



Factors Influencing Young Customers' Purchase Intention for Ready-to-Eat Halal Food Products in Pattani Province

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Abstract

Halal food, as part of the "Halal Economy", was found to be suitable for all consumers, including non-Muslims. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted consumer food purchasing habits, particularly for Ready-to-Eat (RTE) foods. Young Muslim consumers under 30, who make up 60% of the global Muslim population, are expected to demand Halal food that promotes ethnic cuisine, including prepared and RTE options. This research aimed to determine the factors influencing the purchase intention of RTE Halal food products among young consumers in Pattani Province, Thailand. A cross-sectional design was employed using an online survey distributed to young consumers. Data analysis involved descriptive and bivariate analyses, with a multiple linear regression model used to examine the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Results showed that religious beliefs, education level, attitudes toward Halal quality, and perceptions of the Halal logo significantly influenced young consumers' intentions to purchase RTE Halal food products in Pattani Province. Non-Muslim youth generally had lower purchase intentions for these products than their Muslim counterparts. Young consumers with only a high school education or lower tended to be less interested in purchasing RTE Halal food products than those with bachelor's degrees. However, the study has limitations, including a small sample size, the discrepancy between respondents' perceived knowledge of Halal and their actual understanding, and external validity concerns. Recognizing these limitations could help improve interpretation and guide future research directions.

Keywords: *halal; halal knowledge; attitude; ready-to-eat food products; purchase intentions*

INTRODUCTION

Halal food, which holds high economic value, is increasingly consumed by both Muslims and non-Muslims as part of the expanding "Halal economy," reflecting its universal appeal as cuisine that is truly HALAL for all (Latif et al., 2014). By 2030, the global Muslim population is projected to reach 2.2 billion, up from 1.6 billion in 2010, comprising 26.4% of the expected 8.3 billion people worldwide, leading to increased demand for halal food (Lugo et al., 2011). According to a report by Salaam Gateway (2018), the halal market was valued at US\$1.3 billion in 2017 and at US\$1.9 billion in 2023.

Ready-to-eat (RTE) meals are food items that have been cleaned, prepared, and primarily packaged and are ready to eat without prior preparation or cooking. Between 2016 and 2020, the domestic market in Thailand accounted for 80-85% of ready-to-eat food production. The domestic market for ready-to-eat food is worth approximately 44 billion baht, with exports accounting for about 15-20% of that or approximately 328.9 million US dollars, where Thailand exports frozen, chilled food and instant noodles. The ASEAN region is the primary export market in terms of RTE food export value, followed by the Netherlands (7.5%) and the United States (15.3%) (Yongpisanphob, 2021). According to Statista (2025), revenue from the RTE segment is expected to reach USD 636.58 billion by 2025. Between 2025 and 2030, the market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 6.42% between 2025 and 2030. The volume of ready-to-eat (RTE)

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food is projected to reach approximately 104.80 billion kilograms by the year 2030. In 2026, it is anticipated that RTE food will experience a 4.1% growth. Additionally, in 2021, Thailand contributed 73% to the global export share of RTE food products. The increasing trend of RTE food consumption may be caused by changes in eating behavior, including eating patterns and food-related factors (Fanelli, 2021). This change may be related to the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected human life and the economy and turned the food sector into a new era (Boyac-Gündüz et al., 2021).

Halal RTE food is becoming a new trend in today's generation, given that 60% of all Muslims worldwide are under the age of 30, a growing demographic with increasing spending power, especially in. In 2030, a sizable portion of consumers will be Muslims, and they will require several services to fit their lives. Food that highlights the flavor and presentation of ethnic cuisine qualifies as halal food and supports this group—as-prepared or precooked foods (Billah et al., 2020). In addition, by 2030, there will be more than 540 million young Muslim people (ages 15 to 29) in the world by 2030, which is an increase from 25.8% in 2010 to 20.0% in 1990. This figure represents nearly three out of ten (29.1%) of the projected 1.9 billion people in that age group (Lugo et al., 2011).

