

The Awareness of Muslim Consumers towards the Halal Logo in Malaysia

Kesedaran Pengguna Muslim Terhadap Logo Halal di Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The halal logo is an important symbol for the Muslim community in Malaysia and around the world. The logo is the standard for consumers in determining the halal status. It is one of the important instruments for consumers in choosing food and restaurant premises as a dining destination. Although the logo is a positive development for Muslims in Malaysia, this scenario has caused the Muslim community to put their full reliance on this logo in the selection of restaurants. The level of knowledge in determining the halal status is low. The community lacks the ability to determine the legitimacy of food because of the high degree of dependence on the logo. Therefore, this study aims of explaining the concept of halal logo use, identifying consumer awareness of the use of halal logo and assessing the level of dependence of Muslim users on the halal logo. The design of the study was the observation-based survey. Participation observation is conducted to critically examine, view and review situations or events based on the objectives established. Unstructured observation is made without referring to a set of activities or aspects that have been identified specifically. However, this observation is guided by a checklist for data collection focused and meets the objectives set. Observations were made on food premises located at one of the major shopping malls in the Klang Valley. The findings are expected to assess the extent to which consumers have been exposed to the use of halal logos in food establishments in Malaysia.

Keywords: Halal; Halal logo; Halal JAKIM; Halal logo usage; Muslim Consumer's Awareness.

ABSTRAK

Logo halal adalah simbol penting bagi masyarakat Islam di Malaysia dan di seluruh dunia. Logo ini adalah standard bagi pengguna dalam menentukan status halal makanan. Dari perspektif pengguna, ini adalah salah satu instrumen untuk memilih premis makanan dan restoran sebagai tempat makan. Walaupun kewujudan logo ini merupakan perkembangan positif bagi umat Islam di Malaysia, tetapi senario ini telah menyebabkan masyarakat Islam bergantung sepenuhnya kepada logo ini dalam pemilihan restoran. Tahap pengetahuan dalam menentukan status halal adalah didapati rendah dalam kalangan orang awam. Masyarakat tidak mempunyai kemampuan untuk menentukan kesahihan makanan kerana tahap kebergantungan yang tinggi terhadap logo. Oleh itu, kajian ini dilakukan dengan tujuan untuk menjelaskan konsep penggunaan logo halal, mengenal pasti kesedaran pengguna tentang penggunaan logo halal dan menilai tahap kebergantungan pengguna Muslim terhadap logo halal. Reka bentuk kajian adalah tinjauan berdasarkan pemerhatian. Pemerhatian penyertaan dilakukan untuk mengkaji, melihat dan meninjau situasi atau peristiwa secara kritis berdasarkan objektif yang telah ditetapkan. Pemerhatian tidak berstruktur dibuat tanpa merujuk kepada sekumpulan aktiviti atau aspek yang telah dikenal pasti secara khusus. Walau bagaimanapun, pemerhatian ini dipandu oleh senarai semak untuk pengumpulan data yang difokuskan dan memenuhi objektif yang ditetapkan. Pemerhatian dibuat di premis makanan yang terletak di salah sebuah pusat membeli-belah utama di Lembah Klang. Penemuan ini diharapkan dapat menilai sejauh mana kesedaran pengguna Muslim terhadap penggunaan logo halal di kedai makanan di Malaysia.

Kata kunci: Logo Halal; Halal; JAKIM Halal; Penggunaan logo halal; Kesedaran Pengguna Muslim.

INTRODUCTION

Consumption and selection of halal goods in life is very important for every Muslim, whether in terms of nutrition, clothing, equipment or other stuff. This matter is taken seriously in Islam and some efforts as well as steps have been taken to preserve and control it. Among them by proposing the enactment of halal

acts and laws, launching awareness campaigns to each state through visits and coverage by media such as bulletins and halal journals on television, radio (Hifza Rahimah Ibrahim & Mohd Zhafran Helmi Mokhtarudin, 2010: 46) or the internet.

Even global efforts are also carried out such as promoting halal products internationally by organizing the International Halal Showcase

(MIHAS) and Halal Festival (Halfest) in Malaysia, which is seen as a potential halal center in the world (Suhaila Abdul Rahman, 2010: 14-16).

