

# Confidence Level to Purchase Halal Food Products Via Ordering Online Application

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## ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has turned out to be an opportunity for a recent noticeable increase in online purchase in Malaysia. Muslim consumer who concern about halal product were affected by this drastic purchasing trends. Although there is no evidence to support Muslim consumer to explore how they select halal food items and whether their consumption choices are influenced by halal ethical standards. This paper aims to discover how consumer's confidence level to their purchasing halal food via ordering online application. The study measured the factors of product quality, product brand, Halal product awareness and product safety that influence the confidence level of consumer to purchase. The methodology used is quantitative method & questionnaires were distributed to 111 online respondents during this pandemic, results exhibited that confidence level of intention moderates the relationship of the key variables. These findings can contribute to understanding consumer behaviour comprehensively.

**Keywords:** Halal food products, Consumer behaviour, Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Covid-19

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As per the current status, Covid-19 has infected 2.8 million people globally [1]. Every sector and individual have been affected badly during this pandemic. Online marketing and purchasing trends among consumers are also squeezed by this ensure pandemic. This situation made consumer to adjusted their food buying trend especially muslim consumer who concerns about halal foods. The best way chosen by the government is to stay at home so that it becomes a new normal for consumers to buy food via ordering online. Most of the electronic commerce (e-commerce) are involved in customer to customer (C2C) business, which is business activities performed among consumers using the online ordering platform.

Today, halal food has become a more popular product among consumers, that is why halal global demand has increased. Malaysia Halal Master Plan third phase (2016-2020) was planned that the global halal industry is set to grow between US\$3 trillion (RM12.21 trillion) and US\$4 trillion (RM16.28 trillion) within the next five years, from the current US\$2 trillion (RM8.14 trillion). This figure proves that the adoption of halal products in halal industry motivates food manufacturers to comply Halal Management system to gain competitiveness in the

market. Among the integral activities within halal foods include halal food integrity (food ingredients, cleanliness, safety, health, nutrition, and quality), halal slaughtering (poultry and meat slaughtering processes that should comply with Shariah principles), and halal logistics and marketing (storage, distribution, and display of halal and haram products) [2].

However, during this pandemic, consumers have to purchase food via online without the extra checking of the product ingredients, especially the freshness and halal of the food. Thus, the question in this study becomes: does consumers have the level of confidence to purchase halal food via ordering online?

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) served as a theoretical basis for this study framework. This theory has been widely used in this study related to halal food purchase [3-7]. Also, TPB was utilised to develop a foundation for this study to examine and understand the factors affecting consumers's confidence level to buy halal food via online.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

### 2.1. Review of Literature

#### 2.1.1. Halal Food

Halal food means permitted by Allah which are prepared or processed using halal standards prepared by JAKIM. In the Holy Quran, where stated that Allah commands Muslim and all of mankind to consume only what is good and halal (lawful) (Surah Al-Maidah:5). According to Henderson (2016), when determine halal food, it means that food which can be consumed by Muslims as listed in the Quran and the Prophet's saying and also under the Islam legal. Said et al (2014) defined halal food as things that individuals can consume with no legitimate proof disallowing it and also free from any illegal or impure content. Mathew (2014) mentioned that Al-Quran determined halal as legal and allowed, that is food which can be eaten with no uncertainty [8].

Today, Halal food is growing and gaining more popularity around the world, which Halal food an ideal choice for business in the global Halal market. (Mihias, 2019). Muslim and also non-Muslim's consumer demand towards Halal food to ensure the hygiene, cleanliness and safety. Regarding to Ahmed and Najmi (2018), Muslim consumers concern about halal foods and willing to pay more for Halal foods. This is supported by Bernama (2018) which reported that the value of demand for Halal food at 1.4 billion dollars within Asia regions.

Hussain, Rahman, Zaheer and Saleem (2016) state that halal food market will cover the overall 20 percent (%) of the halal food world's market by considering the population growth as well as increasing income levels. Therefore, halal food can be concluded that the increasing demand can use a strong competitive tool which is by providing more attractive features in halal food market.