In addition to an increase in the number of Muslim customers, the changes in daily human life and eating habits have caused people to consume halal RTE food. There could be additional factors that influence food selection. Several studies have determined how attitudes and knowledge influence consumer purchasing decisions. Rachbini (2017) studied the relationship between attitudes, personal norms, halal food purchasing, and perceived behavioral control in Jakarta. The findings reveal a relationship between attitude and purchasing intent. Similarly, Afendi et al. (2014) found that Muslim consumers' attitudes toward recurring purchases influenced their purchase intentions. In addition, research conducted in Malaysia by Elias et al. (2016) indicated that halal knowledge and intention to purchase halal food are positively correlated. A similar finding was also reported by Matthew (2014), who studied non-Muslim consumers and found that their acceptance of halal food depends on their knowledge. Therefore, promoting the intention to purchase halal food through halal knowledge is important.

This study aims to examine the impact of attitudes toward Halal, Halal knowledge, Halal quality, and the Halal logo on the purchase intentions of young consumers in Pattani Province. The southernmost provinces of Thailand, including Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat, are predominantly Muslim, with cultural practices, lifestyles, and shopping habits similar to those of young people in neighboring countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. Despite these unique characteristics, research on Halal consumer behavior in Thailand is still limited, making this study especially timely and relevant. The findings will provide valuable insights into consumer purchasing behavior and offer practical guidance for the Halal industry. Additionally, the study will serve as a resource for government agencies, food producers, businesses, and stakeholders aiming to improve marketing strategies and support the growth of the Halal food sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ready-to-eat Halal Food Products

Ready-to-eat (RTE) foods, processed using preservation methods, are convenience foods that require no further heating or preparation and can be categorized into shelf-stable and dried foods and frozen or chilled foods (Yongpisanphob, 2021). RTE products, including frozen meals, pizza, and filled pasta, are popular due to their convenience, value, appearance, and texture. These products are made for immediate consumption, either hot or cold, and can be prepared without extensive cooking or heating (Brennan et al., 2013; Statista, 2025). The COVID-19 pandemic further boosted RTE product demand as consumers stocked up during lockdowns. This shift, combined

with hectic lifestyles prioritizing time-saving and cost-effective meal options, has fueled the growth of the RTE food market in Thailand and beyond.

Halal food is products that adhere to Islamic law, ensuring they are lawful (permissible) for Muslim consumption. In 2007, the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) introduced specific guidelines to regulate Halal food production, focusing on cleanliness, safety, and compliance with Shariah principles. For food to be classified as Halal, its preparation, processing, storage, packaging, handling, and transportation must align with Islamic law and established Halal standards (Yusoff & Adzharuddin, 2017).

Halal Food Purchase Intention

Purchase intention reflects an individual's willingness to engage in a specific behavior and is widely regarded as an immediate precursor to that behavior (Ajzen, 1985). The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) has been extensively used to investigate consumer purchase intentions, including those related to Halal food. According to Yunus et al. (2014), consumers' intentions to buy, consume, and accept Halal products are closely linked to their beliefs and attitudes toward Halal principles. In halal food consumption, purchase intention is a critical predictor of actual purchasing behavior. Various factors, including Halal beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions of product quality, influence it. Empirical studies indicate that positive perceptions of Halal certification and trusted Halal food outlets significantly enhance purchase intention among Muslim consumers, whereas the influence of subjective norms tends to be comparatively weaker (Jamal & Sharifuddin, 2015; Khalek & Ismail, 2015). Bashir (2019) further emphasized the strong associations between consumer attitudes, Halal knowledge, perceived quality, and their intention to purchase Halal products. The findings suggest that individuals with a higher level of purchase intention are more likely to engage in behaviors consistent with Halal standards, reinforcing the centrality of purchase intention in shaping Halal consumer behavior. An important aspect of this study is the role of attitude as a significant determinant of purchase intention. Wibowo et al. (2020) demonstrated that introducing Halal food knowledge to non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia positively influences both their attitudes and purchase intentions. In this relationship, attitude is a mediator, indicating that greater awareness and understanding of Halal principles lead to more favorable attitudes, fostering stronger intentions to purchase Halal products.

Attitude toward Halal Food

Youth consumers' attitudes toward Halal food significantly shape their consumption patterns. Positive attitudes are strongly linked to purchase intentions, as shown in studies from Malaysia, where customer intentions are heavily influenced by favorable perceptions of Halal products (Alam & Sayuti, 2011). The Theory of Reasoned Action further supports this relationship, demonstrating that innovation-oriented consumers show a positive correlation between attitudes and purchase intentions (Lada et al., 2009). The findings of Muslim students in China show that their intention to eat halal meat is predicted by their positive personal attitudes toward it (Ali et al., 2017). In Thailand, young non-Muslim consumers' purchase intentions are strongly influenced by their attitudes toward halal food. The study's results on the association between attitude and purchase intention show that a positive attitude is essential for forecasting and explaining their behaviour (Maichum et al., 2017).

