

The Relationship between Halal Status Knowledge and the Korean Food Products Purchasing Practices in DIY's Muslim Society

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Abstract

Halal food products have great market potential in Indonesia, considering that majority of its population is Muslim. However, it is followed by the challenges of the increase in imported food products interest, particularly Korean products. Some Korean imported foods do not have a Halal certificate, although the producers or distributors already sell the products widely. Furthermore, the Muslim society's knowledge about halal food products is essential to prevent non-halal products purchasing. This study aims to determine the relationship between the Muslim community in Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY) halal status knowledge and their practice of purchasing food products from Korea. This study is a quantitative cross-sectional online study conducted from February to May 2022. The total number of participants was 112 with the inclusion criteria: Moslem, aged a minimal 14 years old, live in Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY), and a Korean food consumer. There was a significant relationship between the knowledge of the Muslim community on the practice of Korean food product purchasing. This study concludes that the participant's knowledge of halal affects their practice of buying Korean food halal products. It underlined the importance of improving the Muslim community's knowledge about the halal concept through education, especially in Korean products.

Keywords: Halal Food, Halal Knowledge, Korean Food Products, Purchasing Practice

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1. BACKGROUND

Indonesia is a country with a substantial Muslim population. The Central Board of Statistics data shows that 86,3% of Indonesian citizens are Muslim (1). This condition leads to a significant potential of Muslim consumers for several products, including foods. Muslims also believe that the halal concept guides them in purchasing and consuming products (2). The free trade market in the Asian Economic Society significantly also affects the global market, where the distribution of imported products increases dramatically. However, this condition raises concern about the product's halal status. Based on the Shari'a law, Muslims should consume halal products, and imported products without a halal guarantee make Muslims feel unsure when consuming them. (3).

In recent years, globalization has made foreign cultures penetrate Indonesia broadly. For example, South Korean culture's penetration of well-known Korean waves enters Indonesia through K-drama, K-fashion, K-beauty, K-lifestyle, and even K-food. Korean food is one of the most popular Korean products in Indonesia. Korean food is easily accepted in Indonesia based on the similarity of the food taste between Indonesian and Korean cuisine: spicy, sour, sweet, and salty. *Kimchi*, *ramyeon*, *tteokbokki*, and *bulgogi* are the types of K-food commonly consumed in Indonesia, especially by adolescents (4). Teenagers started to be interested in Korean products because of the influence of advertisements, social media, and the impact of Korean idols or influencers promoting Korean products (5).

On the other hand, the majority of Indonesian Muslim people look and decide to purchase Korean foods based on their halal label from the Indonesian Board of Halal Assurance (LPPOM MUI). It is based on their understanding of Islamic law and health awareness. The halal label on Korean food products is improving consumers' trust in the products (6).

A previous research stated that the Korean Government is aware that it is essential to develop halal Korean products to extend their export potential (7). Nevertheless, some Korean products still do not have the halal guaranteed label (8). This condition underlined the importance of the products' halal guarantee. It is crucial not only for Muslim society's protection of non-halal products but also for strengthening the halal industry (9)(10).

The Indonesian government also issued several policies to protect Muslim consumers from non-halal products and improve their convenience in purchasing products by assuring the halal status of the products (Law No. 33;2014 about Halal Products Assurance) (11). The halal aspect of the food product is determined by its primary raw materials, additives, production process, and distribution process until consumers receive it (12).

Although several types of research about Korean food purchasing decisions related to products' halal status, the study focused on the correlation between Muslims' halal concept knowledge and their purchasing practices on Korean products is still limited. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between the Muslim community in Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY) halal status knowledge and their practice of purchasing food products from Korea.

2. METHODS

This study was an online cross-sectional study using google-forms. The data collection was conducted from February to May 2022. The total number of participants in this study was 112. The inclusion criteria were: Moslem, aged a minimal 14 years old, live in Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (DIY), and a Korean food consumer. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to analyze the normality of the data. Furthermore, the spearman test is used for testing the correlation between halal concept knowledge dan practices.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Participants Characteristics

The participants of this study were Muslims who lived in DIY. Most respondents were women (93%), aged 20-40 years old (72%), and undergraduate students (47%) (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Participants Characteristics

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
a. Men	8	7%
b. Women	104	93%
Age		
a. 10 -19 years old	29	26%
b. 20-40 years old	81	72%
c. > 40 years old	2	2%
Occupation		
a. Full-time worker	29	26%
b. Undergraduate Students	53	47%
c. Others	30	27%

3.2. Halal concept knowledge and practices of the participants

Based on the Spearman correlation test result, there is a correlation between the halal concept knowledge and purchasing practices ($p=0.02$) (Table 1.2)

Table 1.2. Spearman correlation test result

		Practices
Knowledge	<i>r</i>	.217*
	<i>p</i>	.022
	<i>n</i>	112

*Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (2-tailed)

3.3. Discussion

Recently, the interest in Korean food products has been rising in Indonesia, especially among teenagers. This trend has been growing and developing in Indonesia since the penetration of Korean culture through the Korean waves. This study result shows that most of the participants were Gen-Z and millennials. Millennials were born between 1981-2000, while the gen-z generation is the generation after the millennials. This finding is strengthened by another research result that showed that most Korean wave fans were Gen-Z. Their characteristic is fanatically attached to the Korean wave and willing to spend their expenses on Korean products (13). Gen Z (born between 1997-2012) are currently the highest

population in Indonesia, with a total of 75.49 million people (14). Gen Z, as consumers, are having a specific characteristic toward trends & innovation. Before they decide to purchasing products, they always consider the innovation of purchasing convenience and product safety (15). These characteristics affect interest in purchasing decisions for products, especially Korean products (16). Furthermore, one of the consumer characteristics that influence the decision to purchase Korean products is the product brand ambassador. Gen-Z is very influenced by brand ambassadors for Korean products advertised. This is in line with research from (17) with the influence of brand ambassadors for e-commerce in Indonesia which shows results that brand ambassadors for K-Pop idols or Korean artists have a significant influence on purchasing decisions for Korean products.

