

An Empirical Investigation on Students Influence towards Halal Food Choice

Elyn Mohd Ridzwan¹, Suhana Mohamed*²

¹Department of Commerce, Polytechnic Metro Johor Bahru, Taman Putra, Johor, Malaysia

²Faculty of Business and Management, University Technology MARA, Pasir Gudang Branch, Jalan Purnama, Bandar Seri Alam, Johor, Malaysia

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.910000376>

Received: 17 October 2025; Accepted: 22 October 2025; Published: 12 November 2025

ABSTRACT

The goal of this study is to determine how well-informed students are about halal cuisine and how social media affects their dietary choices, particularly for Muslim students attending Malaysian institutions. Students' eating choices are being impacted by the current trend of popular culinary videos on the internet via platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Students are often enticed to try new cuisines by these social media trends without verifying whether the restaurants are certified halal. Food choices were found to be significantly influenced by social media, particularly by user suggestions and visually appealing content. To sum up, more creative, interactive, and tech-based halal education approaches are required. Therefore, in order to influence students' behavior toward adhering to halal food choice behavior, the study suggests that there be more halal education through online media in addition to strategic cooperation between educational institutions, halal regulators, and social media networks.

Keywords: Halal, Student Awareness, Social Media, Viral Food, Food Choice, Halal Education

INTRODUCTION

With an annual worth of trillions of dollars, the halal industry has become a crucial element of the world economy (Abdul Mokti et al., 2024). Being a world pioneer in this field, Malaysia has made a name for itself as a leading center for halal goods and services, contributing significantly to halal production, certification, and innovation (Bidin et al., 2021). The industry is divided into a number of areas, including finance, food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics, all of which require specific knowledge and abilities to guarantee rigorous adherence to halal standards (Ariffin et al., 2023). Malaysia retains its prestigious position in the global halal market because of the hard work of qualified halal professionals (Ibrahim et al., 2022). In addition to managing halal certification procedures, these experts play a major role in quality control, research and development, and the calculated growth of Malaysia's prominence in global marketplaces. The need for qualified halal experts keeps rising as the number of Muslims worldwide rises and consumers become more conscious of halal principles (Nur Azira, et al., 2025).

Anything that is permitted or legal under Islamic law is referred to as "halal," which means "permissible" in Arabic (Rahman et al., 2015). Originally focused on meat products, the halal business has a long history of making sure that they were prepared and killed in accordance with Islamic dietary regulations. This industry has changed dramatically, broadening its scope to include a variety of industries like finance, modest fashion, medicines, and tourism. The impact of Islamic law or ethics on various fields, as well as the rising demand for halal-certified goods and services globally, have been the main drivers of this expansion. As a result, the global halal industry has grown to be one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world (African News, 2022; Azam & Abdullah, 2020).

Social media has a significant influence on consumer lifestyle and choice in our modern digital age, particularly when it comes to food choices. Social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have shown to be crucial

sources for marketing different kinds of viral cuisines that have a tendency to win over students. However, the tendency is usually carried out with little regard for the halal status of the dining establishments, particularly among Muslim students who are required by their faith to seek halal in the foods they choose. For Muslim students, making sure the food they consume is halal is a religious mandate that must be followed. However, social media's overwhelming impact may cause students to follow popular trends and overlook the significance of adhering to halal compliance. According to tests, students have a modest opinion of halal status and do not actively seek to confirm halal certification before making food purchases. It is disturbing that religious instruction may be excluded by social media pull, especially when the culinary content being supplied is compelling and widely accessible.

Despite the establishment of halal certification by reputable organizations like the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) to safeguard Muslim consumers, there is still a discernible tendency among students to value food's popularity and distinctiveness over its halal status. The emergence of popular food fads that are extensively promoted on social media sites like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok has made this problem more noticeable. According to a study by Zulkurnain Hassan (2022), community college students are still not very aware of halal certification, which suggests that they are not concerned with halal considerations while choosing foods. Additionally, teens' and students' eating habits have been found to be significantly influenced by social media (Qutteina et al., 2021), where aesthetically appealing content and favorable ratings frequently serve as the primary motivators for food purchases.

