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# The Effect of Halal Foods Awareness on Purchase Decision with Religiosity as a Moderating Variable

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**Abstract:** This study aims to examine and explain the effect of halal food awareness on purchase decisions with religiosity as a moderating variable. The sample in this study is Muslim consumers in Indonesia and Thailand. Purposive sampling technique was applied by criteria of samples required is Muslim consumers in Indonesia and Thailand. The number of samples is 200 respondents, included 150 Indonesian respondents and 50 Thai respondents. The analysis is done using Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) with SPSS 23.0 software. The finding of this study shows that respondent has a high-level awareness of halal foods in Indonesia and Thailand. Halal food awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase decisions for Muslims living in Indonesia. Halal food awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase decisions for Muslims living in Thailand. Finally, the higher level of religiosity cannot strengthen the effect of awareness on a purchase decision.

**Keywords:** Halal Food Awareness; Religiosity; Purchase Decision.



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## Introduction

Religious beliefs play a significant part in sculpting social behavior. Differences in religious affiliations tend to influence the way people live, the choices they make, what they eat, and whom they associate with. According to (Soesilowati, 2010) Muslim respondents consistently put a high priority on the halal issue when they purchase food, buy meat, or select a restaurant. Muslims tend to consider halal food products when choosing food or restaurant. Globally, the halal food industries estimated growth rate is 7% annually (Aziz & Chock, 2013).

One of the major concerns of Islamic teaching for its believers is to consume all products that are permissible (halal) and good (thayyib) according to the relevant specifically the Quran and the Hadith. This Halal term is already taught by the parent since they were young. Halal is derived from the Arabic word al-halal, which means permissible or lawful. The term halal means "things and activities that are permitted by the Syariah.

One phenomenon that has occurred is the existence of noodle products originating from South Korea "Samyang Noodle" which has pork DNA content. Quoted from Tribunnews.com that based on the order letter dated June 15, 2017, BPOM mentioned the reason for the withdrawal of

noodle products from South Korea because they contained pork DNA fragments (Arsyam, 2018). This phenomenon makes people in Indonesia become aware of purchased food products, especially products from foreign countries.

According to (Golnaz, et al., 2010) the halal concept emphasizes safety, hygiene, and wholesomeness of food. It also provides an excellent platform for healthy eating. Consideration of the place and process of the animals being slaughtered and most importantly, the condition of these animals would not endanger the health of diners, are a prime focus of what Halal is all about. Therefore, Muslims are increasingly aware that choosing halal products is very important not only to follow the rules of religion but to obtain food products that comply with health standards. Research in accordance with these opinions is (Arinilhaq, 2017) which has explained the result that halal awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention.

Such conditions occur where most of the populations are Muslims. This also happens in countries where Muslim minorities like Thailand. According to (Sateemae, et al., 2015) Muslim communities comprise approximately 5% of the total population of Thailand. But Thailand is one country that has potential in food which can be a hub of Halal food. Since Thailand has advantages in raw materials. However, Muslims in Muslim minority countries are certainly more difficult to find halal products, therefore we need a high level of religiosity to increase the awareness of Muslims in Thailand to decide to buy halal food products.

According to (Minton, et al., 2015) religiosity and the values associated with moral priorities are important, yet overlooked, predictors of special food preferences. Prior research has identified religiosity as a moderating variable is (Machali, et al., 2013) which shows the result that religiosity can be a variable that can increase or decrease the relationship between halal food awareness and purchase decision. As a moderating variable, a low level of religiosity will reduce the relationship between halal food awareness and purchase decision. But, the high level of religiosity will increase the relationship between halal food awareness and purchase decision.

This research focuses on the relationship between halal food awareness and purchase intention with religiosity as a moderating variable in Indonesian markets moreover compared Thai halal food products. In the background of this research explained how the differences between halal food awareness in Muslim-majority countries and Muslim minority countries.

