

[IPHS#105]

The Importance of Halal Labelled Meat towards Muslim Consumers in Brunei Darussalam

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ABSTRACT

Halal logo has played an important role in bringing the end product to market with trust and confidence given from producers to the consumers. Thus, the objective of this study is to determine the importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers in Brunei Darussalam. Hence, to satisfy the objective, a qualitative method is employed. Data were collected using primary data source where semi-structured interviews were conducted and secondary data by using library research and past literatures review. One local abattoir of halal meat production has been chosen, where two persons who held the positions of halal officer and plant manager from the company were selected to be interviewed. Findings showed that when halal logo being displayed, it will play a vital role in convincing the consumers mainly the Muslims to purchase the meat without having any suspicions on the integrity and quality. Thus, it is important for Muslim consumers to only seek halal labelled meat as it is guaranteed that the procedures from farm to consumption point were observed.

Keywords: Halal logo; Halal meat; Integrity; Quality; Regulations

1 Introduction

Labelling halal logo on meat is vital in Brunei Darussalam as Muslims are required to consume only halal food due to the fact that Islam has its own dietary laws for food consumption. The fundamental element is that the food must be both halal (lawful or permitted) and also *tayyib*, means wholesomeness (hygienic, safe, quality and healthy) [1-3]. It has been mentioned in Al-Quran, Surah al-Baqarah verse 168;

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy".

Therefore, the study is aimed to determine the importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers in Brunei Darussalam. Thus, the objective could be by finding the answer to this question; What is the importance of halal labelled meat towards; Muslim consumers? Hence, the study is significant in providing information to Muslim consumers, producers and also government on the importance of consuming meat that has halal logo as the procedures has been thoroughly checked by the producers and government. It also gives insight to the



new stakeholders who desire to cater meat for public consumption to label their meat with certified halal logo before putting it on the market.

2 Materials and Methods

To satisfy the objective as mentioned above, a qualitative method is employed. Data will be collected using primary data source where semi-structured interviews will be used and secondary data by using library research and past literatures review. One local abattoir of halal meat production has been chosen via purposive/judgmental sampling, where two persons who held the positions of halal officer and plant manager from the company were selected to be interviewed via email.

3 Results

3.1 From interview approach

Table 1 below shows information related to the importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers. These details were taken from the interviews conducted with one local abattoir of halal meat production in Brunei Darussalam.

Table 1: Importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers [4].

Muslim consumers	Importance of halal labelled meat	
	Consumers' awareness	• Importance of consuming meat that complies with Islamic law.
		• To only purchase meat that has certified halal logo.
	Consumers' purchasing decision	• The halal logo gives consumers the assurance to purchase the meat without hesitation/doubt.
		• No halal logo- cast suspicion on consumers.
	Consumers' protection	• Protect consumers from purchasing meat from ambiguity sources.
	Assurance	• Belief in the governments and the producers' ability to provide halal and high quality of meat.

3.2 From past literatures approach

Table 2 below shows information related to the importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers, producers and government in Brunei Darussalam. Information collected are from the library research, compilation of past literatures review.

Table 2: Importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers[5-14]

Muslim consumers	Importance of halal labelled meat	
	Consumers' awareness	• Importance of consuming meat that follow Islamic guidelines.
		• To only purchase meat that has certified halal logo.
	Consumers' purchasing decision	• With halal logo, consumers will gain confidence to purchase without doubts.
		• No halal logo- raise consumers doubt.
	Time management	• Purchasing make it easier when halal logo is displayed.
	Consumers' protection	• Protect consumers from dishonest, deceitful or unjust business practices.
	Assurance	• Trust and confidence towards the producers and government in producing a halal and high quality of meat.

4 Discussion

4.1 Muslim consumers

With regards to the importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers, firstly, from the information collected during the interview, it revealed that with the usage of halal logo on meat, it has spawned Muslim consumers consciousness on the significance of consuming meat that is adhere to the Islamic rules and principles [4-6]. This indirectly has generated more awareness to only purchase meat that has been certified halal by Brunei government [4]. This has been stated in the previous literatures. It showed that Muslim consumers uphold the religious duty/obligations given to them as it was prescribed for every Muslim individual to seek only “Halal/permissible” matters and avoiding the “Haram/prohibited” things [7]. This was clearly stated on Surah al-Baqarah verse 168:

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy”.

Secondly, in consumers’ decision on purchasing meat, halal logo has served its crucial function [8]. From the statement gather through the interview, and along with the findings from previous studies, accordingly, when halal logo being displayed, it will play a vital role in convincing the consumers mainly the Muslim to purchase the meat without having any suspicions on the integrity and quality [4,7-9]. Thus, without any halal logo, it would immediately raise consumers’ doubt, which subsequently may influence their decision to purchase the meat. This could, inadvertently, result in the purchase being cancelled [9]. It also has to be emphasized that the absence of halal logo, it could naturally open up possibilities of mixing of halal and non-halal things, where doubtful matters will arise, which then ultimately create a confusion among the consumers itself [2,5,10]. This doubtful matter should be completely avoided as it could fall into haram categories. Based on the hadith Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari:

“Verily, the lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear, and between the two of them are doubtful matters about which many people do not know. Thus, he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honour, and he who falls into doubtful matters will fall into the unlawful as the shepherd who pastures near a sanctuary, all but grazing therein. Verily, every king has a sanctum and the sanctum of Allah is his prohibitions. Verily, in the body is a piece of flesh which, if sound, the entire body is sound, and if corrupt, the entire body is corrupt. Truly, it is the heart.”

Thirdly, Muslim consumers can minimize their time on examining or verifying with the meat seller on where the meat comes from to ensure that non-halal substances or materials are not found in the meat if halal logo are being displayed. As a consequence, the consumers will not be experiencing any hassles when purchasing meat, thus leading into purchasing of the meat.

Fourthly, before consumers are making decision to purchase, they have a right to know what they are consuming. Thus, by the presence of the halal logo on meat, they are made to be aware and informed about the meat they are considering to purchase. The inference is that enforcing halal logo on the meat will shield the consumers against dishonest, deceitful or unjust business practices [6,8,11]. From the interview conducted, it also can protect consumers from purchasing meat from ambiguity sources such as meat from illegal activities. This is due to the fact that Muslim consumers are known to be vigilant when it comes to the halal status of the food as consuming halal food is essential and mandatory in Islam [4,10-11].

Lastly, meat that has halal logo could provide imperative assurance to the Muslim consumers [4,7-8,14]. In other words, consumers have built trust and confidence to the local producers as well as government by providing them a halal and high-quality of meat as they can purchase meat without any doubts and hesitation. This statement also aligned with what the literatures has disclosed.

5 Conclusions

To conclude this study, it can be seen that labelling halal logo on meat is crucial to Muslim consumers. This is due to the fact that meat that has halal logo has given a massive impact to the consumers in terms of its purchasing decision, trust and confidence, awareness, quality assurance and also its traceability of meat production. Thus, it is important for Muslim consumers to only seek halal labelled meat as it is guaranteed that the procedures from farm to consumption point was observed. One hadith narrated by Anas RadiyaAllahu anhu, the Prophet (PBUH) said: *"The striving to earn halal is compulsory for every Muslim"*. (Riwayat Imam Ad-Dailani in Musnad al-Firdaus).

Acknowledgments

The researchers would like to give sincere thanks to Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn. Bhd. for the cooperation and help by participating in the interview. The input and knowledge are treasured by the researchers.

Competing Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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