

IDENTIFICATION OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF HALAL MEAT CONSUMPTION: A STUDY OF MUSLIMS IN JAKARTA AND MELBOURNE

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ABSTRACT

Religiosity is considered as one of the most important cultural forces and influences on consumer behaviour. This study investigates the profile of halal meat consumption by Muslims living in Melbourne and Jakarta; and it also examines whether there are differences in the attributes of halal meat consumption between these two groups. The results indicate most respondents strongly agree that eating halal meat is important; hence most respondents intend to eat halal meat seven times a week. The results further indicate that freshness, taste, smell, and slaughter method are the most important attributes of halal meat consumption. In addition, the importance attached to appearance, leanness, and slaughter methods were shown to be significantly different between the two groups. This study contributes to the marketing literature that focuses on the effects of religion on consumer behaviour, a topic that is still under researched.

Keywords: Halal meat, muslim consumer behavior, religion

JEL classification: Z120

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the Pew Research Center, a comprehensive demographic study of more than 200 countries found that there are 1570 million Muslims of all ages living in the world today, that is, 23 per cent of an estimated 2009 world population of 6800 million. Not only is the Muslim population a significant percentage of the global population, but Kearney (2007) also points out that the market for syariah-compliant products or services—that

is products and services that conform to Islamic law—totals US\$2 trillion annually and is growing rapidly. This indicates that the demand for such products has a significant effect on global food markets. The increasing awareness of Muslim consumers of their religious obligations is creating greater demand for halal food and other consumer goods. Customers' decision to consume only halal food is influenced by their religious beliefs.

Trade in halal food is enormous with an estimated annual halal food value of US\$632,000 million globally.¹ It is a lucrative market and there are huge opportunities for halal food businesses, domestic, and international. Globally, many companies are looking at the halal concept as a new tool for their marketing strategies. Many halal expositions have been held around the world; for instance, in Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey, Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and Iran.

The driving forces of the global halal food market include the rapid growth of the Muslim population as the primary market for halal food, rising sales in primary markets for halal food, increasing demand for safe, high quality food in primary markets, an increase in the demand for a greater variety in primary products, and the incidence of food marketed as halal but failing to meet halal requirements: all these considerations have spurred demand for genuine halal products.

The evidence for the growing market in Australia is the fact that halal meat sales rose by 70 per cent between 1997 and 2002. In 2006, Meat and Livestock Australia after it launched a halal brand, exported 43,071 tons of mutton, 17,685 tons of lamb, and 3312 tons of beef to the Middle East, which was valued at US\$242 million. Annual Australian halal exports since 2003 were valued at A\$3700 million for meat and A\$1000 million for

dairy produce. New Zealand lamb exports account for 40 per cent of the world market and 95 per cent of all New Zealand lamb exports are now halal and non-halal production is being phased out. In France, the fine wine and gourmet food exports that underpin the French food industry have been hit hard by the global crisis, but the halal niche market has been growing fast. The boom went largely unnoticed until a hamburger chain tried a halal menu in some of its restaurants, sparking charges of *communautarisme*—a term roughly meaning ‘ghettoisation’—which grates with the French insistence on community integration (France24, 2010).

On the demand side, Southeast Asia and the Middle East are the two major markets for halal products. Southeast Asia is home to more than 250 million halal consumers, and Middle Eastern countries are net importers of processed foods for the food service and food retail markets. South Asia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka are home to almost 13,000 million people, of which over 400 million are muslim. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and other Middle Eastern countries have been importing halal foods for decades. Even in countries where muslims are in a minority, the halal food business is good business; for instance, in cosmopolitan Singapore where the muslim community forms only 16 per cent of the population, the halal food industry

¹ Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (2007)

is big business. McDonald's, A&W, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Taco Bell are some international brands that have gone 100 per cent halal in Singapore.²

Halal is an Arabic word that means lawful or what is permitted and allowed by God. It is the opposite of haram, which means unlawful or prohibited by God. The meaning of the word halal is 'permitted, allowed, authorised, approved, sanctioned, lawful, legal, legitimate or licit'. Halal and haram are universal terms that apply to all facets of life, because Islam is a religion that covers every aspect of human life. Besides guidance on how to worship God, Islam gives guidance on how to live a good life and it must begin with the halal concept. This concept is not just for food, it covers a wide range of goods and services that includes farming, fashion, cosmetics, banking, and more.

