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Awareness Of Halal Certified Products And Services In Europe

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Abstract

Halal certification has been around in Europe for over 40 years, catering to the needs of Muslim consumers. With more Muslims living and working in Europe and an increase in tourists from OIC countries, halal food and services are now easier to find, especially in places like the UK, France, and Germany. Halal-certified items are available in supermarkets and restaurants, which helps Muslims meet their dietary needs. But with the rise of digital info and the ease of access to it, people can interpret halal standards however they want, even if they're not really knowledgeable. This can confuse consumers since there isn't one universal halal standard in Europe. Plus, the different halal certification bodies and their varying requirements make it even harder to know what's genuinely halal. This paper looks at how aware Muslims in Europe are about halal products and services. By using a survey, we want to gather insights on how much they know about halal certification and how much trust they place in it.

Keywords: *halal, awareness, certification, products, services*

Introduction

The halal products and services market in Europe has undergone a profound transformation over the last several decades. Initially viewed through the narrow lens of religious observance, halal has evolved into a broader marker of ethical consumption, hygiene, and quality assurance. This shift is driven in part by Europe's growing Muslim population and the rising number of visitors from Muslim-majority countries. Supermarkets, restaurants, and food service sectors in countries such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany have responded

by expanding their halal-certified offerings, increasingly integrating them into mainstream consumer channels (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). Despite this progress, the halal market in Europe remains fragmented. The absence of a unified certification authority has led to a proliferation of certification bodies, each with its own interpretation of halal standards. This lack of harmonization has sown confusion among consumers, complicating their purchasing decisions and reducing trust in the halal label (Knowles et al., 2014). The problem is further exacerbated by the digital landscape, where uncertified claims and misinformation

circulate freely, challenging consumers' ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources.

Recent findings highlight inconsistencies in certification practices and the absence of a pan-European regulatory framework that undermine consumer confidence and allow misuse of halal labeling (Dugonjić & Bećirović, 2023). Additional research supports that Muslim consumers perceive halal certification not only as a religious necessity but also as a cultural indicator of credibility, identity, and ethics (Alqudsi, 2014).

The objective of this study is to assess the level of awareness, trust, and behavior among European Muslim consumers toward halal-certified products and services. This includes evaluating attitudes toward certification labels, willingness to pay for certified options, and the influence of religious, ethical, and quality perceptions on purchasing decisions. The paper integrates findings from a targeted survey with insights from existing literature to provide a deeper understanding of consumer dynamics and expectations within the European halal market.

Materials and Methods

We used a structured online survey to gather data from people living in different European countries. The survey was done through Google Forms and kept anonymous to encourage honest answers. It contained 15 closed-ended questions across five sections: demographic info (age, gender, education, employment), halal consumption habits, knowledge of halal certification, trust in certifying bodies, and willingness to pay for halal-certified goods and services.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Overview

The sample included 53.6% males and 46.4% females. Most (53.6%) were aged 30–50, followed by 50–70 (35.7%) and 18–30 (10.7%). Education levels were high, with 71.5% having tertiary degrees, and 85.7% reported they were

employed. This means we have a group that can think critically about certification and labeling systems.

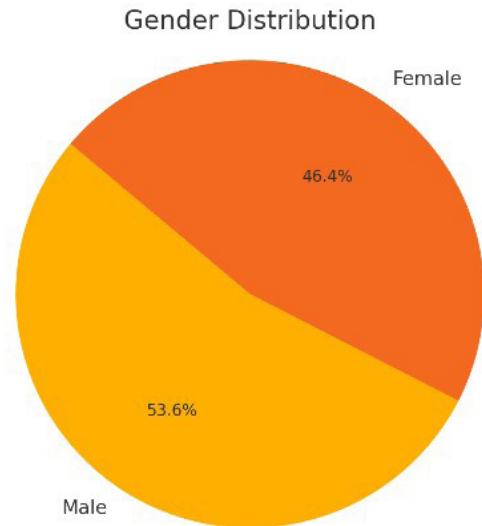


Fig. 1. Gender Distribution

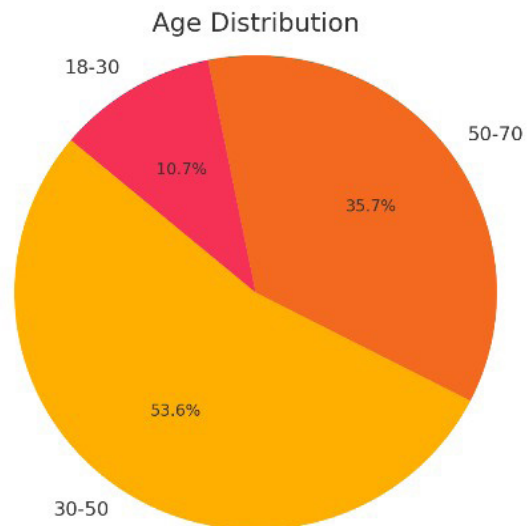


Fig. 2. Age Distribution

Halal Consumption Behavior

About half of the respondents (48.3%) said they only consume halal-certified products, while 51.7% do not, often due to trusting their vendors or not being able to find halal options. This matches findings from other regions where community trust sometimes takes the place of formal certification. This aligns with Alqudsi (2014), who observed similar trends in Southeast Asian markets where trust in community vendors often replaces formal certification.

