

Halal Awareness: Insights into Gen Z's Perceptions in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to assess the level of halal awareness among Gen Z in Indonesia and determine if there were any differences in awareness between men and women. The research involved 450 Muslim respondents aged 19 to 25 (Female 54.4 percent), who participated through self-administered questionnaires and convenience sampling. The results indicated a high level of awareness regarding halal food products, with an average mean score of 4.54. Additionally, the comparison between male and female respondents showed no significant differences in their awareness of halal food products. The high level of halal awareness among Gen Z suggests that businesses and marketers should tailor their strategies to this demographic. Companies can leverage this awareness to promote halal products more effectively, emphasizing quality and compliance with halal standards to attract this consumer group.

Public interest statements

Considering the rising demand for halal food products, food manufacturers and suppliers should explore developing new halal-certified products that meet the preferences and dietary requirements of Generation Z. This may involve creating innovative food choices that align with current trends, such as plant-based or health-focused halal products.

Keywords: *Halal awareness, gender, Gen Z, Indonesia*

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menilai tingkat kesadaran halal di kalangan Gen Z di Indonesia dan menentukan apakah ada perbedaan kesadaran antara pria dan wanita. Penelitian ini melibatkan 450 responden Muslim berusia 19 hingga 25 tahun, yang berpartisipasi melalui kuesioner yang diisi sendiri dan pengambilan sampel secara praktis. Hasilnya menunjukkan tingkat kesadaran yang tinggi terhadap produk makanan halal, dengan skor rata-rata 4,54. Selain itu, perbandingan antara responden pria dan wanita tidak menunjukkan perbedaan yang signifikan dalam kesadaran mereka terhadap produk makanan halal. Tingkat kesadaran halal yang tinggi di kalangan Gen Z menunjukkan bahwa bisnis dan pemasar harus menyesuaikan strategi mereka dengan demografi ini. Perusahaan dapat memanfaatkan kesadaran ini untuk mempromosikan produk halal secara lebih efektif, menekankan kualitas dan kepatuhan terhadap standar halal untuk menarik kelompok konsumen ini.

Pernyataan kepentingan publik

Mengingat meningkatnya permintaan akan produk makanan halal, produsen dan pemasok makanan harus mengeksplorasi pengembangan produk bersertifikat halal baru yang memenuhi preferensi dan persyaratan diet Generasi Z. Ini mungkin melibatkan penciptaan pilihan makanan inovatif yang sejalan dengan tren terkini, seperti produk halal berbasis sayuran atau yang berfokus pada kesehatan.

Kata Kunci: Kesadaran halal, gender, Gen Z, Indonesia

Introduction

The halal industry is experiencing rapid growth, reflecting Muslims' increasing economic power and consumer base worldwide. In 2018, Muslim spending across various sectors, including food, pharmaceuticals, and lifestyle products, reached US\$2.2 trillion. This substantial expenditure highlights the importance of meeting the needs and preferences of Muslim consumers, particularly in the halal food sector. The report projects that the global Muslim population will reach 31% over the next 45 years, indicating a sustained increase in the demand for halal products. Specifically, the halal food sector is expected to grow significantly, with its value estimated at US\$ 1,303 billion in 2018 and projected to reach US\$1,863 billion by 2023. This growth trajectory underscores the increasing importance of halal food in the global market (Wibowo et al., 2022). Expenditure by Muslim consumers on food and drinks is anticipated to rise from US\$1.4 billion in 2018 to US\$ 2.0 billion by 2024, reflecting not only the growing Muslim population but also a heightened awareness and demand for halal-certified products as consumers become more discerning about the food they consume, businesses that offer halal options are likely to benefit from this trend (Yusof et al., 2019).