## **Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### **Halal Food**

Halal means permitted or lawful follows as Islamic laws. Food defined as anything eaten or taken orally to the body as a source of energy (Mathew, et al., 2014). Halal foods are foods that are allowed under Islamic dietary guidelines. Halal foods not only limited

ideas for Muslims but also provide to everyone because the main importance of Halal food is foods are cleanness in every proves and follow from Halal standard which might differ in each country.

### **Halal food Awareness**

Awareness comprises a human's perception and cognitive reaction to a condition or event. Awareness does not necessarily imply understanding, just an ability to be conscious of, feel, or perceive. According to Ambar and Bakar (2013) cited by (Machali, et al., 2013), the literal meaning of the word "awareness" in the halal context is to have a special interest in or experience of something and/or being well informed of what is happening at the present time on halal food, drinks, and products.

### **Purchase Decision**

The purchase decision is the selection of two alternative choices or more consumers on purchase (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Purchase decision-making is the stage where the consumer purchase product. For measuring the purchase decision, mentioned that the purchase decision process consists of five stages: introduction needs, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and behavior after purchase (Armstrong, 2012).

### **Religiosity**

Religiosity is something very important in human life. Religiosity embodied in various sides of human life. Religious activity not only occurs when someone performs ritual behavior (worship) but also when doing any other activity that is driven by supernatural forces. Not only with respect to the activities that looked and could see the eyes, but also activities that do not appear to occur in one's heart. People with a higher level of religiosity were significantly more likely to feel a greater connection with the universe than their counterparts with lower lever religiosity (Momtaz, et al., 2011).

### **Hypothesis**

Based on this research the researcher can determine the hypothesis of Halal Food Awareness to Purchase Decision with Religiosity as a moderating variable.

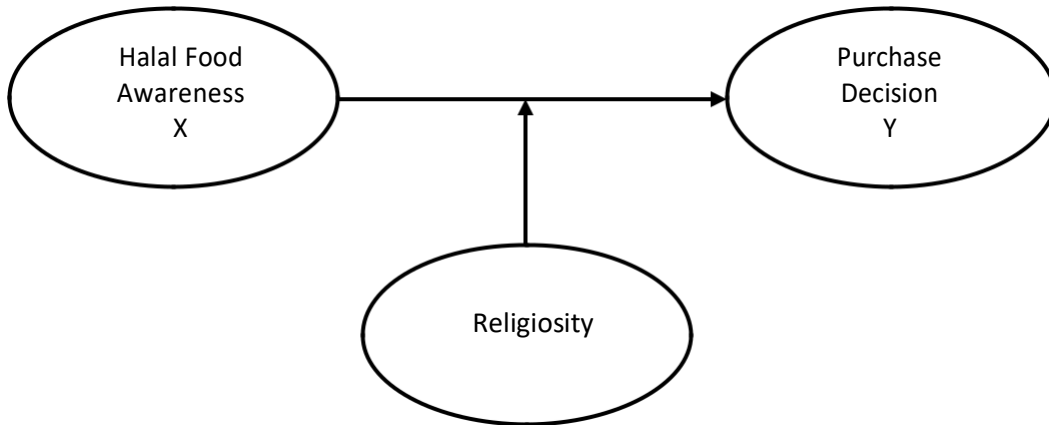
**H1:** *Respondents have a high-level awareness of halal foods*

**H2:** *Halal foods awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase decision for Muslims living in Indonesia*

**H3:** *Halal foods awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase decision for Muslims living in Thailand*

*H4: The higher the degree of religiosity, the stronger the effect of awareness on the purchase decision.*

**Conceptual Framework**



**Figure 2.1** Research Model

**Research Method**

This research in testing the hypothesis seeks to explain causal relationships between several variables with the causality approach. This research conducted in Yogyakarta and Thailand. The sample data technique used is non-probability sampling, where the sampling technique does not provide the equal opportunity for each element or member of the population to be selected as a sample. The type of non-probability sampling used is a purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling). The sample used in this research is based on the researchers' assumptions, where the sample used was 150 samples from Indonesian respondents and 50 samples from Thai respondents. However, these 200 samples are in accordance with the provisions of (Hair, et al., 1998) which explain that representative samples range from 100-200 samples. Technique data collection used to collect data that meets established standards. The tool used to obtain data is a questionnaire by using Google Forms Survey applications.

