

Education as Moderator to Knowledge Consumers in Creating Awareness of Halal Food Consumption

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ABSTRACT

It is imperative for the Muslim to observe the consumption according to Islamic teaching based on the Quran and Sunnah and according to the Islamic Fiqh. Education in terms of basic Islamic rules in regards to the Muslim food is very important especially to create awareness in determine the Halalness of the food consumed. Hence this study focusses on education as moderator towards knowledge and awareness of the Muslim consumers over their consumption of Halal food product. Data were collected from 162 respondents on a random sampling basis. Quantitative analysis was conducted using SEM AMOS version 22 in determining education as moderator to knowledge and awareness of Muslim consumers. The finding shows that the level of the education plays a significant role as moderator in strengthening the knowledge of Muslim consumer in utilizing Halal food product. It indicates that knowledge is positively significant related to awareness. However, the relationship of understanding related to awareness is not significant maybe due to the attitude and practices of the Muslim consumer themselves. The study shows that consumers' education moderates the relationship between knowledge and awareness. Hence the emphasis of relevance government sector and other Islamic institution to educate the society at large and Muslim consumers in specific is crucial as for them to get the benefit of education in increasing knowledge and awareness that comply with Shariah in food consumption.

Keywords: Education, muslim consumer, awareness, shariah compliance, halal food product.

I INTRODUCTION

Islamic teaching stand on nutrition food and drink should be acquired from the Halal source and provided in Islamic way since what is eaten can directly affect the physical and spiritual condition of human being. Muslim should accept all the Halal consumable with gratitude since it creates happiness in seeking the blessings of Allah SWT and putting more efforts into gaining His blessings. The Quranic

verses, al-Nahl 16:114 ascertain this; "So eat of the sustenance which Allah has provided for you, lawful and good; and be grateful for the favors of Allah, if it is He Whom ye serve." Halal nutrition could generate true and perfect Muslims (hakiki) from all aspects of the human personality (Yasim, 2011; Othman et al., 2018). To achieve Muslim hakiki, every Muslims should be concerned about the purity of the food eaten since unclean food affected the spiritual health and behavioral factors of a human being. Education is looking upon as a tool for Muslim to increase the knowledge in Halalness thus Ambalia and Bakar (2014) stated that Halal for Muslim consumers means that the requirement by the Syariah Law is fulfilled. The sources of references for Halal assurance in Malaysia is certified by the Islamic body that is JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia). Its Halal certification with the Halal logo of JAKIM is the only certified Halal that is recognized by the government and Islamic authority. The general principle concerning food according to Islamic teachings is that everything is halal except impurity (or mixed with impurity), harmful and intoxicant (JAKIM, 2015). Hence, each Muslim should seek the basic knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence as to ensure that whatever consumption in everyday life is following Islamic teaching.

II EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE OF HALAL COMPLIANCE

Zuhdi (1987) asserted that Shariah means the law set by Allah through His messenger to all mankind for them to obey Allah based on faith, deeds and akhlak. The word Halal comes from the Arabic language namely halla, yahillu, hillan, wahalalan which means allowed or permitted by Islamic law or in other words, anything that allowed by Allah to do so (Dahlan, 1996). Qaradawi (1993) defined Halal as an obligation, which prevails in its prohibition and permissible by Islamic law towards all Muslims. Tieman (2011) articulated that the concept of Halal and Haram is something that is universal in its application which covers all aspects of a man's life, from the aspect of worship to muamalah. Thus, Halal refers to something that is required by Allah to the human being that covers all aspects of life.

Though with numerous branding and various sources of food producers, sometimes the doubtfulness of its Halalness arises. Education plays a substantial role in contributing to the understanding and awareness of the consumers. Education is an educational process that resulted in knowledge and development (Merriam Webster, 2018). It indicates the knowledge, skill, and understanding that a person is getting by attending a formal or informal education. Hamm (2003) emphasized that education include both formal and informal process of learning that benefitted human achievement which becomes as most valuable development characterized by knowledge and understanding. In these senses, the education commenced with the learning process that impacted the knowledge and understanding of an individual. Proper attention should be given to the education and awareness hence it provides safeguards and integrity to the consumers. The fundamental understanding of Halal has undeniably helped the Muslim consumers in taking Halal into greater awareness (Zain et al., 2017).

