

Journal of Tourism Management Research

2021 Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 1-10.

ISSN(e): 2313-4178

ISSN(p): 2408-9117

DOI: 10.18488/journal.31.2021.81.1.10

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HALAL FOOD IN TOURISM: EXPLORING THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HALAL FOOD SELECTION AMONG TRAVELERS

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ABSTRACT

Article History

Received: 29 October 2020

Revised: 18 November 2020

Accepted: 27 November 2020

Published: 14 December 2020

Keywords

Religious belief

Health reasons

Halal logo certificate

Halal food selection

Halal food selection while traveling

Malaysian Muslim youth.

Halal industry has been commercialized by the Malaysian government for many years, and Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) is part of the Malaysian government initiatives to facilitate the growth of Halal industry whereby it has been successfully stimulating Malaysian halal products in locally and globally. Although there were lots of effort taken by the Malaysian government in commercializing the Halal food and brand, the consciousness of consuming the Halal food is still imprecise especially among the young Muslim consumers. Muslims' consciousness in seeking for the availability of Halal food while travelling is not in satisfactory phase when there are some of the Muslims were found to avoid religious attributes such as having Halal food when travelling to a destination. Thus, this study aims to investigate the factors influence Halal food selection among Muslim youth while traveling. A total of 384 respondents of Malaysian Muslim youth consumers were participated in this research. The data was analyzed by using IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21 through several analyses such as descriptive analysis, frequency analysis and Pearson correlation analysis. Results of this study indicated that religious beliefs, health reasons, and Halal logo and certificate affect Halal food selection among Muslim youth. This study provide several implication for the Muslim consumers to be conscious of the Halal logo and certificate presence before making selection in buying food products.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by discovering the factors that influence Halal food selection among travelers and identifies the relationship between the three factors (Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate) with Halal Food Selection among Malaysian Muslim youth while traveling.

1. INTRODUCTION

Halal food and products have been perceived as important by the Muslim consumers. This is because Islam has made Halal food as compulsory for the Muslims. Due to that, Halal industry has created a greater demand from the Muslims population around the world. When Muslims all around the world are demanding for Halal food and product, it is to be highlighted that; necessitating the creation of Halal food facilities to cater for Muslims travelers in a destination is a must. Fulfilling the Muslim travelers' needs will result to an increasing in most of the countries' Gross Domestic Product due to the fact that the number of Muslim travelers have improved and are estimated to remain to grow in the future (Jurattanasan & Jaroenwisana, 2014; Rahim, 2016; Waehama, Alam, & Hayeemad, 2018).

The word “Halal” itself was originally came from Islam which defined as permitted or lawful (Baharuddin, Kassim, Nordin, & Buyong, 2015). Additionally, Ambali and Bakar (2014); Baharuddin et al. (2015) indicated that Halal food is a food which fulfil with the Islamic code and law. Without complying with Islamic law, the food cannot be claimed as Halal Baharuddin et al. (2015). When the growing demand of the Halal industry is increasing, the non-Halal firm has also started to adopt Islamic value in their product (Abdul Talib, 2010 as cited in Mat Isa and Mohamed Ismail (2017)). This has made the Halal concept of producing product to be restricted where the premises of product need to follow all the regulations by JAKIM or otherwise the halal status will be revoked. Nowadays, the consciousness towards Halal food consumption has been improved, and it the act of consuming Halal food is not limited only to Muslims, but also non-Muslims (Mat Isa & Mohamed Ismail, 2017). When Muslims are conscious of Halal food because of the religious requirement, the non-Muslims perceived the Halal food as the hygiene and clean to eat. This is because whole concept of Halal not only limited to comply with the Shariah, but it also take into account the elements of hygiene, health and safety (Baharuddin et al., 2015). In a study by Golnaz, Zainalabidin and Mad Nasir (2012) as cited in Baharuddin et al. (2015) there are minimum more than 50 percent of non-Muslim consumers whom are alert towards the presence of Halal values. Additionally, the Halal food also applicable towards nutritionists, because it contributes to boost nutrition when they eat health and hygiene food (Baharuddin et al., 2015; Rahman, 2018).

