitted for consumption (halal) and beneficial for the human body. Hence, the halal certificate plays a role in customers' purchasing decisions for halal food, as it guarantees that the food is compliant with Sharia law and also indicates that it is clean, safe, and healthy.

Halal certification in Malaysia gives the food industry a competitive edge and provides consumers with assurance of quality. The adoption of this certification increases Muslims' awareness of Islamic compliant products and food consumption in Malaysia. Even though Halal business practices can be appealing and present new opportunities for business success, some businesses are hesitant to adopt these practices and opt to operate without Halal certification especially in the food service industry.

## Literature Review

### The Concept of Halal

It is a fundamental requirement for an adherent of Islam to abide by the teachings of the Holy Quran and the customs (Sunnah) of the Prophet Muhammad. These teachings encompass various aspects of life, including dietary laws. One such law pertains to the consumption of food, where Muslims are required to consume halal foods and abstain from haram foods (Ahmad, 2013). The concept of halal is widely used among Muslims to determine what is permissible or prohibited in terms of food and drink. The term has become increasingly prevalent in the Western food industry in recent years, particularly due to exports to the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The term "halal" originates from Arabic which translates to "permitted" or "lawful," is clear, but its interpretation and understanding can vary among different countries and food producers (Amat, 2014).

In Islam, the devotion and worship of Allah are seen as the cornerstone of every action. Allah, Himself stated in the Holy Quran,

*"I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship."*

(adz-Dzariat, 56:51).

Even the act of eating is considered a form of devotion that is guided by Sharia law. The Quran emphasizes that food should not only be halal (permissible) but also healthy. This is evident from the numerous references to halal in the Quranic verses, which are consistently followed by mentions of goodness. For example, Allah says,

*"O people, eat of the good things of the earth and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."*

(Al-Baqara 2:168).

The Quran further advises believers to

*"fear Allah and consume the provisions He has granted, seeking comfort and goodness".*

(Al-Maidah 5:88).

Muslims generally use this dichotomy to decide whether something is in line with Islamic principles and therefore avoid consuming anything that is haram. This applies to many aspects of a Muslim's life (Amat, 2014). The consumption of halal food is deeply ingrained in Muslim customs and religion, as it follows the guidelines and rules set forth by Islam. These dietary laws are explicitly described in the Holy Quran and the Teachings of Prophet Muhammad because they are crucial to fostering well-being within the religion. Therefore, Muslims must grasp the significance of Halal Food and fully comprehend and value the concepts of Halal and Haram that align with their religious requirements. Understanding the concept of Halal food requires having personal understanding and convictions about issues related to eating Halal cuisine. This understanding and knowledge enable individuals to gain a clearer understanding of the principles behind Halal food consumption. As a result, consumers can decide depending on their particular interests and religious convictions. Nonetheless, a major hurdle arises from the varying interpretations of what Muslims perceive as Halal, leading to confusion, misunderstandings, and even instances of fraud (Othman, 2010).

### Halal Certification

Across the globe, there exist numerous Islamic organizations dedicated to certifying foods as halal. These organizations provide consumers with the assurance that the ingredients and production processes used in the creation of these products align with the principles of Shari'ah. The term "halal" has gained recognition as a significant trademark worldwide. Unlike a regular trademark, a certification trademark goes beyond identification and serves as a guarantee, indicating that the goods and services meet specific criteria. Halal certification not only assures consumers that the food complies with Islamic dietary regulations but also signifies its value, adherence to health standards, and consideration for the environment. By obtaining halal certification, products are verified to contain only permissible ingredients, providing consumers with peace of mind and confidence in their choices (Asa, 2018).

In the present day, it is mandatory for producers or food premises to obtain halal certification for their products or premises, serving as a way to differentiate them from other items available in the market. This certification plays a crucial role in ensuring customer satisfaction, trust, and reliability. It goes beyond simply guaranteeing that the food itself is halal; it extends to ensuring that the entire production process follows halal practices. Halal certified products adhere to stringent standards of hygiene, cleanliness, safety, and nutrition, meeting the specific needs and requirements of consumers, particularly Muslim consumers (Asa, 2018). In Malaysia, the halal certifying authority is the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), which was established by the government in 1994. Halal certification is an official document that confirms the halal status of a product or service according to the Malaysia halal certification scheme issued by the authorized bodies JAKIM. The halal certification and logo serve as an important symbol indicating the halal status of food establishments and products (Ghazali, 2020).

