

**Understanding Restaurant Managers' Expectations
of *Halal* Certification
in Malaysia**

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Sharifah Zannierah Syed Marzuki

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the expectations of restaurant managers and perceived attributes of *halal* certification in Malaysia. *Halal* certification at restaurants represents the understanding that foods is served according to Islamic dietary laws. *Halal* means permitted or lawful or fit for consumption. As well as its importance in Muslim countries, the demand for *halal* food is growing internationally as a result of increasing trade, tourism and globalization. Therefore, *halal* certification is seen as an important aspect in both the Malaysian and the international restaurant and hospitality industries. *Halal* certification in an eating premises means that both the restaurants, as well as the entire food supply chain, conform to Islamic dietary rules which do not tolerate contamination by *haram* (prohibited) materials.

Research for this thesis was undertaken by both a mail survey and interviews with restaurant managers. For the survey, a systematic sampling method was applied whereby every fourth restaurant was selected from a list of all restaurants in Malaysia provided by the Companies Commission. A mail survey to 2080 restaurants was administered throughout Malaysia in July 2009. The number of completed and returned questionnaires was 643, indicating a 31% response rate. Data was then entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for further analysis. The response rate was considered reasonable given the nature of the study and its limitations. In addition, 33 interviews with restaurant managers were conducted in five locations.

The results indicate that restaurant managers have high expectations towards *halal* certification although there are different expectations between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents with respect to attributes such as food safety, hygiene, food quality, marketing aspects and certification issues. It is also gathered that there are significant differences between them with respect to market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, cost of compliance and local awareness. This thesis concludes that *halal* certification does yield some benefits in terms of market signals, Islamic attributes and marketing factors while there are also certain issues on cost and compliance that need to be addressed by related local authorities. The findings also indicate that *halal* restaurant food may have a broader appeal beyond religion and also contributes to Malaysia's positioning as a tourism destination and a hub for the global *halal* market.

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**This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the
People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them.**

(Surah Al-Maidah [The Table Spread], verse 5)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This thesis is about understanding restaurant managers' expectations towards *halal* certification in Malaysia and will focus on the reasons for this certification from the perspectives of restaurant managers in managing their daily operations. Despite the importance of *halal* food for a large portion of the world's population, there is very little academic research on this food and on *halal* restaurants certification in particular (Wan Hassan, 2008). This thesis therefore seeks to make a further contribution to this significant area of food service, hospitality and tourism.

This chapter outlines the initial context for the thesis and presents the research questions that will be addressed. The first section of this chapter will discuss the *halal* concept. Basic guidance with respect to the *halal* food laws is discussed in detail in the *Quran* (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Islamic dietary laws offer the freedom for people to eat and drink a wide range of food they like on the condition that it is not *haram*. The list of *haram* foods will be discussed further together with other religions' dietary prohibitions.

The second section will highlight the general ideas of the Islamic dietary laws that focus on three main categories, namely, *halal*, *haram* and *syubha*. *Halal* is the permitted food whereas, *haram*, the prohibited, and *syubha* (questionable or doubtful) is in-between *halal* and *haram*. One must adhere with the *halal* food laws and regulations at all times in order to become a good Muslim as mentioned in the *Quran* (*Surah Al-Maidah* [The Table Spread], verse 5):

This day are (all) good things made lawful for you. The food of those who have received the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them. Who denied the faith, his work is vain and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.

Muslim customers of Malaysian restaurants may therefore be particularly vigilant in fulfilling their religious dietary obligations and search for restaurants that offer *halal* foods. Therefore, providing certainty as to the *halal* nature of the food it offers may be especially important for restaurant managers given the increased demand for *halal* food in recent years (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009). The third section is on the Malaysian food sector in relation to *halal*

certification. Types of eating outlets that are commonly and regularly patronized by Malaysians will be noted. The final section of the chapter presents the research questions of this study and is followed by the chapter summary.

1.1 Halal Concept

The *halal* market and the demand for *halal* food have been popular topics in non-academic articles. Nevertheless, academic literature on *halal* certification and the food service industry in particular is extremely uncommon (Wan Hassan, 2008; Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003). According to Shafie and Othman (2006), *halal* is a unique Islamic concept. It does not just mean food but it is also integral to the Islamic way of life. Al-Harran and Low (2008) stated that Islamic rules and manners govern individual Muslims and they reflect Islamic ideas and values. In order to fulfil Islamic values, Chang (2006) noted that *halal* certification is gaining popularity as a new benchmark for quality, hygiene and safety and at the same time conforms to the *Shariah* (Islamic law).

The National Small and Medium Enterprise Development Council (2006) stated that Malaysia is viewed internationally as a progressive Islamic country with competitive business incentives and is seen as a good example of where a single *halal* standard will be implemented throughout the country. Furthermore, this outcome has been regarded as the basis for the development of world *halal* food industries as well as adding marketing value to other products and services, namely, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, logistics, financial and insurance services and the toy-making industry.

According to Mohd Yusoff (2004), *halal* does not cover only the religious aspects but it adheres to very strict quality and hygiene compliance which is in line with good manufacturing practices. This comprehensive Islamic term encompasses not only the matters of food and drink, but also all other matters of daily life. Most of the studies done on *halal* topics focused primarily on *halal* meat (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Martini & Chee, 2001; Waarden, 2004), perhaps also reinforcing the impression among non-Muslims that *halal* is only concerned with meat (Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003). However, *halal* applies not only to meat and poultry, but also to other non-food products, for instance, cosmetics and personal care products.

As a result of growing globalisation of the food chain in terms of *halal* production, food safety, trade and consumption, Muslims are now increasingly demanding that *halal* products be certified in order to boost their confidence level and have ‘peace of mind’ (Shafie & Othman,

2006). This is significant as commercial food service sales relate heavily to the awareness of restaurant operators in fulfilling the needs and wants of their customers (Edwards & Meiselman, 2005), who also suggest that the interaction between the customer, service personnel and the service organisation is important for return patronage. In general, customers have their own reasons for wanting to return to any restaurant (Dube et al., 1994). Although Muslims consumers are very much similar to any other consumer segments, in that they are demanding healthy and quality products, they are also demanding that the food or products must also conform to *Shariah* requirements (Al-Harran & Low, 2008). Furthermore, Muslim restaurant customers are like any other customers when eating out, as their desire for customer satisfaction and return visits to a restaurant are strongly influenced by food quality (Dube et al., 1994).

Although this thesis is substantially concerned with *halal* as an absolute priority for Muslim restaurant customers, it is important to note that Malaysia is an Asian country with a multi-ethnic population. The population includes native Malays as well as the Chinese and an Indian ethnicity that totals more than 28 million people (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). The multi-racial society is dominated by four major religions: Islam being the major professed religion which accounts for 60.4% of the population, followed by Buddhism (19.2%), Christianity (9.1%), Hinduism (6.3%) and the remainder consisting of Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions (2.6%) as revealed in *Census 2000*. Shamsudin and Selamat (2005) pointed out that Malaysia is becoming urbanized and the lifestyle has been changing with consumers now willing to pay for the price of convenience, particularly when purchasing food. In addition, the Malaysian government has identified tourism as a high priority growth sector and is aggressively promoting the country worldwide (Saeed et al., 2000). As a result, restaurants in Malaysia operate with an increasingly more ethnically and culturally diverse customer base of locals and tourists.

Malaysia, like other countries, consists of different religions and followers. Religion plays one of the most influential roles in the choices and subsequent selection of foods consumed in certain societies (Dindyal & Dindyal, 2004). Malay people who are Muslims and consume *halal* food represent the majority of the population. Apart from them, the Indians and Chinese also have their own religious dietary prohibitions. Eating has long been central to the culture of India as diet is linked to notions of purity and self-control (McCaffree, 2002). In Hinduism and Buddhism, the consumption of both pork and beef is frowned upon because it is considered as unclean meat. In addition, ancient Hindu scriptures prohibit the eating of these meats. Sardar (2000) mentioned that Malays refrain themselves from eating at Chinese stalls where pork may have been prepared and Indians seek out Indian stalls where no beef is on offer or only vegetarian fare is prepared. As a

result of this, many Hindus and Buddhists refuse to eat any meat at all and are strict vegetarians, despite being allowed to eat chicken and lamb (Assadi, 2003; Bonne & Verbeke, 2008).

Only the consumption of pork and not beef is prohibited for the same reasons in the Islamic religion and Judaism as part of *halal* and *kosher* respectively (Assadi, 2003). In Jewish tradition, in addition to the mere permissibility of animal or bird, *kashrut* or “keeping *kosher*” is also determined by the way an animal is slaughtered (Diamond, 2002). *Halal* and *kosher* both demand special prayers to be performed in order to make the eating of prohibited animals acceptable (Assadi, 2003; Bonne & Verbeke, 2008).

Furthermore, the permitted animals such as ruminants and poultry have to be killed by a Jew to make them *kosher* and by a Muslim to make them *halal* (Assadi, 2003). Assadi also emphasized that Islam and Judaism prohibit common methods of killing such as stunning and killing as they are unfit for consumption. This stands in contrast to most forms of Christianity, which allows the consumption of any types of meat without the need for any kind of repentance to God in the form of prayer. Also in the other extreme to these religions, the Jain religion does not allow the eating of any meat and any vegetables beneath the soil. Indeed, almost all religions around the globe have sets of laws that affect everyday purchases and habits.

For *kosher* observance, it is important not to combine meat and dairy products (Diamond, 2002) but no such restriction is observed for *halal* (Assadi, 2003). The cleaning of equipment is also different between both standards. Assadi (2003) further mentioned that many consumers perceive *halal* and *kosher* foods as being specially selected and supervised at all stages of preparation and processing in order to achieve the highest standards of wholesomeness and hygiene. In fact, there are certain similarities and some differences between *kosher* and *halal*, which will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

1.2 Islamic Dietary Laws

A Muslim who follows the Islamic dietary laws is a symbol of faith towards his or her religion. In relation to this, the life of a Muslim revolves around the concept of *halal* and *haram* (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). According to the Islamic dietary laws, there are three main categories of food for Muslims: *halal*, *haram* and *syubha*. *Halal* is a term describing foods that are lawful for Muslims to consume, according to Islamic dietary laws as found in the *Quran*, *hadith* (books that recorded the sayings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad) and in the *fiqh* (jurisprudence) of the Muslim

jurists. *Haram* foods are unlawful and prohibited for Muslims, while *syubha* foods are questionable and therefore should be avoided.

In a *hadith* by Bukhari and Muslim that was narrated by Abu Abdullah An-Nu'man, the Prophet Muhammad said: “*Halal* (lawful) is clear and *haram* (prohibited) is clear; in between these two are certain things which are suspect or *syubha or mushbooh*”. Hence, many people may not know whether those items are *halal* or *haram* (but) whosoever leaves them, is innocent towards his or her religion and their conscience. The *hadith* further explains: “Anyone who gets involved in any of these suspected items may fall into the unlawful and prohibited” (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

According to Riaz and Chaudry (2004, p. 7) five major terms are used to describe the permissibility of food:

- *halal* means permissible and lawful
- *haram* means prohibited – it is directly the opposite of *halal*
- *syubha* is something questionable or doubtful, either due to the differences in scholars' opinions or the presence of undetermined ingredients in a food product
- *makrooh* is a term generally associated with someone's dislike for a product or, while not clearly *haram*, it is considered dislikeable by some Muslims
- *zabiha or dhabiha* is a term often used by Muslims in the United States to differentiate meat that has been slaughtered by Muslims as opposed to by Ahlul Kitab (Jews or Christians) or without religious connotation.

1.3 Malaysian Restaurants

The issues of food safety are becoming more complex in line with the advancement of food technology. Trading food without certification and providing false documentation are among the contributing factors in the issue. Consumers ultimately must have confidence in the value of certification if they wish to pay more for the certified goods (Caskie & Davis, 2001). The impact of the food safety issue to the consumers is that they will lose their trust when the food they eat is not actually what they expected. The perceived emotional attributes which the consumers have set in their mind that have convinced them to buy certain goods are considered confidence and trust of a brand (Manning, 2007). Here, *halal* certification demonstrates its values when Muslim customers patronize *halal* eating premises in Malaysia bearing the certification (determined by their beliefs) (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009). However, most of the restaurants in Malaysia are owned or operated by

local Chinese businessmen since the majority of the Chinese are in the commercial sector (Sin, 1987). Therefore, *halal* certification is a critical issue that must be addressed carefully by the food, hospitality and restaurant industry players in consideration of Islamic dietary laws (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008).

Malaysians frequently eat away from home at various low to high-end food service establishments across the country (Chang, 2006). Thus, it is common for families to treat themselves at least once a week by eating away from home. It is estimated that the total consumer service sector was valued at RM10.7 billion in 2005 (Chang, 2006). However, the hospitality sector, including restaurants, is also a major player within the global economy suggesting that research on *halal* foods in restaurants may have a wider significance than just the Malaysian context.

Hospitality in the commercial setting bears a specific kind of relationship between individuals, which in this context is between the hospitality service provider and the customer (King, 1995). In this relationship, the host understands the needs and wants of the customer, who gives pleasure to them and enhances his or her well-being and comfort. With the growth of the *halal* food industry, debates have broken out in the Muslim community over the rules and standards for deeming food acceptance. Can a restaurant be considered *halal* if its food is in accordance with the Islamic dietary laws although it serves alcohol? However, there are plenty of restaurants that operate in this kind of way locally and internationally to cater for non-Muslim customers who visit and dine at their premises.

Taking Singapore as an example, the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS)/the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore was established to broaden and deepen the Singaporean Muslim community's understanding and practice of Islam (Tan, 2007). As *halal* certification issuance is among its principal functions, this organization has been issuing *halal* certificates since 1978 to exporters that cater for a global *halal* market as well as certifying local establishments such as restaurants, food courts and individual stalls (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). MUIS also insisted that the *halal* certification must be displayed clearly in the eating establishment.

Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) found that the self-described “devout” and “practising” Singaporean Muslims are indeed extremely concerned about the issue of *halal* when it comes to food and drink consumption as well as the preparation and the environment where *halal* food is consumed. Most of them indicated that they would prefer to dine in a totally *halal* environment if

there was a choice. However, they do patronize mixed establishments either out of necessity (for example, if there were no totally *halal* establishments available) or out of choice where they want to enjoy the company of non-Muslims. Nearly all of the respondents interviewed took defensive dining measures in fulfilling their religious obligations while participating in a multi-cultural and cosmopolitan everyday life.

Heng and Guan (2007) noted that in general the food service industry in Malaysia can be classified into five main categories, namely, dine-in restaurants (including hotel coffee houses), fast food outlets, coffee shops, food courts or hawker centres, and roadside hawkers. All of these may sell *halal* food. They explained that the dine-in restaurants are normally air-conditioned establishments where uniformed staffs provide a full range of services. These cater mostly to those in the upper income group. Patrons in most of these establishments are also subjected to the service charge and government tax. Fast food outlets consist mainly of franchise holders of Western-style menus. These outlets follow strict serving and preparation specifications, charge standardized prices and are frequented by the upper and middle-income groups. Coffee shops are, by and large, non-air-conditioned establishments operated by individual owners who sublet sections of their premises to others selling local gourmet food.

The bulk of food courts or hawker centres are located at major shopping complexes or at urban townships. These hawker centres generally serve local cuisine and the ambience in such establishments varies widely according to their locations. Roadside hawkers are commonly sighted congregating along the streets, peddling their foodstuffs. These hawkers remain a favourite among Malaysians from all walks of life, owing to the informal settings and the cheap price ranges. Pang and Toh (2008) emphasized that hawker foods are a significant cultural heritage and an important source of nourishment as well as income for the public, as well as a great contributor to the economy in Malaysia. In contrast, Kueh and Voon (2007) argued that food service premises in Malaysia could be divided into restaurants, street stalls and pubs/bars. Restaurants may be either limited-service or full service facilities and involve limited, medium contact encounters between customers and service providers. Davis and Steward (2002) noted that in limited service restaurants, customers give their orders at a counter and pay immediately. In the Malaysian context, this includes fast food chains such as McDonald's and Pizza Hut as well as cafeteria-style outlets. Full service restaurants have table service and generally have more elaborate dining amenities and décor. In Malaysia fast food chains offer *halal* food.

The patrons to these restaurants are multi-ethnics as Malaysia comprises of three major races (namely, Malays, Chinese, Indians) and minorities from the Sikh and other ethnic groups in East Malaysia located in Sabah and Sarawak (Davis & Steward, 2002). There is also a sizeable expatriate population and, according to Chang (2006), Malaysia is a popular tourist destination for Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Here tourists have the opportunity to taste the dishes that are prepared according to the styles and traditions of various ethnic communities.

Most of the research that focuses on restaurant consumer satisfaction revealed that food quality is one of the important attributes considered essential by restaurant patrons (Andaleeb et al., 2006; Enz, 2004; Josiam et al., 2007). In relation to this attribute, *halal* certification is seen as a reliable measurement, particularly for Muslims, to allow businesses to achieve food quality by ensuring that the ingredients and the preparation of food are according to Islamic dietary laws (Chang, 2006; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008).

Religious affiliation affects food consumption in Malaysia and restaurants that own *halal* certification, and those which are non-certified but claim to serve *halal* offerings, are a common scenario in all states in Malaysia (Chang, 2006). The number of certified *halal* restaurants in Malaysia keeps on changing (JAKIM, 2010) as it depends on the restaurateurs' initiatives and considerations as to whether to renew the *halal* certification or not. Nevertheless, research suggests that *halal* certification is undoubtedly important as Muslims are actively seeking this certification when deciding on a place to dine publicly (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). The research also discovered that a large majority of the respondents indicated that when they were in doubt about the *halal* status of a food, they would not proceed in consuming it. In this situation, confidence and trust appear to be very important factors when deciding whether or not to patronize a particular eating establishment (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008; Shafie & Othman, 2006).

According to Al-Harran and Low (2008), success in marketing a *halal* certified restaurant can be attributed to the quality of certification and knowing what the customers want. They stressed that when a Muslim consumer purchases a *halal* product, he or she is doing so because of their commitment to Islamic principles and teachings, apart from their need for the product. Thus, a good Muslim should seek to lead a generally *halal* way of life and retain *halalness* in all aspects without incurring any doubts, particularly when patronizing a food outlet (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). As a result many caterers, hawkers and restaurateurs have responded to this need by acquiring formal *halal* certification in order to cater for the Muslim market. Muslim customers would be loyal when they always get the product they want as the *halal* certification is a symbol of

the authority's guarantee of the producer's claims (Al-Harran & Low, 2008). Above all, food and drinks that are *halal* must not only be permissible but must also be pure, which means they cannot be contaminated by any *haram* elements (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.; Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008; Shafie & Othman, 2006).

1.4 Research Objectives

As highlighted earlier in the chapter, the literature on *halal* food in restaurants is extremely limited, with few academic articles and only one doctoral study devoted to the topic (Wan Hassan, 2008). Nevertheless, the discussion in this chapter indicates that the provision of *halal* food is an extremely significant issue for consumers as well as restaurants and suppliers who cater to the Muslim market. This applies not only within the Malaysian context but also on an international scale. Therefore this thesis aims to identify the expectations of restaurant managers towards *halal* certification in Malaysia and the reasons as to why they do (or do not) seek certification. Several key questions are identified:

1. Do restaurant managers regard *halal* certification as important?
2. What are the attributes perceived by them that relate to *halal* certification?
3. Are there different expectations between Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers with respect to *halal* certification?

1.5 Chapter Summary

Halal food has its own regulations as found in the *Quran*. Muslims who want to become good followers must adhere to the standards and stay away from *haram* foods. The *halal* concept under Islamic dietary laws is precise and clear. In fact, the selection of permissible food is large while the prohibited ones are small but with reasons. Taking the demand for *halal* food that is growing inevitably, restaurant managers in Malaysia have expectations towards *halal* certification that will be examined in this study.

This thesis is structured around nine chapters, namely: one on introduction; three on the literature review; one on research methodology; two on findings; one on discussion; and one on the conclusion. Chapter One presents the overview of this study. Chapter Two details the concept of *halal*, Islamic dietary laws, *haram* foods as well as the demand for *halal* food and its supply chain. Chapter Three begins by reviewing the current literature on food certification and safety by comparing the secular and religious points of view. Different types of certification from scientific

and religious perspectives are also discussed as well as the importance of food safety to the consumers, types of certification on organic, genetically modified organisms and also religious certifications concentrating on *halal* and *kosher*. This chapter also presents some of the *halal* food certifying organizations.

Chapter Four covers restaurants and *halal* certification within the Malaysian context. The methodology and research design for data collection on the national mail survey and also interviews with the restaurant managers are in Chapter Five. Chapter Six presents the analysis of the mail survey and Chapter Seven discusses the analysis of the interview session. Chapter Eight highlights the discussion and Chapter Nine suggests the recommendations and concludes the thesis.

Above all, the foundation of Islamic dietary laws refers to the concept of *halal* and *haram*. As the *halal* industry is growing simultaneously with the demand around the globe, *halal* is certainly not a new notion. In this respect, the key to *halal* sustainability lies in issues relating to *halal* standards, compliance and certification. Taking both the high demand for *halal* food and the benefits of having a *halal* status in the food service industry, this has encouraged the author to investigate further the expectations of restaurant managers in Malaysia towards *halal* certification.

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, academic research on *halal* and food service industry is extremely limited where only one study has been conducted by Wan Hassan (2008) on *halal* restaurants in New Zealand. However, this study on restaurant managers' reflections on *halal* certification is expected to provide directions to the marketers, industry players and other stakeholders in the development of the *halal* market. Thus, ensuring the benefits of gaining a *halal* certificate meets the realities of the market, consumer demand and the industry.

CHAPTER TWO

ISLAMIC FOOD AND PRACTICE: A COMPARISON WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

2.0 Introduction

Food is an important aspect in our life. As well as being vital for existence it is also considered an essential factor for interaction among various ethnic, social and religious groups (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). All human beings are concerned about the food they eat. Some of them have their own food restrictions, such as Muslims who want to ensure that their foods are *halal* and Jews that their foods are *kosher*. As far as *halal* food is concerned, the relationship between *halal* and Islam has created a unique and special value to the Muslims when food aspect is discussed.

In order to follow the demands of being *halal* the entire food supply chain must follow the *halal* standard including the slaughtering of animals, storage, display and preparation. Thus, the standard makes compulsory the requirement to physically separate *halal* from non-*halal* food and products. This is to maintain the wholesomeness concept (*Halalan Toyyiban*) of *halal* food that covers the lawful requirements of the *Shariah* Law and the requirements for good food that emphasize the elements of hygiene, sanitation and safety.

Increasing demand of *halal* food globally has encouraged restaurant and hospitality business managers to change the status of their eating establishments to be *halal* certified. Furthermore, *halal* can also be considered as a universal food where it is consumed by the Muslims as well as the non-Muslims (Abdul Latif, 2006; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008), including in Malaysia (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009).

This chapter starts with an introduction to Islam and food prohibitions under Islamic dietary laws. The Islamic ‘farm to fork’ concept is highlighted where it begins from the Islamic manner of slaughtering to *halal* food preparation. Several *halal* restaurants scenarios in selected countries are presented to show the demand for *halal* food. A comparison between *halal* and *kosher* food is also done to show some similarities and differences between both religious food as well as other religions. *Halal* issues that are debated are also discussed.

2.1 Islam and Islamic Dietary Laws

The word “Islam” means total submission and refers to the basic teaching of absolute submission to the will of God (Kocturk, 2002). Islam is a religion and Muslims are the followers of the religion (Vinning & Crippen, 1999). The majority of Muslim followers can be found in areas including the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia, North and East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Indonesia and Malaysia and is represented among many minority groups in Europe, the America, Russia, China and Australia. With that, Islam is estimated to be the second largest faith after Christianity worldwide and the fastest growing (Berry, 2008; Kocturk, 2002).

Koecturk explained in detail that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) received the first revelation affirming the oneness of God, Allah from archangel Gabriel (see *Surah*¹ 96, *Al-Alaq* [The Clot, Read!]), at Mount Hira near the city of Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula around AD 610 during the lunar month of Ramadhan. In addition, in Islam the Prophet Muhammad is considered the last of God’s messengers after Adam, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

In this context, the Islamic divine book, the *Quran* and the *Sunah*² are guides to Muslims in leading their life towards the day after. In fact, there are many similarities to Christianity and Judaism including the notions of Heaven, Hell, Judgment Day and Creation. Life on earth is believed to be a forerunner for the afterlife. Islam teaches that God, Allah, is the one and only, omnipotent, all knowing and merciful creator of the whole universe. The *Quran* is the infallible word of God to all Muslims for them to become good followers.

In order to avoid an adverse decision on Judgment Day, Muslims undertake five ritual acts (Bonne et al., 2007; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004; Vinning & Crippen, 1999) . These Five Pillars are obligatory for each believer. The Five pillars refer to:

- *Shahadah*, the declaration of faith.
- *Solat*, prayers that are to be performed five times a day, starting at daybreak and continuing until after sunset. Ablution before prayers includes washing some parts of the body like the hands, face and feet. Worshippers must be in a state of ritual purity in a ritually, clean place and facing Mecca.

¹ A chapter of the Quran

² Sunah is a practice or saying of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

- Fasting during *Ramadhan* (the ninth month in the Islamic calendar)
- *Hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca that must be performed for those who can afford it, at least once in every Muslim's lifetime.
- *Zakat*, a religious tax or alms that is given to the poor or needy.

Shahadah is the declaration that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad (pbuh) is the Messenger of Allah. It must be said sincerely and confidently, as it is the fundamental of a Muslim's whole way of life. The second pillar is prayer where it begins with the purification of the body and ends with the purification of the soul. The third pillar is fasting during *Ramadhan*, which is the fasting month. Faithful followers will seek the blessings from Allah by abstaining from drinking, eating and having any sexual relations during daylight of the entire month. They must also keep their mouth and ears from saying and hearing bad things as well as maintaining good behaviour. This long fasting period culminates with feasts shared with family and friends on Hari Raya Aidil Fitri as commonly known in Malaysia or Eid Mubarak. The fourth pillar, the *Hajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca, is an act of worship and the glorification of Allah. Finally, *Zakat* is the spiritual investment where it purifies the soul of the contributor from greed and selfishness as well as cleanses the heart of the recipients from envy and jealousy. It is to strengthen the brotherhood and foster goodwill among Muslims (Islamic world, 2008).

Islam is a religion and a civilisation and social order based upon the revealed principles of the religion (Nasr, 1981). In addition, Islam has dietary restrictions which are very clear and are concerned not only with the prescription of permissible food and drink consumption but also the practice of consuming (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). Like many commentators, Riaz and Chaudry (2004) observe that Islam is a way of life. They reasoned that Islam is not merely a religion of rituals but rules and manners governing the life of the individual Muslim. Hence, one of the important aspects of a Muslim life is food and dietary code. Narayan (1997, p. 161) stated that food is strongly associated with identity, prestige, social place and symbolic meanings while Martini and Chee (2001) said that although food is a public consumption, it has always been commercialized. But, in Islam, eating is considered a matter of God worshipping, like ritual prayers whether or not the food has been changed to suit a new environment (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

Halal/Permitted Foods

Food in Islam is contained within the concept of *halal* and *haram*. Again, *halal* means lawful, permitted, pure, wholesomeness and recommended by the Islamic law (Dahalan, 2008; Kocturk, 2002; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004; Shafie & Othman, 2006). *Halal* rules occur mostly in the *Surahs* entitled *Al-Baqara*- The Cow (2), *Al-Maidah*- The Table Spread (5) and *Al-An'am*- Cattle (6). The three *Surahs* describe food as a “sign” from God for which believers owe gratitude. Foods that are perpetually mentioned in the *Quran* include honey, dates, milk, semolina and wine. Several verses in the *Quran* keep reiterating the recommendations to “eat of all wholesome things which are lawful to you.”

O ye who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him ye worship.

(*Surah Al-Baqara* [The Cow], verse 172)

This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them.

(*Surah Al-Maidah* [The Table Spread], verse 5)

Eat of the good things We have provided for your sustenance, but commit no excess therein, lest My Wrath should justly descend on you: and those on whom descends My Wrath do perish indeed!

(*Surah Ta-ha*, verse 81)

The term *Halalan Toyayiban* encircles the food supply chain with respect to the *halal* concept. Every aspect must conform to the *halal* standard as to avoid it from falling under the category of *haram* and *syubha*. *Syubha*, that is doubtful or suspect, lies between the two extremes, *halal* and *haram*. According to Riaz and Chaudry (2004), doubtful things should be avoided as there is a gray area between clearly lawful and clearly unlawful. They further explained that Islam considers it an act of piety for Muslims to avoid doubtful things and for them to stay clear of the unlawful. However, many people may not know whether these items are *halal* or *haram*. So, whosoever leaves them, he is innocent toward his religion and his conscience. He is therefore, safe. Anyone who gets involved in any of these suspected items, he may fall into the unlawful and the prohibition.

In another context, Islam has a number of denominations, primarily the Sunnis, Shias and Sufis (Kocturk, 2002). Here, the Sunnis are the largest that include 90% of all Muslims and they have four schools of thought and are still in force in some Muslim countries while in others, secular law has replaced them. Food rules are very similar among the Sunni and Shia and most of the Sufi. They are faithful to the customs of the original Islamic state and the examples represented by the Prophet Muhammad. It has therefore, four schools of religious law. It is not surprising that the four main juridical schools; Shafie, Maliki, Hambali and Hanafi serve different interpretations on some conditions pertaining to *halal* food. The debate on aquatic animals is seemed the most prevalent issue. Chehabi (2007) noted that Hanafi school of thought which is dominant in Iran and Iraq is the most restrictive among all. Hanafi Sunnis permit all fish but Shiites (the main branch of Shiism) allow fish with scales to be *halal* and both groups prohibit other aquatic animals. In another aspect, Al-Qaradawi (n.d.) explained this matter in detail:

Marine animals that is, those which live in water and cannot survive outside it, are all *halal*. It does not matter in what way they are obtained: whether they are taken out of the water dead or alive, whole or in pieces, whether they are fish or marine animals, whether they are called sea dogs or sea hogs or whether they are caught by a Muslim or a non Muslim.

Here, Islamic law has exempted fish, whales and other sea creatures from the category of “dead animals”. Locusts are also exempted from the category of “dead animals” when the Prophet (pbuh) gave permission to eat dead locusts where the question of slaughtering them does not arise (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.). As several *Surahs* in the *Quran* and *Hadith* have stated on the permission of eating marine animals:

Permitted to you is game of the sea and its food, a provision for you and for the traveler.

(*Surah Al-Maidah* [The Table Spread], verse 96)

And it is He who has subjected the sea, that you may eat out of it fresh flesh.

(*Surah Al-Nahl* [The Bee], verse 14)

In a *Hadith* reported by Imam At-Tirmithi, An-Nasa'i and Abu Da'ud the Prophet (pbuh) once said about the sea:

Its water is pure and its dead are *halal*.

(Source: Al-Qaradawi, n.d.)

Again, Abdullah Ibnu Abu Aufa reported in a *Hadith* by Bukhari and Muslim on the consumption of locusts:

We went on seven expeditions with Allah's Messenger and ate locusts.

(Source: Stork, 2004)

In order for Muslims to be good followers, they must adhere to the strict dietary restrictions outlined in the *Quran (Koran)* from God (the Creator) to Muhammad (pbuh). In Islam, the sphere of prohibited things is very small, while that of permissible things is extremely vast (Al-Qaradawi, n.d., p. 14). In addition, Al-Qaradawi (n.d.) emphasized that there is only a small number of sound and explicit texts concerning prohibitions, while whatever else that is not mentioned in a *nas* (either a verse of the *Quran* or a clear, authentic and explicit *Sunah*) as being lawful or prohibited falls under the general principle of the permissibility of things and within the domain of Allah's favour. In the *Quran*, the Prophet (pbuh) is reported to have said:

What Allah made permissible in His Book is lawful (*halal*) and what He has forbidden (*haram*), and what He deliberately did not mention is forgiven. You should accept this privilege which Allah bestowed on you for He is never forgetful. The Prophet (pbuh) then recited, And your Lord is never forgetful.

(*Surah Maryam [Mary]*, verse 64)

Another *Hadith* reported by Bukhari highlighted the importance of the fact that there are rules according to the Shariah (Islamic law). In the *Hadith*, Al-Miqdam narrated: The Prophet (pbuh) said:

Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than which one has earned by working with one's own hands. The Prophet of Allah, Daud, used to eat from the earnings of his manual labour.

(Stork, 2004)

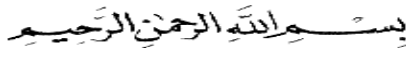
Islamic law must be observed at all times where the life of a Muslim revolves around the concept of *halal* and *haram* as Riaz and Chaudry (2004) highlights. In addition, Islam permits food that is 'wholesome' (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.) as found in *Surah Al-Baqarah* [The Cow], verse 168 that stated:

O mankind! Eat of what is permissible and good on earth and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, truly he is an open adversary to you.

Muslims are supposed to make an effort to maintain the intake of *halal* food of good quality (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Meanwhile, they also highlighted that for non-Muslim consumers, *halal* foods are often perceived as specially selected and processed to achieve the highest standards of quality. Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) emphasized that it is important to note that under Islamic law, not only are there rules and prohibitions on food and drink, but the slaughtering, processing and serving of any food and drink must also conform to Islamic law. The animals that are to be slaughtered must be of *halal* species as well.

The *Halal* Slaughter

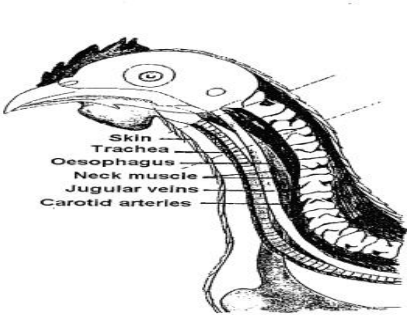
Islam considers all animals as important as humans and this is clearly stated in the Holy *Quran* (Aidaros, 2005). It is further elaborated that the Islamic method of slaughter (*halal* method) is the least painful method if the correct measures are undertaken. This is to ensure the highest benefit to both the animals and the consumers. Here, the slaughter of animals must be performed by a Muslim of sound mind and maturity, who fully understands the fundamentals and conditions related to this activity (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). The Department of Standards Malaysia (2004) detailed that the act of slaughter shall be done with *niyyah* (intention) and the slaughterer is well aware of his action. The purpose of slaughtering is only for Allah and not for other purposes. Furthermore, the animal must be an animal that is *halal* and shall be alive or deemed to be alive at the time of the slaughter. The animals to be slaughtered shall be healthy and have been approved by the competent authority.

The phrase  Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim (In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful) has to be invoked immediately before slaughtering (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2004). The *halal* standard also requires that slaughtering lines, tools and utensils shall be dedicated for *halal* slaughter only. The slaughter must be done with a sharp device but not something made out of bones, nails or teeth. Slaughtering shall be

done once and the “sawing action” of the slaughtering is permitted as long as the slaughtering knife or blade is not lifted off the animal during the slaughtering.

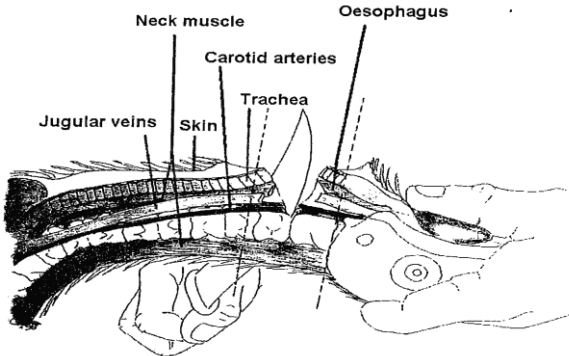
Department of Standards Malaysia further explains that the act of *halal* slaughter shall begin with an incision on the neck at some point just below the glottis (Adam’s apple) and after the glottis for long necked animals. In addition, the slaughter shall sever the trachea (*halqum*), oesophagus (*mari’*) and both the carotid arteries and jugular veins (*wadajain*) to hasten the bleeding and death of the animal. According to Riaz and Chaudry (2004), the traditional method of slaughtering in Islam is to slit the throat, cutting the carotid arteries, jugular veins, trachea and the oesophagus, without severing the head (Figure 2.1 to 2.4). As a result, the bleeding shall be spontaneous and complete. In order for the meat to become *halal*, a trained Muslim inspector who is responsible to ensure that the animals are properly slaughtered according to *Shariah* must check all of these procedures.

Figure 2.1: Slaughtering Part for Chicken



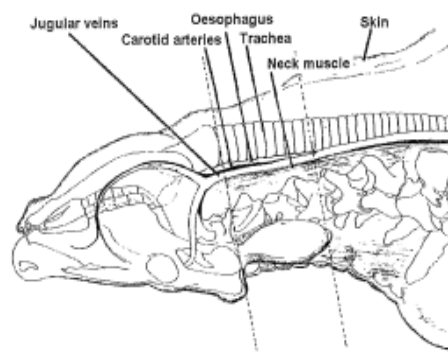
Source: Department of Standards Malaysia (2004, p. 6)

Figure 2.2: Method of Slaughtering Chicken



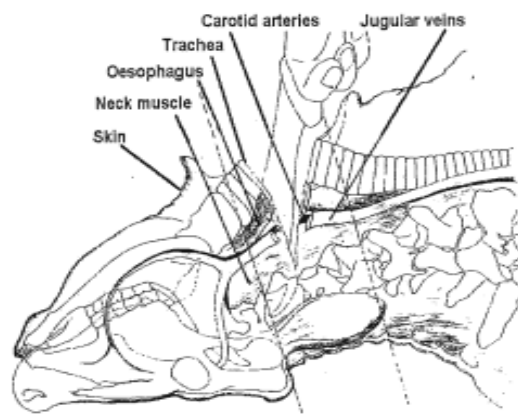
Source: Department of Standards Malaysia (2004, p. 6)

Figure 2.3: Slaughtering Part for Cattle



Source: Department of Standards Malaysia (2004, p.7)

Figure 2.4: Method of Slaughtering Cattle



Source: Department of Standards Malaysia (2004, p.7)

The *Quran*, the Prophet's *Sunah* and the consensus of the Muslim scholars are the three legitimate sources of prohibitions (Stork, 2004). In this respect, the *Quran* has revealed:

Why should ye not eat of (meats) on which Allah's name hath been pronounced, when He hath explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you - except under compulsion of necessity? But many do mislead (men) by their appetites unchecked by knowledge. Thy Lord knoweth best those who transgress.

(Al-An'am [The Cattle], verse 119)

According to Muhammad (2007), non-Muslims would most likely think that slaughtering is to be cruel to animals where they believe that the animals will suffer and bleed to death. However, the Islamic principles of slaughtering has clearly stated that the knife used must be very sharp to ensure a quick, deep and clean cut through the vital anatomy of the neck of a *halal* species animal. It is mainly directed at the trachea, oesophagus and major blood vessels. For animal welfare reasons, the knife should not be sharpened in front of the animal (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

Muhammad (2007) reported that the Islamic way of slaughtering has been supported by members of the scientific community and the Association of Muslim lawyers as being humane because it initiates massive haemorrhaging and anoxia (lack of oxygen in the brain cells). Thus, it acts as a powerful painkiller and disables the sensory centre and causes the animal to become entirely insensitive to pain. According to Aidaros (2005), the immediate cutting of the vessels of the neck during *halal* slaughter causes ischemia of the brain and induces the animal insensitive to pain. This method results in the rapid gush of blood which drains out from the animal's body. Bleeding also ensures the meat is of good quality.

With a single stroke of a sharp knife, the jugular vein and the oesophagus are cut to interrupt the flow of blood to the brain and thereby render the animal unconscious almost immediately. It is further emphasize that the rules for *halal* slaughter are based on the dual principles of effectively draining the animal's blood, without inflicting unnecessary suffering. Here, humane treatment is required where the act of strangling, striking, piercing or goring the animals is prohibited as it can cause injury to the animals (Kocturk, 2002).

The efficacy of *halal* slaughtering has been supported by an experiment by Professor Schultz and Dr Hazim of Hanover University in Germany (Aidaros, 2005, p. 592; Dabayeh, 1998), using an electro-encephalograph (EEG) and an electrocardiogram (ECG) to demonstrate that Islamic slaughter was a very humane method. In the experiment, one group of animals was slaughtered using *halal* method and the second by using a captive bolt. The EEG and ECG measurements were performed on all animals to record the condition of the brain and heart during the process. The experiment that has surprised many people concluded that:

- During the first three seconds of Islamic slaughter, the EEG did not show any change in brain activity, thus indicating that the animal did not feel any pain during or immediately after the incision;

- Three seconds later the EEG recorded a condition of deep sleep: unconsciousness. This is due to a large quantity of blood gushing out from the body;
- After the above mentioned six seconds, the EEG recorded no brain activity, indicating that the animal was feeling no pain at all; and
- As the brain messages dropped to zero level, the heart was still beating and the body convulsing vigorously (a reflex action of the spinal cord) driving maximum blood from the body, resulting in hygienic meat for the consumer.

Bergeaud-Blackler (2007), raised the issue of pre-stunning which is a matter of lively public debate in animal welfare and veterinary circles in Germany, the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark. The reason is that slaughter is probably the most delicate operation in the transformation of an animal into a piece of meat fit for human consumption. Within this context, uncertainty and disagreement about the degree of animal suffering and the use of stunning method is increasing (Maussen, 2006). Lack of regulation is pointed out by Aidaros (2005) as there are no clear enforced official regulations and activities in many jurisdictions in this respect. But, concludes with reasons, that animal slaughtering according to *halal* method is the least painful method for the animal. Here, a plurality of opinions on the matter is inevitable.

The Department of Standards Malaysia (2004) has stated that stunning is not recommended (see reference 4.2.3 and Annex A) but if it is to be carried out, the conditions specified below must be met.

- Slaughtering shall be carried out according to the requirements related to the slaughter of animals in Islam;
- The animals shall be alive or deemed to be alive (*hayat al-mustaqirrah*) at the time of slaughter;
- The use of stunning equipment shall be under the supervision of a trained Muslim and periodically monitored by competent Islamic Authority or *Halal* Certification Authority;
- The stunning shall not kill or cause permanent physical injury to the animals;
- Gadgets which are used to stun the animals under mughallazah najis³ category shall not be used to stun animals for *halal* slaughter;

³ There are three types of najis (filth)

1. Mughallazah which is considered as severe najis which are dogs and pigs including any liquid and objects discharged from their orifices, descendants and derivatives;
2. Mukhaffafah, which is considered as light najis. The only najis in this category is urine from a baby boy at the age of 2 years and below who has not consumed any other food except his mother's milk; and
3. Mutawassitah which is considered as medium najis, which does not falls under severe or light najis such as vomit, pus, blood, alcoholic drinks, carrion, liquid and objects discharged from the orifices, etc.

- Type of stunning that is recommended is electrical stunning or any other stunning that is permitted by Majlis Fatwa (Fatwa Council);
- The electrical stunner shall be of the type allowed by the competent authority in charge of slaughter;
- The type of stunner used for slaughter of *halal* animals shall be ‘head only stunner’ type, where both electrodes are placed on the head region;
- Electrical stunning of poultry is allowed using “water bath stunner” only;
- The strength of current used shall be supervised by a trained Muslim and monitored by a competent Islamic Authority or *Halal* Certification Authority. The guidelines on stunning parameters are as specified in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Guideline parameters for electrical stunning

Type of stock	Current (A)	Duration (s)
Chicken	0.25 – 0.50	3.00 – 5.00
Lamb	0.50 – 0.90	2.00 – 3.00
Goat	0.70 – 1.00	2.00 – 3.00
Sheep	0.70 – 1.20	2.00 – 3.00
Calf	0.50 – 1.50	3.00
Steer	1.50 - 2.50	2.00 – 3.00
Cow	2.00 - 3.00	2.50 – 3.50
Bull	2.50 – 3.50	3.00 – 4.00
Buffalo	2.50 – 3.50	3.00 – 4.00
Ostrich	0.75	10.00

Source: Department of Standards Malaysia (2004, p. 12)

Storage, Display and Preparation

Processed food is *halal* if it is not made up of or does not contain parts or by-products of animals which Muslims are forbidden to consume (Shafie & Othman, 2006). It should not contain what the law terms as *najs* (things impure or filth that are themselves not permissible) and should be prepared, processed and manufactured using untainted equipment. Mohd Janis (2004) stressed that during all phases of the preparation, the raw materials, equipment, tools and materials used must not be *najs*, mixed with any *najs* material or has been in contact with *najs* materials. *Najs* can be divided into three types such as *najs al-mughallazah*, *najs al-mutawassitah* and *najs mukhafaffah*, which are severe, medium and light respectively. *Najs al-mughallazah* can only be cleansed

through *dibagh*. Here, *dibagh* or the washing method and ritual cleansing are according to *Shariah* law.

The method of washing and ritual cleansing (*dibagh*) according to *Shariah* law for *najs al-mughhallazah* is explained in detail. According to the Department of Standards Malaysia (2004, p. 14), the *najs* whether visible or invisible (disappeared or dried up) is named “*hukmiah*”. In order to cleanse the *najs*, it is required to be washed seven times and one of which shall be water mixed with soil. The first water shall be to clear the existence of *najs*, even if a few washes are needed. Then, the water from the first cleaning shall not remain behind and the next wash shall be counted as the second wash and the amount of soil used is just enough to make a suspension. In addition, the conditions of the soil must be free from *najs*, impurities like oil and not *musta'mal* soil⁴. The conditions of the water are also important where it shall be natural (*mutlaq*) and not *musta'mal*⁵ and free from *najs*.