The increasing interest in the halal concept, especially in marketing and branding, signifies a significant change in consumer behavior and preferences (Ambali & Bakar, 2013; Bashir, 2019; Jaiyeoba et al., 2019; Muslichah M. et al., 2019; Wilson & Liu, 2011; Yulianto et al., 2022). As highlighted by Wilson and Liu (2010), the role of halal marketing and branding is

vital in shaping consumer awareness and influencing purchasing decisions related to halal products. Halal awareness goes beyond mere knowledge; it involves a deliberate understanding and perception of halal products, a nuanced aspect that is often overlooked. In the same vein, Ambali and Bakar (2013) propose that awareness in the halal context means having a particular interest in or being well-informed about halal food, drinks, and products. This awareness is closely linked to two key concepts: First, halal knowledge is an individual's understanding of religious guidelines regarding what is permissible (halal) and what is prohibited (haram). It involves being educated about halal principles and the specific requirements that products must meet to be considered halal. Second, halal watchfulness reflects an individual's sensitivity and vigilance in ensuring that the products they consume are lawful. This vigilance is significantly influenced by a person's religiosity, which is how much they adhere to their religious values, beliefs, and practices in their daily lives. This means that more religiously observant individuals are likely to exhibit higher levels of halal watchfulness, actively seeking out halal-certified products and being more discerning in their purchasing decisions (Muslichah & Sanusi, 2019; Muslichah M. et al., 2019).

The existing research has consistently shown that halal awareness affects the purchasing behavior of seasonal consumers (Ambali & Bakar, 2013; Bashir, 2019; Jaiyeoba et al., 2019; Muslichah M. et al., 2019; Wilson & Liu, 2011; Yulianto et al., 2022). However, there has been limited focus on studying the specific role of gender in this context (Jaiyeoba et al., 2023). Therefore, the main goal of this study is to investigate how gender may impact halal awareness among Gen Z consumers in Indonesia. By examining the influence of gender, this study aims to bridge the gap in existing literature and gain insights into how male and female consumers differ in their awareness and perceptions of halal products. The potential benefits of this study's findings for marketers and businesses targeting this demographic are significant, as they can use this information to tailor their strategies and products to the unique preferences of Gen Z consumers. Moreover, the study's emphasis on Generation Z in Indonesia is important, as this demographic holds increasing sway in the market. Their distinct values, preferences, and behaviors related to halal products require specific attention, particularly in a diverse and rapidly evolving market like Indonesia.

Case Description

Halal awareness

Ambali and Bakar (2013) define halal awareness as the understanding and awareness of halal products, including knowledge of what is permissible (halal) and what is prohibited (haram) in the context of food, beverages, and other products. This awareness also involves having a special interest and up-to-date information about halal products. In marketing, halal awareness is the level of consumer awareness of halal products that can influence their purchasing behavior. This concept includes understanding halal certification and choosing products that align with religious values (Wilson & Liu, 2010).

Jaiyeoba et al. (2019) define halal awareness as consumer awareness of the existence and characteristics of halal products that influence purchasing decisions. This awareness includes knowledge of the halal certification process and trust in products advertised as halal. According to Bashir (2019), halal awareness is the understanding individuals have about halal

products, including knowledge of Islamic law governing the consumption and use of products and individual sensitivity to halal aspects in everyday life (Bashir, 2019). In the same vein, Yulianto et al. (2022) proposed the concept of halal awareness as the level of consumer knowledge and awareness of halal products, including understanding religious values and how the product meets halal criteria. This awareness plays an important role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions (Yulianto et al., 2022). From the definitions above, halal awareness includes an individual's understanding, knowledge, and awareness of halal products and how these factors influence their behavior and purchasing decisions.

The role of gender

Gender plays a significant role in understanding purchasing and brand behavior (Duan et al., 2021; Fikry & Reeza Bustami, 2012; Koca & Koc, 2016; Lin et al., 2019; Pang & Ding, 2021; Shafariah & Gofur, 2024). In Muslim society, social and cultural norms can influence the level of halal awareness between men and women. Women typically make more decisions about food and everyday products, so they tend to be more exposed to information about halal. On the other hand, men may focus more on decisions about larger product purchases or investments, affecting how they understand and value halal. Analysis shows that female consumers strengthen the positive relationship between halal product awareness and consumer trust, compared to male consumers (Shafariah & Gofur, 2024).