For a product to be considered halal, it must be, as a whole or in part, (a) free of, and not containing, any substance or ingredient taken or extracted from a haram animal or ingredient; (b) made, processed, produced, manufactured or stored using utensils, equipment or machinery that has been cleansed according to Islamic law; and (c) never have come into contact with, have been touched by or have been close to a haram substance during preparation, making, production,

manufacture, processing or storage. Basically, Islamic syari'ah law considers all food halal unless it is specifically prohibited in the Qur'an. The list of proscribed foods includes alcohol, pig meat, blood, dead meat and meat that has not been butchered according to Islamic standards. Before going further, it is necessary to give some more information about halal and its certification. This study investigates the profile of halal meat consumption by Muslims living in Melbourne and Jakarta. It also examines whether there are differences in the attributes of halal meat consumption between these two cities.

Melbourne is a city where the muslim population is a minority, but in Jakarta muslims are a majority. This study will also identify the differences in behaviour of muslims in Melbourne and muslims in Jakarta when each group makes dietary choices. In this study, the hypothesis that was tested is that there is a significant difference in behavioural intentions between the muslim communities of Melbourne and Jakarta. Because of the gaps in the literature, this study contributes to this field of inquiry by examining aspects of religiosity in consumer decision-making behaviour, particularly with regard to halal meat consumption.

II. HALAL CERTIFICATION

For muslims to be assured that food is halal and may be eaten in good conscience, it is necessary to monitor

² <http://www.halalfocus.com> and <http://islammonitor.org/>

and ensure the observance of halal practices through all stages of food production. When fattening beef cattle for meat, for example, muslims must ensure that the fodder is free from any haram ingredients, like dried, ground intestines of pigs.

When producing canned meat products like beef loaf, there must be no lard or any form of pig liver added during production. According to Sheikh Salih D. Musa, the secretary-general of the National Halal Fatwa Council of the Philippines, his organisation has received reports indicating that minced pig liver was being added to canned tuna to improve its taste (Kinjiyo, 2006). Often, he said, 'the producer does not declare this ingredient in the labels'. Therefore, muslims must spend considerable time checking food packaging labels to make sure there is no ingredient in the food that is haram; they are very particular about the ingredients of food. The more pious they are, the more time they spend in checking their food.

Halal certification of food refers to the examination of its production, from the preparation stage, slaughtering method, ingredients used, cleaning, handling and processing, right down to transport and distribution. To make checking easier, muslim communities establish institutions whose purpose is to observe the whole food production process, institutions that provide halal certification. The certification is to reassure muslims that the food

is halal. The process of halal certification is complex. It begins with an investigation of all the ingredients of a food, the cleaning procedures used in production and packing. The investigators then conduct site audits of all production or processing sites to verify compliance with Islamic dietary laws. Every aspect of a product is researched; from its raw materials to trace ingredients that might be added in manufacturing and packaging. Once a food or beverage has received halal certification it means that it is permitted and fit for consumption by muslims. In Indonesia (Jakarta), the authority for such certification is Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI); in Australia it is the Halal Certification Authority Australia.

In 2009, the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) tried to change formulate the law regarding halal certification. This caused controversy; if the intended law were to become operational, the halal certification would be administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This arrangement was opposed by the MUI, which now and in the past controls halal certification. The public is concerned if this certification is controlled by the Ministry of Religious Affairs that it will be subject to the bureaucracy. Many food producers assume that this would increase production costs. Others argue that the problem of certification should be left to the market; if consumers are aware and want to be

assured that the food they buy is halal, then naturally the demand for halal food will increase. The supply will match this increasing demand; in other words, demand will create its own supply. The difference in perspective proved that, even in a country where around 80 per cent of population are muslim, halal food certification is still an important consideration.

