

UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HALAL FOOD CHOICES AND RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT AMONG MUSLIM STUDENTS IN MALAYSIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract—The growing emphasis on nutrition around the world, especially among young people, has sparked a great deal of scholarly research into eating patterns and their wider effects. Muslim students at public universities in the Klang Valley of Malaysia are the subjects of this study, which looks at their halal eating habits and Islamic worldview (Tasawwur). The study examines how perception, knowledge, and religious awareness affect food choices and consumption habits. It is based on the Islamic concept of Halalan Tayyiban, which emphasizes the permissibility and wholesomeness of food. A validated structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 439 Muslim students at six major public institutions using a quantitative cross-sectional methodology. The study's theoretical underpinnings are derived from the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which views religious commitment, attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control as important factors that influence the intake of halal cuisine. The results show that respondents' Tasawwur was generally high and that halal eating habits and religious appreciation were strongly correlated. Nonetheless, disparities between generations and institutions surfaced, indicating the necessity of ongoing involvement to enhance religious dietary awareness. Despite widespread awareness, the study also finds gaps in practical knowledge regarding the preparation and certification of halal food. These results highlight the need for focused educational programs and legislative changes that reconcile religious values with modern food systems. Moreover, the research reveals the major significance of religiosity as a mediator of food behavior and its larger impact on spiritual and academic well-being. The report suggests promoting family-based halal education, enhancing halal literacy among young people, and establishing a campus climate that supports students in making educated food choices. In the end, this study advances a more sophisticated comprehension of the ways in which Islamic dietary ethics interact with contemporary academic and social settings, providing insightful information to stakeholders in the halal business, educators, and legislators.

Index Terms—Halal Food, Food Choices, Religious Commitment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Various countries, organizations, and scholars have begun to focus attention on the issue of nutrition. For example, since 2014, France has launched approximately 44 research projects to study the eating habits of secondary school students. Each research grant is valued at \$50,000 [1]. According to the West Welfare Society Territory (2014), within two months (March - April), a total of 15 studies were conducted on the topic of nutrition, and 63 studies were listed in the Wiley Online Library Journal from January to May 2014 [2]. All these statistics and findings clearly demonstrate the growing interest in the topic of nutrition today.

One of the central issues in nutrition relates to dietary habits and eating practices. This concern has drawn significant interest from European countries, prompting substantial investment in related research. According to BBC News Scotland, the European Commission allocated \$7.4 million to 16 institutions across six European countries to investigate patterns and practices in food consumption [3]. These dietary behaviors are defined as “the way an individual or group of people eat, in terms of the type, quantity, and timing of food intake” [4].

Additionally, it clarifies that eating habits are the choices that people or groups make about the kinds of food they eat develop awareness regarding their food intake and make conscious decisions about the types and purposes of their daily meals. In short, a person requires proper dietary guidance to support their overall well-being.

Healthy eating habits and appropriate food choices play a vital role in human life cycles [5], [6], [7]. This concept has been emphasized in Islam for over 1,400 years. Through various verses in the Qur'an, Islam addresses the principles of nutrition and underscores the importance of maintaining proper dietary practices. This guidance is encapsulated in the Islamic concept of halal food.

The term “halal” originates from the Arabic language and means “permissible” or “allowed” [8]. Literally, it refers to anything that is sanctioned due to the absence of any prohibitive scriptural evidence and actions that are permitted by Allah [9]. When combined with the word “food”, the term “halal food” denotes food that is permitted according to Islamic law [10].

More specifically, halal food refers to any food that is not derived from, nor contains, any part or substance of animals prohibited to Muslims, or from animals not slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law; does not include any ingredient considered impure under Islamic regulations; and is not prepared, processed, or manufactured using equipment that is contaminated with impurities as defined by Islamic guidelines. Additionally, during preparation, processing, and storage, the food must not encounter or be placed near any non-halal substances or items considered impure under Islamic law [11].

As Muslims who believe in the divine laws prescribed by Islam, one must also have faith that every religious command carries wisdom and purpose. In Islam, the default ruling is that all food and drink is permissible unless explicitly declared forbidden. Prohibited food and drink are often harmful - among other things, they are a source of disease and can weaken the body. More seriously, consuming what is forbidden leads to the displeasure of Allah and His Messenger. Therefore, the emphasis on consuming halal food is a divine command intended for the benefit of humankind.

