



Factors Affecting Muslim Students Awareness of Halal Products in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed to investigate the factors affecting the awareness of Muslim students towards halal food products. The variables used are religious belief, self-identity and media exposure as the independent variables and costumers' awareness as the dependent variable. Using the convenience sampling, 234 respondents, students of Universitas Islam Indonesia, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta and Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta were involved in this study through questionnaires. Data gathered was analyzed with descriptive and causal through regression. Results of this study indicated that religious beliefs, self-identity and media exposure affect the awareness of Muslim customers towards halal food, either from partial and simultaneous analysis.

Keywords: Halal Products, Religious Beliefs, Self-identity, Media Exposure, Costumers' Awareness

JEL Classifications: D11, N35, P46

1. INTRODUCTION

Muslim food market can no longer be underestimated, both in terms of economic and market value. Main reason for this statement is fast growth in Muslim population around the world in both current and projected numbers. Pew Research Center (2015) shows that Islam is religion of around 1.8 billion of world's population. Such amount of Muslims imply potential market for industries in Muslim as well as other countries. The growth of Muslim population is projected to be 35% in next two decades, increasing from 1.6 billion in 2010 to 2.2 billion by 2030. This number will be about 26.4% of the world's population which is projected to be about 8.3 billion. The growth is expected to be steady so that by 2050, the Muslim population possibly will grow to 2.6 billion or approximately 30% of world projected population.

Thomson Reuters's (2014) report also indicates that Muslim market reached \$2,001 billion in 2013 or about 12% of world market size. It also predicts the number will increase up to \$3,735 billion in 2019.

For Muslim preserving Islamic principles, such as considering of halal product, achieving Maslahah for individuals and society and being modest, is essential for their consumption pattern (Mustafar and Borhan, 2013). In 2013, Muslim market for halal food has extended to 17.7% of total global market size having value of \$1,292 billion (Thomson Reuters, 2014).

Considering halal is essential for Muslims for their food type and choices, many studies on this topic grow significantly in recent years. Mohammed et al. (2008) conclude the significance of halal logo from Malaysia's authority toward respondents' awareness of food products. Other research also implies the importance of halal labeling in consumers' decision whether to buy a product or not (Latiff et al., 2015). A survey in Malaysia indicates that purchasing intention among non-Muslim consumers is confidently correlated to halal awareness, halal certification, marketing promotion, and brand. Food quality on contrary has adverse association with their intention to purchase (Aziz and Chok, 2013). Other study in Kuching (Shaari et al., 2013) and Penang (Shaari et al., 2014) Malaysia also indicates spirituality, awareness, and lifestyle are

significantly correlated with confidence level of Muslims choosing halal restaurants.

The previous works above reflect Malaysia's leadership in research on halal food which in some point relatively consistent with Thomson Reuters's (2014) data that put the country ahead of top three countries for the halal food indicator. Other two countries in the indicator are United Arab Emirates and Australia. Although Malaysia took leading position in the halal food research, some works based on other countries can also be noticed. Salman and Siddiqui (2011) for example indicate that attitude towards halal food is faithfully analogous to the concept of belief in two groups of sample in Pakistan. Yener (2014) indicates that Islam plays influential role in Muslims consumer purchasing behavior. In their research, Thomas et al. (2015) show current challenge in halal meat production in the United Kingdom, despite fast growing demand of the products.

With around 205 million Muslims population (Fleishman-Hillard Majlis, 2013), Indonesia has also obviously large portion of global demand for Islamic products, i.e., halal food and other. Some research have also been conducted in the matter for Indonesian context. Jusmaliani and Nasution's (2009) study indicates that behavioral control and availability of halal meat significantly influence consumers' intention to consume halal meat. In the case of Jakarta and Melbourne Muslims society, their research also confirm the absence of significant factors differing intention in consumption of halal meat. Other researcher also noted on the importance of government role in maintaining halal certification as answer to fast demand of the products in Indonesia since current practice in legalizing body for halal industry is very limited (Rasyid, 2010).

