



Study Effecting of Halal Logo on Ready-to-eat Meal towards Purchase Intention of Non-Muslim Consumers In Bangkok

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to determine the effects of halal logo on ready-to-eat meals toward purchase intention of non-Muslim consumers in Bangkok. The factors are halal awareness, halal logo and attitude, which are important factors in affecting the intention of consumers.

Research methodology – Data were collected via a questionnaire with a sample of 230 non-Muslim consumers in Bangkok with non-probability sampling, convenience and snowball sampling method.

Results – According to the research results, all factors positively impact non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal with the Halal logo. Additionally, the research found that non-Muslim consumers have positive attitudes and awareness of the Halal logo similar to those of the Muslim consumers. Although the study focuses on non-Muslim consumers, most of the respondents who participated in the research were Buddhists.

Research limitations – The respondents were only limited to Thai nationality in Bangkok. The focus was only on Halal's four variables: Halal awareness, Halal logo, attitude, and purchase intention.

Recommendation – This research can support marketing to leverage the understanding of the Halal concept in the food industry to attract Muslim and non-Muslim consumers in domestic and international markets.

Keywords: Purchase intention, Attitude, Halal awareness, Halal logo, non-Muslim consumers

1. Introduction

With the growth of the Muslim population worldwide, the demand for Halal products is significantly increasing to drive halal food marketing from niche market to mass market. All consumers have roughly the same preferences, and the market shows no natural segments (Kotler & Keller, 2012) within decades. Besides the growth of the Muslim population, the COVID-19 pandemic is also the main factor that drives hygienic awareness in consumption behavior. Shortly, it is estimated that the global halal food industry is extensively growing along with the demand for food safety and food traceability from Muslim and non-Muslim populations. As a non-Muslim country, the interest in halal foods and products has also been increasing in Thailand. Although the Muslim population composes approximately 6 percent (or equal to 4.3 million) of Thailand's total population ("Religions in Thailand | PEW-GRF," 2021), Thailand has established itself as one of the significant halal food producers and exporters in Southeast Asian countries. The country has

rapidly become a globally recognized halal hub (Halal food industry during COVID-19, 2021).

Accordingly, it is vital for all stakeholders to better understand Halal concepts, terms, and definitions. The first of these terms to be focused on is the word "Halal." Halal, an Arabic term that means permissible, is mainly associated with Muslim communities. It refers to foods and products produced according to Islamic Law and contains no unlawful ingredients. Halal products also include cosmetics, medicine, ingredients etc. Moreover, Mohd Nawawi et al. (2019) cited that halal consumption has been a significant concern for the Muslim population globally, especially in multi-religious and multi-cultural countries such as

Malaysia and the USA and European countries, including non-Muslim-majority countries such as Thailand.

According to the research of Thailand's Food Industry (2018), Thailand has long been called "the kitchen of the world" as the food industry contributed roughly 23%



of the country's GDP. With its abundant natural resources, highly skilled workforce, and strong support from the government, Thai manufacturers are investing significant resources in research and development to enhance their productivity and efficiency. Many companies are using technological systems to control their production processes. Thanks to rapid urbanization, families are becoming smaller and consumer lifestyles are changing to be more hectic ("What's trending in Thai ready meals," 2019). These significant factors drive convenient, ready meals, and purchases of processed foods tend to be rapidly growing for domestic consumption and export demand. Although lifestyles are changing and pushing consumers to depend on ready-to-eat meals, they are still a concern and awareness of nutrition and quality of the food intake. Therefore, brands in the ready meals market need to communicate the food information clearly on their product to leverage the fact that they offer better hygiene to consumers. Besides common food quality labels, the displayed Halal logo could provide another line of traceability to Halal standards as Halal products. This product is widely receiving recognition in terms of food safety and quality assurance (Septiani & Ridlwan, 2020), which can lead to consumer interest in buying the product at one time.