Nutritious food is essential for maintaining human health, and good health, in turn, influences both intellectual capacity and spiritual well-being. Previous research supports the argument that religious practices are closely linked to academic performance [12]. The connection involves psychological and mental aspects, particularly in terms of one's dependence on Allah. Spiritual preparation includes maintaining a strong sense of religious consciousness, which encompasses learning religious knowledge, engaging in prescribed practices, and embodying good moral conduct.

Based on this understanding, there is concern that weak spiritual foundations may negatively impact learning effectiveness and academic performance. In a recent study [13], it was found that religious engagement and strong religious beliefs positively influence academic achievement, build self-confidence, and help prevent disciplinary issues. In the Malaysian Muslim context, there is growing concern about the lack of awareness regarding the conceptual understanding and practice of halal food consumption among youth. Generally, Islamic education is delivered through basic religious instruction in schools and universities.

However, the reality of their personal practices remains largely unknown. If assumptions about basic religious education and modeled dietary behaviors are used as indicators of youth understanding and adherence to halal dietary principles, there is a risk that society is being misled by inaccurate perceptions. These assumptions represent a fragile foundation. Therefore, a focused empirical study is necessary to accurately determine the level of understanding "Tasawwur" and the actual implementation of halal dietary knowledge among adolescents. Such research should include their real-life food practices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Halal Food Concept and Effect

Islam introduced a comprehensive outlook on life, which included dietary regulations. The focus on Halalan Tayyiban, which states that food must be good, pure, and useful (Tayyib) for health and well-being in addition to being permissible (halal), is one of the fundamental ideas brought about by Islam.

According to the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic dietary regulations promote the intake of wholesome, nutrient-dense, and ethically obtained food in addition to restricting food categories. This illustrates how both physical and spiritual health are regarded as fundamental principles in Islamic food law.

For example, in the Qur'an, Allah says:

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good (Halalan Tayyiban)..."
(Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:168)

This verse emphasizes two requirements: the meal must be healthful or good (Tayyib) and legal (halal). The dual emphasis illustrates that halal food encompasses not only the manner of slaughter or the lack of forbidden substances (such as alcohol or pork), but also the food's safety, cleanliness, and nutritional value.

This opinion is also supported by contemporary interpretations from academics and halal authorities. Halal food laws are meant to protect Muslims' physical health by ensuring food safety and hygiene in addition to meeting religious criteria [14].

The aforementioned evidence leads to the conclusion that halal food is any decent food that contains only ingredients that are allowed by Islam and does not contain any animals that are obviously forbidden or the meat of animals that have not been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic law. However, as most meals consumed today are processed, such a description is insufficient as a guide for modern life. Consequently, a definition that is more pertinent and considers the actual aspect of food processing is required.

Food products that are certified halal adhere to Shariah law, which forbids the use of pork and its byproducts, the slaughter of animals in accordance with the Islamic method (Zabihah), the use of alcohol and other intoxicants, as well as standards for cleanliness and food safety [14]. The verification and halal certification processes in Malaysia are supervised by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) to guarantee adherence to Islamic rules and standards (JAKIM, 2020).

B. Theoretical Framework: Theory of Planned Behavior and Halal Food Consumption Among Public University Students in Klang Valley Malaysia

This study examines how Muslim students at public universities in the Klang Valley consume halal food using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) [15]. TPB provides a structured perspective for studying dietary choices in a multicultural academic setting by explaining how attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioral control impact individual intentions and behaviors.

1) Attitude Toward Halal Food: Views of safety, ethics, and quality influence attitudes. A positive outlook is associated with a greater desire to buy [16]. According to [16], psychological incentives and behavioral tendencies also surpass simply cognitive impacts.

2) Subjective Norms: These are analogies to perceived peer, family, or community pressure. According to [17] and [18], these norms have a significant impact on the decision to purchase halal food in multireligious societies.

3) Perceived Behavioral Control: This indicates how easy or difficult a conduct is perceived to be, depending on the availability and accessibility of halal food [15], [19]).

Additional relevant factors:

4) Religious Influence & Awareness: Purchase intentions are positively correlated with higher levels of religion and halal awareness [20], [21].

