

Awareness on Halal Labeling of Snack Products Among Halal Industry Management Students at UiTM Shah Alam

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ABSTRACT

Halal labeling supports Muslim consumers in making informed food choices and in identifying products that are represented as compliant with halal requirements. This study examines the self-reported understanding of the halalan tayyiban concept and awareness of halal labeling of snack products among students enrolled in the Bachelor of Halal Industry Management (Honours) programme at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam. A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted with 329 respondents selected through simple random sampling from a population of 2,026 students. Data were collected using an online questionnaire comprising four items on understanding of halalan tayyiban and six items on awareness of halal labeling, measured on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.784). Results showed very high self-reported understanding of the difference between halal and haram food ($M = 4.83$) and high-to-very-high awareness of halal labeling. Familiarity with halal certification logos or symbols recorded the highest mean in the labeling section ($M = 4.69$), whereas awareness of the specific criteria and requirements that make a snack product halal recorded the lowest mean ($M = 3.95$). Respondents also rated checking halal labels before purchase as important ($M = 4.22$), while the reported frequency of looking for halal labels was comparatively lower ($M = 4.07$). The findings indicate a strong baseline of halal understanding and label awareness within this academically exposed sample, while identifying areas for further practical education. Because the study is descriptive, cross-sectional, self-reported, and limited to one halal-related academic program, the findings should not be interpreted causally or generalized to all university students. Future research should incorporate objective knowledge measures, scenario-based label-authentication tasks, broader samples, and inferential analysis.

Keywords: halal labeling, halal awareness, halalan tayyiban, snack products, university students

INTRODUCTION

The concept of halal is fundamental to the lives of Muslims and encompasses not only dietary concerns but also broader lifestyle aspects. In food consumption, halal involves adherence to Islamic guidelines regarding ingredients, processing methods, storage, and packaging (Zakaria, 2008; Shafie & Othman, 2006). Among the many indicators that help Muslims identify lawful products, halal labeling stands as a crucial component.

Halal labeling may involve more than the visible presence of a halal logo and can include information related to the certification holder and certification references (Tieman et al., 2012). However, consumer-oriented awareness can be operationalized at different levels. In this study, the empirical focus is limited to respondents' self-reported familiarity with halal labeling, their tendency to look for and check labels, their awareness of halal criteria, their willingness to pay for properly certified and labeled snacks, and their familiarity with halal

certification logos or symbols. The study does not objectively audit every regulatory element displayed on a product label.

Young Muslim consumers, including university students, represent a vital demographic in the halal economy. While they are generally aware of the importance of halal certification, previous studies have shown that their attention to detailed labeling is inconsistent (Fauzi & Othman, 2021; Putit & Abdullah, 2019). With digital platforms and convenience stores dominating snack food access, the ease of verifying halal status often becomes secondary to price or packaging appeal (Hassan & Ahmed, 2019).

This study aims to describe the understanding of the halalan tayyiban concept and the level of awareness of halal labeling of snack products among students enrolled in the Bachelor of Halal Industry Management (Honours) programme at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam. The focus on this specific academic population is intentional and should be considered when interpreting the scope and generalizability of the findings.

Numerous studies have examined halal awareness and consumer behavior in relation to halal certification and labeling. Aziz and Chok (2013) noted that consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by confidence in halal logos and certification authorities. For snack products, which are often impulse purchases, Mohd-Shariff et al. (2021) found that younger consumers rarely scrutinize the full label.

Talib and Johan (2020) highlighted the importance of the halalan tayyiban concept, integrating lawful and wholesome criteria. However, Rahman and Halim (2024) revealed that overreliance on the logo without verifying other label elements increases the risk of misinformed purchases. Similarly, Ibrahim and Kamri (2021) emphasized the role of halal label credibility in consumer trust and food evaluation.

Internationally, Kamarulzaman et al. (2022) studied halal literacy and trust in ASEAN countries, linking awareness to educational exposure. Susilawati et al. (2023) reported that religiosity and logo perception influence purchasing behavior. A bibliometric review by Aneesh and Siddiq (2024) concluded that trust in certification bodies is critical to shaping positive halal consumption behavior.

