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## **PREFERENCE OF FOOD SELLERS TOWARDS HALAL LABELED FISH BALL IN KELANTAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

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Aim/Purpose	The objective of this study is to determine the preferences of food sellers in Kelantan towards the halal-labeled fish ball.
Background	Fish balls are the popular value-added products in Malaysia. Fish ball production is in second place after fish cracker production for processed fish-based production in Malaysia. Thus, this study tries to expose the preferences of the food sellers toward halal-labeled fish ball based on KAP model.
Methodology	A convenience sample technique is employed in selecting 58 food sellers in Kelantan. The food sellers were interviewed face-to-face by using a structured questionnaire.
Contribution	This study is about the perception of the food sellers towards the halal labeled fish ball in Kelantan. Consumers, researchers, society, manufacturers, and government can use the results that had been revealed and the conclusions that had been reached.
Findings	The result indicates that knowledge, attitude, and practice of food sellers have an impact toward the halal labeled fish ball. This showed that food sellers know the ingredient used in the halal labeled fish ball. The result of factor analysis indicates that knowledge is the major factors that influence the decision of food sellers in selling halal labeled fish ball products.
Recommendations for Practitioners	Food sellers also should be exposed more about the official halal logo by JAKIM and another country halal logo that is certified by Malaysia government as this can increase their confidence level toward the halal labeled fish ball. The

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	manufacturers should include a halal logo on their fish ball packaging to influence food sellers in purchasing the fish ball.
Recommendation for Researchers	Another study can be done regarding the consumers' behavior toward fish ball based on the halal label in Kelantan or Terengganu or Pahang or other states in Malaysia.
Impact on Society	The results of the study can help manufacturers to understand the needs and wants of customers. Government and local producers need to fulfill the needs of society by producing a fish ball, which has the halal label on the packaging.
Future Research	This study just focuses on Kelantan, and it does not represent other states. Further study should be done at other state to obtain the nation preference of halal-labeled fish ball.
Keywords	Fish ball, halal labeled, knowledge, attitude, practice

## INTRODUCTION

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Fish balls are the popular value-added products in Malaysia. Fish ball production is in second place after fish cracker production for processed fish-based production in Malaysia. Department of Fisheries shows that fish ball production contributes roughly 15-20% of total fish-based processed food products in Malaysia. Malaysia is moving near to becoming the core of "Halal" food industry and a substantial portion of study on halal food consumption. Muslim show a positive perception towards the halal logo and the ingredients on the product's label (Talib *et al.*, 2010). In Islam "Halal" commonly refers to all such manners and acts that are in unity with the sayings of Allah and the last prophet. Islam emphasizes the consumption of food by Muslim to gain a life which is meaningful (Nursalwani & Zulariff, 2017). Islam strongly implements the cleanliness both spiritually and especially on dietary laws. For a food or drink to be permitted for consumption as Halal, it must be deep-rooted by Islamic law revealed in Quran and practice of last Prophet. Mohamed *et al.*, (2008) stated that certifying the halalness of food products is the factor that influences the confidence of respondents on the official halal logo by JAKIM and the important part of the halal logo. Minor family-based enterprises commonly start fish ball production in Malaysia. In recent years, many manufacturers have devoted their capital to modern machinery to escalate the production of fish balls (Huda *et al.*, 2010). In South Korea, buyers were very concern about preservative, colorants, and artificial sweeteners in foods and most of them voiced that evidence on food additives was unsatisfactory (Shim *et al.*, 2011). Consumers become more confident in purchasing food with labels on the packaging (Zulariff & Mohamad Amizi, 2014). The food label degree appears adequate to present the ongoing standards of the halal logo, nutritive value and ingredient use by Malaysian to go through food items before buying (Zulariff *et al.*, 2015). The halal label is one of the Muslim identifications of consumable food packaging Zulariff *et al.*, 2013). In recent years, fish ball producers substitute the use of fish meat with surimi (Huda *et al.*, 2010). According to Huda *et al.*, (2010), surimi is a steadied myofibrillar protein gained from mechanically deboned fish meat that cleaned with water and mixed with cryoprotectants. Few surimi in the market can be non-halal due to the process of using non-halal plasma transglutaminase to increase the gelling characteristics of surimi (Alina *et al.*, 2012). The sources are doubtful and can be from non-halal sources. Hence the knowledge from food seller about the ingredient used in fish ball differ from one another. High level of knowledge and halal awareness indicated by Muslim respondents shows that the respondents have knowledge related to the halal concept (Elias, Othman, & Saifudin, 2016). Packaging act as the protective layer to protect the foods and carry the food labels and other important information about the foods. The amount of useful information given on food labels and packaging is a role of the level of caution, which is frequently higher for people who show more apprehension about the food they consume (Coulson, 2000). Fish ball is sold in any packaging. Some are just a simple packaging of plain transparent plastics bag, and others are packaged in a much higher quality plastic bag with manufacturer design to