The display of the halal logo in an eating establishment plays a significant role in convincing the customers mainly the Muslims to visit and dine without having any suspicions on the purity of the food. In Malaysia, the activities of controlling, monitoring, and regulating halal food products sold in Malaysia and the export market are under the supervision of Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia/ Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) (JAKIM 2010).

These efforts are further strengthened by carrying out enforcement and standardization of the application of the halal logo on every product and item marketed. This enforcement and standardization was received with reaction and different views from Muslim consumers at the same time affect the image of the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) as the body responsible for this endeavor. Plus, the logo halal has now become a phenomenon in business and priorities for companies and industries to promote a product so that it can be accepted by society especially Muslim consumers (Shambavi Rajagopal et al., 2011: 138-153)

The halal logo is an important icon for Muslims, especially in Malaysia. The Halal logo is an effort to open the door of *ijtihad*. This *ijtihad* will contribute to solving various humanitarian problems (Ahidul Asror, 2020), especially those related to the food industry. It is also a simple visual statement but has a very strong impact on society. This logo is loaded with both expressive and implied meaning (Ros Mahwati 2017).

Halal certification now goes beyond the religious point of view. This certification relates significantly to safety and hygiene. Muslim and non Muslim consumers in Malaysia and all over the world are interested production purchasing halal products because it clarifies that the food preparation and final product are safe and hygienic to be consumed. Therefore, it is important to find the relationship between Halal certification and its impact to business growth (Asnidar Hanim, Syadiyah & Ummi Salwa, 2016). From the religious point of view, it is *da'wa* (Wan Haslan, Indriaty & Abdull Rahman, 2020).

The emergence of the halal logo at the beginning of its use was ignored by society. Today, however, the logo is in the spotlight and is getting attention from local and foreign companies. Japan and Europe are among the countries that pay attention to this

logo for economic reasons (Yacob, Shakila; Zainol, Rosilawati; Hussin, Hanafi, 2018) (V Ramesh, Shirley, 2020).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The history of Halal certification in Malaysia began in 1974. It began with the involvement of the Research Center, Islamic Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Office in providing a halal authorization letter for Shariah-compliant products. Halal certification was first introduced in the form of certification and logos in 1994. The inspection process began in 1998 and Company Ilham Daya was appointed by the Malaysian government to carry out the responsibility (Malaysian Halal Official Portal) (Ros Mahwati, 2017) (Ibrahim, Noraini, 1998).

However, in 2002, the government directed all halal certification activities to be fully implemented by JAKIM through the Division of Study on Islamic Food and Goods. In view of the rapid growth of the food industry in the country, on November 17, 2005, the Department of Public Services Malaysia approved 165 posts of various schemes and grades under the new name of the Halal Hub Division (Official Portal of Halal Malaysia).

In 2008, the management of the halal certification was again handed over to the private sector of the Halal Industry Development Corporation before being restored to its role and function to JAKIM based on the decision after the meeting of the Cabinet on July 8, 2009 (Malaysian Halal Official Portal).

The long experience that JAKIM has in Halal management has proven the advantage. The Malaysian halal logo is now one of the most well-established standards in Halal certification and has gained global recognition (Ros Mahwati 2017).

According to Sazelin Arif (2012), the real concept of halal is not just halal and clean from haram elements alone. In fact, he should be able to maintain the five things of *ḍarūrī* which are religion, life, intellect, lineage and property of the *mafsadah*. In addition to prioritising halal food and his *ṭayyib* also emphasized the importance and necessity implementation of the concept of *ḥalālān ṭayyibān* from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-Syar'iyyah* in the procedure of determining halal food based on two main scopes, namely:

1. Procedures for the determination of halal food analyzed from the workflow comprehensive halal certification.

2. The role of JAKIM as the main body implementing halal certification in Malaysia.

Based on the above opinions and views, it is found that understanding the concept of halal comprehensively from a theoretical and practical point of view is the matter the basics that need to be emphasized on each user. This is because of the halal issue is a broad issue and is very closely related to the daily activities of each individual. Even an accurate understanding of the next halal concept can influence the attitudes and actions of users in addition to being able to build a healthy and safe consumer culture.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Although the existence of this logo is a positive development for Muslims in Malaysia, this scenario has led the public to give JAKIM a total halal decision-making process. The level of knowledge in determining the halal status is low among people. Society lacks the skills to determine the halal status of food.