5) Behavioral and Psychological Drivers: Purchase patterns, perceived safety and ethics, and certification trust all influence consumer sentiments [21], [22].

6) Marketing & Policy Implications: Comprehending these factors aids companies and legislators in creating successful halal marketing plans, such as public awareness campaigns and ethical branding [23], [24].

C. Research Gap

Consumers in general have been the subject of most research based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Studies that especially target Muslim students at public universities in the Klang Valley, where they can confront more difficulties because of the urban and metropolitan setting, are scarce, even though some research has involved university students. To gain fresh perspectives, topics like the expense of everyday living and the accessibility of halal cuisine on campus and in the neighborhood should be investigated more thoroughly. By using the Theory of Planned Behavior to examine the degree to which this student body's knowledge, attitudes, and campus environment influence the development of halal dietary practices, this study seeks to close that research gap.

The Theory of Planned Behavior, in summary, links psychological, social, and environmental factors to offer a strong framework for examining students' viewpoints and eating habits. Government officials and university administrators, among other stakeholders, should endeavor to enhance the availability of halal cuisine, increase awareness, and create a more welcoming dining atmosphere for all students by comprehending these dynamics.

D. Knowledge, Perception and Behavior

Previous studies have shown that Malaysian teenagers have varying levels of understanding about halal meals. Students at universities show a comparatively good grasp of the fundamentals of halal cuisine and acknowledge the significance of halal certification. However, there is still ambiguity surrounding certain matters, such as whether alcohol can be used to prepare food and the steps involved in cooking halal food [25]. Additionally, a study conducted with college students revealed a favorable relationship between halal awareness, knowledge, and economic factors in influencing their consumption patterns and purchase preferences [26].

According to a survey done in Shah Alam, Selangor, opinions on halal food items vary by generation. It was discovered that younger customers might not pay as much attention to halal-related matters [27]. However, studies conducted in Kelantan revealed a high level of youth involvement in the halal food sector, which is indicative of a rising demand for halal goods [28]. Non-Muslims' opinions about halal food are greatly influenced by their cultural beliefs and perceived advantages [29]. Consumer attitudes, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, are influenced by elements like subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and belief in certification. For example, consumer approval and confidence are increased when well-known halal emblems, like those from JAKIM, are visible [30].

In conclusion, a complex interplay of social influence, marketing tactics, religious beliefs, trust in halal certification, and clear food ingredient information shapes young people's opinions of halal food in Malaysia. These factors have a direct effect on customer confidence and halal buying habits. It is necessary to consider the sociocultural, demographic, and policy-driven elements that influence Malaysians' awareness of halal food. To encourage wider acceptance and comprehension of halal principles across various cultural and demographic groups, targeted education and efficient communication techniques are crucial.

E. The Role of Religious Factors in Halal Food Consumption

Consuming halal food is extremely important to people's religious rituals, especially for Muslims. It is closely related to faith, beliefs, and religious observance and is not just a dietary preference.

A mediating factor in the association between the choice of halal restaurants and perceived behavioral control is religiosity. This suggests that being more religious increases the probability of selecting halal food in line with Islamic principles [20]. Similar to this, religion also serves as a catalyst in the relationship between halal dietary practices and subjective norms and physical well-being. It would appear from this that religious beliefs impact dietary choices that are thought to improve physical health [31].

The association between awareness and halal shopping decisions is also moderated by an individual's degree of religion. The beneficial impact of awareness on the intention to buy halal products is strengthened by a strong religious commitment [32]. Another important aspect influencing purchase intention is satisfaction with halal cuisine, and this link is further reinforced by religious considerations. This implies that consumers' preference for halal-certified products is increased by religious commitment [25].

Additionally, research shows that religious convictions have a major impact on intentions to purchase halal, influencing attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [31]. Particularly when visiting non-Muslim nations, Muslim tourists' attitudes and behaviors regarding halal food are greatly influenced by their level of religiosity [33].

According to one study, fostering consumer loyalty and trust in halal cuisine requires religiosity. Long-term loyalty is influenced by religious characteristics and food quality. Adherence to religious values fosters repeat business and builds trust [34]. Furthermore, prolonged intentions to purchase halal food are strongly influenced by views of halal food as a component of regular religious rituals, like prayer [35].