Mohd Yusoff (2004) raised the issue on safety when preparing for *halal* food as all the products and raw materials used must also be safe and will not cause harm to the health. The reason is that *halal* regulations cover all aspects of preparation, processing, packaging, distribution and all related processes. Therefore, any equipment found to be in contact or contaminated with non-*halal* materials must be cleansed according to the *Shariah* requirements. The concerns of Muslims with respect to *halal* food are reflective of those of many consumers. Food preparation, handling and storage are defined as areas of “critical concern” for restaurants and their customers because they are thought to have a significant impact on food safety (Bonne et al., 2007; Cruz et al., 2001; Manning, 2007).

With these issues, *halal* certification has the potential to gain confidence amongst the Muslim and non-Muslim society because the concept of *halal* covers everything from farm to fork (Al-Harran & Low, 2008). In addition, Linton et al. (1998) mentioned that the retail food industry, especially food service and retail foods stores, represents a critical link in the food distribution chain. Furthermore, ensuring safe handling of foods is especially important for retail food establishments since they are often the final handling sites before consumption of a food.

⁴ Used for dry ablution (*tayammum*) except after subject to heavy rain

⁵ Water that is less than 2 qillah (approximately 270 litre) that has been used for cleansing

Riaz and Chaudry (2004) have stressed the importance of segregation between *halal* and *haram* foods particularly in food companies. Food contamination is a critical and sensitive issue for a Muslim as Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) found in their study. It showed that the Muslim respondents would prefer to visit *halal* eating outlets to safeguard them from any doubtful state when having their meal. In conclusion, during preparation, processing and storage, *halal* food should not come into contact with or be in close proximity to that which is not *halal*.

Hygiene and Sanitation

In dealing with *halal* foods, Shafie and Othman (2006) stated that the premises preparing and selling food and drinks must be clean and free of elements which may cause infestation or flies, rats, cockroaches, lizards and other such pests. They added workers must be healthy, wear clean protective clothing and cover the heads to avoid contamination. Equipment used must be washed frequently to ensure cleanliness as well as washroom facilities. Proper cleaning must also be done during the manufacturing of *halal* products where all possible sources of contamination are eliminated (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). This can be achieved by thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing production lines and equipment.

According to Amjadi and Hussain (2005), proper food hygiene results in healthful, clean, wholesome food, an orderly environment and pleasant working conditions. They also emphasized on personnel who is part of the environment that must also be clean and healthy in maintaining the hygienic conditions. The four issues highlighted by them in creating effective hygienic system are food, people, facilities and vermin. These elements can be monitored through regulations and appropriate standards.

In another context, Rennie (1994) stressed that there is evidence that ongoing reinforcement of the hygiene messages in the workplace is essential if desired food handling practices are to be sustained. Improvement in food hygiene practices can also be fostered by provision of a physical and social environment, which supports the application of appropriate food handling behaviours. Routine restaurant inspections are also essential in maintaining food safety and preventing food-borne illness. If a restaurant has the *halal* certification it will in a way gives a sign that the food handling and preparation are healthy and safe (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008).

Hashim (2004) listed several key principles that are important to assure food hygiene from the primary production through the final stage for consumption. The following are the critical areas that must be adhered at all times:

- Emphasis should be on primary production, which should be carried out in an area where the presence of potential harmful substance does not contaminate the food until it reached unacceptable level.
- Establishments or premises where food is produced ought to be located in areas free from potential sources of contamination such as areas that are prone to pest infestation.
- Control of operation through preventive measures is consistently implemented throughout the system to reduce the risk of food hazards at the appropriate stages of the production. Food business operators can control food hazards through the application of management systems such as HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point).
- Ensure adequate and appropriate maintenance and cleaning programme, pest control system, waste removal and storage and sanitation systems.
- Ensure personal hygiene is carried out where medical examination should be provided for food handlers. Food handlers should maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness.
- Ensure adequate control measures during transportation to prevent contamination from dust, fumes or fluctuation of temperature and humidity.
- Product should be labeled with lot identification and product information.
- Workers who are in direct or indirect contact with food should be trained and/or instructed in food hygiene to a level appropriate with the operations they are performing.

According to Mohd Yusoff (2004), *halal* food means cleanliness and hygiene and they are very closely related to food safety. It is also an important prerequisite under *halal* certification as it covers personal hygiene, attire, equipment and working environment. On the other hand, Hashim (2004) defined safe food as food that does not cause harm to the consumers when it is prepared and or eaten according to its intended use. It is suggested that food hygiene practice should be applied throughout the food supply chain from primary production through the final stage for consumption and ensuring hygienic controls and measures at each stage. *Halal* certification as a standard that fulfills the *Shariah* requirements simultaneously increases the confidence level in food consumption will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

2.2 *Haram/Forbidden Food*

Islamic law has clearly defined that *haram* has universal applicability where there is no privileged classes or individuals who, in the name of religion can do whatever they desire according to their whims (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.). Hence, Muslims do not have any privilege of making something *haram* for others and lawful for themselves. As noted earlier, a good Muslim would pay extra attention to what he consumes as whatever he puts into his mouth would be part of him physically, mentally and spiritually. The *Quran* has many verses that indicate foods and drinks that are considered *haram* and provide explanations on that matter.

Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah; that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety. “This day have those who reject Faith given up all hope of your religion: yet fear them not but fear Me”. “This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion”. But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

(Al-Maidah [The Table Spread], verse 3)

In essence, all foods pure and clean are permitted for consumption by the Muslims, except for the following categories including any products derived from them or contaminated with them (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004, p. 9).

- Carrion or dead animals
- Flowing or congealed blood
- Swine (all variants) including all by-products
- Animals slaughtered without pronouncing the name of God on them
- Animals slaughtered while pronouncing a name other than God
- Animals killed in a manner that prevents their blood from being fully drained from their bodies
- Intoxicants of all types, including alcohol and drugs
- Carnivorous animals with fangs, such as lions, dogs, wolves or tigers

- Birds with sharp claws (birds of prey) such as falcons, eagles, owls or vultures
- Land animals such as frogs or snakes

As mentioned above with respect to terrestrial animals, Allah has prohibited the eating of pork, the flesh of any animal which dies of itself or is sacrificed to anyone other than Allah and the drinking of blood. In relation to other prohibited animals, Al-Qaradawi (n.d.) had defined wild animals as those which prey on others and devour them by tearing them apart, for instance, the lion, leopard, wolf and birds with talons such as hawks, eagles and falcons, to name a few. A *Hadith* which was narrated by both al-Bukhari and Muslim stated that the Prophet (pbuh):

Forbade the eating of any wild animals with a canine tooth and of any bird with talons.

(Source: Al-Qaradawi, n.d.)

Halal and *haram* foods must be segregated so that the purity of the *halal* foods can be maintained (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). They emphasized that when a Muslim takes only those that are *halal* and good, it means that he is showing his gratitude towards Allah for all the blessings Allah has given. Additionally, blood that pours forth from permitted and non-permitted animals alike is prohibited from being consumed (Regenstein et al., 2003b; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Therefore, Muslim scholars have generally agreed that anything made from blood is unacceptable.

Prohibition is also extended to the consumption of drinks such as alcohol. Riaz and Chaudry (2004) referred the word alcohol as ethanol or ethyl alcohol which is the main ingredient in what the *Quran* refers to as *khamr*. The Arabic word *khamr* signifies any alcoholic drink which causes intoxication although it is taken in small quantities (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.). For this reason Islam's stands in prohibiting alcohol and in blocking all avenues which lead to drinking is very clear and unequivocal.

The Prophet has warned in several *Hadiths* against foods and drinks that are prohibited. Caution in the consumption of wine is prescribed in at least two verses in the *Quran* and called for total abstention. The existence of these verses together with the tradition has contributed to the prohibition of all alcoholic beverages among most Sunni and Shia denominations. Some Sufi groups may have a different interpretation (Kocturk, 2002).

O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination, of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper. Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: will ye not then abstain?

(Al-Maidah [The Table Spread], verse 90-91)

It is common that in any religion, not everyone follows perfectly all the rules due to different interpretation and schools of thought. As such, some Muslims were found to consume alcoholic drinks in Russia (Gradirovski & Esipova, 2008), Morocco (Lawless, 2008) and North West China (Anonymous, 2008a). However, Muslim followers have been reminded from the *Quran* and *Hadith* not to consume alcoholic drinks and to stay away from drinking parties as well as gatherings where alcoholic drinks are served. The Islamic prohibition on alcoholic drinks in one way or another will affect the hospitality enterprises where premises could not offer liquor to the Muslims. Furthermore, it depends on a Muslim to think of the reasons behind the prohibitions as it is all stated in the *Quran* and *Hadith* in order to become good Muslims. Quranic guidance has listed everything on foods that are permitted and prohibited. There is no challenge to this fact as mentioned by Riaz and Chaudry (2004) and no explanations are required or necessary as in the *Quran* (Al- Maidah [The Table Spread], verse 88).

Eat of that which Allah hath bestowed on you as food lawful and good and keep your duty to Allah in whom ye are believers.

2.3 The Demand for *Halal* Food

The demand for *halal* foods and products in countries around the world is on the rise (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Many Muslim countries used to get their *halal* sources domestically or imported from other Muslim countries. However, the population rate outpaced food supply where Muslim countries now import food from agriculturally advanced countries. With the expansion, the *halal* food market potential in the world is not limited to Muslim countries. As a result, countries such as Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa (with relatively smaller Muslim populations) have become significant contributors to the world *halal* trade.

The increased international trade and globalization have contributed to the demand of *halal* food as emphasis on *halal* is growing. It is also fast becoming a new market force and identifier and gaining entrance into the mainstream market (Al-Harran & Low, 2008), thus affecting and

changing perception on how businesses are being conducted and lending impact on consumers as well. Mohd Yusoff (2004) mentioned that the increasing demand for *halal* food not only came from the Islamic countries but also from Europe and America. According to Wan Omar et al. (2008), the total world Muslim population is estimated to be 1.8 billion and the market for *halal* products is US\$560 billion a year. Therefore, it is a huge market for food industry players. Additionally, Muhammad (2007) noted that the *halal* concept is increasingly not an alien concept amongst non-Muslims particularly those in Muslim countries as well as those with substantial Muslim communities whose restaurants non-Muslims patronize. This indicates that there are possibilities that some of the increased demand for *halal* food may be coming from the non-Muslims.

Dindyal and Dindyal (2004) and Waarden (2004) expressed their views that different countries with different ethnic groups will have their own choice and selection. However, Gutman (1999) argued that the age of environmental consciousness has led consumers to purchase in accordance with their personal ethical views such as using their purchasing power to support ecologically superior products and services like organic food. El-Mouelhy (2007) as cited in Al-Harran and Low (2008) reasoned that the *halal* food market exists whenever there are Muslim consumers whose tastes and preferences are governed by the *halal* rules on food specification. Muhammad (2007) believed that many non-Muslim people already choose to eat *halal* because of the perception that it is a healthy choice. On the other hand, consumers with food security concerns do also have other certified food choices such as organic and *kosher* food (Gutman, 1999).

The *halal* market is considerable even in a nominally Christian country, like France where it dominated the meat segment (Assadi, 2003). The 4.5 million Muslims in France, 7.5% of the total population, consume 300,000 tons of meat products every year through 3,000 independent butcheries and chain supermarkets for a total sale of 3 billion Euros. However, Trade Mart (2006, p. 21) reported that there has been an introduction of a new form of *halal* product, notably ready-made meals, soups and beverages as 70% of the Muslim population in France are origins of the Magreb countries (Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia), while others are from Turkey and diverse African Muslim origins such as the Comoros Islands and Senegal. According to Journo and Peacock (2007) France represents one of the largest *halal* market with sales ranging from \$2 - \$4 billion in 2005.

Muhammad (2007) also reported that there was tangible increase in sales in *halal* stores throughout Moscow whereby non-Muslim Russians made purchases from Muslim stores because

they believed the products are fresh, safe and infection free. This means that products with certification and with *halal* status in particular are gaining acceptance and increasing in demand. Therefore, consumers ultimately must have confidence in the value of certification if they are to be prepared to pay more for certified goods (Caskie & Davis, 2001). Meanwhile in the Philippines, non-Muslims also tend to prefer foodstuffs stamped with the *halal* logo for health reasons (Muhammad, 2007). Another reason for the tremendous acceptance of *halal* within the global population is the process of assimilation (Al-Harran & Low, 2008). They claimed that foreign foods in some countries as in Europe have become assimilated and local tastes are changing, encouraged by global tourism and reverse colonization. For example, curry is now the number one take away meal in the United Kingdom and kebabs are a typical German staple.

According to Trade Mart (2006, p. 18), the *halal* food sector in Australia creates an important market feature for local and international companies to invest in this lucrative business. The demand for *halal* food is increasing as official statistics indicate that the Muslim population is growing faster than the overall Australian population. It is also reported that there are also an estimated 28,000 Muslim students and 31,000 Muslim travelers in Australia at any one time. Famous for its goat meat industry, Australia and New Zealand have primarily become one of the major exporters of *halal* goat meat to the United States (Knudson, 2006) whereas McDermott et al. (2008) reported that almost 94% of sheep meat produced in New Zealand is exported to the European Union, North America, North Asia and *halal* markets.

Knudson also reported that, according to the President of the U.S. Meat Goat Association, the U.S. market has sufficient demand to support a herd of 15 million animals and that the demand for goat meat will increase by 40 percent by 2007. Most of the demand for goat meat comes from Hispanic and Muslim consumers. The *halal* goat meat caters to the large Muslim population in Southeastern Michigan and Northwestern Ohio and fulfills the highest demand at the beginning and end of *Ramadhan* (fasting month), an important Muslim religious time of fasting between dawn and dusk.

Multiculturalism in Singapore has contributed to social integration where the people share common tastes and preference particularly towards food. Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) argued that the country's small size and a high degree of urbanization and racial diversity have influenced many aspects of its everyday life, including food consumption. Their findings also showed that the Singaporeans usually dine out together despite of their different religions and that *halal* certified establishments are also attractive to non-Muslims.

Unlike its neighbouring country, Chang (2006) reported that with a Muslim population of 60%, the demand for *halal* foods by Malaysian consumers has increased over the years. They have expressed concerns and expected that a *halal* standard in food products have extended from meat and meat products to non-meat based products such as snacks, confectionery, dairy, bakery and so forth. The report revealed that *halal* food is fast becoming recognized as a new benchmark for quality, hygiene and safety. Thus, food products and ingredients that have *halal* certificates have added marketing value in Malaysia. In fact, Malaysia was the pioneer in establishing *halal* laws in the early 1980s and remains a force in matters relating to *halal* certification globally (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

2.4 The *Halal* Supply Chain

Customers demand for *halal* foods has been growing tremendously (Muhammad, 2007; Wan Omar et al., 2008). Industry players are putting greater efforts to gain and expand their market share in this growing niche. In order to provide confidence to consumers, everyone in the food industry, including farmers, processors, food premise owners, food handlers, food servers and governments, must ensure that the *halal* supply chain adheres to the religious needs of the Muslims particularly on their dietary restriction.

***Halal* and Restaurants - International Comparisons**

Muslims seek *halal* food as a symbol of faith towards the religion (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Religiousness is an important value in the individual consumer's cognitive structure that can influence an individual's behaviour (Delener, 1994), and plays an important role in problem solving and decision-making. Accordingly, religion plays a significant role in the selection and consumption of food by some individuals and by their respective communities (Dugan, 1994). She reasoned that religion and food could not be separated since the dawn of time. The findings from Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) also revealed that Muslims are indeed cautious while eating out concerning the issues of *halal* and *haram* including the *halal* food supply chain, preparation and surroundings particularly at restaurants.

According to Riaz and Chaudry (2004), during the past two decades, South East Asian and Middle Eastern countries have witnessed the westernization of the food service industry. Global food service giants such as McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken are a regular feature of the

landscape. Thus, the Western food companies have to comply with the local *halal* requirements and consumer demands in order to compete and be successful. Dana and Vignali (1998) found out that not only is sensitivity to tastes important, so is sensitivity to religious needs. Their study indicated that in various markets, including Malaysia and Singapore, meat used to make McDonald's *halal* burgers comes from animals, which have been slaughtered according to Muslim religion, which tolerates no pork. The other McDonald's finding was in Singapore, which can be seen as a prime example where it has seen an influx of eight million patrons a year after obtaining a *halal* certification (Hazair, 2007).

Dining out is a popular aspect of everyday life in Singapore and as a multicultural country, it has 'public spaces' that are situated around main transportation hubs where much of the communal life takes place (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). With regards to *halal* eating establishments, Singapore is globally renowned for its vibrant and diverse restaurant industry (MacLaurin & MacLaurin, 2000) where there are more than 20,000 food service establishments that cater for 150 persons per outlet. MacLaurin has divided the eating premises in Singapore into two segments such as food service operations that constitute 79 percent of hawkers' food centres (open markets), coffee shops, canteens and food courts and the remaining of 21 percent is classified as restaurants respectively. *Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura* (MUIS) (translated: Islamic Religious Council of Singapore) certifies local establishments conforming to the *halal* requirements in Singapore and emphasized that its *halal* certificates are displayed clearly in *halal* certified eating premises (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). The display is for easy recognition for the Muslim customers although these customers represented only among the minority of the population. In essence, it is also to consider the social integration to dine with other non-Muslims in a totally *halal* eating environment.

Furthermore, Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) also found that the dining outlets in Singapore are operated by private enterprises and in a typical 10-stall food courts and there will be one *halal* Malay vendor and one Indian vendor. However, at hawkers centres, food courts or restaurants, beef which is prohibited by Hindu and Buddhism (Dugan, 1994) or pork which is prohibited by Islam could be sold and consumed by communities that do not have these dietary restrictions. In addition, alcohol can be readily found at many public establishments. The findings from their study showed that the respondents would activate 'defensive dining' strategies in food courts or hawker centres where both *halal* and non-*halal* food are sold. Defensive dining means that Muslims are placed in a situation of considerable unease when dining publicly as the external

environment particularly in a multicultural society may conflict with the Islamic dietary restrictions (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008).

In Thailand, several Muslim restaurants can be found in remote and tourist areas in Bangkok (Satha-Anand, 1991, p. 100). They are situated close to mosques surrounded by Muslim communities in the neighbourhood. Most of the restaurants have visible signs that mention liquor and pork are not served and prohibit them to be brought inside the premises as well. However, there are few restaurants that do not advertise themselves as Muslim restaurants although the food served is definitely *halal*. Muslim restaurants in Thailand regularly employ local people who are non-Muslims as their staff such as the cooks, waiters and waitresses.

Bonne and Verbeke (2008) reported that Muslims in Europe are mainly immigrants and the adoption of eating patterns and food habits of the host country may change more slowly. Siong (2008) added that *halal* food is of great concern among the French Muslim population. Thus, in France, Burger King has added Muslim to its brand name to target the niche market that desires *halal* convenient foods. The outlet has publicly confirmed its Islamic identity and responded to the rise of a strong Islamic attitude among young Muslims. Apart from Europe, Muslims in North America have increased in number since World War 1 and even faster after World War 2 (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). With that, sales of *halal* foods in North America have grown 70% since 1995 and the *halal* market is valued at US\$12 billion per year (Berry, 2008).

In the British case, Hamlet et al. (2008) explained that South Asian immigrants to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, like other consumers, both adapted to and maintained cultural traditions through food consumption and shopping. It is clear that the extant retail infrastructure placed constraints on the opportunities for cultural expressions through food shopping and consumption as found by them where religion plays a vital role in the case of Muslim consumers living in Britain. This shopping tradition prevails for the UK Muslims when eating out at restaurants (Anonymous, 2008b). As such, seeing the *halal* logo is a must for them to be certain that the food has been prepared in accordance with the teachings of Islamic law. In relation to this tradition, when the first *halal* curry restaurant was opened, there have been many firsts for *halal* food with the word *halal* being visible next to Chinese restaurants and steak houses. However, some Muslims in the UK are comfortable to eat *halal* food in a restaurant that also serves alcohol and pork, which are both prohibited in Islam (Wilson & Liu, 2010). Realizing this, Britain is now moving towards understanding the needs of consumers from a particular segment of society where the Muslim population in some areas is actually very high compared to the total population. This outcome is in

line with Al-Harran and Low (2008) who highlighted that the tremendous acceptance of *halal* food is contributing to the process of assimilation among local people.

New Zealand, also a major exporter and producer of *halal* slaughtered meat in the world, has become an attractive destination for Muslim travelers (Wan Hassan & Awang, 2009). According to Statistics New Zealand (Table 2.2), the country has positioned itself to be the world's largest exporter of *halal* slaughtered sheep meat, and also an exporter of *halal* slaughtered beef as shown below.

Table 2.2: New Zealand Sheep Meat Exports to Solely *Halal* Markets Year Ending May 2006

<i>Market</i>	<i>Tonnes</i>	<i>\$NZ Million</i>
Algeria	3877.40	11.30
Bahrain	172.40	1.60
Indonesia	33.90	0.17
Jordan	1543.70	5.60
Kuwait	556.20	3.20
Malaysia	6603.60	24.40
Oman	977.80	3.50
Saudi Arabia	11.50	41.20
Singapore	1608.90	85.50
UAE	795.70	4.40
Other <i>Halal</i> Markets	335.80	1.60
Total	16516.90	182.47

Source: Statistics New Zealand as cited in McDermott et al. (2008)

Smith and Hall (2003) highlighted that New Zealand has also progressively begun to promote its food internationally and domestically as a component of its destination attractiveness. In relation to the *halal* restaurants, many restaurateurs find it difficult to conform to the Islamic dietary restrictions in food preparation even though there is *halal* meat on the menu but at the same time offering alcohol and pork (Wan Hassan, 2008). By considering the sensitivity of other religions in food consumption, restaurateurs in New Zealand not only can maintain their existing segmented customers who are mainly the non-Muslims, but also attract the potential niche diners particularly amongst the Muslim market. It is also found that, New Zealand has a high potential to receive more inbound Muslim tourists and therefore brings greater awareness in fulfilling the *halal* food needs in the hospitality and tourism sector (Wan Hassan & Awang, 2009).

The highest Muslim inbound tourists were from the Middle East as well as from Malaysia, India and Singapore that demand absolute awareness from the hospitality sectors typically on sensitivity towards food. Within this context, the Muslims in New Zealand are also known as the 'hidden population' (Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003, p. 83), where they are in urgent need of *halal* statutory or legislative regulations of *halal* food. Results had shown that many businesses in the hospitality industry in New Zealand were still unaware about *halal* food and its significance to Muslim customers and thus required immediate attention from the local Islamic bodies (Wan Hassan, 2008). At the same time, the Muslim consumers played an important role by becoming assertive in demanding their food to be served according to their religious rules and regulations in order for the industry to provide them with *halal* food.

In Malaysia, the government is trying to develop itself as a global *halal* food hub as Muslims have become more demanding in their food choices. *Halal* hub is a concerted effort among the Islamic organizations and bodies that include *halal* manufacturers, *halal* traders, buyers and consumers worldwide (Nik Muhammad et al., 2009). This is due to the fact that *halal* food is not only sought by the Muslims around the world, but by people from different races and religions who are looking for clean and pure food. Habib et al. (2011) in their study on consumers' preference and consumption towards fast food in Malaysia suggested that the international fast food providers should take the opportunity of Malaysia's *halal* hub as their new entry point to other Muslim countries. However, they must comply with the Malaysian commercial and contract laws, procedures and local norms. This includes all fast food outlets must be free from *haram* materials. Furthermore, *halal* species animals must be slaughtered according to Islamic rites and rules.

According to Muhammad (2007), the market value of *halal* food industry is so significant that no single food product manufacturer will fail to benefit from it. This includes food producers, processors and manufacturers and also restaurants. In relation to this, the restaurant industry, its certification, processes and practices in the Malaysia context will be discussed in Chapter Four.

2.5 Similarities and Differences with Other Religious Food Restrictions

Halal and Kosher

The two prominent religious dietary restrictions, *halal* and *kosher* are important parts of the food industry (Regenstein et al., 2003a) and represent a growing niche market (Reynolds-Zayak, 2004). However, when *halal* and *kosher* topics are discussed, they raise several concerns. Hussaini (1993)

stressed that *halal* food and *kosher* are two different entities carrying different meanings and spirit although often times non-Muslim consumers tend to assume *kosher* is similar to *halal*. According to Riaz and Chaudry (2004), there are certain similarities and some differences between *kosher* and *halal*. Both Islam and Judaism have guidelines about ‘proper’ food preparation and diet set in their holy books (Eliasi, 2002; Gutman, 1999; Regenstein et al., 2003b; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

Gutman (1999) stressed that *kosher* means different things to different people. Eliasi (2002) defined *kosher* as “fit” and acceptable, permissible (Diamond, 2002), proper (Regenstein et al., 2003b) and proper for consumption (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). The laws not only cover the slaughtering of animals but also include the fitness of all foods (Eliasi, 2002). In addition, foods prepared in accordance to Judaic law are *kosher* or acceptable to eat. In contrast, foods unfit to eat are referred to as non-*kosher* or “*treif*” which means unclean. Over the years, the meaning of the Biblical *kosher* laws have been interpreted and extended by rabbis to protect Jewish people from violating any of the fundamental laws and also to address new issues and technologies (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

The Jews sensitivity concerning their observance of dietary laws is also critical depending on one’s level of observance and environmental realities with the laws of *kashruth* or of ‘keeping *kosher*’ according to Halakhah or Halacha which is explicitly written in the Torah and interpreted by rabbinical authorities (Diamond, 2002). A Jew may follow the law of kosher with a strict adherence or have a less rigorous approach where some Jews keep a kosher home, eating non kosher only when dining out, whereas others abstaining only from pork (Eliasi, 2002). Here, Riaz and Chaudry (2004, p. 149) have listed three issues related to *kosher* dietary laws:

- Allowed animal
- Prohibition of blood
- Prohibition of mixing milk and meat

Ruminants with split hoofs that chew their cud, traditional domestic birds and fish with fins and removable scales are generally permitted for consumption (Regenstein et al., 2003b). Meanwhile, pigs, wild birds, sharks, dogfish, catfish, monkfish and similar species are prohibited along with all crustacean and molluscan shellfish. The slaughtered meat and poultry must be free of blood where they are soaked and salted within a specified time period. Apart from that, restriction on chometz, which is prohibited, grains namely wheat, rye, oats, barley and spelt occurs during the week of Passover (in late March or early April).

Prohibition of mixing milk and meat demands complete separation of equipment and fall under properly designated category. In order to keep meat and milk separate, it requires that the processing and handling of all products that are *kosher* fall into one of three categories namely meat products, dairy products and pareve (parve) or neutral products (Regenstein et al., 2003b). They defined pareve as all products that are not categorized as meat or dairy like eggs, fish, honey and lac resin (shellac). Furthermore, these pareve foods can be used with either meat products or dairy products (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004, p. 153).

Although the Jewish dietary laws or *kashrut* are derived from the law of Moses (Leviticus 11: 1-31), different schools of Jewish thought and practice have different traditions and interpretations as to what constitutes *kosher* food. Dugan (1994) and Gutman (1999) found that the differing interpretations on *kashrut* cover not only the production but the processing methods although these are often thought to be no more than a prohibition against pork, shellfish and mixing meat and milk. Gutman (1999) further explained that one of the oldest continuous food traditions - Jewish food laws, is guided by the legal decisions of its scholars in each community, generally rabbis. Gutman extended that the major disputes in interpretations came from the Ashkenazic (literally German Jews who are of Eastern European origin) and Sephardic (literally Spanish Jews who are of Middle Eastern and North African origin) communities and the Orthodox as well as Conservative movements.

Meanwhile Regenstein et al. (2003b) highlighted that there are several regulatory bodies that exist in certifying *kosher* food such as the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations (OU), Organized Kashrus Laboratories (OK), Star-K and the Kof-K. However, Dugan (1994) added that different branches of Judaism do not recognize each other as final authorities but food that was approved by an Orthodox rabbi is acceptable for all Jews. Apart from *kosher*, *halal* dietary laws deal with the following four issues which have been discussed earlier:

- Prohibited and permitted animals
- Method of slaughtering
- Prohibition of blood
- Prohibition of intoxicants

Although there are similarities in dietary restrictions of both religions, Islam and Judaism, there are also distinctive differences. Islam requires that the name of Allah be pronounced at the time of slaughter but Judaism does not recite a prayer over each animal at the time of slaughter

(Regenstein et al., 2003b). The permitted animals have to be killed by a Jew to make them *kosher* and by a Muslim to make them *halal*. Hence, the front quarter cuts of red meat are generally used for *kosher*. In contrast, Islamic dietary laws do not restrict any particular cuts. They also added that, *kosher* meat needs to be soaked and salted but this is not required for *halal* meat.

Riaz and Chaudry (2004) emphasized that the meat of animals slaughtered according to Islam is called *zabiha* or *dhabiha* meat. Apart from the slaughtering, there is no restriction about cooking in Islam as long as the kitchen is free from *haram* foods and ingredients. When preparing *halal* food, there is no need to keep two set of utensils, one for meat and one for dairy, as in *kosher* food preparation. Contaminated equipment needs to be cleansed ritually according to Islamic law - for instance, using acids, bases, detergents and rinses with hot water for seven times and in some Islamic traditions the cleansing also requires the use of sand and water.

Apart from Muslim and Jews, there are followers from different religions that have special dietary practices which have been generally elaborated by McCaffree (2002) where Hindus avoid foods like garlic, onion and other foods that stimulate the senses which will hinder them from spiritual development. Eating meat is to be avoided although not prohibited. The most significant restriction is the prohibition of beef where the Hindus believe that cows are sacred. However, dairy products from cows are acceptable and considered spiritually pure. Dugan (1994) noted that Buddhism teaches people not to “eat the flesh” and many appear to be vegetarian while some abstain from meat and consume only fish. Within this context, the religion also forbids five ‘pungent’ foods like onions, leeks, garlic, scallions and chives. Meanwhile, most of the Sikhs eat meat although they are prohibited from taking alcohol (McCaffree, 2002).

Schweitzer (2001) thought that the issue of food was neglected in Western Christian thought although it plays important roles in Christian faith. This is due to the fact that food was not a centre of attention in the Bible because it heavily discussed God as the giver of food rather than the food itself. Fundamentally, there are various religious traditions concerning food consumption including fasting in this religion. According to Dugan (1995), the Christian tradition has an ancient history of defining the self and the human condition. Additionally, it has offered a balancing perspective by tracing the impulses of the spirits and horizons. As such, this is an important aspect to introduce, since fasting and indeed all forms of asceticism have encountered misunderstanding in modern times. The Church of the Latter Day Saints, more commonly known as the Mormon Church, has restrictions on alcohol and tobacco. They also avoid caffeine and hot drinks like coffee and tea. Permitted foods like meat, herbs, vegetables, fruits and wheat are taken moderately.

Seventh-Day Adventists follow a strict lacto-ovo vegetarian diet with no meat, fish, poultry, alcohol, tobacco or caffeine. Whole grains, fruits and vegetables are considered the base of their diet and legumes while low fat dairy products and eggs are to be consumed sparingly. The different types of religious restrictions show that sensitivity to one's observance of dietary laws is critical (Eliasi, 2002).

Assurance systems have been developed by taking into account the dietary restrictions among religions such as on *halal* and *kosher* food as well as food safety concerns among consumers globally. According to Achilleas and Anastasios (2008), consumers now consider quality assurance systems such as good manufacturing practice (GMP), Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to name a few as ways to ensure food quality, safety and build their trust in food consumption. Soderlund et al. (2008) argued that the complex and detailed systems will lead to ineffective implementation as conflicting information on medical issues and confusion with consumers will arise. Apart from that, Mohd Daud (2004) suggested that everybody needs to be responsible in ensuring that the food eaten is safe for consumption although the issues on insufficient resources, knowledge, indifference of eating habits, emergence of new food and distribution techniques have contributed to a complicated situation.

2.6 Emerging *Halal* Issues

Halal and *haram* in food is a very sensitive and serious matter to all Muslims (Abdul Latif, 2006). The impact of globalization and the advancement of science and technology have led to curiosity among the Muslims in particular regarding the food they consumed. As a result, more information on food sources and processing are heavily acquired by them (Muhammad, 2007). In a report, Abirerah (2008) claimed that there have been cases of food processing factories that ignored the *halal* standard where *halal* and *haram* foods are stored together in a cold storage in Malaysia. It is reported that one of the suspected factories was believed to have stored raw materials that were placed together with pork and pigs' intestines. This situation appeared to cast doubt as there were quite a number of food processing industries that have used fake *halal* logos to attract and lure the Muslim consumers. Furthermore, it is extensively reported on the existence of unauthorized organizations that certify eating establishments in Malaysia apart from Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM)/Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Idris, 2010). These certifiers claimed that they have the authority to check, monitor and approve *halal* certificates, which could raise doubts among Muslim consumers.

In another aspect, the impact of modern manufacturing methods has created confusion among *halal* producers. Much of the debate centred on the use of stunning in animal slaughter (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008), as discussed above. This has resulted in significant differences in standards between countries and repeated auditing (Regenstein et al., 2003b). Regenstein et al. (2003b) reasoned that there has not been a central ruling authority for many years where Muslim inspectors follow different traditions with respect to the dietary standards they enforce.

Another issue in the *halal* industry is the emergence of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) where such products could have been mixed with non-*halal* derived genes. Riaz and Chaudry (2004) defined biotechnology as an extension of plant and animal breeding and genetics, which have been practiced for decades and in some cases, for centuries. Hence, the introduction of animal genes into food plants presents considerably ethical difficulties for Muslims from their religious standpoint. Baker and Mazzocco (2005) stated that the production of foods using biotechnology or GMOs is considered a credence attribute because in most cases consumers cannot easily ascertain the process by which the food is produced. While there may be some noteworthy exceptions, as would be the case if a GMO yielded a product with a distinct colour or shape, in most cases the production process is not detectable by consumers or is detectable only with considerable effort or expense.

Linton et al. (1998) found many foods are inherently contaminated with disease causing micro-organisms, especially foods of animal origin. Each year, red meat, poultry and seafood products are the leading vehicles of reported cases of food borne illness. Due to these food safety concerns, countries like Australia and New Zealand have taken stringent actions and made decision for mandatory labelling of foods containing genetically modified food (Scully, 2003) due to negative opinions and issues in the media and political debate (Fortin & Renton, 2003). The purpose of labelling is to inform consumers what they are eating and how it was produced in order for them to make better choices and avoid foods that raise any ethical concerns although GMO labelling is a sensitive issue (Ellahi, 1994), that could be damaging to the sales of the product.

Islam teaches caution and moderation to Muslims in food consumption. Riaz and Chaudry (2004) explained that GM foods and GM ingredients may not be *haram*, but many Muslims may avoid them anyway because they do not feel comfortable consuming them. There are also ethical and religious problems to both Muslim and non-Muslims consumers associated with GM food as it relates on specific kind of modification where the transfer of copy genes of human origin to other

organisms is involved (Ellahi, 1994). This issue has gained different feedback from various religious groups such as the Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Bahai faith, Jewish faith and Christian sects. The literature noted that Islam prohibits the transfer but the transfer is acceptable to Jews while other religious groups fall between these two groups' opinions.

In Islam, complication arises when genes from *haram* animals are used into *halal* animals or plants. The Muslim consumers do not buy into the benefits of GMOs given the difficult issues surrounding the complication of the genes from the *haram* animals on *halal* animals or plants. Riaz and Chaudry (2004) also pointed out other biotechnology related issues such as cloning animals for food use and designing new species of animals which will be equally challenging for the religious scholars to make their review and evaluation. However, Coward (2008) through his dialogue, focus groups and study, found that at this point, some Muslim scholars accept cloning for animals but not for humans. They believed that cloning and genetic modification as a miracle made possible by Allah and as a means of betterment for the world and should not invite sufferings for animals. Additionally, Revel (1997) highlighted that the ethical debate on cloning particularly animal experimentation is still on the early stage although he suggested that crossbreeding animals is an acceptable technique for genetic improvement, thus, enhances the quality of meat for human consumption. Whatever it takes, Coward (2008) summarized his views that any religion accepts animal genetic modification in fulfilling human needs and not meeting individual or corporate greed.

2.7 Chapter Summary

In summary, Islam has guided its followers on permitted and prohibited foods under Islamic dietary laws. All details concerning the rules have reasons behind them that could be found in the *Quran* and the *Hadith*. An additional requirement for Muslims is that they require safe food from the beginning of the food chain until they consume the food. In fact, all religions emphasize on food safety. Bonne and Verbeke (2008) noted that the impact of religion on food consumption depends on the religion itself and on the extent to which individuals follow the teachings of their religion. In addition, most religions prohibit certain foods, for example pork and not ritually slaughtered meat in Judaism and Islam and beef in Hinduism and Buddhism. However, Christianity is a notable exception, which has no food taboos.

A relevant issue pertaining to the values of Muslims dietary restriction is the concept of farm to fork that is guided by the Islamic law. Therefore, it is important for the Muslims to know

the source of food that they eat (Dahalan, 2008). In essence, Islamic religion inspired requirements that focused on spirituality is developed through many compositions and one of them is food. So, it is an indicator for food service industries to take the opportunity of this unique concept by labelling and displaying the *halal* certification properly as the consumers have the right to expect food that they eat to be safe and suitable for consumption. In this context, most of the dietary restrictions placed on Muslims fall in the domain of animal kingdom, especially land animals (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Thus, *halal* slaughtering method must be applied to *halal* animals although public debate on slaughtering and stunning of animals are indefinitely discussed with the issue of animal cruelty and animal welfare being highlighted.

However, according to Islamic Jurisprudence, no one except God can change forbidden (*haram*) things into lawful (*halal*) or vice-versa. It is forbidden for people to change the lawful (*halal*) things into unlawful (*haram*) or vice versa although there are times when new technology arises such as cloning of animals that need further references from the schools of thought. In addition to their religious significance, the Muslims consider *halal* certification as a seal of quality and they will have greater confidence in consuming such products or foods. In fact, other religions are very much concerned on food safety and certification that promotes good health and peace of mind.

CHAPTER THREE

FOOD SAFETY AND CERTIFICATION

3.0 Introduction

There is a global increase in concern as to the safety of food for consumption. De Jonge et al. (2008) and Mohd Daud (2004) stressed that the growing awareness of the importance of food safety is due to the numerous severe outbreaks and food borne illnesses that took so many lives and one of them is the global Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) food contamination. In this context, lack of knowledge on food hygiene and safety lead to more risks. Hashim (2004) added that most of the food poisoning cases are caused by negligence as many people do not know how to handle, store or prepare food and are not able to spot potential cause of food spoilage in grocery stores or food outlets. Hence, a need for a preventive and cost effective food safety assurance method is required. In Malaysia, the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) System works in line with the *halal* standard to ensure the food is safe and *halal*. The HACCP System is a scientific, rational and systematic approach to identification, assessment and control of hazards during production, processing, manufacturing, preparation and use of food to ensure that food is safe when consumed (for example: it does not present an unacceptable risk to health). The HACCP System can be readily integrated into management systems like Total Quality Management, ISO 9000 and *halal* standard (Mohd Daud, 2004).

There are several certifications that exist in delivering good and safe food apart from religious certification. Higgins et al. (2008) emphasized that certification schemes are broadly aimed based on 'qualities' associated with the product, process or place of production. Moreover, by using the standards, third party auditing and product labeling, these qualities are independently verified and communicated to consumers. It is then further argued that, certification have a number of benefits for consumers and producers, especially as it helps respond to the increasing demands of consumers that foods be produced in ethical, environmentally sustainable and socially just ways. Organic and GMO certification are some of the examples that receive high demand and acceptance (Makatouni, 2002). Consumers on the other hand, should recognize their role in choosing suitable and safe food as to avoid food risks. In order to support this, food service management and staff also need to be motivated to improve hygiene standards as training alone may not produce the

desired changes (Morrison et al., 1998). They stressed that law enforcement can force them to meet the goal and that hygiene education can provide the required knowledge.

This chapter looks at food certification and safety. It begins by comparing food safety from religious and secular aspects. From there, it provides some food scare cases and the importance of food safety to consumers. Then, examples of types of certification on organic and GMO foods would follow with specific focus on religious certification on *kosher* and *halal* foods. It then goes into a broader aspect when international *halal* food certification is presented.

3.1 Food Safety from Religious and Secular Perspectives

According to Smith (2000), food safety is a highly discussed issue among consumers, agricultural marketers, farmers and governments. Meanwhile, Grunert (2005) said that the issue has been prominent for the past ten years in the public debate, food policy, industry and in research. However, they shared the same view that consumers felt that it is important to look at food safety when making purchase decisions. Specific concerns on food safety not only vary from country to country but it also differs from religious and secular perspectives. The meaning of religion and secularism in relation to Islam is further explained in relation to food safety. Nasr (1981) defined religion as the revelation sent by God to man to guide him towards Unity.

Furthermore, religion in Islam means first of all the Islamic revelation and all the truths, exoteric and esoteric, revealed in the Holy *Quran* and interpreted by the Prophet in his sayings and traditions. Nasr (1981) also explained that secularism implies ideas and institutions of purely human origin and not derived from a divine source. Generally, secular and religious food safety has the same end goal that is providing good and safe food for consumption although they differ in context. Here, Muslims do not distinguish between the religious and the secular but consider Islam to be a complete way of life (Scott & Jafari, 2010, p. 4).

Rosenblith (2008, p. 111) has pointed out an interesting fact on the differences on food intake between several religions and emphasized that “culture is a part of religion”. Rosenblith (2008) and Harris (1995, p. 67) further noted that Islamic and Jewish cultures have reasons in prohibiting their followers to eat specific foods and it would be disrespectful and inaccurate to say that they refrained themselves from eating certain foods because they are commanded to do so based upon a belief in the veracity of their respective doctrines and teachings. However, Delener (1994) argued that religion is an aspect of culture because it significantly influences lifestyle that

affects consumers' decision making. In fact, the definition of religion itself can be a controversial issue (Tong & Turner, 2008).

Food safety is of prime importance to consumers and professionals in the food and foodservice sectors (Badrie et al., 2006). Apart from that, Shears et al. (2001) stressed that food is the major source of exposure to viruses, parasites and bacteria which lead to diseases and outbreaks where food borne illnesses were estimated to be the cause of 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalisations and 5,000 deaths in the United States each year (DeWaal, 2003). Scully (2003) found that food poisoning was regarded as the biggest risk in a study conducted in New Zealand and consumers felt it is most likely to occur at restaurants (Badrie et al., 2006; Bolton et al., 2008; Knight et al., 2007; Morrison et al., 1998; Rudder 2006; Soriano et al., 2002b). Previous studies have shown that food safety affect food safety practice (Caskie & Davis, 2001). Despite the increased emphasis on food safety by the restaurant industry generally, a significant percentage of restaurants continues to have inadequate food safety practices (Knight et al., 2007).

The impact of food safety is of great concern as Shears et al. (2001) have discussed that the implications of food safety are not only on the people consuming it but it also imposed severe economic burdens on communities and nation such as rejection of foods by importing countries as well as the tourist industry. According to Badrie et al. (2006) and Knight et al. (2007) , consumers have their own reasons for being cynical at trusting the food safety authorities in ensuring food safety. Their confidence level deteriorates due to several reasons such as inadequate attention to food safety measures, lack of implementation and monitoring of food safety systems and outdated food safety standards.

Caskie and Davis (2001) brought up the issue that although consumers are demanding food safety, the food suppliers who are likely to know more about the safety of their product may be tempted to exploit this advantage. A similar point was noted by De Jonge et al. (2008) when they noted consumer's trust in institutions where competence, honesty and care for public wellbeing are considered to be essential parts of trust. The institutions that comprise farmers, retailers, manufacturers and regulators have a responsibility of guaranteeing food safety and stimulating consumers' confidence in food safety.

Restaurants are one of the more significant food suppliers that have been implicated as one of the most frequent settings for food borne illness outbreaks (Knight et al., 2007; Rudder, 2006).

In the United States of America for example, a significant trend of eating out was found by Nielsen et al. (2002). In their study on the trends in energy intake in the USA, young adults aged 19 to 39 consumed close to 30% proportion of food intake from pizza, cheeseburgers, french fries, hamburgers and Mexican food which have increased simultaneously with the growing number of restaurants and fast food establishments. Thus, this may lead to possible circumstances on the level of risk concerning food. Reid et al. (2001) have made comparisons among some countries when they found in their study that consumers around the world responded to food quite differently when the quality aspect is concerned as shown in Table 3.1. The table shows that Australians are less likely to consider taste as an important criterion in food choice but more likely to find new recipes and try new foreign foods (novelty) than other countries. In relation to this, meat consumption among Australians are relatively high and only 3.7% of adults are self identified vegetarians (Lea & Worsley, 2001). Due to this eating trend, for the past decades, there has been a micro change in the regulation of meat and poultry hygiene in Australia to maintain public health standards (Sumner et al., 2004). This is to provide for the wholesomeness of meat and poultry and to reduce the incidence of food-borne illness.