According to the survey, one of the challenges faced by the halal industry in Malaysia is the issue of using the halal logo among traders and the high level of public reliance on halal logos thus reducing their sensitivity and knowledge of the issue.

Although law and regulation related to halal supervision implemented in Malaysia have the basic right and good, but in the meantime the enforcements are still questionable. The halal logo is a victim of forgery and abuse. The Malaysian halal industry is shocked by a series of logos such as marketing of peanut products and snacks using the halal logo without approval at Chemor (Farah Suhaida, 2018), using the halal logo of the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (JAKIM) in Merlimau illegally (Mohd Hilmie, 2018), processing fish balls in Jalan Pinang Tunggal here is detected using halal logos and certificates not recognized by the Islamic Development Department of Malaysia (Jakim) in Sungai Petani (Othman Yahya, 2018) and more.

Based on the source of the newspaper, the abuse of the halal logo has been identified in several forms. Among the forms of logo abuse that occurred are forgery of the logos, using uncertified halal logos, using expired logos and some other abuse. In conclusion, economic factors are seen as the basis for the problems that arise.

Malaysia has always been known as a food paradise. Food outlets such as chained restaurants and food stalls owned by various ethnic groups are springing like mushrooms after rain due to the diversity of ethnic groups throughout the country (Suzanah Abdul Hamid, 2017). Society's obsession with food has an impact on the food industry. Foreign restaurants also color the local food industry. The feeling of wanting to try is also ingrained in the consumer which is sometimes influenced by the film industry factors such as Korean dramas that is affecting the sociocultural community including the food aspect (Nor Hashimah & Zaharani, 2012). As a multi-racial country, tolerance model shows that the perception and attitude of Muslim citizens contribute to tolerance behaviour (Fazilah, Khadijah & Khairul Anwar, 2019), which allows them to consume food from another ethnic group if it is certified to be halal.

Early observations have shown that the halal logo is not a must. Not all restaurants have halal logos. Basically, the community has the ability to determine which restaurants are halal and which ones are not without its logo. The principle is also simple. A shop owned by a Muslim or a shop that exhibits the features of Islam by name or another feature is decidedly a halal restaurant. But the question is, do all Muslim communities in Malaysia have this capability? Or are these aspects manipulated by irresponsible owners so that their shops will appear to look halal and visited by Muslim consumers? Thus, the study was conducted to unravel the concept of using the halal logo and to identify awareness of displaying the halal logo among the owners of food stores in one of the largest shopping malls in Putrajaya. The study also assessed the level of dependence of Muslim consumers on the halal logo in food selection.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives; Elaborating on the concept of using the halal logo and identifying the awareness of the food store owners displaying the halal logo. Consuming halal products is an obligation and a religious requirement to every Muslim. So, several efforts and initiatives have been made by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) to carry out the monitoring, enforcement and issuing of the halal certification. This article reviews the acceptance and Muslim consumers' perception of the monitoring

and the enforcement of JAKIM's halal logo. It also aims to understand the sensitivity and awareness of Muslim consumers as well as determine the level of prioritization of the halal logo towards consumers in purchasing the items they need.

RESEARCH QUERIES

This study was conducted to address the following research questions; What is the meaning of the Halal logo and whether the owner of the food store has the awareness of displaying the Halal logo on their premises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal brings great meaning to Muslims. Halal is not just about food; it covers all aspects of human life. The query of halal in the context of nutrition is considered to be very important as it is going to be part of the blood and flesh, and affects human behavior (MN Kasmon, 2011).