Because social media has such a strong hold, there is a risk that Muslim students will unintentionally eat non-halal food. Therefore, this research is essential to determine how well-informed students are about halal status and how much social media influences their food choices. As a result, this study offers valuable information to a range of stakeholders, particularly Muslim students, regarding how to raise their level of awareness regarding the halal status of the foods they often eat. Students are often exposed to viral cuisine trends that might not adhere to the halal standard in the current digital era, when social media has an enormous effect. This helps students comprehend that leading a halal lifestyle involves not just a religious obligation but also considerations of safety, hygiene, and consumer ethics. It is suggested that community colleges and other TVET schools use the research's findings to better combine halal education with students' contemporary living needs. The study's conclusions offer authorities like JAKIM useful guidance on how to reduce the difficulties in delivering halal information to a younger generation that is more interested in digital and social media content. As a result, the ways in which halal is communicated to students might be improved to make them more approachable and accessible.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

Azhar et al. (2025) stated that the summary of the last ten years' worth of worldwide research on halal awareness shows that this area has grown in importance for both scholarly study and real-world implementation. The systematic review's most significant finding is that, in the quickly growing halal industry, consumer behavior and corporate strategy are significantly influenced by halal awareness, which is molded by consumer knowledge, social context, and regulatory frameworks. This knowledge reflects its increasing importance among Muslim and non-Muslim consumers and goes beyond the usual food sectors to include cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. Companies that actively raise knowledge of halal issues stand to benefit from competitive advantages in a variety of marketplaces, and governments can use these insights to promote social cohesion and economic growth.

Growing Numbers of Halal Awareness

In writing about halal, halal awareness has emerged as one of the most important subjects. Halal awareness has been conceptualized differently by different researchers, however it is evident that these ideas are mostly predicated on self-evaluation. Since self-assessment does not rely on external validation, it may be vulnerable to additional criticism. The results show that consumers' information-seeking tendencies are demonstrated by the steady quantity of their queries that are answered by the Mufti. Furthermore, it was found that customer inquiries have grown more intricate and intelligent over time. This pattern implies that there is a growing awareness of halal issues (Noor Fadhana, 2025). Research on students' awareness of halal indicates that knowledge and

practices related to halal are still at an alarming state. Hassan and Mohd Nor (2022) conducted research among community college students and found a moderate level of awareness among the students about the aspect of certification on the score of 4.13 for certification awareness and 3.95 for general halal concept awareness.

Faradewi et al. (2022) also noted that though university students have basic knowledge of halal, the practical behavior of checking the status of halal before purchasing food is rarely done by them. This shows the disjoint between mere knowledge and actual behavior. There is growing concern that the body of research on halal talent development and management in Malaysia is not sufficiently comprehensive, despite the crucial role that halal professionals play in maintaining and growing the business (Mohamad Zain et al., 2022). Malaysia's halal sector is a major contributor to the country's economy and a major player in the international market, requiring a highly qualified and specialized workforce to maintain halal standards across a range of industries. This lacuna in the literature makes it more difficult to fully comprehend the opportunities and difficulties of developing a strong talent pool that can satisfy the changing needs of the halal business. There are gaps in our knowledge of the particular requirements, tactics, and frameworks needed to successfully develop and oversee halal professionals due to the absence of a coherent and thorough examination.

Adding on to that, Azlan et al. (2022) showed that a student's attitude and behavior toward halal products are highly influenced by their level of knowledge and religiosity. In this regard, Faradewi et al. (2022) reported that family norms and perceived behavior also have a significant influence on students' choice of consuming halal food. Hence, such halal awareness programs should be holistic in approach, covering educational aspects, social influences, and communicative methods which would be appropriate for the current lifestyle of students. The halal issue has evolved over the past few decades from being solely a religious duty to becoming an essential component of the Muslim way of life worldwide (Mulyana, 2024; Sakti, 2019). The importance of consuming products that adhere to Sharia principles is becoming more widely recognized in the context of the halal industry's rapid development (Hafiz & Rialdy, 2024), not only as a sign of spiritual devotion but also as a component of the identity of the contemporary Muslim consumer.