2. Literature Review

Halal

Halal is an Arabic word meaning lawful or permitted. In reference to food, it is the dietary standard, as prescribed in the Qur'an (the Muslim scripture). The opposite of halal is haram, which means unlawful or prohibited. These terms are commonly used in relation to food products, meat products, cosmetics, personal care products, pharmaceuticals, food ingredients, and food contact materials ("What is halal? A guide for non-Muslims," 2016). The concept of halal stresses hygiene, safety, purity, manufacture, production, process, honesty and service of foodstuffs and other financial and social activities on the excellent platform of Islam (Hussain et al., 2016). There are several criteria for food belonging to Halal. These criteria are based on the Qur'an. First, food or drink is halal if its basic ingredients come from animals or plants, forbidden in Islam. Therefore, Halal food must contain no pork, alcohol, and other ingredients forbidden in Islamic law. Second, the entire production process must comply

with their rules and requirements to be considered Halal; the phrase "Bismillah" (In the Name of Allah) should be invoked immediately before the slaughter of each animal and so on. Moreover, even in terms of substances, the food has been done correctly according to Islamic law, but it is presented in the wrong way; it does not belong to Halal standards. Fourth, all food should be prepared, processed, packaged, transported, and stored to comply with the criteria. Such Halal food can be prepared, processed, transported or stored using facilities that have been previously used for non-halal foods provided that proper cleaning procedures, according to Islamic requirements, have been observed.

Halal awareness

Awareness is the knowledge or understanding of a particular topic or situation, while awareness in the context of Halal means the level of knowledge or understanding of the Halal concept. Such knowledge, not limited to only Muslims, includes understanding what products can be consumed according to Halal law, including the production process. Halal awareness can be an absolute requirement for consumers and producers to consume and produce food (Shaari & Arifin 2010; Ahmad et al., 2013). Therefore, awareness is vital in determining the intention to choose a particular product (Aziz & Chok, 2013). It is a process where a concept of knowledge is applied to a particular behavior. Moreover, awareness reflects the first step in the purchasing process, in which consumers who are primarily unfamiliar with the product or service become familiar with it. In the context of halal, consumer's awareness of halal affects their decisions towards buying ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo. A study of Bashir (2019) concluded that halal awareness has a positive and significant effect on foreign consumers' purchase intention. In addition, consumer's awareness of halal affects decisions towards buying halal food products (Septiani & Ridlwan, 2020). Similarly, Jumani and Sukhabot (2019) revealed that awareness is linked to positive attitudes among non-Muslim consumers towards Halal logo even they are independent from Halal obligations. It is obviously proved that awareness has a positive effect on consumer intention. Accordingly, the findings confirm that awareness of the halal logo positively influences consumers' purchase intention.

Halal logo



During decision-making, the consumers look for quality cues, specifically for the brand and other guarantee signals (Trigui & Giraud, 2012). Before purchasing or consuming food, consumers' decision depends on the food quality, price, packaging, and labeling. The halal logo on the product represents product quality standards based on Islamic nutritional requirements. Its original purpose is to halal to Muslim consumers looking for products that conform to Islamic law and religious belief. It sends the Halal concept, which is not limited to animal slaughtering; another focuses on the processes from the planting or production of raw materials to delivery to the end-user. The logo also serves as a guarantor to confirm that the products are safe for consumption. This helps to simplify the decision-making process for the consumers regardless of their religion. Not only are Muslims the primary customers of Halal foods, but non-Muslim consumers use the Halal logo as a guideline when purchasing foods as the logo indicates safe and hygienic handling of food. Compared to other food safety certifications, Halal logo is a growing trend in the food and beverages industry. Hence, there will be an inclination to use the Halal logo certification to gain competitiveness for manufacturers. It affects consumers' perception of the logo in different levels of trust, confidence and credibility in the products. In addition, different countries have different Halal logos according to their Halal certification institutes.