#### 2.1.2. Product Quality

Product quality can be defined to incorporate features that have a capacity to meet consumer needs and gives consumer satisfaction by improving products and making them free from any deficiencies or defects (Juran, 2013). Cronin and Taylor (2012) also stated that a customer's satisfaction was built by the services and product quality [9]. Besides, Matthew (2014) stated that products with high quality show the products get a good response from the consumers in terms of cleanliness and freshness. According to Khemchotigoon and Kaenmanee (2015), perceived product quality did impact on consumer satisfaction in the retail business [10].

Quality in halal food products is about the food must be clean, safe, well taken care of, healthy, served in proper manner and quality for consumers to consume.

Das (2014) stated that firms should know and be aware how the consumers evaluate the product quality because consumers value quality over price [11]. Soong (2017) mentioned the importance for consumers to know how the demand for high quality halal products will pressure food manufacturers to provide high quality halal products.

Today, in the current globalization, demand for halal foods now is not only related to religious need but also as a standard of hygiene, healthy style and quality product (Ismail & Nasiruddin, 2014). According to Mathew (2014), non-Muslims also concerned about food with halal logos are hygiene, clean and good quality to consume.

#### 2.1.3. Product Brand

Product brands can be a major source of competition in the food industry as they have potential for earning superior returns. The product brand is an important part of business because this brand provides a description of that business product. This product brand is also a helper factor for food manufacturers because it can help create specific images for their business to be known by consumers [12].

Besides, the product brand is an important factor to get consumer loyalty. Brand loyalty creation, especially in a messy media atmosphere and compelling competition conditions has gained a vital importance for the companies and also increases the endurance and brand power towards competitive attacks as well.

Today, product brands are now facing a different environment from previous decades. Food manufacturers face the dilemma during Covid-19 pandemic of changing consumer demand while bearing the risk and responsibility of their image product. The food manufacturer's ability to respond to changing demands is a key factor for attaining success in global food markets (Regmi and Gehlhar 2020).

#### 2.1.4. Halal Product Awareness

The halal industry can boost national and global revenues as a result of increased consumer awareness of Halal products. Increasing awareness of Halal awareness among Muslim and non-Muslim consumers has led to an increase of demand for Halal food products and other products such as cosmetics, medicines and more. In this regard, SMEs, which are one of the Halal food manufacturers, need to formulate effective strategies by implementing a Halal management system in the production of Halal food products to meet consumer demand. SMEs are trying to attract consumers by complying with the Halal standard set so that consumers can purchase the products without having doubts.

Nusran, Gunawan, Razak, Numba, & Wekke (2018), mentioned that the increasing Muslims consumer around the world and the raise of awareness among their recent generations are two crucial reasons behind the new trend in the change of behaviour among Muslim consumers [13]. Since Muslims consumers are aware about the prohibition from using non-Halal ingredients such as alcohol, pork and any other related items, this may lead to rapidly rising demand for any Halal products. Exposure, religiosity, knowledge and awareness are significant to describe the customer's intention to buy halal food for their family. (Lee, Ling, Ng, Tan & Wong, 2018).

Consumers putting their trust in food providers about halal foods. Curocity regarding to the halal foods among Muslim and non-Muslim consumers can educate them to purchase halal food.

### *2.1.5. Product Safety*

According to Teng, Rezai, Mohamed and Shamsudin (2012) the aspects of food safety and sanitation are being controlled by JAKIM in Malaysia. Regarding Malaysian Halal Standard MS 1500:2004, food safety includes packaging, manufacturing and providing the food items to the client in good condition. Besides, in the current globalisation world, the varieties of food products in the market have increased [14].

Customers are concerned about the safety of food they consume and purchase (An, Sohn, Choi & Kim, 2015). Regarding the requirement of halal, the food being produced will be certified by reputable certification and this has given them confidence and is becoming the main choice of purchase by a consumer (Aziz & Chok, 2013). An et al. (2015) also mentioned that a product being certified with halal is a significant element in the buying choice and there is a demand for it by Muslim [4].

Supported by Ambali and Bakar (2014) stated that a safe food, beverage or item which does not harm customers either Muslims or non-Muslims as well [15]. Hussain et al. (2016) also stated that safer food was demanded by non-Muslim who is also familiar with the halal concept. According to Yang (2017), who did a case study on variables affecting the non-Muslim buying behaviour on halal food, the safety of the halal food has a critical impact on the non-Muslim clients [16].