Food Content in Social Media

Shaharuddin et al. (2025) stated that the use of technology to manage daily duties is becoming more and more popular as the globe grows more technologically sophisticated and globalized. Due in large part to both local and international demand for Halal products, Malaysia's Halal food industry has expanded dramatically. However, in order to guarantee long-term success, this expansion comes with a variety of challenges and issues that need to be carefully taken into account. Stakeholders may contribute to boosting the industry's competitiveness, guaranteeing adherence to Halal standards, and meeting the evolving demands of consumers both domestically and abroad by acknowledging and addressing important issues.

Qutteina et al. (2021) conducted a study showing that social media influences adolescents' food choice. The engaging and viral content of nature, such as short videos and food reviews, shapes eating norms and builds up food literacy in young users. It also stated that exposure to food-related messages on social media was closely associated with eating attitudes and behaviors among adolescents, in which the descriptive norms played a role in raising consumption of unhealthy foods. Filippone et al. (2022) present that the longer the exposure to food content on social media, the more it can trigger intense cravings to try the food featured in those ads without considering health or halal aspects. The authors reported that the proposed cognitive impulsivity mediates the relationship between time of exposure and food craved, leading to uncontrolled eating behavior.

Some conceptual and methodological questions remain unanswered, despite the fact that interest in halal issues in Muslim consumer behavior has significantly increased in the literature in recent years (Mujahid & Muthohar, 2023). It is challenging to generalize or reproduce the findings of several earlier studies due to discrepancies in the definition and assessment of halal awareness (Selian, 2024). This might imply a possible threat that Muslim students will be encouraged to try the viral foods without checking their halal status because of great visual and social persuasiveness evoked through digital media. According to previous studies, awareness of halal among students is still possible to be enhanced and that social media is a powerful means of shaping food selection behavior. The contribution of this study is that there has been very little research that discussed both aspects simultaneously: halal awareness and social media influence among Malaysian TVET students.

CONCLUSION

It has given a clear picture on the awareness level of the halal status of food among the Muslim students and what contribution social media makes on what they consume daily. The results indicated that though the level of awareness about the importance of halal is very high, at the same time, a major impact on eating behavior due to social media still exists. The increasing viral food phenomenon through social media awareness has brought new challenges to maintain the halal way of life among youths who are highly exposed to digital information. Malaysia retains its prestigious position in the global halal market because of the hard work of qualified halal professionals (Ibrahim et al., 2022). In addition to managing halal certification procedures, these experts play a major role in quality control, research and development, and the calculated growth of Malaysia's prominence in global marketplaces. The need for qualified halal experts keeps rising as the number of Muslims worldwide rises and consumers become more conscious of halal principles.

Muslim consumers' awareness of goods and services that adhere to Islamic standards has significantly increased as a result of the worldwide halal industry's rapid development (Al-Mazeedi et al., 2020). The term "halal awareness" describes how well-informed consumers are about halal ideas, such as the production process, the materials and instruments used, and halal certification (Abhinaya & Setyawan, 2024; Safitri & Afandi, 2023). It can be concluded that effective halal education and communication is needed and should be compatible with the lifestyles of students nowadays. Therefore, in developing high awareness on being halal, this paper also highlighted the responsibility of all educational institutions and government agencies through their collaborations and digital communities in order to strengthen the practice of being halal among students. These gaps hope to improve to the extent that, with appropriate interventions, students will make wiser, more ethical, and Shariah-complimenting food choices.

Malaysia's halal food industry can be promoted as a worldwide standard in a number of ways. Stakeholders and other Malaysian parties should coordinate their efforts as Malaysia is making multiple attempts to develop this identity. The combination of scholarly sources demonstrates that halal practices are unreliable, which causes a number of issues and challenges in the food industry. All Malaysian industries frequently face problems and challenges, which are brought on by either management or employees. Many entrepreneurs in Malaysia are engaged in the production of Halal culinary items. However, due to their tiny size, their competitors face fierce competition in the market because of limited resources, rivalry, technology, inadequate business networks, and inexperience in product promotion.