Attitude

Attitude defines a person's enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluation, emotional feeling, and action tendencies towards some objects (Kotler & Keller, 2012). It characterizes an individual's intention on a specific product as well. This research found attitude is the most significant in predicting the purchase intention of halal products as long as there is a strong relationship between food culture and religion. In addition, Jumani and Sukhabot (2019) pointed out that the purchase intention of non-Muslim consumers towards the products with Halal logo also depends on demographic factors, such as age, educational background, occupation, and income. Accordingly, when purchasing products with Halal logo, consumers' attitude will determine whether they have a favorable or unfavorable attitude towards those products. Additionally, Bashir (2019) also found that attitude strongly influences the consumer's purchase intention.

Purchase intention

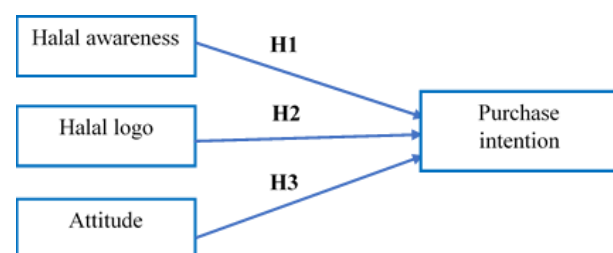
According to Che Omar (2015), purchase intention refers to the likelihood that a consumer will select a product in a specific purchasing situation in the future. In other words, it comes about when consumers feel that there is a need that must be available, which can influence and predict the consumers' purchasing decisions in the future. Purchase intention is an essential predictor of actual buying behavior (Sparks & Browning, 2011). It also refers to the mental stage in the decision-making procedure in which consumers already have an interest and willingness to act on a product or brand (Wells et al., 2011). In other words, purchase intention is also perceived as a consumers' willingness to purchase products. The bigger the purchase intention of a consumer, the higher the probability for the consumer to purchase a product or service (Garg & Joshi, 2018).

3. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

This study explains how people's beliefs or perceptions are determined or influenced by their intention to purchase a ready-to-eat meal with the Halal logo. Therefore, in this study, it is predicted that people perform certain behavior based on a predicted conceptual model as suggested by the researcher. The researcher proposed the effect of the Halal logo that may influence consumer's purchase intention towards a ready-to-eat meal in Bangkok. The conceptual framework comprises of independent variables (halal awareness, halal logo and attitude) and dependent variables (purchase intention). Its purpose is to examine the effect of halal awareness, halal logo and attitude on intention to purchase a ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo. Each component of the model was adopted from the theoretical framework of Bashir (2019). Accordingly, four constructs were conceptualized to fit into the current study setting, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework





3.1 Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses of this research were based on the conceptual framework to find the relationship among the Halal components; Halal awareness, Halal logo, and attitude of non-Muslim consumers that influence consumer intention to purchase ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo in Bangkok. The hypotheses of this study are:

H1. Halal awareness of non-Muslim consumers has a positive impact on their purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

H2. Halal logo has a positive impact on non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

H3. Non-Muslim consumers' attitude has a positive impact on their purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

4. Research methodology

The researcher uses the quantitative method to conduct this research, including non-probability sampling, convenience, and snowball sampling. The non-probability sampling is applied to collect the target respondents living in Bangkok via online and offline distribution channels. The questionnaire comprises screening questions, demographic questions (comprising gender, age, educational background, marital status, religion, and employment status), and Likert scale questions. Likert-scale questions are applied for rating the opinion by ranking from 5 as "Strongly Agree" to 1 as "Strongly Disagree" to measure consumers' purchase intention. In addition, simple linear regression and Pearson's correlation matrix are also applied to analyze the effect of independent variables on dependent variables. The statistical analysis is applied in the proposed model that was adapted from previous studies.

4.1 Population and sample size

The research questionnaire is conducted with 230 target respondents selected based on some criteria; non-Muslim consumers reside in Bangkok and have experience in ready-to-eat meals. The reason for mainly targeting this group for the study is to clearly understand the effect of halal awareness, halal logo, and attitude on non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention towards a ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo. The questionnaire was in Thai and English and distributed mostly through online channels focusing on

social media channels; Google forms, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Line to reach many targets. With convenience and snowball sampling method, the questionnaire is also shared through colleague's connection to collect quantitative data. The pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents. Even though there are 250 respondents participating in the questionnaire, only 230 respondents met the criteria, or a response rate of 92 percent. The 20 questionnaires were excluded due to incomplete information and failed to comply with criteria set for screening questions.

