

## Product Awareness of International Muslim Students in South Korea about the Importance of Halal Food

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### Abstract

The objective of this study was to obtain the views of muslim international student about importance of halal food. This study was conducted in South Korean cities having muslim international students. The research design used was qualitative conducted with interview and field study with participant sample of international students in South Korea. The results showed the key themes explanation of halal food, importance of halal food, halal food price. More specifically, the results presented that among all students answer that they must eat halal food. They have to eat halal food as in rules in their religious tenet. Besides that, this was is considered not just because of the rule, but also purposing their healthy, where they highly perceive that halal food also mean hygienic food. From the discussion, it can be concluded that even the halal price is expensive, and it is not a big deal for muslim. They will buy it even it's expensive. The results practically useful for local and international marketers to assess their marketing to muslim consumer in non-muslim countries as it will be good opportunity for marketers to gain some profit by sell halal food and increasing the product price.

### Keywords

Islamic marketing, qualitative interview, halal food, muslim students, South Korea

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## 1. Introduction

Halal food is consumed by the Muslims as a fundamental practice and is said that the Quran states that the followers of Islam are meant to eat food that is prepared only from the halal method of slaughtering meat. The opposite of halal is haram which means it is not permissible.

The rapid growth in the Muslim population and awareness regarding halal food among the non-Muslim population are the major market drivers for the halal food & beverage market (Golnaz et al., 2010; Haque et al., 2010; Wibowo & Ahmad, 2016). The global halal food & beverage market report covers the regions, including North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and the Middle East and Africa. The halal tourism industry is set to be worth a whopping US\$238 billion by 2019 (Globe Newswire, 2019).

The Asia-Pacific is the largest market available for the growth of halal food & beverage products in terms of revenue. The region has the largest Muslim population in the world, which is resulting in the increasing consumption of halal food in the region. The growing literacy rate among the young Muslim generation and increasing awareness about the other beneficiary qualities of halal food among consumers are also important factors for the growth of the halal food & beverage market (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Aziz & Chok, 2013).

As Destinations for Halal Tourism and Countries to Study in Asia, The Seoul Metropolitan Government has been pushing for more halal restaurants in the city to cater to the ever-growing numbers of Muslim tourists. Seoul's halal restaurants consist of those with a Muslim chef and owner, the only Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) halal-certified restaurants, and restaurants that use exclusively halal ingredients (Pusparani, 2019).

### 1.1 Islam in Korea

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## **2. Methods**

Interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data. The Qualitative research design can be complicated depending upon the level of experience a researcher may have with a particular type of methodology. As researchers, many aspire to grow and expand their knowledge and experiences with Qualitative design in order to better utilize diversified research paradigms for future investigations. One of the more popular areas of interest in qualitative research design is that of the interview protocol. Interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic. Often times, interviews are coupled with other forms of data collection in order to provide the researcher with a well- rounded collection of information for analyses. This paper explores the effective ways to conduct in-depth, Qualitative interviews for novice investigators by employing a step-by-step process for implementation.

The sample of this study was obtained from 10 students who were contacted and they agreed to be direct interviewed, while 10 students are consists of Indonesia, Turkey.

### **BOX 1**

#### **Importance of halal food**

Halal food is very important because food is enter body and become blood and fat — woman (18)

Not necessarily there is halal label the important thing is not contain pork - woman (19)

Halal is not just a label it's a rule to eat hygienic food - man (20)

Due to Quran and religion rules we must eat halal food if not it will be big sins and feel guilty after eat haram food — man (26)

Halal contain also mean healthy for our body it doesn't have to slaughtered by Muslim just except pork contain food — man (22)

Bangladesh students in Dong-A University Youngsan University in Busan, South Korea.

## **Data collection and analysis**

Data collection and analysis Interviews were arranged at a time and place to suit each person, and written consent was obtained. Transcripts of interviews were anonymized. It takes around 10-15 minutes to interviewed. As data collection progressed, additional items were added as new areas of interest emerged. The authors read all the transcripts. The interviews we present here are representative of the key themes, reflect the range of accounts, and show contrasting views.