The effect of religion on food consumption patterns relates to the restricted consumption of particular foods and beverages (Bonne *et al.*, 2007). For example, muslims are obliged to follow a set of halal dietary prescriptions. According to Lindridge (2005), religion's influence on consumer behaviour remains under-researched. In addition, despite religion having a significant influence on the lives of many individuals, its role in consumer food choice is still unclear (Delener, 1994). There are not many studies that have examined the role of religiosity in consumer behaviour; especially in relation to halal food consumption. In matters like these, it is important to know what factors influence Muslim consumers when they make their purchasing decisions.

Although in Jakarta the majority of the people follow Islam, Muslims do not invariably search out and purchase halal food. One group has argued that because the majority of the city's population is muslim, all food must be halal, unless it is specified (on the label) that it contains pig meat. But

some people are unaware of the possibility that halal products might contain haram ingredients. Based on the 2006 Australian census, the muslim population in Australia has grown to 340,392 (Wikipedia, 2010). The distribution, state by state, of the nation's Islamic followers has New South Wales with 50 per cent of the total, followed by Victoria (33 per cent), Western Australia (7 per cent), Queensland (5 per cent), South Australia (3 per cent), the ACT (1 per cent), and the Northern Territory and Tasmania each with 0.3 per cent. The halal food market in Australia is growing; there is an increasing interest in halal products on the part of buyers and producers. Muslims in Melbourne could be more concerned regarding halal certification of their food compared with muslims in Jakarta. This is because halal food is not easily found in Melbourne, for example, halal meat can only be found in a halal butcher's shop, not in normal supermarkets. The limited availability of halal products could be one consideration that influences the food-buying characteristics of muslims in Melbourne.

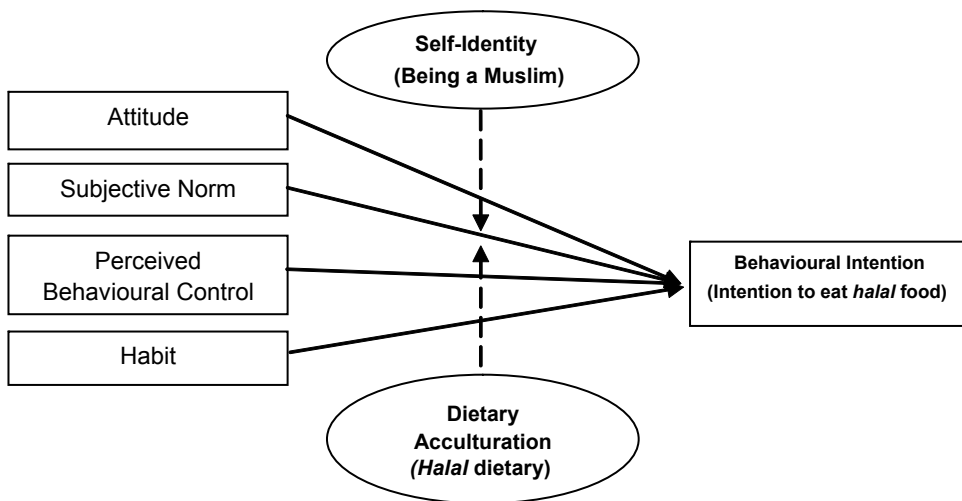
III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Religiosity is considered one of the most important cultural values and influences on consumer behaviour (Assadi, 2003; Bonne *et al.*, 2007; Delener, 1994; Pettinger *et al.*, 2004); particularly in food purchasing decisions and

eating habits (Bonne *et al.*, 2007). According to Assadi (2003), religiosity is an important element in the individual consumer's cognitive structure and can influence consumption behaviour. Differences in religious affiliations tend to influence the way people live, including their customary cuisine and food purchasing behaviour (Fam *et al.*, 2004). Bonne *et al.* (2007) point out that the influence of religion on food consumption depends on the religion itself, and the extent to which individuals interpret and follow the teachings of their religion.

