

The perception on halal label of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor

Nursalwani Muhamad^{1*}, *Siti Ainul Mardiah Ghazali*¹, *Palsan Sannasi Abdullah*¹, *Ahmad Syukri Ibrahim*², and *Zul Ariff Abdul Latiff*¹

¹Faculty of Agro Based Industry, University Malaysia Kelantan, 17600 Jeli, Kelantan, Malaysia

²MAMEE-Double Decker (M) Sdn Bhd, Lot 793, Persiaran Subang Indah, Off Persiaran Subang, 47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract. The halal label on food products is important to provide health and create awareness among MAMEE consumers. The official halal label on food packaging has been investigated as one of the good health indicators that is beneficial for people who consume it. A shift towards sustainable halal labels should be taken to ensure good absorption of food nutrition. Consumers' perception of the halal label on MAMEE products has changed due to their awareness of the halal label's effect on consumer health. This study is conducted to investigate the relationship between demographic factors and the perception of consumers towards MAMEE products based on the halal label. The questionnaire was distributed to 114 respondents in Selangor. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). From this study, the consumers are able to give a positive perception towards MAMEE products based on the halal label. The result showed a relationship between demographic factors and the perception of MAMEE consumers in Selangor, with significance values below 0.1. The significance of this study is to be a reference for the MAMEE Company to conduct research and development (R&D) in producing halal food products for the consumers.

1 Introduction

According to the Quran, the meaning of halal is acting in opposition to haram, and the name "halal" derives from Arabic roots that indicate "permissible" [1]. Halal is a religious requirement that has an impact on Muslims' adoption of halal products, particularly halal food items for their daily needs. Halal facilitates the consumer's ability to select a quality meal [2]. Muslims are required by Islam to refrain from consuming foods made from particular ingredients, such as pork, alcohol, non-slaughtered animals, or venomous animals [3]. For a product to be considered halal, it must be made from sources that are sanctioned by Islam, the sources of raw materials, such as meat and poultry, must be slaughtered in accordance with Shariah law, and the product must bear the halal label and certification of a reputable halal-certified body, such as the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) in Malaysia [4].

* Corresponding author: nursalwa91@gmail.com

Because customers are more concerned with selecting and utilizing only halal items in their daily lives, there is a greater demand for halal goods. According to earlier studies, the high demand for this halal food is anticipated to last until 2030 [5]. Muslims and non-Muslim businesspeople alike have been drawn to create and sell halal goods because of the strong demand for them and their potential for profit. Since these concepts demonstrate the goodness of the product, such as good hygiene practices, high quality, safety, and the fact that the product produced is based on compliance with shariah law [6], halal products have attracted a great deal of attention and are the subject of extensive discussion among consumers and manufacturers worldwide. When entrepreneurs are able to offer halal products to their consumers, especially Muslim consumers, it can give them satisfaction and confidence to purchase and use such halal products as they believe that the product does not contradict their religion and beliefs.

Most consumers in Malaysia eat snacks mostly made from halal food. Consumers mostly take snacks during their free time, and according to a particular factor that leads them to consume the snack product. In Malaysia, the food industries and processed foods play a vital role in the overall national economic growth since they are important in income distribution and job creation. Next, food and snack manufacturers should consider providing a halal meal in snack production. Certain marketing practices are relevant besides halal goods, as it will be the customer's buying decision for the products. In consuming the snacks, there will be several perceptions from the people who consumed them. It is either a perception from the first time the snack was consumed or from the loyal consumer's perception of the snack by a certain brand.

Snack foods are difficult to define because of the division between snacks and meals. Some research has defined the term snacking, which is a food intake fifteen minutes before a meal. Nowadays, snack foods are a rapidly growing sector in the food industry, and many new snacks come in a few snack foods products in Malaysia. Besides modern snacks, there are also traditional snacks like crispy chips made of tapioca, banana, sweet potato, and onion. There are healthy snacks and unhealthy snack foods on the market, and it depends on the consumer to choose between healthy and unhealthy snacks for daily intake. However, snack foods are not equally well perceived by everyone.

