

DEMOGRAPHICS AND HALAL FOOD CONSUMPTION: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *The objective of this paper is to examine the demographic differences in halal food consumption. Data collected from 730 respondents in Peninsular Malaysia. All respondents were required to answer survey questionnaires related to their demographics and attitude towards halal food. The result of this study shows that the majority of Muslims in Malaysia have high-level awareness in consuming halal food. For demographic characteristics focusing on the gender, a significant difference was found ($p < 0.05$). This research also identified that there was no significant difference in respondents' attitude towards halal food consumption based on age and origin region ($p > 0.05$). The practical implication is specifically for the halal food industry as they would be able to promote the halal culture referring to the findings of this particular study.*

Keywords: *Halal Industry, Halal Food, Behaviour, Halal Food Consumption, Quantitative.*

Introduction

Halal food is one of the common yet cardinal Islamic practices as the Muslims all over the world need to follow specific eating code of conduct called "Halal eating rules". This code of conduct covers the concepts of "safety", "hygiene" and the "wholesomeness" of food which promotes an excellent platform for healthy eating. Consideration of the place, the slaughtering process of the animals, and most importantly, the condition of these animals that would not endanger the health of human being are the primary focus of what Halal is all about (Golnaz, Zanalabiddin, Mad Nasir & Chiew, 2010).

The essential wisdom behind this particular Islamic command is the physical as well as psychological benefits of human being. In addition, it encompasses a sense of wholehearted submission to the divine rulings pertaining to human life. Al Ghazali (1058-1111) mentioned that people who did not preserve their abdomen have the potential to be involved in psychological problem such as negative personality (Khairani, 2012; Zulkiple Ghani & Nor

Salimah, 2006). The importance of halal food in daily life has been explicitly mentioned in Islamic scriptures including Qur'an and Prophetic traditions; however, Muslim nowadays still have low awareness on halal food (Md Sawari, 2017).

Literature Review

Gender, age and origin region are list of demographic characteristics associated with attitude toward halal food variables were special interest in this paper. According to Kiefer and Kunze (2005) in dietary topic, gender-specific factor significantly contribute the decision-making. In 2005, Keifer and Kunze conducted study on the "Eating and dieting differences in men and women" have highlighted statement that man have a lower awareness and less knowledge of nutrition than women. This result similar with Arganini, et. al. (2012), when they discover that female is always aware and more alert in acquiring more knowledge related to dietary topic. Not only that, Hummel et. al. (2018) also mention that gender plays role in influencing eating behaviour. This formula is also applied in the topic of halal food (Md. Sawari, 2017). This study revealed that Muslim youth female in Malaysia place a higher value on halal food awareness.

This result similar for age profile. Data from Md. Sawari (2017) study revealed that young age found to have more positive thought that they will eat halal food daily. Compare to the older people, they record lower mean rather than the youngster. This significant different similar with the finding research completed by Rodin in 1986. As one of the prominent researcher, Rodin (1986) suggest that the relationship between ability to perform an action significantly depend upon age group.

Zhang, Liang, and Huang, (2015),discovered there are significant differences in the attitude across different ages. According to them, older groups are more concerned about food selection. This result shows that age differences play roles in changing people attitude and thought.

Research Objectives

Referring to the statement mentioned above, it is very important to explore the halal food consumption awareness among Muslim in Malaysia. Specifically, this paper aims;

1. To investigate the level of halal food consumption awareness among Muslim in Malaysia.
2. To examine the demographic differences in halal food consumption.

Methodology

This study is a quantitative research in nature. In this quantitative study, a total of 730 survey questionnaires have been completed to a sample of Muslim population that are living in Peninsular of Malaysia. The samples were selected using stratified random sample technique. All participants were required to answer survey questionnaires related to their profile and attitude toward halal food. The data were analysed using IBM SPSS 20.0 software. The study was tested with the analysis that related to descriptive analysis and test difference. A significant analysis was conducted to test the difference in the mean score for dependent variable which was the Muslim response towards attitude toward halal food. For the purposed of comparison of the mean score, two significant test procedures were used by researcher; Independent-Samples T-Test procedure and One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Finding and Discussion

All of the respondents were randomly selected from Public Institutions of Higher Education in Peninsular Malaysia. Out of 730 respondents, 244 respondents (33.4%) are male and another 486 respondents (66.6%) are female. In the aspect of origin region, 395 respondents (54.1%) were from urban areas, while 335 respondents (45.9%) were from rural areas. In terms of their age, most of the respondents involved in this study were youth at the age of 21 to 25 years old, with the frequencies and percentages (n=346, 47.4%); 21 -25 years old (n=357, 48.9%); and 26-30 years old (n=21, 2.8%). The rest youth involved in this study was at the age of 30 years old above (n=6,1%). Table 1 shows the respondents' profile specifically on their gender, origin region, and social economic status.

