

# Extent of Awareness on Halal Food Among Muslim Students Consumers of The University of Southern Mindanao

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## ABSTRACT

Being Muslim residents of a non-Muslim country like the Philippines, awareness of the fundamental beliefs in Islam down to its most basic tenets are often times a challenging issue. This study focused on the extent of student awareness on halal products. Using quantitative research design the researchers surveyed 120 student consumers, the paper finds that with an overall mean score of 3.42, indicates that they are aware of the importance of adhering to the Islamic teachings of halal foods and agreed, with 2.85 total mean score, that the teachings of Islam on matters concerning halal is not limited only to food and drinks but to include all mu'amalat (day-to-day dealings of men with their fellows). Logistic Regression Analysis results show that with all participants' demographic profile tested only secular and Islamic education is found to have statistical significant and are positively correlated with halal awareness. This study concludes that despite living in non-Muslim majority country where values and etiquettes is defined by dominant un-Islamic cultures and traditions in the country, Muslim are still well-guided and aware of their fundamental beliefs in Islam.

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## 1. Introduction

Muslims are obliged to pursue what is stated in the Holy Quran and Traditions (sunnah) of Prophet Muhammad. One of it is a set of dietary laws. In this law, Muslim must consume halal foods and avoid haram foods. Halal is an Arabic word which means 'lawful, legal, licit, legitimate, permissible, allowable, permitted, allowed, admissible, unprohibited. The food consumed by Muslims are lawful or permitted unless, the food being categorized in Holy Quran and Hadith as haram or forbidden. A set of dietary in food consumption is one of the rules in ensuring good well-being.

Halal food is becoming a lucrative business not only among Muslim but also non-Muslim countries. Muslims have always been associated with Islam which is directly link to halalan and toyyiban (good quality and clean). The question of understanding among Muslims about halal food is posed because food market is managed by all ethnic groups.

Halal food demand has increased tremendously in parallel with the expansion of 2.1 billion Muslim populations around the world. According to Mariam (2010) size of halal market throughout the world is about USD 2.1 trillion and in 2011 it is estimated that the size of halal food sector is USD 661 billion. Halal market is growing fast and has been increasing at an estimated 25% per year.

In Malaysia, the application of halal certification and logo is based upon request of food producers. Those with halal certification and logo have the advantages of capturing a bigger market. Because 60.4% of Malaysians are Muslims. Social awareness can be described as a contextualized cognizance either of oneself or of another person.

In the context of this study the authors examined the extent of awareness on halal food among student consumers of University of Southern Mindanao (USM) including their attitude in choosing food in varied food outlets, for example do they look out for halal logo or JAKIM and IDCP signage when choosing an eatery outlet? This study was conducted among the Muslim students of the University of Southern Mindanao (USM), Kabacan, Cotabato.

The study generally aimed to determine the extent of awareness on halal food among Muslim student consumers of University of Southern Mindanao (USM). Specifically, it aimed to Determine the socio-economic and demographic profile of the respondents; Ascertain the extent of awareness on halal foods among the targeted respondents; and, Identify the attitude of respondents toward Halal foods.

This study is significant for the business sectors who are in the halal business as it reveals the extent of awareness on halal food among Muslim student consumers in the University of Southern Mindanao including their attitudes on choosing halal foods. Religious sectors of the society will also gain benefits from this study as it provides information on areas where Muslims food consumers' needs more clarification and further guidance. Moreover, this study served as general reference for the Muslim student's consumers to be aware of the non-halal foods. The food producers will also see this study as significant to enhance marketability of their products and upgrade the quality of food industry in the university. Furthermore, this study also served as basis in local policy issues..