Halal product is widely recognized for their quality assurance. Meanwhile, the halal logo has become a symbol of good quality product. The global demand for halal food in accordance to Shariah compliant will continue to rise with a huge global demand. Islam is the basis of public and private life in Muslim nations (Zamani Farhani et. al 2010). This indicates that Islam has inspired the way of life of a Muslim and food consumption is one of them. With the growing number of Muslim population worldwide, the demand for halal food is simultaneously at an increasing rate. Zailani et al. (2011) highlighted that the world Muslim population has been growing rapidly from 1.84 billion in 2007 to approximately 3 billion in 2010. Al-Nahdi et al. (2009) on their survey found that majority of Malaysian Muslim considers the concept of halal as vital before consumption on patronizing halal restaurants.

HALAL CONCEPT

Halal is an Arabic word meaning permitted or permitted by Islamic law. Islamic law (Syara') is referring to Islamic law by the Shafi'i schools of thought, or Maliki, Hambali or Hanafi schools of thought, as ordered by the King of Malaysia and enforced in the Federal Territory or designated by

the Head of State of any state and enforced in their respective states (Malaysian Halal Official Portal).

Islam encourages its people to eat Halal and good food. Allah Almighty says in surah al-Baqarah verse: 172 means "O you who believe! Eat from the good things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship".

The origin of everything is *mubah* or halal as long as there is no explicit prohibition against it. This is the deal agreed upon by scholars. This statement clearly shows that halal food is plentiful. The illegal foods discussed in Islam do not restrict the diet of Muslims.

In determining the Halal status of food, several principles need to be taken into account. Yusuf al-Qaradhawi (1985) outlined some important principles that are: (i) Determination of Halal or Haram is the absolute right of Allah, (ii) Prohibiting the halal is shirk, (iii) illegal food is harmful, (iv) Halal food does not require the haram, (v) mediation of prohibition is the haram, (vi) investigating illegal things is illegal, (vii) good faith not legalizing the haram, (viii) avoiding syubhah, (ix) the haram is still haram for all and (x) the emergency lifted an illegal ban.

The concept of halal is not based on the halal and purity of things that are illegal, but rather it has to preserve the five things contained in the *maqasid syar'iyah* namely the preservation of religion, life, intellect, posterity and wealth (Sazelin Arif, 2012).

The halal concept that Islam advocates is holistic. The term *halalan taiyyiban* is used in the al-Quranic al-Karim through verse 168 of the surah al-Baqarah. The concept of *halalan taiyyiban* from the perspective of JAKIM's applied *maqasid syar'iyah* emphasises two key elements of the process of determining halal food involving the comprehensive workflow of halal certification and JAKIM is the leading body for implementing halal certification in Malaysia (Siti Fatimah & Ahmad Hidayat, 2016). This is the basis for the halal certification process in Malaysia.

All in all, halal refers to actions or the use of things that fulfil the human needs which are designed for health, safety and conformity with Shariah requirements. In the Quran, the word Halal has been used in the context of *muamalat*, family matters and marriage, food, earning a living and so on. However, halal is used most often in the context of food and earning a living.

MALAYSIAN HALAL LOGO

The Malaysian Halal logo is the most trusted logo in Malaysia and is gaining international attention. The responsible parties responsible for issuing the halal logo are the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), the State Islamic Religious Department (JAIN) and the State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN). However, JAKIM is the most powerful body to coordinate halal certification in Malaysia. So, it is not surprising that the Malaysian halal logo has gained worldwide recognition as it involves direct government participation in the certification (Malaysian Halal Official Portal; Ros Mahwati 2017).

The halal logo is a simple visual statement of full meaning. The Malaysian halal logo is made up of four components namely the eight-pointed star, the halal word, the circle that's with the word Malaysia written on it and the two smaller five-pointed stars. All of these representations have their own meanings and interpretations.

For JAIN and MAIN released logos, some additional information is included on the logo. The letter H is placed under the halal mark in writing and is accompanied by a state code according to the National Registration Department. For example, H-10 refers to Halal issued by the state of Selangor (Halal Malaysia Official Portal).

The Malaysian Halal logo is subject to the Trade Descriptions (Use of the term "Halal") 1975. The term halal is used in relation to food in any form, in the process of trade or business as one aspect of trade or as part of a trade aspect for the labelled food, the term 'Halal', 'Halal Guaranteed' or 'Islamic food'. It includes food products and beverages, utilities, food premises and slaughterhouses (Official Portal Halal Malaysia).