Table 3.1: Scale Means for Five International Samples

	Britain	France	Denmark	Singapore	Australia
Quality Aspects					
Health	15.08	15.84	15.50	15.83	15.52
Price/Quality Relation	17.83*	16.72*	17.78*	16.77*	15.73
Novelty	12.74*	10.85*	14.06*	12.43*	15.60
Organic Products	10.25*	10.72*	11.91	12.85*	11.61
Taste	16.32*	17.04*	16.67*	16.23	15.55
Freshness	18.01	18.00	17.33*	17.55	18.26

* = significantly different with the corresponding Australian mean at less than 1% level

Source: Reid et al. (2001)

In Europe, approximately 22% and in the US 45% of all food borne illness has been traced to food eaten in catering establishments (Bolton et al., 2008). Hence, if there is a food safety mistake, it will definitely affect many people such as the Jack in the Box E.coli outbreak in 1993 that took the lives of four children and 700 people fell sick due to eating contaminated meat

purchased at 73 Jack in the Box restaurants in the US (Knight et al., 2007). Meanwhile Badrie et al. (2006) and Knight et al. (2007) found that Salmonella infection which is commonly associated with poultry, pork, ham, processed meats and pies had caused 324 people ill after eating at an Asian restaurant/takeaway in the UK. In another incident, Morrison et al. (1998) also revealed that a highly reputable and the largest upscale catering company in Denver, USA, Le Petit Gourmet was implicated in a Hepatitis A outbreak in late 1992 although it had a good food safety record. This signifies that although safety measures and precautions were carried out, the food borne illnesses will keep on occurring as what Caskie and Davis (2001, p. 366) mentioned as quoted “it is difficult to assess the health risks associated with eating certain products”.

In addition with the food scare, Malaysia has also experienced a memorable event when a severe outbreak of viral encephalitis among pig farmers in the Bukit Pelandok area in Negeri Sembilan state struck in 1999. More than 200 individuals were affected and caused 28 deaths (Chua et al., 1999). Due to the incident, the demand for pork is less compared to meat and mutton (Sheng et al., 2010). Looking at the scenario in the country where Malaysians prefer eating away from home and they like to eat hawker foods proved the findings from previous studies that showed poor sanitation of hawkers have been associated with reports of food-borne illness in Malaysia (Pang & Toh, 2008). Their study on Muslim and Buddhist hawkers’ food safety in Malaysia revealed that religion might have been a reason for better food safety practice in Malay hawkers. It is proven from the study that some Muslim hawkers have a greater emphasis on body cleanliness and hygiene that may have contributed to the higher food safety performance standard of this religious group compared to others. The Malay hawkers stated, “hygiene is very important in Islam” where “hands and body must be clean before prayer”. Here, some of them pray each time the stall is opened and most of them perform body cleansing before preparing food. They concluded in their study that the Muslim hawkers (mostly Malays) had significantly better food safety knowledge and food safety practice than the Chinese.

Another reason for food scare is the issue of meat. Two surveys that were ten years apart revealed that meat has been the most frequently named food that caused illness (Antle, 1996; Badrie et al., 2006). According to Che Man et al. (2007), meat is also an important food product subjected to adulteration and also the main issue of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). Shears et al. (2001) defined BSE as a slowly progressive and ultimately fatal neurological disorder of adult cattle and they referred to epidemiological studies that showed the source of the disease was cattle feed prepared from carcasses of dead ruminants. The Government in the UK for instance

has introduced a programme of slaughtering animals to keep out the infected meat from the human food chain.

The Islamic perspective of slaughtering animals emphasizes certain conditions for the handling of animals (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). As narrated by Abu Yaala Shaddad bin Aws, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, Verily Allah has prescribed proficiency in all things. Thus, if you kill, kill well and if you perform *dhabiha*, perform it well. The word ‘well’ has been said twice, meaning that it is very important to follow some conditions before the slaughtering takes place. In fact, primary and secondary requirements exist in relation with *dhabiha* animal slaughtering to ensure food safety. One of the prominent primary requirements is the blood of the slaughtered animal must be drained out thoroughly and the animal, must die of bleeding rather than any other injury, inflicted or accidental.

The secondary requirements stated that animal or bird to be slaughtered should be healthy and free from diseases and defects. Appropriate method of desensitizing can be used to control the animal provided the animal is not dead before actual bleeding according to *dhabiha* standards. If any animal dies from this method then the carcass becomes prohibited for Muslim consumption (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). This was the state of the world in relation to the eating of food at the advent of Islam (Al-Qaradawi, n.d.) as stated in the *Quran* (*Surah Al-Baqarah* – The Cow, verse 168) and this must be adhered at all times. As discussed above, *halal* food covers all aspects and nothing is forbidden except what is prohibited either by a verse of the *Quran* or an authentic and explicit *Sunah* of Muhammad (pbuh) in order to become a good Muslim and always remember the day of afterlife.

The likeness of the life of the Present is as the rain which We send down from the skies: by its mingling arises the produce of the earth, which provides food for men and animals: (it grows) till the earth is clad with its golden ornaments and is decked out (in beauty): the people to whom it belongs think they have all powers of disposal over it: there reaches it, Our command by night or by day, and We make it like a harvest clean-mown, as if it had not flourished only the day before! Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who reflect.

(*Surah Yunus* - Jonah, verse 24)

The Importance of Food Safety to the Consumers

Food safety incidents that occurred in the recent decades have decreased the consumer confidence (De Jonge et al., 2008) and proposed that appropriate risk management and risk communication practices are introduced to reduce the negative effects associated with food related hazards. Elaborated further, risk communication is developed to promote food safety to optimize consumer protection and confidence in the safety of food. In addition, it is to provide them with better understanding and handling their concerns on food issues. This is particularly important as there is evidence to suggest that consumers have lost trust in both official bodies setting food standards and science in general (Dimara & Skuras, 2005).

Malaysia is also experiencing the phenomenon of eating away from home as eating out has become a regular feature of the Malaysian lifestyle where they involve themselves in this activity on a daily basis (Heng & Guan, 2007). Increasingly busy work schedules, convenience, global economic recovery, growing trend towards the independence of women and their participation in the labour market, growing income as well as urbanization are the contributing factors to this high demand. As a result, this growing popularity has paved the way for the development of the food away from home industry in Malaysia. They found that from 1999 to 2003, the Malaysian consumer food service market increased by 16% to a total of 20,235 consumer food service units.

Although studies have shown that eating out tends to be less nutritious, higher in calories and cholesterol (Lin et al., 1998; Lin et al., 2001) and also linked to problems of overweight and obesity, food safety is the main priority (Antle, 1996). Peri (2006) presented nine consumer requirements, and food safety was the top priority which was generally expressed as the absence of “risk factors” where safety requirements must be respected.

Aliman and Othman (2007) emphasized that the number and types of attributes used by a consumer in making a purchase decision may vary from one product to another. As argued by Mackenzie (1986), attributes may be perceived differently in terms of experience and information from one consumer to another as time changes. However, Manning (2007) listed the perceived emotional attributes that create the value components that a consumer seeks. These attributes are as follows:

- Confidence when specific standard will be delivered

- Trust which means that consumers require solid assurance when purchasing a consistent food product
- Wishing to buy in a humane way

De Jonge et al. (2008) argued that successive food incidents have the ability to put consumer confidence and trust in the safety of food under pressure, particularly in Canada and Netherlands. For that matter, Alonso-Zaldivar (2008) reported that the American consumers are seeking peace of mind when they are performing their daily purchasing activities. Thus, they demand a system that can trace through layers of processors, packers and shippers, reversing back to the farm. Evidence from the report also suggests that the more confident the customers are, the more goods they will purchase. One of the ways that the industry is practicing to reduce uneasiness among the consumers is having certification as a symbol of safety.

3.2 Types of Certification

The increasing effort to provide better food safety and quality leads to increasingly stringent safety specifications and a considerable growth in the number of quality assurance schemes. Certification is a means for firms to deliberately position themselves in the market to capture the attention of consumers. It is also a way where the consumers can differentiate between firms. In order to assure that food is safe for consumption, producers should take necessary steps to comply with the quality standard set by regulatory bodies.

Organic Certification

According to Cicia et al. (2002), organic products have received substantial attention by consumers and Makatouni (2002) suggested that organic food is one of the fastest growing areas of the food market in Europe, Northern America, Australia and Japan. Trade Mart (2006) reported that the USA is the world's largest organic food market that covers 34% of global market value. In contrast, Padel and Foster (2005) argued that the demand in the UK slightly deteriorates over the last few years due to lack of intervention by policy makers in the supply chains. Therefore, there has been a growing concern on the usage of pesticides, the development of Genetically Modified (GM) crops and the possible impact these may have on people's health for the past 10 years. Moreover, since 1998, the amount of land used for organic farming has increased seven-folds and there were nearly 4,000 organic holdings in the UK by June 2001. Apart from that, it is generally known that consumers chose to buy organic food for both health and ethical reasons (Cicia et al.,

2002; Essoussi & Zahaf, 2008; Gutman, 1999; Harper & Makatouni, 2002; Krystallis & Chryssohoidis, 2005; Makatouni, 2002; Onyango et al., 2007; Padel & Foster, 2005; Roddy et al.,1994).

Makatouni (2002) further explained that organic food is perceived as food without “chemicals” and “growth hormones”, food that is “not intensively” produced but it is “natural”. However some researchers like Gutman (1999) as well as Krystallis and Chryssohoidis (2005) thought that organic refers to a set of philosophical beliefs about the relationship with the environment, not merely to the physical characteristics of a product. Meanwhile, Padel and Foster (2005) claimed that the term organic and organic labels have strong emotional quality from the customers’ point of view in ensuring good health and personal wellbeing as well as tasty and protects the environment. In fact, this myriad of claims is very confusing to consumers (Harris, 2007). On the other hand, Essoussi and Zahaf (2008) who did a focus group study in a community market in the province of Ontario, Canada created a new dimension to the definitions of organic. The respondents defined organic as products that contain no fertilizer, no chemicals, no pesticides, no antibiotics, no hormones, no GMO and is not processed, nor packaged, with no injection, and brings no harm to animals, natural, tasty, nutritious, colourful, fresh/stay longer and labour intensive.

A study on Greek consumers’ willingness to pay for organic food done by Krystallis and Chryssohoidis (2005) showed that factors like quality, security and trust are basis for them to choose organic food. They reasoned that Greek consumers are significantly less confident about their food supply and fearful of pesticide residues compared to the British consumers. In contrast, Roddy et al. (1994) argued that the general perception of Irish consumers toward organic food is divided into two attitudes although organic farming in the Republic of Ireland is very much in its infancy. The positive attitudes in relation to the product are taste, quality, health, safety and environment.

Marshall (2005) stated that early proponents of organic and sustainable agricultural practices emphasized restoration of soil fertility as a primary goal, with a clear linkage between healthy soil, food, animals and humans. Thus, the organic movement originally emphasized diet and nutrition, health, sewage disposal and rural life as well as agricultural methods. As an alternative to the dominant agro-industrial methods prevalent in the United States post-World War many viewed organic as part of radical fringe.

As mentioned earlier in the topic of food safety, consumers are demanding for assurance that the product they want to purchase can be trusted. In the case of organic food, certification is also an important issue where retailers are competing with each other to provide this perceived healthy food as certified organic products being trusted by one third of the consumers (Krystallis & Chryssohoidis, 2005). In this context, they found that 130 countries are currently producing certified organic food of which 90 are developing countries with ideal environmental conditions to produce satisfactory organic food.

In order for the organic products to be certified, Lohr (1998) determined that certification of organic products served three functions. First, it assures consumers that a product that is not observably different from non-organic food was grown, processed and packaged according to rules that limit or ban synthetic inputs and such protect the environment. Second, it assures producers that unscrupulous use of the term organic does not defraud them of price premiums and market share that can be earned from certified foods. Third, it makes the market more efficient by reducing information asymmetry along the marketing channel from producer to consumer.

Additionally, the organics sector integrates all aspects of a pesticide-fertilizer free production process using specific standards and is subject to a rigorous certification system (Essoussi & Zahaf, 2008). In addition, to fulfill these functions, the certification must follow a credible process whereby there will be a set of standards, verification of the standards, followed by inspection of the facility and operating records and approving the producer or processor. The approving authority confers the license to allow display the certifier's label on the product. Lohr (1998) also added that harmonization is a critical issue because consumers form strong loyalty to labels that they perceive as credible organic indicators.

There has been direct implications on certification and sustaining the supply chain in order to fulfill the growing demand from the consumers as the organic industry is heading from niche market industry to a mainstream industry (Essoussi & Zahaf, 2008; Krystallis & Chryssohoidis, 2005). Thus, establishing a well known and trusted certification system is essential (Wier & Calverley, 2002). Trust is also the main factor raised by Essoussi and Zahaf (2008) when consumer deals with certification and relationship with the farmers. They gathered that consumers expressed concerns on seeing the certification because they feel a lot better and safer.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) Certification

Baker and Mazzocco (2005) found that the introduction of GMOs or organism with DNA from foreign organisms, have been received with mixed reaction by consumers and the debate over the safety of GMOs have varied greatly in intensity. Consumer attitudes play a significant role toward the acceptance of GMO products and its application in society (Miles et al., 2005). Thus, negative perceptions will certainly have an impact on commercialisation. Marshall (2005) argued that modern biotechnology has extensive contributions and implications for the food industry and benefit the consumers as the technique will stimulate plant breeders to develop plants with new characteristics and enzymes for food processing industry. Marshall further emphasized that genetic modification can directly improve food quality and processing by suggesting one example that is a modified tomato that can stay on the vine for a longer time and rich in flavour. However, because of the recent tomato scare as a result of the current salmonella outbreak that affected more than 1, 200 people in 42 states in the United States of America (Alonso-Zaldivar, 2008), tomato growers have lost more than \$100 million and this has contributed to increasing level of discomfort among consumers toward food safety.

GM food is perceived as being associated with both health and environmental risks (Hunt & Frewer, 2001). As a result, stricter safety specifications and quality assurance schemes have been introduced to provide higher food safety and quality both in international and European Union (EU) level. As Dimara and Skuras (2005, p. 90) stated “food consumption and production in Europe has been marked by the renaissance of quality”. Similarly, Japan and South Korea do not welcome imports of GMO food (Xue & Tisdell, 2002).

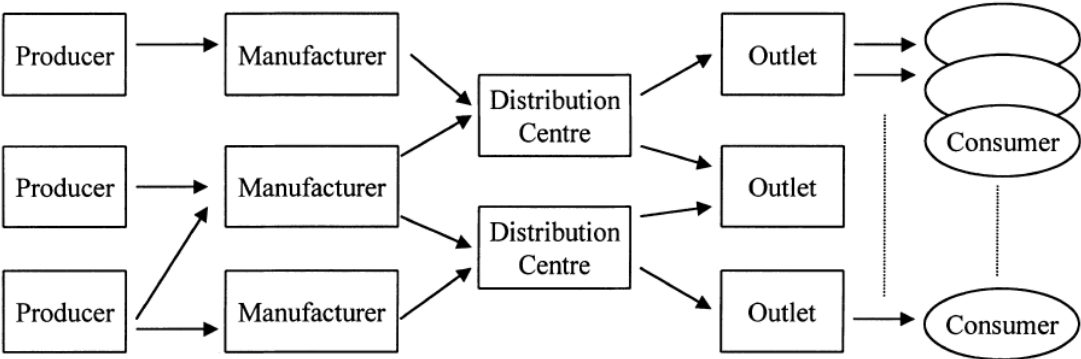
A study on the perceptions and attitudes of Singaporeans toward GMO food revealed that slightly more than half of the respondents were worried by this food type (Subrahmanyam & Cheng, 2000). At the same time, the study suggested that as people become aware and knowledgeable about GMO, their negative perceptions decrease. Fortin and Renton (2003) had also found similar results. On the other hand, China has been paying greater attention to developing its own GMO technology and products (Xue & Tisdell, 2002) due to China’s food shortage. Similarly, DeWaal (2003) found that US consumers were largely unconcerned with the safety of GMOs.

In Europe, the debate has been vigorous and consumers have, in general, been extremely skeptical of the technology and unwilling to assume the risks associated with GMOs (Botonaki et al., 2006; Fortin & Renton, 2003; Hunt & Frewer, 2001; Miles et al., 2005; Scully, 2003; Vendurme & Viaene, 2003). In fact, Whitman (2000) mentioned that different governments have their own stand towards this issue. Thus, several countries responded differently. Japan for example has taken action that health testing on GM foods will be mandatory and some states in Brazil have banned GM crops entirely. However, India's government has not yet announced a policy on GM foods because no GM crops are grown and available in retail outlets although the country is very supportive of transgenic plant research. Meanwhile, a survey conducted in Beijing, China found that the Chinese consumers accepted the use of biotechnology to grow GM rice and GM soybean oil which are the staple foods of the Chinese diet (Li et al., 2002).

Whitman (2000) however, raised the issue of confusion in the United States regulatory process when she reasoned that there are few different government agencies that have jurisdiction over GM foods. Fox (2000) explained that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) presented a proposal in March 2000 for nationwide standards defining organic foods. The proposal specifically prohibits the use of genetic engineering from agricultural products bearing the organic label. Similarly with organic labeling, consumers demand GMO food products to be labeled in order to develop a system of traceability throughout the food supply chain (Miles et al., 2005). In addition, Tenbült et al. (2007) and Ellahi (1996) claimed that through labeling, consumers have more complete information and they can make more informed choices.

Partridge and Murphy (2004) extended the labeling concerns by stating that it should be informative to consumers and to also look into international trade and economic implications. Thus, the realities of biology and commerce need to be considered when framing certification and labeling rules in their study of transgenic soya. Dimara and Skuras (2005) argued that although labeling may serve as a powerful quality signal for consumers to make decisions its efficiency has been seriously questioned. For instance, product labels may have too much information and be too complex to understand. The notion of farm to fork or commonly known as the food supply chain (Figure 3.1) that starts from the primary production to processing, distribution and consumers shows the importance of having a circle of quality products where they can be traced down from where they started (Kirwan, 2006). As mentioned earlier, failure to implement the traceability strategy will generate negative impacts on consumer confidence in food security as they are very much concerned on the issues on food safety, outbreaks and risk regulation (Miles et al., 2005).

Figure 3.1: Schematic Diagram of a Generic Food Supply Chain



Source: Vorst et al. (2000).

Regenstein et al. (2003b) highlighted *halal* and *kosher* foods as important components of the food business because both religious foods have their own valuable niche markets. Diamond (2002) also pointed out that observant Muslims may buy *kosher* certified food to suit their religious requirements. Although many Muslims purchase *kosher* food in the US, these foods do not always meet the needs of the Muslim consumers (Regenstein et al., 2003b). This issue is also brought up by Rosenblith (2008) who noted that Muslims were tired of not being able to find *halal* food in Western countries and having to rely on the *kosher* stamp. However, even if *kosher* looks similar, there are substantial differences between the laws of *kashrut* and the laws of *halal* as noted in Chapter Two.

Nevertheless, by considering these two religious certifications, companies can better understand the needs and demands of the related consumers because most people are not aware of certain foods that are under religious supervision (Al-Harran & Low, 2008). They emphasized that *halal* and/or *kosher* certification should be an authoritative, reliable and independent testimony to support a food manufacturer’s claim that his products meet the certain religious requirements. Thus, customers will have greater confidence in consuming such products or foods as *halal* is fast becoming a new market force and identifier and is now moving into the mainstream market, affecting and changing the perception and landscape on how businesses are being conducted.

Kosher Certification

Gutman (1999) focused on *kashrut* organizations that certify *kosher* food which have spent a lot of effort to create trust in providing information to the observants of the Jewish laws. In relation to this, self-informed consumers rely on the reputations of particular *kashrut* organizations. Although, this is in fact a difficult issue to address because there are so many different *kosher* supervision agencies (Regenstein et al., 2003b). They pointed out the fact that some authorities chose more lenient standards while others preferred more stringent standards and also claimed that people in the food industry particularly, are not aware of religious foods. Thus, the present trend tends to neglect consumers who follow the religious supervision.

However, Diamond (2002) noted the acceptance of Orthodox Jewish in Canada who started to involve themselves in the concept of eating out which occurred by late 1950s. As a result, in 1961, the first *kosher* restaurant was opened in Toronto to suit not only their new lifestyle but to maintain their religious observance. Since then, the number of *kosher* restaurants increases. According to Regenstein et al. (2003a), providing consumers with this particular choice will enhance potential market opportunities. As previously noted, by having certification, companies can make claims in the marketplace that their products meet the Jewish religious dietary restrictions. Apart from that, there are also millions of non-Jewish consumers who viewed the *kosher* designation as representing “quality”, “healthful” and “good for you” (Diamond, 2002).

The trend in the mainstream *kosher* community is that more stringent standards (Regenstein et al., 2003b) employ sophisticated and privately driven labeling system to alert consumers to *kosher* status food. Gutman (1999) made reference to the situation in the US where religious organizations, national and local contract with food producers supervise production before finally certifying the finished outputs as *kosher*. Regenstein et al. (2003a) detailed that those supervising organizations, for instance, the OU, the OK, the Star-K and the Kof-K are responsible to certify larger food companies. Meanwhile, the OU and the Star-K are communal companies, which are part of a larger community religious organization.

Gutman (1999) highlighted the OU as the largest organization that certifies products in fifty four countries with more than 200 registered *kashrut* symbols existed in the United States. Additionally, there are also mainstream and lenient *kosher* standards which are under supervision of individual rabbis (Regenstein et al., 2003a). The evolution of *kosher* lifestyle has become one of the factors that change *kashrut* supervision from small time individual rabbis to multimillion dollar

international supervisory organizations. Gutman (1999) concluded that consumers will purchase products from trusted organizations. In fact, the whole system is based on trust together with the close relationship among religious communities although Diamond (2002) argued that most consumers are likely unaware of the reasons for an OU logo on a food label.

Halal Certification

Companies need to have additional concerns for *halal* standards because in many countries, *halal* certification has become necessary for products to be imported (Regenstein et al., 2003a). According to Riaz and Chaudry (2004), South East Asia has 250 million Muslim *halal* consumers and *halal* is considered a symbol of quality and wholesomeness by both Muslims and non-Muslims in countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. A *halal* program was initiated by Malaysia during the early 1980s with the introduction of *halal/haram* Act and formulation of a high government level *halal/haram* committee (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

Riaz and Chaudry (2004) defined *halal* certificate as a document issued by an Islamic organization certifying that the products listed on it to meet Islamic dietary guidelines as defined by that certifying agency. Some of the major *halal* certifiers that are internationally recognized include:

- Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia/Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), Malaysia
- Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), Indonesia
- Islamic Religious Council of Singapore/Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS), Singapore
- Muslim World League (MWL), Saudi Arabia (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004, p. 172)

There are certain processes before an organization can obtain a *halal* certificate. Generally, the process will start from filling out an application form, explaining the production process, detailing the products to be certified, listing down the ingredients used along with other relevant information on manufacturing process and other products manufactured in the same facility. Subsequently, a facility audit will be performed and upon the approval, fees will be imposed on the applicants.

3.3 Halal Certification - International Approaches

There is a continuous effort done by *halal* authorities internationally in delivering services particularly on *halal* food to the stakeholders. The International Market Bureau Canada (as cited by Wan Omar et al., 2008) stated that the average global *halal* food trade is estimated at US\$560 billion per year. Thus, encouraging the Muslim and non-Muslim producers to seek and obtain the *halal* certification in fulfilling the increasing demand by Muslim consumers globally in their obligation to consume *halal* food.

Halal standards and certification procedures need to be continuously improved by all the certifying bodies around the world as *halal* standard covers not only to food but it also include non food products. One of the issues that still remain as a public debate is on developing a standard global *halal* logo and certification. This covers mainly on the process of slaughtering of animals, ingredients for food preparation and inspection that will be covered in Chapter Seven and Eight.

The *halal* market is growing at a fast pace, having drawn so much attention and interest from various areas, further development initiatives and strategies are essential for the *halal* certifying organizations to lead and formulate ways to strengthen their credibility with the current and relevant issues surrounding the global *halal* market. Thus, *halal* certification and standards is a continuing process that reinforce on scientific research towards the development of a truly standard *halal* processes and procedures.

This study focuses on several *halal* certifying organizations in South East Asia, United Kingdom and North America that are recognized by JAKIM. As Malaysia is situated in South East Asia, it is relevant to look into the tasks and accomplishments in other neighbouring countries that include Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Thailand and Philippines that can provide further improvements in the *halal* regulatory framework as a whole. As discussed in Chapter Two, due to the high number of Muslims in United Kingdom and North America, it is appropriate that the selection of *halal* certifying organization is done to compare with the Western countries.

The regulatory bodies that are responsible to issue *halal* certification and their tasks mentioned above are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Some of *Halal* Food Certifying Organizations

<i>Halal Food Certifying Organization</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Task</i>
Islamic Religious Council of Singapore/Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS)	Singapore	The <i>Halal</i> Certification Strategic Unit of MUIS is ISO 9001 certified and provides a wide range of personalised <i>halal</i> services and ensures good <i>halal</i> assurance standards in all certified premises.
The Assessment Institute For Foods, Drugs And Cosmetics Indonesian Council Of Ulama/ Lembaga Pengkajian Pangan, Obat-Obatan Dan Kosmetika Majelis Ulama Indonesia (LPPOM- MUI)	Indonesia	To maintain sustainability of <i>halal</i> production process in order to assure its <i>halalness</i> according to the rules of LPPOM MUI.
The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand (CICOT) and the Provincial Islamic Committee	Thailand	To ensure that the development and certification of <i>halal</i> food standards complies with the provisions of the Islamic religion.
Islamic Da'wah Council of the Philippines	Philippines	Assisting for the <i>Halal</i> Business opportunities.
Brunei Islamic Religious Council	Brunei	To ensure the <i>halal</i> certified place of business complies with <i>halal</i> conditions and requirements.
<i>Halal</i> Food Authority (HFA) The Muslim Food Board <i>Halal</i> Monitoring Committee (HMC)	United Kingdom	HFA monitors and regulates red meat and poultry. The Muslim Food Board formalizes the investigation and certification of food products. HMC monitors, inspects and certifies <i>halal</i> meat and poultry sector.
The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA)	North America	Promote <i>halal</i> food and the institution of <i>halal</i> .
Department of Islamic Development of Malaysia/Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM)	Malaysia	Responsible to ascertain policies pertaining to the development and advancement of Islamic affairs in Malaysia.

Singapore *Halal* Certification

Malay Muslims living in Singapore have to negotiate interaction in restaurants, which may not provide guaranteed *halal* food (Tong & Turner, 2008). A study by Martini and Chee (2001) highlighted that Muslim and Indian restaurants in Little India, Singapore discussed the importance to respect dietary obligations. They mentioned that Muslim restaurants can serve both customers, Muslims and Indians but a Hindu restaurant is not able to cater the Muslims who require *halal* food prepared according to the Muslim rites. It is also found out in another study by Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) that the Singaporeans preferred to dine at food courts or hawker centres because of the relatively low cost as well as the aggressive marketing campaign by the Singapore Tourism Board. The campaign highlighted that dining in Singapore would not be completed without dining at a typically Singaporean hawker centre that includes multiple ethnic food stalls.

Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) further explained that the Muslims in Singapore actively seek for *halal* certification. In Singapore, the regulation of *halal* is done by Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) or also known as the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore, that is the highest Islamic authority in-charge of Muslim affairs in Singapore. The mission of MUIS is to expand in detail the understanding and practice of Islam among the Singaporean Muslim Community while enhancing the well being of the nation (Tan, 2007). It is conducted by setting Islamic agenda, promoting religious, social, educational, economic and cultural activities for the Muslims in line with the principles and traditions of Islam. One of its roles is also to advise the President on all matters relating to Islam in Singapore.

According to MUIS (2007), the MUIS *halal* services formally started in 1978. The move to set up its *Halal* Certification Strategic Unit was driven by the increasing demand for *halal*-certified products and eating establishments, as well as the need to regulate the *halal* industry. As a result, MUIS has developed the *Halal* Quality Management System (HaIMQ) to assist local companies gain greater recognition when marketing *halal* products globally. In 2007, MUIS certified more than 2,000 premises and has played an important role as the custodian of *halal* food assurance for Singapore's 15% Muslim population. Furthermore, the promising *halal* food industry with the availability of many *halal*-certified eating establishments has helped to foster social interaction between individuals from diverse racial, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Indonesia *Halal* Certification

Since 2005, Lembaga Pengkajian Pangan, Obat-Obatan Dan Kosmetika Majelis Ulama Indonesia (LPPOM-MUI) has introduced the *Halal* Assurance System (HAS) in Indonesia (LPPOM-MUI, 2008). This system assures the *halalness* of the products in order to obtain MUI (Majelis Ulama Indonesia) *halal* certificate. The validity of MUI *halal* certificates is two years. LPPOM-MUI emphasized that companies with *halal* certificates must conform to the *halal* standard in fulfilling the requirements made by MUI and the Muslim consumers as a whole. Therefore, LPPOM-MUI requires companies to set up a system that is HAS and documented as a HAS manual whereby this manual is arranged by companies according to its condition. LPPOM-MUI (2008) defined HAS as an arranged, applied and maintained system by *halal* certified company to maintain sustainability of *halal* production process according to the rule of LPPOM-MUI.

As a certifier, LPPOM-MUI has set several steps for companies to go through before the certification is awarded (LPPOM-MUI, 2008). Auditing of materials, production processes and checking the HAS will be done by a qualified auditor. The auditor is a representative of the *ulama* (Muslim religious scholars engaged in several fields of Islamic studies) and a witness to find facts on *halal* production of a company. HAS, as outlined by LPPOM-MUI, has several principles that need to be followed by the companies. The principles include to safeguard the implementation of Islamic law, to be honest, trustworthy, systematic as well as ensure key person involvement, management commitment, delegating authority, traceability and that all processes undertaken are absolute and specific (see LPPOM-MUI, 2008). Furthermore, companies that intend to apply *halal* certificates must set up an integrated, accountable and traceable administration system to cater for the fast growing Muslim population and also the non-Muslim consumers.

Thailand *Halal* Certification

Historically, *halal* food affairs in Thailand have been undertaken for more than fifty years (The Institute for *Halal* Food Standard of Thailand/*Halal*-Thai, 2007). As such, The Central Islamic Committee of Thailand and the Provincial Islamic Committee are authorized to act as the principle bodies of *halal* food certification. In 2003, the organization was restructured towards establishing a special body as so called “The Institute for *Halal* Food Standard of Thailand (*Halal*-Thai)” under supervision of the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand.

The *Halal*-Thai is a national agency engaged in standard development, screening, monitoring, verification and tracing of all *halal* food to be in accordance with Islamic law. As well as internationally accepted and reliable food standards. Here, *Halal*-Thai acts as a key player in developing the Thai *halal* certification system not only to comply to Islamic law but also to those internationally standards so as to promote Thailand as one of the leaders in *halal* food market.

Thailand is aggressive in building *halal* food promotion activities like a grand campaign “Thai Kitchen to World Kitchen” by enhancing the international competitiveness of Thai food and agricultural products and strengthen The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) position in the international fora (Puntasen et al., 2008, p. 98). Furthermore, the promotion of *halal* food is through the intensification of cooperation in production and processing technology development between Southern Thailand and neighbouring countries.

In essence, with the commitment of all sectors to strengthen Thailand’s competitiveness, the *Halal*-Thai commits to the reliability and credibility in *halal* food certification along with close collaboration with both diverse concerned private and public agencies. This is to ensure that *halal* food system in Thailand gains the trust and confidence in physical and spiritual safety for all Muslim consumers all over the world (*Halal*-Thai, 2007).

Philippines *Halal* Certification

The Islamic Da’wah Council of the Philippines (IDCP) is a duly recognized *halal* certification and accreditation authority in the Philippines as well as in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and all other Muslim countries and communities (The Islamic Da’wah Council of the Philippines, 2009). In the Philippines, a number of Islamic *da’wah* and educational institutions are recognized and registered by the government. The Islamic *Da’wah* Council of the Philippines is an Islamic NGO accredited by the Philippines Department of Social Welfare and Development, which represents 95 Muslim organizations throughout the Philippines.

Hisham (2007) mentioned that the Philippines’ government aims to gain a foothold in the global *halal* food industry by embarking on several important initiatives, including the establishment of a *halal* technical committee that is led by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). In fact, DTI has initiated the preparation for a national standard for the Philippines’ *halal* food products. This is to boost the domestic industries in tapping the US\$150 billion global Muslim food market.

Brunei *Halal* Certification

Brunei *halal* brand is a government project initiated by the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources along with the cooperation of the Brunei Islamic Religious Council, Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Health (Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, 2010). It is expected that through the Brunei *halal* brand, Brunei will become one of the major players of the *halal* industry globally, both in terms of *halal* food production and certification.

Brunei's focus on developing the *halal* sector is based on a three-fold approach. Firstly, it is taken as a *fardu kifayah* (an obligation to the Muslims to make *halal* food readily available, safe and with high quality), secondly, it is a means to diversify the national economy and thirdly, *halal* can be a platform to develop the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector (Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, 2010).

Being a Muslim country and where the government bodies involved are under a Muslim organisation, Brunei has a lot of emphasis on elevating *halal* products (Thien, 2010). This is supported when the vendors at the Fifth International *Halal* Products Expo (IHPE) 2010 expressed their desire to see Southeast Asia deciding on one *halal* commercial brand, with the Brunei *Halal* Brand logo as their preferred seal. With this, Brunei has created a new commercial image for *halal* food.

United Kingdom *Halal* Certification

An increasing number of British food and drink companies are seeking *halal* certification to capture the growing market (Scottish Enterprise, 2008). It is reported that the demand for *halal* products is rising among Britain's estimated 3 million Muslims with 95% of them claimed to be *halal* consumers. Regulatory bodies in the UK include the *Halal* Food Authority (HFA), The Muslim Food Board and *Halal* Monitoring Committee (*Halal* Food Authority, 2006). The organisation was launched in 1994 to monitor and regulate red meat and poultry in UK. This voluntary, non-profitable organization has introduced a unique system of identifying *halal* meat from non-*halal*, by putting marking or tagging for authenticity of *halal* on the carcasses, soon after slaughter at the slaughterhouses.

In order to formalize the investigation and certification of food products, The Muslim Food Board (UK) was established in 1992 (The Muslim Food Board (UK), 1999). It is an

independent organization serving *halal* consumers throughout U.K. Another organization, *Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC)* was established in early 2003 consisting of various *ulama* and figures from various backgrounds to lend advice and direction pertaining to *halal* matters (The *Halal Monitoring Committee*, 2006). As a non-profitable organization, it was set up to monitor, inspect and certify *halal* products focusing on *halal* meat and poultry to serve the Muslim consumers, retailers and suppliers.

According to the *Halal Food Authority*, its endorsement network has been in high demand both by Muslim end users and the manufacturers, therefore providing the opportunity for both groups to enhance the market further in accordance to the Islamic dietary laws (*Halal Food Authority*, 2006). A *halal* certificate issued by the Muslim Food Board (UK) is an assurance that a particular product has been thoroughly investigated and found to conform to Islamic dietary laws and suitable for Muslims consumption. The investigation carried out for *halal* certification by these organizations is almost similar with other certifying bodies in other countries. The investigation includes investigation of all contents, cleaning procedures and site audits of all production and processing sites.

United States *Halal* Certification

In order to accommodate the demand of Muslim population in North America, more than 40 organizations issue *halal* certificates in the United States (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). However, some Muslim groups that enter the *halal* certification field have their standards not as well defined (Regenstein et al., 2003b). This growing niche market has long been ignored by the U.S. food industry until the late 1990s when there was an interest in exporting food to Muslim countries.

The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) is one of the reputable certifying agencies for retail and multilevel-marketed products. Acting as the only mainstream agency, IFANCA has been recognized by many Muslim countries (Regenstein et al., 2003b). According to IFANCA (2008), when a product conforms to the *halal* requirements, a certificate is issued and granted permission to display the IFANCA certification logo, the Crescent M on the product packaging and label. This is to assure that the product is an authentic IFANCA *halal* certified product that meets the highest quality of *halal* certification.

IFANCA (2008) further explained that Muslim consumers will have the confidence to buy products with *halal* certification and do not have to bother checking all the ingredients. Thus, they

can purchase the product without doubt. The benefits are also shared by the producers when IFANCA developed a documented procedure for producing *halal* products which complies with HACCP and other quality assurance standards (Regenstein et al., 2003b), as part of a broader move towards tighter standards in order to receive wider acceptance from a larger audience.

In addition, producers expect that they will receive immediate recognition and acceptance of IFANCA *halal* certification by *halal* consumers worldwide from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore to Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the rest of the Middle East, through Europe and North and South America. Imperatively, consumers have the right to know issues and truth in labeling of food products (Regenstein et al., 2003b) when New Jersey *halal* regulation was passed, followed by Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan and California. It shows that different states provide legislative support to *halal* certification and simultaneously has an impact on the restaurant sector in particular.

All of these *halal* certifying organizations are responsible to ensure that companies which are interested to apply for *halal* certificates conform to the Islamic dietary rules and regulations. Additionally, all the processes must also comply with the quality, safety and cleanliness standard outlined by the local government. In this context, Malaysia *halal* certification will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

3.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has indicated that the rapid global movement of food has increased consumer concerns with food safety. Consumers now demand more information from trusted food sources and that has encouraged food industries to label food clearly and properly (Abdul Latif, 2006) as the impact of food safety issues affects consumer confidence (De Jonge et al., 2008). The successful application of both religious and non-religious certifications requires full commitment and involvement of management and the workforce as food safety is an ultimate consideration before any purchase decision. While several authors have found that different food handling practices are important, the levels of knowledge of food safety among food handlers and the effective application of such knowledge are also essential in ensuring a consistent production of safe food in restaurant operations (Bolton et al., 2008).

In the Islamic context, Islam emphasized that cleanliness is a crucial element when the matter of food and drink is discussed (Wan Hassan & Awang, 2009). Furthermore, as far as

religious food is concern, the devout and practicing followers are certainly demanding their food to be certified although there are some minorities who are less practicing or exclude themselves from participating in the dietary prohibitions on certain reasons. International certifying organizations that deal with the *halal* standards are responsible for the effective implementation and monitoring of the respective systems, for example HACCP, ISO and Total Quality Management as the market for *halal* food derives from Muslim and non-Muslim countries (Mohd Daud, 2004). As such, the food service industry as a whole and restaurant sectors in particular must take the advantage to exploit this emerging market as *halal* certification has its own attributes.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FOOD SERVICE INDUSTRY AND MALAYSIAN *HALAL* CERTIFICATION

4.0 Introduction

Mohd Yusoff (2004) defined *halal* certification as the examination of food processes in its preparation, slaughtering, cleaning, processing, handling, disinfecting, storing, transportation and management practices. The application of *halal* should apply to all stages of processing “from farm to table” (see Chapter Three). As noted in previous chapters it is significant for both consumer confidence (Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003) and as a marketing tool (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009; Mohd Yusoff, 2004). As noted in the previous chapter, the global *halal* food trade is growing rapidly and is worth billions of dollars (Mohd Daud, 2004; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004; Wan Omar et al., 2008). In order to capture this enormous market, Malaysian food service industries, including the restaurant sector, have been striving to achieve *halal* status for products for both domestic and international markets. Therefore, understanding the *halal* concept is crucial not only for Muslims but also for the non-Muslim marketers and producers of *halal* products that are seeking to sell *halal* foods.

A major issue involved in restaurant research is the difficulty involved in classifying restaurants. In details are the outline of some of the typologies and categories of restaurants outlined in the literature. According to Goldman (1993), the traditional typology of independent restaurants identifies three segments, namely: quick service, midscale and upscale. However, Kasavana (1994) added institutional service restaurant to the segments which he defined as an eating place found in schools, nursing homes, healthcare facilities, prisons and catering services for business and industry. It also combines aspects of quick service and table service operations. Muller and Woods (1994) argued that the traditional typology does not fit the increasingly multiunit environment of food service and included two new segments which are moderate upscale or casual theme and business or industry dining. Carter et al. (2000) defined family/popular restaurants as informal and either independent or chain operated. In contrast, based on the studies by Kivela et al. (1999) and Carter et al. (2000), a formal restaurant category requires full service features like alcohol sales, table cloths, crockery and cutlery. In general, they have more elaborate dining amenities and décor (Davis & Steward, 2002).

Quick service, also known as fast food restaurants rely on narrow menus, target price sensitive customers and fast delivery (Chong et al., 2001; Goldman, 1993; Kasavana, 1994; Muller & Woods, 1994). Family dining or coffee shop segment falls under midscale segment that offers full service tables and counters. It has broad menu offerings throughout the day and the strongest revenues are earned during breakfast and lunch as these segments rely on high traffic (Muller & Woods, 1994).

Moderate upscale, also referred to as the casual theme segment, is a combination of midscale and upscale restaurants in which the wide menu of midscale and price as well as service from upscale create a specialized concept to the patrons (Muller & Woods, 1994). One of the distinctive characteristics of this type of restaurant is its ability to convince and portray to consumers that the restaurant has its own distinct image and group identity. Goldman (1993) reasoned that dining at casual restaurants became more popular due to the fact that the customers would dine informally and simply at moderate prices, although some casual restaurants created particular themes and brands to try and encourage customers to select the restaurant for celebrations and special events (DiPietro et al., 2007). Industry experts see casual dining categories as being more suitable to the lifestyles of North Americans (Goldman, 1993; Darden Restaurants, 2006) although there is also evidence that this type of dining is being adopted by Asian consumers particularly in larger urban centres, such as Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. MacLaurin and MacLaurin (2000) found casual dining at theme restaurants gaining popularity in Singapore when they interviewed restaurant managers who commented that these restaurants were perceived as trendy and more appealing. Furthermore, customers were starting to expect better return from their dining experience, although consumers usually regarded casual dining restaurants to be less expensive compared to fine dining restaurants (DiPietro et al., 2007).

Fine dining has long been described as the 'real' restaurant business (Muller & Woods, 1994) and usually refers to an upscale segment that features more expensive ingredients, styled menus, decors and uniforms as a symbol of high quality (Goldman, 1993). In essence, image is an important part in marketing and advertising fine dining restaurants and the most expensive restaurants are usually perceived to have the best food and the best service. However, some fine dining restaurants have taken some actions such as lowering the price, relaxing the formalities and restructuring the menus in response to the movement towards more casual dining (Carter et al., 2000).

This chapter begins by looking at customer perceptions and managerial issues in restaurant service. As the study focuses on Malaysia, the different types of restaurants that exist in the country will be discussed. The chapter then goes on to examine *halal* restaurant certification in selected countries and the standards and procedures guided by local authorities with respect to *halal* certification for Malaysian restaurants. The final part is on *halal* certification attributes that were gained from past studies.

4.1 Customer Perceptions of Restaurant Service

A visit to a restaurant involves interaction between customer, restaurateur and the service organization. Generally, customers have different reasons when visiting a restaurant and have their own attitudes toward the food service industry especially at a particular restaurant. Customers purchase food according to their desires for health, style, expression and use of time (Prabhu & Harrah, 1996) while preferences and tastes are the main determinants of restaurant selection with the most significant value being the quality of food (Clark & Wood, 1998).

Kivela et al. (1999) took a customer perspective in generating a model of the restaurant choice process. They found out that individual factors (such as age, gender, income, education, life cycle and reasons for eating out) and external factors (customer's experience at the restaurant, media and merchandising efforts, and communications with others) are important attributes to predict return patronage intentions along with the overall satisfaction of the dining experience.

Enz (2004) posed the question of how to increase the number of customers coming into a restaurant. Findings included ensuring that customers' expectations were reasonable; better understanding of demographic trends and the nature of the dining experience, and the need for better tools to gain customers' feedback before they leave the restaurant. Gregoire et al. (1995) indicated that restaurant cleanliness and quality of food are considered essential by restaurant patrons while Peri (2006) also stressed that food quality is a necessary condition to satisfy the needs and expectations of consumers. As a result, customer satisfaction is an essential indicator of an eating establishment's past, current and future performance and therefore has been a crucial and critical focus among marketing practitioners and scholars (Namkung & Jang, 2007; Oliver, 1999).

According to Namkung and Jang (2007), quality food played an important role to maximize success in the restaurant business followed by tasty and fresh food. Johns (1998) discovered that food, staff and atmosphere were the most important attributes of a restaurant. The

emphasis by customers on atmosphere and aesthetics suggests that customers go to a restaurant expecting physical and aesthetic pleasure and comfort. However, Johns (1998) argued that a broader concept of emotional comfort provides a better description of the range of attributes that a consumer is seeking in their dining experience. This includes not only the acceptability of the service and décor but also the food in the cultural as well as the sensual sense. As far as *halal* certification at restaurants is concerned, the connection between emotional comfort and acceptability are fundamental inputs for the research study given the importance attached to the *halal* food by Muslim consumers. Indeed, being given the recognition in the consumer decision-making literature that religion has considerable influence on people's values, habits and attitudes and greatly influences consumptive aspects of lifestyles (Delener, 1994), it is remarkable how little attention is given to it with respect to research on restaurant consumers.

4.2 Managerial Issues in Restaurant Service

Restaurants are an integral component of society. Roberts and Sneed (2003) estimate that 40% of American adults eat in a restaurant on a typical day. It is therefore not surprising that customer satisfaction is a crucial dimensions of the restaurant industry (Heung & Lam, 2003; Namkung & Jang, 2007). DiPietro et al. (2007) in a study of selected restaurant chain managers found that the development of interpersonal and social responsibilities particularly with respect to food safety was regarded as one of the most important aspects of the food service business. Several studies have had similar outcomes suggesting that the relationship between interpersonal and social responsibilities depends on an array of tools to gauge workplace success (Blum & Harrah, 1996; Ingram, 1995; Lashley, 2000; Teare, 1996). Within this context, one of the critical management elements is with respect to ensuring that the food in restaurants is safe for consumption. This dimension is also reflected in consumer attitudes with Roberts and Steed (2003) noting that although restaurant industry sales are increasing, consumer confidence in food safety at restaurant has decreased.

