3rd International Conference on Finance Business and Banking
Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis Islam, Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram
Mataram, 27th - 28th November 2023
Available Online at http://proceeding.uinmataram.ac.id

Extent of Awareness on Halal Food Products: The Case of Non-Muslim Consumers in Iligan City, Philippines

D. L. Bico[1], H. L. Asoy[2], and F. N. Caneda[3]

[1] Department of Marketing, College of Business Administration and Accountancy, Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines
dianaruth.bico@msumain.edu.ph
[2] Department of Marketing, College of Business Administration and Accountancy, Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines
Asoyhazel21@gmail.com
[3] Department of Marketing, College of Business Administration and Accountancy, Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines
canedanathaly@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Purpose — This study uncovers the extent of awareness of non-Muslims on halal food products in terms of food processing, packaging, labeling, storage, and transportation and the relationship between the respondent's profile and their level of awareness on halal food products.

Method — The study employs a quantitative design with a correlational approach and used adapted survey questionnaires to conduct the survey of 386 non-Muslim consumers (millennials) in Iligan City. Descriptive analysis, inferential statistics, Shapiro-Wilk Test, Kruskal Wallis Test, Rank-Biserial Correlation (Somer's Delta) were used to analyze the collected data.

Result — The findings of the study revealed that non-Muslim consumers in Iligan City are aware of halal products in terms of halal food processing, packaging, labeling, storage, and transportation. Meanwhile, Age, gender, civil status, and barangay of the respondents has a significant relationship, while educational attainment, monthly income, and religious affiliation have no significant relationship with the halal food product awareness. Food Processing, Packaging, and Labelling have a fairly strong positive correlation, while Storage and Transportation have a very strong positive relationship when associated with "overall awareness".

Keywords: *Halal Awareness, Halal Food, Non-Muslims consumers, Iligan City*

INTRODUCTION

Halal is an Arabic word that refers to the consumption of permissible foods; such action is viewed as morally and ethically acceptable and complies with specific Islamic regulations and laws (Tieman, 2011). The rapid growth of the Muslim population has increased global demand for Halal-certified food products. Food accounts for more than 57 percent of global Halal expenditure (Bux et al., 2022), attracting more than USD 5.5 billion in investment (52 percent of total amounts invested). As a result, both Muslim and non-Muslim countries are seeing Halal food as a lucrative business opportunity (Datucalia & Sali, 2020).

Awareness is the ability to feel conscious about an event and an object (Aziz & Chok, 2013). Awareness in the context of halal food is a condition in which the consumer has a special interest based on experience and information they know about allowed food in Islam, making religion one of the factors that may influence awareness and behavior (Ambali 2014; and Mathras, 2016). According to Malik, Hermawan, & Asnawi (2019), the most dominant factor for the occurrence of purchase intention was halal awareness. The awareness shaping the consumer's decision-making process can help to increase the trade of halal products in other religious communities (Widyanto & Sitohang, 2021).

Halal awareness in the Philippines, particularly concerning food products, has been growing driven by various factors such as the increasing Muslim population, globalization, and the rising demand for halal-certified products. The public relations office of Victoria Foods Corporation – one of the many firms with Halal certification –claimed that an increasing number of Filipinos are becoming health-conscious. Filipinos

are now looking for Halal products, which they believe to be safe, healthy, and good to consume (Muhammad, 2007).

The Philippines is a country in Southeast Asia with a Christian majority and a Muslim minority. Despite its small Muslim consumer population, the country continues to develop and expand its Halal market in both domestic and international markets. As a result, non-Muslim consumers are becoming more aware of halal-certified food products. The first step in the purchase process is awareness, in which consumers who are unfamiliar with the product or service get acquainted with it (Suryani et al, 2022). According to Liba et al., 2018, most restaurant owners in Manila are aware of the systematic processes of Halal food and non-Muslim college students have moderate knowledge of Halal. In addition, evidence from the study of Damit et.al, (2019) reveals that non-Muslim consumers nowadays prefer halal food because the Halal food and service concept is based on biological agriculture, fair trade, ethical business, green animal breeding, and ecological economic concepts.). Another study by Yunos et.al, (2018) and Teng & Wan Jusoh (2017) had found that non-Muslims accepted halal food products as part of their eating habits despite their lack of comprehension of the idea because they believe it is a nutritious food product and they are worried about food safety.