In addition, Hassan, Omar, and Khairuddin (2025) emphasized the growing importance of digital halal literacy among youth, especially in identifying authentic certification on e-commerce platforms. Their study found that many students still lack the skill to verify halal logos and documentation in online shopping environments. This gap reflects the evolving nature of halal awareness as it shifts from physical to digital spaces.

Despite the expanding literature on halal awareness and consumer behavior, fewer studies have focused specifically on self-reported awareness of halal labeling for snack products among students with direct academic exposure to halal-industry studies. This study addresses that context by describing two constructs measured in the original questionnaire: understanding of halalan tayyiban and awareness of halal labeling. It does not test objective label-authentication competence or causal relationships between knowledge and purchasing behavior.

Based on the literature and research background, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is the level of understanding of the halalan tayyiban concept among Halal Industry Management students at UiTM Shah Alam?
- What is the level of awareness of halal labeling of snack products among Halal Industry Management students at UiTM Shah Alam?

Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To measure the understanding of the halalan tayyiban concept among Halal Industry Management students at UiTM Shah Alam.

- To determine the level of awareness of halal labeling of snack products among Halal Industry Management students at UiTM Shah Alam.

Operational Definitions

Awareness of halal labeling refers to respondents' self-reported familiarity with halal labeling for snack products, frequency of looking for halal labels when purchasing snacks, perceived importance of checking halal labels before purchase, willingness to pay a slightly higher price for properly certified and labeled snacks, awareness of specific halal criteria and requirements, and familiarity with halal certification logos or symbols.

Understanding of halalan tayyiban refers to respondents' self-reported understanding of the concept of halal, the distinction between halal and haram food, awareness of halal certification, and awareness of the key concepts or conditions for a product to be considered halalan tayyiban.

Label verification in this article refers only to the self-reported tendency to look for and check halal labels before purchasing snack products. It does not represent an objective authentication task involving certification numbers, manufacturer details, certifying bodies, or digital verification systems.

The term halal literacy is used cautiously as a broad descriptive concept for halal understanding and label awareness. The questionnaire did not constitute an objective halal-literacy competency test.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional survey design to describe students' understanding of the halalan tayyiban concept and awareness of halal labeling of snack products. The design is appropriate for summarizing the distribution and level of self-reported responses but does not establish prediction or causality.

Study Population and Sampling

The study population consisted of 2,026 Halal Industry Management students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam. Using simple random sampling, 329 respondents participated in the study. The minimum sample indicated using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) approach was 322; therefore, the achieved sample exceeded the minimum requirement. Because the sampling frame was restricted to one halal-related academic program, the findings are specific to this population and should not be generalized to all UiTM students or to university students generally.

Instrumentation

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire divided into three sections:

Section A: Demographic profile (4 items)

Section B: Understanding of the halalan tayyiban concept (4 items)

Section C: Awareness of halal labeling of snack products (6 items)

Items in Sections B and C were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was administered in English. The present article reports the ten substantive items exactly according to the constructs and results documented in the original study.

Reliability of the Instrument

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The ten substantive questionnaire items produced

a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.784, indicating acceptable reliability for the instrument (Bond & Fox, 2015).

Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire administered using Google Forms to eligible Halal Industry Management students at UiTM Shah Alam. Participation was voluntary, and the questionnaire was used to obtain self-reported information on the two study constructs.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26, with Microsoft Excel used as supporting software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the data. Mean scores were interpreted using the original study bands: 1.00-1.80 = very low, 1.81-2.60 = low, 2.61-3.20 = medium, 3.21-4.20 = high, and 4.21-5.00 = very high. No inferential analysis was undertaken because the original study objectives were limited to describing levels of understanding and awareness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Responses from 329 students were analyzed descriptively. Table 1 reports the four items measuring understanding of the halalan tayyiban concept, while Table 2 reports the six items measuring awareness of halal labeling of snack products. Reporting all ten substantive items provides a more complete representation of the dimensions actually measured in the questionnaire.

