Determinants of Halal Food Purchasing Decisions Among Undergraduates at UiTM Tapah

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors influencing halal food purchasing decisions among undergraduates at Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus. With the rising demand for halal products among Muslim consumers, understanding these drivers is vital for business and policy makers. The study examines the roles of religiosity, knowledge, perception, awareness, attitude, and branding and promotion in shaping student's purchasing decisions. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed to conveniently selected 104 undergraduates from various programs. The study focused on six determinants such as Religiosity, Knowledge, Perception, Awareness, Attitude, and Brand and Promotion Influence. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is Halal Food Purchasing Decision. Multiple Linear Regression analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS version 23. The results revealed that three determinants such as religiosity, awareness, and attitude significantly influence halal food purchasing decisions as p-value less than 0.05. Specifically, religiosity (B = 0.177) and attitude (B = 0.332) showed a positive effect , while awareness had a negative effect (B = - 0.114). This study provides valuable insights for food manufacturers, marketers, and university administrators aiming to align strategies with young Muslim consumer's needs. It also highlights the importance of educational initiatives in enhancing halal knowledge and awareness. Future research could expand the scope by conducting comparative studies across different campuses or student demographics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global halal food industry has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by increasing awareness among Muslim consumers regarding religious dietary requirements and the rising demand for safe and high quality food (Ghazali et al., 2022). Halal, an Arabic term meaning "permissible" or "lawful", encompasses not only the ingredients used but also the methods of preparation, processing, and handling in accordance with Islamic law. In Malaysia, where Muslims represent the majority population, the halal

food sector plays a crucial role in the national economy and consumer lifestyle (Faisal et al., 2024). Among the young Muslim demographic, particularly university students, halal food consumption reflects not only of religious obligation but also reflects personal values, awareness, and social influences (Ambali & Bakar, 2014). However, despite the widespread availability of halal-certified products, there remains a gap in understanding the factors influencing undergraduates' purchasing decisions, particularly in campus settings.

At Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus, a diverse student population presents a unique opportunity to explore this phenomenon. This diversity includes students from various ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, religious commitments, and academic disciplines, all of which contribute to a rich and varied perspective on halal food choices. While previous studies have examined halal consumption patterns on a broader scale, limited research has been conducted to specifically address the determinants influencing the purchasing decisions of students within a campus environment. This gap raises important questions about the role of individual religious values, halal knowledge, awareness, perceptions, attitudes, and the impact of branding and promotional strategies on students' purchasing decisions. The problem lies in the lack of empirical data concerning how these factors interact and which of them are most influential in shaping students' halal food choices. This lack of understanding may hamper businesses and food providers may struggle to meet the expectations and needs of this important consumer segment, potentially affecting both customer satisfaction and sales performance.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the determinants of halal food purchasing decisions among undergraduates at Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus. The specific objectives are: (1) to identify which of the religiosity, knowledge, awareness, perception, attitude, and branding influence halal food purchasing decisions; and (2) to determine which of these factors employs the greatest influence. Through this research, it is hoped that valuable insights will be provided to stakeholders in the food industry, educational institutions, and policymakers to better cater to the halal consumer market among Malaysian youth.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The halal food market has gained significant attention from both scholars and practitioners due to the rising demand among Muslim consumers globally (Susanty et al., 2025). Numerous studies have been conducted to understand the factors influencing halal food purchasing behaviour, particularly within the youth and student demographics. This section reviews six sources of determinants for halal food purchasing behaviour, their relevance to the current study, and the gaps that this study aims to address.

Religiosity plays a central role in shaping Muslim's food consumption patterns (Owais et al., 2024). According to (Demirel & Yasarsoy, 2017), religious commitment is one of the strongest predictors of halal food consumption. Their study found that individuals with a high degree of religious observance are more likely to prioritize halal certification and adherence to Islamic dietary laws. The relevance of this finding to the current study is significant, as UiTM Tapah students are predominantly Muslim and their purchasing decisions may be strongly influenced by their religious values. However, the study by Demirel and Yasarsoy (2017) focused on a broader adult Muslim population, overlooking student-specific factors like peer influence or campus style. This research seeks to fill that gap by focusing on undergraduates, whose values may differ due to peer influence and lifestyle factors.

Knowledge and awareness of halal principles are critical in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours. A study by Ismail (2025) emphasized that consumers with greater knowledge of halal standards leads to more discerning purchasing decisions, with awareness campaigns enhancing trust in halal-certified products. For undergraduates, especially those in non-religious academic fields, the level of halal knowledge may vary considerably. This study builds upon his work by investigating the knowledge levels

among Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus students and how it affects their purchasing decisions.

Consumer's attitude and perceptions have been widely studied as predictors of halal purchasing behaviour (Shalihin & Alda, 2025; Youn et al., 2021). Shalihin and Alda (2025) explored the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in the context of halal food consumption and found that attitude significantly influences purchase intention. Their study demonstrated that a positive attitude toward halal products, combined with perceived behavioural control and subjective norms, increases the likelihood of purchasing halal items. However, their research targeted working adults in urban areas, where purchasing power and social influences differ from those of students. This research extends TPB to a campus context, investigating how attitudes and perceptions shape students' halal food choices.