Food safety is a serious matter. Concerns over food-borne diseases have existed throughout history with more than 200 different known diseases of humans being transmitted through food (Mohd Daud, 2004). Therefore, outbreaks of food-borne disease can lead to trade damage, loss of earnings, unemployment and litigation. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) programmes are one of the ways to assure the safety of food. HACCP is a systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of those steps in food manufacturing that is critical to food safety (Spiegel et al., 2004). However, there are many food service operators who do not

implement programs such as HACCP when protecting food while it is in storage and production. Roberts and Sneed (2003) in their survey of independent restaurants in Iowa found that only approximately 8% of the restaurant managers indicated that they had a comprehensive HACCP plan in place. The majority did not implement the prerequisite programs.

Amjadi and Hussain (2005, p. 172) emphasized that “the food service manager must work with reputable suppliers and implement tight receiving procedures to help ensure safe food. Once food arrives, it must be stored, prepared and served using methods that maintain its safety”. They reiterated that the handling of human factor is critical as both employees and customers posed a major risk to food safety. In order to apply the system successfully, full commitment and involvement of the management and workforce are required. Amjadi and Hussain further mentioned that the development of HACCP in 1960s, along with other more recent food safety processes, to help ensure that food is safe and suitable for consumption is obviously a significant development. However, for Muslims, there is another religious and important issue that needs to be addressed and that is that safe food must also be *halal*.

Gregoire et al. (1995) noted that although commercial foodservice sales continue to grow, restaurant operators have to be aware with the needs and wants of the customers in order to attract and retain them. The employees’ job at a restaurant is not just to carry plates but they need to acquire the ability to interpret and deliver service to the customers to ensure success (Ingram, 1995; Lashley, 2000; Teare, 1996). Enz (2004) emphasized customer satisfaction that led to profitability, which led to establishing a strong sense of personal efficacy where the customers were allowed an element of customization. Similar observation were made by Øgaard et al. (2005) in relation to customers expecting sensitive attention to their individual needs via customized products. They highlighted on the notion of “extreme standardization” that needs to be developed to suit local customers’ food preferences with *halal* certification being one potential example. It could possibly be argued that the concept of “extreme standardization” does not apply to religious dietary restriction that may be quite global, although it may have significant implications for local variations in food customs. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter Two the prohibitions on certain foods and drinks are to assure Muslim followers that they are eating according to *Quran*, a standard guide by the *Shariah* (Islamic law), which is imposed via cultural and religious more and more formally by the *halal* certification process.

Øgaard et al. (2005) defined extreme standardization as adapting to local customs. For example McDonald's adjusts the foods offered to some countries to suit the local tastes like including fish in the menus by promoting it as 'McFisk' in Norway and fish sandwiches in Hong Kong, beer and frankfurters in Germany and McSpaghetti in the Philippines. In addition, it also adjusts the production process to obtain *halal* ('clean', 'acceptable') certificates in Muslim countries. This means that local restaurant managers will need to 'follow the book' (Øgaard et al., 2005, p. 23) as well as to adapt products and personal service to local market conditions and to suit the tastes and preferences of the customers.

As this study focuses more on *halal* certification and its attributes, it recognized that a religious guided standards and the "extreme standardization" of business practice are two different dimensions of the food security process that provides *halal* consumers' confidence in their purchasing. Thus, religious guided standards require the Muslims to adhere to the *Quran* and *Sunah*. In contrast, the secular business dimension of the food service industry suggests that local restaurant managers will not only be required to follow the system, but will also have to be more customer oriented and therefore be able to manage their personnel innovatively (Øgaard et al., 2005). In order to achieve this Reynolds (2000) suggested that a manager required several skills such as organizational skills, interpersonal skills, restaurant experience, knowledge, honesty, integrity, strong ethics and leadership skills.

In addition to food sanitation and handling, costs, food quality and nutrition are also areas of concern for restaurants (Enz, 2004). In addition, managers also face constraints when health related news as well as food safety and security issues are given media coverage that could potentially jeopardize sales (Dodd & Morse, 1994). Some of the steps taken by the food service industry to demand for healthier foods were to serve more nutritious foods, for instance salads and low fat dairy products on their menus (Lin et al., 1998; Lin et al., 2001). It demonstrated that the customers challenge restaurant managers to keep attracting them to their premises by offering healthy choices (Namkung & Jang, 2007). However, some restaurant operators have claimed that the customers do not always order the healthy foods they 'demanded'. Nevertheless, restaurant managers were generally trying to ensure that the best possible food products are bought on the costings available to them (Enz, 2004).

As discussed, satisfying customer is a critical objective of a food business particularly because it leads to repeat purchase and loyalty (Kivela et al., 1999; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). In this context, Namkung and Jang (2007) found that customer loyalty was

essential when customers expressed a preference for one company or brand over others, and continue to purchase from it or increase business with it in the future. However, they claimed that there were many “other factors” that could influence customer’s restaurant experience for a return visit despite food quality. Thus they suggested that restaurant owners and managers identify these other factors and stressed these in their total offerings. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that there were no religious food restrictions or certification needs highlighted in their study although they did mention the importance of providing quality food by emphasizing critical food properties.

4.3 Restaurants in Malaysia

With a population of approximately 26 million Malaysia is one of the most developed nations in Southeast Asia (Chang, 2006). According to Shamsudin and Selamat (2005) Malaysians, whose median age is 22 years old, are adventurous in their eating habits particularly the young. They like to try out new eating-places as recommended by friends and relatives as eating out is common and is relatively inexpensive. Furthermore, the multicultural character of the population contributes to the availability of different types of cuisine which may also contribute to the attractiveness of eating out. In addition, Malaysia’s consumer lifestyle has been evolving and changing due to rising income and education level (Shamsudin & Selamat, 2005). Indeed, the numbers of Malaysians who study overseas then return home is also contributing to the growing cosmopolitanism of Malaysian taste. The Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (2008) reported that 54,915 Malaysian students sponsored by the government were studying abroad in 2007 as well as the growth in international tourism arrivals.

The development of Malaysia’s tourism industry has also contributed towards the growth of the food service industry in Malaysia (Chang 2006). The growth in tourism is expected to fuel the growth of restaurants offering international cuisines such as Middle Eastern and Latin American food. In 2005, the tourist arrivals reached 16.4 million and the number is expected to reach 24 million in 2010. In this context, the Malaysian government placed high emphasis on domestic and international tourism because of its actual and potential contribution to the country’s income and employment (Henderson, 2009b). To date, the Tourism Ministry has reported that Malaysia recorded an increase of 1.4 percent to 1,896,918 tourist arrivals in January 2010 compared with the same month last year (Bernama, 2010).

Tourism is seen as an increasingly globalised sector where inter-destination competition is becoming intense (Zailani et al., 2011). Muslim tourists, particularly those from West Asia are increasingly discerning and require access to more sophisticated holiday destinations and *halal* dining. Here, Muslim tourists demand foods and services according to their religious tenets that makes the requirements for *halal* compliance has become more prevalent. Zailani et al. (2011) further mentioned that Malaysia has taken the lead in the Islamic or *halal* tourism industry and has been successfully attracting Muslim tourists from all over the world specifically the Middle Eastern travelers by offering facilities that comply with their religious beliefs and values.

Henderson (2009a) defined Islamic tourism as tourism mainly by Muslims although it can extend to unbelievers motivated to travel by Islam which takes place in the Muslim world. However, Zailani et al. (2011) believed that *halal* tourism is on offering tour packages and destinations that are particularly designed to cater for Muslim considerations and address Muslim needs that is not being applied to food but includes any *Shariah* compliant products ranging from bank dealings to cosmetics and vaccines.

Malaysia has seen this latest trend as an opportunity due to September 11 incident where there is a significant shift to other destinations as the Middle Eastern travelers inclined to go on holiday and invest their money in the US and Europe due to increasing security measures and difficulties in obtaining visas. In essence, being a Muslim majority country, Malaysia is among the preferred country as it is able to cater to most of their needs. In order to fulfill their needs, the shopping malls in Malaysia usually have many *halal* restaurants, Arabic signs and also a surau or prayer room that make it more convenient for these Muslim tourists to shop (Zailani et al., 2011).

The annual visitation figure of tourists to Malaysia is shown in Table 4.1. In fact, domestic tourists are also being encouraged to spend their holidays within the country as was aggressively promoted in 'Cuti Cuti Malaysia' (no English translation) when it was first launched in 2004 that promoted quality tourism (Henderson, 2009b). Chang (2006) also found that Malaysians often chose to eat at open air and street stalls. However, international cuisines are also increasingly being demanded as a result of the rising affluence and education levels of the consumers whose shopping and eating lifestyles have changed drastically in recent years. Klang Valley and other major cities that offer fine dining restaurants and food service outlets are popular restaurant spots where spending power and population concentration are higher.

Table 4.1: Tourist Arrivals to Malaysia

<i>Year</i>	<i>Arrivals (Million)</i>
2009	23.6
2008	22.0
2007	20.9
2006	17.45
2005	16.4
2004	15.7
2003	10.5
2002	13.2
2001	12.7
2000	10.2
1999	7.9
1998	5.5

Source: Tourism Malaysia (2010)

The food service sector in Malaysia is highly composed of small to medium sized players with over 80% of the eating establishments from small family-owned businesses (Foreign Agricultural Service/USDA, 2000). According to Shamsudin and Selamat (2005), there were 172,252 food service entities including stalls and restaurants in Malaysia in 2001. However, as noted in Chapter One there are several ways of categorizing restaurants in Malaysia. Kueh and Voon (2007) argued that foodservice premises in Malaysia include restaurants, street stalls and pubs/bars. In addition, rated hotels and resorts serve food and drinks through their food and beverage restaurants and other food service outlets within their premises. Restaurants may both offer limited-service or full-service facilities and involve limited, medium contact encounters between customers and service providers.

In contrast, Heng and Guan (2007) classified the food service industry in Malaysia into five main categories, namely dine-in restaurants (including hotel coffee houses), fast food outlets, coffee shops, food courts or hawker centres and roadside hawkers. Although not included in this study, institutional catering also operates in cafeterias in schools, colleges, hospitals, and includes companies, which specialize in catering to airlines, special functions such as exhibitions, weddings, and corporate dinners alike (Kueh and Voon, 2007). As highlighted in Chapter One, the Chinese has dominated the business sector and their presence is significant especially in the urban areas on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Sin (1987) reported that 83.34% of the small industry establishments in Malaysia were Chinese owned that covered all kinds of business activities including food stalls and restaurants. In addition, statistics from JAKIM indicates that

95% of *halal* certification applications come from business entities owned by non-Muslims (Dahalan, 2008)

One of the few pieces of academic research on restaurants in Malaysia was a survey done by Josiam et al. (2007) on curry cuisine and perceptions of Indian restaurants in Malaysia. The survey found that restaurants in Malaysia operate with an increasingly more ethnically and culturally diverse customer base of locals and tourists and those consumers are interested in and accepted ethnic foods. The findings showed that the quality of food, cleanliness of restrooms, general hygiene and cleanliness and also value for money are important restaurant characteristics. The most important food attributes included the taste, spiciness and presentation of food, availability of vegetarian choices, new items and *halal* certification.

4.4 *Halal* Restaurant Certification

As noted previously there is no single internationally accepted certification for *halal* food. Instead, there are numerous certifiers in different countries. Nevertheless, producers in many countries are obliged to act responsibly when they acquired *halal* certification from the certifying body that they use in order to maintain the *halal* status. The *Halal* Monitoring Committee United Kingdom has its own *halal* certification procedures for restaurants and takeaways. A business that is interested in applying for certification has its application reviewed and food practices monitored before an agreement contract is issued on approval. After signing the agreement, *halal* certification will be issued and it must be placed on display in a place that is clearly visible to the customers in the outlet. Inspections are done regularly to monitor compliance with the terms of the contract (The *Halal* Monitoring Committee, 2006).

Similar procedures are practiced by the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) which undertakes to certify food and non-food items as well as restaurants, eateries and other premises as *halal* (FIANZ, 2008). However, Wan Hassan and Hall (2003) raised the important issue that manufacturers and business operators in New Zealand, as in some other countries, can freely claim their products or restaurants to be *halal* without getting the endorsement or verification from FIANZ.

Within this context, Malaysia has its own stringent certification procedures in issuing *halal* certificates to food manufacturers, abattoir and restaurants. JAKIM defined food premises as a building or a place for food and beverage business such as restaurant, food court, commercial

kitchen, cafeteria, cake and pastry shop, fast food restaurant, canteen, club/hotel, kiosk and other caterers. Application procedures must be undertaken and complied with the following in order to fulfill *halal* certification requirements:

Table 4.2: General Requirements for *Halal* Certification Application

<i>Halal</i> Certification General Requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each manufacturer/eatery/slaughterhouse shall apply for <i>halal</i> products. • Each company should apply for <i>halal</i> certification and ensure the source of ingredients for food and selecting suppliers or sub-contractors who supply materials have <i>halal</i> certificates. • Each company should ensure compliance with lawful procedures in areas such as outlined in the Malaysian <i>halal</i> certification procedures manual. • Companies listed in the category of Multinational and Small & Medium Enterprise (SME) is required to establish <i>halal</i> audit committee and appoint an Executive Director of Internal Islamic Affairs for controlling and ensuring compliance with lawful certification procedures. • Minimum requirement is to have two workers who remain Muslim and a Malaysian in the kitchen/handling/food processing. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">During the preparation, handling, processing, packaging or transferring, the product has to be clean and contain no ingredients that are forbidden by Islamic law. The use of equipment or facilities within the premises should be cleaned and free of faecal contamination in accordance with Islamic law.</p> • Transport used is for <i>halal</i> products only. • Clean equipment, transportation, production areas and the environment is emphasized and the company should adopt good manufacturing practices. • Employees should adopt codes of ethics and practice (Good Hygiene Practices) as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All employees need to get some injections from any health centre that is recognized by the government before and after being employed;

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- b. All employees should exercise care and good personal hygiene, especially for those who worked as a production operator;
 - c. Employees who are unwell or have wounds or injuries that may affect the quality of a product are not allowed to work until recovery;
 - d. Direct contact with hands and raw materials and semi finished products should be avoided;
 - e. Smoking, eating, drinking or storing food, beverage, cigarettes, drugs and others should be done in a designated area and not allowed in the production areas or any place that may affect the quality of products;
 - f. All persons who wish to enter into the production area must wear special clothing to factories and clean (if there is no special clothing) following the procedure of health care and personal hygiene, including regular employees, temporary workers, management staff, visitors and others;
 - g. Employees must always maintain personal hygiene and wear appropriate cap, mouth, gloves and shoes that fit;
 - h. Employees should always wash their hands thoroughly with an appropriate detergent;
 - i. Before starting food handling activities;
 - ii. After using the toilet;
 - iii. After handling raw materials or contaminated materials and so forth
 - i. Employees may not wear any jewellery or decorative items, clocks etc, in the food processing area that might cause pollution (contamination) in the food handling process;
 - j. Employees must always work in a directed checkpoints;
 - k. Employees should be committed and responsible to the lawful policies established.
 - Tools of religious worship are not allowed in the premises of the food processing area.
-

Source: JAKIM (2010)

According to JAKIM (2010), inspection will be carried out upon meeting all requirements as mentioned above and once payment has been received. The service charge rates include all costs involving research or laboratory tests on the status of the product ingredients and the charges are

borne by the applicant or the company. Here, laboratory tests should be made at any public or private lab that is recognized by JAKIM. The charge rate, applicable for individual applicant for each living unit (the premise) is RM100 and another RM100 for each unit of kitchen. The fees charged cover a period of two years where delays in payment will affect the *halal* inspection visit to be carried out on the premise. Fees will be charged for each renewal application. Within this context, two inspecting officers are assigned to perform the inspection - an Islamic Affairs Officer and a Food Technology Officer, who will examine all aspects of the food premise including documentation, processing, handling to storage, display and product serving, checking of equipment and cleanliness, sanitation and food safety.

Halal certification will be issued upon obtaining approval from JAKIM *halal* certification approval panel that consists of experts in Shariah and scientists on technical matters (JAKIM, 2010). Upon certification the food premise must display the *halal* logo at visible and appropriate places. Describing the process is significant for the understanding of the concept of *halal* because it reemphasize that *halal* is not only limited to the food materials and ingredients used in a restaurant but covers all aspects in the food supply chain as well as personal hygiene, clothing, utensils and working area (Mohd Yusoff, 2004). The process therefore reiterates that, above all else, every Muslim demands that a product complies fully with Islamic religious standards. *Halal* certification offers such reassurance to Muslim consumers. The next section provides a fuller account of *halal* certification in Malaysia.

4.5 Malaysian *Halal* Certification

JAKIM (2010) reported that, since 1970s, Malaysia has been strengthening its mechanism to ensure that the *halal* certification process provides Muslims with the quality assurance in the products that are purchased and services that are used. According to Abdul Talib et al. (2008, p. 3):

Malaysia has developed *halal* certification; a total quality health and sanitary system that involve adopting procedure for slaughtering processing and other related operations as outlined by Islamic rules. It certifies raw materials, ingredients and products based on quality, sanitary and safety considerations. This broad-based system certification is not only limited to meat and poultry products, but also cut across other consumer items such as pharmaceuticals, toiletries, cosmetics and confectionery.

The certification of *halal* food has been formally conducted throughout Malaysia since 1982. In addition to religious reasons much of the support for the process has arisen due to the

enormous economic potential of worldwide demand for *halal* food and the government's interest in developing the country as a global *halal* hub. This goal had been explicitly mentioned in the 9th Malaysia Plan (National SME Development Council, 2007, p. 107).

“Consequently, the number of strategic hubs in the form of industrial and *halal* parks has been increased in an ongoing effort to offer Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) a viable production strategy to bring about sustained competitive growth in a nurturing environment. Malaysia aims to become a net exporter of food by 2010 and has identified the agriculture sector as the third engine of growth in the 9th Malaysia Plan (9MP) to achieve this vision”.

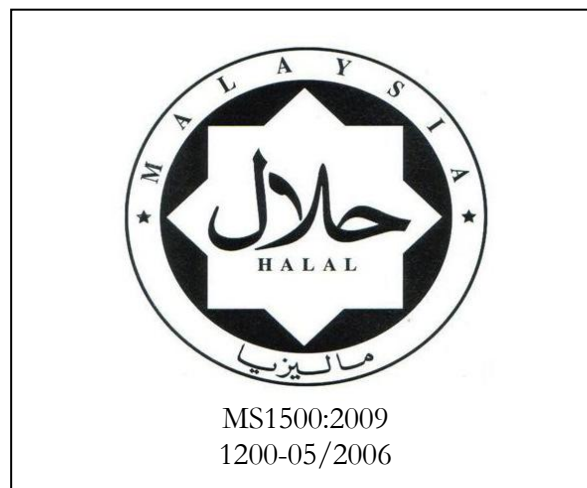
In most countries *halal* certification and regulation is undertaken at the provincial or state government level or by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) usually in conjunction with national or regional government food labeling and advertising law. As a result, Malaysia is one of the few countries in the world where the national government provides the regulatory framework for promoting the *halal* certification process on product and services. Domestically, the local state government agencies that include Islamic Religious Council/ Majlis Agama Islam Negeri (MAIN) and Islamic Religious Department/ Jabatan Agama Negeri (JAIN) have also been given the authority by JAKIM to award *halal* certificates with the same logo as provided by JAKIM but with different state names which appear to be incomprehensible. A recent newspaper article from Utusan Malaysia reported by Saifulizam (2010) highlighted that there was an urge for uniformity of the *halal* logo with JAKIM to be the only body to issue it whereas the state religious councils will handle the applications and auditing from respective states.

The National SME Development Council (2006) reported that the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which is responsible under the United Nations for international regulation of food preparation, has cited Malaysia as a good example in terms of the *halal* food certification process. With that, the Malaysian model has therefore come to be regarded as a potential role model for the development of *halal* food quality assurance processes internationally (JAKIM, 2010). Establishments of the *halal* standard is related to *Shariah* requirements where *halal* food certification refers to the examination of food processes, from the preparation, slaughtering, ingredients used, cleaning, handling and processing, right down to transportation and distribution (Mohd Yusoff, 2004).

In 2006, a new regulation was introduced that meant a single *halal* logo (Figure 4.1) and certification from JAKIM must be used throughout the country. This is to avoid confusion among the consumers and industry, therefore promotes standardization. However, this has not been

entirely and successfully implemented. The issuance of *halal* certificates by private companies namely Islamic Food Research Centre (IFRC), Bahtera Lagenda *Halal* Food Council South East Asia and SAS-H Consultants have contributed to fear and doubts among Muslim consumers regarding the risks of consuming *haram* foods where it was assumed that these organizations lack enforcement and monitoring, and thus, did not follow strictly the *halal* standard (Idris, 2010). In relation to this issue, a draft on a single *halal* logo and certification had been tabled in the Parliament and gazetted in April 2011. This has been confirmed by Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Saifulizam, 2010). Therefore, food operators found to use fake *halal* logos and certification not issued by JAKIM would soon face stiffer penalties under the law.

Figure 4.1: Malaysia *Halal* Logo



Note: MS1500:2009 refers to *halal* food

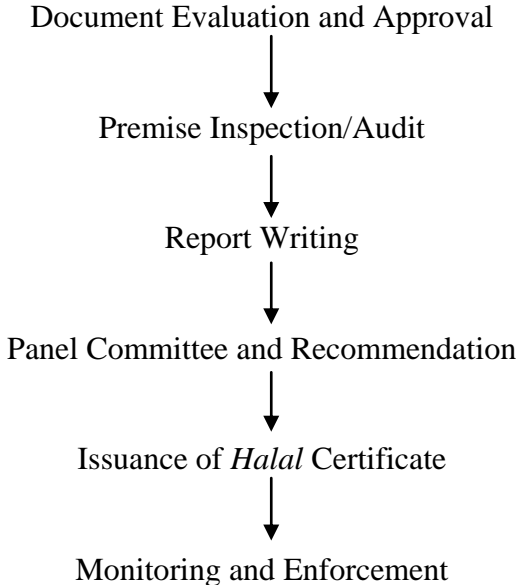
Source: JAKIM (2010)

In Malaysia, despite a number of *halal* certification issues that debatable such as bogus certification and enforcement, the demand for *halal* products/food from the consumers is still growing. The findings by Fischer (2007) revealed the Malaysian consumers preferred JAKIM certified products if these were readily available. They described the *halal* certification as familiar, trustworthy, reliable and convincing. Fischer also added that the *halal* certification is demanded not only in the Islamic but also in the non-Islamic countries.

In relation to this, there are several steps outlined by JAKIM for a company to obtain a *halal* certification (Figure 4.2).

- *Document evaluation* – application forms and supporting documents include a detailed analysis on the company’s profile with declared ingredients, suppliers’ details, manufacturing process and procedures.
- *Inspection* – physical inspection includes an assessment of declared ingredients, storage methods of raw materials and finished products, cold rooms, processing plant manufacturing flows and handling aspects of production, packaging materials, and general hygiene, quality control and assurance practices.
- *Report Preparation* – technical inspectors write a full report on the status of the application based on their inspection.
- *Evaluation Committee and Recommendation* – report is tabled and evaluated.
- *Issuance of Halal Certificate* – once approved, JAKIM issues the *halal* certificate and grants permission to use the *halal* logo. The certificate is valid for two years with renewal of the application to be submitted three months before the expiry date. JAKIM will carry out constant monitoring to ensure conformity to the *halal* standards (JAKIM, 2010).

Figure 4.2: Halal Certification Process



Source: JAKIM (2010)

Products from overseas are issued *halal* certificates by bodies accredited by JAKIM and other related Malaysian government bodies such as the Department of Veterinary Services, Food Safety and Quality Division, and the Ministry of Health Malaysia which is responsible for issuing the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) certificate (Din, 2006). In addition, the Malaysian Standard for *halal* certification is being developed to potentially act as a benchmark for Global *Halal* Standard not only for food but also pharmaceutical, cosmetics and preservatives although it is always being debated that *halal* standardization is hard to achieve (Mohd Yusoff, 2004).

Halal certification and authority provision provide a mechanism to audit and monitor *halal* food related organizations that deal with the *halal* standards. This is significant as there were cases in the UK where several malpractices were reported in the trading of *halal* meat, including the introduction into the food chain of meat that is unfit for human consumption (Pointing & Teinaz, 2004). This means that any meat that has not been approved as *halal* through Islamic slaughter or any food that is liable to cause ill health (decomposing meat or food unfit for human consumption) cannot be considered *halal*, wholesome or as good *Tayyab/Toyyiban*. In addition, the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has suggested that up to 90 percent of the meat and poultry sold as *halal* in the United Kingdom has been sold illegally and not slaughtered in accordance to *Shariah* law (Ahmed, 2008).

Malaysia has developed its industrial relations with regards to *halal* food through such agencies like JAKIM, Department of Standards Malaysia, Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia and Malaysian Institute of Industrial Research and Standard (SIRIM). As a result, a comprehensive *Halal* Food Standard called MS1500:2004 has been developed (Abdul Talib et al., 2008). The Malaysian Standard MS 1500 General Guidelines on the Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage of *Halal* Food prescribes the practical guidelines for the food industry on the preparation and handling of *halal* food and serve as a basic requirement for food product and food trade or business in Malaysia (Mohd Daud, 2004). It can also be used together with MS1480:1999 Food Safety According to Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) and MS1514:2001 General Principles of Food Hygiene that set out the necessary hygiene conditions for producing safe food from primary production to the final consumer, which is suitable for consumption (Abdul Talib et al., 2008).

The Malaysian Standard MS 1500 General Guidelines on the Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage of *Halal* Food prescribes the practical guidelines for the food industry on

halal conformance. In addition the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and the *halal* system will work together to ensure that the product is safe and can be consumed by anyone including non-Muslims. In Malaysia these various standards set the regulatory context for restaurants which must ensure that in order to be *halal* compliant they must be able to account for all aspects of the food process from farm to plate: the segments from sourcing the raw material, handling, processing equipment, processing aids, storing, transporting, preparing and delivering to the patrons. The attributes of *halal* certification are described in more detail in the next section.

4.6 Halal Certification Attributes

As noted throughout the literature review there is relatively little academic research on *halal* food, *halal* eating establishments and *halal* certification. Obviously, *halal* is no longer just a purely religious issue thus it is becoming a global symbol for quality assurance and lifestyle choices (Nik Muhammad et al., 2009). In fact, *halal* has been recognized as a new benchmark for safety, hygiene and quality assurance even by non Muslims. Based on the limited literature available, as well as on the *halal* regulatory process in Malaysia and elsewhere, a number of attributes with respect to *halal* certification have been identified and are discussed below.

Food Quality

The aspect of quality has been accepted as an important ingredient of marketing that offers producers a great opportunity to differentiate themselves in the market and add value to their products (Botonaki et al., 2006). Peri (2006) defined quality and food quality as fitness for use and fitness for consumption respectively. Aliman and Othman (2007) found that quality was one of the most important attributes in purchasing local and foreign brands in Malaysia together with the considerations of conformity to religious requirements. Furthermore, they commented that consumers heavily relied on various information “cues” or characteristics of products when performing product evaluations.

There is general agreement that quality has an objective and a subjective dimension although the term has numerous definitions, both in food and otherwise (Grunert, 2005). This is further argued where objective quality refers to the physical characteristics built into the product and is typically dealt with by engineers and food technologists. Subjective quality is the quality perceived by consumers. As a result, they have their own perceptions when dealing with food quality when dining out.

Food quality has been generally accepted as a fundamental element when dining at restaurants (Kivela et al., 1999; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Sulek & Hensley, 2004) but some researches have indicated that consumers are demanding quality products and are anxious to know its source and supply chain (Dimara & Skuras, 2005; Regenstein et al., 2003a; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). This is comparable to the results of numerous studies that have indicated that restaurant customers are looking for healthy, authentic, traceable and wholesome foods with respect to the product attributes in an eating premise. Bonne et al. (2007) proposed that *halal* is a typical example and fits the definition by Kirwan (2006) on quality criteria. Kirwan (2006) noted the socially constructed quality criteria combines the physical properties of the product and also the means from where it is produced, distributed and retailed. Some of the key consumer requirements in relation to food quality include safety, nutrition, and the sensory context, as well as ethical dimensions, guarantees, and the product, packaging and market system (Peril, 2006). In addition, firms need to demonstrate to their consumers that their products have quality and safety attributes and certification is a way of communicating the implementation (Shamsudin & Selamat, 2005). Muhammad (2007) also noted that *halal* certification is another level of quality assurance which improved the product itself.

Trust (confidence)

Halal is about trust, responsibility, respect and strict compliance. This is supported by Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) who suggested that trust and perception appeared to be very important factors when a customer wanted to make a decision to patronize a particular food vendor. Their research found that a large majority of their respondents indicated that when they were in doubt regarding the *halal* status of a food, they would not precede eating or dining at the eating establishment because it affects their mental wellbeing. This is what Shafie and Othman (2006) referred to as the “peace of mind”, a situation experienced when a Muslim fulfilled the Islamic dietary rules. In a secular sense, it also reflected consumers having trust in the suppliers of what they purchased (Warden, 2004).

According to Aliman and Othman (2007), Muslim consumers in Malaysia are becoming more sensitive and conscious of *halal* conformance and have started to question and avoid products that are not *halal* certified and without the *halal* sign. The industry players and retailers in particular, play an increasingly essential role in providing reassurance of food chains (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). The buying habit of Muslim consumers proved that they must be certain that they

are buying genuine *halal* product where it is obvious that trust is the main issue compared to price (Ahmed, 2008). *Halal* certification is also a distinctive example of what Kirwan (2006) referred to as face-to-face interactions between producers and consumers in which authenticity and trust are developed between both parties.

This perspective is also reflected by Peri (2006) who argued that trust is expressed as a relationship between person to person and not from a relationship between a person and a product. He reasoned that personal trust guaranteed food quality from trusted people supplying the food based on their professional competence and moral reliability. Peri also noted the importance of food certification that acts as a guarantee instrument for consumers in obtaining quality foods. A similar observation was made by De Jonge et al. (2008) who mentioned that consumers placed great trust in institutions that have a responsibility for guaranteeing food safety, for instance farmers, retailers, manufacturers and regulators that stimulate consumer confidence. Therefore trust not only covers the direct consumption of foods but also extends to other aspects of consumer experience including perception of the reliability such as certification, regulatory bodies, and food quality.

Safe and Hygienic

Islam places great emphasis on cleanliness and wholesomeness during food preparation as it relates the mental, physical and spiritual aspects in developing human body and soul. As noted throughout, the whole process from the preparation of raw materials, processing, storing, packaging and distribution must not be contaminated with *haram* materials. *Halal* food must be clean and safe to eat in the spiritual as well as physical sense.

Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) found that devout and practising Muslims were very much concerned on *halal* matters and *halalness* was a critical issue to their lives particularly on food and its preparation as they wanted to be extra certain that everything was pure and free of contamination before consumption. As Awang Teh (2004, p. 11) reported (translated): *Halal* food is food that is free from filth beginning from raw material preparation, production process, storage, preparation, manufacturing, packaging and transportation. Above all, it must be clean and safe for consumption.

In addition, Muslims are taught that it is a virtue to consume only *halal* food. To further illustrate, a standardized translated text of a Friday sermon on 4 July 2008 preached at all mosques

throughout Malaysia listed some precautionary steps for Muslims to know that the food source is *halal* (JAKIM, 2010).

To check and ensure that the food or eating premises are *halal* certified by accredited body such as *halal* logo or certification that are issued by JAKIM. Improve oneself with knowledge on hygienic and food safety prepared by the Ministry of Health, Malaysia and must be very certain that the food is free from suspicious elements.

Food hygiene in a food service operation is the responsibility of everyone working in that establishment (Amjadi & Hussain, 2005). They defined food hygiene as the creation and maintenance of healthful or hygienic conditions. However, food service operations are vulnerable to food-borne illness through errors in purchasing, receiving, storing, preparing and serving food (Amjadi & Hussain, 2005; Powell et al., 2007; Spiegel et al., 2004). This is where food traceability is important as far as *halal* certification is concerned. As a devout and practising Muslim, he/she must deeply consider *halal* food consumption because it signifies being a good Muslim. In *Quran*, *Surah Al-Baqarah* [The Cow] verse, 168 stated:

O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the Evil One, for he is to you an avowed enemy.

Health and Nutrition

Healthy foods seem to be a major concern of many consumers (Rodgers, 2005; Peri, 2006). Here, the health aspects of food are important considerations with the *halal* laws (Regenstein et al., 2003a). In this sense, “Not only is sensitivity to tastes important, but so is sensitivity to religious needs” (Dana & Vignali, 1998, p. 50). In Bonne et al. (2007) study of *halal* meat, they found that the attribute “ritual slaughter” is strongly associated with the value of “faith” followed by “health” and “tradition”. An interesting result from their study was that the consumption of *halal* meat for Muslims was quite different from the consumption of “regular” meat or other foods for non-Muslims. Here, eating *halal* meat is not an automatic process, which is eating without reasoning. It is significantly related to the high level of personal importance attached to *halal* meat consumption due to religious associations.

Din (2006) stressed that Malaysia took the initiative to cater for good and pure meat products when it comes to the consumption of *halal* food. This is to fulfill the demand from

Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Iran as Malaysia is aiming to be a *halal* hub country. In response, the consumers are pleased because they not only obtain *halal* food, but also gain high quality food. Al-Harran and Low (2008) noted that non-Muslim suppliers who might not have heard or eaten *halal* food in their whole life have been very successful in supplying *halal* goods to the Muslim market. Europe, Australia, New Zealand and United States of America are the major exporters for *halal* poultry, meat, dairy products and other foods.

Traceability

A traceability system provides a set of data about the location of food and food ingredients along the supply chain that include from the end user to the producer and even to the suppliers of the producer (Meuwissen et al., 2003). Furthermore, it is suggested that traceability systems can be set up to increase transparency for instance the country of origin that is likely to increase consumers' trust in food safety. Then, traceability is to reduce the risk of liability claims and improve recall efficiency where with an adequate system, the quality of recalls can be improved and reduce costs and at the same time to develop the image of the supply chain. Traceability system is likely to enhance the control of animal movements between farms in order to control the livestock epidemics.

Islamic dietary laws stand from a set of principles, standards and rules to be applied throughout the production and distribution process (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). Kirwan (2006) pointed out that product traceability has become a major concern for the consumers to assess the food quality. On the other hand, traceability and food safety were also interrelated and often led to closer links among value chain members (Grunert, 2005). However, this requires good communication and co-operation between the members as intelligence on consumer demands has to travel all the way back to farm level.

As noted above, the production and processing processes are some of the key determinants of food traceability, quality and safety (Peri, 2006), with requirements concerning the production context focussed on how, when and where food product was produced being sometimes more important than the food itself. According to Farm and Jacoby (2005), consumers are now demanding fresh, authentic quality menu items due to their concern about food safety, nutrition and seeking to know where their food come from and how it is produced. It also suggests that the consumers are choosing certification as a value while sustaining an enjoyable dining experience.

Every step from “farm to table” appeared to be critical before consumption (Abdul Talib et al., 2008).

Muslim customers will gain peace of mind and simultaneously increase their confidence level when the foods they seek are *halal* certified. They placed high confidence that the food served conform to the standard set by the religious authority. It is not only the foods that must be trusted. It is the whole system that supports the expectations of restaurant managers and consumers with respect to *halal* certification. Ideally, traceability therefore requires the creation of a standardized information system that includes all food at all stages of production, from farm to fork (Popper, 2007), with the Malaysian regulatory system for *halal* moving substantially in this direction.

4.7 Chapter Summary

Halal has become an important concept in Malaysia as the food service industries are becoming more aggressive in promoting its *halal* status. *Halal* food attributes are represented by *halal* certification, with the number of patrons of *halal* certified restaurants believed to be increasing (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009). However, despite the increased regulatory and marketing attention given by Malaysian authorities to *halal* food, there is very little research on the *halal* restaurant sector. Nevertheless, this chapter has sought to describe different aspects of *halal* certification pertaining to the restaurant industry and its characteristics. Ideally, with certification, restaurant owners and operators should be more responsible in maintaining the *halal* standard of the food they prepare and serve (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009; Mohd Yusoff, 2004).

Apart from having *halal* certification to suit the religious dietary restriction of the Muslims, restaurant managers felt that the status also provides commercial value (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). A point raised by Al-Harran and Low (2008) with respect to *halal* marketing is that, it is very much like marketing for any other products and the 4Ps of the marketing mix should be applicable. However, it is also an integrating process where the Muslim and non-Muslim patrons can dine together in a multicultural country like Malaysia. In addition, *halal* restaurant operators must understand the *halal* concept clearly as Muslims in the country have become more religious or *halal* food concerns have increased in terms of their consumption habits (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009). Additionally, Islamic or *halal* tourism has become a new trend in the tourism industry and also a powerful force especially within the Middle East with outstanding prospects.

In conclusion, with the increasing demand and concern on safe and suitable food for consumption, food service operators will have to do something in the preparation or service of a meal that will not go against the dietary rules of Islamic religion. If violation occurs, then a Muslim customer will feel that his or her religious identity and security maybe compromised. The multiple ethnicities of Malaysia have complex patterns of demand particularly in the food service industry. Each religion has its own dietary restriction and restaurateurs have to adapt to local customs apart from ensuring that the food is safe in all aspects. Nevertheless, restaurants should also recognize that the Muslim customers would be loyal when they not only get the products or services they want, but also when assured that the *halal* status of the product is unquestionable (Al-Harran & Low, 2008). The next chapter will discuss the methods used to see whether this is in fact the case.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology employed in the study. As stated in Chapter One this thesis will examine the expectations of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification in Malaysia. As noted throughout the chapters on literature review the role of *halal* certification in restaurants has been hardly studied at all (Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003; Wan Hassan 2008), while the certification and quality processes associated with *halal* in general have also attracted relatively little attention in English language literature. Furthermore, there were academic writings that were focused on ritual slaughtering and Muslim consumers' attitudes toward *halal* foods (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Bonne et al., 2007; Dahalan, 2008; Wan Omar et al., 2008). Therefore, this study covers significant new ground with respect to restaurant and hospitality management and marketing literature in its examination of the attitudes and expectations of *halal* certified restaurant managers, *halal* claimant and non-*halal* restaurants toward *halal* certification.

In this chapter, issues of research design, data collection, sampling technique, the measuring instrument and data analysis will be discussed. In order to execute the data collection process, questionnaires were administered throughout the nation as well as conducting interview sessions. A five point Likert scale questionnaires were delivered to restaurant managers in 13 states and one Federal Territory across Malaysia using postal survey. In addition, 33 restaurant managers participated in interviews in order to gather qualitative data on their understandings of the *halal* concept and certification. The data collected were then entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and further analyzed and interpreted.

5.1 Research Design

The goal of the thesis is to better understand the dimensions of *halal* certification that is expected to be significant in the hospitality industry given that there is little documentation on the understanding of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification in Malaysia or in any other country except New Zealand (Wan Hassan, 2008). To the author's knowledge, this study is the first to examine the underlying attributes of *halal* certification in restaurants in Malaysia and may provide important insights for the development of the *halal* status.

As noted in Chapter Three there is a small amount of research on *halal* restaurants in Malaysia from the consumer perspective. In a study on consumers' choice of restaurants, Josiam et al. (2007) found that *halal* certification was one of the least important factors in restaurant selection. In contrast, Aliman and Othman (2007) stressed that conformity to religious requirements appeared to be among the most important attributes. Even though this study does not cover or study consumer attitudes, this study on *halal* certification should provide further context for understanding some of the issues associated with restaurant selection via the perceptions of a sample of restaurant managers.

A clear difference between this research and previous studies on *halal* certification in Malaysia is in the type of the respondents. This study focuses on Malaysian restaurant managers as the respondents whereby Aliman and Othman (2007) selected Malaysian food buyers and Josiam et al. (2007) chose mostly Malaysian restaurant customers as their sampling unit. Above all, the previous studies highlighted above did not cover *halal* food and certification in detail and no study has focused specifically on the perceptions of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification in Malaysia.

5.2 Sampling Procedure and Data Collection

A research design is a framework or blueprint for conducting a research project (Malhotra, 2008). This study took a two-stage mixed method approach to collecting data. It is believed that both quantitative and qualitative researches are important and useful. The author found that both methods have many benefits where in some situations qualitative approach would be more appropriate and in some aspects, the quantitative approach serves more objective reality. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) emphasized that in some situations, researchers can put together insights and procedures from both approaches to produce a superior product. Furthermore, quantitative approach is based on positivism whereas qualitative approach is based on interpretivism (Sale et al., 2002).

In the first stage, a quantitative approach was taken, where a mail survey was sent to 2080 managers of restaurants in Malaysia that were either: (1) certified to serving *halal* food (*halal* certified), (2) were not certified to serving *halal* food but claimed they were (*halal* claimant), or (3) non-*halal* eating establishments (non *halal*). By including managers of all three restaurant-types,

this study sought to fully understand the perception of *halal* certification within the Malaysian restaurant sector.

Restaurants were selected using systematic sampling, where every fourth restaurant was selected from a list of 8320 provided by the Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia/ Companies Commission of Malaysia. This list included restaurants from all thirteen states within Malaysia and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur. Table 5.1 indicated the three types of eating establishments (café, restaurant and others) listed by the Companies Commission of Malaysia (2008). It is noted that Shahrin Rusni, the officer in Companies Commission has sent the list of eating establishments in Malaysia through electronic mail from Companies Commission of Malaysia to the author on 31 July 2008. This survey focused on those restaurants registered as a private limited company or Sendirian Berhad (Sdn Bhd) and listed by the Companies Commission of Malaysia (Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia) (Table 5.2). Under the *Companies Act 1965* a private limited company has a formal business structure where the requirements to form a company are:

- i. A minimum of two subscribers to the shares of the company (Section 14 CA);
- ii. A minimum of two directors (Section 122 CA); and
- iii. A company secretary who can either be:
 - a. an individual who is a member of a professional body prescribed by the Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs; or
 - b. an individual licensed by the Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM)

Both the director and company secretary shall have their principal or only place of residence within Malaysia

Table 5.1: Types of Eating Establishments Registered as Private Limited Companies

	<i>Restaurant</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Café</i>
Kuala Lumpur (Federal Capital)	2781	610	173
Perak	312	74	36
Sabah	311	61	42
Selangor	2428	499	142
Pahang	113	27	3
Kelantan	24	7	2
Sarawak	406	114	46
Johor	617	199	64
Kedah	222	24	15
Melaka	207	34	8
Negeri Sembilan	149	39	7
Pulau Pinang	693	212	66
Perlis	9	0	0
Terengganu	48	2	2
Total	8320	1902	606

Source: Rusni, S. (personal e-mail, July 31, 2008).

Table 5.2: Restaurants Registered as Private Limited Companies as at 31 July 2008

<i>State in Malaysia</i>	<i>Number of Restaurant</i>
	2781
Kuala Lumpur (Federal Capital)	
Perak	312
Sabah	311
Selangor	2428
Pahang	113
Kelantan	24
Sarawak	406
Johor	617
Kedah	222
Melaka	207
Negeri Sembilan	149
Pulau Pinang	693
Perlis	9
Terengganu	48
Total	8320

Source: Rusni, S. (personal e-mail, July 31, 2008).

In the second stage, a series of 33 semi-structured interviews were conducted with restaurant managers in five locations within Malaysia (Selangor, Johor, Pulau Pinang, Perak and Kuala Lumpur). Participants in this stage of the research were recruited using convenience-sampling approach, with at least ten interviews being conducted with managers of each restaurant type (*halal* certified, *halal* claimant and non-*halal*). These interviews allowed the author to further contextualize the quantitative data gathered in the first stage of this study.

Mail Survey

A draft survey instrument was developed and pretested. The cover page of the survey outlined the voluntary nature of the study, informed participants that their responses would remain anonymous, and provided the instructions for returning the survey in the self-addressed envelope provided. A mail survey was chosen due to its low cost and the ability to reach a geographically widespread sample. No incentives were provided in order to encourage participation. As mentioned earlier, restaurants were selected using a systematic random sampling, where every fourth restaurant was selected from the list provided by the Companies Commission of Malaysia.

The survey was designed to measure expectations towards *halal* certification, both in general and in the context of Malaysia. All items were measured using five-point Likert scales that were anchored from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Respondents were informed that if they did not wish to proceed, they could stop at any time they wanted. They were also informed that all data provided would be treated strictly confidentially and that anonymity would be preserved. The survey instrument took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to be completed. Respondents were required to return the completed questionnaire to the author in the self-addressed envelope provided with a paid postage.

In July 2009, 2080 questionnaires were mailed throughout Malaysia. The survey period was concluded in September 2009 after follow ups were conducted with non-respondents. A total of 643 restaurant managers completed the mail survey, thus giving an effective response rate of 30.9%. Postal surveys are becoming an increasingly popular method of conducting research in Malaysia although the response rates from these surveys are not well studied (Yeap et al., 2002). Harzing (2000) indicated that the response rate for food and beverages industry was 18.4% whereas Yaacob (2008) in his mail survey conducted in Malaysia obtained 10 % of response rate. Due to some limitations that have been highlighted in Chapter One, follow-ups were done 2 months after the delivery and showed some increasing results.