Ambali and Bakar (2014) stressed that the halal concept is extremely specific in food issues to prevent diseases by keeping the food and the things around us clean [15]. The same study also stated that an establishment in cleanliness procedures in guaranteeing food cleanliness was laid down under The Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene and the Malaysian Standard MS1514 on General Principles of Food Hygiene.

### *2.1.6. Confidence Level Purchase Intention*

The intention can be defined as the condition of an individual's readiness to play out conduct and it is viewed as a quick antecedent of conduct (Azam,2016), And, about the intention to purchase also can be defined as the condition of an individual is to prepare to buy certain items. According to Lee et al., (2016), a person's attitude and behavioural intention about decision making during buying is affected by their religious commitment.

Many previous studies have used the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to determine an individual's intention to buy, use and acknowledge Halal food items (Rahim & Junos, 2012). Asshidin, Abidin and Borhan (2016) further stated that in the food sector, market research companies use to predict the sales of new products and existing products by analysing the intention to purchase. Based on the TPB, perceived behavioural control, attitude on the conduct and subjective norm have been seen as factors to clarify the conduct and intention to purchase.

Wan and Toppinen (2016) stated that after the customers considered and evaluated the product, the purchase behaviours or purchase intention will exist. In the same study, it stated that customers' purchasing behaviour and their subjective intentions could be predicted and being used as a key point. Therefore, it is considered as an effective tool used by most of the marketers in predicting the customers' purchasing intention [9]. Ozgen and Kurt (2013) mentioned that research could be done to decide the relationship and impact of customer attitude to buy halal items.

## *2.2. Development of Hypotheses*

### *2.2.1. Product Quality*

"Product quality is the characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied customer needs.

*H1: There is a significant relationship between product quality and confidence level intention to purchase halal food products via ordering online application.*

### *2.2.2. Product Brand*

"The product brand is the important part of business because this brand provides a description of that business product. This product brand is also a helper factor for food manufacturers because it can help create specific images for their business to be known by consumers [13].

*H2: There is a significant relationship between product brand and confidence level intention to purchase halal food products via ordering online application.*

### 2.2.3. Halal Product Awareness

“The knowledge in the direction of the influence of marketing related concepts such as advertising and branding with halal purchase intention is almost unavailable” [4].

*H3: There is a significant relationship between halal product awareness and confidence level intention to purchase halal food products via ordering online application.*

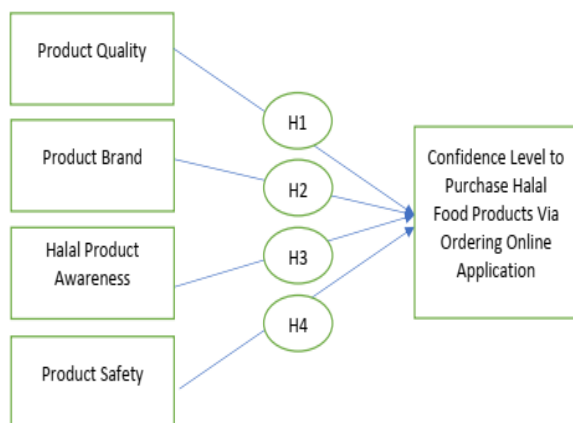
### 2.2.4. Product Safety

“Food supplied cannot contain elements that are harmful to health either in terms of food preparation, sale and consumption of foodstuffs”.

*H4: There is a significant relationship between product safety and confidence level intention to purchase halal food products via ordering online application.*

## 2.3. Conceptual Framework

The aforementioned hypothesized relationships are summarized in Figure 1:



**Figure 1:** Summary of hypotheses

## 2.4. Methodology

The researchers employed a quantitative approach in order to explore the consumers’ understanding and variable under study, which is exploratory, descriptive, and hypothesis testing. The sample for this study consisted of 111 respondents identified from a population consumer as stated by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Subjects in the population are sampled by a random process using either a random number generator or a random number table, so that each person remaining in the population has the same probability of being selected for the sample. The population to be sampled is

composed of fourteen units (14 states in Malaysia) listed in consecutive order from one to fourteen.