A few factors influenced consumers snack food purchasing decisions. Taste is one of consumers' five senses to identify a good product. Advertising also plays a good role in influencing consumers to purchase snacks. Usually, children are easily influenced by advertising. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between demographic factors and the perception of the halal label of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor. Perception from consumers is important to increase MAMEE production. Some of consumers have different perceptions about snacking and what products they want to purchase. Also, some do not buy any snacks due to their nutritional content and health concerns.

MAMEE Company is known as MAMEE Double-Decker Berhad, owned by Datuk Pang Chin Hin since 1971. This company was started in a small historical state in Malaysia, which is Malacca. This company's first product was "MAMEE Monster" (noodle snacks). After that, he expanded the company's production into various products such as instant noodles, snacks, and beverages. The blue monster that had been used by the MAMEE Company as their trademark and advertisement was a symbol of having fun and represented the enjoyment of having the snacks [7]. MAMEE produces many types of products that can attract any level of consumer, from children to adults. The founder of the company noticed that their sales would increase during school holiday. This is because, usually, during school holidays, the family will go on vacation and buy snacks and food instantly. After all, it is easy to serve.

The demand for fast food such as instant noodles and snack consumption always increases from year to year. It is because many people decide to buy food outside their house

rather than cook it. Usually, consumers buy fast food like instant noodles that is easy to serve and can save their time [8]. One of the companies that produces many types and flavours of instant noodles is the MAMEE Company. This is because people nowadays are busy doing work and do not have more time to spend cooking. Besides all the factors that influence in the demand for fast food and snacks, there are a few problems that influence the perception of the customer towards fast foods or snack food like MAMEE products.

Obesity is the first issue that may have an impact on customer demand for MAMEE products. Fast food has been linked to an increase in body weight, according to a US study [9]. The study's scientific findings indicated how important the relationship between eating fast food and weight was. In another investigation, they discovered that snacking had no connection to body weight gain [10]. Besides, the presence of MSG (monosodium glutamate), which can harm the brain, is another issue with snacks and fast meals. However, using it as a flavoring in small amounts in our meals is not being ignored [11]. Additionally, a small number of studies have shown that MSG and food coloring have no negative effects on humans. On the other hand, if there are too many halal logos certified by JAKIM, private institutions, or non-profit organizations of another country for imported items or products, consumers will generally be confused due to less knowledge of the true halal logo. The perception of consumers would undoubtedly alter when contrasting items certified by JAKIM with those certified by other institutions or organizations [12]. Therefore, there is still much to be done to start changing Muslim consumers' perceptions of what they use in terms of halal and shariah compliance [13].

2 Methodology

2.1 Research design and sample

This study used a quantitative design to gather information on the respondents' perceptions of the Halal label of MAMEE products. This study was conducted in three city councils (Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam and Subang Jaya) and six municipal councils (Kajang, Ampang Jaya, Klang, Selayang, Sepang, and Kuala Langat). One hundred fourteen junk food consumers buying MAMEE products were selected as the respondents for this study using convenience sampling. According to [14], convenience sampling is less costly, quicker, simpler and not as time-consuming as other sampling strategies. This study used an administrative questionnaire technique as a data collection technique. The questionnaires comprised five sections: demographic profile, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and perception. Questions for attitude, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, and perception were developed using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale things are strongly disagreeing, disagree, either agree or not agree, agree and strongly agree.

2.2 Research framework and data analysis

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is the theory that was used in this study to explain the significant factor and the relationship between the perception of the halal label of MAMEE products among consumers. The theory was chosen because the TPB contains all the components needed to complete this study. Besides, TPB is most compatible as it is adapted to the objective of this study, which is to investigate the relationship between the demographic profile and the perception of consumers towards MAMEE products based on the Halal label in Selangor. The modified TPB in Figure 1 provides three conceptually independent factors of MAMEE consumer perception towards the Halal label of MAMEE products: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behaviour. Using the context of the TPB

conceptual model framework in this study, the perception of the Halal label of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor is determined by attitudes, subjective norm, perceived behaviour control, and perception factors.