There is now more competition in the global halal market. The challenge of providing the expanding halal market has been taken on by other Asian countries, such as Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore, Indonesia, and China, through a variety of initiatives and by utilizing their current advantages. Similar to those offered by Malaysia, a number of initiatives seek to advance investment and commerce, strengthen halal certification organizations, and assist R&D in the halal food industry as it works toward full halal-toyyiban status. The results of this study ought to provide a basis for understanding the issues and challenges for upcoming scholarly investigations and perspectives (Shaharuddin et al., 2025).

As what is being discussed by Shaharuddin et al., (2025), a significant component of the Malaysian halal industry is halal food products. The sector is growing quickly and contributes significantly to Malaysia's economic expansion. Operators in the food industry find it challenging to incorporate the Halal concept into their daily operations. To give a more comprehensive view of the current state of affairs, this essay examined problems and difficulties from a variety of angles. Thus, by concentrating on the elements that affect entrepreneurs in the food industry sector, this study aims to close the gap in the literature on halal food choice. It is intended that this study would also benefit and provide perspectives on the safety behavior model to other academics, professionals, and researchers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are expressing our sincere gratitude to all team members for invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this research project. The expertise and insights were instrumental in shaping the

direction of this study.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Authors' Contribution

The authors, Elyn Mohd Ridzwan, and Suhana Mohamed, conceived and designed the study, conducted data collection and analysis, drafted the manuscript, and approved the final version for submission.

Conflict Of Interest Declaration

We affirm that no conflicts of interest could influence our research. No financial support or funding was received for this study. We also affirm that this declaration ensures transparency in disclosure before submitting it to the journal.

REFERENCES

1. Abdul Mokti, H., Kamri, N. A. & Mohd Balwi, M. A. W. F. (2024). Tayyiban in halal food production: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 15(2), 397-417.
2. Abhinaya, M. I. A., & Setyawan, A. A. (2024). The Influence of Halal Awareness and Halal Certificate on Purchasing Decisions for Mixue Products. *Brilliant International Journal of Management And Tourism*, 4(1), 62–76.
3. African news. (2022, December 7). Business booming as halal sector is valued over \$2 trillion. African news. <https://www.africanews.com/2022/12/07/business-booming-as-halal-sector-valued-over-2-trillion/>
4. Al-Mazeedi, H. M. M., Al-Teinaz, Y. R., & Pointing, J. (2020). Halal and HACCP: Guidelines for the Halal food industry. In *The Halal Food Handbook* (Issue May). John Wiley Sons.
5. Ariffin, N., Sundram, V. P. K. & Zulfakar, M. H. (2023). Systematic Literature Review of Halal Purchasing in Value Chain Management. A Qualitative Research Era from 2011 to 2022. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 10(6.2), 291-306.
6. Azam, M. S. E., & Abdullah, M. A. (2020). Global halal industry: Realities and opportunities. *International Journal of Islamic Business Ethics*, 5(1), 47–59.
7. Azhar, A., Aliifa, R. F., Azizah, F., Nadhirah, N. & Ihtisham, U. (2025). Halal Awareness In Contemporary Muslim Societies: A Systematic Review of Scopus-Indexed Studies. (2025). *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research*, 30(3), 215-238.
8. Azlan, A., Zalbahar, N., Sultana, S., Daud, S. M. M., & Yuniastuti, A. (2022). Students' perception, knowledge, attitude and behaviour towards halal food products in Malaysia. *Food Research*, 6(2), 99–109.
9. Bidin, R., Razak, M. N. F., Mohamad, B., Osman, M. N., Abu Bakar, M. S., Tham, J. S., Atan, R., Handayati, P. & Utaberta, N. (2021). Halal Industry's Organizational Performance Factors: A Systematic Literature Review. *Pertanika Journal Social Sciences & Humanities*, 29(4), 2545-2568.
10. Faradewi, B. A. R., Osman, S., Ismail, F. H., Azman, A., Ahmad Termizi, N., & Dahri, S. Z. (2022). The implementation of halal food awareness among undergraduate students. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Culinary Arts*, 14(1), 335–347.
11. Filippone, L., Shankland, R., & Hallez, Q. (2022). The relationships between social media exposure, food craving, cognitive impulsivity and cognitive restraint. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 10, 184.
12. Hafiz, M., & Rialdy, N. (2024). Manajemen Syariah: Prinsip, Konsep dan Implementasi. *Madani: Jurnal Ilmiah Multidisiplin*. 2(12), 438–441.
13. Hassan, Z., & Mohd Nor, N. (2022). Kesedaran pelajar terhadap pensijilan halal, kesedaran halal, komposisi makanan dan minat membeli produk halal dalam kalangan pelajar Kolej Komuniti Hulu Langat, Kajang Selangor. *International Journal of Humanities Technology and Civilization*, 7(2).