Halal Certified Consumption

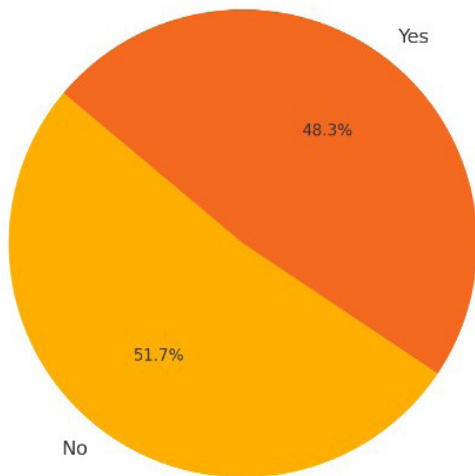


Fig. 3. Do You Consume Only Halal Certified Products?

Familiarity with Certification

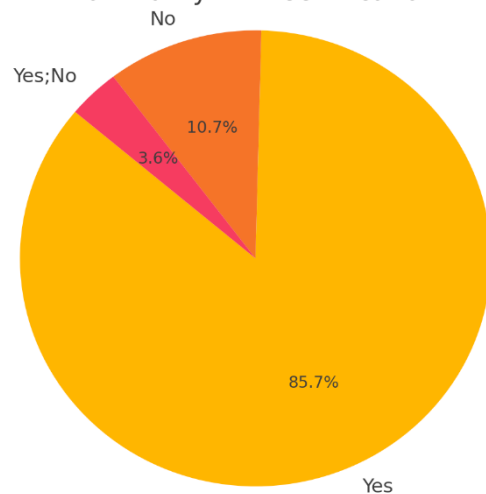


Fig. 5. Familiarity with Certification

Preferred Purchase Locations

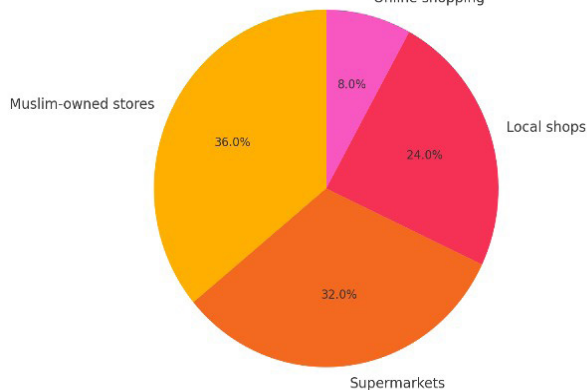


Fig. 4. Preferred Purchase Locations

Trust in Certification Bodies

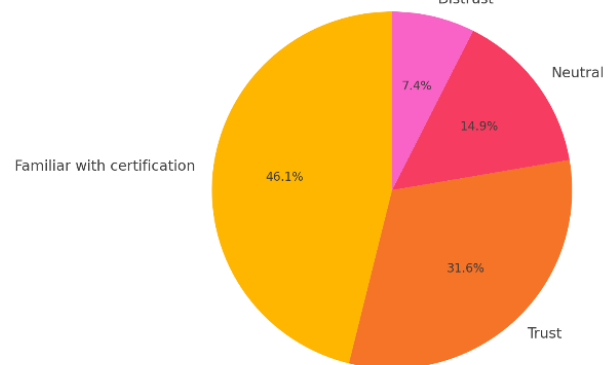


Fig. 6. Trust in Halal Certification Bodies

Muslim-owned stores (36%) were the preferred shopping spot, followed by supermarkets (32%) and local shops (24%). Only 8% liked online shopping, showing that trust and access are key.

Certification Awareness and Trust

A big portion (85.7%) knew about halal certification processes, but only 58.6% trusted certification bodies, with 13.8% distrustful and 27.6% neutral. This shows that local trust varies and often hinges on specific certifiers.

These results are consistent with Dugonjić (2023), who emphasized that lack of harmonized standards leads to skepticism. Trust is often localized, dependent on specific certifiers or religious authorities.