The attitude toward Halal food quality, characterized by attributes such as taste, appearance and overall appeal, is a key factor distinguishing products in a competitive market. The research highlights a strong relationship between perceived quality and purchase intention. For example, a study of young non-Muslim consumers in Thailand found that perceived quality is a key factor influencing the purchasing decisions of younger non-Muslim consumers in Thailand. This group

places significant importance on the quality of Halal food, which plays a crucial role in shaping their buying behavior (Maichum et al., 2017). Similarly, Aziz and Chok (2013) emphasized that high-quality food significantly shapes stronger behavioral intentions to purchase. Therefore, producers, marketers, and policymakers should focus on improving the quality of Halal food to better align with young consumers' preferences, enhance customer satisfaction, and ultimately boost the market. Quality assurance is critical in Halal gastronomy and tourism, where consumer satisfaction and trust are directly linked to perceived food quality. Research highlights that ensuring consistent standards enhances the dining experience and strengthens the market position of destinations aiming to attract Muslim tourists (Saffinee & Jamaludin, 2024).

The Halal logo, as a certification mark issued by the Central Islamic Council of Thailand (n.d) (CICOT), symbolises adherence to Islamic Shariah principles, providing consumers with assurance regarding the product's Halal status. Research indicates that the Halal logo is especially trusted among Muslim consumers in Thailand's southern provinces (Benrit & Mudor, 2018). Its influence on purchase intentions is significant, with studies showing that it positively affects consumer decisions, especially in the context of ready-to-eat meals in Bangkok and other Halal-certified products (Lidiawati & Suryani, 2020; Bunnag & Kitikorn, 2021). The credibility and widespread recognition of Halal logos enhance consumer trust, making them an important factor in shaping purchasing behavior and fostering confidence in Halal products.

Halal certification plays a crucial role in enhancing consumer awareness and building trust, both of which significantly influence purchasing decisions and contribute to the growth of the Halal market (Ali & Ahmad, 2023).

The attitude toward Halal marketing strategies highlights the importance of aligning marketing campaigns with Muslim cultural and religious values. Research from Pakistan indicates that Halal marketing significantly supports purchase intentions (Awan et al., 2015). Successful marketing strategies integrate co-creation and branding to distinguish halal products in competitive markets. By leveraging Halal certification as a unique selling proposition, brands can enhance their appeal. Furthermore, incorporating Islamic standards into marketing strategies attracts Muslim consumers and positions Halal products as a global choice, appealing to diverse consumer groups (Rajagopal et al., 2011; Shah et al., 2020).

Halal knowledge

Knowledge is pivotal in consumer purchasing decisions (Baharuddin et al., 2015). For non-Muslim consumers, understanding Halal food is essential to their acceptance and willingness to purchase it. Encouraging Halal knowledge is crucial for fostering purchase intentions, as increased awareness can promote positive attitudes toward halal products (Mathew et al., 2014). Knowledge of Halal and Haram principles significantly shapes Muslim consumers' attitudes and purchasing behavior. Studies have demonstrated that knowledge about Halal labelling, perceived usefulness, and religiosity influence attitudes and purchasing intentions (Rizkitysha & Hananto, 2022). In Malaysia, a study of university students found a strong positive correlation between Halal knowledge and the intention to purchase Halal food (Elias et al., 2016). Thus, promoting Halal knowledge is an effective strategy to enhance consumer acceptance and drive purchasing behaviors. Additionally, the halal market in Thailand is expanding, driven by both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers, with factors such as product characteristics and halal awareness playing crucial roles in purchase intentions (Syukur & Nimsai, 2018).

RESEARCH METHOD

The Scope of The Research

This cross-sectional study aims to identify the relationship between personal factors,

attitudes, and Halal knowledge on RTE Halal food product purchase intention among young consumers aged 15–24 in Pattani province. Data collection was conducted online and offline using a questionnaire.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was youth aged 15–24 in Pattani province. Pattani has 12 districts: Muang, Nong Chik, Yaring, Yarang, Khok Pho, Mayo, Mae Lan, Panare, Thung Yang Daeng, Sai Buri, Mai Kaen, and Ka Por districts. The sample size was calculated using the formula for comparing two population means. The total sample used in this study included 302 subjects.