## 2. Materials and methods

This research used descriptive statistics in nature, to examine the extent of awareness on halal food among Muslim student consumers. The study was conducted among the students of the University of Southern Mindanao, main campus in Kabacan, Cotabato from January to December 2018. The sample size of this research was determined using the Systematic and Convenience sampling. Convenience sampling in this study, refers to the collection of information from the sample population who were conveniently available to provide information. By systematic, it refers to the use of documented names of Muslim students in the university. This research used survey check list - a questionnaire used to measure the extent of awareness on halal food among Muslim student consumers to enrich the discussion. Surveys were also administered among personnel of accredited Halal restaurant and service food provider in the research areas. The respondents needed to select their awareness level by using 4-point Likert Scale where; "1" indicates not fully aware and "4" indicates fully aware. The questionnaire contains four main sections: 1) socio-demographic, 2) extent of awareness on halal food among Muslim students' customers, and 3) attitudes of consumers towards halal foods. The data were analyzed and interpreted using statistical tools such as frequency counts, mean score, percentage distribution and multiple logistic regression analysis.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### *Extent of Awareness on Halal food*

The results in the table 1 showed that respondents replied aware on the following survey questions: "I am aware that *Halal* is from nurturing to slaughtering a process"; "I am aware that *Halal* is also related with food quality."; "I am aware that food product, if doubts are raised about it by my peers and family, is *haram*"; "I am aware that all food products with *halal* logo are permitted."; "I am aware that food even without *halal* logo as long as the food is made in Islamic country, is *halal*.";

It indicates that they responded fully aware on the survey questions: “I understand what *Halal* and *haram* from Qur’an and Sunnah of the prophet.”; “I am aware that eating *halal* food is religious obligation.”; “I am aware that alcohol and pork are not *halal*.”; “I am aware that *halal* is clean and healthy.”; “I am aware that *halal* is permitted by Islamic law.”;

**Table 1.** Extent of Awareness on *Halal* food among Muslim student’s consumers of the University of Southern Mindanao.

Provision Statement	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. I understand what <i>Halal</i> and <i>haram</i> from Qur’an and Sunnah of the prophet.	3.48	Fully aware
2. I am aware that eating <i>Halal</i> food is religious obligation.	3.63	Fully aware
3. I am aware that <i>Halal</i> is from nurturing to slaughtering a process.	3.20	Aware
4. I am aware that <i>Halal</i> is also related with food quality.	3.44	Aware
5. I am aware that food product, if doubts are raised about it by my peers and family, is <i>haram</i> .	3.21	Aware
6. I am aware that alcohol and pork are not <i>halal</i> .	3.71	Fully aware
7. I am aware that <i>halal</i> is clean and healthy.	3.67	Fully aware
8. I am aware that <i>halal</i> is permitted by Islamic law.	3.53	Fully aware
9. I am aware that all food products with <i>halal</i> logo are permitted.	3.19	Aware
10. I am aware that food even without <i>halal</i> logo as long as the food is made in Islamic country, is <i>halal</i> .	2.93	Aware
Overall Mean	3.42	Aware

### *Attitudes toward Halal food*

Table 2. shows that they agree on the following provision statements: “I believe that the restaurants are *halal* when the staffs wear 'kopiah or headscarf/hijab.”; “I eat food products even without *halal* logo as long as the food is made in Islamic country. ”; “I do not mind eating at the restaurants operated by non-Muslims since it has *halal* logo”; “*Halal* logo is not important as long as the ingredients are free from pork or alcohol.”; “I choose restaurant surrounded in a Muslim community.”; “I ask first (*halal*, prices) before choosing the food.”;

Disagree on the statements: “I believe that almost restaurants have *halal* logo.”; “I do not eat food which I did not see the slaughtering process.”; and strongly agree on: “I eat clean and healthy *halal* food.”

**Table 2.** Attitude of respondents toward *halal* food.

Provision Statement	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. I believe that the restaurants are <i>halal</i> when the staffs wear 'kopiah or headscarf/hijab.	2.61	Agree
2. I eat food products even without <i>halal</i> logo as long as the food is made in Islamic country.	3.06	Agree
3. I do not mind eating at the restaurants operated by non-Muslims since it has <i>halal</i> logo.	2.83	Agree
4. <i>Halal</i> logo is not important as long as the ingredients are free from pork or alcohol.	2.68	Agree
5. I believe that almost restaurants have <i>halal</i> logo.	2.48	Disagree
6. I do not mind <i>halal</i> logo as long as the food is delicious and cheap.	2.18	Disagree
7. I eat clean and healthy <i>halal</i> food.	3.60	Strongly Agree
8. I choose restaurant surrounded in a Muslim community.	3.48	Agree
9. I do not eat food which I did not see the slaughtering process.	2.14	Disagree
10. I ask first ( <i>halal</i> and prices) before choosing to eat the food.	2.68	Agree
Overall Mean	2.85	Agree