This research discusses the factors that influence Muslim students' awareness of the halal food in Indonesia, especially Yogyakarta. This topic is important since the students are future Muslim generation who will define practices of Islam in Indonesia. The city is also home many students in Indonesia to study further so that capturing their attitude will give a glimpse of what their counterparts all over Indonesia are expected to behave. This research involves variables that includes the influence of religious beliefs, self-identity and media exposure. To keep the analysis easy to follow, this section deal with research background and preliminary studies in the topic. The next section describes essential definition based on literatures review and is followed by results and discussion of research. The last section concludes the research and provides some insights on managerial implications.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Halal Food

The word halal is absorbed from the Arabic word al-ḥalāl which its literary meaning is permissible. In technical meaning, halal refers to "things and activities permitted by sharī'ah." The concept carries spiritual values based on Holy Quran and Sunna which imply that Muslims should consider first whether their "activities, professions, contracts, and transactions" are lawful according to Islamic teaching (Khan, 2003. p. 70). As particular definition

of halal is generated in lawful under Islamic law, it implies that halal food refers to permitted or legitimate food according to Islamic law (Muhammad and Pelu, 2009; Wahab, 2004; Alamer et al., 2015).

The halal food product according to Majelis Ulama Indonesia or MUI (2009) is a product that meets the requirements of halal according to Islamic law, namely: (1) Not containing pork and ingredients derived from pig, (2) not containing wine and its derivatives, (3) all meat must come from animals slaughtered according to Islamic procedures, (4) not containing other ingredients that are banned or classified as unclean as: carcasses, blood, substances derived from human organ, dirt, etc., (5) of all storage, sale, processing, management and public means of transportation for the halal products cannot be used for pigs or other illicit goods. If the facility has been used for pig or other illicit goods, and then will be used to advance the halal products, it must be cleaned in accordance with the procedures stipulated by Islamic law. Use of facilities for halal and non-halal alternates are not allowed.

2.2. Muslim Consumer Behavior

According to Schiffman et al. (2012. p. 2), consumer behavior can defined as the behavior demonstrated by consumers to search for, purchase, use, evaluate and dispose products and services that they expect will fulfill their needs. Consumer behavior as well as other behaviors influenced by aspects of cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics so that some practical techniques in western countries for example cannot be simply applied in Islamic countries (Schiffman et al., 2012, p. 375). Cultural factors are considered the greatest influence on a person's desire and behavior (Soesilowati and Ekonomi, 2009). While the Muslim consumer behavior is a behavior that is carried out by a Muslim in which to meet their needs not just to meet the needs (material), but also meet the spiritual needs (Rizqiningsih, 2013).

2.3. Consumer Awareness

Awareness in the context of halal food literally reflects to a condition in which consumers have an interest, special attention, or have experience and good information about food that is allowed by Islamic law (Ambali and Bakar, 2014). Awareness reflects first stage of buying process, in which consumers who were initially not knowing the product start to know it. Without previous knowledge of the product, there is relatively high probability that consumers will not buy the product or services (Kertajaya and Ridwansyah, 2014).

2.4. Religious Beliefs

Islam defines religion is not only related to spirituality and spirituality, but religion is a set of beliefs, rules and regulations as well as moral guidelines for every aspect of human life, including the rules in the consumption of food and beverages according to the Islamic teachings. It is clearly stated that halal food and beverages are allowed while illicit ones are banned for human consumption (Team Writers of P3EI, 2013; Ambali and Bakar, 2014).

Previous study shows that religious beliefs is potential source for Muslim awareness of halal consumption (Ambali and Bakar,

2014). Other research also reveals that 75% of Muslim migrants in the US follow their religious laws concerning food (Hussaini, 1993). This shows that religious belief is source of awareness of consumer in dealing with their choice over halal food.

2.5. Self-identity

Self-identity for a Muslim means he or she describe and put himself or herself in accordance to Islamic rules. Identity as a Muslim was obtained from several factors such as the pressure to behave in a way that is acceptable to the Muslim community (Bonne et al., 2007; Salman and Siddiqui, 2011). Individuals in Muslim societies are bounded by the rules that guide their life in the community. Among these rules is agreement on the basis of religious belief to consume halal food for the entire Muslim community. Thus consuming non halal food is forbidden and can imply social sanctions which will make someone excluded from society. Such action can also degrade relationship within family, relatives and friends (Salman and Siddiqui, 2011). Identity as a Muslim influence consumer awareness of Muslims to consume halal meat according to Bonne et al. (2007).

2.6. Media Exposure

Exposure to the media in the context of halal food according Patnoad (2001), Anderson et al. (1994) is a facility that is used to inform about the halal food products, either through print media such as newspapers, magazines, or any electronic media such as television, radio, internet or other information channels, which could affect consumer awareness of halal food.