A. Awareness on Halal Consumption

Moreover, self-awareness means one's individual thoughts about the state of something in which different people have a different level of awareness (Warmerdam, 2018). Regarding Halal awareness on food consumption, it can be conceptualized that it involved the informing process to increase the levels of consciousness toward what is permitted or prohibited for Muslims to eat, drink and use. Salman and Siddiqui (2011) highlighted that previous studies show that awareness and perception of Halal food are found to be correlated to religious beliefs, religious commitment, attitude towards halal food and the concept of self-identity. Hence the examination of individual awareness in Halalness food consumption would relate to their consumption pattern and behavior in choosing the product.

Soesilowati (2010) conducted the study on Muslim consumer behavior on Halal food consumption which demonstrated that individual's behavior differs in consuming Halal foods or even in food's preparation. Although the government's concerns over the Halal requirement in Malaysia, the nature of halal foods preparation still need to be examined (Ab. Rahman et al., 2011). It includes all the manufacturing chain involve in producing Halal food product abiding the Shariah compliance. Every stage of production involved is to secure the cleanliness, the safety, and the goodness of the food product for the wellness of human being as the vicegerent of this world. It is humanistic, appropriate and respectful towards the human being created by Allah SWT. Ambalia and Bakar (2014)

supported that the concept of Halal entirely encompasses all aspects of human life as it provides human a better and insightful meaning when it is viewed from the perspective of quality and total goodness of what should eat, drinks and use in their daily life. Thus, the formation of research framework derived from the variables discussed is shown in the next section.

III THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of education as a moderator that underpinning knowledge to Muslim consumers in creating awareness of Shariah compliance in Halal food consumption is shown in Figure 1.

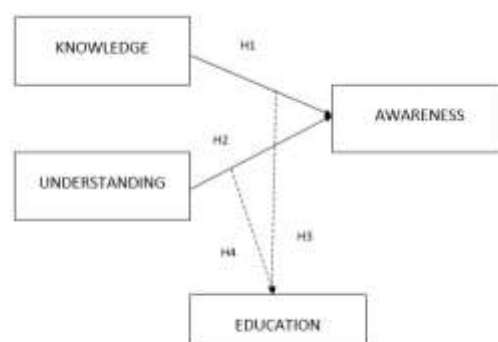


Figure 1. Education as Moderator to Knowledge Consumers in Creating Awareness of Halal Food Consumption.

Figure 1 shows the research framework of the study on how the knowledge of Halal from an Islamic perspective is essential to be gained by the Muslim consumers. This is very crucial concerning the attitude of awareness and understanding of what mean halal food product especially in the daily consumption pattern from the product branding and labeling in which the consumer choose from the supermarket shelf or any other sources of sellers. While the education level plays a crucial role as a factor that contributes to knowledge understanding of the Muslim consumers. It moderates the knowledge and understanding towards creating awareness in consumption of Halal food product. Stemmed from the above framework, this research, therefore, derived a few hypotheses that are constructed as follows:-

- i) H1: Knowledge is positively significant related to awareness
- ii) H2: Understanding is positively significant related to awareness
- iii) H3: Consumer's education moderates the relationship between knowledge and awareness
- iv) H4: Consumer's education moderates the relationship between understanding and awareness

A. Methodology of the Research

The study aimed at observing the knowledge and awareness on the Muslim consumers over their consumption on the Halal food product. Data were collected from 162 respondents in the area of Nilai, Negeri Sembilan on a random sampling basis. Quantitative analysis was conducted using SEM AMOS version 22 in identifying the relationship of knowledge and understanding on Shariah compliance with the consumption awareness in Halal food product consumption. At the same time, the function of education as moderator in this relationship is tested.