THE ACT OF EMPOWERING THE USE OF HALAL LOGO IN MALAYSIA

Efforts To empower the use of halal logos in all food-related premises is constantly being enhanced. Several efforts were made to further strengthen the enforcement of the logo (Siti Fatimah & Ahmad Hidayat 2016).

The process of obtaining a halal logo is not an easy task. It has to go through a rather stringent procedure. Applications for halal certification nationally and internationally need to be submitted directly to the JAKIM halal hub. Whereas local applications are made directly to the relevant JAIN

or MAIN. Applicants eligible to apply are producers/manufacturers, distributors/sellers, sub-contract manufacturers, packaging companies, food premises and slaughterhouses. Applicants will need to complete the appropriate form whether it is a food/household product, food premises or slaughterhouse (Official Halal Portal of Malaysia).

The approval process is subject to several conditions. Applications will be rejected if the manufacturer or distributor is not Halal, the product itself is not Halal, natural products that do not involve any processing, medicines and pharmaceutical products, hair dyes, overseas processed products, fertilizers fertilisers and animal foods (Official Malaysian Halal Portal).

The use of the halal logo is a cultural standard. The halal logo is used to help consumers choose halal food. Nowadays, the use of halal logos is seen across cultural standards. It is also one of today's marketing and business strategies (Lokman Ab. Rahman 2005).

Economic factors are seen as the driving force behind the use of halal logos on food premises. Almost all food outlets use and display the halal logo as an effort to attract customers including local consumers and Muslim tourists especially from the Middle East (Ros Mahwati 2017).

The use of halal logos is known to be used by large local and international companies. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) entrepreneurs claim that the process is complicated, tedious and overly restrictive (Mohani Abdul et al., 2009), while requiring relatively high management costs. Therefore, what can be seen is that non-Muslim food owners are the main users of this halal logo and have greatly benefited from its use.

The Consumers

Consumers are actors on the marketplace stage. Consumers, in general, can be referred as individuals who purchase or consume products and services. However, in terms of buyer and consumer, there is a slight difference.

Buyers are the people who are acting either as ultimate, industrial, or institutional purchasers. The latter one, consumer, refers to individuals who purchase formerly ultimate use, which is more restrictive in terms of meaning (Sternthal Craig 1982) that is, the end-users for whom the products or services are ultimately designed for.

Consumer behaviour has always been an area of major interest for social science researchers,

witnessing an explosion over the past 50 years (MacInnis & Folkes, 2010). Accordingly, literature on this topic has been the center of attention in a number of previous studies. Literature on consumer behavior is diverse and extensive as changes in society, economics and technology affect the way consumers behave. Inevitably, these changes lead to changed consumer behavior studies by which, when, how, and why the topics are studied. Like any other discipline, systematic analysis of the knowledge development status of consumer behavior field is critical in ensuring its future growth (Williams & Plouffe, 2007).

Consumer's intention to purchase any product entirely depends on three main factors, namely, attitude, subject norms and perceived behavioural control. The authors postulated that consumers are most likely to engage only in those behaviours where they have full control. Subjective norms that are considered in this theory are those norms which can be accepted by the society where consumers interact. According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), a subjective norm also can be termed as an attitude towards a particular behaviour. In other words, this is the perception of an individual towards social factors that influence individuals to perform or not to perform particular behaviours. In this theory, attitude is considered as a result of belief. Consumers will hold positive or favourable attitudes if the behaviour performed leads to positive outcomes. On the other hand, consumers will hold negative or unfavourable attitudes if the behaviour performed leads to negative outcomes. However, a person is assumed to hold many behavioural beliefs associated with certain behaviours (Ajzen, 2002).

Public perception and view of the halal logo

Views mean impressions. Perception refers to the images or reflections in the heart or mind of something. Both of these elements, in many cases, affect human attitudes and actions.

Views and perceptions are influenced by a number of factors including religion. Religion is the most important factor in this study, since halal is a religious issue. Religion is the biggest factor influencing consumers especially in their daily food choices (Suzannah Abdul Rahman et al. 2013: 413-42).