According to JAKIM, Halal certification involves a thorough evaluation of multiple facets related to food production. It encompasses not only the ingredients and cooking methods but also extends to other critical factors like the cleanliness of the premises, the handling procedures, and the individuals involved in food preparation. The assessment includes the selection and use of utensils, the overall condition of the working area, and the adherence to personal hygiene by the food handlers. This holistic approach ensures that every aspect of the process aligns with the Halal requirements and guarantees the integrity of the Halal certification (Rosnan, 2015). Research has shown that the presence of a Halal logo or Halal certification significantly impacts the purchasing choices of Muslim consumers. They view it as a reliable indicator of the product or service aligning with their dietary and religious requirements. As a result, Muslim consumers feel comfortable and justified in supporting products or services that bear Halal certification (Othman, 2010).

### Halal Food Service

The halal industry has a broad reach, extending beyond products to encompass various sectors such as food services, warehouse management, logistics, finance, and healthcare. Sharifah Zannierah (2012), reported that there was a total of 172,252 food service establishments, encompassing both stalls and restaurants, in Malaysia in the year 2001. The food service industry in Malaysia can be broadly categorised into five primary sectors: dine-in establishments encompassing hotel coffee houses, fast food outlets, coffee shops, food courts, and roadside hawkers. In addition, the author presented an alternative classification and proposed that food service establishments in Malaysia encompass restaurants, street stalls, and pubs or bars (Marzuki, 2012).

In Malaysia, the food service industry is widely recognized as a highly lucrative business sector. This trend is evident in the increasing number of food establishments transitioning from remote areas to urban areas, catering to the growing demand. To put it into a more human context, food and beverages constitute the largest portion of household expenditure in Malaysia, accounting for 23% of total household spending. On average, Malaysians allocate nearly 50% of their monthly expenditures exclusively to food. This emphasizes the importance and significance of the food service industry in the region, as it directly relates to people's daily lives and well-being (Razak, 2015).

Given the economic potential and societal relevance of the food service industry, it is crucial for companies in this sector to prioritize becoming reputable and compliant with halal standards. To achieve this, the government should focus on enhancing its governance system to ensure that every stage of the food supply chain consistently adheres to halal standards throughout their operations. This would help establish trust and credibility in the industry, both domestically and internationally. This is because Halal certification plays a significant role in ensuring food safety within the food service industry. It goes beyond merely being a religious requirement and encompasses various aspects such as food quality, trustworthiness, safety, hygiene, health, nutrition, and traceability. By obtaining halal certification, food service establishments can assure consumers that their products and practices meet stringent standards, instilling confidence and promoting a sense of well-being among consumers (Razak, 2015).

### **Pork Free Restaurant**

Different Islamic countries have their own specific rules and regulations regarding Halal certification. In Malaysia, the responsibility for implementing, monitoring, and managing Halal compliance lies with JAKIM, one of the country's Halal authority agencies. However, there are concerns surrounding Halal food studies that relate to both Muslim and non-Muslim customers, particularly when it comes to the adoption of Halal certification. Some restaurants may be hesitant to embrace Halal business practices and choose to operate without Halal certification, despite recognizing the potential benefits it offers for business performance (Ismail, 2023).

In Malaysia, it is not mandatory for establishments to obtain Halal certification. Recently, a new trend has emerged in certain districts, mainly in the Klang Valley area, where restaurants promote an "Islamic" image by using the label "pork-free". According to Haroun (2014), the elimination of pork is becoming a common marketing technique used to attract the Muslim market. However, many restaurants' owners view obtaining the official halal certification from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) as a secondary concern, with some prioritizing profit over halal certification. This is evidenced by the fact that only one out of ten food establishments in a major shopping complex in the capital city displayed the JAKIM halal certificate, while the other nine only had "pork-free" signs displayed (Mahpar, 2016). It should be noted that "pork-free" signage does not guarantee Halal status, as it solely indicates the absence of pig-related ingredients in the dishes. Therefore, it is essential to recognize that "pork-free" signage alone is insufficient to determine the Halal status of an establishment (Ismail, 2023).

A study conducted by Haroun (2014), has identified three types of "pork-free" restaurants in Malaysia. The first is restaurants that offer pork-free meals and non-alcoholic beverages and have been certified halal by JAKIM. The second type serves pork-free options but also serves alcohol, to cater to non-Muslim customers. These restaurants still take halal guidelines seriously in other aspects such as using halal-slaughtered chicken, keeping the kitchen clean, and



separating halal and non-halal items (Fatiha, 2020). The third type of restaurants are run by non-Muslims and serve "pork-free" or so-called halal food, but do not have JAKIM halal certification (Mahpar, 2016). Many non-Muslim restaurant owners believe that halal food is simply "pork-free" and use this as a tactic to attract Muslim customers, even though they may be aware that some of their ingredients are not halal (Haroun, 2014).