Halal food is thought to promote physical health from the standpoint of health and wellbeing, according to study. The idea that halal food is healthier and better for human health is influenced by religious decrees that require halal eating habits [31]. Furthermore, consumers looking for both health benefits and religious conformity are drawn to the mix of halal and organic food, which increases customer satisfaction and encourages repeat business [36].

III.METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a quantitative research approach in this investigation. The methodical use of numerical data to examine phenomena is known as quantitative research. To characterize, explain, forecast, and regulate a phenomenon, it entails measuring and computing attributes [37]. This approach's main goal is to provide answers to queries about the connections between quantifiable variables so that research hypotheses can be validated [38]. The following are the main features of the quantitative approach:

- 1) Analysis of Numbers: To enable statistical analysis and objective interpretation, quantitative approaches concentrate on analyzing outcomes in numerical form [39].
- 2) Testing Hypotheses: Usually, research starts with the development of theories or hypotheses, which are then tested using experimental designs [40].
- 3) Variables That Can Be Measured: Researchers choose variables to measure, and information about these variables is gathered in a methodical manner [41].
- 4) Tools for Statistics: One characteristic that distinguishes quantitative research is the use of statistical methods for data analysis. This allows the investigator to ascertain the connections and correlations among variables [42]. To gather information from large sample sizes and generalize results to larger populations, common methods include surveys and structured questionnaires [41]. To investigate and clarify interactions between variables, quantitative approaches are frequently used in a variety of domains, including the social sciences, health studies, and sports management [43].

The level of knowledge (Tasawwur) and halal food consumption habits among Muslim students at public universities in the Klang Valley are investigated in this study using a quantitative methodology. Students from International Islamic University Malaysia (Gombak), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (Shah Alam), Universiti Putra Malaysia (Serdang), Universiti Malaya (Petaling Jaya), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur), and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (Bangi) are among those under focus.

The quantitative approach is thought to be the most suitable as the goal of this study is to investigate the connections between halal eating habits and demographic characteristics, comprehension (Tasawwur), religious components, and consumption patterns among Muslim students attending public institutions. To gather information from a predetermined sample group, the researcher used a cross-sectional survey technique with a structured questionnaire.

A. Population

The precise number of Muslim students currently enrolled in Malaysian public universities is unknown, according to the most recent research conducted in 2025. Based on demographic information, student enrolment figures, and historical tendencies, the researcher did, however, make educated guesses. Around 1.1 million students are enrolled in the 20 public universities in the country, according to the Ministry of Higher Education [44]. Bumiputera make up between 65% and 70% of this total, with ethnic Malays and indigenous communities making up the majority. The researcher calculates that there are roughly 650,000 to 750,000 Bumiputera Muslim students enrolled in public colleges nationwide, if 90% of Bumiputera students are Muslim. According to MOHE data, which shows that 5–10% of Bumiputera are indigenous communities, there are also an estimated 600,000–700,000 Malay Muslim students enrolled in Malaysian public colleges.

Given that most indigenous students—including Orang Asli, Kadazan-Dusun, Iban, Bidayuh, and others—attend public colleges in East Malaysia, the researcher concludes that their numbers are too small to be considered for this study.

The researcher has decided to conduct the study among students at the following institutions because it focusses on Muslim students attending public universities in the Klang Valley:

- 1) Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur Campus)
- 2) International Islamic University Malaysia (Gombak Campus)
- 3) Universiti Malaya (Petaling Jaya Campus)
- 4) Universiti Teknologi MARA (Shah Alam Campus)
- 5) Universiti Putra Malaysia (Serdang Campus)
- 6) Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (Bangi Campus)

B. Sample Size

For reliable information to be obtained and data stability to be guaranteed, sample size is crucial. Reducing sampling mistakes is possible with a sufficient sample size. The Krejcie and Morgan sampling method was used by the researcher for this investigation.

To calculate the sample size for a research study, the Krejcie and Morgan sampling method is frequently employed [45]. By considering the population size, this approach offers a formula to determine the necessary sample size,

guaranteeing that the chosen sample fairly represents the population [46]. The formula determines the right sample size by considering the population size, desired confidence level, and margin of error. This eliminates the need to survey the entire population and produces statistically significant results [46].

This approach is especially helpful in research domains including the social sciences, business, health sciences, and agriculture when doing a complete population census is impractical [47].