On top of that, the youth selection on Halal food and products is some part of the vital element to be taken into account. Speaking in the context of Malaysia, Malaysian youth is the future and they are the Malaysia’s hope to lead Malaysia to be in the success track. Youth are adventurous and hunger to pursue new knowledge and experience, and act as resource for transformation and invention (Ghefe, 2015).

In fact, tourism for the youth is a very vital in segmenting the market, when they have a main part in drawing new visitors to their destination (Ghefe, 2015). When the population of Malaysian youth consists of 43 percent (The Asia Foundation, 2012 as cited in Mat Isa and Mohamed Ismail (2017)), it is to be noted that they are among the large segment living in the society. It is expected that the global youth travel industry to be roughly about 190 million universal travelers per year (Ghefe, 2015). This is due to the fact that the youth travelers have already denoted about 15 % to the tourist market since 90’s. The percentage has been enhanced by 20% in the past decade and estimated to grow by 25% in the future (Ghefe, 2015). What are the factors that influence Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth while traveling?

1.1. Factors Influence Halal Food Selection among Malaysian Muslim Youth (Independent Variables)

In this study, it was found that there are three factors that influence Halal food selection among Muslim youth. This is based on the literature from previous research. To highlight, this study is focusing on Malaysian Muslim youth as the respondents. Halal is a wider topic to be debated from many perspectives, and there are lots of research and literature highlighted on Halal topic. However, it was found that there has been a lack of research on Halal food selection while traveling especially among Muslim youth. Focusing on Muslim youth is the significant ones as research has revealed that young generations have different forms of actions compared to the older ones Khalek (2015). Young generations are the much heavier, because of their different brand conscious and modern-oriented when selecting any food or products Khalek (2015). Thus, those study on Halal consumption towards older respondents must not be generalized to the younger ones as both generations have different actions and preferences when consuming food and products. To date, research on the youth is important because they are the major and most money-spinning consumers nowadays Khalek (2015). Therefore, this study tend to contribute in providing empirical data on Halal food selection from the Muslim youth’s point of view living in Malaysia.

1.2. Religious Belief

As indicated by [Quantaniah and Nurul Syakinah \(2013\)](#) religious belief relates with giving the foundation of understanding that impact one's attitudes and actions. This impact then indicates a dominant role in shaping a person's attitude and actions towards any products and services ([Quantaniah & Nurul Syakinah, 2013](#)). Apart from that, religious belief directly connected with peoples' attitude and emotion towards a range of products, for example like cosmetics, health and food products by requiring legal or illegal things and asserting whether it is acceptable in religion or not. In other opinion by [Khalek \(2015\)](#) religious belief or religiosity refers to point of view of the religion itself. For instance, in Islam, the religious belief indicates the Islamic worldview of the tawhidic model. When the worldview is defined as an individual vision of the way they see the creation and its subjects in this current life, therefore the tawhidic worldview is not limited to this life only, but also holds in the hereafter. Furthermore, [Rahman \(2018\)](#) stated that an individual's belief on religion has influence in inner effect in their life. For example, study has found that the religious belief is one of the significant elements that affect the consumer actions ([Rahman, 2018](#)).

Based on the previous research, it is undeniable to say that religious belief holds an important part in an individual. Thus, in this study, religious belief is positioned as an independent variable 1 (IV1) in clarifying its influence on Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth. To fulfil the inquiry on religious belief among Malaysian Muslim youth, it is to be noted that this study will only include limited component in religious study that relates with Halal food selection. The limited component of religious belief have been included in the questionnaire such as "I consume Halal food because I am a Muslim", "I consume Halal food because it is in accordance with the teachings of Islam based on Al-Quran and Al-Hadith", "I consume Halal food because Islam prohibits from consuming non-Halal food" and "Consuming Halal food is an obligation".