This study adapts the work of Bonne *et al.* (2007) by replicating the conceptual framework used in their study, which consists of four determinants of behavioural intention: attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and habit (see Figure 1). Attitude is the psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a parti-

cular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour. Subjective norm assesses the social pressure on individuals to behave or not to behave in particular ways. Perceived behavioural control is described as perceptions of the extent to which the behaviour is considered to be controllable. Habit refers to behaviour that has become automatic and is beyond an individual's awareness (Bonne *et al.*, 2007). According to Bonne *et al.* (2007), decisions made within a religious context about purchasing meat for consumption could differ significantly from purchasing decisions where religion does not play a key role. In addition, self-identifying as a muslim may influence dietary acculturation, that is, halal dietary. Both these dimensions may increase the effect of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and habit on behavioural intention, that is, to eat halal food.



Source: Bonne *et al.* (2007)

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3.1 Religion and Consumer Behaviour

Religion defines the ideas for life, which consequently are reflected in the values and attitudes of societies and individuals (Fam *et al.*, 2004). Previous studies indicate that religion has considerable influence on people's values, habits, attitudes, and living; and consequently influences consumer decision-making behaviour (Delener, 1994; Fam *et al.*, 2004; Lindridge, 2005; Sood and Nasu, 1995; Wilkes *et al.*, 1986). The study by Hirschman (1983: 131–170)) suggests that the religious traditions of Catholics, Protestants and Jews have significant effects on their attitudes to dance, magazines, restaurants, and political ideas. The results of Wilkes *et al.* (1986) provide some support for viewing religion as an important construct in the study of consumer behaviour. Moreover, the study by Delener (1994) provides empirical evidence on the relations between religious orientation and decision behaviours.

The study of Sood and Nasu (1995) indicated that religiosity in the context of American Protestants was a critical factor in consumer behaviour. A study by Fam *et al.* (2004) examined the influence of religion on attitudes to the advertising of controversial products. The results of their study showed that muslims were more offended by the advertising of gender or sex-related products, social or political groups, and health and care products than were Buddhists, Christians, and the non-religious.

Concerning muslim dietary requirements, Bonne and Verbeke (2006) argue that the dietary laws imposed by religion may be rather strict; however, the number of people following those rules is quite substantial. Particularly for muslims who have to follow halal dietary rules, we assume that the perception of the attributes of halal meat consumption within a religious context may not differ significantly from purchase situations where religion plays a key role. For example, the study by Hussaini (1993) indicates that 75 per cent of muslim immigrants in the USA follow their religious dietary laws, indicating that even after having emigrated, most muslims still eat halal foods. In addition, the most recent study by Bonne, Vermeir, Bergeaud-Blackler, and Verbeke (2007) indicates that 84 per cent of muslims in France always eat halal meat (cited in Bonne and Verbeke, 2008).

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

The sampling unit of this study is the set of muslims living in Jakarta and in Melbourne. Respondents were personally or electronically contacted (via e-mail). In total, 160 questionnaires were completed for this initial study. Most of the measurement items used existing instruments, but some of them were newly developed for this study. Data were analysed using SPSS 17.0. Factor analysis using principal components analysis and reliability using Cronbach alpha were assessed for the

reliability of such measures. Most of the measures have Cronbach alpha between 0.70 and 0.92 demonstrating good reliability (Nunnally, 1978). In addition, descriptive statistics was used to identify the profile and characteristics of respondents. ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used to examine the differences between the two groups of respondents muslims in Melbourne and in Jakarta.

4.1 Statistical Results and Discussion

Characteristics of the total respondent group are that there were more women (58.8 per cent) than men (41.3 per cent) who took part in this survey. Most respondents were young (62 per cent under 35 years), married (65 per cent) and had at least two children (45.9 per cent) with an age range of under five years (46 per cent). In addition, most of the respondents have bachelor degrees (55.6 per cent) and live in Jakarta (54.4 per cent). Of the respondents living in Melbourne, a bare majority (50.44 per cent) has been there for no more than three years.