Methods

A quantitative methodology was utilized, and a self-administered questionnaire was conducted with 450 consumers who had bought halal food from different halal markets. The target sample consisted of consumers aged between 19 and 25, chosen through the convenience approach. This age group was selected to explore halal awareness among the Gen Z demographic. The questionnaire's items were based on previous literature. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher informed the respondents that participation in the study was voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential.

The survey instrument included socio-demographic information such as gender, age, education, employment status, and halal awareness, with seven items adapted from a previous study (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2019). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, including "strongly disagree," "disagree," "neutral," "agree," and "strongly agree."

Results and discussion

Measurement evaluation

The results in Table 1 indicate that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value in the factor analysis is 0.868, which exceeds the cut-off value of 0.60. These results show that the measurement model is suitable for factor analysis. Additionally, the initial Eigenvalues suggest that the seven items can account for 55.7% of the variation in the construct. Overall, the seven items form a single dimension (unidimensional), as depicted in Figure 1.

Table 2.
Initial Eigenvalues

Component	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.899	55.70	55.7
2	0.841	12.01	67.7
3	0.629	8.98	76.7
4	0.518	7.40	84.1
KMO	0.868		

Table 3.
Mean, loading factor, and reliability

No	Items	Mean	β
1	Understand what is halal and what is not	4.45	0.50
2	Prioritize ensuring that the food is halal	4.52	0.76
3	Checking the halalness of the product	4.63	0.76
4	Halal food is important for health	4.61	0.76
5	Buying halal products has become a lifestyle	4.57	0.79
6	Knowledgeable about halal crieries	4.47	0.65
7	Easily recognize the halal logo	4.52	0.63
	α	0.86	
	AVE	0.48	

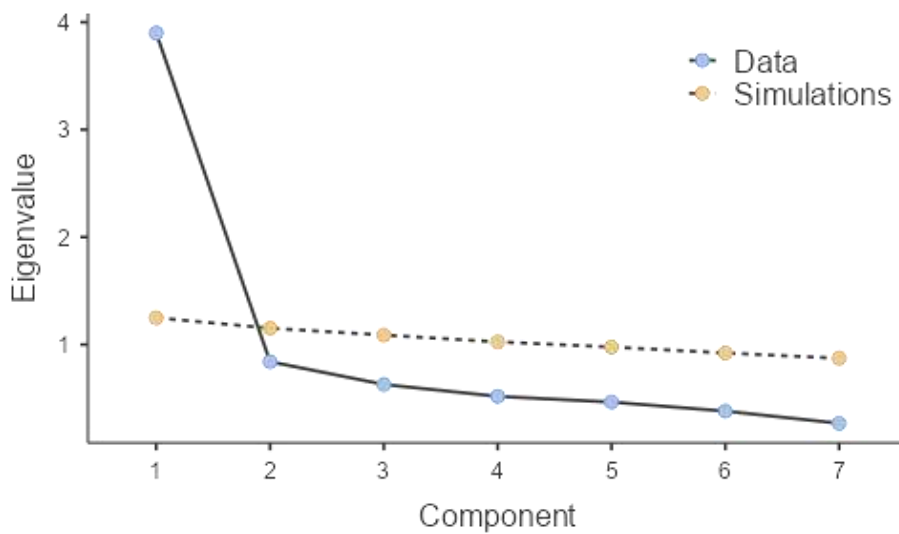


Figure 1.
Scree Plot

Descriptive statistics and comparison for halal awareness items

The findings regarding respondents' awareness of halal food products, as shown in Table 3, indicate a high level of awareness, with an average mean score of 4.54, suggesting that participants generally agree or strongly agree with statements related to halal awareness. Among the seven items assessed, "Knowledgeable about halal criteria" received the lowest score, indicating potential gaps in understanding the specific criteria that define halal products. In contrast, "Checking the halalness of the product before consuming" scored the highest, reflecting that respondents actively verified the halal status of products before consumption.

The findings comparing perceptions between women and men regarding awareness of halal food products suggest no significant difference between the two groups, as indicated by a p-value greater than 0.05. Table 4 displays the consistent results from three different analysis techniques—Student's t-test, Welch test, and Mann-Whitney test—showing that the average scores of male and female respondents are similar in their awareness of halal food. These results indicate that both genders share a comparable level of awareness about halal food products, emphasizing a consistent understanding across demographic groups.