The use of the halal logo may seem trivial to some people, but it is of great benefit to the Muslim community, especially those living in a pluralistic society such as Malaysia (Ros Mahwati, 2017). The

mere use of the halal logo on an item is not enough to convince the consumer of the legal status of the item, but traders and consumers benefit from its use (MN Kasmon 2011).

Traders or owners of food premises are a group of people who greatly benefit from the use of this halal logo. This group has positive views and perceptions of its use. The use of the halal logo can boost demand and the number of customers visiting their premises. The real halal logo benefits non-Muslim business people.

The study on consumer perceptions towards food safety is very complex. Barnett and Breakwell (2001) point out that consumer perceptions towards food safety is influenced by the risk experienced by the individual. Other researchers indicate that factors such as worry (Baron et al., 2000) and anxiety (Boyur et al., 2001) might also contribute to consumer perceptions towards food safety. From Islamic point of view, halal food is clean and safe to eat. Based on the concept of halal, jurists have established that foods containing anything that could bring harm to consumers are prohibited to be consumed (Che Hassan, 2005). According to the Consumers Association of Penang (2006), halal products count heavily on food hygiene. However, some current issues involving halal logo and food producers who do not respect the religious sensitivities among Muslims have resulted in doubt about the status of halal logo.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a field study in the form of a survey conducted to identify the current status of awareness of displaying the halal logo on food premises. The research method used is a field study involving participant observation. This method allows the researcher to play two roles: participant and observer. It also allows the researcher to experience the experience of choosing a destination based on the halal logo on display.

The study involved 104 of the 135 food premises located in one of the largest shopping malls in the Klang Valley. The shopping centre is chosen based on a number of factors namely geography, location, demographic population and trend (popularity).

Observations are administered based on a checklist. This checklist is also guided by the segmentation of food-based segmentation for more systematic insights. The categorization of premises is based on the listing on the mall information

boards with minor modifications. Observations on displaying halal logos are cross-checked with halal verification information on the JAKIM Halal portal. The findings of the study are presented in the form of simple mapping and percentages.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Demographics

The study was conducted in one of the largest shopping malls in the Klang Valley. Observations were made on the use of the Malaysian Halal logo

on the main food premises of the mall based on four categories: fast food restaurants, restaurants & cafes (international), restaurants & cafes (local) as well as snacks and pastries.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of food premises by category. The data shows that the food chain is comprised of 11 fast food restaurants, 44 international restaurants & cafes, 29 local restaurants and cafés, and 20 snacks and pastries. Most of these food establishments represent restaurants and cafes (84 premises or 80%) and the rest are snack and pastry premises. Overall, the study also involved 77 percent of the premises located in the mall.



FIGURE 1. Food Premises Based on Category

2. The concept on the Use of the Halal Logo

The use of the halal logo refers to the display and use of the halal logo on food and beverage products, essentials, food premises and slaughter houses. Only one standard logo used is the Malaysian Halal Logo issued by JAKIM, JAIN and MAIN authorities. For JAIN and MAIN released logos, some additional information is included on the logo to symbolise the state of the producer.

The use of the halal logo on the food premises is not mandatory. Owners of food premises may display or not display the Malaysian Halal Logo in their premises. The halal status and use of the Malaysian Halal Logo is upon request. Holders of

halal status certificates may use halal logos and are subject to compliance and enforcement.

3. Percentage of stores displaying halal logo

The findings show that the level of the halal logo usage on food premises are low. The observational data obtained shows that only 18.1% (19/105) of the food premises involved with the observation displayed the halal logo in front or in their premises. This data indirectly explains that the majority of food premises do not display the halal logo on their premises representing 81.9%. This finding suggests that displaying the halal logo is not a requirement in the food business or that many food premises are not from the halal category.