The researchers try to uncover how well non-Muslim consumers in Iligan City, Philippines, are aware of Halal food products. Besides, previous related studies are concentrated primarily on Muslim consumers' perception of halal food. This study will fill the gap in the literature of halal food, specifically the level of awareness among non-Muslims, and provide information that would be useful in determining whether even non-Muslims have knowledge about halal food products that can be a guide for some business owners, particularly those who intend to develop halal food establishments.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative design to answer the research questions or test hypotheses by collecting data that can be quantified and statistically analyzed. To determine the relationship between variables, the correlational technique was used. This technique was chosen to achieve the primary goal of the study to examine the extent of awareness of non-Muslim consumers of halal food products in Iligan City, Philippines. Iligan is the closest city to the Islamic City of Marawi. Thus, Iligan City is the top destination for the people of Marawi when it comes to shopping. Hence, the city of Iligan became a settlement for some Muslims. It is one of the bustling commercial districts, where different establishments are situated from manufacturing to service industries. The majority population of Iligan City is Christians while Muslims are the largest minority. The chosen respondents are non-Muslim consumers with age ranges from 26 to 40 (millennials) only who lived in the city proper, particularly in the barangay of Mahayahay, Pala-o, Poblacion, Tibanga, Tubod, Saray-Tibanga, and Villa Verde where most businesses are located. The sample size was computed assuming 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level. A total of 398 were taken as samples from the population of 78, 588.

A reliability test was conducted by determining the value of Cronbach's alpha for each of the constructs that were taken into consideration, which included food processing, packaging, labeling, storage, transportation, and halal food product awareness. As Nunnally (1978) suggested, we require all model variables to exceed the threshold of 0.6 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient. The results of the test showed that Cronbach's alpha of all constructs ranged from 0.86 to 0.92, meaning that it indicates good reliability. Thus, it can be said that the questionnaire items are reliable in their ability to measure the respective constructs consistently in this study. The reliability and validity test results are shown in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

Table 1. Reliability Test

Constructs/Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Food Processing	0.90
Packaging	0.92
Labelling	0.86
Storage	0.92
Transportation	0.92
Awareness	0.91

Table 2 shows that all items show that the r computed values is > r table value. The r value in the table with DF=386-2=384 with significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ *is* at 0.1, which will then be used to compare our computed r statistic. Thus, it can be concluded that each of the item indicators is capable of explaining the scales or the independent variables examined in this study.

Table 2. Validity Test

Constructs/Items	Item	Coefficient Correlation	r table	Description
Food Processing	FP1	.801	0.1	Valid
	FP2	.787		Valid
	FP3	.826		Valid
	FP4	.813		Valid
Packaging	PA1	.757	0.1	Valid
	PA2	.835		Valid
	PA3	.833		Valid
	PA4	.851		Valid
Labelling	LA1	.597	0.1	Valid
	LA2	.774		Valid
	LA3	.769		Valid
	LA4	.844		Valid
Storage	ST1	.777	0.1	Valid
	ST2	.832		Valid
	ST3	.834		Valid
	ST4	.846		Valid
Transportation	TR1	.823	0.1	Valid
	TR2	.844		Valid
	TR3	.801		Valid
	TR4	.849		Valid
Awareness	AW1	.800	0.1	Valid
	AW2	.859		Valid
	AW3	.850		Valid
	AW4	.843		Valid
	AW5	.827		Valid

Moreover, to assess and analyze the data acquired, a normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk Test will be employed to determine whether or not our sample comes from a normal distribution (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). When the assumption for normality is met, a parametric test called ANOVA is used to test the significant difference between the corresponding demographic profile of the respondents.

$$\boldsymbol{W} = \frac{\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} a_i x_{(i)}\right)^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})^2}$$