Questionnaire Development

Survey questions were provided in English in order to ensure better understanding among respondents and to avoid misinterpretation of terms and meanings if translated in Bahasa Melayu (Malay Language). The questionnaire was divided into five sections (Appendix A). Section A was on business demographics whereby some general information on the eating establishment was asked such as its name, city, seating capacity, experience, number of employees and whether the premise falls into *halal* certified, *halal* claimant or non *halal* restaurant. Section B examined the perceptions of the restaurant managers towards the premises they were working in. The restaurant managers' perceptions of *halal* certification in general were asked in Section C, while Section D was on what restaurant managers' specifically thought of *halal* certification in Malaysia. Section E of the instrument was designed to collect the demographic information of the respondents such as age, gender, religion, race and educational background. The section on age started from 21-30 because 60% of the workforce in Malaysia are below 35 years of age (Abdul Ghani et al., 2001).

The questionnaire was developed on the basis of the literature outlined in the previous chapters and in light of the overall objective of the thesis. Despite the paucity of relevant literature on *halal* matters, particularly on *halal* certification at eating establishments, there are a number of significant themes that have been derived from previous studies that help inform the survey questions. These are briefly listed in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Generating Survey Questions

<i>Question number</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Comment on contribution of reference</i>
	<i>This restaurant</i>		
11	serves quality foods	Riaz & Chaudry (2004)	<i>Halal</i> foods are often perceived as being especially selected and processed to achieve the highest standards of quality. This is in keeping with religious obligations.
16	international cuisine only	Al-Harran & Low (2008)	Local tastes with respect to food are changing and becoming more internationalized.
17	local cuisine only		

18	local and international cuisine		
19	prepares food that is according to the food safety standard.	Mohd Yusoff (2004) Badrie et al. (2006); Knight et al. (2007)	All the products and raw materials used must be safe and will not cause harm to health. Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about food safety standards and systems.
23	welcomes routine inspection from related authority	Rennie (1994)	Ongoing reinforcement of hygiene messages in the workplace is essential if desired food handling practices are to be sustained. Improvement in food hygiene practices can be fostered by provision of a physical and social environment which supports the application of appropriate food handling behaviours. Routine restaurant inspections are essential in maintaining food safety and preventing food-borne illness.
<i>I think that halal certification in restaurants</i>			
34	signifies food quality	Shamsudin & Selamat (2005); Muhammad (2007)	<i>Halal</i> certification is a form of quality assurance.
36	signifies healthy food	Regenstein et al. (2003)	Relies on trust on the suppliers when purchasing the food items.
38	signifies trust	Mohamed Nasir & Pereira (2008) Aliman & Othman(2007)	The issue of ‘trust’ and ‘peace of mind’ emerges from the work of several authors with respect to consumer perceptions of the <i>halal</i> certified food as well as other food certification programs.
39	signifies being hygienic	Pang & Toh (2008); Shafie & Othman	Muslim consumers in Malaysia also appear to be becoming more sensitive to <i>halal</i> conformance.
40	signifies safety	De Jonge et al. (2008)	Their study on Muslim and Buddhist hawkers’ food safety in Malaysia revealed that religion might have been a reason for better food safety practice in Malay hawkers.
41	signifies all food	Shafie & Othman (2004); Riaz & Chaudry (2004);	Premises preparing and selling <i>halal</i> food must be clean and free of elements which

	sources are <i>halal</i> certified	Linton et al.(1998); Abdul Talib et al. (2008)	may cause infestation of flies, rats, cockroaches, lizards and other such pests. Workers must be healthy, wear clean protective clothing and cover their heads to avoid contamination. Equipment used must be washed frequently to ensure cleanliness including washroom facilities.
			Proposed that appropriate risk management and communication practices, such as certification, reduce the negative effects associated with food related hazards. All elements of the restaurant supply chain must be <i>halal</i> . Traceability aspects of food are an important consideration of the <i>halal</i> certification laws.
45	demand from the Muslim customers	Chang (2006)	With 60% of population being Muslim, the demand for <i>halal</i> foods by Malaysian consumers has increased over the years. They have expressed concerns and expected that a <i>halal</i> standard in food products have extended from meat and meat products to non meat based products.
47	increases confidence level among the Muslim customers	Al-Harran & Low (2008)	<i>Halal</i> certification has the potential to gain confidence amongst the Muslim and non-Muslim society because the concept of <i>halal</i> covers everything from farm to fork.
48	increases confidence level among the non-Muslims customers		
52	attracts the tourism market	Al-Harran & Low(2008);Mohd Yusoff (2004); Chang (2006)	There has been a substantial increase in tourism to Malaysia from both Muslim and non-Muslim countries along with increased awareness of <i>halal</i> in what were traditionally non-Muslim countries as a result of migration. The growth in tourism is expected to fuel the growth of restaurants offering international cuisines such as Middle Eastern and Latin American food.

I believe that other restaurant managers think of halal certification in Malaysia

55	as an important aspect in the food service industry	Al-Harran (2008); National Development Council (2006)	& Low SME (2006)	<i>Halal</i> certification has become a way of assuring consumers as to the quality and integrity of <i>halal</i> food.
62	is a standard that is difficult to follow	National SME Development Council (2006); Mohd Yusoff (2004)		Difficulties in examining the sometimes long supply chains of <i>halal</i> food.
63	is a standard that is difficult to maintain			<i>Halal</i> eating rules is a stringent standard.

5.3 Data Analysis

Statistical analysis of the data surveyed was performed using Statistical Package for Social Science, Version 18.0. The analysis started with the summary of business and personal demographics. The frequencies and percentages were then computed to analyze respondents' profile in terms of age, gender, race, religion, educational background and business demographic variables. The overall profile of respondents was analyzed using descriptive analysis such as means and standard deviation for each variable obtained.

There were four techniques employed to further analyze the data. The first technique was by using factor analysis where it grouped variables according to shared variance. Therefore, several unique factors were listed that signify *halal* certification. The second technique was cluster analysis, which was performed to group cases. It is interesting to find out the expectations of the restaurant managers that denote the most significant variable of *halal* certification to each cluster. The third technique was the cross tabulation and independent t-test was performed for the last technique.

In qualitative research, all data was transcribed and analyzed. The author ensured that the data was treated as strictly confidential. It is important to organize the data accordingly in order to verify conclusions. In addition, thirty-three interview sessions which were done concurrently with the mail survey offered great depth and support in discovering the dimensions, factors and perceived attributes of *halal* certification at restaurants. Above all, the goal of qualitative research is to decipher, examine and interpret meaningful patterns or themes that come from the data (Malhotra, 2008).

5.4 Semi Structured Interview

Apart from the survey, qualitative research was undertaken to obtain more information from the restaurant managers and to better contextualize the survey results. Semi structured interviews that involved fixed but open-ended questionnaire framework were conducted in the main urban centers of Malaysia. Initially, a systematic random sampling approach was used selecting every tenth restaurant from the list of companies provided by the Companies Commission of Malaysia. However, due to a range of limitations which include selected restaurants did not operate during normal working hours, would resume business operations late evening, eating premises have stopped operations or moved. Considering the overall time and cost, the author had adopted a convenience sampling approach. The author entered the eating premises and met personally with the restaurant managers and asked their permission as to whether they were willing to participate or not. These experiences will be further discussed later in this chapter. As a result, data was drawn from a series of interviews with 33 restaurant managers (Table 5.4). Due to better accessibility, there were more participants in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. Restaurant managers from *halal* certified, *halal* claimant and non-*halal* restaurants were selected from the five areas.

Table 5.4: The Selection of Restaurant Managers for Semi-structured Interview

<i>Area/Restaurants</i>	<i>Halal certified</i>	<i>Halal claimant</i>	<i>non-Halal</i>
Kuala Lumpur	5	6	5
Selangor	2	3	2
Perak	1	1	1
Pulau Pinang	1	2	1
Johor	1	1	1
TOTAL	10	13	10

A semi-structured questionnaire framework was used which allowed the managers to respond freely. The interviews took between thirty minutes to one hour per session and were conducted over a span of three months. The main focus of the interviews was to get the respondents to reflect, comment and describe their understanding and expectation of *halal* certification and experiences operating an eating premise in a multicultural country like Malaysia. Seven topics served as the primary focus of discussions with restaurant managers:

- 1) Impression on *halal* certification
- 2) The importance of *halal* certification
- 3) The reliability of *halal* certification
- 4) The connection of *halal* certification on customers
- 5) The reliability of the food supply chain
- 6) The problems of *halal* certification
- 7) The restaurant managers' views and experiences of operating an eating premise in relation to *halal* certification in a plural society like Malaysia

A copy of the interview questions is contained in Appendix 2.

5.5 Expression of Experiences: Conducting Interviews in Malaysia

There is a significant issue in undertaking a more open form of interviews in the field in the position of the researcher and the nature of the relationship between researcher and respondents (Hall, 2010). Given that the only other doctoral thesis on *halal* restaurant certification was undertaken in New Zealand (Wan Hassan, 2008), it should be noted that there were issues associated with field interviews conducted by a female Muslim and this researcher felt that it was appropriate to include her own insights as a source of comparison as well as providing readers with an all-round account of her own positionality in the qualitative research component of the thesis.

Having a local topic and expecting to meet familiar faces was something that she was looking forward to before she conducted this research. This natural overwhelming feeling developed as she always said to herself that, 'I know my own country and the style of its people'. However, when the author read an article by Abd Razak (2005, p. 85), "having shared the values, beliefs, customs, etc sometimes does not give anyone exclusive rights to claim to know it all", she realized that it was absolutely true during her fieldwork when she met and interviewed participants from different ethnicities and religions. As the title on her study focused on *halal* certification at

restaurants, she often thought that the non-Muslims in Malaysia would have little knowledge on *halal* concept and the Islamic dietary laws.

To her surprise, several of the Chinese and Indian restaurant managers who participated during the interview session could explain Muslim religious food far better than the Muslim participants (as discussed in Chapter Seven). An Indian participant who managed a *halal* certified restaurant deliberately talked about the *halal* supply chain and its connection to *halal* attributes that covered trust and confidence. The Indian Restaurant Manager also made marked comparisons on the operations and criticized some *halal* claimant restaurants that were operated particularly by non-Muslims especially on matters pertaining to *halal* compliance. In addition, the author also found out that the non-Muslim participants were also aware of the punishments during the afterlife like their Muslim counterparts.

Again, being complacent with the people and environment made the author neglect the respondents' immediate responses. It was disappointing when calls made to invite selected restaurant managers were turned down. The initial stage of having to conduct the interviews according to every tenth of the list given by Companies Commission of Malaysia was changed to convenience sampling as selected restaurant managers gave multiple reasons of not wanting to participate. They would give excuses such as that their restaurants did not operate during normal hours, that it was time consuming because they were too occupied with their busy schedule, that the topic was very sensitive for them to discuss, and that there was a language barrier where some participants from non-*halal* restaurants who were mostly Chinese could not converse fluently either in Bahasa Melayu or in English. This was confirmed with a participant who was Siamese-Malay who could hardly communicate in Bahasa.

One of the main reasons that participants did not show interest and were afraid to become the subject during the interview was because of the topic of the survey. To them, discussing a religious issue pertaining to food was inappropriate in this plural society, as it would lead to racial tension. In order to maintain the brotherhood and harmony of the country, one should just keep quiet and refuse to participate. This fear of taking the risk has a connection with the racial riot in Kuala Lumpur on May 13, 1969 that had killed many people (Ong, 1990).

Here, mixed emotions took place as the author was coping with time and the number of participants who have agreed to become the subject. Hall (2010, p. 317) highlighted that fieldwork is as much about emotion and the author agreed on that as in 12 days, she only managed to get

only 2 participants. Walford (2001) believed that researchers need to excel in the art of selling themselves and their research through more effective micro-level interactions during the access negotiations process. In order to persuade more restaurant managers to become the subject, she presented her name card and introduced herself as a postgraduate student and a researcher. With that, she managed to get quite a number of restaurant managers who were interested to be interviewed.

In such a situation, she felt that she needed a strategy to gain their interest to participate in her research, as the public appears quite pessimistic about academic surveys and interviews. Through her experience, Malaysians will respect someone who studied or graduated from overseas particularly from English speaking countries, as the chance of studying abroad is not easy to obtain. For them, those people are the chosen ones and possess power. This has been well presented by Abd Razak (2005, p. 85) with regards to power and people.

Malaysia is a hierarchical society, for having power is an exclusive right: thus one has to respect those who possess power. The person with power is seen as a significant and important person, since it is important to present what and who you are in the eyes of others, for it is important to be 'what others see and think of them'. The notion of 'looking up to' was taken literally.

During the interviews, some questions were asked indirectly or open for further discussion, as the author was fully aware of the sensitivity of the title. The majority of the participants gave inspiring comments and suggestions on her research since *halal* certification was highly demanded by the customers (see Chapter Seven). The participants were interested in making a significant contribution to this study given that Malaysian government is set to become a global *halal* hub. Within this context, there are similar findings with the academic study performed by Wan Hassan and Hall (2003, p. 99) in their research at *halal* restaurants in New Zealand where they found that Muslim consumers in New Zealand urgently need statutory or legislative regulations and stronger guidelines pertaining to the issue of *halal* food.

The experiences faced as a Muslim female researcher while conducting research in her home country has contributed many advantages including good cooperation among respondents, pleasant discussions and positive feedbacks. The author did not encounter any problems with the way she dress although Abd Razak (2005) emphasized special attention must be given in presenting one selves specifically with respect to dress and fashion. However, the nature of the

author's fieldwork has led her to meet the restaurant managers directly without having to get any approval from 'gatekeepers' as found in Abd Razak (2005) and Lahmar (2009).

Furthermore, understanding religious and social rules of what was expected from her as a Muslim and female researcher in Malaysia was important to avoid fuelling any kind of suspicious or feeling of disrespect, which might cause some potential problems with individual respondent. Wan Hassan (2010, p. 120) discussed in detail the importance of having a *mahram* when some Muslim men were uncomfortable being interviewed by a woman in New Zealand. A mahram is any man with whom a woman has a relationship (of blood or fosterage) that precludes marriage. Mahram men include a father, grandfather, son, grandson, brother, uncle, granduncle, nephew, grandnephew, a mother's husband, a husband's son and a father in law to name a few. This situation was rather different if compared to the author's experience in Malaysia, as the Muslim men were quite liberal and open to discussion although there was a distance while interacting during the interview session.

5.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the methods used to conduct this research were discussed. Given the research that covered the whole country, a nationwide mail survey was conducted to administer the questionnaires. Interview sessions were also performed to better contextualize the results of the mail survey. The response rate for the mail survey was reasonable, that accumulated to almost 31 percent considering the nature of the study and the limitations. The research design, sampling technique, data collection and data analysis chosen were the most appropriate methods to undertake this survey in a multicultural country such as Malaysia. Although the methods used have several advantages like it gathered more findings and could support the previous research, at the same time, limitations did occur. For example, due to some religious and nature of the topic, some of the questions were asked indirectly. Another limitation was the response rate resulting from using mail survey and time constraints from the need to traveling from one place to another in conducting interviews. Performing research in Malaysia has given the author a new experience as it opens her to a set of values and behavioral patterns amongst the participants, as *halal* matter is a sensitive issue to be discussed.

Within this context, the sample was taken from Malaysia only and limited to drawing generalization from the findings to the broader restaurant managers in other multicultural countries. However, it is a totally new finding as there is no study done specifically focusing on *halal* certification at restaurants with the restaurant managers as the respondents. It is also expected

that the findings will generate more insights and understandings on *halal* certification and its attributes and their connections with *halal* standard and Islamic dietary restriction.

Above all, this study has contributed new findings on restaurant manager expectations toward *halal* certification particularly in Malaysia, which has never been studied before in this country. The result is significant to individuals and organizations that cover the government, private sectors, food service industry players and the education institutions, as *halal* food is demanded by the Muslims as well as the non-Muslims. In this study, the *halal* status is an essential part to inform the Muslim customers that the food offered is fit for consumption. Findings for mail survey will be discussed further in Chapter Six and results generated from the interviews will be explained in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS – MAIL SURVEY

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data gathered through the mail survey. It starts with the business and personal demographic profile of the participants. A postal survey was chosen to administer the 2080 questionnaires to selected restaurant managers in thirteen states- Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Selangor, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Sabah, Sarawak and the capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. Participants who took part represented the different types of restaurants, namely *halal* certified, non-certified but claim to serve *halal* food and non-*halal* restaurants.

The next section presents the descriptive statistics for each variable. In order to ascertain the distribution of the data, means and standard deviations were calculated. Here, three types of perceptions from different contexts were gathered; perceptions of your own restaurant, perceptions toward *halal* certification in general and perceptions toward *halal* certification in Malaysia. This is to broaden our understanding and to provide better insight regarding the expectations of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification.

The questions that were asked under perceptions of your own restaurant encompassed restaurant characteristics, serving options, related certification standards and the owner's dietary restrictions. Meanwhile, perceptions toward *halal* certification in general derived the findings on *halal* certification attributes, the potential impact of *halal* certification and any added advantages in terms of marketing. The final section on perceptions toward *halal* certification in Malaysia was to determine what the participants believed that other restaurant managers thought of *halal* certification. It started from the importance and acceptance of *halal* certification to the issues pertaining to application, maintaining and conforming to the *halal* standard.

Factor analysis is conducted to derive factors related to *halal* certification. Reliability analysis is then conducted to determine the internal consistency of the resultant factors. Next, cluster analysis is performed to classify cases into categories and identify the actual groups that have similarities or differences toward their expectations of *halal* certification. This cluster analysis is then tested and analyzed through mean scores and profiled according to the nature of

the differences between clusters. Cross tabulation is also performed to provide better insights and to facilitate comparisons between variables. Next, independent t-test is measured to inspect on the differences between the Muslim and non Muslim respondents.

6.1 Business and Personal Demographic Profile

This research used the mail survey method to gather information from prospective respondents as discussed in Chapter Five. A total of 2080 questionnaires were administered throughout Malaysia and 643 restaurant managers responded, which contributed to a 31 percent response rate. They represented three types of eating establishments; *halal* certified, non-certified but claim to serve *halal* foods and non-*halal* restaurants. Data was collected over a three month period from July to September 2009. The response rate is considered high with respect to the literature on the use of postal surveys in Malaysia (Harzing, 2000; Yaacob, 2008).

Respondents were from different age groups, races, religions and educational backgrounds, which provided some rich and unique findings in the context of this study. Furthermore, they signify Malaysia as a multicultural and multiracial country. A representative distribution of gender and ethnicities is advantageous to this study as it keeps bias to a minimum. Another factor is that most of the restaurant managers had good qualifications, which will have helped them to answer the questionnaires.

As presented in Table 6.1, a nationwide mail survey has been conducted involving 13 states and one Federal Territory. Kuala Lumpur and Selangor had the highest participation with 215 and 238 respondents respectively. Most of the responses came from the western part of the peninsular namely Pulau Pinang, Johor, Melaka and Negeri Sembilan. Apart from that, a poor response rate was gathered from the East Coast states such as Kelantan and Terengganu except for Pahang that showed 23 restaurant managers participated (3.58%). The two states in East Malaysia have shown extremely poor response with 10 (1.56%) in Sabah and only 1 (0.16%) in Sarawak. The response rates varied so much between regions is particularly due to the low level of awareness towards the importance of *halal* certification in restaurants. It can also be argued that the attitude of the restaurant managers in urban areas in Peninsular Malaysia specifically in the west coast is more promising in answering the survey questions as they expect that *halal* certification is significant to their business operations if compared to their counterparts in the east coast or even in Sabah and Sarawak. This is supported by an exploratory study conducted by Yen et al. (2009) in Sarawak that the mail survey conducted by them received slow responses and they have to do follow up by

phone calls. Respondents that operated restaurants, which had seating capacity of 51-100 have given the highest response (43.55%).

It seemed that restaurant managers with small numbers of employees provided a good response and returned the questionnaires compared to those who managed more than that (Table 6.1). The statistics proved that managers were willing to respond when having smaller number of employees. Employing more than 20 staff is uncommon in the Malaysian restaurant industry. The majority of the respondents (85.69%) had worked in their current position for less than five years, and none of the participants had worked for more than 30 years. 381 of the respondents (59.25%) had worked in the food service industry for less than five years and none with experience of 30 years and above. More than 50% of the participants came from *halal* certified restaurants (57.70%), followed by restaurants that were non-certified but claim to serve *halal* food (33.13%) and the remaining (9.18%) from non-*halal* restaurants.

A total of 643 restaurant managers have participated in the mail survey and most of them belong to the age group of 21-30 years old. The number of male respondents was higher than the female respondents with 397 to 246 respectively. As indicated in Table 6.2, the majority of participants were Muslim (61.59%), followed by Buddhist (24.73%), Christian (5.75%), Hindu (4.04%) and from other religions (3.89%). It showed that the number of Malay restaurant managers who responded to the mail survey has the highest percentage with 55.83% and the least from other religions with 9.02%. Most of the respondents involved in this study possessed the academic qualification level of secondary school (23.95%), Diploma (33.44%) and Bachelor's Degree (19.60%). The rest of the respondents held Masters Degree and others at 2.64% and 7.93% respectively.

Table 6.1: Summary of Business Demographics

<i>Business Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
City/State	Kuala Lumpur	215	33.44
	Selangor	238	37.01
	Perak	13	2.02
	Pulau Pinang	38	5.91
	Kedah	16	2.49
	Perlis	2	0.31
	Kelantan	2	0.31
	Terengganu	3	0.47
	Pahang	23	3.58
	Johor	38	5.91
	Melaka	23	3.58
	Negeri Sembilan	21	3.27
	Sabah	10	1.56
	Sarawak	1	0.16
	Total	643	100%
Seating Capacity	Below than 50	171	26.59
	51-100	280	43.55
	101-150	111	17.26
	151-200	41	6.38
	More than 200	40	6.22
		Total	643
Number of Employees	Below than 10	319	49.61
	11-20	233	36.24
	21-30	50	7.78
	31-40	18	2.80
	More than 40	23	3.58
		Total	643
Number of Years Working in Current Position	Less than 5 years	551	85.69
	6-10 years	69	10.73
	11-20 years	22	3.42
	21-30 years	1	0.16
	More than 30 years	0	0
		Total	643
Number of Years Working in Food Service Industry	Less than 5 years	381	59.25
	6-10 years	153	23.79
	11-20 years	97	15.09
	21-30 years	12	1.87
	More than 30 years	0	0
		Total	643
Type of Eating Establishment	Certified <i>Halal</i>	371	57.70
	<i>Halal</i> Claimant	213	33.13
	Non <i>Halal</i>	59	9.18
	Total	643	100%

Table 6.2: Summary of Personal Demographics

<i>Personal Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	Below 21	32	4.98
	21-30	339	52.72
	31-40	187	29.08
	41-50	61	9.49
	51-60	20	3.11
	61 and above	4	0.62
	Total	643	100%
Gender	Male	397	61.74
	Female	246	38.26
	Total	643	100%
Religion	Buddhist	159	24.73
	Christian	37	5.75
	Hindu	26	4.04
	Muslim	396	61.59
	Other	25	3.89
	Total	643	100%
Race	Chinese	189	29.39
	Indian	37	5.75
	Malay	359	55.83
	Other	58	9.02
	Total	643	100%
Educational Background	Doctor of Philosophy	0	0
	Masters Degree	17	2.64
	Bachelor Degree	126	19.60
	Diploma	215	33.44
	Certificate	80	12.44
	Secondary School	154	23.95
	Other	51	7.93
	Total	643	100%

6.2 Data Analysis

Six statistical tools were employed to analyze the data in this survey; frequencies, factor analysis, reliability analysis using Cronbach Alpha, cluster analysis, cross tabulation and independent t- test:

- 1) Frequency analysis is employed to observe the number of responses that can be obtained from the respondents (Sekaran, 2000; Zikmund, 2003). Furthermore, it is used to describe the basic features of data using tables, graphs and summary statistics.
- 2) Factor analysis is about variables (Mulaik, 2010) and it is undertaken to gather information about the interrelationships among a set of variables (Pallant, 2007). Thus, it measures aspects of the same underlying dimension that are known as factors (Field, 2005). Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) highlighted that the identification of factors was important. They reasoned that, it could provide useful theoretical insights into underlying relationships and patterns in the data. It took a large set of variables and looked for a way the data might be reduced or summarised using a smaller set of factors or components (Pallant, 2007). In another aspect, the primary purpose of factor analysis is to define underlying structure in a data matrix (Grimm & Yarnold, 2005; Hair et al., 1995; Hair et al., 2006). Factor analysis was performed in this study to identify the underlying structure of the items on *halal* certification. The reason for this test was to determine the factors perceived by the respondents relating to *halal* certification in terms of *halal* attributes, Muslim and non-Muslim customers, marketing aspects, cost of certification and awareness.
- 3) Validity and reliability tests are essential for testing the goodness of measure. Internal consistency analysis (Cronbach α) was employed to confirm the reliability of each research factor. The closer the Cronbach's alpha value is to one, the higher the internal consistent reliability (Sekaran, 2000).
- 4) Cluster analysis is a technique which allows researchers to categorise large numbers of cases into a smaller subset of clusters (Coakes & Steed, 1999) and it has wide variety of procedures to create classifications (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1985). In this research, cluster analysis was used to group respondents into mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive groups with high homogeneity within clusters and low homogeneity between clusters. In other words, cluster analysis helped to identify the

different expectations toward *halal* certification particularly from the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents.

However, most of the literature has shown that clustering methods were still poorly understood in comparison to such multivariate statistical procedures as factor analysis, discriminant analysis and multidimensional scaling due to the fact that early work in cluster analysis was done by biologists (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1985; Coakes & Steed, 1999; Everitt, 2005). Thus, it leads to biases that accompany the presentation and description of the result as what may be useful in psychology might not be useful to the biologist (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1985). Above all, the technique of cluster analysis appeared a dramatic growth in recent years as a way of understanding complex domains to cluster elements into homogeneous groups (Coakes & Steed, 1999). Considering the research nature which was essentially exploratory, cluster analysis was performed to examine the data.

- 5) Cross tabulation involves analyzing results by groups, categories or classes (Zikmund, 2003). Furthermore, the fundamental aspect of conducting cross tabulation is to allow the inspection of differences among groups and to make comparisons between selected variables. The selection of variables is related to the results in factor analysis to show a significant link and supporting results between these two statistical tools.

Independent t-test is performed to examine the differences between groups (Sekaran, 2000). In this context, the t-test may be used to test a hypothesis stating that the mean scores on some variable will be significantly different for two independent samples or groups (Zikmund, 2003). As this is an exploratory study, the independent t-test is conducted to answer the research questions.

Analysis of Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used in order to further explain the characteristics of the three variables on perceptions of your own restaurant, perceptions toward *halal* certification in general and perceptions toward *halal* certification in Malaysia. In the output presented in Table 6.3 to 6.5, the information for each variable is summarized. There were many negatively skewed values in the three tables which indicate a clustering of scores at the high end. Skewness is not an essential part in the analysis as the survey has a large sample of 643. This is supported by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) as “with reasonably large samples, skewness will not make a substantive difference in the analysis”. Each of the constructs in this study was measured on five-point Likert scales, indicating

the importance of each factor. Based on the questionnaire, the respondents were required to rate their level of agreement with statements using the scales ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5).

Table 6.3: Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions of Your Own Restaurant

<i>Questions</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Std.Error</i>
This restaurant...					
ensures cleanliness during food preparation	643	4.66	.56	-1.62	.10
ensures cleanliness in the kitchen	643	4.63	.62	-1.99	.10
ensures cleanliness in the dining area	643	4.61	.62	-1.69	.10
ensures that all workers follow hygienic working practices	643	4.54	.63	-1.49	.10
maintains hygienic working environment	643	4.53	.63	-1.22	.10
prepares food that is according to the food safety standard	643	4.52	.66	-1.40	.10
emphasizes efficient service	643	4.51	.63	-1.31	.10
serves quality foods	643	4.49	.67	-1.38	.10
ensures safe food handling during the food supply chain	643	4.49	.64	-1.26	.10
emphasizes employee friendliness	643	4.48	.70	-1.55	.10
ensures cleanliness of restrooms	643	4.38	.82	-1.30	.10
welcomes routine inspection from related authority	643	4.31	.72	-.97	.10
have taken actions due to related certification standard	643	4.15	.97	-1.02	.10
is aware that there are some customers that demand <i>halal</i> foods	643	4.13	.99	-1.30	.10
emphasizes on the convenience of location	643	4.07	.78	-.65	.10
serves healthy options	643	4.06	.85	-.94	.10
emphasizes atmosphere	643	4.04	.79	-.69	.10
emphasizes value for money	643	4.00	.81	-.62	.10
serves cultural familiar food	643	3.85	.93	-.68	.10
serves food that meet all religious dietary prohibitions	643	3.47	1.17	-.43	.10
serves local and international cuisine	643	3.38	1.26	-.44	.10
prepares food according to the religious dietary restriction of the owner	643	3.32	1.27	-.32	.10
meets the religious values of the owner	643	3.32	1.20	-.35	.10
serves food that meet some religious dietary prohibitions	643	3.22	1.12	-.23	.10
serves international cuisine only	643	2.72	1.17	.42	.10
serves local cuisine only	643	2.57	1.13	.53	.10
Valid N	643				

Table 6.3 indicates the results for perceptions of your own restaurant. It showed that the mean in ensuring cleanliness during food preparation was the highest with 4.66 and followed by ensuring cleanliness in the kitchen and in the dining area, with 4.63 and 4.61 respectively. A survey done on perceptions of Indian restaurants in Malaysia by Josiam et al. (2007) revealed that restaurant patrons in Malaysia are more demanding customers when it comes to hygiene and cleanliness. Thus, their findings support this study on that matter. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed that their restaurants ensured workers followed hygienic working practices with a mean value of 4.54, followed by maintaining a hygienic working environment where the mean value was 4.53. The restaurant managers were also aware that some customers placed high demand on *halal* foods. Due to that, they have taken actions in relation to some certification standard such as Malaysian Standard on *halal* food and HACCP. This has contributed to the mean value of 4.52. With that, the concept of *halal* food is for everyone that has been mentioned in many studies and articles (Abdul Latif, 2006; Mohd Yusoff, 2004; Muhammad, 2007).

Looking at food safety standards, the results suggested that restaurant managers strongly agreed that they prepared food according to the food safety standards as shown in Table 6.3. According to Mohd Daud (2004), the combination of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and *halal* standard ensured the foods are not only safe but *halal*. This served as a basic requirement for food products and the food trade in Malaysia on the preparation and handling of *halal* foods. The results of this study rejected the statement made by Morrison et al. (1998), that mentioned food service managers are far more concerned with managing costs and optimising customer satisfaction than with HACCP procedures such as inspecting food suppliers' facilities or supervising the sanitising of work surfaces.

Efficient service has always been the subject matter in food service research due to its contribution to the competitiveness of a restaurant (Andaleeb et al., 2006; Carter et al., 2000; Josiam & Monteiro, 2004; Rodgers, 2005). The mean value of 4.51 is shown for efficient service that indicates for the necessity to serve quality foods with a mean of 4.49. Food quality played a significant role in the food service industry where most of the studies on customer loyalty in the restaurant industry emphasized the quality of food as the most important factor (Carter et al., 2000; Clark & Wood, 1998; Johns & Howard, 1998). A similar mean value of 4.49 is also shown in ensuring safe food handling during the food supply chain.

Table 6.3 also confirmed that the respondents emphasized employee friendliness and having clean restrooms with mean values of 4.48 and 4.38, respectively. Within this context, respondents felt that routine inspection from related authorities is important and welcomed such actions, with a mean value of 4.31. In addition, they have taken actions to conform to some of the standards recommended by the authorities including *halal* standards and procedures with a mean value of 4.15. Thus, it reflected that food hygiene is an ultimate factor to be considered by food operators in order to provide foods that are safe and suitable for consumption (Hashim, 2004).

Restaurant managers were also aware that there are some customers who demand *halal* foods even though they are operating non-*halal* restaurants. The mean value of 4.13 indicated that they knew of the increasing demand from the Muslim and non-Muslim customers. Emphasizing the convenience of location had a mean score of 4.07. *Halal* compliance can be considered new among hospitality industry players in Malaysia which suggests further academic contributions in one aspect due to the paucity of published research or studies that highlight this particular *halal* compliance (Zailani et al., 2011). It is emphasized that food consumption and selection is closely linked to religion which has acted as a powerful motive before purchase takes place.

Convenience of location seems to be an important factor in a study by Blum and Harrah (1996) and therefore supports this study. The mean value of 4.06 suggests that serving healthy options is of prime importance. Rodgers (2005) supported the findings when he claimed that restaurant chains have been following nutritional trends and are promoting healthy offerings on their menu. The findings of this study showed similar results with Habib et al. (2011), which found the choice of eating establishment was determined by its location. A strategic location that offers easy accessibility and convenience are the main criteria for choosing a place to eat. Despite those criteria mentioned above, the *halal* status is perceived as a very important factor to all Muslim respondents in their study.

In another aspect, respondents viewed that ambience will give a competitive advantage in order to retain the business (Soriano, 2002a, p. 1058) as cited: “Today, the most important thing is design and concept”. The mean value for emphasizing atmosphere was 4.04. Another factor is value for money where the result was similar with the studies done by some researchers who highlighted price as a contributing factor for return patronage (Andaleeb et al., 2006; Kivela, 1999). Here, the mean value was 4.00. Another study on perceptions of Indian restaurants in Malaysia revealed that South Asians put great importance on “value for money” and “price”

(Josiam et al., 2007). Therefore, South Asians are more price-sensitive in dealing with the price of food.

Most of the respondents agreed that they served culturally familiar food given the mean of 3.85. The same result was gathered by Josiam et al. (2007) where they stated that it is important to serve a culturally familiar food as it reflected the identity of the country and customers will feel themselves at home. It is common in Malaysia and around the world that some restaurants will have its own market segmentation and target market. Thus, these eating establishments serve foods that meet some religious dietary prohibitions. According to Dindyal and Dindyal (2004), many facts have been provided that point to religion playing an important role in many societies and it is considered one of the most guiding roles in food choice and consumption. However the findings show that the restaurant managers were unsure whether the food they served met some or all religious dietary prohibitions with a mean value of 3.22 and 3.47, respectively, as there were three types of restaurants that took part (*halal* certified, *halal* claimant and non *halal*).

However, most of the restaurants that have been selected served both local and international cuisine with a high mean value of 3.38 as the Malaysian government has aggressively promoted the country as a *halal* hub centre (National Small and Medium Enterprise Development Council, 2006). Therefore, restaurant owners and operators are thriving to cater for this call. As a result, restaurants in Malaysia operate with an increasingly more ethnically and culturally diverse customer base of locals and tourists (Josiam et al., 2007).

In another context, participants agreed that their restaurants prepared food according to religious dietary restrictions and that they met the religious values of the owners with a mean value of 3.32. Taking the Muslim restaurant managers or owners as the example, it is expected that the Muslim customers can find *halal* food easily either by identifying the ethnic origin of the seller and the menu that shows the availability of food choices being offered which are *halal* in terms of their definitions. This is supported by Shafie and Othman (2006) that pointed out that the Malaysian government is concerned in applying the religious principles and values. It is at the same time to support the majority Muslim population that consider purchasing *halal* products as well as *halal* food for consumption (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009). On the other hand, the majority of the respondents disagreed that they served international cuisine only as the mean value is 2.72 when answering some questions on the type of food being served in the restaurant. Interestingly, a low mean value is also indicated for the question on serving local cuisine only with 2.57.

Table 6.4: Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions Toward *Halal* Certification in General

<i>Questions</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
I think <i>halal</i> certification in restaurants...					
signifies all food sources are <i>halal</i> certified	643	4.41	.80	-1.46	.10
increases confidence level among the Muslim customers	643	4.40	.81	-1.59	.10
signifies conformance to <i>halal</i> standard	643	4.39	.74	-1.33	.10
signifies trust	643	4.37	.80	-1.38	.10
has a positive impact on customer satisfaction	643	4.30	.79	-1.10	.10
increases demand from the Muslim customers	643	4.30	.84	-1.23	.10
provides customers with peace of mind during the dining experience	643	4.29	.80	-.99	.10
benefits everyone	643	4.28	.89	-1.34	.10
relies on trust on the suppliers when purchasing the food items	643	4.23	.81	-1.13	.10
signifies hygienic	643	4.17	.93	-1.17	.10
signifies safety	643	4.17	.91	-1.17	.10
signifies food quality	643	4.12	.99	-1.25	.10
signifies healthy food	643	4.07	1.00	-1.13	.10
signifies authenticity	643	4.00	.93	-.87	.10
signifies taste genuity	643	3.94	1.00	-.86	.10
gives competitive advantage over non certified <i>halal</i> restaurants	643	3.93	1.04	-.78	.10
acts as a marketing strategy tool	643	3.91	1.01	-.97	.10
is a trademark establishment	643	3.88	1.04	-.82	.10
attracts the tourism market	643	3.85	1.01	-.65	.10
increases confidence level among the non Muslim customers	643	3.61	1.03	-.32	.10
increase demand from the non Muslim customers	643	3.56	1.02	-.28	.10
Valid N	643				

Perceptions toward *halal* certification in general have raised many interesting and new findings. The results showed that respondents perceived that *halal* certification meant that all food sources are *halal* certified with a high mean value of 4.41. Due to this factor, it stimulated the confidence level among the Muslim customers with the mean value of 4.40. Being a *halal* certified restaurant means that it conforms to the *halal* standard (4.39) thus ensuring trust (4.37). Here, trust has been the main subject matter in academic research on *halal* foods and its certification (Abdul Latif, 2006; Al-Nahdi et al., 2009; Dahalan, 2008). As mentioned in the earlier chapters, *halal* food is a sensitive matter to the Muslims. A Muslim must have no doubts on the food which he considered as *halal* or else the food will fall into *haram* or prohibited to be consumed.

The restaurant managers also perceived that *halal* certification has a positive impact on customer satisfaction (4.30) where it contributed to increased demand, particularly from the Muslim customers (4.30) and provided customers with the peace of mind during the dining experience (4.29). Similar to trust and confidence level, having peace of mind is an essential part during the dining experience. Restaurant managers felt that *halal* certification relates to peace of mind with a high mean value of 4.29. Thus, this study is supported by (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). It is gathered from their findings that Muslim customers will not have doubts when they trusted the food served in an eating premise. Thus, they will feel confident to consume the food. This showed that the Muslims in particular demonstrated that *halalness* is a critical issue to their lives. In fact, the importance of *halal* certified restaurants is a serious concern for all Muslims (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009). Apart from that, Johns and Howard (1998) have found out that emotional comfort as a new determinant in their study. It is proven that the spiritual aspect of the customer is indeed important to patronage a restaurant.

Not only that, the findings reflect that most of the respondents believed that *halal* certification benefits everyone who visit their eating premises with a mean value of 4.28. It is not only the food that matters but a *halal* certified eating establishment in one way or another can generate a harmonious environment where Muslims and non-Muslims can share the same food and eat at the same table (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008; Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003). Although there are several issues with respect to defensive dining (Mohamed Nair & Pereira, 2008), where devout and practising Muslims might find themselves in an uncomfortable situation when dining publicly (in restaurants, food courts and individual stalls) and possibilities might occur and conflict with Islamic dietary restriction, the findings revealed that the act was not to separate the Muslims and the non-Muslims. In relation to this, it is seen as a combination process not to exclude anyone in a *halal* certified restaurant.

In another aspect, *halal* food must come from *halal* food preparation and *halal* food supply chain. Restaurant managers from *halal* certified and *halal* claimant restaurants agreed that they trusted their suppliers with the mean value of 4.23. Raw food such as meat and poultry must come from *halal* suppliers that conform to the *halal* standard in terms of the slaughtering process. The results suggest that the demand from Muslim customers will rise whenever a restaurant is *halal* certified. As a result, their confidence level will simultaneously increase.

The literature showed that *halal* certification has certain attributes and Table 6.4 reveals that they have high mean values apart from trust that has the highest mean value among them that is 4.37. The remaining attributes were hygienic (4.17), safety (4.17), food quality (4.12), healthy food (4.07), authenticity (4.00) and taste genuity (3.94). Mohd Yusoff (2004) also emphasized that in order for the manufacturers to comply with *halal* certification, they are obliged to act responsibly to maintain the *halal* status of the food they produce. Furthermore, cleanliness and hygiene are closely related, and cover personal hygiene, attire, equipment and working environment. Pang and Toh (2008) in their study on the hawker food industry in Malaysia, discovered that hygiene is very important in Islam where some parts of the body must be cleaned before a prayer. In fact, this ablution process takes place almost every time before a Muslim performs his daily prayer.

Restaurant managers who have been selected in the mail survey strongly agreed that *halal* certification signifies safety. It is gathered from the findings that with *halal* certification, a restaurant will ensure that the food is not only *halal* but also safe for consumption. The results are supported from the literature on the importance of certification that is related to safety (Mohd Yusoff, 2004; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Pang and Toh (2008) in their study have revealed a unique finding where the emphasis on body cleanliness and hygiene by some Muslim hawkers may have a significant effect on the higher food safety performance standard of this religious group as compared to others. As highlighted by Abdul Talib et al. (2008), *halal* matters recognized safety and quality assurance. Therefore, it ensures the *halal* products are also clean, safe and well taken care of together with good presentation and served everybody appropriately and in good quality.

Halal certification is seen as a source of competitive advantage (3.93) over non-certified *halal* restaurants. Therefore, marketing plays a vital part in order to attract the customers particularly the Muslims where the restaurant managers agreed that *halal* certification acts as a marketing strategy tool with a mean value of 3.91. The study by Al-Nahdi et al. (2009), suggested that marketing communication tools need to be employed in order to advertise and promote a *halal* restaurant. It is also to highlight that the eating premise with *halal* certification follows the Shariah principle. With the trademark establishment, *halal* certification has gained many opportunities domestically and internationally. A mean value of 3.88 suggests that, *halal* certification is accepted by the respondents as a way to gain confidence and build trust not only in the food service but also in the tourism industry. Malaysia has taken a proactive step by introducing multiethnic foods to the locals and tourists (Josiam et al., 2007) whereby the respondents perceived that *halal* certificate could be a way of appeal to the Muslim tourists from the Middle East and other parts of the world with a mean value of 3.85.

Respondents were not certain as to whether *halal* certification could generate a confidence level and demand among the non-Muslims with both means showing 3.61 and 3.56 respectively. However, Muhammad (2007) has reiterated that *halal* food is for the Muslims and non-Muslims. The fundamental aspect for Muslims to consume is to search for *halal* food as it is their responsibility to ensure that the food is according to the Shariah principle (Wan Omar et al., 2008). Not only that, the whole concept is to promote cleanliness in all aspects of a person's life. On the other hand, *halal* food can be considered as a universal food (Abdul Latif, 2006). As such, it can be consumed by both Muslims as well as the non-Muslims. Zailani et al. (2011) mentioned that Muslims are required to take *halal* food because *halal* is not only merely allowable but also signify cleanliness, safety and quality assurance where the product must be prepared in hygienic, safe and being scrutinized in ensuring that the food is from trusted *halal* sources.

Table 6.5: Descriptive Statistics for Perceptions toward *Halal* Certification in Malaysia

<i>Questions</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Scenes</i>	
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
I believe that other restaurant managers think of <i>Halal</i> Certification in Malaysia...					
as an important aspect in the food service industry	643	4.25	.87	-1.19	.10
as adding value to their restaurants	643	4.10	.83	-1.05	.10
is familiar to the local people	643	4.08	.85	-.97	.10
is gaining acceptance from the local people	643	4.07	.83	-.90	.10
as a signal of trust to the related local authority in approving domestic food products	643	4.02	.79	-.77	.10
as a signal of trust to the related local authority in approving international food products	643	4.01	.80	-.61	.10
as a way to increase the number of customers	643	3.99	.92	-.86	.10
is a regulation to promote standardization	643	3.78	.90	-.59	.10
is gaining acceptance from the foreign people	643	3.73	.93	-.38	.10
is a better standard compared to other South East Asian countries	643	3.72	.93	-.42	.10
takes too much time in getting the approval	643	3.42	1.05	-.22	.10
costs a lot in getting the approval	643	3.27	1.04	-.09	.10
creates some bureaucracy in getting the approval	643	3.24	1.00	-.07	.10
is to cater for the Muslim customers only	643	3.02	1.26	.06	.10
is a standard that is difficult to maintain	643	2.72	1.08	.17	.10
is a standard that is difficult to follow	643	2.71	1.08	.19	.10
Valid N	643				

This section is on what other restaurant managers think of *halal* certification in Malaysia. It is shown in Table 6.5 that *halal* certification is an important aspect in the food service industry where the restaurant managers have indicated a high mean value of 4.25. It is indicated that respondents felt that their counterparts perceived the *halal* certificate as adding value to their restaurants where the mean value is 4.10. The study on defensive dining in Singapore conducted by Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) shows similar result with this study in relation to familiar to the local people when 20 Muslim respondents who have been interviewed mentioned that they would search for the MUIS *halal* certificate when deciding on a place to dine at public places.

Apart from the *halal* certification attributes that are mentioned in Table 6.4, other restaurant managers also believed that restaurants should display *halal* certification at certified *halal* eating premises as food industry is very much concentrated on consumer orientation. The result of this study is supported by Habib et al. (2011) in their research on fast food consumption where *halal* status is one of the major influential factors for fast food purchasing and consumption in Malaysia although their study took customers as their sample. In contrast, this study chose restaurant managers as the respondents and the results were meaningful and covered many opinions and expectations from different perspectives either from the fast food or the non fast food providers.