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents (80 per cent) indicate that they strongly agree that 'halal meat is important' to them. In terms of behavioural control, a majority (44.4 per cent) strongly agree that 'eating halal meat is a personal choice' and 43.8 per cent of respondents indicate that they have complete control

over eating halal food. With respect to habit, most respondents strongly agree that eating halal meat is something that they do without reasoning (35 per cent).

In relation to self-identity, most respondents (86.3 per cent) indicated that they strongly agree with the statement that they consider themselves to be muslim. They also said that religion is very important in their daily lives. However, only 32 per cent of respondents visit a mosque or take part in religious activities once a week. The results indicate that being a muslim affects their behavioural intention to eat halal meat.

In terms of availability of halal meat, the majority of respondents (36.3 per cent) indicate that they moderately agree that 'halal food is readily available' (36.3 per cent) and that 'there are a lot of choice possibilities in halal food' (38.8 per cent). With respect to information, most respondents (41.9 per cent) indicate that they moderately agree that 'information on halal labels/certificate is clear' and that 'there is sufficient information available on halal food' (40.6 per cent). Approximately 38 per cent of respondents, the highest percentage, intended to eat halal meat seven times in the next week; 33.8 per cent of them intended to eat certified halal chicken three to four times a week; and 47.8 per cent intended to eat certified halal beef twice a week. In addition, 40.5 per cent of respondents

Table 1. Halal Meat Consumption (n = 160)

Construct	Items	Scale	%
Attitude	Halal meat is important to me	Strongly agree	80.0
Behavioural control	Eating halal meat is a personal choice	Strongly agree	44.4
	How much control do you feel you have over eating halal food?	Complete control	43.8
Habit	Eating halal meat is something that I do without reasoning	Strongly agree	35.0
Self-identity	I consider myself as a muslim	Strongly agree	86.3
	The importance of religion in your day-to-day activities	Very important	75.0
	The frequency in visiting mosque and/or religious activities	> 1x a week	32.0
Availability	Halal food (i.e. meat) is readily available	Moderately agree	36.3
	There are a lot of choice possibilities in halal food		38.8
Information	Information on halal labels/certificate is clear	Moderately agree	41.9
	There is sufficient information available on halal food (i.e. meat)		40.6
Behavioural intention	How many times do you intend to eat halal meat in the next seven days	7 times	37.5
	Intention to eat halal chicken per week	3-4 times	33.8
	Intention to eat halal beef per week	1-2 times	47.8
	Intention to eat halal lamb per week	None	40.5

do not eat halal lamb in any week. The importance of halal meat in this study is acknowledged by 80 per cent of respondents.

This can be explained in that muslims everywhere understand the importance of halal meat; if this study can be extended to other big cities, the demand can be calculated more exactly, which would give meaningful information to producers and traders in this industry. Those respondents who take part regularly in religious activities tend to be more likely to consider the halal aspect in their food

purchases and consumption. Availability of information regarding halal meat must be improved because a majority of respondents only moderately, not strongly, agree with the statements about labelling and certification of halal foods. The intention of most respondents not to eat halal lamb might be because of the local food customs.

Furthermore, the results in Table 2 indicate that the most important attributes are freshness, taste, smell and slaughter method. The results further indicate that there are no significant