**Result and Discussion**

**Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

**Gender**

**Table 1** Demographic Background of Indonesian Respondents Classified by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	60	40
Female	90	60
Total	150	100

Source: Attachment 3

The result from Table 1 shows that the major of Indonesian respondents in this group are female (90 respondents) who accounted for 60% of the total respondents. The rest are 60 male respondents who accounted for 40% of the total respondents.

**Table 2** Demographic Background of Thai Respondents Classified by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	22	44
Female	28	56
Total	50	100

Source: Attachment 3

The comparison between male and female respondents in this research for both Indonesian and Thai respondents was not too different. The proportion of male and female is not too far, so even though the majority are female respondents, male respondents are also still quite a lot.

### Age

**Table 3** Demographic Background of Indonesian Respondents Classified by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
17-23 years	88	69.7
24-30 years	52	34.7
31-37 years	7	4.7
38-44 years	1	0.7
45-51 years	2	1.3
Total	150	100

Source: Attachment 3

**Table 4** Demographic Background of Thai Respondents Classified by Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
17-23 years	10	20
24-30 years	33	66
31-37 years	4	8
38-44 years	1	2
45-51 years	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Attachment 3

The age difference of the majority of respondents in Indonesia and Thailand is indicated because Indonesian respondents are respondents who are still studying at undergraduate level, so Indonesian respondents are mostly aged between 17 to 23 years. But the majority of Thai respondents are people who are continuing to study at postgraduate, so the age of Thai respondents is older than Indonesian respondents.

**Educational Background**

**Table 5** Demographic Background of Indonesian Respondents Classified by Educational Background

Educational Background	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High School	55	36.7
Diploma	10	6.7
Bachelor’s Degree	72	48
Master’s Degree	11	7.3
Doctorate	2	1.3
Total	150	100

Source: Attachment 3

**Table 6** Demographic Background of Thai Respondents Classified by Educational Background

Educational Background	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High School	-	0
Diploma	-	0
Bachelor’s Degree	20	40
Master’s Degree	25	50
Doctorate	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Attachment 3

As previously explained, the majority of respondents in Indonesia are undergraduate students, so their later education is mostly High School, while Thai respondents are postgraduate students, as long as the majority of the latter education is bachelor’s degree.

**Income**

**Table 7** Demographic Background of Indonesian Respondents Classified by Income

Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rp 1.000.000 or less	39	26.0
Rp 1.000.000 – Rp 1.999.999	32	21.3
Rp 2.000.000 – Rp 2.999.999	26	17.3
Rp 3.000.000 – 4.000.000	22	14.7
more than Rp 4.000.000	31	20.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Attachment 3

**Table 8** Demographic Background of Thai Respondents Classified by Income

Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rp 1.000.000 or less	3	6
Rp 1.000.000 – Rp 1.999.999	4	8
Rp 2.000.000 – Rp 2.999.999	4	8
Rp 3.000.000 – 4.000.000	10	20
more than Rp 4.000.000	29	58
Total	50	100

Source: Attachment 3

The result from Table 8 shows that the majority of Thai respondents have income more than Rp 4.000.000 (58%), followed by income in the range Rp 3.000.000 – 3.999.999 (20%), income in the range Rp 1.000.000 – Rp 1.999.999 (8%), income in the range Rp 2.000.000 – Rp 2.999.999 (8%), and income in the range Rp 1.000.000 or less (6%).