As noted in Chapter Four *halal* certification requires every aspect of life to comply with the *Shariah* principle. The studies by Al-Nahdi et al. (2009) and Dahalan (2008) raised the concern of Muslims in Malaysia that they consider the concept of *halal* as an ultimate factor to consumption. It is also gathered that restaurant managers are aware that local people are looking for *halal* certificates before deciding to enter an eating premise, as they are familiar with it. This is shown with the mean value of 4.08. Moreover, restaurant managers believed that the local people are accepting the *halal* certification displayed at certified *halal* eating outlets depicted by the mean value of 4.07 in Table 6.5.

In another context, respondents perceived that other restaurant managers thought that *halal* certification acts as a signal of trust to the related local authority in approving domestic (mean value of 4.02) and international food products (mean value of 4.01). Respondents also believed that *halal* certification is one of the ways to increase the number of customers (mean value of 3.99) and a regulation to promote standardization (mean value of 3.78). The promotion of *halal* foods to attract the foreign people particularly the Muslim tourists from the Middle East has somehow contributed to the expectations of the respondents. They expected that other restaurant managers

would perceived that *halal* certification would be accepted by the foreign people with a mean value of 3.73. Additionally, it is also believed that *halal* certification is a better standard compared to other South East Asian countries where the mean value is 3.72. As the *halal* program started in Malaysia during the early 1980s, the country also has formal procedures to approve a *halal* certifying organization as well as act as one of the major voices in *halal* recognition (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Since then, as a pioneer in the development of *halal* food products and certification, Malaysia has been undergoing *halal* food industry revolution due to the lucrative potential in the global market.

Several questions on time, costs and bureaucracy in getting the *halal* certification were asked in the survey and showed low mean values of 3.42, 3.27 and 3.24 respectively. A low mean value also indicated (3.02) when respondents thought that other restaurant managers expected that *halal* certification is to cater for the Muslim customers only. The restaurant managers were also unsure whether their counterparts perceived that *halal* certification is a standard that is difficult to follow and maintain resulting with low mean value of 2.71 and 2.72 respectively. Othman et al. (2006) as cited in Zailani et al. (2011, p. 7) mentioned that while compliance with *halal* requirements are considered to include considerable costs and investments particularly during initial stages and it is against sound business strategy and a poor allocation of firm investment that generally generate negative returns to shareholders. However, many scholars believe that these initiatives are no longer a threat but a business opportunity and even a source of sustained competitive advantages. Due to the pertinent value, the result of the present study showed a consistency on the issue of costs.

The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) and the state religious departments are the competent authorities being responsible for *halal* certification in Malaysia. In order to issue a *halal* certificate for products exported to Malaysia, the body issuing the *halal* certificate must be listed on the country's approved list. For example, 40 organizations issue *halal* certificates in the U.S. but only 16 have been approved by JAKIM (JAKIM, 2010).

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is about variables (Mulaik, 2010) and it is used to gather information about the interrelationships among a set of variables (Pallant, 2007). Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) highlighted that the identification of factors is important. They reasoned that, it could provide useful theoretical insights into underlying relationships and patterns in the data. Thus, it took a

large set of variables and looked for a way the data may be reduced or summarized using a smaller set of factors or components (Pallant, 2007). In another aspect, the primary purpose of factor analysis is to define the underlying structure in a data matrix (Hair et al., 2006). According to Pallant (2007) as well as Grimm and Yarnold (2005), a larger sample size is better and more reliable. As this study has a sample size of 643, the use of this technique is appropriate.

This section explains the result of factor analysis in understanding the expectations of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification in Malaysia. As mentioned in Chapter One, this study is very significant as there are no other studies that concentrated particularly on restaurant managers in relation to *halal* certification. Table 6.6 shows that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy is 0.92, exceeding the recommended value of 0.50 by Kaiser (1974) where this explains that the result falls under great value. In addition, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance of 0.00 which indicate the $\chi^2 = 14610.29$. Measure of sampling adequacy for individual variables from the Anti-Image Correlation Matrix ranges from 0.63 to 0.95. The responses to the survey form were subject to a Principal Components Analysis with a Varimax rotation and the results of the analysis appear in Table 6.6.

Using Kaiser's criterion of retaining factors with eigenvalues greater than one, seven interpretable factors were obtained from the analysis. This was then compared to the scree plot, a graph of each eigenvalue (Y-axis) against the factor related with (X-axis) as proposed by Catell (1966). By looking at the point of inflexion of the scree plot, it can be gathered that the data has seven underlying factors. Thus, the analysis produced seven factors where the total variance explained was 77% with all eigenvalues being over one. The title given to each factor is named and described below. With cut off value of 0.65 for inclusion of a variable in interpretation of a factor, 14 of 37 variables did not load on any factor.

These 14 items are identified to have values below 0.3. Low communality values of less than 0.3 indicate that the variables do not fit well with the variables in its component and should be removed from the scale. As a rule of thumb, only variables with loadings of 0.32 and above are interpreted (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Therefore, the greater the loading, the more the variable is a pure measure of the factor. This criteria for the significance of factor loadings is agreed by Hair et al., (1995) that considered the loadings of 0.30 as significant only for sample sizes of 350 or greater. Considering both suggestions, factor loadings of 0.65 is selected as this study has a large sample size of 643. Furthermore, the choice of cut off value for size of loading to be interpreted is upon the researcher to decide (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

It is important to note that the items in Table 6.3 were not included in factor and cluster analyses as they focused on issues within the respondents' restaurant context. The author is interested to look at some of the responses that were asked in Part C (perceptions toward *halal* certification in general) and Part D (perceptions toward *halal* certification in Malaysia) in the questionnaire that are always highlighted in the literature as well as being discussed during the interview sessions. By using factor analysis, it is believed that the integration of the responses allows the author to answer questions of substantial importance. Furthermore, due to the complexity of areas that covers data from a large number of perspectives (perceptions of your own restaurant, perceptions toward *halal* certification in general and perceptions toward *halal* certification in Malaysia), factor analysis is seen to be a tool for cross validation and acts a link between further discussion on cross tabulation in order to gain a more complete understanding.

1. Factor 1 consisted of "Market Signals" that indicates *halal* certification attributes such as healthy food, taste genuity, food quality, authenticity, safety and hygiene. Since the highest variance explained is 33.39%, it proved that respondents expected that *halal* certification represents important factors on market signals.
2. Factor 2 showed the "Islamic Attributes". This dimension had four components that integrate the Muslims with *halal* food such as *halal* certification increases confidence among Muslim customers, signifies conformance to *halal* standards, increases demand from Muslim customers and signifies all food sources are *halal* certified. The variance explained is 13.40% and thus represents essential factors expected by the respondents toward *halal* certification at restaurants relating to Islamic attributes.
3. Factor 3 highlighted on "Marketing Benefits" and in this grouping, *halal* certification acts as a marketing strategy tool, attracts the tourism market, a trademark establishment and gives a competitive advantage over non-certified restaurants. These items in this factor explained 9.31% of the variance.
4. Factor 4 is "Cost of Certification" that is related to tangible and intangible costs such as applicants will have to pay a great amount of money, the involvement of lengthy time and existence of bureaucracy in getting the approval. As indicated in Table 6.6, this dimension explained 6.58% of the variance.
5. Factor 5 is on "Cost of Compliance" where two components related to issues on *halal* certification such as the *halal* standard is difficult to follow as well as to maintain it. The variance explained was 5.35%.

6. Factor 6 indicated “Non-Islamic Attributes” that highlighted on *halal* certification increases demand and confidence from non-Muslim customers that gives a variance explained of 4.84%.
7. Factor 7 is related to “Local Awareness” where the dimension consisted of familiarity of the local people towards *halal* certification and gaining acceptance from them. It shows a variance explained of 4.39%.

Reliability Analysis

As mentioned earlier, an eigenvalue of more than 1.0 was used as a determinant criterion for each factor in the factor analysis. In addition, internal consistency analysis (Cronbach α) was applied to confirm the reliability of each research factor where validity and reliability tests are essential for testing the goodness of measure. According to Sekaran (2000), the closer the Cronbach’s alpha value is to one, the higher the internal consistent reliability. Thus, the results in Table 6.6 showed that most of the factor loading exceeded 0.6 (Nunnally, 1978) as the significant level of convergent validity. The Cronbach’s α values for all dimensions range from 0.84 to 0.92 which exceeds the minimum α of 0.6 (Hair et al., 2006), thus the constructs measure are deemed reliable. In another context, the mean scores in Table 6.7 explained the importance level of each factor. Again, market signals showed the highest mean score of 4.57 and the lowest score was cost of compliance with 2.71.

Cluster Analysis

As this study is essentially exploratory, cluster analysis was further employed to determine if respondents hold common attitudes and perceptions about *halal* certification. Thus, this cluster analysis was used to uncover any similarities that might be used to help identify distinct groups within the sample using the seven factors identified in the previous section. Cluster analysis is a technique that almost constantly produces groupings that are significantly different from each other (Ryan and Huyton, 2000). Seven dimensions from factor analysis have been used to perform the clustering technique using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0 to provide better definition of the clusters. Previously, in order to see each dimension’s internal consistency, the coefficient alpha of reliability was computed. The data from Part C (perceptions toward *halal* certification in general) and Part D (perceptions toward *halal* certification in Malaysia) were used to segment the respondents for a better understanding of their expectations.

The seven dimensions identified by the factor analysis provided the data for cluster analysis instead of the original ratings on variables. According to Mueller and Kaufmann (2001), cluster analysis is commonly used in for the classification of objects. Furthermore, this analysis covers a great variety of methods and algorithms for identifying groups of much related objects. On the basis of similarity, the cluster should be as internally and externally homogeneous in order to distinguish from other clusters. Restaurant managers who are the respondents in this survey were segmented in order to group homogeneous expectations toward *halal* certification. Given the sample size of 643, a non hierarchical clustering approach (K-means) in which the respondents are moved between clusters in order to minimize the variability within clusters and maximize the variability between clusters was adopted. Identification of clusters in this study is based on the guidelines by Aldenderfer and Blashfield (1985) for further investigation.

A visual inspection was performed of the horizontal icicle dendrogram and the sudden jumps in the algorithm schedule. The results suggested that three solutions might be suitable for further analysis because it provided the greatest difference between clusters and it yielded the most interpretable results. It was anticipated that significant differences would occur in each segment. Table 6.8 presents the three different groups and indicates the first group “Certification Advocates” had the highest market signal, Islamic attribute, marketing benefits, non-Islamic attribute and local awareness ratings. The number of respondents in this group was 190 (29.5% of the sample) who perceived that *halal* certification contained a number of benefits.

In contrast, the second group “Certification Ambivalents” had the lowest market signal, Islamic attribute, marketing benefit, non-Islamic attribute and local awareness ratings. This group represented 251 respondents (39.0% of the sample). Next, the third group “Compliance Cost Focussed” perceived that *halal* certification as being meaningful to the restaurants but also perceived the certification process as being costly in terms of financials and time. There were 202 respondents in this group (31.4% of the sample). This study also found that there were no differences in terms of respondent age, gender or educational background. It clearly stated that in terms of religion, Muslim respondents were more likely to be “Certification Advocates” while Buddhist respondents were more likely to be “Certification Ambivalents” ($\chi^2 = 24.922, p = .002$). Looking at race, Malay respondents were more likely to be “Certification Advocates” while Chinese respondents were more likely to be “Certification Ambivalents” ($\chi^2 = 19.272, p = .004$).

Further comparisons were made between the groups in terms of the restaurant each respondent was referring to, when answering the questionnaire. There were no differences found in

terms of either seating capacity, total number of employees, the number of years they had been working in their current position at the restaurant or the number of years they had been working in the food service industry. An interesting finding showed that “Certification Ambivalents” were more likely to work in non-*halal* restaurants while “Certification Advocates” were more likely to be working in *halal* certified restaurants ($\chi^2 = 29.445$, $p = .000$).

Table 6.6: Factor Loadings for Scale Items

	<i>Factor</i>						
	<i>Market Signals</i>	<i>Islamic Attributes</i>	<i>Marketing Benefits</i>	<i>Cost of Certification</i>	<i>Cost of Compliance</i>	<i>Non-Islamic Attributes</i>	<i>Local Awareness</i>
<i>I think that Halal Certification in restaurants...</i>							
...signifies healthy food	.87						
...signifies taste genuity	.86						
...signifies food quality	.85						
...signifies authenticity	.75						
...signifies safety	.74						
...signifies being hygienic	.73						
...increases confidence among Muslim customers		.80					
...signifies conformance to <i>Halal</i> standards		.79					
...increases demand from Muslim customers		.77					
...signifies all food sources are <i>Halal</i> certified		.77					
...acts as a marketing strategy tool			.84				
...attracts the tourism market			.76				
...is a trademark establishment			.73				
...gives a competitive advantage over non-certified restaurants			.69				
...costs a lot in getting approval				.88			
...takes too much time in getting approval				.86			
...creates some bureaucracy in getting approval				.85			
...is a standard that is difficult to follow					.93		
...is a standard that is difficult to maintain					.92		
...increases demand from non-Muslim customers						.86	
...increases confidence among non-Muslim customers						.82	
...is familiar to local people							.84
...is gaining acceptance from local people							.84
Variance explained (percentage)	33.39	13.40	9.31	6.58	5.35	4.84	4.39

Table 6.7: Means, Standard Deviations and Reliabilities of Measures Used

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>
Market Signals	4.57	.51	.92
Islamic Attributes	4.38	.67	.87
Marketing Benefits	3.89	.84	.84
Cost of Certification	3.31	.90	.86
Cost of Compliance	2.71	.94	.92
Non-Islamic Attributes	3.58	.96	.86
Local Awareness	4.07	.78	.84

Table 6.8: Final Cluster Centres (Mean Factor Scores for Each Cluster)

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Group</i>		
	<i>Certification Advocates</i>	<i>Certification Ambivalents</i>	<i>Compliance Cost Focussed</i>
Market Signals	4.80	4.34	4.63
Islamic Attributes	4.76	3.97	4.52
Marketing Benefits	4.46	3.22	4.20
Cost of Certification	3.00	3.09	3.88
Cost of Compliance	1.73	2.65	3.72
Non-Islamic Attributes	4.06	2.86	4.04
Local Awareness	4.54	3.52	4.31

Cross Tabulation of Results

This section focuses on percentage cross tabulations that will take several variables to answer the research questions. Twenty three variables in the factor analysis have been taken and being compared with the five variables under section E of the personal demographic in the survey questions in order to provide varieties in explaining the relationship. Most of the variables are cross tabulated with religions and race so as to indicate whether restaurant managers of different religions and races have common expectations toward *halal* certification attributes. According to Zikmund (2003, p. 477), when data from a survey are cross tabulated, percentages help the researchers understand the nature of the relationship by allowing relative comparison. Furthermore, the purpose of categorization and cross tabulation is to allow the inspection of differences among groups and determine the form of relationship between two variables. Cross tabulating the results of this mail survey is expected to help clarify the research findings.

Table 6.9: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants signifies healthy food” by Religion

Healthy food/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	9	5.7	3	8.1	1	3.8	6	1.5	2	8.0
Disagree	7	4.4	4	10.8	1	3.8	10	2.5	1	4.0
Neither agree nor disagree	43	27.0	11	29.7	4	15.4	42	10.6	7	28.0
Agree	57	35.8	6	16.2	8	30.8	156	39.4	7	28.0
Strongly agree	43	27.0	13	35.1	12	46.2	182	46.0	8	32.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

Table 6.9 presents cross tabulation between the perception that *halal* certification signifies healthy food and religion. It shows that 62.8% of the Buddhists, 51.3% of the Christian, 77% of the Hindus, 85.4% of the Muslims and followed by other religions 60% agree that *halal* certification signifies healthy food. This is supported by Padel and Foster (2005) in their study on organic food that by having a certification, it promotes healthy food.

Table 6.10: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants signifies authenticity” by Religion

Authenticity/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	3	1.9	2	5.4	1	3.8	5	1.3	1	4.0
Disagree	8	5.0	2	5.4	2	7.7	15	3.8	0	0
Neither agree nor disagree	42	26.4	12	32.4	5	19.2	62	15.7	5	20.0
Agree	70	44.0	11	29.7	8	30.8	162	40.9	11	44.0
Strongly agree	36	22.6	10	27.0	10	38.5	152	38.4	8	32.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

It is interesting to note that 66.6% of the Buddhist respondents agree that *halal* certification signifies authenticity if compared to the Christian respondents that is 56.7%. The results also show that 69.3% of the Hindu respondents have similar opinion and followed by Muslims (79.3%) and other religions (76%). Mafra et al. (2008) mentioned that food authenticity is

presently a subject of great concern to food authorities as the incorrect labeling of foodstuffs can represent a commercial fraud.

Table 6.11: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants signifies food quality” by Religion

Food quality/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	6	3.8	2	5.4	1	3.8	9	2.3	2	8.0
Disagree	9	5.7	4	10.8	1	3.8	8	2.0	1	4.0
Neither agree nor disagree	38	23.9	10	27.0	6	23.1	28	7.1	8	32.0
Agree	59	37.1	9	24.3	7	26.9	152	38.4	7	28.0
Strongly agree	47	29.6	12	32.4	11	42.3	199	50.3	7	28.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

The findings on whether *halal* certification signifies food quality is shown in Table 6.11. This cross tabulation indicates that Muslim has the highest percentage of 88.7% of the respondents agreeing to the statement and followed by Hindu (69.2%), Buddhist (66.7%), Christian (56.7%) and other (56%). As highlighted by Abdul Talib et al. (2008), they confirmed that *halal* issues recognized safety and quality assurance. Therefore, it ensures the *halal* products are also clean, safe and well taken care of together with good presentation and served everybody appropriately and in good quality.

The sample population was mainly the restaurant managers and they were very concerned on public health problem and consumers’ confidence in terms of food quality. Furthermore, the increasing technological changes especially the genetic engineering and its use in agriculture and food industry is getting much controversy over its cost and benefits (Verdurme & Viane, 2003). In fact, the notion of food quality is not only a great concern to the restaurant customers but has an impact on marketing strategy effort (Botonaki et al., 2006).

Table 6.12: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants signifies taste genuity” by Religion

Taste genuity/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	6	3.8	2	5.4	3	11.5	7	1.8	2	8.0
Disagree	9	5.7	4	10.8	1	3.8	10	2.5	1	4.0
Neither agree nor disagree	53	33.3	16	43.2	5	19.2	66	16.7	8	32.0
Agree	54	34.0	6	16.2	9	34.6	155	39.1	7	28.0
Strongly agree	37	23.3	9	24.3	8	30.8	158	39.9	7	28.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

Table 6.9 gathers the distribution on *halal* certification and taste genuity. When asked on whether *halal* certification signifies taste genuity, 79% of the Muslim respondents agree followed by 65.4% of the Hindu respondents. Meanwhile, 57.3% of the Buddhist, 56% of other religions and 40.5% of the Christian respondents have similar opinions. It shows that, not only Muslims seek for taste genuity but this implies to other religions. Taking Chinese as an example, it is gathered that the Chinese perceived that food taste is an important element before purchasing a food item (Habib et al., 2011).

Table 6.13: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants signifies hygienic” by Religion

Hygienic/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	5	3.1	1	2.7	1	3.8	3	.8	2	8.0
Disagree	10	6.3	5	13.5	1	3.8	4	1.0	2	8.0
Neither agree nor disagree	42	26.4	6	16.2	3	11.5	37	9.3	4	16.0
Agree	51	32.1	13	35.1	8	30.8	150	37.9	11	44.0
Strongly agree	51	32.1	12	32.4	13	50.0	202	51.0	6	24.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

Mohd Yusoff (2004) emphasized that in order for the manufacturers to comply with *halal* certification, they are obliged to act responsibly to maintain the *halal* status of the food they produced. In essence, cleanliness and hygiene are closely related that covers personal hygiene,

attire, equipment and working environment. Table 6.10 shows that 64.2% of the Buddhist , 67.5% of the Christian and 80.8% of the Hindu respondents think that *halal* certification signifies hygienic. Meanwhile, 88.9% of the Muslim respondents and 68% of other religion have similar opinions.

The survey results showed that Muslim restaurant managers have the highest percentage to be in agreement with their counterparts with respect to the statement. According to Pang and Toh (2008) on their study on hawker food industry in Malaysia discovered that hygiene is very important in Islam where some parts of the body must be clean before prayer. In fact, this ablution process takes place every time before a Muslim performs his daily prayer, that is five times a day.

Table 6.14: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants signifies safety” by Religion

Safety/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	6	3.8	1	2.7	1	3.8	3	0.8	1	4.0
Disagree	8	5.0	4	10.8	0	.0	5	1.3	2	8.0
Neither agree nor disagree	39	24.5	11	29.7	3	11.5	34	8.6	6	24.0
Agree	56	35.2	8	21.6	7	26.9	165	41.7	8	32.0
Strongly agree	50	31.4	13	35.1	15	57.7	189	47.7	8	32.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

Another important aspect on *halal* certification is to ensure that the food is not only *halal* but also safe for consumption (Mohd Yusoff, 2004; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Table 6.11 shows that 66.6% of Buddhist, Christian (56.7%), Hindu (84.6%), Muslim (89.4%) and other (64%) of the respondents agree that *halal* certification signifies safety.

As highlighted by Pang and Toh (2008), the emphasis on body cleanliness and hygiene by some Muslim hawkers may have a significant effect to the higher food safety performance standard of this religious group compared to others. Within this context, Habib et al. (2011) mentioned that Malays are more concerns about the *halal* status and food safety. In fact, the *halal* status is perceived as a very important factor to all Muslim respondents in their survey on consumers’

preference and consumption towards fast food. Their findings also showed that Chinese and Indian are also concerned on food safety.

Table 6.15: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants increases confidence level among the Muslim customers” by Religion

Increase confidence level among the Muslim customers/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	1	0.6	1	2.7	2	7.7	3	.8	0	.0
Disagree	11	6.9	0	.0	0	.0	3	.8	0	.0
Neither agree nor disagree	18	11.3	4	10.8	2	7.7	23	5.8	2	8.0
Agree	60	37.7	11	29.7	7	26.9	135	34.1	5	20.0
Strongly agree	69	43.4	21	56.8	15	57.7	232	58.6	18	72.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

The findings in Table 6.15 show that 81.1% (Buddhist), 86.5% (Christian), 84.6% (Hindu), 92.7% (Muslim) and 92% (Other) agree that *halal* certification increases confidence level among the Muslim customers. This result is supported by some literature on confidence and *halal* foods (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008; Shafie & Othman, 2006; Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003).

Table 6.16: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants signifies conformance to *halal* standard” by Religion

Conformance to <i>halal</i> standard/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	2	1.3	1	2.7	0	.0	1	.3	0	.0
Disagree	5	3.1	1	2.7	1	3.8	2	.5	0	.0
Neither agree nor disagree	30	18.9	1	2.7	2	7.7	12	3.0	3	12.0
Agree	67	42.1	11	29.7	9	34.6	161	40.7	8	32.0
Strongly agree	55	34.6	23	62.2	14	53.8	220	55.6	14	56.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

Most of the restaurant managers agree that *halal* certification in restaurant fulfill the *halal* standard. It is indicated from Table 6.13 that 76.7% (Buddhist), 91.9% (Christian), 88.4% (Hindu), 96.3% (Muslim) and 88% of other religion shared similar opinion. It is gathered that considering the great number of customers demanding a certificate, manufacturers are increasingly under economic pressure to become certified (Jahn et al., 2005).

Table 6.17: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants increases demand from the Muslim customers” by Religion

Increases demand from Muslim customers/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	2	1.3	0	.0	2	7.7	2	.5	0	.0
Disagree	6	3.8	3	8.1	0	.0	5	1.3	0	.0
Neither agree nor disagree	31	19.5	3	8.1	4	15.4	38	9.6	3	12.0
Agree	52	32.7	11	29.7	8	30.8	143	36.1	9	36.0
Strongly agree	68	42.8	20	54.1	12	46.2	208	52.5	13	52.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

The findings show that 75.5% of Buddhist, 83.8% of Christian, 77% of Hindu, 88.6% of Muslim and 88% of other religion restaurant managers agree that *halal* certification in restaurants increases demand from the Muslim customers. Here, Table 6.17 shows a high percentage that the majority of the respondents think that *halal* certification in a way can develop the demand from the Muslim customers. The fundamental aspect for Muslims to consume is to search for *halal* food as it is their responsibility to ensure that the food is according to the *Shariah* principle (Wan Omar et al., 2008) . Not only that, the whole concept is to promote cleanliness in all aspects of a person’s life. On the other hand, *halal* food can be considered as a universal food (Abdul Latif, 2006). As such, it can be consumed by both Muslims as well as the non Muslims.

Table 6.18: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants signifies all food sources are *halal* certified” by Religion

Healthy food/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	3	1.9	1	2.7	0	.0	1	.3	0	.0
Disagree	5	3.1	0	.0	0	.0	5	1.3	1	4.0
Neither agree nor disagree	39	24.5	2	5.4	2	7.7	19	4.8	1	4.0
Agree	39	24.5	8	21.6	9	34.6	134	33.8	8	32.0
Strongly agree	73	45.9	26	70.3	15	57.7	237	59.8	15	60.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

The result shows that 70.4% (Buddhist), 91.9% (Christian), 93.6% (Muslim) and 92% (Other) respondents agree that *halal* certification signifies all food sources are *halal* certified. JAKIM is the authority that is responsible to advice, monitor and implement on *halal* policy and procedures as the body needs to check on the food sources supplied by the food establishments that cater for the Muslim customers (JAKIM, 2010). Tracing is aimed at finding the history of a product, for example, to identify the source of contamination (Meuwissen et al., 2003, p. 169). In this study, tracking the source of food is crucial when dealing to *halal* food and complying to its standard.

Table 6.19: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants acts a marketing strategy tool” by Educational background

Marketing strategy/ Education	Masters		Bachelor		Diploma		Certificate		Secondary		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	.0	3	2.4	10	4.7	3	3.8	6	3.9	1	2.0
Disagree	0	.0	5	4.0	11	5.1	5	6.3	6	3.9	6	11.8
Neither agree nor disagree	3	17.6	20	15.9	32	14.9	21	26.3	27	17.5	16	31.4
Agree	7	41.2	51	40.5	94	43.7	22	27.5	78	50.6	18	35.3
Strongly agree	7	41.2	47	37.3	68	31.6	29	36.3	37	24.0	10	19.6
Total	17	100	126	100	215	100	80	100	154	100	51	100

Al-Nahdi et al. (2009) support these findings where marketing communication tools need to be employed in order to promote a *halal* restaurant. It is also to highlight that the eating premise with *halal* certification needs to follow the Shariah principle. There are restaurant managers who agree that brings the number to 82.4% for respondents that hold a Masters Degree and descending to 77.8% (Bachelor), 75.3% (Diploma), 74.6% (Secondary), 63.8% (Certificate) and 54.9% (Other). This has indicated that the higher the qualification level of the restaurant managers, the higher they expected that marketing strategy plays a vital role in attracting the customers. Jahn et al. (2005, p. 56) suggested that once having been awarded the requisite certificate, companies are entitled to make use of the quality label for marketing purposes.

Table 6.20: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants attracts the tourism market” by Educational background

Tourism market/ Educational background	Masters		Bachelor		Diploma		Certificate		Secondary		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	.0	2	1.6	7	3.3	2	2.5	3	1.9	1	2.0
Disagree	0	.0	8	6.3	18	8.4	6	7.5	9	5.8	5	9.8
Neither agree nor disagree	8	47.1	25	19.8	57	26.5	18	22.5	36	23.4	14	27.5
Agree	4	23.5	43	34.1	66	30.7	26	32.5	65	42.2	22	43.1
Strongly agree	5	29.4	48	38.1	67	31.2	28	35.0	41	26.6	9	17.6
Total	17	100	126	100	215	100	80	100	154	100	51	100

The findings show that 52.9% (Masters), 72.2% (Bachelor), 61.9% (Diploma), 67.5% (Certificate), 68.8% (Secondary) and 60.7 (Other) agree that *halal* certification attracts the tourism market. Those restaurant managers with Bachelor Degree qualification have the highest percentage and they felt that *halal* certification can actually attracts the tourists to enter the eating premise specifically the Muslim tourists from the Middle East. Here, Muslim as tourists are required to adhere to the customary restrictions where possible and refrain themselves from consuming non *halal* foods.

Tourism industry has taken the advantage of the increasing globalization that contributes to food assimilation. In addition, Malaysia has taken a proactive step by introducing multiethnic foods to the locals and tourists (Josiam et al., 2007).

Table 6.21: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants is a trademark establishment” by Educational background

Trademark establishment/ Educational background	Masters		Bachelor		Diploma		Certificate		Secondary		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	1	5.9	4	3.2	8	3.7	2	2.5	5	3.2	3	5.9
Disagree	0	.0	2	1.6	16	7.4	4	5.0	8	5.2	6	11.8
Neither agree nor disagree	4	23.5	32	25.4	49	22.8	18	22.5	28	18.2	14	27.5
Agree	6	35.3	40	31.7	75	34.9	22	27.5	69	44.8	17	33.3
Strongly agree	6	35.3	48	38.1	67	31.2	34	42.5	44	28.6	11	21.6
Total	17	100	126	100	215	100	80	100	154	100	51	100

A question on whether *halal* certification is a trademark establishment was asked in the questionnaire and received multiple responses. A group of respondents who are Masters holders with 70.6%, Bachelor holders with 69.8%, Diploma holders with 66.1%, Certificate holder with 70% and 54.9% of other qualifications perceived that *halal* certification is a prominent aspect in the food service industry. The findings indicate that restaurant managers view *halal* certification as adding value to their restaurants in terms of communicating to customers through existing and trusted certificate displayed in their premises. As such, customers must be aware of the existence and meaning and also have favourable attitude towards the certificate (Botonaki et al., 2006).

Table 6.22: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants gives competitive advantage over non certified *halal* restaurants” by Educational background

Competitive advantage/ Educational background	Masters		Bachelor		Diploma		Certificate		Secondary		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	.0	1	.8	6	2.8	3	3.8	4	2.6	1	2.0
Disagree	0	.0	8	6.3	14	6.5	4	5.0	15	9.7	10	19.6
Neither agree nor disagree	6	35.3	30	23.8	31	14.4	22	27.5	24	15.6	16	31.4
Agree	4	23.5	30	23.8	86	40.0	18	22.5	67	43.5	13	25.5
Strongly agree	7	41.2	57	45.2	78	36.3	33	41.3	44	28.6	11	21.6
Total	17	100	126	100	215	100	80	100	154	100	51	100

The study by Al-Nahdi et al. (2009) suggested that marketing communication tool is important to advertise and promote a *halal* restaurant. They reasoned that it will be a source of competitive advantage for these eating establishments. Table 6.22 shows the results that 64.7% of the respondents with Masters Degree, 69% of Bachelor Degree, 76.3% of Diploma holders, 63.8% of Certificate holders, 72.1% of secondary leavers and 47.1% of other educational background agree that *halal* certification can give competitive advantage over non certified *halal* restaurants.

Table 6.23: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I believe that other restaurant managers think of *halal* certification in Malaysia costs a lot in getting the approval” by Race

Cost a lot in getting approval/Race	Chinese		Indian		Malay		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	4	2.1	0	.0	23	6.4	4	6.9
Disagree	17	9.0	10	27.0	68	18.9	7	12.1
Neither agree nor disagree	93	49.2	16	43.2	124	34.5	26	44.8
Agree	46	24.3	8	21.6	99	27.6	12	20.7
Strongly agree	29	15.3	3	8.1	45	12.5	9	15.5
Total	189	100	37	100	359	100	58	100

The result on whether *halal* certification costs a lot in getting the approval is shown in Table 6.23. It is indicated that 39.6% of the Chinese, 29.7% of the Indian, 40.1% of the Malays and 36.2% of other races agree on the statement. The small number of respondents felt that other restaurant managers think that the costs in getting the approval is quite high although it is stated earlier in Chapter Four that the cost is not that expensive.

Table 6.24: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I believe that other restaurant managers think of *halal* certification in Malaysia takes too much time in getting the approval” by Race

Takes too much time in getting approval/Race	Chinese		Indian		Malay		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	5	2.6	0	.0	14	3.9	5	8.6
Disagree	20	10.6	7	18.9	61	17.0	6	10.3
Neither agree nor disagree	74	39.2	17	45.9	113	31.5	18	31.0
Agree	54	28.6	5	13.5	118	32.9	18	31.0
Strongly agree	36	19.0	8	21.6	53	14.8	11	19.0
Total	189	100	37	100	359	100	58	100

There are mixed reaction when the question on getting the approval was asked. Table 6.24 indicates that 47.6% (Chinese), 35.1% (Indian), 47.7% (Malay) and 50% of other races agree on this question. The highest percentage comes from other races that expect other managers have

to wait for quite some time before getting the approval. Restaurants that would like to apply for a *halal* certification must go through several steps and procedures as mentioned in Chapter 4.

Table 6.25: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I believe that other restaurant managers think of *halal* certification in Malaysia creates some bureaucracy in getting the approval” by Race

Bureaucracy/Race	Chinese		Indian		Malay		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	4	2.1	0	.0	19	5.3	5	8.6
Disagree	20	10.6	9	24.3	66	18.4	7	12.1
Neither agree nor disagree	90	47.6	13	35.1	145	40.4	24	41.4
Agree	52	27.5	12	32.4	90	25.1	13	22.4
Strongly agree	23	12.2	3	8.1	39	10.9	9	15.5
Total	189	100	37	100	359	100	58	100

The result shown in Table 6.25 indicate that 39.7% (Chinese), 40.5% (Indian), 36% (Malay) and 37.9% (Other) agree as what they believe that other restaurant managers think *halal* certification creates some bureaucracy in getting the approval.

Table 6.26: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I believe that other restaurant managers think of *halal* certification in Malaysia is a standard that is difficult to follow” by Religion

Standard that is difficult to follow/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	11	6.9	2	5.4	4	15.4	72	18.2	2	8.0
Disagree	40	25.2	11	29.7	6	23.1	126	31.8	4	16.0
Neither agree nor disagree	70	44.0	19	51.4	10	38.5	111	28.0	11	44.0
Agree	30	18.9	3	8.1	3	11.5	67	16.9	5	20.0
Strongly agree	8	5.0	2	5.4	3	11.5	20	5.1	3	12.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

Table 6.26 shows that the 23.9% (Buddhist), 13.5% (Christian), 23% (Hindu), 22% (Muslim) and 32% (Other) restaurant managers that participated in the survey agree when answering a question on perception of other restaurant managers toward *halal* certification standard where the standard is difficult to follow.

Table 6.27: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I believe that other restaurant managers think of *halal* certification in Malaysia is a standard that is difficult to maintain” by Religion

Standard that is difficult to maintain/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	12	7.5	3	8.1	4	15.4	68	17.2	2	8.0
Disagree	39	24.5	15	40.5	7	26.9	122	30.8	4	16.0
Neither agree nor disagree	69	43.4	15	40.5	10	38.5	112	28.3	9	36.0
Agree	32	20.1	4	10.8	2	7.7	73	18.4	6	24.0
Strongly agree	7	4.4	0	.0	3	11.5	21	5.3	4	16.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

The findings in Table 6.26 and Table 6.27 are almost similar when 24.5% (Buddhist), 10.8% (Christian), 19.2% (Hindu), 23.7% (Muslim) and 40% of other religions agree that other restaurant managers think that *halal* certification is a standard that is difficult to maintain. In contrast, the highest percentage of 48.6% (Christian) that is of the non Muslim respondents disagree on that taking into consideration that *halal* standard is something familiar to them.

Table 6.28: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants increases demand from the non Muslim customers” by Religion

Increases demand from non Muslim customers/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	4	2.5	0	.0	2	7.7	12	3.0	1	4.0
Disagree	22	13.8	3	8.1	4	15.4	36	9.1	2	8.0
Neither agree nor disagree	57	35.8	16	43.2	5	19.2	137	34.6	11	44.0
Agree	45	28.3	11	29.7	7	26.9	129	32.6	6	24.0
Strongly agree	31	19.5	7	18.9	8	30.8	82	20.7	5	20.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

Table 6.28 indicates that 47.8% of the Buddhist, 48.6% Christian, 57.7% Hindu, 53.3% Muslim and 44% of other religions agree that *halal* certification increases demand from the non Muslim customers. It is also stated that the high percentages comes from the non Muslim restaurant managers. They agreed that *halal* certification is able to build up the demand from the non Muslims. The demand comes from the local non Muslim and international tourists.

According to the UNWTO (2008) as cited in Zamani-Farahani (2010), Malaysia is one of the countries apart from Turkey and Egypt that record the highest volumes due in part to their popularity with non Muslim holiday makers. This indicates an unrealized potential among Muslim and non Muslim markets and significant obstacles to destination development although the often substantial scale of domestic tourism should not be forgotten.

Table 6.29: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I think that *halal* certification in restaurants increases confidence level among the non Muslim customers” by Religion

Increases confidence level among non Muslim customers/Religion	Buddhist		Christian		Hindu		Muslim		Other	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	4	2.5	0	.0	3	11.5	10	2.5	1	4.0
Disagree	22	13.8	5	13.5	3	11.5	33	8.3	2	8.0
Neither agree nor disagree	52	32.7	19	51.4	2	7.7	130	32.8	13	52.0
Agree	48	30.2	7	18.9	8	30.8	128	32.3	5	20.0
Strongly agree	33	20.8	6	16.2	10	38.5	95	24.0	4	16.0
Total	159	100	37	100	26	100	396	100	25	100

Most of the respondents think that *halal* certification in restaurants increases confidence level among the non Muslim customers. Table 6.26 shows that 51% of the Buddhist, 35.1% Christian, 69.3% (Hindu), 56.3% (Muslim) and 36% of other religions agree on the statement.

Table 6.30: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I believe that other restaurant managers think of *halal* certification in Malaysia is familiar to the local people” by Gender

Familiar to the local people/Gender	Male		Female	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	6	1.5	3	1.2
Disagree	10	2.5	7	2.8
Neither agree nor disagree	65	16.4	37	15.0
Agree	182	45.8	120	48.8
Strongly agree	134	33.8	79	32.1
Total	397	100	246	100

The findings indicate that 79.6% of the male respondents and 80.9% of the female respondents agree that other restaurant managers think that *halal* certification is familiar to the local people. Apart from that 16.4% of the male restaurant managers neither agree nor disagree and 15.0% of the female respondents have similar opinion. The results also show that 4% of the male and female respondents disagree on the question asked. It shows that the local people are familiar with the *halal* certification as they see it being displayed at the restaurants.

The study on defensive dining in Singapore conducted by Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) shows similar result with this study when 20 Muslim respondents who have been interviewed mentioned that they would actively seek for the MUIS *halal* certificate when deciding on a place to dine publicly. Another study by Habib (2011, p. 21) also highlighted that the local people in Malaysia is familiar with the *halal* status.

Table 6.31: Percentage Cross Tabulation of Question “I believe that other restaurant managers think of *halal* certification in Malaysia is gaining acceptance from the local people” by Gender

Gaining acceptance from the local people/Gender	Male		Female	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	4	1.0	2	.8
Disagree	15	3.8	8	3.3
Neither agree nor disagree	52	13.1	44	17.9
Agree	190	47.9	126	51.2
Strongly agree	136	34.3	66	26.8
Total	397	100	246	100

Halal certification is gaining acceptance from the local people as indicated in Table 6.28. The majority of the male respondents that is 82.2% and 78% of the female restaurant managers agree on the statement. There is only a minority where only 4.8% of the male and 4.1% of the female respondents disagree that other restaurant managers think *halal* certification in Malaysia is gaining acceptance from the local people.

Independent T-Test

A T-test was performed to test the statistical differences between the means for selection factors between Muslim and non Muslim restaurant managers and significant difference occurred for some factors. Table 6.32 reports the results from this analysis highlighting the items taken from factor analysis that include market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, cost of certification, cost of compliance, non Islamic attributes and local awareness for which statistically significant differences were identified.

Table 6.32: Mean Scores of Factors By Comparing Muslim and Non Muslim Group with T-Test Result and Level of Significance

Factors	N	Group	M	SD	t	p-value
Market Signals	396	Muslim	4.26	0.68		
	247	Non-Muslim	3.79	0.92	6.86	***
Islamic Attributes	396	Muslim	4.48	0.56		
	247	Non-Muslim	4.22	0.79	4.51	***
Marketing Benefits	396	Muslim	4.00	0.84		
	247	Non-Muslim	3.72	0.81	4.23	***
Cost of Certification	396	Muslim	3.27	0.93		
	247	Non-Muslim	3.37	0.85	-1.34	.180
Cost of Compliance	396	Muslim	2.61	1.08		
	247	Non-Muslim	2.88	0.96	-3.23	***
Non Islamic Attributes	396	Muslim	3.63	0.93		
	247	Non-Muslim	3.51	1.00	1.52	.128
Local Awareness	396	Muslim	4.17	0.75		
	247	Non-Muslim	3.91	0.79	4.24	***

Note: 1. *** $p < 0.001$

2. Scale 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Inspection of the table reveals that from the seven factors, only five showed statistically significant differences between Muslim and non Muslim respondents as to what level they expect from *halal* certification. Table 6.32 shows that Muslim respondents more strongly believed (4.26, $p < 0.001$) than the non Muslim respondents (3.79) that *halal* certification promotes market signal. The market signals highlight that *halal* certification signifies healthy food, taste genuity, food quality, authenticity, safety and hygienic.

The restaurant managers have high agreement on the item of Islamic attributes where Muslim restaurant managers (4.48, $p < 0.001$) and non Muslim restaurant managers (4.22). This result indicate that *halal* certification has unique Islamic attributes that include increase confidence among Muslim customers, signifies conformance to *halal* standards, increase demand from Muslim customers and signifies all food sources are *halal* certified.

Marketing benefits are becoming relevant as far as *halal* certification is discussed as Muslim respondents have a high mean of (4.00, $p < 0.001$ compared to 3.72). The commercial aspects is seen to be very essential in relation to *halal* certification as it is not only as a trademark establishment but it serves as a marketing strategy tool, attracting the tourism market and thus can gives a competitive advantage over non certified restaurants.

In another aspect, the respondents felt that the cost in applying for the *halal* certification is acceptable for them (3.27, $p = .180$ compared to 3.37) as the result shows that there is statistically insignificance level. It is also shown from the table that the Muslim and non Muslim respondents showed disagreement in complying with the *halal* standard (2.61, $p < 0.001$ compared to 2.88). Another item on non Islamic attributes (3.63, $p = .128$, compared to 3.51) is also not significant. The Muslim respondents, on the other hand, more strongly believed that *halal* certification is familiar to the local people (4.17, $p < 0.001$) if compared to the non Muslim respondents (3.91).

It is gathered that both Muslim and non Muslim respondents have significant differences with respect to their expectations towards those factors in Table 6.32. Again these factors are market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, cost of compliance and local awareness. However, Cost of compliance and non Islamic attributes appeared to be not significant during the test.

6.3 Chapter Summary

It is gathered from the descriptive analysis that the results showed that restaurant managers involved in this study have high expectations toward *halal* certification in terms of its cleanliness, trusted *halal* sources, attributes, competitive advantage and importance in the restaurant sector. Here, success in the implementation of *halal* certification can be attributed to conforming and maintaining to the *halal* standard. The fact of the matter is, Muslim customers like any other consumer segments seek healthy, safe and quality food. Most broadly, the food must also conform to *Shariah* requirements. Al-Harran and Low (2008, p. 43) highlighted the term “patronising attitude” between the producer and the buyer where quality *halal* products must be supplied as the demand for *halal* food is another rising global trend.

Apart from descriptive analysis, factor and cluster analysis were also employed to further examine the data. In factor analysis, seven factor groups were produced that include

market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, and cost of certification, cost of compliance, non-Islamic attributes and local awareness. Here, market signals had the highest mean score as well as the highest Cronbach α value. Meanwhile, the cluster analysis had revealed that the respondents were divided into three distinct groups within the sample.

The first group was “Certification Advocates” that consists of Malay participants who were Muslim respondents. The second group was known as “Certification Ambivalents” that comprises of Chinese participants who were mostly Buddhists whereas the third group was labeled as “Compliance Cost Focussed”. Cross tabulations also provide some insights that act as a link between the results and the more detailed factor analysis. Independent t-test also supported the findings that proved that there are statistically significant differences between the Muslim and non Muslim respondents as stated in Table 6.32.

The findings for the nationwide survey has been explained in this chapter and proved to have significant contribution to the academic literature. In this study also, mail survey was done concurrently with interview sessions to generate more data and information as well as to gain better understandings on the topic. Interviews were done in five different locations and the findings will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS – RESTAURANT MANAGER INTERVIEWS

7.0 Introduction

As noted in Chapter Five, in addition to a postal survey, a series of interviews were conducted with restaurant managers in five different Malaysian cities so as to develop further understanding and contextualize their expectations toward *halal* certification. It was expected that the interviews would help develop further understanding of how the restaurant sector responds to Muslim dietary prohibitions as well as gain participant perspectives on factors and attributes of *halal* certification in the food service industry in a manner that could not be undertaken in a written survey.