Table 1: Respondents Profile—Gender, Origin Region, and Age

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	244	33.4%
Female	486	66.6%
Origin region		
Urban	395	54.1%
Rural	335	45.9%
Age		
Below 20	346	47.4%
21-25	357	48.9%
26- 30	21	2.8%
30 above	6	1%

The items were computed to acquire one standard mean and to conclude the overall halal food consumption awareness level among Muslim in Malaysia. Results from the analysis had indicated that Muslim s in Malaysia have a high level of awareness in consuming halal food (n=685, 93.8%). There is only some Muslim scored intermediate level of awareness (n=45, 6.2%). Remarkably, none of Muslim in Malaysia scored low level of awareness in consuming halal food. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of Halal Food Consumption Awareness

Level	Percentage %
Low	0%
Intermediate	6.2 %
High	93.8 %
Total (N)	100.0%

*Low=1.00 – 2.33, Intermediate= 2.34 – 3.66 and High= 3.67-5.00

Gender and Attitude

Table 3 shows the details of mean and SD differences for attitude toward halal food between male and female respondents. Male Muslim s scored higher (mean=3.974, SD=0.661) as compared to the female Muslim s (mean=3.712, SD=0.640). The mean difference between both scores is 0.262.

Table 3: The Mean and SD Differences for Attitude between Male and Female Respondents

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitude	Male	244	3.974	0.661	0.042
	Female	486	3.712	0.640	0.029

Independent samples t test was calculated to compare the attitude toward halal food mean score between male and female Muslims in Malaysia. From this analysis, a significant difference of mean value was found between the two groups [$t(728)=5.164, p<.05$]. The mean value of the male group is 0.262 higher than the mean of the female group. The result indirectly accepts the alternative hypothesis, i.e., H_{a1} : There is a significant difference in attitude toward halal food based on demographic characteristics. The descriptions of this result are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Results of Independent-samples T-test for Attitude and Gender
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

Attitude	T-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.086	.77	5.164	728	.000	.262	0.051	0.162	0.362
Equal variances not assumed			5.108	473.058	.000	.262	0.051	0.161	0.363

Age and Attitude

A one-way ANOVA was calculated to compare the attitude of respondents with different age levels toward halal food. There is no significant difference of attitude was found among respondents with different age levels [$df(2, 727)=0.873, p=0.418$]. The details of the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: One-way ANOVA for Attitude Based on Age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Attitude	Between Groups	0.756	2	0.378	0.873	0.418
	Within Groups	314.794	727	0.433		
	Total	315.55	729			

Origin Region and Attitude

Table 6 shows the mean and SD differences for attitude variable between the origin regions of urban area and rural area. Muslim youths from the urban area gained a higher score (mean=3.820, SD=0.669) as compared to the Muslim youths from the rural area (mean=3.777, SD=0.645). The mean difference between both groups is 0.0432. The details are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: The Mean and SD Differences for Attitude Based on Origin Region

	Origin Region	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitude	Urban	395	3.820	0.669	0.034
	Rural	335	3.777	0.645	0.035

Independent-samples t-test was calculated to compare the attitude mean score of Malaysian Muslim youths from urban and rural areas. From this analysis, no significant difference was found [$t(728)=0.626$, $p > .05$]. The results indirectly reject the alternative hypothesis, i.e., H_a : There is a significant difference in attitude towards halal food consumption based on demographic characteristics. The descriptions of the results are included in Table 7

Table 7: Results of Independent-samples T-test for Attitude and Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				T-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
Attitude								Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	Equal variances assumed	0.656	0.418	0.875	728	0.38	0.043	0.049	-0.053	0.139
	Equal variances not assumed			0.877	716.187	0.38	0.043	0.049	-0.053	0.139

Results from this paper have shown that Muslim in Malaysia recorded a high level of awareness in halal food consumption. Muslim in Malaysia also expressed confidence in consuming all halal food in Malaysia.

The diversity responses in regards to the attitude towards halal food are discovered according to different demographic profiles, which indirectly show that demography can be one of the factors in “attitude change” towards halal food. This study has discovered that there was a significant difference in the attitude towards halal food consumption between male and female Muslims. Male respondents were more favourable towards halal food consumption compared

to the female respondents. They have agreed that all halal foods in the market of Peninsular Malaysia are healthy, safe, and hygienic. Female respondents, on the one hand, were more critical and did not totally agreed with the statement that all halal foods in the market of Peninsular Malaysia are healthy, safe, and hygienic.

Despite of the significant difference in the attitude toward halal food found between different genders, no significant difference was discovered across different ages. This result is similar with a finding observed by Zhang Liang, and Huang (2015) disagreed as they discovered there are significant differences in the attitude across different ages. From the result, it shows that age differences play roles in changing people attitude and thought. As mentioned by Lutfu and & Maliya (2008), age play a role in influencing people thought and feeling.

Other than age, there were no significant differences in the attitude found in this study towards halal food consumption between Muslims from urban and rural areas, signifying that there is currently no attitude gap across different regions in Malaysia. In opposition, Phang, Abu, Ali, & Salleh (2014) stated there is a clear gap between people from urban and rural areas. Also, rural area communities have lesser exposure and are outdated with current issues. Despite of this, results of this study showed that respondents from rural and urban areas have equal level of attitude towards halal food. Indeed, the results reflected that region does not affect human attitude. This statement has supported the article written in Utusan Online by Shaharudin Idrus (2010).

Conclusion

This study found that the Muslim in Malaysia have a high-level of awareness in consuming the halal food. Muslims should practically choose halal food as the only dietary life style. All haram food is ultimately unacceptable. Even though based on the study had found that there was no significant difference in terms of ages and origin region, however, this study provides a foundation for further research especially in terms of exploring the attitude and gender of Muslim s in consuming the Halal food and their preferences. Hence, this study has contributed to the body of knowledge in respect to the Muslim 's consumption of Halal food. Moreover, it will contribute to the Halal Food Industry in which, the Muslim was their target market.

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