On the other hand, if the assumptions fail Kruskal Wallis test will be utilized instead (Kruskal & Wallis 1952). The test is the nonparametric version of the one-way ANOVA.

$$\boldsymbol{H} = N - 1(\frac{gn_n(t_i - T_i)^2}{gsn_n\left(t_j - T_j\right)^2})$$

Meanwhile, Rank-Biserial Correlation (Somers' Delta) is used to measure of association between pairs of ordinal variables. Ordinal variables are ordered, like best to worst or smallest to greatest (the Likert scale

is one of the more popular ordinal scales.) In this study, the total scores of the responses of each respondent in each construct (Food Processing, Packaging, Labelling, Storage and Transportation) are categorized in to "Fully Aware" as the highest score while "Fully Not Aware" for the lowest. Delta is an ordinal alternative to Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

$$\boldsymbol{Somer's\ D} = (N_c - N_d)/(N_c + N_d + N_t)$$

Hypotheses Development

Islamic marketing is marketing to Muslims that are based on the principles of Islamic values. The principles of Islam are derived from firstly, the Quran, and followed by the Sunnah, where Islam encompasses every aspect of a believer's life. Islamic Marketing, therefore, follows the guidelines of the Shari'ah (Islamic rulings and ethics). Halal marketing would be a subset of Islamic marketing, as Islamic marketing is the wider, all-encompassing aspect of marketing to Muslims. Halal marketing typically includes marketing in aspects of food and beverage, food outlets, pharmaceuticals, and personal care products where the ingredients make a difference in whether the product is permissible (Halal) or forbidden (Haram). Halal marketing also includes the certification for Halal where relevant Islamic authorities would certify the product is halal, prepared in accordance with the Shari'ah, and does not contain any Haram ingredients such as pork or alcohol (Musa, 2021).

A study done by Ahmed (2021) about Halal Standards and Guidelines for Halal Certification served as a primary basis for the theoretical framework utilized in this study. In his research, he emphasized that due to the increased awareness of Muslim consumers about halal standards the demand for certified halal food products also increases. On top of that, there are issues concerning halal food production such as food ingredients including flavors, oils, cheese's enzymes, and a range of other derivatives, as well as innovative technology employed in food processing. Also, for food products to be deemed halal, alcohol and pork derivatives may be hidden in a variety of goods that must be detected and avoided. Hence, conforming to halal requirements must be rigorously enforced in accordance with Shariah law.

Similarly, the study of Rahman and Dardak (2021) revealed that the halal standard upholds the halal principles and provides business owners guidelines for processing, labeling, packaging, storing, and delivering of halal items. The halal certification gives consumers the assurance that food products are clean, hygienic, environmentally friendly, and respect the welfare of animals in addition to being prepared in line with Shariah Law. Utilizing halal standards ensures the safety and halal status of food products. This is in line with other research conducted in Malaysia by Baharuddin et, al. (2015) which shows that the Halal logo, the Halal certification, and information about halal food (production, preparation, handling, and storage) are the most important factors to adhere to halal standards.

For both consumers and producers, it is now crucial to establish and implement Halal practices in the processing of both consumable and non-consumable goods. Companies seeking halal certification ought to view halal certification bodies as business partners since they are the ones who will give them advice and help them with all aspects of halal production, including halal slaughtering, quality control, product flow systems, hygienic practices, sanitizing, packaging, labeling, transportation, and storage. The certifying organization must maintain thorough records and information on all stages of production, including raw material receipt and storage, processing, packaging, labeling, transportation, and final product storage. Hence, the determined factors such as food processing, packaging, labelling, storage, and transportation are chosen as independent variables in assessing the extent awareness of non-Muslim consumers on Halal food products because those factors are essential in ensuring the "halalness" of finished food products (DOST-ITDI, 2021)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