4.2 Pilot Test

The term pilot test is commonly used in research as it can refer to feasibility studies that are done in preparation for the significant study. In other words, a pilot test can also be the pre-testing of a particular research method. One of the advantages of conducting a pilot test is that it might warn where the main research project could fail, where the research framework may be required to review, or whether applied methods or techniques are inappropriate or too complicated (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Besides the pilot test, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient model is applied to help measure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Accordingly, 30 respondents of the target group participated in the questionnaire and are accepted because the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient results of all variables are higher than 0.7, proving that this questionnaire is acceptable and reliable in format. After conducting a reliability test, 30 responses were collected from the sample size of this research and the result of the pilot test are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Reliability test of variables (N=30)

5. Results and discussions

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Halal awareness (HA)	3	0.730
Halal logo (HL)	4	0.729
Attitude (ATT)	4	0.920
Purchase intention (PI)	4	0.937

5.1 Demographic factors

Descriptive analysis was presented of the 230 respondents via the questionnaires. The demographic factors in this research consist of gender, age, educational

background, marital status, religion, and occupation. These factors were presented with percentage and frequency analysis. The gender of the respondents in this study is evenly distributed between male and female, where 49.6 percent are female (114 respondents) whereas 50.4 percent (116 respondents). The age of most respondents is between 20-29 years old, accounting for 33.5 percent, followed by 50-59 years old with 27.9 percent. Their marital status is single for 50.9% (117 respondents) and married for 49.1% (113 respondents). Most respondents are non-Muslim accounting for 98.7% (227 respondents) while Muslim is 1.3% (3 respondents). Whereby the educational background of major respondents is bachelor's degree with 53.9 percent. In addition, the majority of the respondents are currently employed up to 68.7 percent (158 respondents), where 18.3 percent (42 respondents) of them are self-employed. The descriptive analysis of demographic factors of 230 respondents is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic factors (N=230)

Demographic information (N = 230)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	114	49.6
	Male	116	50.4
Age	20-29	77	33.5
	30-39	43	18.7
	40-49	30	13
	50-59	74	32.2
	Above 60	6	2.6
Marital status	Single	117	50.9
	Married	113	49.1
Education	Below bachelor	5	2.2
	Bachelor's degree	124	53.9
	Master's degree	99	43
	PhD	2	0.9
Religion	Non-Muslim	227	98.7
	Muslim	3	1.3
Employment status	Employed	158	68.7
	Self-employed	42	18.3
	Unemployed	19	8.3
	Student	11	4.8

5.2 Reliability analysis

Table 4 shows the reliability coefficients and the interrelationship between the factors. A reliability test is conducted to examine reliability items in the questionnaire. The results of all variables are acceptable with the value of 0.7 or higher according to the requirement standard of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. It was indicated that 0.7 is an acceptable value of coefficient reliability (Nunnally & Nunnally, 1978). Refer to Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient falls in a range between 0.824 to 0.927, which is higher than 0.7. This indicates that high internal consistency is met for all research constructs, therefore it could be implied that the questionnaire developed for this study met the standard required for reliability test.

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Halal awareness (HA)	3	0.824
Halal logo (HL)	4	0.803
Attitude (ATT)	4	0.887
Purchase intention (PI)	4	0.927

Table 3. Reliability test (N=230)

5.3 Descriptive Analysis of variables

This section analyzes and explains the correlation of variables in this research. The descriptive analysis comprises of halal awareness, halal logo, attitude towards non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention of a ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo in Bangkok. This research applied Likert scale model to describe the level of variables into a five-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The arbitrary levels shown in Table 4 were used to rate the respondents' perceptions with each statement presented in the questionnaire.