Branding and promotion strategies also play a role in halal food purchasing decisions. According to Junita et al. (2025), branding influences consumer trust and loyalty, especially when halal certification is prominently displayed on packaging. The study concluded that marketing communication, including social media promotions and halal labels, significantly affects purchasing behaviour among youth. This is particularly relevant for university students, who are heavy users of digital platforms. Nonetheless, the study lacked a specific focus on university campuses, and thus, the current research aims to analyze how branding and marketing appeal to the student population at Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus, where product availability and marketing exposure may differ from urban settings due to its semi-rural location. In Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus, students may face limited access to a variety of branded halal food products compared to urban campuses, and exposure to aggressive marketing campaigns such as billboards or in-store promotions may also be lower. As a result, students here might rely more on online information or word-of-mouth recommendations when making halal food purchasing decisions.

3. METHODOLOGY

Primary data were utilized to examine the influence of several determinants on the halal food purchasing decision. The target population of this study is all students who are enrolled at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Perak Branch, Tapah Campus. The study involved 104 students from Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus, who were conveniently selected from various programs. The information was collected using an online questionnaire constructed in Google Forms and distributed via WhatsApp and Telegram platforms. The study focused on six determinants such as religiosity, knowledge, perception, awareness, attitude, and brand and promotion influence. Meanwhile the dependent variable is Halal Food Purchasing Decision. Multiple Linear Regression analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS version 23. Fig. 1 presents the theoretical framework adapted from (Amalia et al., 2020; Chong et al., 2022; Harun et al., 2023) in this study. The assumptions underlying the regression model are discussed in the findings section.

Fig. 1: Theoretical framework of the study

Multiple linear regression analysis is a statistical method used to examine the relationship between one dependent variable and multiple independent variables simultaneously (Zulkifli et al., 2019). Prior to the

analysis, the assumptions of multiple linear regression are assessed to ensure validity. The hypotheses tested in this study are as follows:

H_0: Religiosity, Knowledge, Perception, Awareness, Attitude, and Brand and Promotion Influence have no significant influence on the Halal Food Purchasing Decision.

H_1: Religiosity, Knowledge, Perception, Awareness, Attitude, and Brand and Promotion Influence have a significant influence on the Halal Food Purchasing Decision.

The null hypothesis (H_0) will be rejected if the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) as a study by Zulkifli et al., (2019), indicating that one or more variables significantly influence the halal food purchasing decision. The multiple linear regression model used in this analysis is presented in Equation (1).

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 - \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \ldots + \beta_n X_n + \varepsilon \tag{1}$$

where Y represents the dependent variable, $X_1, X_2, \ldots X_n$ denote the determinants, ε is the residual term, and the β's coefficients represent the regression coefficients with β_0 being the intercept (constant term). There are four assumptions of the regression analysis must be satisfied in order to make the analysis reliable and valid. The assumptions are as follow:

a) The values of the residuals are normally distributed.
b) The values of the residuals are independent.
c) No multicollinearity exists.
d) There is no outlier exist in dependent variable

4. FINDINGS

A) Assumptions of Multiple Linear Regression

    (i) Results of normality test of the residuals

A normal P-P plot of the model residuals was constructed to assess the normality assumption, as shown in Fig 2. The residuals are considered normally distributed when the data points closely follow the diagonal line (Abid & Savikri, 2025). In this case, the assumption of normality is satisfied as the points are closely aligned with the diagonal line.
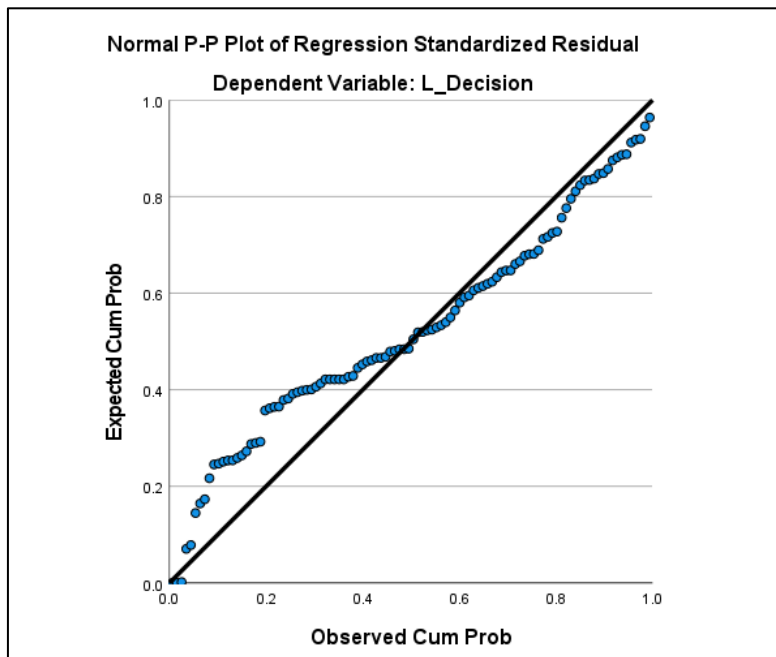
Fig. 2. The normal P-P plot for the residuals of the model