B. Demographic Background of Respondents

The demographic profile of respondents cover the aspects of gender, age, race, education, profession, income, status, and household. Data and information regarding the respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristic.

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	101	62.3
Female	61	37.7
Age		
Below 20	25	15.4
20-30	199	61.1
31-40	24	14.8
41 and above	14	8.6
Education		
SPM	42	25.9
Diploma	38	23.5
Bachelor	82	50.6
Profession		
Government	22	13.6
Private	47	29.0
Self-Worker	29	17.9
Others	64	39.5
Income		
Below RM1000	82	50.6
RM1001-RM2000	43	26.5
RM2001 and above	37	22.8
Status		
Single	111	68.5
Married	51	31.5
Household		
3 Person	37	22.8
4 Person	31	19.1
5 Person and above	94	58.0

C. Education

Distribution and percentage of respondents based on education stated in Table 2. A total of 42 respondents or (25.9%) have SPM. The total of diploma respondents is 38 or (23.5%) and the

highest are respondents have bachelor which are 82 or (50.6%).

Table 2: Distribution and Percentage of Respondents Based on Education (N= 162).

Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SPM	43	25.7
Diploma	40	24
Bachelor	84	50.3
Total	167	100.0

D. Data Analysis

Prior modeling the structural model and executing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), this study has validated all latent constructs involved in the model (Zainudin, 2015). The validation procedure is called Pooled Confirmatory Factor Analysis (PCFA). Pooled-CFA is more efficient, thorough, and can avoid the model identification problem especially if some of the constructs have less than four measuring items (Zainudin, 2015).

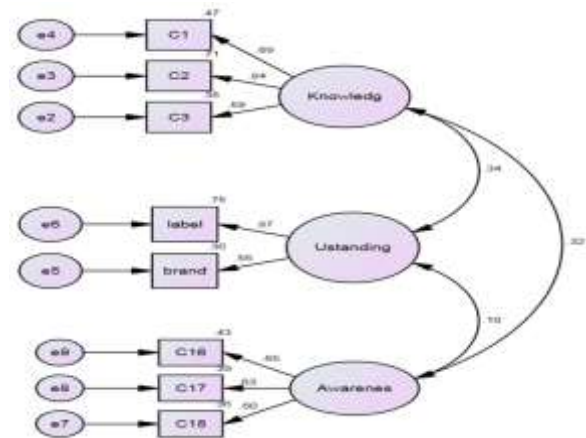


Figure 2. The Pooled-CFA for all constructs of Knowledge, Understanding and Awareness.

Figure 2 shows that the pooled-CFA consists three latent constructs (knowledge, understanding and awareness). In the Pooled-CFA, the process of delete item made for every construct by selecting the item that is having the lowest factor loading in each construct to remove. In this study, there was one item deleted (C4) because the factor loading is below than 0.50 (Afthanorhan, 2013) and the fitness of indexes not achieved (RMSEA = 0.125, CFI = 0.817 and ChiSq/df = 3.054). According to Zainudin (2015), the rule of thumb for the fitness indexes is RMSEA < 0.08, CFI > 0.90 and ChiSq/df < 3.00. The result of fitness indexes achieved after deleted one low (C4) items (RMSEA = 0.08, CFI > 0.916 and ChiSq/df = 2.274).

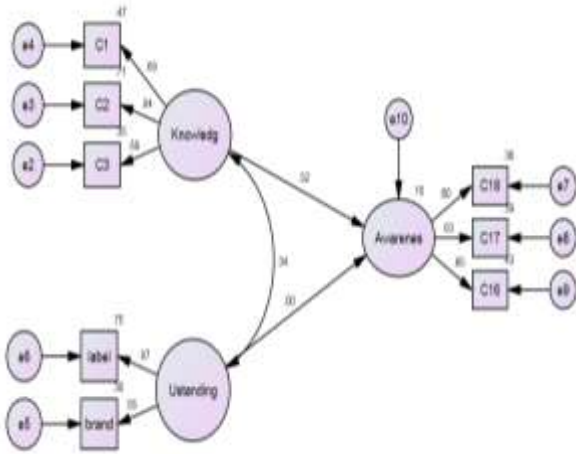


Figure 3: Structural Model of Knowledge, Understanding and Awareness.

