Customers' Intention To Eat At Halal Certified Restaurant Using SEM PLS

Zamra Derahman
Politeknik Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah
zamra@polisas.edu.my

Khairul Bariah Takrim
Politeknik Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah
kbtakrim@polisas.edu.my

Yasinah Abdul Rahman
Politeknik Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah
yasinah@polisas.edu.my

Abstract

Muslim population is continuously mushrooming resulting in the increased demand of Halal foods, products, banking, logistics and others. Thus created an astounding needs for certified Halal restaurants. However, as revealed by JAKIM, the number of available halal certified restaurants is surprisingly small thus indicating that Malaysians customers have limited choice and insensitive to consume at Halal certified restaurants. The purpose of this study is to identify the contributing factors to the customers' intention to eat at Halal certified restaurants as this is important to restaurant owners when they are comply to Halal certification to fulfil the demand for Halal certified restaurant. It is essential for the local government authority and JAKIM to enforce all restaurant operators to apply for Halal certification for their premises in order to avoid misunderstanding of Halal certified restaurants and pork free restaurant among Muslim customers. 113 data was gathered from government servants and industrial players by adopting the non-probability sampling method technique convenience. The relationship between the research model construct is tested using partial least squares (PLS) technique of Structural Equation Method (SEM) approach. The findings reveal attitude, subjective norm and awareness were significant predicators but perceived behavioural control is not a significant predictor to customers' intention to consume at Halal certified restaurant. The findings are of great values to the local government in the effort to enforce the compliance of Halal certified restaurant to fulfil global market demand in future.

Keywords: Halal Certified Restaurant, Partial Least Squares (PLS), Structural Equation Method (SEM)

1.0 Introduction

Halal is a term widely known globally. The mushrooming of the Muslim population explains the high demand for and the expansion of Halal foods, products, banking and others. According to Rasid (2016), the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2015/2016, reported that those sectors are expected to grow six per cent by year 2020. It is also expected a growth of nine percent of total expenditure of Muslim customers which includes food. However, the term Halal is no longer associated with just food, but it has encompassed Halal industry, market, logistics, banking, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. As a Muslim majority country, Malaysia shares the same increasing trend as reported by The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation Halal Unit, it is found that there is an increase of 3.6 precent in the total Halal exports from the first half of 2014 to the year 2015 (Times,

2015). However, it is interesting to note that Halal food and products gained a high priority amongst Malaysian but not the premise that serves the meals. Nevertheless, it is reported that in 2010, only 187 food premise were officially certified Halal by Department of Islamic Development or Jabatan Kemajuan Agama Islam (JAKIM), despite the fact that Malaysian restaurant industry was projected to grow at 5% to RM 9 billion and 3% growth in outlet numbers to reach 9,715 outlets (Euroonitor, 2009). According to the director of the Halal Hub Division JAKIM, Salmah Mukhtar, the fact that only 187 premises is certified Halal is surely a worrying figure (Kosmo,2010).

The issue of Halal certified food premise particularly restaurants regained attention again in early 2016 with cases of 'no pork' and 'pork free' restaurants as reported in Berita Harian (2016), which were claimed to mislead the Muslims customers. Customers were highly concerned with such situation and begin to question the validity of the halal status of such restaurants. It should be highlighted that.not all restaurants run by Muslims (claimed as the Halal restaurants) gain a formal Halal certification by JAKIM and consumption in these restaurants were solely based on the mutual trust that a Muslim would operate a Halal service. This has led to a proposition by Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, Minister at Prime Minister's office that Muslims need to transform their mentality on the issue of halal status of restaurants; even a Muslim entrepreneur should ensure their premises are with Halal certified status and Halal certification is also open for non-Muslim entrepreneurs who operate business that follows the Sharia law. The small figures of the Halal Certified Restaurants revealed by JAKIM and the issue of food premises and restaurants that use signs "Pork Free" or "No Pork" despite not having Halal certification indirectly tell us that Malaysian customers are insensitive enough towards the ownership of Halal certification among restaurant operators (Kosmo, 2010) and (Berita Harian, 2016). Due to the. limited number of HCR and the lack of sensitivity among customers about HCR, a study is conducted aimed to answer this question: What factors influence customers' intention to eat at Halal Certified Restaurant? The study on customers' intention to eat at HCR in Malaysia is an interesting subject and this was the ground for this study.