Halal Food Product Awareness of the Respondents on Different Constructs

One of the objectives of this study is to determine the respondent's extent of awareness on halal food products in terms of food processing, packaging, labelling, storage and transportation. A recording of the responses was done in order to make it easier to identify the respondent's scores on each of the construct items that were used in this study. Initially, the questions followed a Likert scale, in which "1" meant that the respondent was fully not aware, "2" meant that they were not aware, "3" meant that they were neither aware nor not aware, "4" meant that they were aware, and "5" meant that they were fully aware. Responses

for Aware and Fully Aware are turned into "1" which represents "Aware", while Fully Not Aware, Not Aware and Neither Aware or Not Aware are recoded into "0" which corresponds to "Unaware". It is important to take note that the recording of the responses to these items applies only in this section and was not carried on to the succeeding parts of the analysis. Recoding is done for the simplification to identify the respondent's awareness scores in terms of the following constructs.

Table 3. Halal Awareness in Terms of Food Processing Score of the Respondents

Food Processing	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Aware	283	73.32%
0	Unaware	103	26.68%
Total		386	100%

Table 3 presents the halal product awareness in terms of food processing score of the respondents. It shows that 283 respondents or 73.32% of the total respondents have knowledge with regards to how food processing methods is done for halal products while 103 respondents or 26.68% are unaware of food processing practices of halal products.

Given the result, this means that the majority of the non-Muslim consumers in Iligan City have an understanding and are aware that halal food processing starts from nurturing to slaughtering. Halal foods adhere to higher safety and quality standards therefore it is hygienic and nutritious. This is consistent with the findings of Bashir (2018) study that non-Muslim consumers explained why they choose to purchase halal food products as they are confident in them and are aware with the halal food production processes. Non-Muslims embrace and trust Halal-certified food products because it guarantees that food processing places an emphasis on cleanliness and sanitation from beginning to end, also referred to as "from farm to fork," (Liba et al, 2018). Other studies revealed that for non-Muslim consumers, halal is more than just a trade word used as a trademark on the international market but is essentially a symbol of safety and hygiene (Bashir, 2019).

Table 4. Awareness in Terms of Packaging Score of the Respondents

Packaging Score	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Aware	303	78.50%
0	Unaware	83	21.50%
Total		386	100%

Table 4 examines the extent of halal food products extent awareness of the respondents in terms of packaging. It shows that 303 or 78.50% of the total respondents obtained a score of '1' which indicates halal food product awareness in terms of packaging and 83 respondents or 21.50% are unaware of halal product awareness in terms of packaging.

The result therefore demonstrates that most of the respondents have awareness in terms of halal food packaging. That is to say, non-Muslim customers are informed that a halal logo shown on the food packaging indicates that a product is halal certified and a halal certification can determine a food item's halal status. Additionally, respondents are aware that when purchasing halal food, certifications are a sign of quality. A product is properly labeled with required halal symbols to indicate that it is halal, and halal-certified products have a monitoring agency's "certified Halal" logo. Furthermore, "Packaging" has the highest scores among other factors in determining the level of non-Muslim halal food product awareness. This supports the fact that the respondents are aware of the visibility of the halal logo, certification, halal symbols, and emblems shown in the packing of halal food products (Temizkan, 2022) which also means that the presence of the halal logo indicates that food manufacturers adhere to the halal standards.

Table 5. Halal Awareness in Terms of Labelling Scores of the Respondents

Labelling Score	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Aware	302	78.24%
0	Unaware	84	21.76%

Total	386	100%

Table 5 examines the extent of awareness of the respondents in terms of labelling to halal food products. It shows that 302 (78.24%) of the total respondents are aware which corresponds to halal food product awareness in terms of labelling and 84 respondents or 21.76% are unaware of halal food product awareness in terms of labelling.

The results suggest that many of the respondents are aware in terms of halal food labelling. Rejeb et. al, (2021**)** argued that halal food manufacturers can utilize labelling to advertise the viability of their products, highlight the nutritional advantages of halal food, and inform customers about the authenticity of food products. Halal food products is not only targeted to Muslims but also to non-Muslims. Therefore, non-Muslim consumers are becoming knowledgeable when it comes to food products with halal certification/logo which means that it is permissible for Muslim consumers. They are however aware that certain halal food products do not yet have the halal certification, and that product labeling must follow Islamic law's halal standards so that halal food products are labeled properly. Bux et.al, (2022), reiterated that the halal label has also been investigated as the most essential instrument for proving to the consumer that the product is halal thus majority of the Muslim consumers prefer buying food products with halal certification.