14. Ibrahim, M. I., Jamaludin, M. A., Kartika, B., Hashim, Y. Z, H-Y. & Zubairi, A. M. (2022). Enhancing collaboration for future halal studies graduate employability. *Halalsphere*, 2(1), 98-105.
15. Mohamad Zain, M. S., Zakaria, Z. & Samudin, S. A. (2022). Halal Talent in Malaysia: A Bibliometric Study Analysis. *Jurnal Dunia Pengurusan*, 4(4), 41-55.
16. Mujahid, A. R., & Muthohar, M. (2023). Niat Beli Konsumen terhadap Restoran Halal: Studi pada Masyarakat Muslim di Indonesia. *Selekta Manajemen. Jurnal Mahasiswa Bisnis Dan Manajemen*, 02(05), 43–58.
17. Mulyana, R. A. (2024). Geliat Gaya Hidup Halal Global: Peluang dan Tantangan. *Likuid Jurnal Ekonomi Industri Halal*, 4(1), 41–60.
18. Noor Fadhana, M. N. (2025). Halal Awareness through Information-seeking Behaviours among Muslim Consumers towards Halal Food. *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies*, 11(2), 1-12.
19. Nur Azira, T., Nur Fatin, A. F. A., & Anis Najiha, A. (2025). Identifying gaps in halal talent development and management in Malaysia: a systematic literature review. *Al-Qanatir International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 34(1): 78-97.
20. Qutteina, Y., Hallez, L., Raedschelders, M., De Backer, C., & Smits, T. (2022). Food for teens: How social media is associated with adolescent eating outcomes. *Public Health Nutrition*, 25(2), 290–302.
21. Qutteina, Y., Hallez, L., Raedschelders, M., De Backer, C., & Smits, T. (2021). Using social media to promote healthy eating among adolescents: A review of the literature. *Appetite*, 15(8), 105-119.
22. Rahman, M. M., Ali, M. E., Hamid, S. B. A., Bhassu, S., Mustafa, S., Al Amin, M., & Razzak, M. A. (2015). Lab-on-a-chip PCR-RFLP assay for the detection of canine DNA in burger formulations. *Food Analytical Methods*, 8(6), 1598–1606.
23. Safitri, A., & Afandi, M. Y. (2023). Trends of Halal Industry Research: A Bibliometric Analysis. *Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah Teori Dan Terapan*, 10(6), 605–619.
24. Sakti, M. (2019). The Urgency of Global Halal Standards on Products in Supporting International Trade. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 11(1), 1–14.
25. Shaharuddin, F.Z., Norman, A.A., Hamid, S. and Zakaria, Z. (2025). Halal food industry in Malaysia: issues and challenges. *Food Research*, 9 (Suppl. 2), 33 - 42.
26. Selian, G. A. (2024). Mengukur tingkat kesadaran konsumen tentang sertifikat halal. *Selma*, 8(2), 274–285.