Dining Preferences and Certification Importance

Restaurant Certification Importance

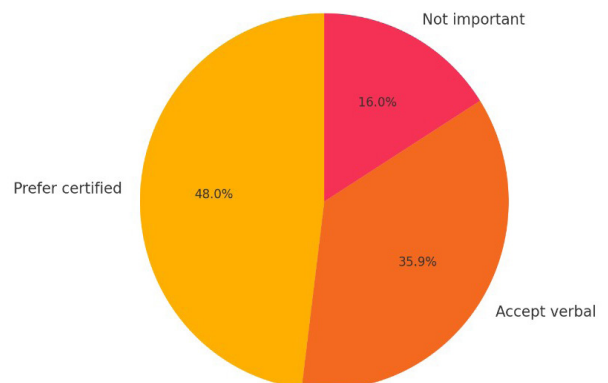


Fig. 7. Restaurant Certification Preferences

42.9% of respondents preferred halal-certified restaurants, while 32.1% accepted verbal confirmations. Only 14.3% thought certification

wasn't important. For hotels, 32.1% wanted halal-certified options, but 25% didn't care about it. This indicates room for growth in certified hospitality offerings.

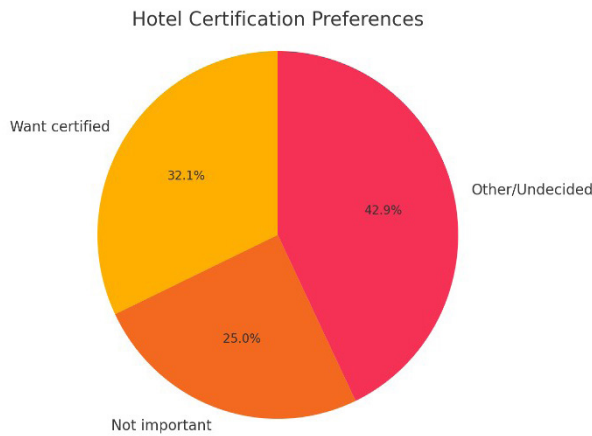


Fig. 8. Hotel Preferences

3.5 Type of Halal Meat

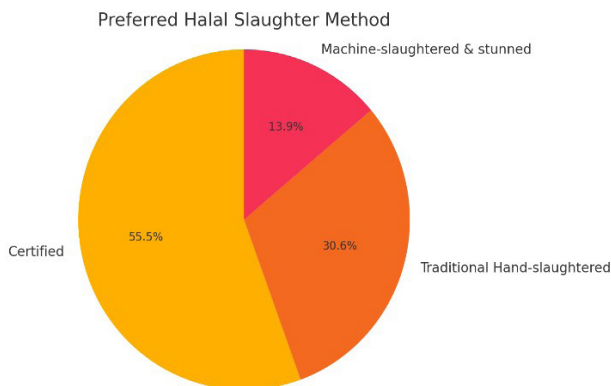


Fig. 9. Halal Meat Preferences

While 55.6% prioritized certification, 30.6% preferred hand-slaughtered methods without stunning. Only 13.9% accepted machine-slaughtered products. This variety shows different expectations among consumers.

Willingness to Pay for Certification

75% of participants said they would pay more for certified halal products, showing that authenticity holds value for them. Similarly, 67.9% were willing to pay more for halal-certified hotels and restaurants.

A study by Bonne and Verbeke (2008) identified a similar trend, characterizing halal as a signal of higher quality and safety, particularly in

the context of meat production and ethical assurance.

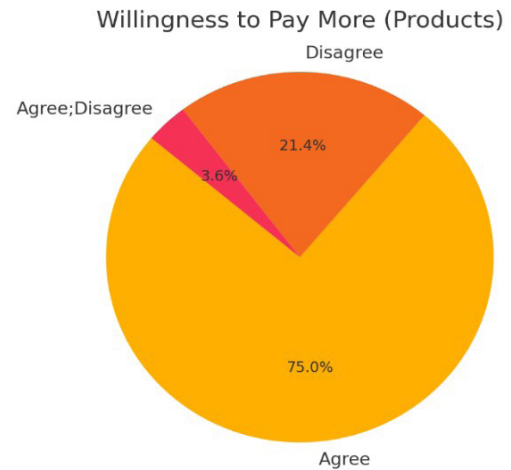


Fig. 10. Willingness to Pay for Certified Products

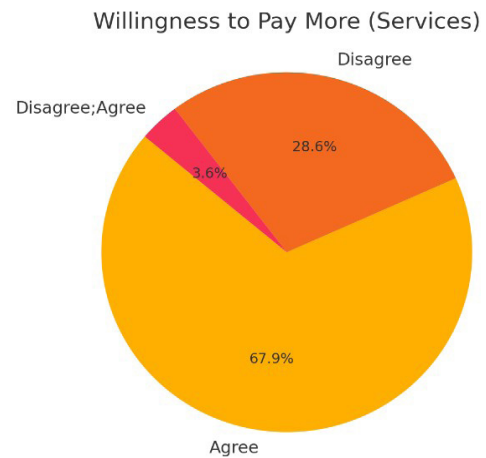


Fig. 11. Willingness to Pay for Services

Awareness of Halal Meaning

85.7% viewed halal as a religious obligation, while 14.2% linked it to added value or quality.