Table 2. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Mean Comparison

Attributes	Total (N=160)		Jakarta (N=87)		Melbourne (N=73)		F-Ratio
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	
Search	3.92	.70	3.40	.66	3.94	.76	.116
Freshness	4.45	.70	4.49	.63	4.39	.78	.764
Appearance	4.09	.82	4.19	.79	3.97	.85	**2.947
Availability	3.88	.96	3.83	1.00	3.95	.911	.593
Leanness	3.63	1.02	3.52	1.04	3.77	.98	**2.406
Little fat	3.51	1.13	3.42	1.21	3.62	1.04	1.273
Experience	3.94	.77	3.95	.80	3.92	.75	.083
Taste	4.24	.81	4.28	.77	4.21	.85	.301
Tenderness	3.94	.88	3.97	.94	3.92	.81	.110
Smell	4.20	.85	4.25	.85	4.13	.85	.732
Easy to prepare	3.76	.98	3.75	1.06	3.78	.89	.047
Juicy	3.56	1.15	3.55	1.27	3.57	.99	.017
Credence	3.68	.97	3.66	1.08	3.68	.84	.068
Slaughter method	3.97	1.19	3.84	1.27	4.14	1.07	**2.528
Absence of hormones	3.67	1.14	3.62	1.23	3.71	1.03	.215
Production method	3.73	1.11	3.78	1.17	3.66	1.04	.494
Quality label	3.76	1.08	3.76	1.17	3.77	.96	.002
Production region	3.24	1.28	3.26	1.29	3.20	1.27	.084

** $p < .01$

differences on attributes of halal meat consumption between muslims living in Melbourne and in Jakarta. Looking at each specifically, the differences in the search attributes of halal meat consumption are closely related to appearance and to the leanness of meat and also the slaughter method. Respondents in Jakarta believed the appearance of meat to be slightly more important than did respondents in Melbourne. Muslims in Jakarta were more concerned with appearance because in Jakarta the appearance of meat is closely related to its freshness. Therefore, for muslims in Jakarta, appearance is one of the important attributes when purchasing halal meat. On the other hand, muslims in Melbourne

perceived leanness to be more important.

In terms of credence, respondents in Melbourne considered that the slaughter method is a very important attribute of halal meat consumption; but Muslims in Jakarta perceived the slaughter method as not so very important (that is, just important). This can be explained in that respondents in Melbourne, a city in a non-Islamic country, would be more concerned with how the meat is slaughtered than would muslims in Jakarta. Respondents in Jakarta might not be so concerned about the slaughter methods of meat because they would assume that halal meat in Indonesia would be produced using halal slaughtering procedures.

With regard to the 'experience' attribute category, taste is seen as the most important specific attributes in this category for respondents in Jakarta and in Melbourne. This is followed by smell, tenderness, ease of preparation, and juiciness of meat. The results suggest that there are no differences for all credence attributes between these two different groups of respondents. In general, the estimation results suggest that muslims in Melbourne and in Jakarta make freshness their primary consideration because this attribute has the highest mean and lowest standard deviation for both groups.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sought to address the attributes of halal meat consumption and examine their relative importance for two different sets of muslims; one living in Jakarta and the other in Melbourne. The results indicate that the majority of respondents strongly agree that 'eating halal meat is important'. Hence many of them intend to eat halal meat every day. The study also found that freshness, taste, smell, and slaughter method are considered the most important attributes of halal meat. However, the importance of appearance, leanness, and slaughter methods were shown to be significantly different between muslims living in Jakarta and in Melbourne.

This study contributes to the marketing literature in relation to the religiosity aspect, particularly in the area of consumer behaviour. Religion influences the intention to buy; thus buying behaviour is not just affected by taste and price, but also religion. Specifically, this study provides empirical evidence of the attributes of halal meat consumption. Furthermore, there have been few similar studies that have been conducted in Asia-Pacific region; thus we hope this study will be a useful contribution for academic purposes.

From managerial and entrepreneurial perspectives, the result of this study suggests that the food industry needs to include halal food in their production lines, in response to the increasing muslim population. If no consideration is given to the availability of halal food, the food industry will lose its (muslim) potential buyers. The growing awareness in muslim communities of their dietary obligations is adding to a growing demand; the market for halal food is there. Thus, to attract more muslim buyers, food retailing businesses need to have special areas set aside for selling halal foods. Furthermore, halal food producers are encouraged to provide clear and comprehensive information regarding halal foods (that is, halal certification and labelling) and to make it easier for the authorities to provide halal certification.

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