2.0 Research Context and Model

The objective of this study is to investigate the factors that influence the intention of consumer to eat at Halal certified restaurant. Literature review regarding the subject matter is scarce as the study about customers' intention to eat at HCR is relatively new. Syed Marzuki et al., (2012) conducted a study about the attitudes of restaurant owners toward Halal certification however there is no study about the customers' intention to eat at HCR. Therefore, researchers referred to associated articles in order to study the related constructs such as awareness, subjective norm, perceived behavior control and attitude as exogenous constructs and intention to eat at Halal Certified Restaurant as an endogenous construct. The relationship between intention of customer to eat at HCR with subjective norm, perceived behavioral control and attitude is adopted and adapted from Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). There were a few studies on Halal that

use the TPB and theory of reason action (TRA) as their foundation to understand customer behavior (Bonne et al., 2009; Lada et al., 2009) toward Halal perception. It is hoped that the findings derived from the model will serve as the basis for the development of Halal marketing strategies, especially in the context of Halal Certified Restaurant. Whilst Jaafar et al., (2012) found out that the customers' attitude and perceive value were the most significant factors toward purchase intention.Others study on intention to purchase Halal logo food, product and pharmaceutical by using TPB to prove the factors of attitude, perceived behavioral control and subjective norm are positively contributing to the intention to buy Halal products or services (Alam & Sayuti, 2011; Bonne et al., 2007). Besides TPB, awareness or knowledge is also predicted to be one of the contributing factors to the intention to eat at HC and consume Halal products and services at individual and management levels (Hamdan et al., 2013; Teng & Wan Jusoh 2013; Abdul Aziz & Chok, 2015; Ngah et al., 2015; Ambali & Bakar, 2012; Saabar & Ibrahim, 2014). It is hoped that the findings derived from the model TBP will serve as the basis for the development of customers Halal intention, especially in the context of Halal Certified Restaurant.

2.1 Definition of Halal food

In Malaysia, the official Halal food definition is outlined by the act of Perintah Perihal Dagangan (Penggunaan Perbahasaan "Halal") 1975 while the Malaysia Halal Standard MS1500:2009: "Halal Food - Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage – General Guidelines (Second Revision)" illustrates a practical guideline towards understanding the Halal standard in Malaysia.

In Arabic, Halal means permissible and lawful by the Sharia law (The Administratior, Bahagian Hab Halal Jabatan Kemajuan Islam, 2016). The ground concept of Islamic dietary rule is that all foods are considered Halal (permissible and lawful by the Sharia law) excluding those which are clearly categorized as haram (impermissible/prohibited and unlawful) in the Quran (Muslim religious text) and in the Sunnah (the sayings and the way of living of the prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h.). Halal food refers to the food/product that are allowed to be consumed by Muslim, which is defined by few characteristics and conditions such as (1) Halal foods should be free from any haram products or derivatives, (2) all lawful land animals must be slaughtered according to Sharia law and in the name of Allah for its meat to be Halal, (3) Halal food should be clean from excrement (najis) and (4) Halal food to fulfill specific conditions when prepared, processed, transported or stored.

2.1 Halal Certified Restaurant

There is no official definition of Halal Certified Restaurant (HCR). HCR could be interpreted as any restaurants that own Halal certificate upon completing and passing JAKIM Halal certification. Samoria & Sabtu (2012) wrote about Halal Premise which includes restaurants. It is highlighted that Halal certification for premise including restaurants covers the processing area, dining space, clean toilet including the food operators (staffs) involved in food preparation and serving. Halal certified restaurants legally own the

right to display Halal Logo and the Halal certificate at their premise. According to Syed Marzuki et al., (2010), the restaurant managers claimed that Halal certification signified the uniqueness of the premises and conformation the Islamic dietary rules.

It is common in the country that Halal products are corroborated with the Halal stamp, also known as the Halal logo authorized by the JAKIM (Islamic Development Department of Malaysia). Halal stamp can only be used by manufacturers who have been issued with Halal certification by JAKIM. Halal certification is defined as a process by which a government-controlled agency or a credible Islamic organization (board) certifies that a company's products can be lawfully consumed by Muslims ("Malaysia Halal certification",2016).