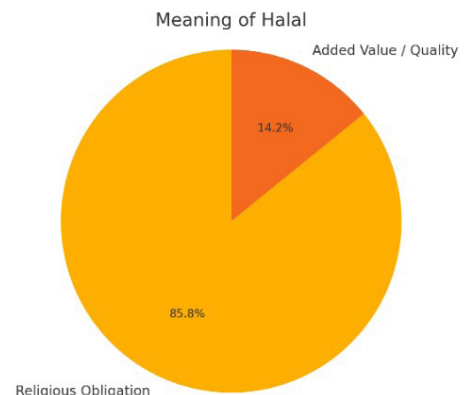


Fig. 12. Meaning of Halal

Satisfaction with Availability

57.1% reported being dissatisfied with the availability of halal products, indicating that there's a need for better distribution, especially in areas outside of the city or in niche markets like cosmetics or medications

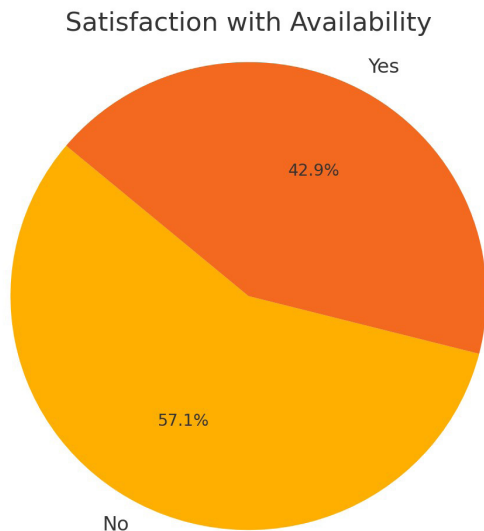


Fig. 13. Satisfaction with Availability

Conclusion

This study shows that Muslim consumers in Europe are becoming more informed and selective about halal-certified products and services. While there's a good understanding of certification practices, trust issues arise from the lack of consistency and transparency.

Comparative literature supports these findings. Research has consistently shown that certification credibility, product traceability, and transparency are essential to building consumer trust (Alqudsi, 2014; Knowles et al., 2014). The continued fragmentation of the halal market in Europe contributes to confusion and skepticism, particularly among younger and more educated consumer groups, as evidenced by recent findings on certification diversity and consumer trust.

Nevertheless, the results reveal positive signals for producers and policymakers. A clear willingness to pay for certified options and growing demand for transparency present strong incentives for establishing unified certification

frameworks. Furthermore, the emerging interest in hospitality services points to a broadening of halal concerns beyond food, calling for more inclusive certification scopes.

It is also worth noting that the concept of halal is evolving. The growing association between halal and quality, animal welfare, and ethical production reflects a shift in consumer values. This development mirrors what other consumer behavior studies have identified as a trend toward ethical and lifestyle-driven purchasing, rather than purely religious obligation. This insight opens opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, including tourism, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals, where halal certification may become a marker of integrity and care.

In sum, halal consumption in Europe is shaped by a blend of religious commitment and ethical consumerism. Businesses and institutions that recognize this duality—and respond with consistent, trustworthy certification practices—will be better positioned to meet market expectations and foster lasting consumer trust.

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Svijest o halal certificiranim proizvodima i uslugama u Evropi

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Sažetak

Halal certifikacija postoji u Evropi već više od 40 godina, prilagođavajući se potrebama muslimanskih potrošača. S obzirom na to da sve više muslimana živi i radi u Evropi, kao i na porast broja turista iz zemalja članica OIC-a, halal hrana i usluge sada su lakše dostupni, posebno u mjestima poput Velike Britanije, Francuske i Njemačke. Proizvodi s halal certifikatom dostupni su u supermarketima i restoranima, što pomaže muslimanima da zadovolje svoje prehrambene potrebe. Međutim, s porastom digitalnih informacija i lakim pristupom njima, ljudi mogu tumačiti halal standarde kako god žele, čak i ako zapravo nemaju dovoljno znanja. To može zbuniti potrošače, budući da u Evropi ne postoji jedinstveni halal standard. Osim toga, različita halal certifikacijska tijela i njihove različite zahtjeve dodatno otežavaju prepoznavanje onoga što je zaista halal. Ovaj rad istražuje koliko su muslimani u Evropi svjesni halal proizvoda i usluga. Korištenjem ankete, želimo prikupiti uvide o tome koliko znaju o halal certifikaciji i koliko povjerenja imaju u nju.

Ključne riječi: halal, svijest, certifikacija, proizvodi, usluge