Table 6. Halal Awareness in Terms of Storage Scores of the Respondents

Storage Score	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Aware	277	71.76%
0	Unaware	109	28.24%
Total		386	100%

Table 6 examines the extent of awareness of the respondents to halal food products in terms of storage. It shows that 277 (71.76%) of the total respondents are aware of halal product awareness in terms of storage while 109 respondents or 12.44% are unaware of halal product awareness in terms of storage.

The results concluded that most of the respondents are aware about halal storage where it comprises the idea of separating halal food products from non-halal food products, where it must be solely intended for halal products from the ingredients, tools, facilities, and equipment to avoid contamination from filth or hajjs. Non-halal food products cannot be delivered in the same warehouse as halal goods unless complete product segregation is possible and halal and non-halal products cannot be produced at the same time or have their storage combined (Azizah, 2022).

Table 7. Halal Awareness in Terms of Transportation Scores of the Respondents

Transportation Score	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Aware	250	64.77%
0	Unaware	136	35.23%
Total		386	100%

Table 7 examines the extent of awareness of the respondents to halal food products in terms of transportation. It shows that 250 (64.77%) of the total respondents are aware of halal product awareness in terms of transportation while 136 respondents or 35.23% of the total respondents are unaware of halal product awareness in terms of transportation.

The results indicated that most of the respondents have knowledge pertaining to the halal transportation in which logistics are very crucial in transporting halal food products and only halal-certified logistics service providers can carry halal food products to retain the purity of the products. According to Ahmed (2021), Halal products should be transported in clean, preferably refrigerated, vehicles to avoid contamination with non-Halal products and spoiling during transportation. The product must be preserved throughout the supply chain.

Table 8. Overall Halal Awareness Scores of the Respondents

Overall Awareness Score	Description	Frequency	Percentage
1	Aware	280	72.54%
0	Unaware	106	27.46%
Total		386	100%

Table 8 examines the extent of overall awareness of the respondents of halal food products. It shows that 280 (72.54%) of the total respondents are much aware of overall halal food product practices while 106 respondents or 27.46% of the total respondents are unaware of overall halal food product practices.

Correlation Among Different Constructs to the Dependent Variable

Table 9. Somer's d Correlation Results

	Overall Halal Food Product Awareness
Food Processing	.649**
Packaging	.674**
Labelling	.670**
Storage	.998**
Transportation	.998**

***Correlations are significant at .05 levels*

Somer's d was employed to determine the association between the ordinal independent variables, or the constructs and the overall halal food product awareness as presented in Table 9. As shown in the table above, the row variables are referred to as the independent variables or the constructs tested for association against the ordinal dependent variable "Overall Halal Food Products Awareness". "Food Processing" (d=.649), "Packaging" (d=.674), and "Labelling" (d=.670) have a fairly strong positive correlation against the overall halal product awareness. In addition, "Storage" (d= 0.998, p-value < 0.05) and "Transportation" (d=0.998, p-value < 0.05) have a very strong positive relationship when associated against the dependent variable "Overall Awareness" as the Somer's d value is very close to 1. This also means that a high level of the awareness in the constructs also implies a high level overall halal food product awareness. Furthermore, the results also show that the association between the individual constructs for halal product awareness namely, "Food Processing", "Packaging", "Labelling", "Storage", "Transportation", and the dependent variable, "Overall Awareness", is statistically significant with p-value < 0.05.