### **Muslim Consumer Behaviour**

Consumer behaviour refers to the process by which individuals make choices to acquire specific products and services. Consumer behaviour refers to the actions and choices made by individuals during the decision-making process. It encompasses various aspects such as the values, personal needs, perceptions, and emotions that consumers possess. Furthermore, consumer behaviour can be understood as a complex and ever-changing interplay between various factors, including external influences, cognitive processes, individual behaviours, and the surrounding environment. This intricate dynamic occurs as individuals engage in their daily interactions and communication (Choirunnisa, 2021).

In addition, according to Zein Muntaqin (2012), consumer behaviour is an academic discipline that examines the various processes through which individuals or groups make choices, acquire, utilize, or discard products, services, ideas, or experiences in order to fulfill their needs and desires (Muttaqin, 2012). According to Syed Shah Alam (2011), the theory of consumer behaviour that emerged in the West following the advent of capitalism can be attributed to a combination of two fundamental concepts: "economic rationalism" and "utilitarianism." Economic rationalism posits that human behaviour is driven by a meticulous process of calculation, guided by foresight and prudence, with the ultimate goal of achieving economic prosperity. The concept of economic rationality posits that consumers will strive to maximize their "satisfaction" in a specific manner, which retains some utilitarian connotations. According to prevailing discourse, the notion in question is purportedly not limited to any specific form of contentment, be it of a spiritual, material, or other nature (Alam, 2011).

In the Islamic tradition, rationalism is about seeking desired outcomes through practicing moderation in consumption (Alam, 2011). According to Siddiqi (1992) a rational Muslim strives to adhere to Islamic norms through conscientious behaviour and putting in maximum effort. In this context, a Muslim consumer willingly sacrifices their economic satisfaction if it conflicts with the requirements of their faith. It is important for individuals to consume a sufficient amount of economic goods to lead an efficient life, as Islam aims to achieve certain objectives in the realm of consumption. However, there is a belief that certain prohibited goods should not be consumed. Engaging in excessive indulgence and extravagant living is discouraged, as the focus should not solely be on the consumption of economic goods and the resulting satisfaction. Rather, the purpose should be to facilitate the attainment of the ultimate objectives of a purpose-driven existence (Siddiqi, 1992).

### **Halal Awareness**

Halal awareness encompasses having a keen interest, experience, or sufficient knowledge about halal food, beverages, and other halal products. It involves human perception and cognitive responses related to the consumption and utilization of various substances, including food and drinks. Awareness in the context of halal is subjective, as individuals may have different levels of understanding regarding matters of halal, which pertains to what is permissible according to the teachings of Allah SWT. Therefore, halal awareness can be defined as a cognitive process

aimed at acquiring knowledge to enhance the understanding of permissible dietary and consumable practices for individuals who follow the Islamic faith (Simanjuntak, 2020).

According to Azam (2016), when it comes to halal, awareness goes beyond a general understanding. It refers to individuals' specific interest, expertise, or understanding in relation to acquiring a product or service. For Muslim consumers, having a deep understanding of various aspects associated with a product is crucial before making a purchase. This includes examining the ingredients, production methods, storage conditions, and other relevant sources and elements (Azam, 2016). In today's world, Muslim consumers have become increasingly aware and knowledgeable about halal and haram principles. They are no longer satisfied with a simple halal logo on product packaging. Instead, they scrutinize the "halal status" of a product more thoroughly. This heightened awareness has become a significant factor in the decision-making process of Muslim consumers, particularly in countries with a Muslim majority like Malaysia (Haque, 2019).