Table 4.

Independent Samples T-Test

		Statistic	df	p
HAW1	Student's t	-1.07	448	0.29
	Welch's t	-1.07	438	0.29
	Mann-Whitney U	23643.00		0.22
HAW2	Student's t	0.36	448	0.72
	Welch's t	0.36	439	0.72
	Mann-Whitney U	24282.00		0.48
HAW3	Student's t	0.36	448	0.72
	Welch's t	0.36	447	0.72
	Mann-Whitney U	23928.00		0.28
HAW4	Student's t	0.80	448	0.42
	Welch's t	0.80	428	0.43
	Mann-Whitney U	24182.00		0.40
HAW5	Student's t	0.15	448	0.88
	Welch's t	0.15	425	0.89
	Mann-Whitney U	25019.00		0.94
HAW6	Student's t	-1.56	448	0.12
	Welch's t	-1.57	440	0.12
	Mann-Whitney U	23070.00		0.09
HAW7	Student's t	0.22	448	0.83
	Welch's t	0.22	440	0.83
	Mann-Whitney U	24549.00		0.64

Note. $H_a: \mu_1 \text{ Female} \neq \mu_2 \text{ Male}$

The practical implications of the research results regarding awareness of halal food products, particularly about Gen Z, are noteworthy for several reasons: The findings indicate a need for enhanced educational programs focused on the specific criteria that define halal products, particularly since the item "Knowledgeable about halal criteria" received the lowest score. Stakeholders, such as halal certification bodies and food producers, can develop targeted campaigns to improve consumer understanding of halal standards, which may lead to more informed purchasing decisions. Given that both men and women exhibit similar levels of awareness regarding halal products, marketing strategies can be designed to appeal to a broad audience without the need for gender-specific messaging. This can streamline marketing efforts and ensure campaigns effectively reach all consumers interested in halal products. Food manufacturers and retailers can use the insights from the research to develop and promote halal products that meet consumer expectations. By ensuring transparency in halal certification and providing clear information about halal criteria, businesses can build trust and encourage more consumers to choose their products.

Limitations

This study has a few limitations that could be improved in future research. Firstly, the reliance on self-reported data from respondents regarding their awareness and perceptions of halal products could introduce bias, as individuals may overestimate their knowledge or provide socially desirable responses rather than their true beliefs and behaviors. Secondly, the study mainly focuses on awareness without delving into deeper aspects such as attitudes, motivations, or behaviors related to halal food consumption. Understanding these factors could offer a more detailed view of how awareness translates into actual purchasing decisions. Lastly, the research needs to consider cultural differences in the understanding and significance of halal food across various communities. Different cultural backgrounds influence perceptions and awareness levels, affecting the findings. Future studies could use a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups. This would allow researchers to gather more detailed data on respondents' attitudes, motivations, and behaviors regarding halal food consumption, providing a deeper understanding of the factors influencing awareness and purchasing decisions. Future research could incorporate objective measures of awareness and knowledge about halal products to mitigate the bias associated with self-reported data. This could include quizzes or assessments to evaluate respondents' understanding of halal criteria and observational studies to analyze actual purchasing behaviors in real-world settings.

Conclusion

This study examined the awareness of halal products among Gen Z individuals in Indonesia, specifically focusing on differences between male and female participants. The study involved 450 Muslim respondents between 19 and 25 who completed self-administered questionnaires. The findings revealed a high level of halal awareness, with an average mean score of 4.54, indicating widespread agreement with statements about halal awareness. Additionally, the analysis showed no significant differences in awareness levels between the genders. The study employed various analytical methods, such as Student's t-test, Welch test, and Mann-Whitney

test, to comprehensively assess gender differences in awareness, enhancing the study's credibility. Furthermore, the study contributes valuable insights into halal awareness within the Indonesian cultural and religious context, which can be particularly beneficial for businesses and policymakers in the region.

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