The critical point of halal in a product is used to control the risk of non-halal processed food products. Errors in the production process in the form of not implementing several factors such as the correct production process, human error, the equipment used, and the work environment that do not comply with the guidelines in the Halal Assurance System (12). The critical point is a point in the processing process, which causes halal materials or halal food to become Haram (forbidden). A critical point of halal products can be seen from their products according to Islamic law and additives which do not use haram products (18). In Korean food and beverage products, the critical points for product halalness are found in the use of alcohol, fermentation, and cooking processes (19).

The majority of Korean are non-muslim. This is one the reasons why the halalness of products (especially cosmetic and food) is not a big concern for them. Weak regulation and law enforcement related to halal product also play role. These matters lead to a lot of cases of halal label fabrication by some producers and certain people acting on behalf of Islamic organization (3) However, South Korean food companies that take the Muslim population as their market target must adhere to halal norms, such as handling halal certification and including halal labels, information on raw materials, and processing procedures on product/food packaging (20). This halal market represents a massive export opportunity for Korean and private firms, and they have the capacity and ability to become worldwide suppliers of halal

food items—nevertheless, only a few halal-certified Korean food processing enterprises, for example, in the sector of seafood processing (21).

Furthermore, the study results correlate consumers' halal concept knowledge and purchasing practices. This study result shows a significant correlation between halal concept knowledge and purchasing practices of Korean food ($p=0,02$). In line with the previous research result, stated that when someone decides to purchase products, several factors affect the decision: knowledge, social environment, family, culture, perception, and preference. Therefore, the consumer's understanding will determine the purchasing intention (1) (22). This research in line with (23) that shown halal awareness and knowledge of Halal Products have a significant effect on purchase decisions partially and simultaneously. Research by (24) shows that The level of knowledge consumers has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions on halal food. Halal awareness is a level of knowledge owned by Muslim consumers to seek and consume halal products according to Islamic law (23).

The halal knowledge of products is relatively significant in purchasing decisions by 16%. The other factor influencing the purchasing decision (84%) are the products' quality, the brand image, and the price (25). Consumers knowledge about halal products is a very important basis in finding out other consumer behaviour is the same as searching for true news so as not to be consumed by fake news (23). Consumers can obtain information about halal food through advertisements or labels that are already attached to the product. The easiest way to choose halal products is to see whether there is a halal label from LPPOM MUI on the packaging of a food product (26). The halal label is important for Muslim consumers to ensure that the products they consume and use have passed the halal test from the institution that issued the halal certification. Consumers must be more careful and selective in seeing the absence of a halal label on product packaging (27). In addition, the Muslim societies' awareness also positively affects purchasing intention (20). The Muslim community also thinks that the knowledge and understanding level of halal concepts are essential to determine what kind of products they want to buy (28), while another study also found that most respondents are hesitant to make purchases if the product label does not contain a halal label. Therefore, awareness of the use of halal

products can affect Muslim customers purchasing decisions (29).

The variation in Korean food products also affects purchasing intention. Various types of Korean food appear in drama, variety and reality shows, making people curious and want to taste the food. The appearance of this food is even more interesting with the addition of the eating sound (30). It works as an attractive packaging to showcase its social culture. This kind of soft marketing influences an individual's cognition, influencing the purchasing behaviour of Korean food culture (31). Another research stated that there is a positive correlation between Korean food preference and the purchasing intention of Indonesian consumers. Consumers strongly preferred noodles, *kimchi*, *ramyeon*, and snacks (32).

Indonesian teenagers' knowledge of Korean halal products can be seen when they choose the product. Therefore, the well- knowledge youngsters will purchase a product with a halal label from LPPOM MUI. Similar to the finding, another research explained that Muslim students' subjective norms, controlled behaviour perception, and religiosity positively affect halal-labelled food purchasing intention (33). Furthermore, there is a linear correlation between the halal label variable and purchasing intention of a Muslim student. In addition, Muslim teenager believes that the halal label is crucial for a Muslim's obligation to obey the *shari'a* law and that the halal product is considered safe and beneficial for health (22). Research from (34) said that for consumers who have a high level of knowledge about the halal product, the level of decision to buy the product will be more efficient and consumers with a high knowledge about religion or more religious are usually giving more concern to the halalness of product, thus will affect their decision in purchasing of product.

Although previous research found that most Indonesian Muslim has good halal awareness and knowledge (35), some are not. Further, it should be underlined that good halal knowledge is essential for each Muslim. For this reason, the promotion of halal should be sustained. Besides the government as a stakeholder, the halal-food influencers might be used to drive generation Z through the trend of halalness into the rules and resources in order to boost the halal ecosystem in Indonesia (36).

4. CONCLUSION

This study's findings show that most participants are teenager and young adults. Furthermore, their knowledge of halal affects their practices in buying halal Korean food products. It underlined the importance of the stakeholder role in improving the Muslim community's knowledge about the halal concept through education and promotion, specifically for popular Korean food products in Indonesia.

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