attract the customer. The fish ball that is pack using the high-quality packaging usually provided with all the ingredient and the origin or the company that manufactured the fish ball. Based on information provided, the consumer can get the idea of the origin and ingredient of the fish ball. However, there is food seller that bought their fish ball with the plain transparent plastic bag packaging. This kind of packaging usually not able to provide the information needed by the consumer and yet, the consumer still bought the product (Rezai, Mohamed, & Shamsudin, 2012). The Asian Food Information Centre (AFIC) has explored buyers' reactions to nutrition evidence on food packaging as well as relative factors that influenced consumer feedback in China and Malaysia. Based on the study, most people fixed that the nutrition evidence on packaging should be included for all manufactured foods. However, buyers acknowledge their least knowledge relating to food product information. Buyers are more concern about the price tag and expiration date on the packaging more than about the details of the ingredients used. Kordnaeij, Askaripoor, & Bakhshizadeh, (2013) stated that factors such as advertising, halal product quality, religious, consumption difficulties, subjective norm and attitude toward a halal product are the factor that determines attitude toward products carrying the halal brand. The findings of this study will give an advantage to both food seller and manufacturer of the fish product. Through this enable food seller of fish ball and fish ball product producers regarding where the final can achieve a better understanding of the halal labeling. Additionally, both food seller and producers of fish ball products stand to benefit from the outcomes of this research through getting a better understanding of halal label which can improve the intention of food seller on the halal nature of fish ball products and the ingredients used.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

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For this study the literature review divided into the two following sections:

### ***Food Sellers' Perception of Halal Fish Ball Product***

Malaysia is moving near to becoming the core of "Halal" food industry and a substantial portion of study on halal food consumption. Muslim show a positive perception towards the halal logo and the ingredients on the product's label (Talib *et al.*, 2010). In Islam "Halal" commonly refers to all such manners and acts that are in unity with the sayings of Allah and the last prophet. The idea of halal food is opening new views and opportunities for the marketers and is developing a new brand concept (Abdullah & Ahmad, 2012). Choice of complex products was also in obedience to religious values (Khraim, 2010). Level of religiosity influenced the confident purchasing behavior towards halal labeled food products (Rezai, 2008). Human dietary behavior can be influenced by attending the religious schools. Respondent's level of religious is important toward the effect of the decision to purchase halal food products (Othman & Hashim, 2010).

### ***Factors Influencing Food Sellers' Decision toward Halal Labeled Fish Ball***

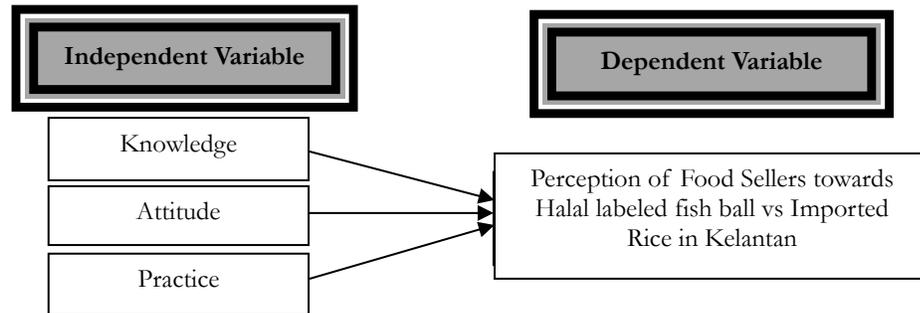
One of the potential individual factors is religion, especially among the Muslim (Rezai *et al.*, 2012). Religion plays one of the most significant roles in food choices. The effect of religion on food consumption depends on the religion itself. Different level of understanding the teaching of respective religion affects the impact of religion food consumption (Zaman *et al.*, 2011). Reports thrive on companies confusing buyers by deceptively labeling their products as halal to gain the benefit of the rising global market. Majority of these companies were not fully fulfilling with halal guiding principle (Abdul *et al.*, 2009). In Canada, the main factor that influenced Muslim buyers' decision in buying meat is having self-assurance and trust that the product they are about to obtain is halal. The assurance needed for long-term faithfulness can be made only by companies that develop public trust especially whose product is imperceptible and difficult to assess (Abdul *et al.*, 2009). Rezai, 2008 also stated that Islamic principles have a huge impact on buyers over purchasing behavior and food consumptions. Few buyers are not that assured with halal logo, the majority of them conscious of the importance of halal logo (Rezai, 2008). It only takes a halal sign to convince any Muslim that the food sold was consumable. Mohamed *et al.*, (2008) stated that certifying the halalness of food prod-

ucts is the factor that influences the confidence of respondents on the official halal logo by JAKIM and the important part of the halal logo. Confident level of respondents toward food products with the halal label also can be increase by the factor of respectable manufacturing and sanitary practices, religious knowledge, and awareness about foods halal status. JAKIM involvement to certify the halalness of food products is an essential factor in convincing the respondents about the halal status of the food products carrying the halal logo. Thus, it is significant for JAKIM to conduct their role in certifying the originality of the halal logo used on food products especially production from non-Muslim manufacturers (Mohamed *et al.*, 2008).