In a diverse and dynamic market like Malaysia, where halal plays a significant role, acknowledging the human aspect of halal awareness becomes essential for businesses to thrive and for consumers to make confident and informed decisions about the products and services they choose (Haque, 2019). A study by Roslina Ali et al. (2016) found that only 22.3% of 600 respondents in Malaysia viewed the halal logos displayed in restaurants as trustworthy. Muslim consumers in the Klang Valley area prioritize factors such as price, taste and ambiance when choosing a food outlet to patronize, rather than the presence of a halal logo, as stated by Ahmad et al. (2013). According to Nooh, (2007), promotion, place, attractiveness, and quality are the top three factors that influence consumers' intention to purchase a product, with halal certification being the fourth factor, despite 94% of the participants being Muslims. Additionally, some Muslims still dine at restaurants that claim to be halal without a halal logo or "pork-free" restaurants with "pork-free" signage, as reported by Ali et al. (2016). Trust, cleanliness, food safety, traceability, and culture were found to be the factors that influence Muslim patronage in halal-claiming restaurants. In terms of culture, many Muslims prefer to eat at "warung" or roadside food stalls without considering the presence of a halal logo, a practice passed down from generation to generation (Ghazali, 2020).

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study utilised a quantitative methodology, with a specific emphasis on exploratory studies. The utilisation of quantitative research facilitated the researcher in comprehensively examining and comprehending the subject matter. Quantitative research is a method that involves the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining phenomena

### Population and Sample

Since the population of Muslim consumers in Shah Alam, Selangor is large, the researcher used a simple random sampling procedure to obtain eligible and relevant data from the respondents. The sample size of 384 residents from Shah Alam, Selangor, was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) method for sample size calculation (Nations, 2023). This method is commonly used in social sciences research to estimate the sample size needed for a study based on the population size and desired level of precision. It appears that the population size for this research is 617149 residents, and the sample size is 384 residents from Shah Alam, Selangor

(DOSM, 2020). Using this sample size and a method established by Krejcie and Morgan, the research aims to have a representative sample that allows for inferences to be made about the larger population of Muslim consumers in Shah Alam.

### Data Collection Method

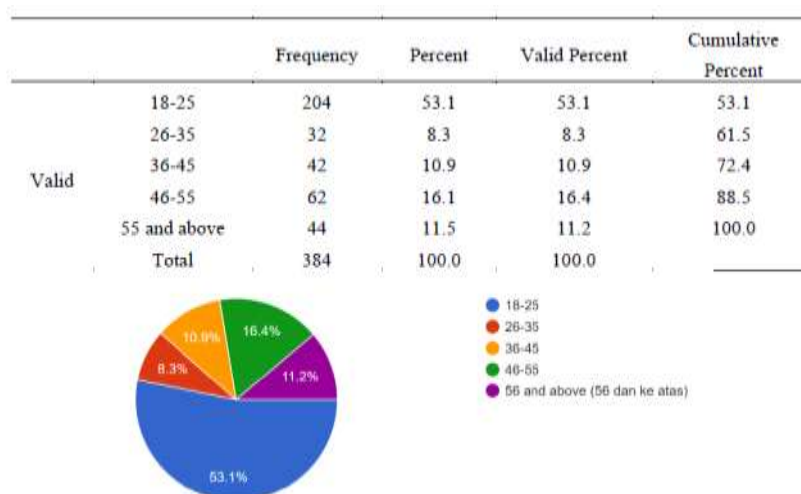
This study used a combination of primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected through an online survey using questionnaires that consist of multiple questions. The survey is distributed using Google Forms, which allows for an efficient and convenient way to collect data from a large number of respondents. The researcher established a sample structure and only Muslim consumers living in Shah Alam, Selangor were eligible to participate. The data collection and analysis were based on surveys completed within a specified time period to ensure that respondents had enough time to respond and provide accurate and relevant information. The survey or questionnaires were created using online survey software such as Google Form. The analysis and synthesis of secondary data, such as a literature review, involved the examination and consolidation of information pertaining to the research topic. This information was sourced from various scholarly outlets, including books, scientific papers, and other relevant sources that are associated with a specific subject, field of study, or concept.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. These software packages are suitable for the research's analysis technique and data collection purpose, as they provide various statistical tools and techniques to analyze data and draw valid conclusions. The software can also help in calculating mean, median, and mode to analyze results, and generate graphs and charts to present the data visually. Overall, the data analysis method used in this research is appropriate for studying Muslim consumers' behaviour regarding pork-free and no-pork signs displayed at non-certified halal restaurants

## Results

**Table 1: Respondents' Age Distribution Chart**



The analysis of Table 1 reveals the distribution of respondents' age as observed in this study's questionnaire. Out of the 384 responses received, 204 respondents (53.1%) fell within the age range of 18 to 25. Additionally, 32 respondents (8.3%) were between the ages of 26 and 35, while 42



respondents (10.9%) were aged 36 to 45. Moreover, there were 62 respondents (16.4%) aged 46 to 55, and 44 respondents (11.2%) were 55 years old and above.

**Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

| Gender Distribution of Respondents |       |           |         |               |
|------------------------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|
|                                    |       | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
| Valid                              | Man   | 159       | 41.7    | 41.7          |
|                                    | Woman | 225       | 58.3    | 58.3          |
|                                    | Total | 384       | 100.0   | 100.0         |



The background of the 384 respondents in this study is defined by a table and figure that are based on the variables analysed, specifically the gender of the individuals, categorised as either male or female. The researcher employed frequency and percentage approaches to analyse the characteristics. Based on the data presented in the table and figure above, it can be inferred that there is a higher number of female respondents compared to male respondents. As a result, the survey participants observed that there were 225 female respondents, accounting for 58.3% of the total respondents. On the contrary, the number of male respondents amounts to 159, which corresponds to 41.7% of the total.

**Table 3: Educational Level Distribution of Respondents**

| Educational Level |                   |           |         |               |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
|                   |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
| Valid             | Primary School    | 1         | .3      | .3            |
|                   | Secondary School  | 39        | 10.2    | 10.2          |
|                   | Diploma           | 54        | 14.1    | 14.1          |
|                   | Bachelor's Degree | 261       | 67.7    | 67.7          |
|                   | Master's Degree   | 25        | 6.5     | 6.5           |
|                   | Doctorate degree  | 4         | 1.0     | 1.0           |
|                   | Total             | 384       | 100.0   | 100.0         |

Table 3 showcase the comprehensive analysis of the educational level of the participants. Within the cohort of 384 participants, the distribution of educational levels can be delineated as follows: Out of the total respondents, one individual, constituting a mere 0.3% of the sample, disclosed possessing a primary school education. On the other hand, 39 respondents, accounting for 10.2% of the participants, affirmed having successfully completed their secondary education. Furthermore, 54 respondents, representing 14.1% of the sample, reported holding a diploma. The majority of the participants, precisely 261 respondents, which corresponds to 67.7% of the sample, indicated having obtained a bachelor's degree. Additionally, 25 respondents, constituting 6.5% of the participants, disclosed possessing a master's degree. Lastly, a small proportion of the respondents, specifically 4 individuals, representing 1.0% of the sample, reported having achieved the highest level of educational attainment by obtaining a doctorate degree. The provided information offers a comprehensive overview of the educational background of the participants involved in the study.

**Table 4: Frequency Eating Out Distribution of Respondents**

| Frequency Eating Out |              |         |               |                    |
|----------------------|--------------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|                      | Frequency    | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid                | Never        | 1       | .3            | .3                 |
|                      | Rarely       | 66      | 17.2          | 17.4               |
|                      | Occasionally | 148     | 38.8          | 56.0               |
|                      | Frequently   | 83      | 21.4          | 77.6               |
|                      | Always       | 86      | 22.4          | 100.0              |
| Total                | 384          | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

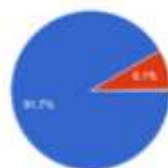


● Never (1 time overall)  
 ● Rarely (once a month or less often)  
 ● Occasionally (2-3 times a month)  
 ● Frequently (4-5 times a month)  
 ● Always (more than 5 times a month)

The collected information in Table 4 showcase the descriptive analysis of the participants' dining out habits. Within the cohort of 384 individuals, the frequency of dining out can be observed as follows: a solitary respondent (0.3%) claimed to never partake in eating out, 66 respondents (17.2%) reported engaging in this activity rarely, 148 respondents (38.8%) indicated occasional dining out, 83 respondents (21.4%) expressed a propensity for frequent dining out, and 86 respondents (22.4%) professed to always dining out. The provided information offers a comprehensive overview of the participants' dining-out habits and the frequency at which they engage in this activity, as observed in the study.