Multi-stage sampling was applied to select the samples in this study. The subject was then sampled using convenience sampling with an equal number of samples in each district (75 samples in each district). The sampling method process is shown in Figure 1.

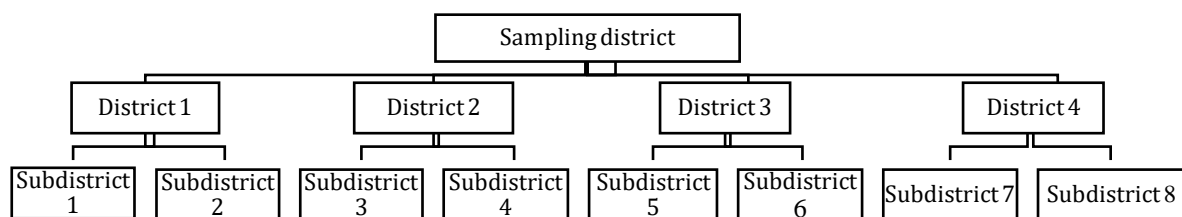


Figure 1. The Steps of the Sampling Method

Data Collection Tools

The questionnaire was used for data collection. Online and offline questionnaires were distributed to young customers in Pattani province. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The part contains personal data, such as gender, education level, monthly income, age, and religion. Part two comprises information about Halal awareness, food safety, Islamic brands, Halal knowledge, ingredients, and logos. Part three contains a questionnaire about consumers' purchase intention for halal food, which is the outcome variable. The list of variables is shown in Figure 2.

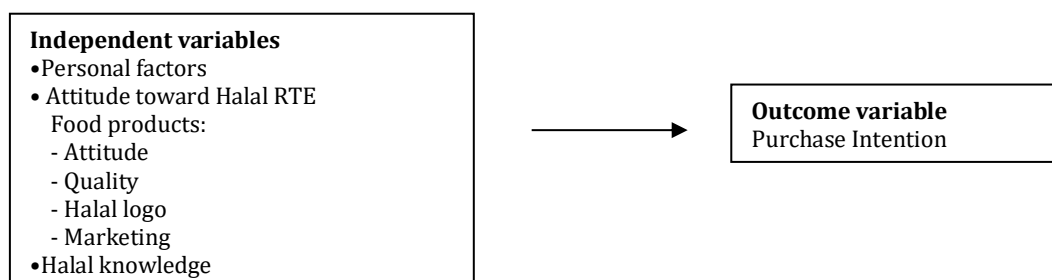


Figure 2. Path Diagram

The survey employed a 5-point Likert scale with the following response options: strongly agree (5 score), agree (4 score), moderate (3 score), disagree (2 score), and strongly disagree (1 score). The criteria for data interpretation are describe as following.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Bin range} &= \frac{\text{Highest score} - \text{Lowest score}}{\text{Scale of score}} \\ &= \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.8 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the average score range and level of a consumer's purchase intention can be written as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Score Range and Interpretation

Mean score range	Purchase intention level
1.00-1.80	Least
1.81-2.60	Little
2.61-3.40	Moderate
3.41-4.20	Much
4.21-5.00	Very much

Reliability Analysis

The questionnaire used in this study was evaluated for quality using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Table 2 presents the reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) of attitudes toward Halal RTE food products. The attitude subscales (quality, logo, marketing) showed good reliability, with values above 0.7, although the attitude subscale was slightly lower at 0.699. The reliability was slightly below the threshold of 0.7, suggesting moderate internal consistency. Although acceptable for exploratory research, there may be room for refinement to improve reliability in future studies. Halal Knowledge had a strong alpha of 0.741, indicating good consistency. Purchase intention demonstrated excellent reliability with an alpha value of 0.914, reflecting high item consistency.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient)

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Attitude toward Halal RTE Food product:		
Attitude	0.699	5
Quality	0.882	5
Logo	0.871	5
Marketing	0.768	5
Halal Knowledge	0.741	10
Purchase Intention	0.914	5