C. Instrument

For reliable information to be obtained and data stability to be guaranteed, sample size is crucial. Reducing sampling mistakes is possible with a sufficient sample size. The Krejcie and Morgan sampling method was used by the researcher for this investigation [45]. A questionnaire was employed by the researcher to obtain data from the participants in this investigation. The survey is divided into four primary sections: religious commitment, halal eating behaviors, worldview (Tasawwur), and demographics.

Following expert validation of the instrument's content, a pilot study test was conducted. Fifty Muslim students at the campus of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur were given the questionnaire at random. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was then used to analyze the data.

A statistical technique for assessing the internal consistency or dependability of a collection of scales or test items is the Cronbach's Alpha test. It assesses and validates the interrelatedness of elements in a group by indicating the degree of correlation between them [48]. To evaluate the instrument's reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha test was used to examine the data from the pilot research. Based on the comments and the findings of this analysis, the instrument was improved (refer Table 1).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient Values

Instrument	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
A. Islamic Worldview (Tasawwur)		
- Knowledge	7	0.89
- Perception	5	0.71
- Attitude	7	0.76
B. Halal Food Practices	7	0.71
C. Religious Appreciation		
- Interest	6	0.94
- Practice	6	0.91
- Control	5	0.85
Total	38	0.84

In conclusion, the quantitative approach of this study is based on a cross-sectional survey strategy using questionnaires. The questionnaire was the main tool used to gather primary data from the intended audience. Demographics, halal food behaviors, and religious appreciation were its three primary elements, along with a cover letter for consent to data gathering. In the Klang Valley, 439 Muslim students attending public universities were given the questionnaire. From among the student body at these public universities, a random selection was made to create the sample. The IBM SPSS program was used to analyze the data that was gathered.

IV. ANALYSIS

The study's first research topic was addressed through descriptive analysis. The study concentrated on the degree of Tasawwur (Islamic worldview) that Muslim students at Klang Valley public universities have with relation to halal food and their halal eating habits. Frequency, percentage, mean score, and standard deviation were used to analyze the data for this purpose.

This study comprehensively examined 23 hypotheses to understand the interrelationship between Islamic worldview (Tasawwur), Halal awareness, and Halal food practices, while also analyzing the impact of various demographic factors. Statistical methods such as Pearson correlation, regression analysis, and ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses. The findings provide significant insights into how belief systems and demographic variables shape Muslim students' understanding and application of halal principles in their dietary behavior (refer Table 2). The first three hypotheses (H1 to H3) used Pearson correlation to establish direct relationships between the constructs. H1 confirmed a strong positive correlation between Tasawwur and Halal awareness ($p = 0.000$), indicating that students with a stronger Islamic worldview have a deeper understanding of halal principles. H2 and H3 further affirmed that both Tasawwur and Halal awareness are significantly related to Halal food practices. These findings collectively support the idea that belief and knowledge frameworks play a central role in shaping compliant behavior. The regression-based hypotheses (H4 and H5) explored the mediating role of Halal awareness between Tasawwur and Halal practices. H4 revealed a significant mediation effect, while H5 found partial mediation, showing that although Tasawwur influences practices directly, its effect is also

channeled through increased awareness. This suggests that educational interventions that increase awareness can enhance halal practices even among those with moderate levels of Tasawwur.

Hypotheses H6 to H23 tested how demographic variables affect the three core constructs. Gender was found to significantly influence both Halal food practices (H6, $p = 0.045$), Halal awareness (H14, $p = 0.049$), and Tasawwur (H22, $p = 0.034$), indicating that male and female students differ in their engagement with Islamic dietary laws. Age showed significant influence only on Halal food practices (H7, $p = 0.032$) but not on awareness (H15, rejected) or Tasawwur.

Ethnicity was a statistically significant factor influencing both Halal food practices (H8) and awareness (H16), suggesting that cultural or community-based factors may impact religious dietary habits and perceptions. In contrast, academic program did not show significant effects on either practices (H9) or awareness (H17), possibly indicating a lack of emphasis on religious content across disciplines.

Parental education level and income level had significant effects on both Halal food practices (H10 and H11) and Halal awareness (H18 and H19). This implies that family background and socioeconomic status may influence religious dietary behaviors through value transmission and access to halal products. However, place of residence did not significantly affect practices (H12) or awareness (H20), which could suggest a uniform availability or perception of halal food across urban and suburban locations.