Arbitrary levels	Rating
5	Strongly agree
4	Agree
3	Moderate
2	Disagree
1	Strongly disagree

Table 4. Likert scale model

5.3.1 Descriptive statistics for halal awareness variables

Regarding the response to the halal awareness variables towards ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo shown in Table 5, it indicates that most respondents agree that they understand the meaning of Halal, where the mean value accounting for 3.50. In addition, they are quite familiar with the Halal logo, where the mean value shows 3.45. However, they are probably aware of the process involved in Halal ready-to-eat meal as the mean value is 3.17. Regarding the result, it could be implied that respondents are informative and knowledgeable about the Halal concept and Halal logo.

5.3.2 Descriptive statistics for halal logo variables

Regarding the response to halal logo variables towards ready-to-eat meal shown in Table 5, most respondents agree that the Halal logo represents high quality, where the mean value is 3.51, and the halal logo is widely popular (mean value 3.37). Moreover, they also perceive that the Halal logo is reliable, resulting in the mean value to be 3.65. However, the Halal logo's benefit does not significantly impact their purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo as the mean value shows 2.66. Therefore, these descriptive results indicate that even the respondents perceived the attribute of Halal logo, it might not impact enough to drive their purchase intention.

5.3.3 Descriptive statistics for attitude variables

Regarding the response to attitude variables towards ready-to-eat meal, they mostly agree that buying ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo is a good idea as the mean value is 3.37 and it probably makes them feel satisfied (the mean value 3.17). Although it is a good idea and satisfies

them, non-Muslim in Bangkok disagree that it is much better to buy a ready-to-eat meal with the Halal logo as the mean value is 2.90. Respondents agree that buying a ready-to-eat meal with the Halal logo is their ethical goal (the mean value is 3.30). So far, the results indicate the respondents show a positive attitude towards a ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo.

5.3.4 Descriptive statistics for purchase intention variables

Regarding the response to purchase intention variables towards ready-to-eat meal shown in Table 5, some

of the respondents agreed that they will buy ready-to-eat meals with halal logo in the future as the mean value shows 3.03. However, they slightly disagree that they intend to buy ready-to-eat meal with the Halal logo despite its availability (the mean value is 2.75). Furthermore, most of them do not intend to continue buying ready-to-eat meal with the Halal logo in the future as the mean value is only 2.51. Accordingly, they do not buy ready-to-eat meal with halal logo unless it is sold close to them (the mean value shows 2.25). Therefore, these descriptive results indicate that non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meals with Bangkok's Halal logo is quite low despite their positive attitude and familiarity with the Halal logo.

Table 5

Standardized factor loading value, mean and standard deviation (N=230)

Variables	Items	Standardized loading	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Halal awareness	HA 1	0.771	3.50	0.966	0.824
	HA 2	0.725	3.17	1.095	
	HA 3	0.776	3.45	1.206	
Halal logo	HL 1	0.745	3.51	0.929	0.803
	HL 2	0.722	3.37	1.065	
	HL 3	0.766	3.65	1.050	
	HL 4	0.781	2.66	1.148	
Attitude	ATT 1	0.867	3.37	1.06	0.887
	ATT 2	0.832	3.17	1.09	
	ATT 3	0.825	2.90	1.13	
	ATT 4	0.895	3.30	1.24	
Purchase intention	PI 1	0.931	3.03	1.13	0.927
	PI 2	0.889	2.75	1.23	
	PI 3	0.882	2.51	1.17	
	PI 4	0.914	2.25	1.17	

5.4 Hypothesis testing results

This is research applied the Simple Linear Regression method to examine hypothesis in the effects of halal logo on ready-to-eat meal towards purchase intention of non-Muslim consumers in Bangkok. The hypothesis was derived from the objective of this research and based on the conceptual framework as follows:

H1. Halal awareness of non-Muslim consumers has a positive impact on their purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

H2. Halal logo has a positive impact on non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

H3. Non-Muslim consumers' attitude has a positive impact on their purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

Table 6

Regression model summary

Model Coefficients - PI Avg

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept	-0.398	0.2186	-1.82	0.070	
HA Avg	0.180	0.0631	2.86	0.005*	0.159
HL Avg	0.206	0.0871	2.36	0.019*	0.161
ATT Avg	0.549	0.0694	7.91	< .001*	0.505