1.3. Health Reasons

Health is the supreme gift from the Creator to human being. Having a healthy living is an essential part in Islam. Additionally, health has been stated in the Quran and the Sunnah particularly about the way to safeguard an individual's health and keeping a clean lifestyle ([Quantaniah & Nurul Syakinah, 2013](#)). In maintaining a healthy lifestyle, food is one of the essential component that need to be taken into account. In a research by [Quantaniah and Nurul Syakinah \(2013\)](#) consumers nowadays are aware towards the significance of health and they are likely to search for healthy food in order to prevent diseases. Spiritually, eating Halal food is not only good for physical of one's body, but also for mental achievement. Nowadays, Muslim consumers are demanding to have healthy and quality products, which shall be complied with Shariah requirements ([Quantaniah & Nurul Syakinah, 2013](#)). To explain, health reasons include the foods that are prepared in safe, clean and hygienic process. Speaking of the health reasons in Malaysian context, acceptance of Halal food was not only based on religious commandments, but also taking into account the features of quality, cleanliness and safety of the food ([Khalek, 2015](#)). Cleanliness or hygiene in Halal food concept include several aspects of one's body and his clothes, as well as the equipment used when involving in food processing ([Ambali & Bakar, 2014](#)). This is to ensure that the food is guaranteed from anything that can harm human's health. Hence, the health reasons in Halal context is to eat only health, clean and safe food which will not cause any damage to an individual's health state.

Hence, it can be said that health reasons is part of the vital inquiry in this study. Thus, in this study, health reasons is positioned as an independent variable 2 (IV2) in clarifying its influence to Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth. To fulfil the inquiry on health reasons among Malaysian Muslim youth, this study has include several items such as "I believe that Halal food is more hygienic and clean compared to non-Halal food", "I believe Halal food is safer to eat compared to non-Halal food", "I believe Halal food is healthier to eat compared to non-Halal food", "I believe that Halal food provide more benefits than non-Halal food", "I believe that buying Halal

food means buying food that is guaranteed its cleanliness, safety, and quality, “I believe that consuming Halal food can prevent me from health hazards”.

1.4. Halal Logo Certificate

Halal logo certificate here means specific products or service that has been certified by relevant authority like JAKIM for Muslim consumers to consume the product. In a study by [Mohamed Elias, Othman, Yaacob, and Mohd Saifudin \(2016\)](#) Halal certificate is permitted to business operator to produce products or services according to Shariah requirements. It is to ensure the consumers to have healthy life and safe from any hazards ([Mohamed Elias et al., 2016](#)). In Malaysia, all Halal logo and certificate in a product or premises are issued by JAKIM. JAKIM was first started in 1974, whereby their role was to check and approve the status of food and drink products whether it can be consume or not by Muslims. During those times, Halal confirmation letters has been used by JAKIM in order to certify any products that is conformed to the Shariah requirements ([Kamarulzaman & Madun, 2017](#)). The confirmation letters were then changed to Halal logo form after several decades. As mentioned by [Kamarulzaman and Madun \(2017\)](#) the first issuance of Halal logo as Halal certificate of product was in 1994. As the Halal industry goes universal, the existence of complex universal transport system encompassing various companies from all over the world in supplying food products has becoming a concern. This is because, the wider the supply market, the higher the possibility for Halal food to be placed in the same containers with non-Halal food. Halal is a big process that requires pure compliance to be obliged from the beginning of beginning of the food manufacture till it reach an individual as the consumer. Malaysia is the first country in the world to take the lead in formalizing a system to manage the logistics of halal products. Thus, in ensuring the full compliance of Halal food preparation, JAKIM has presented Halal logistic standards mainly for logistic businesses concerning transportation and its manufacturing process. In fact, JAKIM’s logo of Halal certificate is being familiar by most of the Islamic countries ([Kamarulzaman & Madun, 2017](#)).

Due to that, it is likely to be said that Halal logo certificate is also part of the inquiry in this study. To include Halal logo certificate as the independent variable 3 (IV3), this study has include several items such as “Halal certificate and Halal logo are essential to ensure that the food is Halal”, “Whenever I buy food products, it must have Halal logo”, “Presence of Halal logo is the first thing that I look into when I buy food products”, “I will not buy food products that do not have Halal logo in the packaging” and “If I cannot find the Halal certificate or Halal logo in the product, I will check the ingredient of the product before purchase or consume” in the questionnaire in order to clarify its influence to Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth.

2. RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

This study use quantitative research design and cross-sectional study as the research approach. Cross-sectional study is one of the approach method that analyze data from a particular population or a representative subgroup. A set of questionnaire has been designed and distributed to the total of 384 respondents of Malaysian Muslim youth before being recorded in the IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 21 to be analyzed using the descriptive analysis and Pearson correlation analysis.

3. POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

3.1. Population of the Study

Since Halal food products is mainly consumed by the Muslims, the study’s target population are the Muslim consumers, or to be more precise, the Muslim youth consumers. According to [Indexmundi \(2019\)](#) Muslim population is 61.3% of 31, 809, 660 populations of Malaysian citizen which is 19, 499, 321 as a whole. However, the precise population for Muslim youth is remain unknown. According to [Khalek \(2015\)](#) a Muslim who aged in between 16 to 35 years old is considered as a Muslim youth. It is substantial to highlight that, having Muslim youth

as the respondents in this study is significant because the Muslim youth are much heavier consumers than the other consumer, whereby they have their different brand conscious and modern-oriented when selecting any food or products (Khalek, 2015).

3.2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Since the precise population for Muslim youth is remain unknown (Indexmundi, 2019) it is a need for the researcher to select at least 384 total of respondents (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). In this study, the researcher has managed to obtain 384 total of respondents. As for the sampling technique, this study used the method of non-probability sampling, or to be specific, the convenience sampling method. This type of sampling technique enables data to be collected from those people who are readily available for the study. In this study, the online questionnaire has been spread to those individuals who are easily accessible to the researcher.

3.3. Analysis

Multiple regression analysis has been done in this study so as to investigate the factors that influence Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth while traveling. Multiple regression analysis enables researcher to know whether there is a relationship exists between the variables (Ozili, 2015). By focusing on the p -values and t -stat, multiple regression analysis also functions to identify whether this relationship is significant or not.

4. FINDINGS

By using the multiple linear regression model, the dependent variable is the Halal Food Selection among Muslim youth while the independent variables are the Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate. The researcher decided to use the multiple regression analysis because this type of analysis is more appropriate to get a valid result. To make it clear, the result of multiple regression analysis can be summarized based on the table below:

Table-1. Descriptive statistics of religious belief, health reasons, halal logo certificate and halal food selection.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Religious Belief	5.8177	0.74791	384
Health Reasons	5.5634	0.97378	384
Halal Logo Certificate	5.3432	0.88398	384
Halal Food Selection	4.9535	0.79351	384

Table-2. Correlations of religious belief, health reasons, halal logo certificate and halal food selection.

Correlations		Halal Food Selection	Religious Belief	Health Reasons	Halal Logo Certificate
Pearson Correlation	Halal Food Selection	1.000	0.608	0.577	0.599
	Religious Belief	0.608	1.000	0.680	0.594
	Health Reasons	0.577	0.680	1.000	0.531
	Halal Logo Certificate	0.599	0.594	0.531	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Halal Food Selection	-	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Religious Belief	0.000	-	0.000	0.000
	Health Reasons	0.000	0.000	-	0.000
	Halal Logo Certificate	0.000	0.000	.000	-
N	Halal Food Selection	384	384	384	384
	Religious Belief	384	384	384	384
	Health Reasons	384	384	384	384
	Halal Logo Certificate	384	384	384	384

Table 1 displays that religious belief has the highest score on mean which at 5.8177, followed by Health Reasons (5.5634), Halal Logo Certificate (5.3432) and Halal Food Selection (4.9535).

From the Table 2 above, the correlation between Religious Belief and Halal Food Selection is 0.608 which implies a moderate correlation and has confirmed that Religious Belief is the factor that influence Halal Food Selection among Malaysian Muslim youth. Next, the correlation between Health Reasons and Halal Food Selection is 0.577 which shows that significant relationship is exist in between both of these variables. Lastly, is the correlation between Halal Logo Certificate and Halal Food Selection (0.599) which denotes there is a correlation exists between these two variables. Eventually, this correlation has revealed that Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate influence the Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth.

Table-3. Model summary of religious belief, health reasons, halal logo certificate and halal food selection.