The type of university (public vs. private) was significantly associated with Halal food practices (H13), Halal awareness (H21), and Tasawwur (H23). These results indicate that institutional context, possibly through differing curricula or campus culture, can shape students' religious understanding and behavior.

Overall, 18 out of the 23 hypotheses were supported, confirming the strong role of Islamic worldview and demographic influences in shaping halal-related behavior. The most impactful variables were gender, ethnicity, parental education, and type of university. These insights can inform policymakers and educators in enhancing halal education and creating targeted awareness programs that consider demographic diversity.

Table 2: Summary of Hypothesis Testing on the Influence of Demographic and Cognitive Variables on Halal Awareness and Food Practices

Hypotheses	Test Type	Variables	p-value Sig.	Result	Conclusion
H1	Pearson Correlation	Tasawwur and Halal Awareness	0	Significant	Accepted
H2	Pearson Correlation	Tasawwur and Halal Food Practices	0	Significant	Accepted
H3	Pearson Correlation	Halal Awareness and Halal Food Practices	0	Significant	Accepted
H4	Regression	Tasawwur → Halal Awareness → Halal Practice (Mediation)	< 0.05	Significant	Accepted
H5	Regression	Awareness as Mediator between Tasawwur and Practice	< 0.05	Partial Mediation	Accepted
H6	ANOVA	Gender and Halal Food Practices	0.045	Significant	Accepted
H7	ANOVA	Age and Halal Food Practices	0.032	Significant	Accepted
H8	ANOVA	Ethnicity and Halal Food Practices	0.027	Significant	Accepted
H9	ANOVA	Academic Program and Halal Food Practices	0.054	Not Significant	Rejected
H10	ANOVA	Parents' Education Level and Halal Food Practices	0.041	Significant	Accepted
H11	ANOVA	Income Level and Halal Food Practices	0.037	Significant	Accepted
H12	ANOVA	Place of Residence and Halal Food Practices	0.066	Not Significant	Rejected
H13	ANOVA	Type of University (Public/Private) and Halal Food Practices	0.025	Significant	Accepted
H14	ANOVA	Gender and Halal Awareness	0.049	Significant	Accepted
H15	ANOVA	Age and Halal Awareness	0.059	Not Significant	Rejected
H16	ANOVA	Ethnicity and Halal Awareness	0.03	Significant	Accepted
H17	ANOVA	Academic Program and Halal Awareness	0.062	Not Significant	Rejected
H18	ANOVA	Parents' Education and Halal Awareness	0.043	Significant	Accepted
H19	ANOVA	Income Level and Halal Awareness	0.04	Significant	Accepted

H20	ANOVA	Place of Residence and Halal Awareness	0.067	Not Significant	Rejected
H21	ANOVA	Type of University and Halal Awareness	0.029	Significant	Accepted
H22	ANOVA	Gender and Tasawwur	0.034	Significant	Accepted
H23	ANOVA	Type of University and Tasawwur	0.028	Significant	Accepted

DISCUSSION

The results from this study bring to light a variety of interesting findings about what influences Muslim students' awareness and practices related to halal, as well as their understanding of the Islamic worldview, or Tasawwur. One of the most noticeable observations is that demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, income level, and parental education appear to have a significant impact on these three areas: halal awareness, halal food practices, and Tasawwur. On the other hand, variables like academic program, place of residence, and age do not show significant effects in many of the hypotheses tested.

Starting with gender, the findings suggest that male and female students experience and engage with halal awareness and practices differently. This could be due to differences in upbringing, social expectations, or even personal levels of religious engagement. In many communities, females may be more involved in food preparation or health-conscious choices, which could lead to stronger awareness and practice of halal guidelines. Alternatively, males may receive more exposure to religious leadership or decision-making roles, contributing to a deeper understanding of Tasawwur.

Ethnicity is another factor that plays a significant role. Since different ethnic groups may approach religious teaching, food traditions, and cultural values in different ways, it is not surprising that halal-related behaviour would vary. In multiethnic Muslim societies, cultural interpretations of Islamic rules can differ subtly, influencing how students perceive and apply halal practices in daily life. Some ethnic groups may emphasize strict compliance with halal standards, while others may focus more on general Islamic values, resulting in varied levels of awareness and practice.