**Validity Analysis**

**Table 9** The Result of Validity Analysis

Variable	Instrument	Sig.	alpha	Description
Halal Food Awareness	HA1	0,000	0,05	Valid
	HA2	0,000	0,05	Valid
	HA3	0,000	0,05	Valid
	HA4	0,000	0,05	Valid
	HA5	0,000	0,05	Valid
	HA6	0,000	0,05	Valid
	HA7	0,000	0,05	Valid
Religiosity	R1	0,016	0,05	Valid
	R2	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R3	0,016	0,05	Valid
	R4	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R5	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R6	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R7	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R8	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R9	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R10	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R11	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R12	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R13	0,000	0,05	Valid
	R14	0,000	0,05	Valid
R15	0,000	0,05	Valid	
R16	0,000	0,05	Valid	
R17	0,000	0,05	Valid	
R18	0,000	0,05	Valid	
R19	0,000	0,05	Valid	
R20	0,000	0,05	Valid	
R21	0,000	0,05	Valid	
Purchase Decision	PD1	0,000	0,05	Valid
	PD2	0,000	0,05	Valid
	PD3	0,000	0,05	Valid
	PD4	0,000	0,05	Valid
	PD5	0,000	0,05	Valid
	PD6	0,000	0,05	Valid
	PD7	0,000	0,05	Valid
	PD8	0,000	0,05	Valid

Source: Attachment 2

Based on Table 9, the result of the validity test can show that all instruments used to measure the variables in this research have significance value less than 0,05. According to (Ghozali, 2016), that all instruments used in this study are valid.

**Reliability Test**

**Table 10** Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Halal Food Awareness	0,785
Religiosity	0,885
Purchase Decision	0,838

Source: Attachment 2

Based on Table 10, reliability analysis showed that all variables (halal food awareness, religiosity, and purchase decision) fulfilled the required Cronbach's alpha-level of > 0,6. According to Ghozali (2016), Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.6 which indicates that the internal consistency reliability of the measures used in this study can be considered to be good.

**Hypothesis 1**

**The first hypothesis was respondents have a high-level awareness toward halal foods.**

Following table 11 summarizes the results of the first hypothesis.

**Table 11** Percentage of Responses Related to Awareness Toward Halal Foods

Total Score	Level of Awareness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
29– 35	Very High	107	53.5
22– 28	High	78	39.0
15– 21	Moderate	14	7.0
8–14	Low	1	0.5
1– 7	Very Low	-	0

Source: Attachment 4

Based on table 11 indicates that 53.5% of respondents have a very high level of awareness, followed by 39% of respondents a have high level of awareness, 7% of respondents have a moderate level of awareness and 0,5% of respondents have a low level of awareness. Overwhelmingly more than 90% of respondents report having a high or very high level of awareness of halal foods. This provides support H1 which indicate that the halal food awareness among respondent in Indonesia and Thailand is significantly high.

**Hypothesis 2**

The second hypothesis of the model requires a test of the expected positive and significant effect of awareness on purchase decisions for Muslims living in Indonesia. Table 12 present the result of hypothesis 2.



**Table 12** The Regression Result of Indonesian Respondents

Independent Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t`	Sig	Description
Halal Food Awareness (X)	0,667	10,881	0,000	Positive and Significant

Source: Attachment 5

Based on table 12, the result of the hypothesis 2 test shown, the effect of halal food awareness on purchase decision for Muslims living in Indonesia has positive and significant (t = 10,881, Sig. = 0,000 < 0,05). The result provides strong support for hypothesis 2.

**Hypothesis 3**

The Third hypothesis of the model requires a test of the expected positive and significant effect of awareness on purchase decisions for Muslims living in Thailand. Table 5.8 present the result of hypothesis 3.

**Table 13** The Regression Result of Thai Respondents

Independent Variable	Standardize Coefficients Beta	t`	Sig	Description
Halal Food Awareness (X)	0,562	4,707	0,000	Positive and Significant

Based on table 13, the result of the hypothesis 3 test shown, the effect of halal food awareness on purchase decision for Muslims living in Thailand has positive and significant (t = 4,707, Sig. = 0,000 < 0,05). The result provides strong support for hypothesis 3.

**Hypothesis 4**

The fourth hypothesis of the model requires a test of religiosity as a moderating variable between halal food awareness and purchase decision.