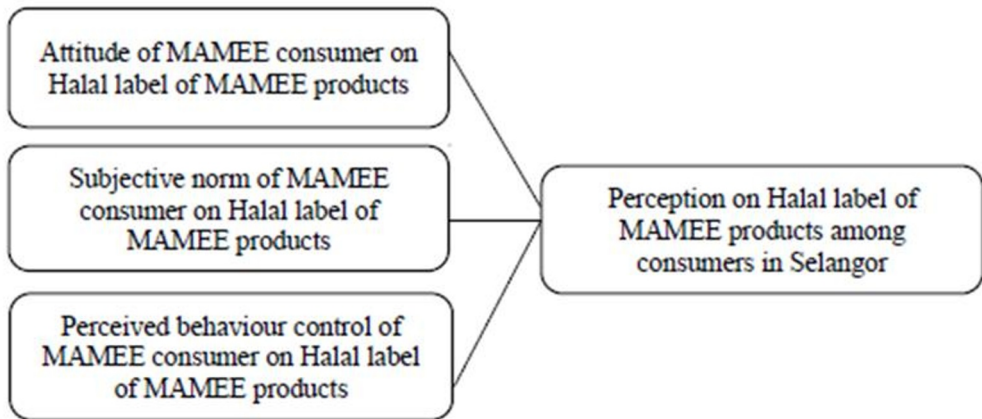


Fig. 1. The conceptual framework of the Theory of Planned Behaviours model with application to the perception of the Halal label of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor. (Source: Adapted model from [15]).

The data collected in this study was keyed into SPSS Software Version 21. The data was analysed using descriptive analysis and chi-square analysis. The descriptive analysis was used to summarize the demographic profile into a more straightforward summary to make it easier to understand and measure. Chi-square is the analysis utilized to determine the relationship between two factors. This study used a chi-square test to analyse whether there is a relationship between the demographic profile of MAMEE consumers and the perception of the Halal label of MAMEE products among consumers.

3 Results and discussion

3.1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. In this study, most of the MAMEE consumers lived in urban area, with 84 respondents (73.3%), while 24 respondents (21.1%) stayed in sub-urban areas, and six respondents (5.3%) lived in rural areas. The consumers of MAMEE are primarily female, with 83 respondents (72.8%) and 31 respondents (27.2%) being male. Consumers of MAMEE are mostly 26-35 years old, with 39 respondents (34.2%). This is followed by 27 consumers (23.7%) of 18-25 years, 26 consumers (22.8%) above 40 years old, and the least of them all is the group of 36-45 years old which has only 22 consumers (19.3%). The marital status of MAMEE consumers also plays a crucial role in the perception of the halal label of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor. Most of the MAMEE consumers are married, which is 68 persons (59.6%), followed by 44 consumers (38.6%) who are single, while the rest are already divorced (1.8%). The educational level of MAMEE consumers might affect their perception of the halal label of MAMEE products in Selangor. From the data collected, 71 (62.3%) MAMEE consumers have a degree certificate as their educational background. Meanwhile, the MAMEE consumers with a diploma are 21 persons (18.4%). 16 of MAMEE consumers (14.0%) have SPM, and the least of the 6 consumers (5.3%) are postgraduates. On the other hand, Malay

consumers are 111 persons (97.4%), followed by 2 consumers (1.8%) of Chinese, while Indian consumers are only 1 (0.9%). There are three types of religions among MAMEE consumers in Selangor. Firstly, 111 consumers (97.4%) are Islam, followed by 2 consumers (1.8%) who are Buddhists and 1 consumer (0.9%) who is Hindu. Occupation among MAMEE consumers in Selangor comes from a few sectors. The highest is 48 consumers (42.1%) who work in the private sector. 32 consumers (28.1%) work in the public sector. Followed by 26 consumers (22.8%) who are unemployed. 5 consumers (4.4%) are housewives, 2 consumers (1.8%) are already retired, and 1 of the total of consumers (0.9%) is self-employed.