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis, such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation (SD), was used to explore the data. Bivariate analysis, such as t-test and ANOVA, was used to compare the mean difference in the outcome variable among the groups of independent variables. A multiple linear regression model was used to determine the relationship between the outcome variable and independent variables. All statistical data analysis was performed using an R program.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3 provides an overview of the study's participants (N = 302) across several variables. Most participants were female, accounting for 60.90%. Most were Muslim (60.93%), while 39.07% were non-Muslim. The highest education level attained by most participants was a bachelor's degree (56.76%), followed by high school education (30.07%). Participants with Islamic education at the ibidem to sanai levels collectively represented 60.07%. The most prominent participants were students (63.58%), reflecting a youthful population still engaged in formal education. Nearly half of the participants reported earning less than 3,000 baht monthly (48.01%), while only 4.30% earned more than 15,000 baht. Most participants were single (96.03%), likely corresponding to the predominantly student population. For purchase frequency, it was found that Daily purchases were

the most common (54.97%), indicating a pattern of frequent consumption of essential goods. Markets (29.14%) and convenience stores (26.16%) were the most preferred locations for shopping, followed by restaurants (24.83%). Other venues, such as supermarkets and malls, were less frequent. The details are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics

	Variable	Frequency (N=302)	Percentage (100.00)
Gender	Male	118	39.10
	Female	184	60.90
Religion	Islam	184	60.93
	Non-Muslim	118	39.07
Education	Bachelor's degree	168	56.76
	High school	89	30.07
	Junior high school	22	7.43
	Vocational Certificate	17	5.74
	Illiterate	5	1.66
Islamic Education	Sanawi	106	35.10
	Mutawasit	47	15.56
	Ibtidae	28	9.27
	Illiterate	121	40.07
Employment status	Employed	57	14.33
	Unemployed	15	4.97
	Educational personnel	7	2.32
	Farmers, Fisheries	1	0.33
	Freelance	27	8.94
	government official	3	0.99
	student	192	63.58
Monthly income	The less than 3,000 baht	145	48.01
	3,001 – 5,000 baht	61	20.20
	5,001 – 10,000 baht	59	19.54
	10,001 – 15,000 baht	24	7.95
	The more than 15,000 baht	13	4.30
Marital status	Single	290	96.03
	Married	12	3.97
Frequency of purchase	Less than 1 time/week	2	0.66
	1-2 times/week	38	12.59
	3-4 times/week	39	12.91
	5-6 times/week	57	18.87
	Daily	166	54.97
Place to purchase	Cafe	8	2.65
	Convenience Store	79	26.16
	Market	88	29.14
	Restaurant	75	24.83
	Supermarket	36	11.92
	Food court	8	2.65
	Mall	3	0.99
	Grocery store	5	1.66
	Cafe	8	2.65

For the descriptive analysis of the attitude, knowledge, and purchase intention, the respondents showed a positive attitude toward Halal RTE food products (mean = 4.262, SD = 0.621), with high importance placed on quality (mean = 4.144, SD = 0.714) and the Halal logo (mean = 4.209). Marketing strategies were viewed positively but to a lesser extent (mean = 3.979). Halal knowledge was high overall (mean = 7.109, SD = 1.934), reflecting some variation within the sample. Purchase intention was strong (mean = 4.177, SD = 0.736), demonstrating a consistent intention to buy Halal products. The details are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis Results for Attitude Toward Halal RTE Food Products, Halal Knowledge, and Purchase Intention Variables

Variables	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Attitude toward Halal RTE Food product:					
Attitude	4.262	4.2	0.621	2	5
Quality	4.144	4.2	0.714	2	5
Halal Logo	4.209	4.2	0.705	2	5
Marketing	3.979	4.0	0.690	1	5
Halal knowledge	7.109	7.0	1.934	2	10
Purchase Intention	4.177	4.2	0.736	2	5

Table 5. The Association Between Independent Variables and Outcome Variables

Variables	t/F -value	P-value
Gender	1.135	0.2577
Age	0.611	0.5416
Religion	171.200	<0.0001
Education	4.843	0.0008
Islamic education	111.700	<0.0001
Monthly Income	1.603	0.1730
Marital status	0.029	0.9767
Employment status	2.397	0.0281
Place to purchase	2.320	0.0199
Frequency of purchase	17.670	<0.0001

Table 5 presents the associations between outcome and independent variables. The study reveals that factors influencing young consumers' intentions to purchase RTE Halal food products in Pattani provinces include religion, education, Islamic education, employment status, purchase location, purchase frequency, attitudes toward Halal food, Halal knowledge, product quality, Halal logo, and Halal marketing.