## METHODOLOGY

### *Conceptual Framework*

The questionnaire was constructed in this study by using the KAP conceptual framework (knowledge, attitude, and practice). KAP studies are vastly focused evaluations that quantify changes in human knowledge, attitudes, and practices in response to a specific intervention, usually outreach, demonstration or education. The data has been collected from the population to determine the perception of food sellers towards the halal labeled fish ball in Kelantan. The Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework used in conducting this study.



**Figure 1: Study of Perception of Food Sellers towards Halal labeled fish ball in Kelantan**

(Adopted and modified from KAP Model)

### *Data Collection and Sampling Frame*

A random sample of 58 food sellers in Kelantan area was obtained using face-to-face interviews. Based on Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) stated that survey on the homogenous group is sufficient with 15 to 20 respondents. Hence this research obtains 58 is more than enough for research. The primary data was collected randomly using a structured questionnaire based on several sections related to the objective of this study and was said to be reliable due to the entire variable obtained was more than 0.6, as stated by Coakes & Ong (2011) (Table 1).

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

No	Variables	Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)	Number of Items
1	Knowledge	0.697	7
2	Attitude	0.657	9
3	Practice	0.662	6

The first section of the questionnaire was information on demographic characteristics of respondents. The second section of the questionnaire covered on the impact of food sellers' knowledge toward the halal labeled fish ball. The next section was covered about the impact of food sellers' attitude toward the halal labeled fish ball. The last section of the questionnaire focuses on the impact of food sellers' practice toward the halal labeled fish ball. Type of question in the questionnaire used was 1-5 Likert scale, dichotomous questions, and ordinal questions.

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the demographic information of the food seller and to investigate the perception of food sellers towards the halal labeled fish ball in Kelantan. Then factor analysis was run to determine the most inclination factor on knowledge, attitude, and practice. With the factor analysis, the observed variance in a large number of variables could be explained by using the small numbers of factors from a large number of variables.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the study, 22 statements relating to the food sellers' perception towards halal labeled fish ball were analyzed using the Varimax rotation with the factor loading of 0.6. Factor analysis was used to analyze the inclination factor in practice, attitude, and knowledge of food sellers towards the Halal labeled fish ball in Kelantan. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's test of Sphericity were first performed to confirm whether the factor analysis can be carried out as proper analysis or not. As shown in Table 2, the values of KMO and Bartlett's Test for three variables were more than 0.5. Budaev (2010) stated that KMO and Bartlett's Test values less than 0.5 is inappropriate and values from 0.5 to 0.7 must be treated with carefulness. Kaiser and Rice (1974) also stated that it is recommended to accept KMO and Bartlett's Test values more than 0.5 as acceptable. The KMO and Bartlett's Test value for this study is 0.538. Thus the factor analysis can be conducted as a proper analysis (Tabachnick, 2007).

**Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy</b>		0.538
<b>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</b>	<b>Approx. Chi-Square</b>	395.061
	<b>Df</b>	190
	<b>Sig.</b>	0.000

As shown in Table 3, the most influencing factor in knowledge, attitude, and practice toward halal labeled fish ball was recognized. Three factors which have 74.624% of total variance explained are summarized as follows. The first factor is food sellers' knowledge about the halal labeled fish ball. This factor consisted of six sub-variables and has a total variance explained of 33.290%. From the result, it indicates that food sellers know halal labeled fish ball and ingredients used in the fish ball. Thus, knowledge influences food sellers' perception toward halal labeled fish ball. Next factor as the second factor is the attitude toward the halal labeled fish ball. This factor comprises of eight sub-variables and has total variance explained of 26.524%. The results of this factor showed that attitude could influence the perception of food sellers towards the halal labeled fish ball. The last factor is practices toward the halal labeled fish ball. This factor consists of six sub-variables which have total variance explained of 14.810%. Base on the results indicated that food sellers got several practices toward the halal labeled fish ball when they made a choice.

**Table 3: Result of Factor Analysis**

No	Variables	Factor Variance (%)	Number of Items
1	Knowledge about Halal Labeled Fish Ball	33.29	6
2	Attitude toward Halal Labeled Fish Ball	26.52	8
3	Practice on toward Halal Labeled Fish Ball	14.81	6
	<b>Total Variance (% of explained)</b>	<b>74.624</b>	<b>20</b>

## CONCLUSION

From the finding, the food sellers know about the halal labeled fish ball and the ingredients used in the fish ball. Based on the results, their perception which built based on their knowledge and perceived attitude was also positive. Besides that, according to the results, the food sellers got several practices toward halal labeled fish ball when they want to make a decision to choice. Therefore, from this study, it is proven that the knowledge, attitude and practice influence the perceptions of food sellers toward halal labeled fish ball.

Food sellers of fish ball should be exposed more about the official halal logo by JAKIM and another country halal logo that is certified by Malaysia government as this can increase their confidence level toward the halal labeled fish ball. This study also showed that food sellers have more confidence to sell a fish ball that has a halal label on the packaging. Thus, manufacturers should include a halal logo on their fish ball packaging to influence food sellers in selling the fish ball.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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