2.3 Intention eating at HCR

Intention is the central construct to both TPB and TRA (Armitage & Conner,2001). TPB outlines that intention is a function of three basic components: attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioral control. Ajzen proposed that intentions are presumed to capture the motivational factors that is stimulus a behavior and to indicate how hard people are ready to try or how much effort they would exert to perform the specific behavior (Ajzen,1991). In this study, intention is referring to indication of individual's readiness to eat at HCR. Thus behavioral intention in this context is referring to customers' intention to eat at HCR.

2.4 Customers' Attitude

Attitude is the personal factor which originated from a collective behavioral belief. It is the most relevant component of TPB in influencing one's intention. Ajzen & Fishbein (1980) explained that attitude is defined by positive or negative evaluation of individual's belief to perform the behavior. A positive belief is an execution of a specific behavior to lead to positive result and will produce a favorable attitude toward performing the behavior. While a negative belief is an execution the behavior that will lead to negative result that will produce an unfavorable attitude. According to Bonne et al., (2009), there is a positive personal attitude towards the consumption of Halal meat in their study to predict the intention to eat Halal meat among Muslims. Past studies pertaining to Halal products such as Lada et al. (2009) and Alam & Sayuti (2011) confirmed that attitude is positively related to intention to eat Halal products. The study on young customers' attitude towards Halal Food Outlets and JAKIM's Halal Certification in Malaysia had revealed young Muslims' attitude is positively related towards Halal food outlets and JAKIM's certification (Abdul Khalek, 2014). Hence, the study proposed:
H1: Attitude is positively related to customers' intention to eat at Halal certified restaurant

2.5 Perceived Behavioral Control

Ajzen (1991) explains perceived behavioral control (PBC) is the degree level of difficulty for individual perceived to perform the particular behavior. Basically, PBC is the extent to which one confidence and believes that he/she is in control of the outcome of an event (Boyd, N., 2016). This study had

defined PBC as perception of individual in performing particular behavior, as pointed out by Venkatesh et al., (2003) and Ajzen (1991). The greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger should be the person's intention to perform the particular behavior (Value Based Management.net, 2016). According to Alam & Sayuti (2011) who had done the study on Halal food purchasing intention indicate that PBC has positive and significant impact to the intention to purchase Halal foods. Bonne, et al., (2009) also found out the PBC of Muslims in France is significantly related to the consumption of Halal meat. Hence, the study proposed

H2: Perceived behavioral control is positively related to customers' intention to eat at HCR.

2.6 Subjective Norm

Subjective norm is one of the determinants of intention but the weakest one among the other factors according to some researchers such as Sheppard et al., (1998) and Van den Putte (1991). Subjective norm is an individual's perception of the perceived social pressure on him/her either to engage or not to engage in that particular behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). A person who believes that most referents with whom he is motivated to comply think he should perform the behavior will receive social pressure to do so. According to Alam & Sayuti (2011) who had done the study on Halal food purchasing intention indicate that subjective norm has positive and significant influence to the intention to purchase Halal foods. Bonne et al., (2009) also found out the subjective norm is positively related for Muslims in France towards the consumption of Halal meat. Hence, the study proposed

H3: Subjective norm is positively related to customers' intention to eat at Halal certified restaurant

2.7 Customers' Awareness

Randolph (2003) defines awareness as the knowledge or understanding of particular subject or situation. While according to Ambali & Bakar (2014) awareness is the knowledge or well informed about particular subject to reflect human perception and cognitive reaction. Ambali & Bakar (2012) proposed that awareness in the context of Halal literally means having special interest in or experience of doing something and/or being well informed of what is happening at the present time on Halal foods, drinks and products. It is further explained that awareness is a relative concept where a person may be partially aware, subconsciously aware or may be acute aware of an issues relating to Halal aspect of what is permitted by Allah. Therefore, different people have different level of awareness about something. Abdul Aziz & Chok (2012) had reviewed "Halal Awareness" and hypothesized that awareness and purchasing intention of Halal food hold a positive relationship. According to Shaari & Mohd Arifin (2010), this function of belief has been hypothesized as an important role in determining the intention. Hence, it is proposed:

H4: Awareness is positively related to customers' intention to eat at HCR.