Table 6. Association Between Independent Variables and Outcome Variables Using Correlation Coefficients

Variable	r	t-value	p-value
Attitude toward Halal RTE Food product:			
Attitude	0.723	18.118	<0.0001
Quality	0.773	21.077	<0.0001
Halal Logo	0.758	20.166	<0.0001
Marketing	0.622	13.769	<0.0001
Halal knowledge	0.283	5.109	<0.0001

Table 6 shows the relationship between independent variables and purchase intention for ready-to-eat (RTE) Halal food products. Strong positive correlations are observed between purchase intention and several factors, including attitudes ($r = 0.723$), perceived quality ($r = 0.773$), and the Halal logo ($r = 0.758$). Marketing also demonstrated a significant positive impact ($r = 0.622$). Although Halal knowledge has a weaker correlation ($r = 0.283$), it still plays a meaningful role in shaping purchase behavior. The table presents the correlation coefficients between the independent variables: attitudes, quality, Halal logo, marketing, and Halal knowledge, and the outcome variable, namely, purchase intention. These variables demonstrate statistically significant associations (p -values < 0.05), confirming their significant influence on purchase intention for Halal RTE food products.

Table 7. Association Between Independent Variables and Purchase Intention Using Multiple Linear Regressions (Final Model)

Variable	Estimate	t-value	p-value
Intercept	1.802	8.097	<0.0001
Religion			
Muslim (ref.)	0.000		
Non-muslim	-0.473	-7.367	<0.0001
Attitude toward Halal quality RTE food products	0.349	6.113	<0.0001
Attitude toward Halal Logo RTE Food product	0.275	4.751	<0.0001
Education			
Bachelor's degree (ref.)	0.000		
High school	-0.125	-2.347	0.0183
Illiterate	-0.423	-2.300	0.0222
Junior high school	-0.014	-0.152	0.8794
Vocational Certificate	0.009	0.091	0.9272

Table 6 presents the multiple linear regression analysis highlighting factors influencing purchase intention. Non-Muslims strongly decrease purchase intention (estimate = -0.473, $p < 0.0001$). This finding suggests that religious beliefs are crucial in shaping consumer preferences for Halal products. Non-Muslim consumers may be less familiar with Halal principles or perceive these products as less relevant to their dietary practices, leading to a lower likelihood of purchase. These results align with a study on non-Muslim consumers in Korea, which found that attitudes, positive anticipated emotions, perceived behavioral control, and halal awareness significantly influenced their intention to purchase halal food (O. et al., 2024). Positive attitudes toward the quality of halal products (estimate = 0.349, $p < 0.0001$) significantly increase purchase intention, highlighting the importance of maintaining high standards in appeal, taste, and appearance to attract customers. Since consumers' perceptions of quality play a significant role in their decision-making, Halal products should highlight their superior quality to appeal to a broader market. This finding aligns with prior research on young non-Muslim consumers in Thailand, revealing product quality's influence on purchase decisions (Maichum et al., 2017).

Furthermore, this study confirms that a positive attitude toward halal logos significantly increases buying intention (estimate = 0.275, $p < 0.0001$), with the halal logo serving as a decisive

factor in consumer purchase decisions. Its presence enhances trust and assures consumers that the product complies with Halal standards. This is particularly important for ensuring confidence among Muslim consumers and expanding the appeal to non-Muslim consumers by signalling quality and ethical compliance. According to research by [Bunnag and Kitikorn \(2021\)](#), the Halal mark is essential, particularly regarding ready-to-eat (RTE) meals in Bangkok and other Halal-certified goods. Education impacts vary; high school education slightly reduces purchase intention (estimate = -0.125, $p = 0.0183$), whereas illiteracy leads to a more notable decrease (estimate = -0.423, $p = 0.0222$). Education significantly affects purchase intentions, with lower levels (high school and illiteracy) associated with reduced likelihood of purchase.