The first section of the chapter provides the profile of participants who took part in the interviews. The analysis of results suggested that almost all of the restaurant managers were aware of the Muslim dietary prohibition despite their different religious backgrounds. As noted in the chapter this point was particularly interesting, although no other literature could be found in the Malaysian context that addresses this point. Nevertheless, some findings of the interviews appeared to be similar with the survey results discussed in the previous chapter particularly on *halal* certification attributes such as trust, food quality, hygiene and safety, trust of suppliers and food preparation. In addition, the interviews also provided insights into more sensitive *halal* certification issues such as requirements before application, standardization, non-certified issuers and lack of enforcement as these are further discussed below. Above all, the interviews provided additional information that extends the expectations of the restaurant managers as far as *halal* certification is concerned.

7.1 Profile of Participants

Participants came from different states, races and religions. A convenience sampling approach was used (See Chapter Five) and potential participants were invited to take part in the interview sessions in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Perak, Pulau Pinang and Johor. The author informed the participants of the general aims of the study and explained that the interviews would be recorded and that the recordings would then be transcribed. Anonymity in the transcripts and reporting was assured. An information sheet was given to restaurant managers who agreed to

participate prior to the interview session. Once they gave their consent, the discussions commenced based on a series of questions. Participants were given the opportunity to discontinue their participation at any point of time.

Table 7.1 showed the location of participants, their gender, race, religion and type of restaurant they are operating. Restaurant managers who represented the three different types of eating establishments were selected for the interview sessions with 10 participants from *halal* certified restaurants, 13 *halal* claimant and 10 from non-*halal* restaurants. The total number of subjects was 33 with a gender balance of 16 males and 17 females. The over representation of Chinese has been highlighted in Chapter One and Chapter Four as the majority of small scale industrial establishments in Malaysia are in the hands of the Chinese. This is due to the nature of the Chinese who predominantly run a family owned and operated business with the help of the family members (Sin, 1987). Supported by Korff (2001, p. 275) that stressed “the Chinese were seen dominating the economy after Malaysia gained its independency”.

Table 7.1: Profile of Participants

<i>Participant</i>	<i>State/Federal Territory</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Race</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Type of Restaurant</i>
1	Pulau Pinang	Male	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
2	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
3	Kuala Lumpur	Male	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
4	Selangor	Female	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
5	Selangor	Male	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
6	Kuala Lumpur	Male	Indian	Hindu	<i>Halal</i> certified
7	Selangor	Female	Chinese	Buddhist	<i>Halal</i> certified
8	Selangor	Female	Siamese	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
9	Selangor	Male	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> certified
10	Selangor	Male	Chinese	Buddhist	Non <i>Halal</i>
11	Selangor	Female	Chinese	Buddhist	Non <i>Halal</i>
12	Kuala Lumpur	Male	Chinese	Christian	<i>Halal</i> claimant
13	Kuala Lumpur	Male	Chinese	Buddhist	<i>Halal</i> certified
14	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
15	Kuala Lumpur	Male	Chinese	Buddhist	<i>Halal</i> certified
16	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Chinese	Buddhist	<i>Halal</i> certified
17	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> certified
18	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
19	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Chinese	Christian	Non <i>Halal</i>
20	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Chinese	Christian	Non <i>Halal</i>
21	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Chinese	Buddhist	Non <i>Halal</i>
22	Pulau Pinang	Female	Chinese	Buddhist	Non <i>Halal</i>
23	Pulau Pinang	Male	Chinese	Buddhist	<i>Halal</i> claimant
24	Pulau Pinang	Female	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> certified
25	Perak	Male	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
26	Perak	Male	Chinese	Buddhist	Non <i>Halal</i>
27	Perak	Male	Chinese	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> certified
28	Kuala Lumpur	Female	Chinese	Buddhist	<i>Halal</i> claimant
29	Kuala Lumpur	Male	Chinese	Buddhist	Non <i>Halal</i>
30	Kuala Lumpur	Male	Chinese	Buddhist	Non <i>Halal</i>
31	Johor	Female	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> claimant
32	Johor	Male	Malay	Muslim	<i>Halal</i> certified
33	Johor	Female	Chinese	Buddhist	Non <i>Halal</i>

7.2 Analysis

The questions that were asked during the interview sessions and following discussions covered the participants' understanding of *halal* certification and its importance in a restaurant context. The conversations then went on to cover the reliability and the connectedness of the *halal* status to marketing aspects and return patronage as well as the food supply chain. Participants were also asked with respect to issues surrounding regulating *halal* certification and their views and experiences in operating a restaurant in Malaysia.

Patton (2002) emphasized that in qualitative research, discovery of choices made by the researcher(s) and the rationale behind such choices are indispensable in clarifying the assumptions and theoretical dimensions of the methodology. In this qualitative research, all discussions were recorded and transcribed and the author handled the data extraction and analysis in a systematic way. The next step is to read all transcripts carefully and identifying arising issues. Repeated readings of the transcriptions were performed to avoid miscoding. The data were extracted manually under thematic headings. With a thematic analysis, the author formulates themes which are based on the whole data from the interviews. In relation to this, cases were then compared to look for areas of general agreement.

The researcher has drawn up a list of coded categories and organized into three main categories. As mentioned earlier, this was done manually and following the initial categorization of interview material, three common themes were identified among the participant interviews: the importance of restaurant managers having knowledge of Muslims' dietary restrictions, sensitivity and religious practices; *halal* certification signifying that it has some attributes that make it unique; and *halal* certification issues. Each segment of transcribed data with relevant keywords was carefully selected and placed under one of these categories. It is important to highlight that the author has used keywords in identification of the categories that is based on the literature review in Chapter Four. For example, if participant A has mentioned on trust, food quality or hygienic, and the transcribed data pertaining to this would be positioned under the category of *halal* certification attributes.

Halal certification attributes is one of the main themes and it has been divided into several supporting themes that include trust, food quality, hygiene, safety, food sources and preparation. The purpose of separating the supporting themes is to for better organization and explanation. Cross referenced to Chapter Four of the thesis was utilized to verify that the

findings represented similar *halal* certification attributes in accordance to previous researches. However, the other two emergent themes have provided interesting findings to this qualitative research. Interestingly, various responses to the *halal* concept signaled the different religions and cultures in Malaysia although the participants had a basic knowledge on the term.

In this study, some interviews were conducted entirely in Bahasa Melayu, upon request by the Malay and Chinese restaurant managers who felt comfortable communicating in the daily language. Some of the quotes used in presenting the results were translated from the national language, Bahasa into English. In the following analysis information provided by specific respondents is given with the respondent's background information in brackets so as to maintain confidentiality. The interviews have provided the author an opportunity to explore interesting subject matters dealing with the participants on their holistic understandings of *halal* including the issues surrounding it.

Importance of Knowledge on *Halal*, Muslim Sensitivity and Religious Practices

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in this study to obtain the different expectations of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification compared to the survey. By having face-to-face interaction with the participants, it was expected that they would be more likely to discuss *halal* matters better than via a survey.

The attitudes and comments of the participants during the interviews indicated that most of them were aware of the Muslim dietary restriction of *halal* and *haram*. Participants emphasized that the importance placed on Muslim sensitivity including food and religious practices within the context of Islamic values is inextricably linked in a Muslim country like Malaysia. In addition to valuing the sensitivity of the Muslims, non-Muslim participants expressed their understandings on conforming to the *halal* standard and procedures. They were aware of religious practices such as prayer recital before slaughtering taking place, during food preparation and also to provide suitable and clean place for the Muslim workers to perform their daily prayers. The majority of the participants agreed that this was an important issue to deal in order to promote racial harmony and social integration among the people.

Historically, British colonialism has designated ethnic groups in Malaysia (previously known as Malaya) as Chinese, Indian and Malay (Korff, 2001). As a result, living in a plural society made these different ethnicities aware and understand the different types of cultures and

religious needs. As far as food is concerned, Islam provides integration through a common trait among all of the quite diverse Malay groups within Malaysia and even beyond it. With *halal* certification, although entirely commercially driven, it is actually an integrating process (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). It gives a significant indication that *halal* certification is not only fulfilling the religious dietary needs but also seeking profit and bringing the community together. Berry (2008, p. 1) mentioned “there is strong commercial potential for *halal* certified products, with consumers looking for safe, genuinely certified and diversified *halal* products”. Apparently, this is an impact from the globalization process and modernization that support the demand and consumption of *halal* certified foods.

Discussion of the meaning of *halal* has opened interviews to various elements that emphasize Muslim’s sensitivity on food matters, like for example, the source of production, slaughtering, handling, transportation as well as preparation. During the interview sessions, respondents stressed the importance of knowledge on *halal*, Muslim sensitivity and religious practices. In fact, they have defined the meanings of *halal* in so many ways according to their understandings. This is particularly due to the different races and religions of the subjects. The fundamental perspective of the *halal* concept was similar with almost all of the non-Muslim respondents mentioned that *halal* means no pork, lard and alcohol. However, some of them had wider knowledge on the matter.

Halal means following the rules and regulations of Islam. If we look at the food service industry, it starts from the processing, slaughtering, storing and preparing. For me, *halal* is not for the Muslims only, the non-Muslims can also consume *halal* foods. It is safe to eat. When I look at the slaughtering process, I also look at the kind of foods given to the animals, how they are slaughtered, packaging and other parts. It all started from the production process until the end. I mean the food supply chain. (Male, Indian, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

The concept of *halal* means a lot. It is not just the Muslims are restricted from eating pork but the animals like cows and chickens must be slaughtered according to the Islamic way to become *halal*. There will be a prayer recital before the slaughtering takes place. (Female, Chinese, non *halal*, Pulau Pinang)

Apart from that, as would probably be expected, the Muslim respondents viewed the *halal* concept and certification in a more detailed way. It seems a hard task for them to comply

with the *halal* standard but they had to do it being a Muslim. The Muslim restaurant managers emphasized that becoming a good Muslim was not difficult although there were some Muslims who in a way declined to follow partly or entirely the Islamic regulations. For example, they see the connection of their actions toward following and maintaining the *halal* concept with the rewards given after life. In a more commercial context all of the restaurant managers that were interviewed agreed that *halal* certification is important to the restaurant sector as it can attract more people to dine at the premise.

As a Muslim, I want everything to be *halal* and it is very important to me. I want the food that I ate is clean and blessed. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

If we want to do something, we must do it in a right way. For me, my business is on *halal* food, I must really follow what the *Quran* says and then everything will be blessed. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Johor)

All races and religions can eat at restaurants with *halal* certification without doubt and I see it as an important factor in this country. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Pulau Pinang)

Generally speaking, *halal* certification is important where a lot of people can visit the restaurant. However there are some business people who want to target all the races and some have their own niche market. (Male, Chinese, *non-halal*, Selangor)

Definitely *halal* is important. We have to serve *halal* food due to the Muslim population as well as the whole community. (Male, Chinese Muslim, *halal* certified, Perak)

Halal certification is important but for our restaurant, we cater mostly for the Chinese as this is a *non-halal* eating premise. (Female, Chinese, *non-halal*, Johor)

Being a Muslim country, there are many facilities like mosques and “surau” (a smaller place than a mosque or prayer room for a Muslim to perform his daily prayer) that are scattered nationwide. In order to fulfill Muslim religious practices, some restaurants provide “surau” for the use of workers and customers. It shows that some of the non-Muslim restaurant managers

are providing facilities that support the wider Islamic values although having the “surau” is not a pre-requisite in getting the *halal* certification. This is supported by Zailani et al. (2011, p. 5) that mentioned on shopping malls in Malaysia usually have many *halal* restaurants, Arabic signs and also a “surau” that make it convenient for Muslim tourists to shop with respect to tourism industry. Another aspect is the cleansing of the kitchen equipment according to the *halal* standard if the food handlers are not certain with the level of cleanliness and purity of the equipment. One of the respondents mentioned that she would ask a Muslim to “*samak*” (Islamic method of cleaning) if she felt uncertain whether the cooking utensils are contaminated with *haram* materials or not. The sense of social responsibility particularly from the non-Muslim respondents revealed an interesting finding. Here, it is found that they were sensitive and took responsibility to offer a convenient place to work for the Muslim workers by having a religious worship area at the eating premises and also ensuring that all kitchen equipment used conform to the *halal* standard.

The concept of purity in the food supply chain is important in Islam. In this research, all the Muslim respondents referred to trying to maintain purity as a measure of ritual cleanliness when asked the meaning of *halal*. These ideas were supported by Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) who stressed that a fully *halal* establishment would mean that not only is the food served *halal*, but that the whole environment would also need to be *halal*. In contrast, non-Muslim participants did not mention the concept of purity but instead focused on following the guidelines listed by JAKIM. Non-Muslim respondents therefore have a more literal understanding of *halal* as opposed to the inherent understanding of Muslim respondents.

For example, within the context of ensuring cleanliness, many of the Muslim restaurant managers talked about reciting a short prayer while cleaning the food, while a Chinese female non-Muslim participant mentioned the importance of “*samak*” if the restaurant used second hand dining wares. Again, from a Muslim perspective all possible sources of contamination must be eliminated where products and equipment are not just clean but must be ritually cleaned. Participants discussed the religious and cultural sensitivity associated with food, particularly the importance of individuals on respecting other religious dietary restrictions in Malaysia. The Muslim participants often illustrated this point by contrasting their own approach to understanding and a sense of being in a shared religion, Islam with their counterparts. The following quotes, a fragment from a discussion among Muslim and non-Muslim participants exemplify the general feelings on this subject.

If I follow the Islamic dietary regulations, whatever I do, is considered *halal*. Every aspect in preparing food is guided by a short prayer. I want it to be clean or shall I say, ritually clean. That is what I always do. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

We provide a place for the workers to perform their daily prayers. This country has a lot of Muslim followers and we feel that we have to suit ourselves with the situation. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

It did not matter whether I bought the second hand equipment from the Malay or Chinese shops. I need to ask a Muslim to do the “*samak*”. It is to follow the *halal* rules and regulation. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Selangor)

Respondents suggested that restaurants that have acquired the *halal* certificates to maintain the *halal* standard. Almost all the respondents agreed that *halal* food was not only for Muslims but also for the non-Muslims. As a result, restaurants with *halal* status can potentially cater to all customers and not just to the Muslim market.

Halal is for everyone. I have some Chinese customers from Singapore who prefer to eat at *halal* certified restaurants. They also like to eat *halal* beef. (Male, Malay, *halal* certified, Johor)

We are planning to apply for *halal* certification as it can cater to all people despite their races and religions. But for the first three months, we are looking at the feedbacks. (Male, Chinese, non *halal*, Selangor)

Halal is a specific word and there are some conditions for a Muslim to follow. However, it is not specifically for the Muslims only. In our multiracial community, we have to serve all community. (Male, *halal* certified, Perak)

Looking at the scenario in Malaysia, *halal* is not particularly for the Malays only. In fact it is for the whole ummah (Muslim followers). We cannot simply say that a tourist is a non-Muslim although he or she has a white coloured skin. Maybe that particular person is a Muslim. So, *halal* market is wide. My non-Muslim friends

once mentioned to me that a business would flourish if *halal* status were gained.
(Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

These views showed the concern of the respondents on the need to treat others with dignity and respect as far as religion is concerned. This respect extends to the acceptance of dietary restriction particularly for the Muslims as well as for the non-Muslims. An Indian participant told that he previously perceived that *halal* was meant for slaughtering purposes only but then realized that it covered more than that whereby the participants would purchase mutton from the Malay sellers. This means that the non-Muslims will seek *halal* food, as they believe that *halal* food in a way can be consumed although they have their own religious dietary restrictions.

I used to think that *halal* is mainly on the Islamic way of slaughtering *halal* animals but it is actually more than what I thought and I always buy *halal* slaughtered mutton from the Malay butchers. (Male, Indian, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

Literature on *halal* certification from the perspectives of the restaurant managers is very limited (Wan Hassan and Hall, 2003). The views expressed by the participants showed that *halal* certification was an important aspect of Malay life where they emphasized that a restaurant manager should not only have some knowledge on *halal* matters but should also have an understanding of the basis of the practices and beliefs of other religions as well. Some of the participants have their own personal beliefs that being sensitive towards one's dietary restrictions is crucial in maintaining a good relationship between humankind. Apart from that, there were a few of the Muslim participants who claimed that the non-Muslim restaurant managers were not sincerely complying with the *halal* standard due to some reasons but at the same time having a genuine *halal* certificate to cater for bigger market.

***Halal* Certification Attributes**

The interview sessions generated extensive discussion on *halal* certification and its attributes. Since the fundamental knowledge of *halal* has been defined by the respondents in their own understandings, it is also shown that *halal* certification has its own meaning but in different perspectives. The findings also revealed that most of the respondents had mentioned *halal* certification attributes during the interview session. The attributes such as trust, food quality, hygiene, safety, food sources and preparation matched the literature in Chapter Four. It showed

that *halal* certification signifies highly valued characteristics that promote Islamic teaching on the food supply chain.

Trust

A dominant theme that emerged in the discussion is on trust, which integrates two major aspects such as from the participant's perspectives as well as the customers. The author found that almost all of the participants that operated *halal* certified and *halal* claimant restaurants were particular about trust with respect to the food they purchased and the way they prepared it. The survey also showed that participants were confident that *halal* certification from an authorized organization, such as JAKIM, acts as a medium to convey that all foods served in their eating premises are absolutely *halal*. As a result, they benefited from the customer satisfaction and return visits especially from the Muslim customers (see also Lada et al., 2009).

However, Muslim customers might also become more demanding with *halal* foods especially given that non-Muslim entrepreneurs dominate the *halal* food service industry in Malaysia (Dahalan, 2008). During the interviews, almost all the Muslims and two non-Muslim participants who were Indian male and Chinese female managers expressed their concerns with restaurants that are *halal* certified but with non-Muslim owners. They even claimed that *halal* status has been violated and manipulated by some irresponsible owners.

I believe that *halal* certification has no meanings because mostly the non-Muslims will desperately put their own *halal* signage at their eating premise to attract the Muslim customers. This is because their foods are not entirely and genuinely *halal*. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Pulau Pinang)

For me, everybody can make it *halal*. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Selangor)

A lot of people cheat on *halal* certification. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

Other interviewees had more confidence with the *halal* certification issued by JAKIM and not from those unauthorized bodies. They emphasized that they believed that only JAKIM could be the competent authority to approve and certify *halal* status. A participant from a *halal* claimant restaurant who had been in the food service industry for more than 20 years felt that

some restaurant operators did not really know or fully understand the *halal* concept. When probed further, he mentioned that every single thing in preparing *halal* food must come from *halal* sources.

If I look at *halal* certification from JAKIM, I am more confident compared to other organizations that I am not familiar with. I will make sure all the products and ingredients that I bought had a JAKIM *halal* logo, which is definitely *halal*. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

Malay participants from *halal* claimant restaurants had similar opinions on the reasons why they refused to apply for a *halal* certificate. Here, the issue on whether the Malay restaurant managers followed strictly the Islamic dietary rules is open to argument. However, during discussions they emphasized the importance of being a good Muslim and follower where they felt that serving *halal* food is their responsibility and a good deed for the people who shared the same belief as theirs.

Usually when the owner is a Malay, all foods are guaranteed *halal*. I have never known that when an eating premise is wholly owned by a Malay, we need to apply for a *halal* certification. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

It is just a certificate. Whatever I do, I know that it is *halal*. It is upon me to decide. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Selangor)

Wan Hassan (2008) also noted in her study of *halal* restaurants in New Zealand on the issue of restaurant managers believing that they should be trusted with the *halal* qualities of their food and therefore did not need certification because they were good Muslims. Trust seems to be a critical factor as far as *halal* certification is concerned from the perspective of both restaurants and consumers. A study on defensive dining in Singapore by Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) found out that a large majority of the devout Muslim respondents would not continue eating food at a restaurant when they were in doubt. This is because when a Muslim is in a situation of *syubha*, it is important not to proceed as to obey the restrictions outlined in the *Quran*.

Why should ye not eat of (meats) on which God's name hath been pronounced, when He hath explained to you in detail what is forbidden to you - except under compulsion

of necessity? But many do mislead (men) by their appetites unchecked by knowledge.
Thy Lord knoweth best those who transgress.

(Al-An'am [The Cattle], 119)

It showed that trust has been one of the important attributes in relation with restaurants and suppliers who are keen to maintain the *halal* standard, a way to convince the customers whether to visit a restaurant or not.

Many Muslim customers who are religious will ask whether my restaurant serve *halal* foods although they can see Muslim workers at my restaurant. But when they look at the *halal* certification, they will feel more confident. (Male, Indian, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

Halal certification is important when the target market is Malays and Muslim customers as this will build up their confidence level. (Male, Chinese, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

Generally speaking, Muslim customers will not feel uncertain when eating at *Halal* certified restaurants. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Perak)

In another situation, one restaurant manager mentioned that there were Muslim customers who preferred to eat food that is prepared and cooked by Muslims at *halal* certified eating outlets. This is due to the fact that non-Muslim foreign workers are often hired from Nepal, Vietnam and Myanmar besides the Muslim foreigners from Bangladesh and Indonesia presently working in the food service industry.

Few of the Muslim customers here are very particular. They will ask whether this restaurant has a *halal* certification or not. When I said, yes, they will ask who the chef is. When I said a non-Muslim is the chef, they said that they are not confident eating here. However, most of them will come and eat here because we display our *halal* certification. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Selangor)

All the interviewees were asked about their views on the importance of *halal* certification. At an aggregate level, they said that it is very important and contribute to trust and increase the confidence level of the customers. They believed that *halal* certification portrays

the image of the whole restaurant. The clear signage at the entrance means that not only is the food served *halal* but the entire process would be *halal*. They believed that *halal* certification would generate trust among the customers to visit their eating establishments. However, there were respondents who expressed doubts regarding the origins or certifiers of the *halal* status. Mostly restaurant managers from non-certified *halal* restaurants that claim to serve *halal* food raised these concerns. When asked further on this matter, they said those restaurants that owned fake *halal* certificates did not follow Shariah principles but they knew that with the status, Muslims would have confidence and trust.

There are some restaurants that never applied for *halal* certification but managed to display it. Those people tried to make their restaurants *halal* by using all kinds of tactics. The Muslim customers will definitely feel confident when they see a *halal* certified eating premise. (Male, Malay, *halal* Claimant, Pulau Pinang)

Most of the *halal* certifications are fakes because the restaurants intended to attract more customers. In my opinion, such restaurants that employed non-locals as cooks are not competent to be certified as *halal*. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

The views expressed by the *halal* claimant respondents in relation to the veracity of restaurant certification are in substantial contrast to the statements made by the participants from the *halal* certified restaurants. The majority of them emphasized that they had to follow stringent procedures to obtain a *halal* certification. Therefore, in order to maintain status, they would ensure that *halal* compliance is strictly observed.

It is not easy to get the certification from JAKIM. They will check all the details. I mean from the ingredients, workers, suppliers, slaughtering process and others. They will inspect every single thing. It took us quite some time to be approved. (Female, Malay, *halal* certified, Pulau Pinang)

For me, the religious department is very strict on *halal* certification because this is regarding religious dietary restriction. It is a serious and sensitive matter and not something to be taken for granted. I can say that the *halal* status in all certified restaurants is reliable as it is hard to be awarded. (Male, Malay, *halal* certified, Johor)

I will always check the certificates of my suppliers. If not, I will get in trouble when the religious department officers come and find out that the certificates from the suppliers have expired. They have the authority to close shops that are non-compliance to the *halal* standard. Of course, I do not want that to happen. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Selangor)

JAKIM is very strict as far as *halal* certification is concerned. I have worked in many *halal* certified restaurants and I am very much aware of that. (Male, Indian, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

Among Muslim and non-Muslim participants, there was extensive discussions on their views on trust and purity. Interestingly, almost all the Muslim participants perceived three specific elements in the discussion of having trust in food related business. The first is to demonstrate their belief for their religion and follow what the *Quran* permits and avoid what it prohibits. The second factor is to receive blessings from God for their good action and the third element is on their responsibility to serve *halal* food to the Muslim community in particular and to others as a whole.

In contrast, non-Muslim participants would get their restaurants *halal* certified so that the Muslim customers would have the opportunity to visit their eating premises. Although a few of the non-Muslim participants talked on their responsibilities in fulfilling the Muslim's dietary rules, they did mention on how they anticipated their own punishments during the afterlife if they serve doubtful food to the Muslims. They also felt that cheating the customers means that they will lose their business. Both Muslim and non-Muslim interviewees therefore highlighted their provision of *halal* in cultural and religious terms, but non-Muslim managers placed far more emphasis on the commercial dimensions.

These significant findings have derived an interesting perspective from a self and social identity dimension. It is gathered that the spiritual and commercial tensions with respect to *halal* certification do exists among the participants. This is due to the fact that in gaining market acceptance to visit a *halal* certified or *halal* claimant restaurants, restaurant managers need to fulfill the religious aspect of the Islamic dietary laws. The findings reveal that the participants are obligated in such a way to conform to the *halal* standard. By anticipating the expectations of restaurant managers and operating *halal* certified restaurants that offer *halal* foods is seen to be

most likely to survive and to emerge as far as *halal* conformance is relevant to commercial perspectives but at the same time having moral responsibility and sensitivity towards Muslim religious dietary rule. As such, the primary purpose of this study, therefore, is to determine the expectations of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification and to know whether they perceive *halal* certification as a serious concern and to act proactively in the adoption of and adaptation to *halal* standard.

It is therefore evident that the restaurant managers who were interviewed demonstrated that trust was a crucial element in dietary prohibition such as *halal*. Some of the respondents felt other restaurants have abused that *halal* certification while they also raised concerns with respect to issues of compliance with *halal* standards. This is not surprising because there were some private companies that had awarded *halal* certification to eating establishments, which were not recognized by JAKIM (Idris, 2010). These matters will be further discussed under *halal* certification issues later in the chapter.

Food Quality

The circle of producing food with quality procedures started from the farm until it is prepared and served. *Halal* certification that signals that foods are permissible and lawful for the Muslim to consume also meets the criteria for food quality. When asked about *halal* certification and food quality, many respondents talked about the connection between customers and return visit. They felt that customers would visit a restaurant several times if they serve quality foods.

I feel that *halal* certification and food quality are related and very important toward my restaurant because I only deliver the best as this will increase the number of customers that are coming in. If I serve poor quality foods, then the customers will come here once and will not ever return. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Selangor)

We take great care of our food quality. We buy fresh chicken and seafood for this restaurant. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Selangor)

Another restaurant manager also agreed that *halal* certification delivers food quality. He pointed out the importance of the certification for entrepreneurs in this multiracial country.

It is important to inform the customers that *halal* certification has many attributes. One of them is food quality. *Halal* certification is very important for business people despite their races. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Perak)

The above quotes demonstrated how some participants viewed food quality in different contexts. In other words, the notion of food quality might be very subjective as there were different responses with respect to the elements of “best”, “fresh” and “value” to attract the customers.

Hygiene and Safety

Food hygiene required steps and procedures that control the operational conditions within a food establishment (Hashim, 2004) in order to produce safe and hygienic food for human consumption. As indicated above, restaurant managers took the issue of *halal* certification standard very seriously with *halal* certification helping to portray a restaurant’s image of serving hygienic and safe foods. Within this context, *halal* food emphasized that cleanliness and hygiene are related to food safety. As highlighted in Chapter Four, the Malaysian Standards MS 1500:2004 *Halal* Food Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage and MS 1514:2001 General Principles of Food Hygiene covered all aspects from primary production until preparation in order to maintain the wholeness concept of *halal*.

All the participants were asked about their views on hygiene and safety in relation to *halal* certification and the findings showed that both attributes made significant contribution to their expectations toward *halal* certification in their restaurants. Some Muslim restaurant managers however explained *halal* certification in an Islamic kind of way and emphasized the importance of stringent rules, purity and ethics as a good Muslim follower.

If there is *halal* certification, the food is completely clean and safe. (Male, Indian, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

This restaurant focuses more on cleanliness and in term of *halal* concept, it is *Halallan* Toyyiban (pure and clean). The moment we get the *halal* certification, it guarantees that our food storage and preparation are hygienically clean. We have to undergo a lot of strict processes before we receive the *halal* certification and it is not

easy to get. Once we obtain it, we will maintain the *halal* standard accordingly.

(Male, Malay, *halal* certified, Johor)

As mentioned earlier, food that is clean and safe starts from the production process. Restaurant managers during the interview session emphasized that they recognized their roles by following relevant instructions and applying appropriate food hygiene measures.

Food Sources and Trust on The Suppliers

The *Quran* clearly addressed the issues of modesty and honesty. In light of this, this section outlines how practicing Muslim restaurant managers behaved with respect to the food supply chain in *halal* certified and *halal* claimant restaurants in order to serve food according to the Islamic rules and prohibitions. Respondents from *halal* certified and *halal* claimant restaurants confirmed that most of the foods served come from *halal* food suppliers. Taking into account the Islamic slaughtering process, meat and chicken must come from *halal* suppliers. Foods like seafood and vegetables are bought from wet market or hypermarkets. Findings from the interview sessions suggested that all of the respondents in the *halal* certified and *halal* claimant restaurants trusted their suppliers who supply meat and chicken. For them, if they cheat the customers, they are the one who will get the punishments from God.

I will search for suppliers who I believe are reliable and outsource the goods from them. Those suppliers are the ones whom I have screened and have confidence to do trade. In fact, I will go directly to meet them. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

The respondent above also suggested to whom the suppliers should sell their farm products like meat, poultry, vegetables and eggs and that they need to apply for *halal* certification to confirm that all animals and plants supplied are grown, slaughtered or even being fed or fertilized according to the *halal* standard. One respondent mentioned that suppliers with *halal* certification would follow the rules and regulations provided by the religious authority, as they know that it is not easy to obtain the *halal* certification as mentioned earlier.

I do not think that the suppliers will play around with the *halal* certification because it will end their supply chain if they are being caught. (Male, Chinese Muslim, *halal* certified, Perak)

Even though the participants emphasized the importance of following the rules and regulations in maintaining the *halalness* of the food, there were still many cases reported of food vendors who used fake *halal* logos to cheat customers. Idris (2010) highlighted on raids at malls that caught several food operators using *halal* logos and certificates which were not issued by JAKIM.

Some non-Muslim respondents were very conscious with the *halal* standard because for them *halal* is a sensitive issue and they respected the Muslim religious dietary restrictions.

Our chicken supplies are from suppliers with *halal* certification. Not only is that, our raw materials also *halal* certified. I will not use non-certified *halal* products. For me, the Muslims especially the Malays have their own rituals and customs. I have to make sure that the chickens are slaughtered according to the Islamic way. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

Majority of our customers are the Malays and we ensure that our kitchen prepare foods according to their religious food prohibitions. We trust our suppliers and work with the standard. (Male, Chinese, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

An interesting finding during the interview session was that a non-*halal* restaurant purchased food, especially chickens, from Muslim suppliers so that the chickens are *halal* and can be consumed by the Muslims. When probed further, he gave the reason of buying *halal* chickens as being to test the target market that is the Malays, as they represent the majority of the country's population. However, as the interviewee noted the restaurant is non-*halal* and the cooks are all Chinese, meaning that, as the interviewee stated, Muslims may not necessarily patronize the eating premise. These comments reinforce the importance of Malaysian Muslims' perception of the *halal* qualities of restaurants (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009).

Preparation

As noted in the literature review, *halal* covers slaughtering, storage, display, preparation, hygiene and sanitation (Shafie & Othman, 2006). All these aspects must be carried out properly so as to avoid contamination from non-*halal* elements as noted in Chapter Two. In addition, any food service industry in Malaysia that intends to apply for a *halal* certification must have at

least two full time Malaysian Muslim workers employed in the kitchen section or handling or processing of food (JAKIM, 2010). The interviewee comments indicate that non-Muslim respondents who have already obtained *halal* certification are very concerned about maintaining Islamic environment during food preparation in their eating establishments.

We have Muslim workers as our chefs and the kitchen is 100% *halal*. (Male, Chinese, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

I have to make sure that all of my employees from floor to kitchen understand and follow the *halal* concept while carrying out their roles and responsibilities. It is a good idea if the government can offer training and seminars for us particularly in the food service industry regarding *halal* certification. (Male, Indian, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

The cooks must be Muslims and there are Malaysians and Indonesians who work for us. They will recite *doa* (supplication) before cooking. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

For me, I am truthful, even though I am a Buddhist. I believe that if I serve non-*halal* food or anything that is not *halal* to the Muslims, I am committing a sin and it is not good for me. I know the rules, I am honest about it and I will ensure that I will get it done. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Selangor)

Apart from the non-Muslim restaurant managers, their Muslim counterparts also admitted that they as well as their workers do carry out Islamic religious duties during work. They also recited some prayers when preparing foods specifically during cleaning the raw materials and while cooking so as to maintain the *halalness* of the foods and the environment. This is because any equipment that is in contact or contaminated with non-*halal* substances must be cleansed according to the Shariah requirements (MohdYusoff, 2004; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

I follow the Islamic way in running my business. If I want to clean the chickens and fish, I will recite some doas as what my mother taught me. I really emphasize on that. If not, I will be the one who will be in difficulties in answering the questions during my “after life”. (Female, Malay, *Halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

The Muslim respondents believed that all good things they do would be blessed and rewarded by Allah swt. Almost all the Muslim respondents were afraid of the consequences and punishments if they betray Allah swt on the *halal* concept.

Allah has promised to those who believe and do good deeds (that) they shall have forgiveness and a mighty reward.

(Al-Maidah- Table Spread, verse 9)

Those who reject faith and deny our signs will be companions of Hell-fire.

(Al-Maidah, Table Spread, verse 10)

Halal Certification Issues

Based on the interviews with 33 restaurant managers for this research, all of them indicated that *halal* certification had several issues that require immediate action. Amongst them were substantial paperwork and evidence before application, standardization of a single *halal* logo, and emergence of non-recognized *halal* certification issuers and lack of enforcement. Comments from interviewees indicated that although Malay participants agreed that *halal* certification was important, especially for other restaurants because of the certainty it gave Muslims in their eating, they were reluctant to apply for *halal* certification themselves, as they had to go through several processes and procedures. One of the main reasons why they refused their restaurants to have a *halal* status was that given the relevance of the type of food being served as an expression of Islam, and their perceptions of themselves as good Muslims, they therefore believed that they should be trusted to provide good *halal* food.

Specific Requirements Before Application

JAKIM requires substantial paperwork and evidence before the application is approved. This covers the ingredients, suppliers, utensils and workers. That means every single process must comply with the *halal* standard. A number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the whole process and procedures by JAKIM.

The process for us to get the *halal* certification is about 6 months. The officers will come in and check all the receipts as proof of purchase. Then, they will check on our

workers. There is a lot of paperwork to be done. I think the problem in Malaysia is that there is no proper body that actually works together. They perform many *halal* certifications from different organizations. JAKIM is the most stringent compared to others. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Selangor)

When we first applied for *halal* certification, we have to complete a lot of forms. If JAKIM wants all the restaurants to become *halal* certified, they must make things easy -instead of difficult. It is tedious and detailed. No wonder a lot of people do not want to apply for *halal* certification. (Female, Malay, *halal* certified, Kuala Lumpur)

I admit that there are a lot of steps and procedures before obtaining the *halal* certification. It is difficult to get because it takes a lengthy time and they (JAKIM) will check every single thing. (Female, Malay, *halal* certified, Pulau Pinang)

One respondent mentioned that she did not want to apply for the certification because she heard that it would cost her a lot of money. However, most of the *halal* claimant restaurant managers were planning to apply since Malaysia plans to be a global hub for Islamic food and the government is encouraging certification measures (Wan Omar et al., 2008). In contrast, another participant felt that there was not an issue when applying for the *halal* certification because he receives full support from the officers and religious authority, although he admitted that *halal* certification in general has a lot of rules, processes and procedures.

I can say that *halal* certification is a bit complicated and that is why it is hard to get. I do not face any difficulties with *halal* certification as I will always ask the officers or surf the websites if I have any concerns. For me, maintaining the *halal* standard is not a burden to me. (Male, Malay, *halal* certified, Johor)

Any eating premise that intends to apply for a certification is supposed to follow the normal standard required by the issuing authority. However, in the situation where the Muslim population is the majority, a *halal* standard has been added to the regulatory system to suit their religious needs. This religious dietary standard refers to the *Quran* and it is definitely different in focus, given its religious dimension, from other existing standards like HACCP, General Principles of Food Hygiene and Food Safety to name a few and that is the reason why the process and procedures are so precise. Nevertheless, the different sets of food standards are

complimentary rather than competing, although this may be an issue that government authorities need to give more attention to.

Standardization of a *Halal* Logo

Issues on standardization of the worldwide *halal* logo have been discussed for decades but still the matter has yet to be resolved. According to Anonymous (2008c), some of the issues are the reluctance of some Muslim consumers to accept *halal* certification from organizations that have not been accredited by their own country on account of the different standards being used. Another area that is crucial is the actual implementation of the *halal* standards among the non-Muslim countries, which are either suppliers of *halal* raw materials or ingredients or producers of *halal* finished products. Some non-Muslim countries are creating their own recognized *halal* certification bodies whose membership are neither qualified nor are practicing Muslims, but have been able to penetrate the *halal* industry through diplomatic means. This situation can create issues for restaurant managers with respect to recognizing that *halal* standards that have been maintained throughout the entire food supply chain.

The situation in Malaysia is also somewhat confusing at times (see also Chapter Four), as there are several local *halal* logos that are available for consumer products and premises. To make the situation more complicated, JAKIM and the Departments of Islamic Affairs from local states have the authority to issue the *halal* certification and its logos. In order to handle the issue, a call for uniformity has been suggested. Therefore, an initiative has been launched to issue a single *halal* logo from JAKIM without the state codes. However, the issuance of the certification is still under the authority of both organizations (Ngah, 2010).

One respondent expressed her view on several religious authorities that issue *halal* certification that she believed will create confusion.

There are a lot of organizations that issue *halal* certification. They have JAKIM, JAIS (Department of Islamic Selangor) and others, which I think need to work together. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Selangor)

Private *Halal* Certification Issuers

The emergence of private companies has become a major problem to JAKIM and the State Department of Islamic Affairs. Several private companies claimed that they have the authority to issue *halal* certification. Therefore, some of the eating premises have made application through them. It is gathered from the interviews that some of the respondents raised some concerns over this issue. It is to note that JAKIM and other state religious departments are the only competent authorities in the country that can ascertain a *halal* certification, although there are some individual firms that declare that they can also become the issuers like the Islamic Food Research Centre (IFRC), Bahtera Lagenda (BL) *Halal* Food Council South East Asia and SAS-H Consultants. Some of the participants mentioned that the unauthorized issuers are lenient compared to JAKIM.

I found that some non-Muslim restaurant owners made the application through other incompetent issuers beside JAKIM. I was told that the approval process is quite loose. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

IFRC is different. They are more flexible in a sense that they only require two Muslim handlers in the restaurant. Compared to JAKIM, they emphasize on hiring two Malaysian Muslim workers and that is very hard to get. (Female, Chinese, *halal* certified, Selangor)

JAKIM has attempted to manage the issue by introducing an e-*halal* service that can be accessed through their website, phone calls or sending text messages where fake *halal* logos and certification are easily detected using simple steps. However, this problem is still on a rise due to lack of enforcement.

Lack of Enforcement

As noted above, JAKIM is facing problems with their enforcement of the *halal* labels. Furthermore, through observation during the qualitative research period, there were clearly some eating premises that displayed *halal* certification, which was not from JAKIM. Although there have been raids and arrests for offences, such as displaying *halal* certification from unauthorized authorities and the usage of Quranic verses in *halal* claimant eating premises where the owners and workers are non-Muslims which created uncertainty on its *halalness*. As

such, the practice is still continuing. There are also other related matters in the business operations such as preparation and cleanliness that add to the existing problems of the management of the *halal* certification process.

The number of enforcement officers from JAKIM is not sufficient although they do seek assistance from other state religious departments and the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs to handle the situation (JAKIM, 2010). This is one of the reasons why the non-competent *halal* certification issuers still exist in the country. Some of the *halal* claimant respondents raised the issue on enforcement matters in different ways.

I was wondering why some restaurants could get *halal* certification so easily. How did they manage to obtain it? All of a sudden, all the eating premises are certified *halal* although we do not know for certain if the food served are really *halal* or not. (Female, Malay, *halal* claimant, Kuala Lumpur)

Halal certification is very important but there are some eating premises that display fake ones in non-visible places because they serve alcoholic drinks. (Male, Malay, *halal* claimant, Pulau Pinang)

The comments indicated that participants felt that *halal* certification is easy to gain because of the number of unrecognized issuers and they are very concerned with the ability of the enforcement officers to handle this issue. Idris (2010) reported that food business operators had been deceiving consumers into buying non-certified meat and poultry by using fake *halal* logos issued by private companies under the guise of an Islamic research organization. This is due to the fact that business finds it cumbersome to get *halal* certification from JAKIM as highlighted by the participants during the interview sessions.

7.3 Chapter Summary

Halal certification of a restaurant represents the status of the food being offered at an eating premise. The comments gained from the interviews supported the notion that the participants were aware of and sensitive to Muslim's dietary restriction and religious practices. Given that Malaysia is primarily an Islamic country, the restaurant managers have taken several initiatives to accommodate the situation by providing a proper place for Muslims to perform their daily

prayers. Furthermore, they also knew about Muslim ritual cleansing and the importance of maintaining the *halalness* during food preparation.

The element of trust was the main focal point of the interviews and was heavily discussed by the participants. As Al-Harran and Low (2008) stated, the main reason for a Muslim to buy a *halal* product is because of his commitment to Islamic principles and teachings apart from his physical need for the product. From an Islamic perspective, the commitment to such principles is critical because of the rewards that a Muslim will benefit in the afterlife if he follows the teachings and guidelines in the *Quran* (Dahalan, 2008). It is significant that several non-Muslim participants were very concerned about the strength of Muslim attitudes with respect to the importance of certainty over *halal* given that they believed that some Muslims were reluctant to patronize their restaurants although it is *halal* certified. Nevertheless, all restaurants that had *halal* certification acknowledged the responsibility to maintain their business operations according to the *halal* standards. Almost all the Muslim restaurant managers interviewed would recite a short prayer while preparing the ingredients, cleaning the raw materials and cooking the food. This kind of practice was also mentioned by the non-Muslim participants stating that they were aware of this daily routine of the Islamic way of blessing the food.

Halal food is blessed not only when preparing it but from when the food supply chain started, from planting, fertilizing to harvesting. In some areas, blessings are performed before a *halal* species animal is slaughtered. Here, trust on food suppliers is also a crucial aspect, as they also need to comply with the *halal* standards. All of the participants who run a *halal* certified and *halal* claimant restaurants suggested during the interviews that they acquired their food sources from trusted suppliers. They would purchase products that were sealed with a recognized *halal* logo. According to the participants, the *halal* certified products whether local or imported are accessible at retail shops in Malaysia. Thus, making the purchasing process more convenient.

The participants also raised some *halal* certification issues such as detailed requirements before application, the call for standardization of a single *halal* logo on food products, non-certified issuers and problems on enforcement. During the interview session, several areas of concern were highlighted by some of the restaurant managers. A *halal* claimant restaurant manager felt that *halal* certification can be bought easily as there were a number of private companies and consultation firms that issue the certification such as Islamic Food Research

Centre (IFRC), SAS-H Consultants Sdn Bhd and Bahtera Lagenda (BL) *Halal* Food Council South East Asia. The issue here is those firms mentioned above are issuing illegal certificates, which are against the procedures outlined by JAKIM (2010). A statement in its website mentioned that:

JAKIM and all other states of Islamic religious department are the only two bodies or institutions that are legally responsible to issue a *halal* certification and *halal* logo for products manufactured in Malaysia, food premise and abattoir. Any *halal* logo or *halal* certification that is being issued by any private party is not permitted by the government and against the law. Anyone caught with this act could face legal suit (translated from frequently asked question section which is available at <http://www.halal.gov.my/faq.php>).

The Malaysian Government is serious in protecting the consumer rights and has made it mandatory for food operators to obtain *halal* certification. In relation to this, the *Halal* Act will be formulated in 2010 and implemented in 2011. It is to promote the growth of the *halal* industry and check the problems of *halal* falsification (Idris, 2010). This act would specify the form of action and measures to be taken against those using fake *halal* logos and certificates including failing to follow the *halal* standard sets by JAKIM.

A Muslim restaurant manager who ran a *Halal* certified eating premise has raised another point of view. She said that if the owner of the restaurant is a Muslim, the food served is absolutely *halal* and having a *halal* certification is pointless. In contrast, a statement made by another Muslim restaurant manager who said that customers would not know the food sources are all or partially *halal* due to the fact that it is wholly owned by a Muslim. There is also an issue on non-certified *halal* restaurants that claim to serve *halal* foods whereby the premises will display “no pork and no lard” sticker at the entrance. But still there were quite a number of customers who patronized the abovementioned eating places including Muslims. It is gathered that the three themes from the interviews indicated spiritual and commercial tensions with respect to *halal* certification.