Hence, the researchers have chosen the consumers of Halal food products throughout Malaysia as the respondents. The researchers applied the random sampling method, and approached the consumers who were buying via online. We employed quantitative analysis through the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 for descriptive statistics, ANOVA, T-test, correlation, and multiple linear regression.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Profile of Respondents

Table I summarizes the profile of the respondents. A total of 111 respondents co-operated by returning the questionnaire resulting in 100% rates of return. The sample was diverse in several aspects. Approximately, 27.9% of the sample (31) was male and 72.1% (80) was female. There was a representation from various races, including Malay (109), Chinese (1), and other races (1) which Iban. Table I also reports that 35.1% of respondents (39) from Perlis, followed by 25.5% (25) from Kedah. 4.5% (5) from Penang, 6.3% (4) from Perak, 3.6% (4) from Putrajaya, 8.1% (9) from Negeri Sembilan, 9% (10) from Johor, 4.5% (5) from Sabah and 0.9% (1) from KL, Melaka, Pahang, Kelantan, Sarawak and Selangor respectively. Meanwhile, the highest age range was between 18 and 30 years old (60.4%), and the lowest was between 51 and 61 years old (0.9%). Furthermore, in terms of employment status, 21.6% (24) of the respondents are from the private sector, 23.4% (26) of respondents from the government sector, 3.6% (4) of them was self-employed, 1.8% (2) of respondents are housewives and 49.5% (55) respondents are retired. The table also shows that 50.5% of samples (56) earn less than RM500 of income per month, RM500 to RM999 by 2.7% of samples (3), RM1000 to RM2999 by 12.6% of samples (14), RM3000 to RM4999 by 14.4% of samples (16), followed by 19.8% of samples (22) received income more than RM5000 monthly.

### 3.2. Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis. The table shows that the question on product safety showed the highest mean is at 4.8264 while the lowest mean is 4.2671 on the question about the confidence level of intention to purchase halal food via ordering online application.

**Table 1.** Profile of respondents

Demographic Items	Frequency	(%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	31	27.9
Female	80	72.1
<i>Race</i>		
Malay	109	98.2
Chinese	1	0.9
Others	1	0.9
<i>State</i>		
Perlis	39	35.1
Kedah	25	22.5
Penang	5	4.5
Perak	7	6.3
Kuala Lumpur	1	0.9
Putrajaya	4	3.6
Melaka	1	0.9
N. Sembilan	9	8.1
Pahang	1	0.9
Kelantan	1	0.9
Terangganu	1	0.9
Johor	10	9.0
Sabah	5	4.5
Serawak	1	0.9
Selangor	1	0.9
<i>Age</i>		
18-30	67	60.4
31-40	36	32.4
41-50	7	6.3
51-60	1	0.9
<i>Employment Status</i>		
Private Sector	24	21.6
Government Sector	26	23.4
Self-employed	4	3.6
Housewife	2	1.8
Retired	55	49.5
<i>Income Level</i>		
Less than RM500	56	50.5
RM500 – RM999	3	2.7
RM1000 – RM2999	14	12.6
RM3000 – RM4999	16	14.4
RM5000 above	22	19.8

**Table 2.** Descriptive Analysis

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Confidence Level of Intention to Purchase	4.2671	0.43995
Product Quality	4.6095	0.55332
Product Brand	4.4613	0.46504
Halal Product Awareness	4.4827	0.53984
Product Safety	4.8264	0.45627

Therefore, the confidence level on the product safety has the most influence in purchasing halal food via ordering online applications. Secondly, the highest mean is 4.6095 over a five-point scale for product quality, which will be rated, and agreed by most of the respondents. The purchasing criteria number third is halal product awareness which at 4.4827 and followed by product brand at 4.4613 respectively. On the other hand, in terms of standard deviation for the confidence level of intention to purchase the halal food via ordering online application with the highest value is product quality at 0.55332 and followed by halal product awareness at 0.53984, product brand at 0.46504 and product safety at 0.45627 respectively.

### 3.3. Reliability Analysis

Table 3 indicates the values for Cronbach's alpha. Based on the scale proposed by Nunnally & Bernstein (1994); Hair et al., (2009), the Cronbach's alpha for the confidence level of intention to purchase halal food via ordering online application is acceptable since it is 0.631, which is greater than recommended value of 0.60. Cronbach's alpha for product safety is 0.921 can be considered excellent which has strong reliability. Product quality and halal brand awareness's Cronbach's alpha value are 0.766 and 0.773 respectively, which are considered as good. Last but not least, Cronbach's alpha for product brand is 0.671 and considered acceptable