Kruskal Wallis Test for Differences in Groups

The last objective of this study is to determine whether there is a significant difference between the respondent's profile and their level of awareness in halal food products. In order to determine what test that will be used to compare the groups, test for normality assumption is employed with Shapiro Wilk Test for Normality with W=0.9097, p-value = 0.000 which indicates that data is not normally distributed. Thus, a non-parametric test called Kruskal Wallis Test is employed to compare the mean ranks of the respondents when grouped according to their age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, monthly income, and barangay. The null hypothesis of the test states that there is no significant difference between the halal product awareness of the respondents when grouped according to the following demographic profiles. In the event that a statistically significant difference is found to exist between the groups, that is having p-value < 0.05, a post-hoc test known as the Dunn Test will be utilized in order to determine which of the groups are different. This method will be carried out by conducting pairwise comparisons of each of the groups considered below. It is important to note that the findings only show statistically significant pairwise comparisons with a p-value of less than 0.05.

Table 10. Kruskal Wallis Test for Age

	Scores
Chi-Square	6.659
DF	2

Asymp. Sig.	0.03581

Differences between Age Groups are also examined using the Kruskal Wallis Test with H(2)=6.659, p-value = 0.03581 as shown in Table 10. The results imply that there is a significant difference on their halal product awareness when the respondents are grouped according to their age. Further investigation by pairwise post-hoc Dunn test with Bonferroni adjustments reveals that significant difference can only be observed between 26 – 30 years old and 31 – 35 years old with p-value = 0.0398.

Table 11. Kruskal Wallis Test for Gender

	Scores
Chi-Square	9.3952
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.009117

As can be seen in Table 11, differences in responses from respondents are also explored when the respondents are categorized according to their gender. The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed $H(2) = 9.3952$, p=0.009117, which implies that there is a significant difference between the mean ranks of the halal product awareness between these groups. The post-hoc test Dunn test is employed to determine which of the pairwise groups differ from each other and the result reveals that a significant difference can only be observed between Female and Male respondents with a p-value = 0.0065.

Table 12. Kruskal Wallis Test for Civil Status

	Scores
Chi-Square	10.13
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	0.0175

Also, differences among respondents when grouped according to their civil status are also investigated as shown in Table 12. The Kruskal-Wallis H test showed $H(3) = 10.13$, p=0.0175, which implies that there is a significant difference between the mean ranks of the halal product awareness between these groups. Similar to the other significant results, a post-hoc test is employed to determine which of the pairwise groups differ from each other. The Dunn test reveals that a significant difference can only be observed between Married and Single respondents with a p-value = 0.0089.

Table 13. Kruskal Wallis Test for Educational Attainment

	Scores
Chi-Square	4.1509
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.1255

From the results in Table 13. the Kruskal-Wallis H test showed $H(2) = 4.15$, p=0.1255, which implies that there is no evidence to reject our null hypothesis. Thus, there is no statistically significant difference between the three groups in educational attainment. This also means that the level of halal product awareness among the respondents when grouped according to their educational attainment does not vary in terms of food processing, packaging, labelling, storage, and transportation.

Table 14. Kruskal Wallis Test for Income

	Scores
Chi-Square	6.5294
Df	6
Asymp. Sig.	0.366

From the results in Table 14 the Kruskal-Wallis H test showed $H(6) = 6.5294$, p=0.366, which implies that there is no evidence to reject our null hypothesis. Thus, there is no significant difference between the level

of halal product awareness between the respondents when grouped according to their income and does not vary in terms of food processing, packaging, labelling, storage, transportation.

Table 15. Kruskal Wallis Test for Religious Affiliation

	Scores
Chi-Square	6.2786
Df	4
Pr. > Chi-Square.	0.1793

From the results in Table 15 the Kruskal-Wallis H test showed $H(4) = 6.2786$, p=0.1793, which implies that there is no statistically significant difference between the four groups in religious affiliation which are the Roman Catholic, Iglesia Ni Cristo, Born Again Christian, and Seventh Day Adventist. This also means that the level of awareness between groups does not vary in terms of food processing, packaging, labelling, storage, and transportation.