Figure 3 indicates the results of the SEM Amos analysis and both hypotheses were measured. The first hypothesis, H1 predict that knowledge is positively significant related to awareness. Table 3 indicates that knowledge is positively significant related to awareness (CR: 2.258, $p = 0.00$) therefore, H1 can be accepted. The second hypothesis, H2 predict understanding is positively significant related to awareness. Analyses have shown that the CR is below 1.96, indicate value -0.47 and $p = 0.971$ value. The values demonstrated that H2 is not significant and H2 is rejected. Therefore, hypothesis four (H4) is rejected for test moderation effect on consumers' education level. Meanwhile, since the relationship between knowledge and awareness is significant for hypothesis one (H1), it is appropriate to test H3 for the moderation effect of the consumers' education level.

E. Moderation Analysis

H3: Consumer's education moderates the relationship between knowledge and awareness

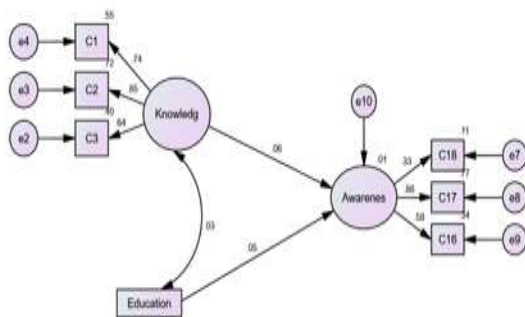


Figure 4. High Education: The Output of Model

Table 3 shows that the moderation test for high education is a moderator in the relationship between knowledge and awareness is significant since the difference in Chi-Square value between the

constrained and unconstrained model is 24.666, while the Degree of Freedom is $13-12 = 1$.

Table 3: The Moderation Test for High Education Group Data

	Constrained Model	Unconstrained Model	Chi-Square Difference	Result on Moderation	Result
Chi-Square	42.377	17.711	24.666	Significant	Supported
DF	13	12	1		

Hypothesis Statement:

H3: Consumer's education moderates the relationship between knowledge and awareness Supported

For the test to be significant, the difference in Chi-Square value must be higher than the value of Chi-Square with 1 degree of freedom, which is 3.84 (Zainudin, 2015).

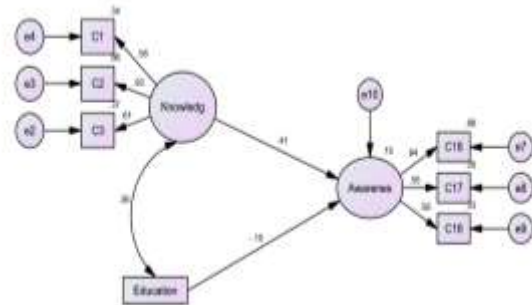


Figure 5. Low Education: The Output of Model

Table 4 shows that the moderation test for low education is significant since the difference in Chi-Square value between the constrained and unconstrained model is 6.649, while the Degree of Freedom is $13-12 = 1$. Both high and low education gave significant Chi-Square values and did moderate the relationship between knowledge and awareness.

Table 4: The Moderation Test for Low Education Group Data.

	Constrained Model	Unconstrained Model	Chi-Square Difference	Result on Moderation	Result
Chi-Square	152.896	146.427	6.469	Significant	Supported
DF	13	12	1		

Hypothesis Statement:

H3: Consumer's education moderates the relationship between knowledge and awareness Supported

IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The finding shows that knowledge is positively significant related to awareness (CR: 2.258, $p = 0.00$) hence, the knowledge of Muslim consumers are significant concerning the awareness in regards to Shariah compliance Halal food product. However, this study shows that understanding is not significantly related to awareness with CR below 1.96, indicate value -0.47 and $p = 0.971$ value. This indirectly portrayed that the relation of understanding of the issues arises in the Halal food product with the awareness are not significant. This condition may raise from the complication of the various ingredients used and sometimes the misconduct of the producer in putting the Halal brand and labeling as a point of sale to Muslim consumers. This is confirmed by Jais (2014) that Halal related issues associated with food are often highlighted in the media, similarly the abuses of the Halal logo to sell non-halal food and contamination of non-halal ingredients in food products (Jais, 2014). On the moderation analysis, it shows that consumer's education moderates the relationship between knowledge and awareness. Thus, it seems that Muslim consumers are aware on the importance of their Halal food consumption and always put the effort to learn for the accurate fact as to observe the Islamic teaching and the proper way of life as a Muslim. However on the insignificant relationship between the understandings of the Shariah compliance with the awareness of consumption may be due to the complication of the current issues arising. Sometimes the issues of ingredients used and misconduct of the producer in putting the Halal brand and labeling as to confuse the Muslim customer with the objective of profit making only. It also portrays that the knowledge built from a proper education help Muslim consumers to recognize the critical information that can help them in determining the Halalness of the food product.

It shows that education helps human being prospering in self-knowledge development which plays the role of guidance in action taken in any specific matters. Ushama (2014) accentuated that knowledge is wisdom and educates to refrain from impudence. At the same time, the role of government and other Islamic agencies to deliver current information through social media to the public is essential. Educating consumers becomes crucial to enable them to make well-informed decisions (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2001). Hence Halal education should be started early and in parallel with the ever-changing needs of the economic dynamism (Jais, 2014). The effort has been made by four public universities which comprise of IIUM, UPM, UM & USIM as to focus

on research collaboration and information sharing of the Halal industry, development of talent and skills and cooperation in producing Halal products and services (UPM News Portal, 2017). Zain et al. (2017) supported that Halal studies undoubtedly support the specific knowledge that empowers the Halalness and authenticity of Muslim consumption.

Most importantly the education, knowledge, and awareness must be well competent to the producers as to make them aware that their responsibility in providing the Halalan Toyyiban is essential to the Ummah. Talib and Hamid (2013); Said et al., (2014) stressed that the Halalan Toyyiban should be implied in the procurement process, production, packaging, storage, logistics and others and it should be essential criteria for entrepreneurs and producers (Baharuddin et al., 2015). Supervision from the authorities especially JAKIM in Malaysia should be more rigorous covers overall the production chain and processes. According to Anderson et al. (1997), consumers have to rely on the seller or outside observers and put their trust in the information received. Patnoid (2001) suggests that one of the best ways to make people aware of what they are consuming is through educational exposure. People are exposed to Halal consumption through the newspaper, television, radio, and the Internet (Ahmad et al., 2013). The role of government as a mediator to convey the latest issue and message is very crucial. Technology advancement in social media can become the tool of learning and education. Hence, a lifelong educational process provides knowledge that is crucial to the Muslim towards achieving complete Halalness food product consumption.

V CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Halalness ensure full commitment to producing and serving clean, safe foods and products for the consumers. In other words, Halal products should be recognized as a symbol of cleanliness, safety, and quality of a healthy life. It can be concluded that health reasons are another determinant of halal awareness. As such, the relevant agency or government as a whole should use health reasons as an alternative policy source of information to convince Muslim consumers on the importance of their awareness of the nature of halal foodstuff or products. Awareness in Halalness of the food product can be gained through direct and indirect education and learn through social media and government rules. Through awareness, it can create an understanding which inculcates the sensitivity and alert to the ingredients contain, the labeling of products, and Halal logo certified as endorsement towards Halal food consumption. Thus, continuous education to the public on Halalness is essential to increase their knowledge and to educate and support

the Muslim consumers at large continuously. Education would empower consumers with the wisdom to make the right choices of what they consume daily. Thus, the primary responsibility of the government or agency in charge of halal products lies in educational exposure. Food safety education efforts must be directed towards the consumers, school-aged children, and employees in food industries. In Malaysia and other Muslim countries, consumers' level of awareness on Halalness is increased via teaching and learning.

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