**Table 3** Multiple Logistic Regression Validation of statistical assumptions

Table 3.1 Model fitting						
Model no.	Variable excluded in the equation	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	F Statistics	Std. Error	p-value
Model 1	None	0.1521	0.09906	2.869	1.024	0.00857
Model 2	Age	0.1314	0.08524	2.848	1.032	0.01277
Model 3	Year Level	0.1066	0.05917	2.247	1.047	0.04368
Model 4	Sex	0.1429	0.09736	3.139	1.025	0.00696
Model 5	Civil Status	0.1342	0.08824	2.919	1.03	0.01101
Model 6	Weekly Allowance	0.152	0.107	3.376	1.02	0.00423
Model 7	Islamic Education	0.03782	0.1138	2.419	1.043	0.03088

Model comparison is performed to identify which linear combination best fits the regression analysis. Regression model is best fit on the basis of comparably higher R<sup>2</sup>, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, F- statistics, lower standard (Std.) error term and lower p-value. <sup>1</sup> Table 4.1 shows that model 1 shows the highest R<sup>2</sup> but model 6 shows high adj. R<sup>2</sup>, F-statistics with lower Std. Error and p-value. This indicates that model 6 is best fit the regression equation.

<sup>1</sup> Selva Prabhakaran. (n.d) "Linear Regression". Retrieved from: <http://r-statistics.co/Linear-Regression.html>. Retrieved date: 09/11/2020.

**Table 3.2.** AIC and BIC result for model comparison

Model no.	Variable excluded in the equation	AIC value	BIC Value
Model 1	None	356.0365	381.124
Model 2	Age	356.9301	379.2301
Model 3	Year Level	360.3031	382.603
Model 4	Sex	355.3302	377.6301
Model 5	Civil Status	356.5364	378.8363
Model 6	Weekly Allowance	354.043	376.343
Model 7	Islamic Education	359.3311	381.631

Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) are also model comparison tool or regression analysis. The lower the AIC and BIC the better the model. Table 4.2 verifies that model 6 is the best fit for having lowest AIC and BIC value. Thus, the model is hereby by selected as regression model and remove weekly allowance from the equation.

**Table 4.** Logistic Regression Analysis

Provision statement	Coefficient	$\beta$	$p$ -value
	(Intercept)	2.688e+00	0.0101 *
	Age	- 0.08487	0.09800 .
I ask first (halal, prices) before choosing to eat the food	Year level	0.24219	0.01531 *
	Gender	0.20985	0.26864
	Civil Status	0.66287	0.11850
	Islamic Education	0.25882	0.02563 *
	Parents' Islamic Education	0.0989	0.34447

Signif. codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Table no. 4 shows multiple logistic regression analysis result which indicates that on provision statement “*I ask first (halal and prices) before choosing to eat the food*”, the  $p$ -value for “Year Level” in secular school and “Islamic Education” is significantly lower than the alpha level 0.05. Being  $p < 0.05$ , this means that both variables are statistically significant predictor for the provision statement. Secondly, the beta ( $\beta$ ) test value of coefficient *year level*, 0.25 and *Islamic education*, 0.26 are positive. This indicates that the higher the year level of the respondents in secular education the higher they likely agree on the provisional statement. Also, the higher the Islamic education they acquired the higher the chance they also agree on the same statement.

#### 4. Conclusion

The awareness and attitude on halal food concept varied among the respondents. Some of them are aware and very particular about halal, they will only consume products with the Halal logos, but others do not bother much, as long as the food came from Muslim countries with Arabic sounded-brand names, such products are considered Halal already.

It is also concluded that the awareness among consumers could be a major determinant factor in purchasing decision process. It further concluded that the Muslim consumers, despite of their age and weak Islamic education, they have strong believe in the importance of Halal consciousness as one aspect of getting good relationship to God (Allah). The results further concluded that the

Muslim consumers are very particular and concern about their food intake and only Halal food will be their preferences..

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