Table 16. Kruskal Wallis Test for Barangays

	Scores
Chi-Square	20.154
DF	6
Pr. > Chi-Square	0.002599

From the results in Table 16, the Kruskal-Wallis H test showed $H(4) = 20.154$, p-value = 0.002599 which implies that we reject the null hypothesis that the mean ranks of between groups is the same and thus there is a reason to believe that there is a significant difference between the barangays in terms of halal product awareness. Now, in order to identify exactly which of the groups are different a post-hoc test is necessary. For the pairwise multiple comparison, a Dunn test reveals that the following pairs are significantly different from each other in terms of halal product awareness: Mahayahay – Poblacion with p-value = 0.0297, Mahayahay - Saray Tibanga with p-value = 0.02634 and Mahayahay – Tubod with p-value = 0.0047. In addition, a possibility of high or low level halal product awareness may be observed from barangay Mahayay given that it is present in all meaningful pairwise comparisons.

DISCUSSION

Around the world, non-Muslim consumers are becoming more aware of halal-certified food products that can represent a successful business opportunity. The result of this study shows that the majority of the non-Muslim respondents particularly in Iligan City are aware pertaining to their overall halal awareness. This can also be explained by the previous results as seen in Table 3 to 7, which demonstrate that the majority of respondents are knowledgeable in terms of food processing, packaging, labelling, storage, and transportation of halal food products. Therefore, it can be concluded by the fact that in the overall awareness of the respondents to halal food products, most of the respondents are aware. Consumer awareness about halal can affect their choice to purchase and eat food items labeled as halal (Fadholi et.al, 2020). Given also that the location of the study is around the city proper of Iligan where several businesses can be found. The city is also a settlement of a Muslim minority such as the Maranao and is surrounded by neighboring Muslim communities. It is also reported that the city will be the target of proposed halal hub in region 10 (Philippine News. Net, 2019). Thus, more people particularly the millennials who are exposed to activities related to halal food. This supports the finding of Fadholi et al. (2020) study that millennial customers have positive impressions of halal food that is hygienically made, clean, safe, and free from contaminants.

In terms of association between the ordinal independent variables, or the constructs and the overall halal food product awareness. Storage and transportation have a very strong positive relationship against overall halal product awareness as compared to food processing, packaging, and labelling. The high level of awareness in the constructs also implies a high level of overall halal food product awareness.

In assessing the significant relationship between the respondent's profile and their level of awareness. The findings indicated a significant difference in respondents' awareness of halal food products can be seen in socio-demographic factors like age between 26 and 30 and 31 to 35, gender between male and female respondents, civil status between married and single respondents. Given that it appears in all significant pairwise comparisons, barangay Mahayay may also provide evidence of high or low levels of halal product

food awareness. On the other hand, the respondents' level of awareness about food processing, packing, labeling, storage, and transportation is the same regardless of their level of education, monthly income, or religious affiliation.

CONCLUSION

Awareness is the starting point for decision-making. It involves acquiring information about available options, alternatives, and relevant factors that may influence the decision. The respondents of this study were aware of halal specifically in the aspect of processing, packaging, labeling, storage, and transportation of halal food products. Moreover, examining the extent awareness of overall halal food product awareness, also shows that the respondents are aware. A high level of halal awareness among non-Muslims has the potential to reshape consumer preferences, business strategies, and cultural dynamics, fostering an environment of inclusivity, ethical consumption, and interfaith understanding. Businesses that adapt to these changing dynamics may find new opportunities for growth and market expansion.

Storage and transportation are aspects with a very strong positive correlation to overall halal food product awareness which means that consumers with strong Halal awareness may prioritize and demand greater transparency in the entire supply chain, including storage, transportation, and the overall journey of the product from production to consumption. This emphasizes the importance of providing clear information about the handling of products during storage and transportation, adhering to Halal standards, reinforcing the integrity of Halal products, and contributing to greater consumer trust. Food processing, packaging, and labeling are aspects that should not be neglected as they show a fairly strong positive correlation with the overall halal food products which means that highly aware consumers who are more aware of Halal requirements are likely to be more attentive to the quality, sources of ingredients, processing methods, halal logo, and halal certification.

In addition, the level of halal awareness of the respondents varies significantly across different ages, gender, civil status, and barangay which means that halal awareness and strategies done by the business and government should vary accordingly in order to reach the target. On the other hand, the respondent's educational attainment, monthly income, and religious affiliation do not vary significantly.

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