### 3.4. Correlation Analysis

Pearson's r correlation is the most widely used correlation statistic to measure the degree of the relationship between linearly related variables (Cohen, 2003). Table 4 below illustrates the inter-correlations among the variables of the study. As can be seen, product quality ( $r=0.538$ ), product brand ( $r=0.650$ ), halal brand awareness ( $r=0.640$ ) and product safety ( $r=0.686$ ) were significantly and positively correlated with the confidence level of intention to purchase halal food via ordering online application. All of the variables are

significant at 0.01. It indicates that all of the variables are a moderate positive correlation with the confidence level of intention to purchase halal food via ordering online application. Therefore, the higher all of the variables, there is more likelihood of the confidence level of intention to purchase halal food via ordering online application.

**Table 3.** Reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Confidence Level of Intention to Purchase	5	0.631
Product Quality	5	0.766
Product Brand	3	0.671
Halal Product Awareness	4	0.773
Product Safety	5	0.921

**Table 4.** Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pearson Correlation, r	Relationship
Product Quality	.538**	Moderate
Product Brand	.650**	Moderate
Halal Product Awareness	.640**	Moderate
Product Safety	.686**	Moderate

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 3.5. Hypotheses Testing

Table 5 represents the result of multiple regression analysis for hypothesis testing. The p-value should be lower than 0.05 for the relationships to be significant. As referred in the table below, the R square value is 0.601 suggests that 60.1% of the total variance in the dependent variable (confidence level of intention to purchase halal food) is explained by the all independent variables (product quality, product brand, halal product awareness and product safety). Hence, the remaining 39.9% is unaccounted for, which could be due to other variables which are not included in this study. Furthermore, it states that a significant result of (p=0.000) which is smaller than 0.05 and the F value is produced at (F=39.927).

**Table 5.** Multiple Regression Analysis

Explanatory Variables	Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.797	2.525	.013		
Product Quality	-.005	-.067	.947	.429	2.333
Product Brand	.283	3.735	.000	.589	1.697
Halal Product Awareness	.202	3.041	.003	.555	1.803
Product Safety	.349	3.470	.001	.341	2.936

R Value : 0.775  
 R Square: 0.601  
 F Value : 39.927  
 Significant: 0.000

Table 5 also reports that product quality does not seem to significantly influence the confidence level of intention to purchase halal food via ordering online application at (p=0.947). As suggested, the p-value must be smaller than 0.05 to be considered significant. However, the other three variables significantly influenced the confidence level of intention to purchase halal food via ordering an online application comprising product brand at (p=0.000), halal product awareness at (p=0.003) and product safety at (0.001).

The regression equation explaining the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is captured as;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

Therefore;

$$CLIPHF = 0.797 - 0.005 (PQ) + 0.283 (PB) + 0.202 (HPA) + 0.349 (PS) \quad (2)$$

The study also employed tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values to clarify the multicollinearity problem. Results of the study revealed no multicollinearity problem for product quality, product brand, halal product awareness and product safety. The tolerance values for the variables are greater than 0.1, which means the results raise no multicollinearity problem (Hair et al, 2006; Pallant, 2005). On the other hand, the VIF values greater than 10 show collinearity existed (Amin and Ramayah, 2010). The VIF values for the present study were all below 10 and the tolerance values were all above 0.1, which could be concluded that there was no collinearity with the data of the study.

**Table 6.** Hypotheses Result

Hypotheses	Sig.	Result
H <sub>1</sub>	.947	Not supported
H <sub>2</sub>	.000	Supported
H <sub>3</sub>	.003	Supported
H <sub>4</sub>	.001	Supported

#### 4. CONCLUSION

COVID-19 changes food purchasing among consumers especially Muslim consumer who concern about the halal food they want to consume. Online purchasing is the best platform for consumers which the government determined for consumers to purchase food. Consumers are more likely to purchase food online due to the COVID-19 epidemic, government support and regulation should focus on ensuring the safety of food sold via the internet. Many factors that consumers need to pay attention to when buying food online, that are about the quality, brand, halal awareness and product safety. These factors influence confidence level intention to purchase halal food via online.

Some limitations of this paper should be noted since they may have implications for future research. It must be remembered that this study was undertaken in Malaysia, and whether the results of this paper are applicable to other countries remains uncertain. With the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic globally, it would be of great significance to examine whether and how the results differ in other countries.

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