Model	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R Square (R ²)	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.695 ^a	0.484	0.479	0.57250

Note:

a. Predictors: (Constant), Halal Logo Certificate, Health Reasons, Religious Belief.

b. Dependent Variable: Halal Food Selection.

R² is the percentage of the dependent variable variation that a linear model explains. As depicted in the Table 3 above, the model summary table shows the correlation between Religious Belief, Health Reasons, Halal Logo Certificate and Halal Food Selection has produced R² of 0.479 or 47.9%.

Table-4. ANOVA of religious belief, health reasons, halal logo certificate and halal food selection.

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)
1	Regression	116.612	3	38.871	118.597	0.000 ^b
	Residual	124.546	380	0.328		
	Total	241.159	383			

Note:

a. Dependent Variable: Halal Food Selection

b. Predictors: (Constant), Halal Logo Certificate, Health Reasons, Religious Belief.

In ANOVA output table, it is important to look into the *p*-value in order to determine whether this model shows a good determinant of relationship between the Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate (independent variables) with the Halal Food Selection (dependent variable). As shown in Table 4 the Sig. (*p*) value result is 0.000 which is less than 0.5. Therefore, this specifies that there is significant linear regression between the independent variables and dependent variable.

Table-5. Coefficients of religious belief, health reasons, halal logo certificate and halal food selection.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. (p)	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	0.760	0.235		3.231	0.001	0.298	1.223
	Religious Belief	0.277	0.058	0.261	4.812	0.000	0.164	0.390
	Health Reasons	0.185	0.042	0.228	4.419	0.000	0.103	0.268
	Halal Logo Certificate	0.290	0.042	0.323	6.888	0.000	0.207	0.373

Note: Dependent Variable: Halal Food Selection.

The coefficient output result indicates the highest contribution to the variation of dependent variable (Halal Food Selection). Based on Table 4 above, it can be seen that the p -value of Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate are 0.000 respectively which is less than 0.05. Dahiru (2008) stated that a variable is statistically significant when the p -value is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be said that, Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate are the significant factors that influence Halal Food Selection among Malaysian Muslim youth as the p -value of these three variables are less than 0.05.

The value of Beta indicates the most significant factors. In this study, the most significant factors that influence Halal food selection among Muslim youth is the Halal Logo Certificate, followed by Religious Belief and lastly the Health Reasons factor. This is because Halal Logo Certificate obtained the highest value of Beta which is at 0.323. The second highest is the Religious Belief (0.261) and lastly is the Health Reasons (0.228) (see Table 4). Ultimately, this has answered the Research Question 1 which is to know the factors that influence Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth while traveling.