Table 1: Respondents' Understanding of the Halalan Tayyiban Concept

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
I have a clear understanding about the concept of halal	329	2	5	4.60	0.627
I understand the differences between halal and haram food	329	3	5	4.83	0.384
I am aware that all halal foods must be halal certified	329	1	5	4.34	0.694
I am aware of the key concepts or conditions for a product to be halalan tayyiban	329	1	5	4.27	0.516

Table 2: Respondents' Awareness of Halal Labeling of Snack Products

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
I am familiar with the concept of halal labeling for snack products	329	2	5	4.21	0.570
I often look for halal labels when purchasing snack products	329	1	5	4.07	0.516
It is important for me to check the halal label on snack products before purchasing them	329	2	5	4.22	0.451

I am willing to pay a slightly higher price for snack products that have proper halal certification and labeling	329	1	5	4.21	0.613
I am aware of the specific criteria and requirements that make a snack product halal	329	2	5	3.95	0.566
I am familiar with any specific halal certification logos or symbols commonly used on snack products	329	2	5	4.69	0.507

Table 1 shows very high self-reported understanding across all four items. The highest mean was recorded for understanding the difference between halal and haram food ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 0.384$), followed by a clear understanding of the halal concept ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.627$), awareness that halal foods must be halal certified as worded in the questionnaire ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.694$), and awareness of the key concepts or conditions for a product to be halal (tayyiban) ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.516$).

Table 2 indicates high-to-very-high awareness of halal labeling. Familiarity with specific halal certification logos or symbols recorded the highest mean ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 0.507$). The perceived importance of checking the halal label before purchasing snack products was also very high ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.451$), while willingness to pay a slightly higher price for properly certified and labeled snack products recorded $M = 4.21$ ($SD = 0.613$).

Two comparatively lower scores were observed: respondents reported that they often look for halal labels when purchasing snack products ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 0.516$), and their awareness of the specific criteria and requirements that make a snack product halal recorded the lowest mean in the labeling section ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.566$). Both scores remain within the high category according to the interpretation used in the original study.

The difference between rating label checking as important ($M = 4.22$) and reporting that one often looks for halal labels ($M = 4.07$) may indicate a descriptive difference between perceived importance and routine self-reported practice. However, the present descriptive data do not establish a statistically significant knowledge-behavior gap, prediction, or causal relationship. Similarly, willingness to pay reflects stated attitude rather than observed purchasing behavior.

DISCUSSION

The findings show a strong self-reported foundation in halal concepts among the sampled Halal Industry Management students. The very high score for distinguishing halal from haram ($M = 4.83$) is consistent with the expectation that students in a halal-related academic program have substantial exposure to core halal concepts. Nevertheless, the comparatively lower score for awareness of the key concepts or conditions of halal (tayyiban) ($M = 4.27$) indicates that the more detailed dimensions of the concept can still be strengthened through applied learning.

For halal labeling, respondents reported particularly strong familiarity with halal certification logos or symbols ($M = 4.69$). At the same time, awareness of the specific criteria and requirements that make a snack product halal was the lowest item in Section C ($M = 3.95$). This pattern suggests that recognition of visible halal identifiers is stronger than self-reported knowledge of the criteria underlying halal status. This interpretation is descriptive and should not be treated as evidence of objective verification competence.

The results also show that respondents considered it important to check halal labels before purchasing snack products ($M = 4.22$), while the reported frequency of actually looking for halal labels was lower ($M = 4.07$). This difference is useful for identifying an area for consumer education, but the study did not conduct inferential tests to determine whether halal knowledge significantly predicts label-checking tendencies.

Although the sample displayed high and very high levels of self-reported understanding and awareness, the results cannot be used to claim that curriculum exposure caused these outcomes. All respondents were drawn from the Halal Industry Management program; consequently, their academic background is a defining characteristic of the sampling frame rather than an experimentally tested explanatory factor. The findings are therefore most appropriately interpreted as a description of this specific group.

The willingness to pay a slightly higher price for snack products with proper halal certification and labeling ($M = 4.21$) reflects a positive stated attitude toward halal assurance. However, because the questionnaire measured agreement with statements rather than actual purchasing transactions, this result should not be interpreted as observed consumer behavior.