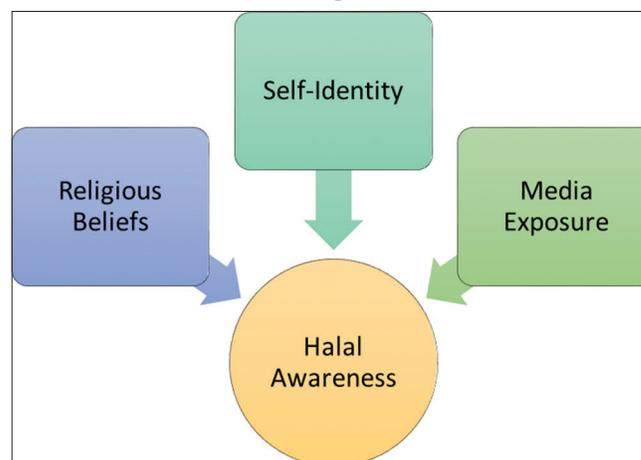
This study aims to reveal whether religious beliefs, self-identity and media exposure affects consumer awareness of the Muslim halal food. Based on discussion on literature review above, the conceptual framework of the research can be summarized as follows:

Figure 1 describes conceptual framework applied for this research in which three independent variables, i.e., religious beliefs, self-identity, and media exposure, affect dependent variable, halal awareness. The effect expected from the conceptual framework was significant both in simultaneous and single model of regression.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population in this research are students in Yogyakarta with criteria of being Muslim, and chosen from three large universities namely Islamic University of Indonesia or UII, Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University or UIN and University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta or UMY. Sampling methods used are judgment sampling by selecting sample based on researchers' judgment about some suitable features essential for sample member (Zikmund and Babin, 2010. p. 312) and quota sampling to guarantee that various subgroups of a population will be represented on relevant characteristics as researchers expect (Zikmund and Babin, 2010. p. 313). Certain criteria that respondent should be a Muslim is intended to ensure that they could represent Muslim consumers. 234 respondents replied questionnaire distributed and this number was then analyzed for the research.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of research. Developed from Salman and Siddiqui (2011)



Source: Authors' modification based on Salman and Siddiqui (2011)

Technique used in the collection of data in this study is by questionnaire distributed to selected respondents. Measurement scales of answers in the questionnaire follow Likert scale, consisting of (1) score 5 to answer strongly agree; (2) score 4 agree to answer; (3) score 3 simply agree to answer; (4) score 2 to answer disagree; (5) score 1 to answer strongly disagree. Usage of Likert scale 1-5 used in scoring system is based on previous research on the topic of research consumer awareness of halal products as suggested by Ambali and Bakar (2014) and Salman and Siddiqui (2011).

The data obtained from questionnaires is analyzed using multiple linear regression. This method is aimed to test how much interaction between religious beliefs, self-identity and media exposure to consumer awareness about halal food products. SPSS is used to estimate the results of analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Description of Respondents Characteristics

Male and female respondents in this study are almost the same in number, with male respondents represent 50.41% of the total 234 respondents and female respondents as much as 49.58%. Distribution of universities of respondents are evenly spread among three campuses, UII with 32.06% respondents, 31.62% for UIN and UMY contribute 36.32%. Respondents' data in detail can be viewed in the Table 1.

Most of respondents as described in the Table 1 are from semester V and III which imply that average respondents have a fairly good level of understanding of the religion, because Islamic teachings in their campuses have been thought and integrated from the beginning of their entry to university.

4.2. Linier Regression Results

Multiple linier regression results are displayed in the Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the variables of religious beliefs, self-identity and media exposure has a positive correlation to variable consumer

Table 1: Respondents characteristics

Characteristics	Groups	Total	Percentage
Sex	Male	118	50.42
	Female	116	49.58
	Total	234	100
University	UII	75	32.06
	UIN	85	36.32
	UMY	74	31.62
	Total	234	100
	Semester	IX	2
	VII	25	10.69
	V	88	37.60
	III	76	32.48
	I	43	18.38
Total		234	100

Source: Primary data. UII: Islamic University of Indonesia, UIN: Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, UMY: University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

Table 2: Results of linear regression

Variables	Co-efficients of regression	t-statistics	Significant
Religious beliefs	0.346	3.281	0.001
Self-identity	0.191	3.085	0.002
Media exposure	0.177	1.979	0.049
Constants	1.314		
R ²	0.146		
F-statistics	13.143		
Significant	0.000		