3.0 Research Methodology

The data analysis of this study was done at the individual's levels in which include industrial players at industrial area and government servants at higher education institutions who came from different states in Malaysia. According to Sidin et al. (2004), the selected area was sufficiently representative of Malaysian population because at the industrial and higher education institute areas are covered by people who come from 13 different states in Malaysia.

3.1 Data Collection

A total of 180 self-administered questionnaires were distributed to customers over three weeks used drop and pick techniques by individuals who are familiar with respondent. Out of 180 questionnaires, only 130 were collected, but due to poor data, 17 were rejected and only 113 were used as data sample.

3.2 Measures and Assessment of Goodness

The five point Likert scale was used to measure item in independent and dependent variables. All instruments were adopted from other technology of adoption and modified to suit the current study since the subject matter is relatively new and lacking of literature in HCR. Items for constructs of perceived behavioral control, subjective norm, attitude and intention were adapted from Venkatesh et al. (2003) which represented by TPB and construct of awareness was adapted from Ambali and Bakar (2014) which is shown by Table 1.

Research model in Fig.1 was tested by using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique of structural equation modeling using SmartPLS version 2.2. This data analysis technique is selected owing to the exploratory study and applied two-step approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). First approach is to test the convergent validity and discriminant validity. Second approach is to test the hypothesis.

Table 1: Properties of the measurement items

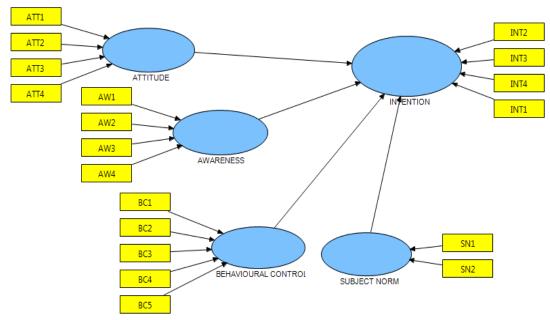| Construct	Definition	Source	Item
Attitude	Various outcomes and attributes from behavioral performance	Venkatesh et al., (2003) Ajzen (1991)	4
Perceived Behavioral Control	Perception of individual in performing the particular behavior/task	Venkatesh et al. (2003) Azjen (1991)	5
Subjective Norm	Perception which influenced by the judgment of significant relationship	Venkatesh et al., (2003) Ajzzen (1991)	2
Intention	Indication of an individual's readiness to eat at Halal certified restaurant	Venkatesh et al., (2003) Ajzen (1991)	3
Awareness	Knowledge or well informed about particular subject to reflect human perception and cognitive reaction	Ambali and Bakar, (2014)	4

Figure1. Research Model

3.3 Construct Validity

There two-step data approach was being used for testing goodness of measure which is identifying this relationship after determining validity and reliability of the measure. According to Sekaran & Bougie (2010), validity was a test that is intended to measure on how well the instruments of the particular concept to measure, whereas reliability was intended to test on how consistent the instrument measures any concepts that is used to measure. Testing construct validity can be done by checking the respective loading and cross-loading to evaluate the particular item. According Hair et al. (2010), the cutoff value at minimum 0.5 is considered significant. Table 2 shows that all items measured for a particular construct loaded highly on the particular construct. Thus confirm the construct validity.

Table 2: Loading and Cross Loading

Item	Attitude	Awareness	Behavioral Control	Intention	Subjective Norm
ATT1	**0.919**	0.505	0.716	0.774	0.718
ATT2	**0.910**	0.502	0.733	0.746	0.764
ATT3	**0.907**	0.608	0.691	0.747	0.682
ATT4	**0.837**	0.548	0.548	0.581	0.622
AW1	0.541	**0.875**	0.506	0.645	0.477
AW2	0.335	**0.697**	0.424	0.379	0.340
AW3	0.606	**0.916**	0.608	0.600	0.543
AW4	0.338	**0.626**	0.417	0.254	0.318
BC1	0.698	0.630	**0.875**	0.668	0.735
BC2	0.639	0.439	**0.853**	0.601	0.575
BC3	0.558	0.488	**0.776**	0.541	0.508
BC4	0.598	0.436	**0.729**	0.574	0.546
BC5	0.381	0.403	**0.613**	0.340	0.391
INT1	0.695	0.556	0.626	**0.851**	0.673