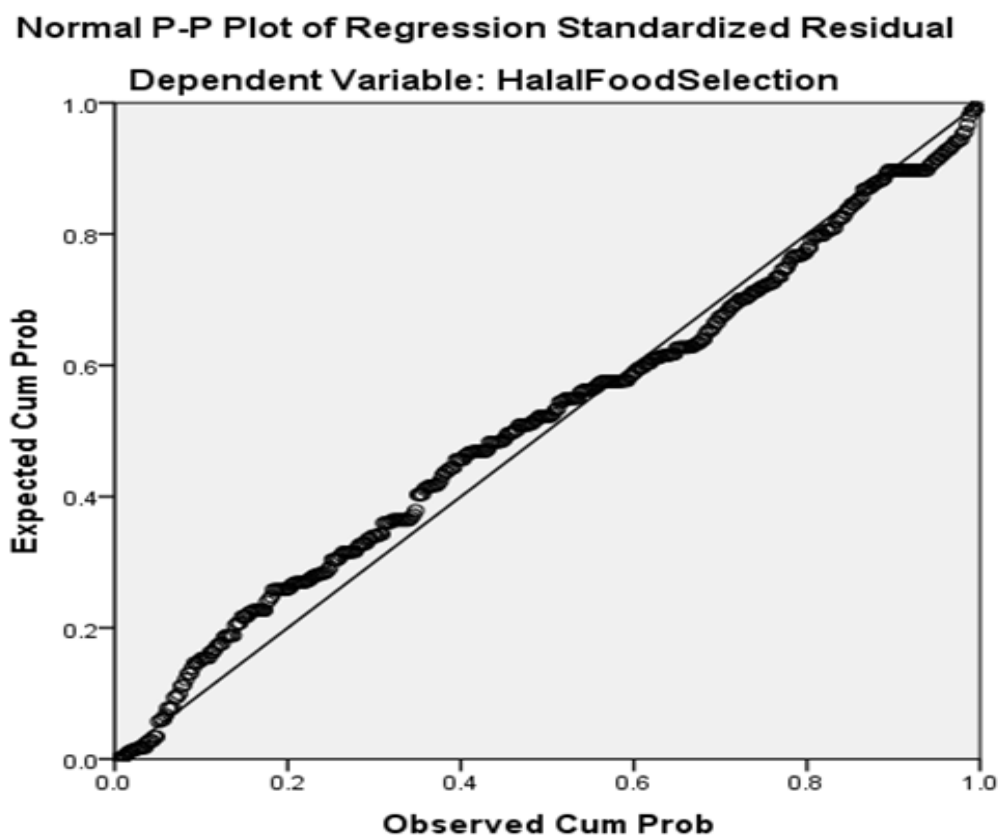


Figure-1. P-Plot regression of religious belief, health reasons, halal logo certificate and halal food selection.

Based on Figure 1 above, the P-Plot shows that the residuals is in line which depicts that there is significant relationship between Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate factors towards Halal Food Selection among Malaysian Muslim youth. Therefore, it is to be said that this regression model is valid to answer the Research Question 1 which is to identify the factors that influence Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth.

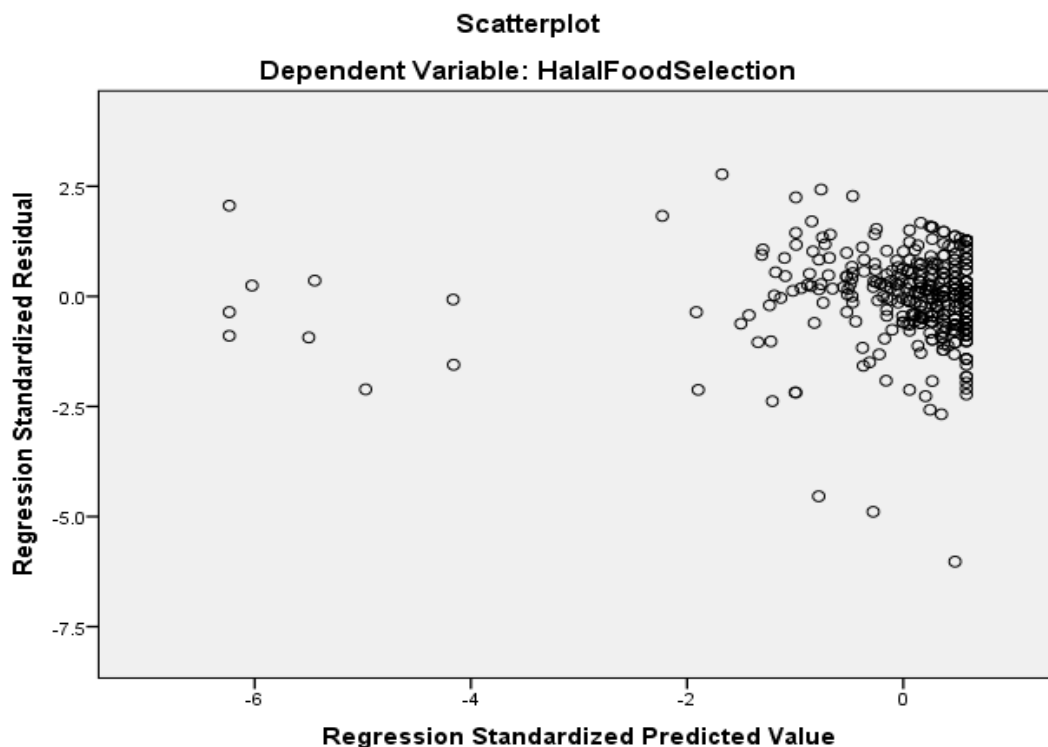


Figure-2. Scatterplot regression of Religious Belief, Health Reasons, Halal Logo Certificate and Halal Food Selection.