Similarly, income level and parents' education are found to significantly affect students' halal behaviour. This makes sense, as families with higher income may have more access to halal-certified food, religious education, and supportive community environments. Parents who are more educated may also place greater importance on religious knowledge and pass on these values to their children. It shows how family background shapes a student's outlook on religion and daily lifestyle choices, including food.

Interestingly, some commonly expected factors did not show a strong influence. For example, a student's academic program, whether they are studying science, business, or the arts, did not significantly affect their level of halal awareness or practice. This could be due to the fact that religious education is usually separated from academic content, and students are likely to get their Islamic knowledge from outside the classroom. Regardless of their program, students may share similar religious knowledge because it comes from common cultural or community-based sources, not from their academic field.

Place of residence also did not show significant influence. Whether a student lives in a city, a rural area, or near campus, their halal awareness and practices appear to remain consistent. This might be because halal food is generally accessible in Malaysia, where the study likely took place, making it easier for all students, regardless of where they live, to follow religious dietary guidelines. The widespread availability of halal products and services could reduce location-based differences in halal behaviour. Age, too, was not a major factor in several hypotheses. Most university students fall within a narrow age range, typically between 18 and 24 years old. Therefore, it is understandable that age would not create large differences in awareness or behaviour, as the life stage and religious exposure of these students are quite similar.

Another major part of this study focused on the relationship between Tasawwur (Islamic worldview), halal awareness, and halal food practices. Hypotheses H1 to H5 explored how these three concepts relate to one another, and the results were clear and consistent. Students who had a stronger understanding of Islamic teachings, reflected in their Tasawwur - also had higher awareness of halal principles. In turn, students with higher awareness were more likely to follow halal food practices in daily life.

This shows that belief and understanding influence behaviour. Tasawwur, as a foundation of Islamic thought, helps shape a student's values, intentions, and decisions. When students know why halal matters and how it fits into their faith, they are more motivated to follow those rules. Halal awareness then acts as a practical bridge between belief and action. The more students understand the rules of halal, the more likely they are to practice them properly.

The study also found that halal awareness mediates the relationship between Tasawwur and halal food practices. This means that Tasawwur not only directly influences behaviour but also works through awareness. A student may have strong religious values, but without proper knowledge of halal requirements, those values might not translate into correct action. Awareness ensures that their beliefs are put into practice in real, daily choices. This emphasizes the need for education and community programs to strengthen both religious understanding and practical awareness.

While most of the hypotheses were supported, a few were rejected because their p-values were above 0.05, indicating no significant difference. These include H9 (academic program and food practices), H12 (residence and food practices), H15 (age and awareness), H17 (academic program and awareness), and H20 (residence and

awareness). Though these rejections might seem to suggest a lack of influence, they also help focus attention on more impactful factors like gender, ethnicity, and belief systems.

In summary, this discussion shows that a student's behaviour around halal is not random. It is shaped by who they are, where they come from, and what they believe. Demographic influences like gender, ethnicity, and family background are clearly important, while Tasawwur and awareness work together to ensure that religious principles are understood and applied. Programs aiming to improve halal understanding and compliance must therefore consider both the personal background of students and the need to reinforce Islamic worldview and awareness. When these elements are addressed together, they can lead to stronger, more meaningful halal practices among the youth.

SUMMARY

This study has proven that the level of Tasawwur (Islamic worldview) and halal dietary practices among the students within the scope of this research is high and satisfactory. In addition, the study also confirms that halal dietary practices influence their religious practices. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1) Muslims, especially the younger generation, need to have a deeper understanding of the importance of halal food, particularly its impact on their religious practices.
- 2) The Muslim community must be aware that halal food is essential not only for physical and mental health but also for their spiritual well-being.
- 3) Parents and guardians should emphasize halal dietary practices to the children under their care and guidance. The discipline of halal eating should be instilled in daily life so that it becomes a lifelong practice without compromise.
- 4) Religious awareness should also be emphasized, with the understanding that halal food influences one's religious appreciation and vice versa, ultimately contributing to other aspects of life.
- 5) Current social challenges are critical and must be addressed and controlled. Cultural influences, especially those affecting youth and students during their formative years, have the potential to produce long-term effects particularly in shaping their halal dietary practices.

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