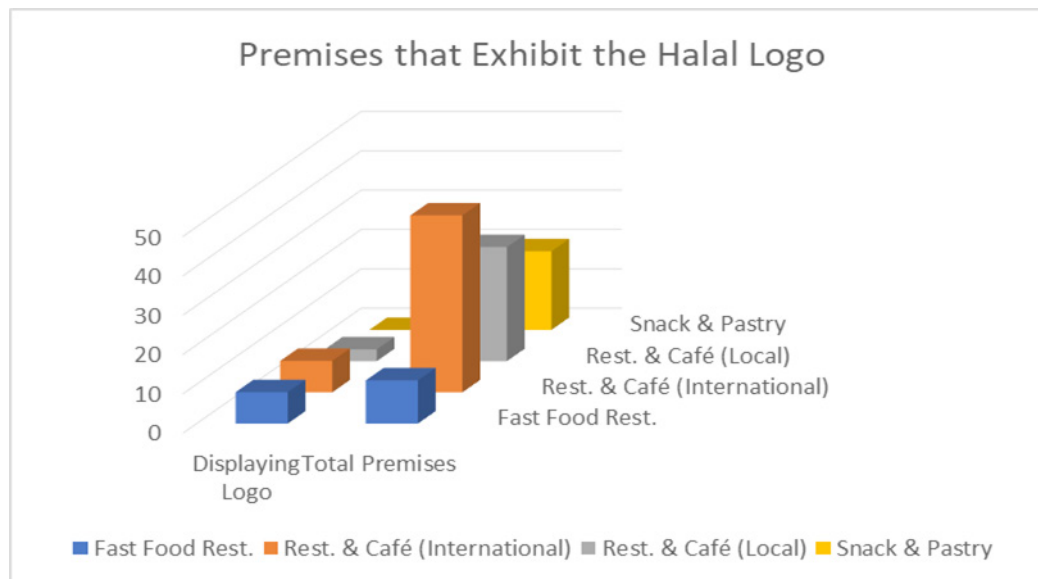


FIGURE 2. Premises that Exhibit the Halal Logo

In-depth research on the 19 premises that display the halal logo shows that the majority of the premises are franchise / fast food restaurants and international companies. Data shows 42% (8) of the premises displaying the halal logo are from the franchise / fast food category and 42% (8) are from international restaurants and only 15.8% represent local restaurants & cafes. There are no logos displayed by the snack and pastry category premises. The findings show that international fast food and restaurant companies represent the highest percentage (84%) among premises that display halal logos.

This finding also explains why 72% of the fast-food restaurants surveyed displayed a halal logo in

their premises. Although this fast-food restaurant has a good halal reputation among Malaysians, it still exhibits a halal logo. This shows a high commitment to halal status among fast food providers.

4. The status of the halal logo is on display

Observation is ongoing on the validity of the logo displayed. The findings indicate that 100% of the logos displayed are valid, meet the criteria and are still in the validity period. This finding shows that all 19 premises that display the halal logo have valid halal certificate holder status. This explains international franchises and restaurants have a high level of commitment and compliance with the Malaysian Halal Logo.