INT2	0.701	0.525	0.548	**0.818**	0.581
INT3	0.725	0.580	0.689	**0.909**	0.731
INT4	0.627	0.531	0.599	**0.845**	0.606
SN1	0.775	0.457	0.691	0.712	**0.916**
SN2	0.646	0.546	0.631	0.671	**0.905**

Note: Bold values are loadings for items which are above recommended value > 0.5

3.4 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was used to test the degree multiple items to measure the same variable. According to Hair et al. (2013), to asses convergent validity the cut off value for loading and composite reliability are greater than 0.5 and AVE are also greater than 0.5 (Barclay et al., 1995). Analysis data on Table 3 is shown the value of loading, composite reliability and AVE are met the requirement value recommended by Hair et al. (2013) and Barclay et al., (1995). The result is concluded that all constructs are valid measures to their parameter significance and estimation (Chow and Chan 2008).

Table 3: Convergence Validity

Model Constructs	Measurement Item	Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
Attitude	**ATT1**	0.919	0.941	0.799
	ATT2	0.910		
	ATT3	0.907		
	ATT4	0.837		
	AW1	0.875	0.865	0.621
Awareness	**AW2**	0.697		
	AW3	0.916		
	AW4	0.626		
Behavioral Control	**BC1**	0.875	0.881	0.600
	BC2	0.853		
	BC3	0.776		
	BC4	0.729		
	BC5	0.613		
Intention	**INT1**	0.851	0.917	0.734
	INT2	0.818		
	INT3	0.909		
	INT4	0.845		
Subjective Norm	**SN1**	0.916	0.907	0.830
	SN2	0.905		

3.5 Discriminant Validity of Constructs

Discriminant validity can be tested by examining the correlations between the measures of interception value of its own construct. The interception value of particular construct should be higher than the value of opposing constructs (Compeau et al., 1999; Hair et al. 2013). As shown in Table 4, the correlations of other constructs are lower than the square root of the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) by indicating measured construct

(Fornell & Larker's, 1981). It is indicated the measurement model demonstrated the adequate convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Variables	Attitude	Awareness	PBC	Intention	Subjective Norm
ATTITUDE	**0.894**				
AWARENESS	0.602	**0.788**			
PBC	0.758	0.623	**0.775**		
INTENTION	0.803	0.640	0.721	**0.857**	
SUBJECTIVE NORM	0.782	0.549	0.727	0.759	**0.911**

Note: Diagonals (in bold) represent square root of AVE and the off diagonals represented correlations

3.6 Hypothesis Testing

Table 5: Path coefficient and hypothesis testing

	Hypothesis	Beta	SE	T-Value	Decision
H1	Attitude-> intention	0.376	0.187	**2.164***	Supported
H2	Awareness-> intention	0.212	0.099	**1.876***	Supported
H3	Behavioral control-> intention	0.115	0.102	1.054	Not supported
H4	Subjective norm-> intention	0.263	0.138	**1.921***	Supported

Nonparametric bootstrapping was applied to test structural model with 500 replications (Wetzels et al., 2009 and Chin, 1998). Table 5 is shown the result for four hypothesis test generated from structural model in Fig.2. Value for R^2 for the main model is 0.721(Figure 2) which represent 72.1 percent of the variance in the extent of collaboration is described by attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norm and awareness. The result in Table 5 indicated the H1, H2 and H4 hypothesis (three out of four) are supported and the beta value is 0.376, 0.212 and 0.263 respectively with significant at $p < 0.01$. Even though the Beta value for H3 is 0.115(positive), H3 is not supported the hypothesis since T-value < 1.645 (Hair, 2013).
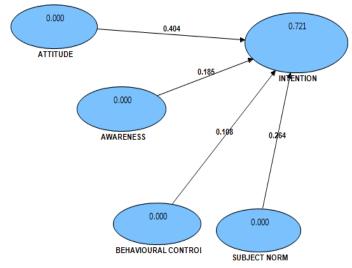