**Table 5: The Importance of Halal Certification of Respondents**

| The Importance of Halal Certification |                    |         |               |                    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|                                       | Frequency          | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid                                 | Very important     | 352     | 91.7          | 91.7               |
|                                       | Somewhat important | 31      | 8.1           | 99.7               |
|                                       | Not important      | 1       | .3            | 100.0              |
|                                       | Total              | 384     | 100.0         | 100.0              |

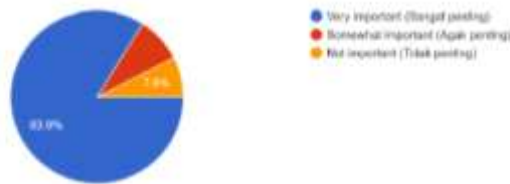


● Very important (Strongly perceiving)  
 ● Somewhat important (Slightly perceiving)  
 ● Not important (Not perceiving)

The analysis of the participants' perception regarding the significance of Halal certification is outlined in Table 5. Out of the total sample size of 384 participants, the responses pertaining to the significance of Halal certification can be categorised and analysed as follows: A total of 352 respondents, accounting for 91.7% of the sample, expressed a strong perception of the significance of Halal certification. Meanwhile, 31 respondents, constituting 8.1% of the sample, held a somewhat important view on the matter. Interestingly, a mere 1 individual, representing a negligible 0.3% of the sample, expressed a lack of importance towards Halal certification. The provided information offers a comprehensive summary of the respondents' viewpoints regarding the significance of Halal certification in the study.

**Table 6: The Importance of “No Pork” or “Pork-Free” Signs at Non-certified Halal Restaurants**

| The Importance of “No Pork” or “Pork-Free” Signs at Uncertified Halal Restaurants |                    |           |         |               |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|                                                                                   |                    | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid                                                                             | Very important     | 323       | 83.9    | 83.9          | 83.9               |
|                                                                                   | Somewhat important | 32        | 8.3     | 8.3           | 92.4               |
|                                                                                   | Not important      | 29        | 7.6     | 7.6           | 100.0              |
|                                                                                   | Total              | 384       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |



The analysis provided in Table 6 presents a descriptive overview of the respondents' perception regarding the significance of "No Pork" or "Pork-Free" signs at non-certified Halal restaurants. The distribution of responses pertaining to the significance of these signs is as follows, encompassing a total of 384 participants. A total of 323 respondents, accounting for 83.9% of the sample, regarded these factors as highly important. On the other hand, 32 participants, representing 8.3% of the total, viewed them as moderately important. Lastly, 29 individuals, constituting 7.6% of the respondents, expressed that these factors hold little to no importance. The data presented offers valuable insights into the viewpoints of the participants regarding the significance of "No Pork" or "Pork-Free" signage at uncertified Halal establishments, as explored within the study.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the consumer behaviour of Shah Alam Muslim consumers towards the signage 'no pork' or 'pork-free' displayed at non-certified Halal restaurants and explore the influence of awareness of the Halal concept on their behaviour. Through a descriptive analysis of data collected from a survey of 384 respondents, valuable insights were gained. The findings indicate that the majority of participants displayed a high level of agreement regarding the significance of being aware whether non-certified Halal establishment serves pork, as well as the importance of 'no pork' or 'pork-free' signage when making decisions about such dining establishments. Nonetheless, the reception towards the prospect of patronising non-certified Halal restaurants displaying such signage was met with a combination of positive and negative reactions as certain participants expressed the necessity for enhanced verification procedures to guarantee the Halal status of the restaurants. This highlights the importance of obtaining appropriate Halal certification in establishing consumer confidence. The results of the study revealed that the participants demonstrated a full understanding of awareness of the Halal concept and Halal certification played a crucial role in influencing consumer behaviour. This understanding significantly impacted their level of comfort when it came to dining at restaurants that possessed appropriate certifications. Nevertheless, there was a comparatively lower level of consensus regarding the notion that signage serves as an indicator of a restaurant's Halal certification. This implies that there is a necessity for enhanced education and understanding regarding the significance of such signage.

This study generates several valuable insights. The significance of adequate Halal certification and verification procedures cannot be underestimated, as they play a crucial role in establishing consumer trust and confidence in Halal establishments (Asa, 2018). Additionally, the results underscore the necessity of educational initiatives aimed at augmenting consumer knowledge

regarding Halal principles, specifically in comprehending the importance of signage indicating the absence of pork. Furthermore, the research highlights the importance of cultural and religious contexts in influencing consumer behaviour, emphasizing the need to take these factors into account when making marketing and policy choices.

In general, the findings of this study indicate that consumer behaviour is impacted by the extent of their familiarity with the Halal concept and the availability of signage in non-certified Halal establishments. This study emphasises the necessity of ongoing educational initiatives and awareness campaigns aimed at providing Muslim consumers with comprehensive information and improving their decision-making regarding dining options. The findings of this study hold significance for various stakeholders, including the Halal sector, proprietors of dining establishments, and policymakers. These insights offer valuable guidance for enhancing consumer trust and guaranteeing the genuineness of Halal products within the food industry.

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