## **3. Results**

Overall, 10 respondents who are international students in South Korea agreed to be interviewed. All the respondent claim that they always eat halal food in South Korea. Even though hard to get halal food and more expensive than haram food they still have to buy it.

For them halal not just mean a label but also guarantee that they eat healthy food. If they don't eat halal food they will feel guilty and feels like eating trash. So halal food is not just important but also necessary.

In South Korea where muslim are minority, it is very hard to get halal food in this country. Especially in South Korea people tend to buy pork because of cheap price and easy to get it. Like Korean culture a lot of food are contain pork. So it's hard to get halal food in this country. All of respondent said when first time arrive in Korea very hard to look for food especially when first

time respondents still cannot speak Korean. They will not pick pork but if still in raw shape so people can recognize it. But if pork cut into little pieces or become powder like in noodle powder seasoning, they cannot recognize it. So because food is necessary, the most important thing is okay to eat haram food if we don't recognize it or accidentally eat it. But all of respondents will not eat pork in menu written contain pork.

Muslim people still tend to buy halal products even it's expensive. They will not buy pork or alcoholic contain products. They will buy seafood product in usual mart or market due to from Quran all seafood products are halal. For chicken and beef some people buy in halal store some people not. Some people who do not buy in halal store believe that beef from Australia 99% are halal so, they will just buy in supermarket in Korea for example Lotte Mart or E- Mart.

Because of halal store far from their house and they didn't know that halal products can buy online in Korea thru some halal store website. They also will cook halal food themselves due to can keep from pork contain products. Due to in Korea, Korean people like to mix their food with pork products or alcoholic contain products. But if some special occasion or sometime when they have activities outside they will just look at restaurant menus and avoid pork products. Usually, they will eat chicken and beef together. Due in Korea is easy to find chicken restaurant. they also will not drink beer, they usually drink water and sodas. Some Korean friends who know the conditions can understand it so it will not be a problem.

## BOX 2

### **Market of Halal food**

I will buy halal food even it's expensive- man (26)

South Korea should sell halal products so they can gain a lot profit from that products. Due to muslim willing to pay high for halal product- man (22)

I usually buy tuna and chicken products due to easily get in Korea- woman (19)

Usually I spend around 50,000 — 80,000 won in one week just for buy halal food not include rice and bread — man (22)

I will buy in Asia mart or by online to buy halal product in Korea some halal store provides website shopping so I can get halal product easily — woman (25)

Aker I buy the ingredients from mart even from Halal mart or not I will cook by myself so I can make sure my foods clean and halal — woman (19)

Usually if I go out with my Korean friends we will eat chicken and beef- woman (19)

Although Muslims are obligated to eat Halal- certified foods, there are other consumer segments that may be interested in these foods. For example, because the use of animal by-products is banned in Halal foods, vegetarians and vegans who avoid eating meat products represent a large portion of the possible target market. For the same reason, Halal foods are a good alternative for people with specific animal by-product allergies.

As the South Korea becomes more diverse because every year a lot of foreign students come to Korea, there is an increasing opportunity for food producers to differentiate their products and gain price premiums. However, as with any market segment, the marketer must get to know the customer. The Muslim audience has particular religious beliefs that constrain their diets. By providing foods that fit Muslims' prescribed diets, producers may be able to diversify their markets and increase their profitability.

#### 4. Conclusion

Halal was also merely understood as no- pork food. It seemed that consumer alert more in area where muslim was a minority in consuming food. They would seek a vendor with halal logo, asking the sellers, or just assumed it halal by the outfit of the sellers to indicate the halal product.

Halal is important, but taste and nutrition will be still at the top of priority within consumers. This is important to ensure the achievement of law on halal product guarantee.

Among the consumer chicken is the most consumed products when they live in Korea. Even there is no halal label they still believe that all of Korean chicken are halal. So maybe if Korea Muslim Foundation (KMF) collaborate with some chicken company in Korea the price can rising up. Therefore, the company can get more profit.

#### Limitations

This study is limited just for muslim student due to different perspective of non-muslim people. Also some non-muslim people still don't know a lot about halal food information. Because majority Korean are non-muslim, so in this study we do not interview Korean people.

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