Source: Authors' computation based on primary data

awareness, either partially or simultaneously. On the religious beliefs and self-identity significant value are 0.001 and 0.002 respectively while for media exposure it is 0.049. This result imply that using $\alpha = 0.05$, all variables are statistically significant affecting dependent variables partially. Meanwhile, the F-test has significance value of 0.000 or $P < 0.05$ which indicate that there is significant influence of religious beliefs, self-identity and exposure to media simultaneously to the awareness of consumers toward halal food products.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of regression result shows value of 0.146. This means that the religious belief of self-identity and the influence of media exposure accounted for only 14.6% halal awareness of consumers, while the rest, about 85.4% comes from other factors outside the model. This result imply the need for wider analysis in other factors affecting students' awareness of halal products.

4.3. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the factors that influence consumer awareness of halal food. Variables used are religious belief, self-identity and media exposure as an independent variable and consumer awareness as the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing 1 result showed that religious beliefs affect consumer awareness of the Muslim halal food. These results indicate that the level of diversity (religious beliefs) have a relationship with the Muslim consumer awareness on halal food. Results of previous studies that support this research, including a study by Ambali and Bakar (2014). Hypothesis testing 2 result shows that self-identity derived from extrinsic factors influence the Muslim

consumer awareness on halal food which relevant to Salman and Siddiqui's (2011) result. Based on their study, Muslim consumers have self-identity indicators such as: (1) Family and friends who always consume halal food, (2) family and relatives who will stop visiting them when found having haram food and (3) belief that a Muslim should follow dietary laws governed by religion that will affect the awareness of halal food consumption. This research supported previous findings (Bonne et al., 2007) stating that identity affects consumer awareness of Muslims to consume halal meat in Belgium.

Hypothesis testing 3 of this research shows that media exposure influences consumer awareness of halal food. This results indicate that Muslim students in Yogyakarta acknowledge that they know about halal products from mass media such as magazines and the internet. They find out information about halal food through friends in the social media and acknowledge that the media have a major influence on their awareness of halal food. Result of this study is also supported by previous study proving media exposure's importance in halal products awareness (Ambali and Bakar, 2014). Media exposure is for this reason a potential source for Muslim society to increase awareness of consuming halal foods.

4.4. Implications for Managers

Some considerations can also be generated from the results of this research by managers, both internally and externally. Managers should internally provide insight to all parties to understand that a company's internal awareness of halal products is part of the Muslim consumer behavior. Among impact for consumers of halal food is healthy, reassuring, giving a sense of security, and so on. All of these are important values, especially for modern human being as the food offered is very diverse and tasty, but does not yet necessarily safe, healthy, and reassuring in the long-term. Healthy, safe, peaceful are important even for non-Muslims. Managers' effort in dealing this issue can be formalized by providing better understanding to all internal parties that all that company produce starting from its materials, until its production processes and sales shall not contradict halal concept.

The second implication is related to external strategy of the company to meet consumers' interest. At this point, managers should be aware that among the factors that influence consumer awareness of the Muslim halal food products is a religious belief, self-identity and media exposure. Managers then should use these item as part of strategy, especially company communications team to introduce their halal products to Muslim consumers.

Religious belief is guidance for Muslims in their life including the way they consume. Understanding this characteristics within society, company can contribute to create a healthy, safe and meaningful life for Muslims. For this reason, managers should embody halal awareness in their business to ensure that materials used in production process along with the production process itself meets halal requirements. Furthermore, integrated marketing of product should also meet halal standard so that employees understand that halal awareness is not only about what consumers' opinion about the products but it is reflected in products and services provided by company.

5. CONCLUSION

This research suggests that religious beliefs, self-identity and media exposure affect Muslims consumer awareness of halal products partially or simultaneously. The research gathers data from respondents who are students of three Islamic universities in Yogyakarta with most of them are in mid of their higher-education years of study. However, this research has many limitation mainly in sample involved in the study. Although the number is relatively adequate for academic inquiry, bigger figure should be addressed in the future work. Future works should also add more variables that can explain deeper understanding of Muslim awareness. It is important to do that since the topic as earlier explained will attract many attention as Muslims population increase.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors thank UII for providing required fund for this research and its preparation for publication. The authors bear all responsibilities for any errors and mistakes in this research.

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