An important boundary of the findings concerns the meaning of label verification. The questionnaire measured whether respondents look for halal labels, consider checking them important, know general criteria, and recognize certification logos or symbols. It did not directly test whether respondents could authenticate a certification number, identify a certifying body, verify manufacturer information, distinguish genuine from questionable labels in a scenario, or perform digital halal verification. These dimensions should therefore not be reported as empirical findings of the present study.

The broader literature nevertheless indicates that practical and digital verification are increasingly relevant to halal consumption (Hassan et al., 2025). Future studies can extend the present work by including objective knowledge questions and scenario-based tasks in which respondents are required to distinguish authentic, incomplete, and questionable halal-label information. Such measures would allow researchers to assess demonstrated competence rather than relying exclusively on self-reported agreement.

The Theory of Planned Behavior was not tested in the present study because the questionnaire and analysis were not designed to estimate predictive relationships among attitudes, intentions, perceived behavioral control, and behavior. Future research may apply Ajzen's (1991) framework if the relevant constructs are measured and inferential analysis is conducted.

From an educational perspective, the findings support practical learning activities that move beyond recognition of halal logos. Teaching may include structured label-reading exercises, explanation of halal criteria and requirements, and guided authentication scenarios. These recommendations are intended to address the comparatively lower self-reported scores observed for awareness of specific halal criteria and routine label-seeking; they should not be interpreted as interventions whose effectiveness was tested by this study.

Study Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design; therefore, it cannot determine causal relationships or identify statistically significant predictors of label-checking behavior. Second, the measures were based on self-reported Likert-scale responses. The scores represent perceived understanding, awareness, attitudes, and tendencies rather than objectively demonstrated knowledge or directly observed behavior. Third, the sampling frame was restricted to Halal Industry Management students at UiTM Shah Alam, which limits generalizability beyond this academically specialized population.

Fourth, the questionnaire did not include objective knowledge questions or scenario-based authentication tasks, nor did it directly measure the ability to verify certification numbers, manufacturer details, certifying bodies, or digital halal claims. Future instruments should include these dimensions so that practical halal-label competence can be assessed more comprehensively.

Future studies should also include students from non-halal academic programs and other universities. Where individual-level data and appropriately measured constructs are available, correlation, multiple regression, or structural modeling may be used to examine relationships among halal knowledge, halalan tayyiban understanding, attitudes, and label-checking tendencies.

CONCLUSION

This study described the understanding of the halalan tayyiban concept and awareness of halal labeling of snack products among 329 Halal Industry Management students at UiTM Shah Alam. The findings show very high self-reported understanding of core halal concepts and high-to-very-high awareness across the six halal-labeling items.

The strongest result for the halal-concept construct was the ability to distinguish halal from haram food ($M = 4.83$). For halal labeling, familiarity with certification logos or symbols was highest ($M = 4.69$), whereas awareness of the specific criteria and requirements that make a snack product halal recorded the lowest labeling mean ($M = 3.95$). Respondents also rated checking halal labels before purchase as important ($M = 4.22$), while reporting a somewhat lower frequency of looking for such labels ($M = 4.07$).

Taken together, the findings indicate a strong baseline of self-reported halal understanding and label awareness within this specific student group, while pointing to opportunities to strengthen practical knowledge of halal criteria and consistent label-checking practices. These conclusions are descriptive and should not be interpreted as evidence of causation, objective authentication competence, or behavior beyond what was measured by the questionnaire.

Based on the findings and the limitations of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Practical Learning:** Halal-related courses may strengthen applied label-reading activities, particularly those explaining the criteria and requirements that determine halal status and the correct recognition of halal certification logos or symbols.
- **Consumer Awareness:** Educational and regulatory awareness activities may emphasize consistent checking of halal labels during snack purchases and explain the difference between recognizing a logo and verifying the information that supports a halal claim.
- **Objective Verification Skills:** Future educational materials and research instruments should include scenario-based exercises involving authentic and questionable labels, certification information, and, where relevant, digital verification. These elements were not directly measured in the present study.
- **Further Research:** Future studies should broaden the sample to students from non-halal academic programs and other universities, use objective knowledge measures, and employ inferential techniques such as correlation, multiple regression, or structural modeling when suitable individual-level data are available.

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