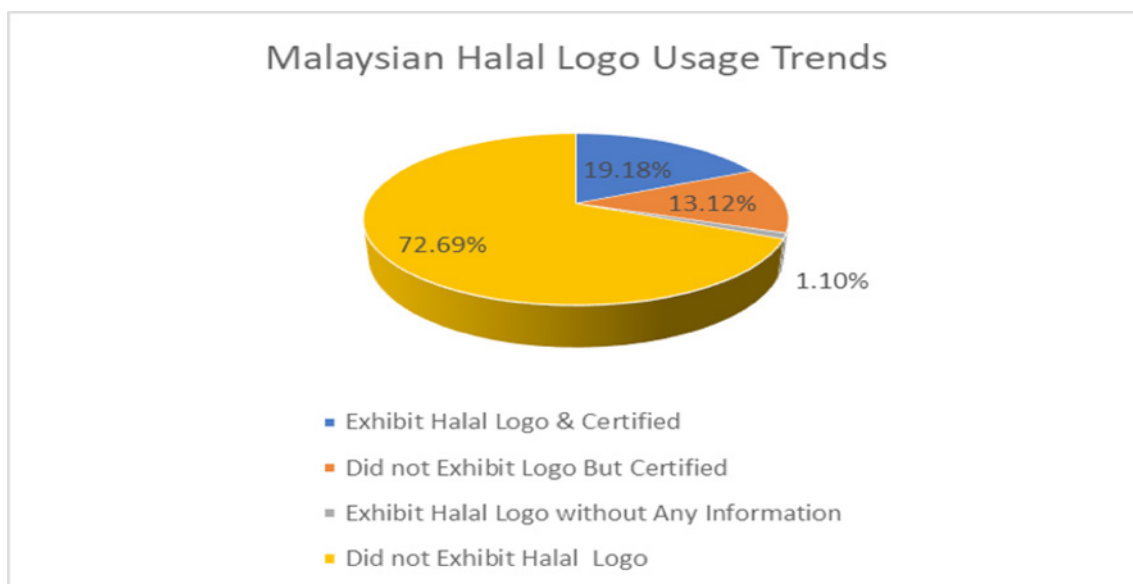


FIGURE 3. Malaysian Halal Logo Usage Trends

Figure 3 also shows that a premise representing one percent of the total number of premises surveyed exhibits a halal certificate, but its validity cannot be ascertained. A search for JAKIM's halal status check did not find any information about the premises. This finding explains that there are possibilities of the halal logo manipulation.

5. The halal status of stores that did not display the logo

The use of the Malaysian Halal Logo is not mandatory. Therefore, not all premises that do not display the halal logo do not have a valid certification status. The findings show that 13 food premises do not display the halal logo but have the status of holders of Malaysian halal certificates. This number makes the premises with halal status 30% of the total dining premises available in the mall.

DISCUSSION

Overall, all the objectives and research questions outlined in this study have been answered through the data and findings presented. Overall, all the objectives and research questions outlined in this study have been answered through the data and findings presented. Only the JAKIM halal logo is allowed to be used with certain standards and specifications.

The awareness of displaying the halal logo among the owners of food premises. The findings show that the awareness level of the halal logo on food premises is at a moderate level. This is evidenced by the percentage of premises that have halal certification status and exhibit a halal logo which represents only 59%. This means that 41% of premises with halal status do not display the logo on the assumption that the surrounding community is aware of their halal status, or that the premises do not require the logo to line up their sales. This finding addresses the objectives of the second study.

This scenario indirectly leads to another question, Does today's Muslim community rely on the logo in choosing their dining destination? Given the findings of this study, Muslim consumers do not have any problems in choosing fast food restaurants as these companies are very committed to ensuring that their halal certificate status is always valid and certified. However, in the context

of selecting international and local food premises, Muslim consumers are expected to face confusion and difficulties.

The survey shows that the halal logo does not seem to be significant for some Muslim consumers, especially when choosing an international food destination. The food premise does not display the halal logo and does not have a valid certification record on JAKIM's official portal but has received extraordinary visits from Muslim users. Based on this finding, Muslim dependence on the halal logo is quite limited and the logo factor is found to not influence the user to enter a restaurant. So, what are the factors that influence the choice of Muslim consumers on these premises? These questions are, therefore, important aspects to be considered in future studies.

Based on these opinions, it is evident that the views and each individual's perception is different due to the existence of several factors that such as nature, circumstances, religion and so on. Although so, it can still be used as an added value and initiative in evaluating JAKIM's halal enforcement and management in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

Deepening the concept of halal from different aspects can have a positive impact on consumer attitudes and actions. In order to realise it, some effort and action have been taken by JAKIM. The effort is however accepted with different views and perceptions by Muslim consumers, at the same time showing that most Muslim consumers are very sensitive to halal issues. At the same time, JAKIM needs to improve and enhance the management system and existing halal services as a progressive step towards making Malaysia the halal center of the world.

Overall, the Malaysian Halal Logo certainly has a huge impact on the halal industry. It is undeniable that this logo is of great benefit to Muslims especially in Malaysia and also internationally. However, the Muslim community should not rely on this logo alone, but rather be prepared with the knowledge of halal foods. In this way, JAKIM is a powerful authority and the community will work together to ensure that the country's halal industry is always in the best position to guide the international halal industry.

Malaysia could not afford to miss this opportunity as its aspiration is to become the halal hub in this region and to spur the growth of small and

medium enterprises which dominated the halal food industry. Globally, halal products are recognised for their benchmark on safety and quality as they are linked to cleanliness, being healthier, tastier and having global acceptance (Alam and Sayuti, 2011).

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