Table 7

Collinearity Statistics

	VIF
Halal Awareness Avg	1.46
Halal logo Avg	2.18
Attitude Avg	1.92

The regression model summary in table 8 shows that the value of R² is 0.519 indicating that 51.9% of all independent variables in this research; Halal awareness, Halal logo, and attitude could well explain non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention, which is the dependent variable, at significant level of 0.05 or 95% of confident level. The P-values of the independent variables are less than 0.05 showing that H1, H2, and H3 are supported and significant. SE value are below 0.1 indicating all variables are positively supported. Accordingly, Halal awareness, Halal logo, and attitude have statistically positive effect on non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal with the Halal logo. In addition, the variance inflation factors (VIFs) were verified to validate the multicollinearity problem. All VIFs were less than 5.00, considered as no critical multicollinearity problem in this research.

6. Discussion and conclusion, Limitation, and Recommendations

6.1 Discussion

This research aims to study the effects of the Halal logo on ready to eat meal towards purchase intention of non-Muslim consumers in Bangkok with the use of Simple Linear Regression model from Jamovi program software. The result of 230 respondents participating in this research has shown that Halal awareness, Halal logo, and attitude positively impact purchase intention. Since the hypotheses H1, H2, H3 are supported and interrelated, all variables are significant at the p-value of less than 0.05, respectively. According to the findings, there was an agreement with H1 that halal awareness influences non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo, as shown in Table 6. In addition, this result aligns with findings of the studies (Bashir et al., 2019) as non-Muslim consumers are aware of the Halal concept, and they are informative to make rational decisions to purchase ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo. Additionally, the agreement of H2 indicates that the Halal logo positively impacts non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention. Halal logo has become a quality label and plays an increasingly important role in the global food industry. In other words, this implied that more Halal are widely popular, the more technological methods of production and traceability are becoming important for manufacturers, traders, certifiers and consumers. Furthermore, attitude also has a positive impact on non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention in agreement with H3. As consumers who have a positive attitude, normally they have a positive direct impact on their intention (Ajzen, 1991).



6.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, Halal logo and attitude were determined as the most significant factor influencing the purchase intention of ready-to-eat meal with Halal logo, followed by halal awareness. This indicates the fact that non-Muslim consumers are aware and informative of the Halal concept, including Halal logo attribute. Understanding these consumers' purchase intention and their perception of Halal products helps the manufacturers in the food industry to better analyze the factors that significantly influence their production and develop the product to serve consumers' needs better.

H1. Halal awareness of non-Muslim consumers supports their purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

H2. Halal logo supports non-Muslim consumers' purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

H3. Non-Muslim consumers' attitude supports their purchase intention towards ready-to-eat meal.

6.3 Limitation

The research result contributes to the stakeholders in the food industry and supports the results of previous studies, but this research also has unavoidable limitations. As most respoto analyze betteri nationality, it would be better to retrieve foreign consumers' perception of Bangkok and provide other interesting information. Moreover, the target group of this research is limited to Bangkok only, which might not apply to other provinces in Thailand due to their demographic profile, behavioral practice, and population density. For example, in the southern part of Thailand, where the majority is Muslim population. Besides the limited location, this research focuses only on ready-to-eat meals. It does not cover other Halal food products, such as ready-to-cook ingredients, raw material, and freshly cooked meals.

6.4 Further research

Manufacturers and marketers might improvise the attribute from this research to leverage the benefit of the Halal concept in the dimension of strategies, marketing communication, product concept, and brand planning to penetrate the Halal market in Thailand. These will enable the business to gain a competitive edge in terms of differentiation among players in the market as they might outperform in meeting consumers' needs and generate sales

profit. In addition, the research assessed only Halal awareness, Halal logo and attitude factors; other factors such as Halal quality, Halal regulation, product variety and income should be considered in future studies. It is also suggested that future research should consider the effect of demographic characteristics, gender, age, income, and educational background on consumers' purchase behavior towards halal food products in Bangkok.

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