Addressing these gaps through education and targeted marketing can enhance the acceptance of Halal products and broaden the consumer base. These studies on non-Muslim consumers have shown that their acceptability and desire to buy Halal food depend on their knowledge. Since greater awareness can result in favorable attitudes toward Halal items, promoting information about Halal is essential for generating purchase intentions ([Mathew et al., 2014](#)). This study examines the purchasing behaviors of youth in Pattani Province regarding RTE Halal food products. Religious affiliation, perceptions of Halal product quality and brand recognition, and educational attainment are significant determinants of individual behavior. The research indicates that a favorable perception of Halal product quality and trust in halal certification significantly enhances the purchase probability. Conversely, non-Muslim consumers and individuals with lower educational attainment exhibit a diminished propensity to purchase, indicating that engagement strategies must be more inclusive and targeted.

These results indicate significant segmentation and targeted communication opportunities from a marketing strategy perspective. Current strategies that emphasize religious faith and product authenticity may still be effective for Muslim consumers. Conversely, for non-Muslim consumers who have a far lower propensity to purchase, marketing efforts must transcend religious connotations and concentrate on universally appealing attributes such as hygiene, safety standards, nutritional quality, and user-friendliness. Highlighting that Halal cuisine adheres to superior quality and health standards may bridge perceptual gaps and enhance its appeal to individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

This research demonstrates the impact of educational attainment on consumer purchasing behavior. Individuals with higher educational attainment exhibited a greater propensity to purchase Halal products, potentially due to their enhanced awareness of food safety and certification processes. This indicates that efforts to educate and create awareness among individuals with limited education or non-Muslims may enhance their understanding and appreciation of Halal food. Retailers and legislators may seek collaboration with local schools, community organizations, and influencers to disseminate clear information regarding Halal certification, quality requirements, and the advantages of Halal products for all stakeholders.

This study contributes to the limited research on RTE Halal food consumption among youth in southern Thailand, a region distinguished by its demographics and culture. This addresses the identified gap between research and practice. Prior research has predominantly examined marketplaces with significant Muslim populations or overarching trends in Halal consumption. This study provides a detailed analysis by categorizing customers into segments and identifying unique motivations for their purchasing decisions regarding Halal products. This enhancement enhances scholarly comprehension and effective marketing techniques applicable in diverse, multicultural contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined young consumers' intentions to purchase RTE Halal food products in

Pattani Province, focusing on the influence of key demographic and perceptual variables. Using multiple linear regression analysis, the research identified significant predictors of purchase intention, including religion, attitudes toward Halal product quality and Halal logo, and education level. The findings reveal positive attitudes toward Halal quality and logo recognition drive purchase intention. Conversely, non-Muslim consumers and individuals with lower educational attainment (high school or below) demonstrated significantly lower intention to purchase Halal products. These results highlight the critical role of religious affiliation, perceived product quality, branding through Halal certification logos, and educational background in shaping consumer behavior. This study enhances understanding of the sociocultural and cognitive factors influencing halal food purchases, offering practical insights for marketers, policymakers, and producers aiming to expand their consumer base across diverse religious and educational groups. The Halal sector may improve its position to appeal to a broader audience, both inside and outside Muslim communities, by filling in knowledge gaps and highlighting the universal qualities of Halal, such as quality, safety, and ethics.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The results of this study have several limitations. First, the research was limited to Pattani Province, which has distinct demographic, religious, and cultural characteristics, potentially limiting the generalisability of the findings to other regions. Second, the study focused exclusively on young consumers, which restricts the applicability of the results to other age groups. Older consumers may hold different beliefs, attitudes, or decision-making processes regarding Halal food consumption, which were not captured in this study. Third, the data were collected through self-reported surveys, which were susceptible to response biases, including social desirability bias. Participants may have overstated their intentions or opinions to align with socially acceptable responses or cultural norms. Finally, this study examined a limited set of variables, potentially omitting other important factors influencing purchase intention.

Consumer behavior may also be influenced by factors such as price sensitivity, health consciousness, environmental concerns, cultural identity, and digital marketing, which were not included in the current model. Therefore, future research should incorporate these variables and expand geographically beyond Pattani Province to include other regions of Thailand and neighboring countries in order to compare consumer behaviors across diverse cultural, religious, and socioeconomic contexts. A wider range of age groups and quantitative surveys could provide a more comprehensive perspective on consumer behavior. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus group discussions, can provide deeper insights into consumer attitudes, beliefs, and motivations. Factors such as price sensitivity, health consciousness, cultural and ethnic identity, digital marketing, and social media influence could also be considered to provide a more nuanced understanding of Halal food purchasing.

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