Fig.2. Structural model result

4.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study is to identify the factors which determine customers' intention to eat at Halal Certified Restaurant in Malaysia. The findings show that awareness, attitude and subjective norm were supported in positive relationship. The higher value of attitude, subjective norm and awareness are indicators to the higher intention of customers to eat at Halal Certified Restaurant. Awareness is found out as one of the determinant factors to consume at Halal Certified Restaurant. Ambali and Bakar (2014) also found out that there is a positive relationship between awareness and are also identified by other factors such as religion, belief, health, exposure and role played by logo Halal among customers in Shah Alam Malaysia to consume Halal food and product. The increase level and value of awareness has significant effect with the intention to consume food and beverages at Halal Certified Restaurant thus will create greater demand for Halal certified Restaurant. According to Ambali and Bakar (2014), the increasing level of awareness among Muslim as their obligation to consume Halal food and product will create greater prospect of demand for the dietary Muslim requirement as well as Halal Certified Restaurant. In context of non-Muslim customers, the increase of awareness for Halal Certified Restaurant is reflected the increase requirement for hygienic, healthy and quality food and beverages served at Halal Certified Restaurant.

However, the findings showed perceived behavioral control is not a contributing factor to the customers' intention to eat at Halal Certified Restaurant. The study of environmental psychology in the application of the theory of planned behavior is stated that actions that are environmentally friendly carry a positive normative belief. According (Koger & Winter, 2010) and (Stern, 2005), sustainable behaviors are widely promoted as positive behaviors, however perceived behavioral control can be hindered by some constraint. In this study, the perceived behavioral control is not significantly related to the customers' intention to eat at Halal Certified Restaurant because it was hindered by the limited numbers of available Halal Certified Restaurant in Malaysia. Only 187 Halal premises compared to thousands of restaurants in Malaysia. So the perceived behavioral control carry the negative value to the research because of the scarcity number of available Halal Certified Restaurant to be consumed. The determinant factors of customers' intention to eat at Halal Certified Restaurant are awareness, attitude and subjective norm. As a Muslim country, this study has proven the customers' attitudes, subjective norm and awareness have bigger impact on intention to consume at Halal Certified Restaurant.

The statements that claim Muslims customers are not sensitive enough towards Halal logo proven mislead. Based on the study of customers' confidence on information about Halal logo, the findings indicate that customers are sensitive to the subject matter; the false information on Halal logo will lead to the loss of confidence and affect their intention to purchase Halal products (Mohamed et al., 2013). As Halal Certified Restaurant emphasized on Halal ingredient or food and Halal process of preparing food, people would have become more alert about their food consumption as well as they become more alarm about the cleanliness and healthiness which is crucial value in Halal consumption (Kartina, 2015). It is believed the request

for Halal Certified Restaurant would be increased as awareness of halal, hygienic and healthier food among Muslims and non-Muslim customers would become more important over time.

The results of this study are also beneficial to the restaurant owners to comply for Halal certification in order to fulfill customers' demand and to penetrate Halal global food market. In fact in year of 2010, there are 15 out of 20 Japanese companies have received halal certification for their food products (Md Akhir at el., 2010) and predicted to increase. This indicator proved the Japanese restaurant owners are committed to fulfill the halal demand of Malaysian customers. According to Syed Marzuki et al., (2010), restaurant managers think that Halal certification is only dominant in hospitality industry that promotes the knowledge in Muslims' dietary restriction and sensitivity. Since the growing demand for Halal Certified Restaurant is significant, JAKIM should take some proactive action to resolve the imbalance demand-supply for Halal Certified Restaurant. Even though JAKIM has introduced new campaign 1Malaysia 1Halal, restaurant owners claimed it is hard to apply Halal certification because the difficulty in getting Halal raw food supply. JAKIM must ensure local government authority should improve and come up with new strategic planning to assist restaurant owners to comply the Halal certification requirement in order to ensure this campaign is successful. According to Berita Harian (2016), government must make sure all restaurant owners to display 'Halal' or 'non Halal' logo at their premises to avoid misinterpretation among Muslims customers. The current rules and regulations have provided some freedom to the restaurant premises but the enforcement should be executed by JAKIM seriously and persistently.

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