**Table 14** Summary of MRA

Equation (3) : $Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 Z_i + \beta_3 X_i * Z_i + \epsilon$				
Independent Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t`	Sig	Description
Halal Food Awareness (X)	0,352	0,693	0,489	Not significant
Religiosity (Z)	0,184	0,791	0,430	
(X*Z)	0,192	0,302	0,763	

Source: Attachment 5

Based on table 14, the result of hypothesis 4 test is rejected. Religiosity cannot strengthen the influence between halal food awareness and purchase decision ( $t = 0,302$ , Sig. =  $0,763 > 0,05$ ). The result provides that it does not support hypothesis 4. This result support by the previous study by Machali et al. (2013) which is halal food awareness has no significant effect on purchase decision through religiosity as a mediating variable.

#### **Have a high-level awareness of halal foods**

Halal awareness is the level of understanding of Muslims in knowing the issues related to the concept of Halal. Such knowledge includes understanding what is lawful and how the production process of a product according to Islamic halal standards (Nurchahyo & Hudrasyah, 2017). This result supports previous research by (Machali, et al., 2013) which found the halal food awareness among students in Brunei is significantly high. This result also supports previous research by (Ambali & Bakar, 2012) which found awareness and concern about halal food among Muslims are gaining impetus in Shah Alam.

#### **The Effect of Halal Food Awareness on Purchase Decision for Muslim Living in Indonesia**

This is an encouraging result because previous research such as (Nurchahyo & Hudrasyah, 2017); (Machali, et al., 2013) and (Aziz & Chock, 2013) found that people who are highly religious may not necessarily have a high level of awareness about halal food. The majority of respondents is largely dominated by aged 17 to 23 years and they are can decide their purchases personally, in this case, they realize that they are very cautious related to halal foods. This means that the higher halal food awareness, the more will be their concern to ensure that the food they eat conforms to halal requirements.

#### **The Effect of Halal Food Awareness on Purchase Decision for Muslim Living in Thailand**

Living in Muslim minority countries makes customers be aware of a product and then build and intention of purchase. This means that awareness is a key factor for a Muslim living in Muslim minority countries when assessing foods. The result of this study strengthens the research of (Soesilowati, 2010) which found Muslim respondents consistently put a high priority on the halal issue when they purchase food, buy meat, or select a restaurant. This result also strengthens the research of (Machali, et al., 2013) which found the higher the awareness, the higher the purchase decision.

#### **The Effect of Religiosity as Moderating Variable between Halal Food Awareness and Purchase Decision**

Based on descriptive statistical analysis, religiosity has a very strong agreement by Indonesian and Thai respondents. This indicates that the respondent has a very high level of religiosity, so that religious life has been deeply embedded in him. The result also agrees with the previous study by (Machali, et al., 2013) which indicates religiosity as a moderating variable has a negative and significant result. Then the result is the

higher degree of religiosity, weaken the effect of awareness on the purchase decision. Also, this research has result that does not support the hypothesis. Religiosity cannot strengthen or weaken the relationship of halal food awareness to purchasing decisions because Muslims in the majority Muslim countries tend to have regulations that require every mass product sold in a minimarket or supermarket or another channel distribution must have a halal certificate. So that either the person has high- or low-level religiosity, still buy halal food product.

## Conclusion

Respondent has a high-level awareness of halal foods in Indonesia and Thailand. Because there are proved with the result of descriptive statistics that showed halal food awareness has a total mean 4,04 which means the respondents have a high-level awareness. Halal food awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase decision for Muslims living in Indonesia because there are proved with the significant value of t-test is 0.000 with coefficients  $t = 10,881$  it means halal food awareness gives a positive impact towards purchase decision of halal food in Indonesia.

Halal food awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase decision for Muslims living in Thailand because there are proved with the significant value of t-test is 0.000 with coefficients  $t = 10,881$  it means halal food awareness gives a positive impact towards purchase decision of halal food in Thailand. The higher level of religiosity cannot strengthen the effect of awareness on the purchase decision, because the significant value of MRA is 0.763 which means religiosity cannot moderate the effect of Halal Foods Awareness on Purchase Decision.

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