(ii) Results of the independent for the residuals

The Durbin-Watson statistic was used to test the assumption that residuals are independent or uncorrelated. In this study, the Durbin-Watson value was 1.786, which falls within the acceptable range of 1 to 3 referring a study by Zulkifli et al., (2019). This indicates that the assumption of independence among the residuals is met.

(iii) Results of multicollinearity test

The collinearity statistics presented in Table 1 were used to assess the presence of multicollinearity. The analysis indicated that this assumption was satisfied, as all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 10 and tolerance values exceeded 0.2 (Zulkifli et al., 2019). Therefore, multicollinearity is not a concern in this dataset.

Table 1. Collinearity Statistics

Variables	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
X_1	0.387	2.584
X_2	0.326	3.067
X_3	0.456	2.191
X_4	0.482	2.076
X_5	0.409	2.445
X_6	0.469	2.133

(iv) Results of the existence for the outliers

As shown in Table 2, all Cook's Distance values were below 1 (Zulkifli et al., 2019), indicating that no individual cases exert an undue influence on the model. This suggests the absence of significant outliers that could affect the regression results.

Table 2. Cook's Distance Value

Cook's Distance Statistics	Statistics
Minimum	0.6213
Maximum	0.7145
Mean	0.6891
Standard Deviation	0.0173
Size (N)	104

(v) Multiple linear regression analysis

The F-statistic obtained was 13.088 with a *p*-value less than 0.05 indicating that the overall regression model is statistically significant at the five percent significance level. As presented in Table 3, the regression results reveal that Religiosity, Awareness, and Attitude are significant determinants at the 0.05 level. This suggests that these three determinants have a meaningful influence on students' decisions to purchase halal food. The estimated coefficients for Religiosity, Awareness, and Attitude are 2.876, -3.807, and 5.104, respectively. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that Religiosity, Awareness, and Attitude significantly influence halal food purchasing decisions among students. The regression equation is presented in Equation (2).

$$\hat{Y} = 8.984 + 2.876X_1 - 3.807X_4 + 5.104X_5 \qquad (2)$$

The 2.876 associated with halal food purchasing decision indicates that for each additional in level of religiosity, the decision level will increase 2.876, holding the other determinants constant. Then for each additional in Awareness, the decision level will decrease 3.807, if the other determinants remain constant. Lastly for Attitude, every one level increase in attitude, the halal food purchasing decision increases by 5.104 with all other determinants held constant.

Table 3. Regression analysis results

Model	B	Standard Error	t	p-value
β_0	0.380	0.042	8.984	0.000*
X_1	0.177	0.062	2.876	0.005*
X_2	0.059	0.079	0.745	0.458
X_3	0.027	0.072	0.370	0.712
X_4	-0.114	0.030	-3.807	0.000*
X_5	0.332	0.065	5.104	0.000*
X_6	-0.019	0.037	-0.525	0.601

Note: *p-value $\leq$ 0.05

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigated the influence of six determinants Religiosity, Knowledge, Perception, Awareness, Attitude, and Brand and Promotion Influence on students' decisions to purchase halal food at Universiti Teknologi MARA Perak Branch, Tapah Campus. The analysis employed multiple linear regression to examine these relationships, with all regression assumptions being satisfactorily met, including normality, independence of residuals, absence of multicollinearity, and lack of influential outliers. The results revealed that three determinants such as religiosity, awareness, and attitude significantly influence halal food purchasing decisions. Specifically, religiosity and attitude showed a positive effect, while awareness had a negative effect. The statistical significance of the model, supported by an F-statistic of 13.088 and a *p*-value below 0.05, confirms the overall validity of the regression model.

The insights provided may guide marketers, educators, and policymakers in developing more targeted strategies to promote halal food consumption especially within educational institutions. Future research could explore additional variables or apply the model to broader demographic groups, use interviews or focus groups, and explore the role of social media, peer influence, and lifestyle trends. Long-term studies could also track changes over time. These steps can give a deeper and broader understanding of halal food choices among students. This study is limited by its small sample size and focus on one campus, which may not reflect students at other universities. It also used a quantitative approach, which doesn't capture personal experiences.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/FUNDING

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

8. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Nurul Husna Jamian: Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation and writing-original draft; **Ilya Zulaikha Zulkifli**: Conceptualisation, methodology, and formal analysis; **Ahmad Nur Azam Ahmad Ridzuan**: Conceptualisation, formal analysis, and validation; **Samsiah Abdul Razak** Conceptualisation, writing- review and editing and formatting.

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