The scatterplot based on [Figure 2](#) above displays the random residuals which focused on zero. Thus, this illustrates that Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate influence the Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth while traveling.

The results revealed that all of the three factors which are the Religious Belief, Health Reason and Halal Logo Certificate are the key factors in this study. This is in line with a research by [Ambali and Bakar \(2014\)](#) saying that Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate are among of the greatest significant parts or factors that influence the food choice, whereby it brings influence towards the consumers' selections and actions.

Interestingly, Halal Logo Certificate factor showed the highest score of Beta followed by the other two factors which are Religious Belief and Health Reasons. This shows that Halal Logo Certificate is the most significant factors in this research. The result is consistent with studies by [Kamarulzaman and Madun \(2017\)](#); [Khalek \(2015\)](#) which stressed that Halal Logo Certificate in products or food premises is among the factors in forecasting Halal consciousness among the Muslims consumer. This indicates that Halal Logo Certificate is a factor that influence Halal food selection among the Malaysian Muslim youth when Halal certificate in food and drink products is perceived as much essential by the Muslims before selecting and consuming the food or product ([Kamarulzaman & Madun, 2017](#)). Having Halal Logo Certificate as the factors that influence Malaysian Muslim youth in selecting Halal food might be because they feel more confident to select when they see Halal logo certificate displayed in particular food packaging.

Although Halal Logo Certificate has obtained the highest value and is considered as the most significant factor, the other two factors (Religious Belief and Health Reasons) shall not be ignored as they are also another significant factor after Halal Logo Certificate factor. This is because both of these factors have obtained the p -value less than 0.05, thus indicate that they are also the significant factors in this study. This is supported by a research from [Zakaria, Majid, Ahmad, Jusoh, and Zakaria \(2017\)](#) whereby they concluded that religiosity is the leading factors in influencing consumer's selection towards Halal food products. Apart from that, the result is in line with another study made by [Quantaniah and Nurul Syakinah \(2013\)](#) which aimed to investigate the factors that influence Muslim

students in selecting Halal food. Similarly, the result displayed that the direction of the Muslims students in selecting Halal food are more towards the religious belief (Quantaniah & Nurul Syakinah, 2013). This is probably due to the strict commandments in Islam that prohibits its believers to consume non Halal food.

Besides Halal Logo Certificate and Religious Belief, Health Reasons is another variable in this study which was found to be another factors that influence Halal food selection among the Malaysian Muslim youth while traveling. This is because Muslim consumers nowadays are demanding to have healthy and quality products, which shall be complied with Shariah requirements (Quantaniah & Nurul Syakinah, 2013). In fact, it is also in line with a study which found that Halal food and products has gained attention from the Muslims all over world who tend to prefer food with Halal logo for health reasons (Rahman, 2018). This might be due to the exposure in social media promoting on healthy lifestyle while keeping one's body fit. Selection of food based on health reasons influence one's dietary habit.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to study the factors influence Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth as well as to identify the relationship between the three factors (Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate) with Halal Food Selection among Malaysian Muslim youth while traveling. The study distributed the questionnaire through Google form and used social media platform to find the respondents. The respondents of this study have reached to the targeted required number of respondents which there were a total of 384 respondents of Malaysian Muslim youth, aged between 15 to 40 years old that have answered the survey. The present findings have confirmed that the significant factors which influence the Malaysian Muslims youth in selecting Halal food while traveling, are mainly the Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate in the food products or premises. The findings is in line with the previous research saying that Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate are among the significant factors that influence Halal food selection. The findings also revealed that there are significant relationship exist between the three factors (Religious Belief, Health Reasons and Halal Logo Certificate) towards Halal food selection among Malaysian Muslim youth while traveling. Since this study focused on Halal food selection while traveling, it is recommended for Ministry of Tourism to also taking part in promoting Halal food to attract those international Muslims tourists as they contribute lots in the country's expenditure. Thus, this minor study leaks rough facts that factors of Halal food selection are essential in influencing Muslim youth selection towards Halal food.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Acknowledgement: Both authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study.

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