Table 1. The demographic profile of respondents.

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Residential Area		
Rural	6	5.3
Sub-urban	24	21.1
Urban	84	73.7
Gender		
Male	31	27.2
Female	83	72.8
Age		
18-25 years	27	23.7
26-35 years	39	34.2
36-45 years	22	19.3
Above 46 years	26	22.8
Marital status		
Married	68	59.6
Single	44	38.6
Divorce	2	1.8
Education level		
SPM	16	14.0
Diploma	21	18.4
Degree	71	62.3
Postgraduate	6	5.3
Races		
Malay	111	97.4
Chinese	2	1.8

Indian	1	0.9
Religion		
Islam	111	97.4
Buddhist	2	1.8
Hindu	1	0.9
Occupation		
Housewife	5	4.4
Private Sector	48	42.1
Public Sector	32	28.1
Retired	2	1.8
Self-employed	1	0.9
Unemployed	6	22.8

3.2 Chi-Square analysis

The Chi-Square analysis was applied to analyse the statistical difference of some demographic factors of the MAMEE consumers with the perception on halal labels of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor. The result is significant if the value is equal to or less than the alpha value of 0.1 (90% confidence). Table 2 below shows the Chi-Squared analysis result between demographics and the perception of MAMEE consumers on the halal label of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor. The result showed that the age of the respondents has a significant relationship with perception, as the p-value of 0.058 is lower than 0.1. For races, the asymptotic significant value is 0.000, P-value 228.000, so there is a significant relationship between races and perceptions of the halal label of MAMEE products among consumers. The result shows that occupation has a significant relationship with perceptions according to 0.000 of the p-value. The same goes for religion, which has a significant relationship with perception with a p-value of 0.000. From the results, age, race, occupation, and religion had significant value in influencing perceptions of the halal label of MAMEE products among consumers. It shows that the age, race, occupation, and religion of MAMEE consumers can influence the perception of the halal label of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor.

Table 2. Result of Chi-Square Analysis between Demographics and Perception among MAMEE Consumers in Selangor.

Demographic Factor	Variables	Perception
Age	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	0.058
	Value	64.285

Races	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	0.000
	Value	228.000
Occupation	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	0.000
	Value	129.208
Religion	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	0.000
	Value	228.000

4 Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between demographic factors and the perception of consumers towards MAMEE products based on the Halal label among consumers in Selangor. The data analysis in this study comprises descriptive analysis and chi-square analysis. The descriptive analysis was used to discuss the results of the demographic information of the MAMEE consumers, the attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavior control, and the perception of the Halal label of MAMEE products among consumers in Selangor. A chi-squared analysis was used to find the relationship between demographic factors and the perception of consumers towards MAMEE products based on the Halal label in Selangor. The study was conducted on 114 MAMEE consumers who consumed MAMEE products in Selangor. The majority of MAMEE consumers are women and workers. The study had succeeded in achieving its objective which can be seen in the results. The result revealed that age, race, occupation and religion had a significant relationship with the perception of consumers towards MAMEE products based on the Halal label in Selangor. Therefore, it can be concluded that age, race, occupation, and religion can be related to the perception of MAMEE consumers. The result of the study can help to strengthen the perception of consumers toward MAMEE products based on the Halal label. Besides, the Halal label is necessary for consumers in Malaysia, as Halal refers to the lawful of a product. The findings of this study suggest that there may be specific opportunities for the government, policymakers or other parties to focus more on creating knowledge and awareness about the Halal label, especially on snack foods in order to increase the demand for food products. Hence, it is essential to carry out a further and more comprehensive range of surveys on how to improve the perception of consumers based on the Halal label especially MAMEE consumers in Malaysia, to achieve a more accurate and reliable test.

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