Whatever it takes to achieve it, the selected restaurant managers agreed that *halal* certification is an important aspect in the food service industry especially in the restaurant sector as more people can be influenced to patronize eating establishments that have it. They also reasoned that a restaurant could offer better service in terms of convenience and ample space compared to hawker stalls and food courts. The growing demand in *halal* food, the launching of

the *halal* hub concept, and the increasing number of Muslim tourists to Malaysia have led the restaurant managers to have high expectations toward *halal* certification with respect to improved business competitiveness while not neglecting the fundamental aspect of conforming to the *halal* standards. In order to further explain the expectations of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification in Malaysia, Chapter Eight will highlight on the discussions with respect to the findings.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION

8.0 Discussion

This section will discuss on the findings gathered from the quantitative and qualitative research. The restaurant managers who participated in this study showed much interest and concern with the *halal* status of their eating premises. *Halal* certification is very important to the restaurant industry in Malaysia but the actual implementation of its standards is crucial for the comprehension of those who are unfamiliar with Islamic dietary rules. Overall, restaurant managers in Malaysia believed that having a *halal* status is an advantage as the market for *halal* food is rising and consumers are demanding *halal* certified food products including those available at eating outlets.

The findings showed that respondents had high expectations towards *halal* certification where seven important factors emerged from factor analysis. The highest variance explained was market signals that highlighted *halal* certification connotations. For example, it signifies healthy food, taste, food quality, authenticity, safety and hygiene. By looking at the wholesomeness concept of *halal* food, it entails every aspect according to the *Shariah* principle. As such, maintaining the standards is required to obtain good food in terms of hygiene, sanitation and safety.

This is also supported by the qualitative findings where restaurant managers claimed during interviews that when there is *halal* certification, the food is guaranteed clean and safe. They reasoned that the *halal* concept of *halallan toyyiban* (pure and clean) delivers the highest quality in cleanliness, as the *halal* status requires comprehensive and stringent procedures before approval. Thus, almost all participants in the survey and interviews were very concerned with cleanliness during food preparation. In fact, cleanliness was the highest mean (4.66) under perceptions towards their own restaurant in relation to food preparation (Table 6.3) and signifies hygiene with a mean score of 4.17 in Table (6.4) under perceptions towards *halal* certification in general. The majority of Muslim restaurant managers mentioned that blessings were recited during the cleaning and cooking of food in their restaurants to make it even cleaner in the religious sense. Therefore, this research reinforces that the religious understanding of food

safety should be part of its broader definition as one of the top priorities in the food quality system (Peri, 2006).

It is worth noting that the concept of *halal* for Muslims has an emphasis on permitted, allowed, lawful food based on Islamic definitions. Sociologically, the meaning signified by this concept can be interpreted differently in a different community, country, culture and even from the different Islamic schools of thought. In this study, the respondents felt that the Muslim customers must have the ability to adapt and control their eating habits within particular circumstances, thus within the Islamic principle. As such, restaurant managers who participated during the mail survey and interview session considered that *halal* certification attributes are very significant in fulfilling the Muslim's dietary restriction.

Wan Hassan and Awang (2009), as well as Pang and Toh (2008), in their evaluation of *halal* food preparation reiterated the importance of cleanliness in the context of food and drink as Islam considers eating to be a matter of worship. Similarly, it applies to all Muslims who are required to carry out the ablution process or cleaning of certain body parts before they perform their daily prayers. Thus, it relates to the five pillars in Islam as highlighted in Chapter Two. Furthermore, it is believed that the Islamic dietary laws are based on health issues due to the impurity or harmfulness of what the *Quran* prohibits (Regenstein et al., 2003a). The views of the participants within the study would support such an approach.

The Islamic attributes suggested by *halal* certified restaurants is regarded as increasing the confidence and demand of Muslim customers, conforming to *halal* standards, and signifying all food sources are *halal* certified. The satisfaction based on trust increases the confidence level among Muslim customers when deciding to visit an eating premises. It is gathered from the findings that this element of trust covers all aspects in the food supply chain as well as the dining experience. The importance of trust in this study of restaurant managers is similar to other studies on *halal* food, products and restaurants (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009; Dahalan, 2008; Wan Omar et al., 2008). This is also supported by Al-Harran and Low (2008) in Chapter One that *halal* certification is a symbol of trust and simultaneously develops the confidence level, particularly among the Muslim customers.

Almost all the restaurant managers who participated in the survey expected that *halal* certification would represent the image of the whole restaurant where in a way it demonstrates that food hygiene is greatly emphasized. The literature in Chapter Two highlights that not only

the food must be clean and safe for consumption, but the personnel involved in preparing foods must be in proper sanitary conditions as mentioned by Amjadi and Hussain (2005) in relation to food hygiene and preparation. They emphasized that the food service managers must work closely with reliable suppliers to ensure that the food supply chain is safe from contamination. Trust in food traceability is crucial to avoid outbreaks that risk the lives of the consumers. Trust as expressed by Peri (2006) in Chapter Four is a relationship between person to person. The result of this study demonstrated that identification of a *halal* certificate is an important factor. It is believed that a quick identifying process is done when a *halal* certificate has a JAKIM logo and other necessary information that includes Muslim staff, type of customers and type of food offered in terms of what is considered as *halal*.

The clear *halal* logo at the entrance means that not only is the food served *halal* but the entire process would be *halal* as well. Therefore, *halal* certification is an important aspect in the Malaysian food service industry. Therefore this research is supported by the study by Aliman and Othman (2007) and rejects the findings by Josiam et al. (2007) that found *halal* certification as one of the least important factors in terms of restaurant characteristics. Participants from *halal* certified and *halal* claimant restaurants also placed great emphasis on *halal* food sources when asked about the matter during the interview sessions. They assured the author that all meat was slaughtered according to *Shariah* principles as they obtained the food from *halal* certified suppliers or bought them personally from Muslim butchers. They believed that *halal* certification not only built their own trust towards their suppliers but also with customers who visited their eating establishments.

Mohd Yusoff (2004) claimed that *halal* certification provides some benefits. One of them is confidence as people can make an informed choice of their purchase, and as well it can affect the mentality of potential customers (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). It appears from the survey and interviews that Muslim customers in particular are seeking peace of mind during food consumption. Shafie and Othman (2006) noted that having peace of mind initially came from trust. Their studies on international marketing issues and challenges with respect to *halal* certification reasoned that the *halal* logo played an important role and clarified doubt during the purchase decision. This is supported by the result of the interviews when the participants mentioned that religious authorities would conduct an inspection without prior notice on their premises as well as the food sources and ingredients.

Halal certification is also viewed by respondents as having marketing aspects that act as a strategic tool to persuade customers to purchase from their restaurants. Restaurant managers also considered *halal* certification as a trademark that provides a competitive advantage over non-certified restaurants. *Halal* certification by restaurants was also regarded as reinforcing government efforts to promote Malaysia as a *halal* food hub as well as a destination for Muslim tourists. Foreign Muslim tourists, mostly from the Middle East, China, Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, are attracted to Malaysia not only by the multi-racial element and harmony, but also the *halal* culinary delights being offered in the country (Wan Omar et al., 2008). Ching et al. (2005) as cited in Zailani (2011), have conducted a study on satisfaction levels of Asian and Western travelers that indicate that the factor of *halal* food and beverage plays a vital role in determining the overall satisfaction levels for Asian travelers especially Muslims. Their study also shows that Asian Muslim travelers who visit Malaysia are searching for the variety and freshness of the local *halal* food. In relation to Islamic tourism, Zamani-Farahani (2010, p. 79) has narrated it in an interesting way:

Islam is the foundation of public and private life in Muslim nations and its influence extends to politics, especially in theocracies where the state and religion are indivisible. In these countries, society is ordered in conformity with the principles of the Islamic way, which directly and indirectly affects recreation and travel. Religion thus influences individual host and guest experiences, but also the operation of the industry, tourism policy making and destination development.

Islamic or *halal* tourism has become a new phenomenon in the tourism industry (Zailani et al., 2011). As such it has been well accepted and opened a wide opportunity to the food providers and entrepreneurs to take advantage of getting into this market. The fundamental aspect of Islamic regulations on *halal* food preparations and hygienic environment will give an added competitive advantage in attracting local and foreign tourists, particularly those from the Middle East, West Asia and other Islamic countries. Zailani et al. (2011) further stressed the increasing sensitivity of West Asia Muslim tourists who seek access to more sophisticated holiday destinations and *halal* dining.

Since 2003 the Malaysian government has streamlined the implementation of *halal* certification (Mohd Yusoff, 2004). JAKIM is now the lead agency in the conferment of *halal* certificates and labels at both the federal and state levels. However, respondents have raised their concerns over several issues pertaining to costs, time and bureaucracy in getting the

approval. Cost of certification was also identified in the factor analysis as a significant issue that relates to the financial and non-financial costs mentioned above. Once they obtained the certificate, other matters arise in order to comply with the *halal* standards where participants perceived that other restaurant managers thought that *halal* certification is a standard that is difficult to maintain and follow. This means that in maintaining the standard the holders are obliged to act responsibly in terms of the food they produce and serve. They must ensure that the whole process is not in contact with any *haram* materials. The data obtained from the interview sessions also indicated that all participants were aware of the *halal* standards and monitored it very closely as they were concerned about maintaining these standards in an Islamic environment.

The research also suggested that *halal* certification not only increases the demand and confidence level among Muslims but also non-Muslims. As such, having the *halal* status means a bigger market share can be secured for restaurants (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009; Mohd Yusoff, 2004) as *halal* food is regarded as suitable for both Muslims and non-Muslims. The result of the survey suggested the demand from the non-Muslims is growing when a restaurant has *halal* certification and that this simultaneously increases their confidence level in the food provided. Similar results from the interviews supported this when some restaurant managers agreed that *halal* food is not exclusively for Muslims but for everyone. It is found that there were some non-Muslim customers who requested *halal* food for certain reasons.

Given that Malaysia consists of multiple ethnicities, the *halal* status of a restaurant is expected to create unity among its people. Although the research on defensive dining by Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) was on Muslim customers in retaining *halalness* in the multi-cultural setting of Singapore, their study suggested that the widespread acceptance of *halal* foods by different ethnic groups allowed participation in a multi-cultural everyday life. Such a finding, supported by the results of this study, may have important implications for cultural relationships between Malaysia's various ethnic groups as both Muslims and non-Muslims can sit and eat together in an premises that is *halal* compliant.

As far as being an Islamic country is concerned, since the *halal* development program started during the early 1980s, the certificate has gained national acceptance. It is gathered that the local awareness appeared to be of relatively high importance with a mean score of 4.07 on a scale of 1 to 5. Expectations towards *halal* certification in this study were high, as the respondents believed that the *halal* market would emerge as one of the great market forces in

the coming years. Here, the meaning of *halal* is wide and respondents regarded the *halal* status as adding value to the restaurants in the sense of gaining acceptance from the locality. In addition, the findings indicate that *halal* certification in Malaysia is a signal of trust to the related local authority in approving domestic and international food products as Malaysia is the pioneer in *halal* certification matters (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

Malaysia is known as a multi-racial and multi-cultural country and this local identity has promoted the demand for *halal* food like its neighbouring country, Singapore. Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) keep on reiterating about the dining together of different races and at the same time Muslim customers can eat their *halal* food according to their dietary rules and regulations in Singapore. Even though South East Asian and Middle Eastern countries have shown a considerable preference to western food (specifically fast food like McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King and Pizza Hut as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two), the fundamental aspect is that this food must be certified *halal*. However, there are certain restaurants in Bangkok (Satha-Anand, 1991) and New Zealand (Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003) that do not display *halal* signages although the food served is *halal*.

These above-mentioned items have been further supported through factor analysis that has divided them into different categories. In addition, *halal* certification is also believed to increase the confidence level among Muslim customers. This can be related to trust that has been greatly emphasized by the participants during interviews. As the number of Muslim respondents is greater than other religions, it is expected that the result represents more from their viewpoints. Therefore, the results in factor analysis is a subsequent evidence from the descriptive that further suggests that the Malay restaurant managers can be categorized as "Certification Advocates" in cluster analysis.

The important aspect about *halal* is conceptualized in the Muslim's ability to adapt and control one's eating habits within particular circumstances according to Islamic dietary laws. Furthermore, with the increase of food variety and consumption, it is vital for Muslims to look for food which meets their food Islamic standard and at the same time avoid purchasing unfamiliar or doubtful food. It is gathered in the study that *halal* certification acts as a trademark establishment where almost all of the respondents strongly agreed that it is considered as a prominent source of identification for Muslim customers before visiting a restaurant (Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008). Here, restaurant managers felt that eating establishments with *halal* certification provide the necessary information such as confidence and trust as well as reliable

halal sources. In addition, Muslim customers in Malaysia can find *halal* certified restaurants at ease.

The findings from the cluster analysis as well as the interviews highlighted the different expectations of Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers. In essence, there was a clear difference between the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents towards *halal* certification in the survey. The result of the cluster analysis proved that the members were divided into three distinct groups. Cluster 1 is named “Certification Advocates” who were the Malays and Muslim restaurant managers. The members of cluster 1 had the highest market signal, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, non-Islamic attributes and local awareness ratings. The members felt that *halal* certification had a lot of benefits where it is essential to follow the *halal* standard procedure and were confined with their daily routines in delivering *halal* values to the customers. This group appeared to be more likely working in *halal* certified restaurants. They expected that *halal* certification in restaurants was more towards gaining a positive impact on customer satisfaction. They believed that maintaining the *halal* standards was the most important factor in running their business.

In comparison, cluster 2 is known as “Certification Ambivalents” comprising of Chinese respondents who were Buddhists and had the lowest market signal, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, non-Islamic attributes and local awareness ratings. In fact, they were the opposite in perceiving *halal* certification benefits compared to “Certification Advocates”. These groups of respondents were more likely to be working in non-*halal* restaurants. However, findings from the interviews indicated that non-Muslim participants suggested that Islamic norms and values must be practised while operating *halal* certified restaurants. This is to preserve the Muslim customers’ dietary restriction in particular and gain mutual understanding from the society in general. The managers had viewed *halal* certification in a broader, yet practical, perspective and with the combination of the religious aspects they noted that *halal* status encompassed several important factors for the benefits of their restaurants.

The non-Muslim respondents of *halal* certified and *halal* claimant restaurants also respected the dietary restrictions of Muslims and worked closely to fulfill and maintain the *halal* standards. This is supported by the findings from the interviews where the participants emphasized the importance of knowledge relating to Muslim dietary prohibition and religious practices. An interesting aspect is that there are some non-Muslim restaurant managers who have much interest and are well versed in Islamic dietary laws. Their sensitivity towards the

halal food and eating environment may be one of the results of living with multiple races for centuries. The last group in the cluster was “Compliance Cost Focused”, who perceived that *halal* certification brings benefits but at the same time felt that the certification process demands financial and non-financial costs.

The application process and conformance to the *halal* standard was also a significant issue for restaurant managers. Both the survey and interviews raised similar results on the strict processes prior to being certified and *halal* compliant after certification. Again, it can be argued that the procedures are rigid due to the fact that it is a law from the *Quran*. It is clearly stated in the Holy Book that Islamic dietary laws permits and prohibits certain foods for Muslim consumption. Thus, there is no compromise on that matter. In addition, the issues on non-government recognized *halal* certifiers have become a serious problem and affect the integrity of related enforcement. In order to reduce and eliminate the problem, and help satisfy the concerns of some *halal* certified restaurants as to the value of the official certification process, aggressive enforcement needs to be executed. The regulatory bodies must consistently monitor these eating establishments to conform to *halal* standards at all times. Furthermore, the *Halal* Act that commenced in 2011 (Idris, 2010) is seen as a positive move in facing the challenges towards the *halal* food service industry.

The findings from the cross-tabulation show that most of the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist respondents strongly agreed that *halal* certification signifies several advantages such as healthy food, authenticity, food quality, taste authenticity, hygiene and safety. The result is supported by Habib et al. (2011) who also highlighted several similar attributes in their survey on fast food consumption in Malaysia. Another aspect is on authenticity as *halal* food must be separated from non-*halal* food. When a restaurant is awarded with a *halal* certificate, it conveys information to the customers that only *halal* food is served. The information given is also essential for the customers to choose certain foods over others. That particular choice might be the reflection of lifestyles such as vegetarianism or religious practices such as Jews and Muslims where pork meat should be absent (Mafra et al., 2008). The findings indicate that non-Muslim respondents are very much concern on authenticity where Buddhist (66.6%), Christian (56.7%), Hindu (69.3%) and other religions (76%). These results show a relationship with the findings in the interviews in terms of importance of knowledge about *halal*, Muslim sensitivity and religious practices.

Then followed by *halal* certification signifies food quality that showed a high level of agreement by the Muslim respondents (88.7%), followed by Hindus (69.2%), Buddhists (66.7%), Christians (56.7%) and other religions (56%). Zailani et al. (2011, p. 6) have suggested that the food producers must be well equipped with the understanding of the *halal* concept in fulfilling Muslim consumers' demands towards *halal* products. Furthermore, religious buildings and rituals are important factors for the attraction of the consumer behavioural intention to purchase the food items. In terms of taste authenticity, Muslim respondents have the highest percentage (79%) and the least from the Christian respondents.

Zailani et al. (2011) also emphasized that most of the food entrepreneurs in Malaysia have a good knowledge and understanding about food hygiene and *halal* food including ways it is processed, prepared and marketed. This is a good indication for Malaysia in being a global *halal* hub. Again, the findings by Habib et al. (2011) supported this study where *halal* status has been found as the main influential factor for the Malay customers to consider the purchase of food whereas the Chinese gives more priority towards food safety and Indian for freshness. Table 6.13 indicates that the Muslim and Hindu respondents strongly agreed that *halal* certification signifies hygiene with 88.9% and 80.8% respectively. This is in line with the discussion during interviews that *halal* certification emphasizes hygiene that covers all aspects from production until the preparation of food. If hygienic procedures are followed, it is expected that food safety would be achieved (Hashim, 2004). Amjadi and Hussain (2005) also emphasized this prevalent factor where food service managers must collaborate with reliable suppliers in ensuring that only safe food is prepared and offered to consumers.

In general, food safety is perceived as an important aspect and consumers are willing to pay a higher price in order to obtain safer food. It is interesting to highlight in this study that different religions have different expectations on *halal* certification attributes with respect to the findings on cross tabulation. It shows that Hindu respondents expected that *halal* certification is able to provide safety (84.6%) whereas the percentage of the Chinese respondents on similar attributes has shown a significant difference where in terms of safety attribute is 66.6%. Muslim respondents have the highest expectation where they highly expected that *halal* certification promotes food safety (89.4%). If compared with the findings during interviews, participants keep reiterating on *halal* certification means clean and safe. This is being supported by Nik Muhammad et al. (2009) who reported *halal* is being acknowledged as a new standard for safety, hygiene and quality assurance.

Food safety scandals have heightened consumers' concerns about food safety where contamination was not immediately detected (Meuwissen et al., 2003). Here, they emphasized that food safety is the primary responsibility of food producers and reasoned that the exact source of contamination was difficult to identify within a reasonable time period due to the fact that the food hygiene rules do not mention the need for certification of "good manufacturing practices". If compared to the study, Islamic dietary laws has outlined its *halal* standard that does not compromise on non-*halal* materials. It is suggested that by obeying the *halal* standard, distrust in the safety of food in a *halal* certified or *halal* claimant restaurants can be avoided. In fact, good manufacturing practice or good hygiene practice is a compulsory requirement in preparing *halal* food as it is becoming increasingly important throughout the supply chains (Mohd Janis, 2004). In principle, the effect on trade is positive since food safety and hygiene systems and traceability systems are indicators of the quality and background of a product (Meuwissen et al., 2003).

This study focuses on restaurant manager expectations towards *halal* certification and they are responsible to ensure that food safety is observed and well monitored as mentioned in Chapter Three. The literature has stressed these professionals in food service sector need to handle the food safety issues wisely as people are more aware due to a number of outbreaks in previous years (Badrie et al., 2006). As such, food safety is greatly emphasized (De Jonge et al., 2008; Mohd Daud, 2004). One of the ways being practised to avoid the foodborne illnesses is by consuming organic food that is perceived by people as natural food and having a unique relationship with the environment (Krystallis & Chryssohoidis, 2005). Apart from that, there are some consumers who prefer to eat GMO food that is also highlighted in Chapter Three. However, GMO food is perceived as being related to health and environmental risks. Taking *halal* food as a comparison, the growing demand towards this religious food as found in the findings has shown that it signifies food safety although *halal* is more related to religious compliance. Again, religion has a significant influence on people's values, habits and attitudes as mentioned by Delener (1994) in Chapter Four.

Within this context, almost all of the respondents have very high expectations, that is, more than 80% (Table 6.15) felt that *halal* certification is able to increase the confidence level among Muslim customers. Similar results are also shown in Table 6.16, that *halal* certification signifies conformance to the *halal* standard. The interesting fact that needs to be highlighted here is that the Hindu respondents have the highest percentage of 88.4%. During the qualitative research it is indicated that a Hindu participant personally viewed *halal* certification as a

guarantee standard that the food complies with Islamic dietary laws. This is supported by Al-Harran and Low (2008) that *halal* certification is a symbol of the authority's guarantee of the producer's claims.

As such, *halal* certification can increase the demand from Muslim customers as it signifies all food sources are *halal* certified. The respondents believed that if a restaurant is *halal* certified, it means that *halal* food is served as it is generated from *halal* sources. In fact, tracing *halal* resources is critical (Meuwissen et al., 2003, p.169). Here, JAKIM is responsible to check that potential *halal* certified restaurants use *halal* ingredients before they are awarded with the *halal* certificate. Trust in the certification itself is found to be a prominent element in this study. Not only is the customer's demand for trust in *halal* certification important, but restaurant managers must also have trusted the *halal* certification scheme as well as the certifying party.

With this, *halal* certification is expected to act as a marketing strategy tool by the respondents in this study. The cross-tabulation between educational background and marketing strategy showed that the respondents expected that *halal* certification has the marketing benefits where Masters degree holders (82.4%), more than 70% for Bachelor degree and Diploma holders and also to secondary leavers. The findings show that *halal* certification adds value to their restaurants in terms of attracting potential and existing customers. It is gathered that restaurants with *halal* certification offer restaurant managers a great opportunity to differentiate themselves from other restaurants in the food service industry that do not have a *halal* certificate. Here, certification facilitates the communication about the product. This study is further supported by Botonaki et al. (2006) and Meuwissen et al. (2003).

Once having been awarded with a *halal* certificate, a restaurant is entitled to make use of the quality label for marketing purposes with respect to the tourism market. Again, the findings from the cross-tabulation showed that 72.2% of the Bachelor degree holders and the remaining respondents with other qualification strongly expected there is a relationship between *halal* certification and attracting tourists to visit restaurants in Malaysia. An aggressive promotional campaign has been done to build trust particularly among Muslim tourists. According to Jahn et al. (2005), certification systems mainly depend on trust. In essence, trademark establishment can be achieved with *halal* certification where 42.5% of certificate holders strongly agree on the statement.

In order to take advantage of the well-accepted *halal* certification, *halal* tourism is one of the most resilient forms of tourism that should be taken into consideration by restaurant managers in Malaysia. Zailani et al. (2011) highlighted that *halal* or Islamic tourism is not limited to tourists from Middle Eastern countries although they have been traveling to many different parts of the world. This unexploited *halal* tourism is seen as a competitive advantage to certified *halal* restaurants over non-certified *halal* restaurants. The main issue in attracting the Muslim tourists is being able to provide maximum convenience during their trip to fulfill religious obligations while on holiday (Zailani et al., 2011). Being an Islamic country, Malaysia is considered fortunate to become a tourist destination for Muslim travelers (Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003).

It can be suggested from this study that *halal* certification has a quality label or trademark establishment. Most of the restaurant managers agreed that with the trademark, *halal* certification acts as mode of communication specifically to Muslim customers that the food complies with their religious dietary rules. In essence, this gives a competitive advantage over non-certified *halal* restaurants. This is one of the marketing benefits that a restaurant manager can seek from *halal* certification as the results in Table 6.22 indicate that the majority of the respondents agreed on the matter.

Halal certification is able to provide consumer protection through JAKIM by providing reliable and efficient external audits and implementation. Looking at the food service industry, JAKIM must ensure that certified products, processes and systems in the restaurant sector are in conformity with *halal* standards. Certification will also become more important as due diligence becomes increasingly crucial, not only with regard to food safety issues but also in the field of livestock epidemics. Time, costs and bureaucracy are among the factors that a restaurant manager needs to face before being awarded with a *halal* certificate approved by JAKIM.

Customers are urged to be able to trust both the product and organizations responsible for validating that product (Padel & Foster, 2005). In relation to this study, an independent organization like JAKIM that has clearly defined and explained standards and information is more trustworthy than several non-accredited private companies that award *halal* certification to restaurants which then leads to confusion among Muslim customers. Here, *halal* standards and procedures, implementation and enforcement need to be carried out by an accredited party like JAKIM. Not fully credible standards will jeopardize public confidence and lead to market failure on a higher level (Jahn et al., 2005).

Most of the respondents disagreed that other restaurant managers perceived *halal* certification costs a lot and takes too much time in getting the approval. Furthermore, they expected that their counterparts did not recognize some bureaucracy in getting the approval due to the low percentage value (Table 6.25). Again, the results are similar with Table 6.26 and Table 6.27 where the respondents showed disagreement that the *halal* standard is difficult to follow and to maintain in accordance to the *halal* standard. It is gathered from the interview sessions that conforming to the *halal* standard is not that difficult either to follow or maintain. However, most of the participants during interviews raised the issue about detailed procedures that they have to follow before being awarded with the *halal* certification. Whatever it takes, it is possible for non-Muslim entrepreneurs to be as competent and competitive with their Muslim counterparts in adopting Islamic values and principles when producing *halal* products and services (Zakaria & Abdul-Talib, 2010).

The non-Islamic attributes that include *halal* certification increases the demand and confidence level among non-Muslim customers and showed moderate and low percentages as indicated in Table 6.28 and Table 6.29. The results from the independent t-test also indicate similar results as the non-Islamic attributes is not significant. Respondents were also asked whether other restaurant managers perceived that *halal* certification is familiar and gaining acceptance from the local people. Due to the high number of male respondents, it is gathered that 79.6% of them have high expectations towards familiarity and 82.2% on acceptance compared to 80.9% and 78% for the female. The reputation of a *halal* certificate must be able to serve as a reliable quality signal, which in turn acts as a communication medium to inform that trusted *halal* food is being prepared and served. The underlying institutional structure can considerably influence the effectiveness and reliability of the whole processes and certification system (Jahn et al., 2005).

Malaysia is positioning itself to be the central trading hub for *halal* products. In achieving its stated goal, this country must intelligently market itself by providing a credible platform in connecting a global *halal* supply chain and certification for *halal* assurance (Nik Muhammad et al., 2009). The findings of this study showed that there are significant differences between Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers pertaining to *halal* certification in terms of factors like market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, cost of certification, cost of compliance, non-Islamic attributes and local awareness during the t-test.

It is gathered that there are significant differences among Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers on market signals. Muslim respondents have a higher mean of 4.26 compared to 3.79 from non-Muslims. This indicates that Muslim restaurant managers have high expectations that *halal* certification signifies healthy food, taste authenticity, food quality, safety and hygiene. This result is supported by the cross-tabulation and from the findings during interview sessions. Participants from the interview sessions mentioned these factors as *halal* certification attributes that match with those of previous researchers (Aliman & Othman, 2007; Al-Harran & Low, 2008; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008; Peri, 2006). It is commonly emphasized that Islamic dietary laws hold a set of principles, standards and rules to be applied through the *halal* food circle.

The result is significant ($p < 0.001$) between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents when Islamic attributes are discussed. The t-test results showed that almost all of the respondents strongly agreed that *halal* certification can increase the confidence level among Muslim consumers, signifies conformance to *halal* standards, increases demand from Muslim customers and signifies all food sources are *halal* certified. Participants from different races were more interested to discuss trust during the interviews. In fact, this is the dominant aspect that has been raised. They agreed that Muslim customers are very particular in seeking *halal* food. The element of trust is also heavily discussed in relation to peace of mind (Shafie & Othman, 2006).

The independent t-test has highlighted a range of interesting and significant findings and one of them is the item on marketing benefits. The quantitative results showed that the expectations of the respondents towards *halal* certification are more towards the commercial drivers and this is supported from the t-test that indicated significant result. Due to the fact that *halal* is the new market force in most Islamic countries (Nik Muhammad et al., 2009), Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers are striving to ensure that they represent the hospitality industry in attracting the tourism market, becoming competitive over non-certified restaurants and using *halal* certification as a marketing strategy tool.

Findings from the interview also suggested that *halal* certification has marketing benefits but it needs to be supported with the spiritual concept. The qualitative results indicate that almost all of the participants have given increased attention to the *halalness* of foods they are offered in their restaurants. Here, spiritual drivers added although commercial objectives are significant as the acceptance towards *halal* foods is increasing not only among the Muslims but

also non-Muslims (Abdul Latif, 2006; Muhammad, 2007; Nik Muhammad et al., 2009). Looking at this phenomenon, the potential in this market is remarkable.

Another aspect of cost of certification is statistically insignificant (.180) as it shared a similar result with the cross-tabulations. It is gathered that the issues were not that serious such as for the costs of applying, duration in getting the approval and bureaucracy. The issues that have been deeply discussed during the interviews were the time taken before being awarded the *halal* certificate and the strict procedures. The Muslim and non-Muslim respondents disagreed that *halal* certification is difficult to follow and to maintain as shown in Table 6.32. The result is statistically significant. However, non-Islamic attributes showed no significant differences where *halal* certification can increase the demand and confidence level from non-Muslim customers. The final factor of local awareness explained that there are significant differences between the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents that *halal* certification is familiar and gaining acceptance from the local people. This is supported by Josiam et al. (2007) that Malaysian customers do rely on *halal* certification.

During the interviews, the *halal* claimant restaurant managers raised the issue of the non-Muslims who are applying for *halal* certification to attract Muslim customers (Dahalan, 2008). However, it can be argued that if they have obtained the *halal* certification, it is their responsibility to maintain the *halalness* and conform to the *halal* standards. Almost all of the non-Muslim participants from *halal* certified restaurant in the interviews mentioned that they followed the rules and regulations outlined by JAKIM or other *halal* certification local issuers. They were afraid to cheat the customers or even the *halal* certification authorities as it will tarnish their restaurant's image and they might face the possibility of a legal suit. As a result, their *halal* status will be suspended.

In another context, the respondents, whether Muslims or non-Muslims, also look at the blessings from God when they perform good duties as a human being. Most of them are afraid of the punishments from God if they are caught for wrongdoings. They mentioned that they do not want to face any predicament during their eternal life. Some non-Muslim respondents were very sensitive and fully respected the Islamic dietary restrictions and at the same time maintained an Islamic environment in their daily business operations. It shows that religious corporate social responsibility is very much in practice among some of the restaurant managers in Malaysia. Another non-Muslim restaurant manager also emphasized that one of the other benefits of *halal* certification was that the premises were likely to be clean and the food safe for

consumption as there will be authorities to do the enforcement. Overall, this study confirmed that the majority of the participants during surveys and interviews perceived that eating establishments with *halal* certification had the attributes claimed by Muslim respondents.

Food not only influences the physical development of a human but a Muslim will not enter heaven if his or her life is surrounded by *haram* sources (Dahalan, 2008). Dahalan further explained that the laws of *halal*, *haram* and *syubha* do not mean to torture, but it is a process of physical and spiritual development so that the followers are capable to carry out their responsibilities as good Muslims. Scott and Jafari (2010) emphasized in Chapter Three that Muslims consider Islam as a complete way of life, although there are Muslim followers who considered themselves as non-religious or secular.

Allah doth not wish to place you in a difficulty, but to make you clean, and to complete his favour to you, that ye may be grateful.

(Al-Maidah [The Table Spread], verse 6)

In a *hadith* reported by Bukhari and Muslim, Abdullah Ibnu Abbas related that the Prophet (pbuh) repeated Allah's affirmation that: "He has defined good and evil and has expounded their gradation. He therefore who makes up his mind to do a good deed, is rewarded by Allah for one full measure of it, and if he then proceeds to carry it out, Allah rewards him ten to seven hundred times and even many times more. He who is inclined towards an evil deed, but does not carry it out, is rewarded by Allah for one full measure of a good deed, and should he carry it out, he is debited only one veil deed" (Stork, 2004). In the Islamic world, adherents must follow many rules in order to gain access to divine reality and religion is an integral part of daily life (Scott & Jafari, 2010, p. 4). As a multi-racial country, Malaysia seeks to promote unity in all aspects in order to promote harmonious setting between its people. This is in line with the One Nation campaign initiated by Dato Seri Najib Tun Razak, the Prime Minister of Malaysia (The Prime Minister's Office Of Malaysia, 2010).

Halal certification does have an impact in Malaysia, as it is one of the pioneers in introducing *halal* standards and recognition as well as becoming a global *halal* hub. In order to achieve this, the country must first have a dedicated blueprint to offer clear objective and guidelines in the industry (Nik Muhammad et al., 2009). Currently, Malaysia's strength is in its certification and this study proved that the Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers had some differences in relation to their expectations towards *halal* certification. The cluster

analysis has distinguished the respondents into three different groups. The most significant groups are the “Certification Advocates” that comprise Malays or Muslim respondents and the “Certification Ambivalents” that include the majority of the Buddhist and other religions, thus denoting the non-Muslim respondents.

The above indicators have provided significant indications that in becoming a *halal* hub, there were undeniably tensions among the respondents in fulfilling the government’s objective. The quantitative results have shown that most of the respondents expected that *halal* certification delivered commercial drive and the qualitative results offered more insights where not only the business-related matters were discussed but the spiritual aspects were also emphasized. The study suggested that restaurant managers expected that *halal* certification could give benefits to them and the restaurant industry as a whole. It is important to note that the term “extreme standardization” that was highlighted in Chapter Four by Øgaard et al. (2005) played a significant role in this study with respect to restaurants’ offerings and market conditions. Here, restaurant managers in Malaysia need to familiarize what they are offering to the local tastes and preferences of the consumers. Looking at religious aspects, this connotation becomes quite crucial and raises some concerns and implications to the restaurant industry. The differences can be gathered from the t-test result in Table 6.32. Again, *halal* food is a universal product which should not be targeted for Muslims but also for the non-Muslims and that is consistent with Islamic dietary laws.

In conclusion, *halal* certification means that all the foods that are served are fit for Muslim consumption. *Halal* food is for everyone despite the different religions and multi-ethnic communities in Malaysia (Abdul Talib et al., 2008; Mohd Yusoff, 2004; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Some of the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents during interviews regarded *halal* certification from Malaysia as well established and accepted internationally. This recognition will indirectly act as a promotional tool to attract domestic customers as well as Muslim tourists from the Middle East, northern Africa as well as from Europe and neighbouring countries. As a result, it may boost the tourism industry and make a significant contribution towards Visit Malaysia campaigns, and facilitate the country’s desire to become a global *halal* hub if the restaurant managers fully support the ideas by acquiring and maintaining the *halal* certification from a recognized authority like JAKIM.

In contrast, there were also Muslim participants who expressed their concerns about individuals who falsified the *halal* certificates or displayed *halal* logos and certification other

than those issued by JAKIM. This phenomenon contributes to the major problems faced particularly by JAKIM and also the state religious authorities. Lack of enforcement is seen as one of the factors in the growing numbers of restaurants having illegal *halal* certificates and yet no action is taken. Apart from the issues, the respondents from both mail survey and interview sessions have high expectations that *halal* certification is important in Malaysia. With this, Chapter Nine suggests the recommendations for this study and concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER NINE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

9.0 Recommendations and Conclusion

This is the first thesis to study *halal* certification in restaurants in Malaysia. Despite the size of the *halal* food market and the global demand for *halal* foods from Muslims only one other doctoral thesis (Wan Hassan, 2008) has examined issues associated with *halal* certification in the restaurant sector. Wan Hassan (2008) has studied *halal* restaurants in New Zealand, a country in which Muslims are a relatively small but fast-growing minority. Although New Zealand is one of the world's major producers of *halal* meat it only has a voluntary non-government certification program for restaurants which many *halal* restaurants do not enter into (Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003; Wan Hassan, 2008).

This thesis therefore represents the first study of restaurant certification in a predominantly Muslim country and one in which the certification process is government backed. In addition, as noted in Chapters Two to Four, there is a dearth of academic writing on *halal* foods in English with the possible exception of some specific works on *halal* meat and slaughtering (for example, Regenstein et al., 2003a; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). It is therefore hoped that this thesis will not only make a contribution to the specific focus on the expectations that restaurant managers have of *halal* certification for restaurants but also some of the wider issues surrounding *halal* food with respect to awareness, integrity and significance.

The first section of this final chapter will provide an overview of the thesis and indicate how it answers the research questions stated in Chapter One. The research will then be evaluated considering the limitations of the study. Next, the research implications are highlighted, as this is the first study ever performed in Malaysia. In order to capture the emerging *halal* market, recommendations for relevant authorities and restaurant managers are then provided and ended with a conclusion.

9.1 Overview of Thesis

This study focuses on understanding restaurant managers' expectations towards *halal* certification in Malaysia. No other studies have previously been conducted on this issue in Malaysia despite the importance of *halal* certification in the food service industry. A basic understanding on *halal* is central to every Muslim follower as guidance to search food that is according to their beliefs. In contrast, the conscious consumption of or engagements in *haram* activities without repentance carries the risk of spiritual or physical punishments within Islamic law or in the Hereafter (Wilson & Liu, 2010). *Halal* certification at restaurants represents that the foods served are according to Islamic dietary laws. As the life of a Muslim revolves around the concept of *halal* and *haram*, it is very important that restaurant operators meet their religious dietary requirements.

This thesis contributes to a thorough understanding of different aspects from the *halal* concept, *halal* certification and *halal* attributes particularly from the perspectives of restaurant managers. In Chapter One, the concepts of *halal* and *haram* in Islamic dietary laws and the types of restaurants in Malaysia are outlined. A number of research questions have been brought forward to identify whether restaurant managers expect that *halal* certification is important, to determine the attributes that lie within the *halal* concept, and also to investigate whether there exist differences between the Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers with respect to *halal* certification.

Chapter Two focuses on the definitions of *halal* and *haram* food, the Islamic slaughtering method, food preparation, demand for *halal* food and comparison with other religious food restrictions. *Halal* in its general sense can be defined and translated to different meanings for different people but the term *halal* according to Islamic jurisprudence is in fact very precise and clear. Due to the implicit views, it appears that many allegations have been made that Islamic slaughter is not humane to animals. Due to this issue, *halal* matters that have been part of public debates and political agendas are also highlighted. In addition, types of *haram* food are also included that create stronger sentiments among Muslims. Other crucial aspects that fall under scrutiny are the storage, display and preparation of *halal* food. This chapter emphasizes the prohibitions of mixing *halal* and non-*halal* materials during the food supply chain. As the demand for *halal* food is growing, restaurants are taking advantage of attracting customers who prefer to eat *halal* food. Here, the international comparisons on *halal* restaurants are discussed that highlight the restaurants' patronizing attitude in Singapore,

Thailand, Europe and New Zealand. The similarities and differences between *halal* and other religious food restrictions add a significant input to this study.

Due to the growing concerns among consumers for food safety, Chapter Three discusses food safety from religious and secular perspectives and it appears to be a very important aspect before consuming a food. Religious and non-religious food certification regimes that include *halal*, *kosher*, organic and GMO certification are also discussed. Past research in Chapter Three highlights the food scare and continues to reiterate the importance of finding safe food. In addition, the chapter presents *halal* certification from international perspectives that strive to deliver excellent services on *halal* foods to the stakeholders. Among the certifying organizations that have been selected are those from the South East Asian countries, United Kingdom and North America.

Chapter Four examines restaurant managers' and customers' perceived attributes towards the food service industry and looks at Malaysian *halal* certification. Some attributes of *halal* food and the significance of certification have been gathered in past studies although they are very limited in quantity and scope. Thus, that particular chapter extracts and explains the attributes in detail. The research methodology for this study was through administering a mail survey and interview sessions as explained in Chapter Five. A national mail survey of 2080 questionnaires were sent out, with 643 completed forms being returned contributing to a 31% of response rate. In order to further contextualize the results, 33 interviews were conducted with restaurant managers in five major urban centres. The methodological approach in this study has used quantitative and qualitative approaches to compare and support the findings as well as inculcate factual knowledge. This was to stress that the varied statistical tools applied in this study has strengthened both the methodological approach and the support for the more factual knowledge. For instance, the mail survey method helped to identify the different expectations towards the respondents' own restaurant, *halal* certification in general and *halal* certification in Malaysia. This approach was further explored with the interview sessions that delivered supporting results.

Data and statistics for the mail survey are revealed in Chapter Six. It started with the analysis of descriptive statistics and then moved onto factor analysis. Results about factor analysis showed that there are seven components that include market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, cost of certification, cost of compliance, non-Islamic attributes and local awareness. Then reliability testing was performed and this determined the cluster groups. Three

different groups have been distributed among the respondents through cluster analysis, for example, “Certification Advocates”, “Certification Ambivalents” and “Compliance Cost Focused”. Then, cross-tabulations analysis and independent t-tests that compared various items in support of the factor analysis were performed.

Interview results are discussed in Chapter Seven and these indicate three common themes. Participants felt that it is important to know the meaning of *halal*, Muslim sensitivity and religious practices. Furthermore, they believed that some attributes existed in *halal* certification that necessitated an appreciation. Certification issues still remain controversial, although the latest local newspaper coverage highlighted that only an accredited *halal* logo from JAKIM would be used and recognized nationwide effective from 1 January 2012 (Abdul Rahman, 2011). Chapter Eight discusses the findings from the mail survey and interview sessions and highlights interesting findings.

9.2 Research Questions

In order to perform this study, a list of research questions was posed in Chapter One. They are as follows:

1. Do restaurant managers regard *halal* certification as important?
2. What are the attributes perceived by them that relate to *halal* certification?
3. Are there different expectations between Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers with respect to *halal* certification?

9.3 Answering the Research Questions

It is worth noting that this study is within the context of restaurant managers in Malaysia, a country with different ethnicities, although their conceptions of the term *halal* are sometimes varied. Following the findings, assertions concerning the use of *halal* certification and the subsequent business implications are significant in the restaurant sector in terms of the marketing aspect. This section will answer the research questions, which is the area of concern in this study.

Do Restaurant Managers Regard *Halal* Certification As Important?

The descriptive statistics for perceptions towards *halal* certification in Malaysia indicated that respondents believed that other restaurant managers expected that *halal* certification is an important aspect in the food service industry with the highest mean of 4.25 (Table 6.5). This important aspect is extended to a wider perspective in relation to marketing and tourism in order to gain a competitive advantage. The findings from the cross-tabulation also showed that the majority of respondents agree that *halal* certification acts as a marketing strategy tool and at the same time can attract the tourism market. Looking at the factor analysis, the components of marketing strategy tool and attracting tourism market is categorized under marketing benefits (Table 6.6) that proved *halal* certification is of prime importance among restaurant managers.

Wilson and Liu (2010, p. 108) supported this study on marketing aspects that stressed the credibility of *halal* food to help increase market share. A study conducted by Al-Nahdi et al. (2009) on patronizing *halal* restaurants in Malaysia found that customers are willing to return to *halal* certified restaurants as they believed that those eating premises followed the *Shariah* principle. Another study on defensive dining by Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) also supported the findings in this study, as Muslims in Singapore would always try to find a fully *halal* establishment although they represented the minority in the country. However, this study rejected the findings by Josiam et al. (2007) that found *halal* certification as the least important restaurant characteristic among customers in Indian restaurants in Malaysia.

Restaurants managers can also benefit from tourism industry as Islamic or *halal* tourism turns out to be a global rising trend. As such, Zailani et al. (2011) and Zamani-Farahani (2010) supported that the *halal* environment pertaining to food service industry will give an added competitive advantage in attracting local and foreign tourists especially those from the Middle East, West Asia and other Islamic countries. It is found from their study that Muslim tourists, specifically from West Asia, are increasingly sensitive and require sophisticated *halal* dining in one aspect. In comparison with this study, the participants from interview sessions viewed *halal* certification in a more particular manner. They were looking not only to the marketing side of the business but considering the sensitivity of the Muslim customers and from their part as food preparers as well. It showed that restaurant managers have the intention to fulfill the customers' requirement and comply with the *halal* standard. In light of these contributing factors, conclusions that bring forward the importance of *halal* as something that will fit the

understanding of the *halal* term and matters among restaurant managers from different types of restaurants that include *halal* certified, *halal* claimant and non-*halal*.

What Are the Attributes Perceived by Them That Relate to *Halal* Certification?

According to the literature in Chapter Four, the term *halal* has a number of attributes. Among them are food safety, food quality, hygiene and traceability. It is clearly stated in the mean value (4.17) that safety is among the highest mean compared to other attributes (Table 6.4). Cross-tabulation analysis showed the highest percentage among other attributes where the Hindu and Muslim respondents expected that *halal* certification signifies safety. This is supported by Mohd Yusoff (2004) as well as Riaz and Chaudry (2004). However, *halal* certification signifies hygiene appear to be the same mean value as safety but the percentage is less if compared in the cross-tabulation analysis. There are also other significant attributes such as food quality, being healthy food, authenticity and having taste authenticity. In another aspect, these attributes are categorized under market signals under factor analysis where the healthy food attribute had the highest factor of .87 (Table 6.29).

Some of the attributes mentioned above have also been highlighted by Habib et al. (2011) and Abdul Talib et al. (2008). It is to highlight that Wilson and Liu (2010, p. 108) have discovered that *halal* is a concept that contains attributes which render a phenomenon. The findings from the qualitative method also showed that participants always mentioned *halal* certification attributes such as food quality, hygiene and safety. In fact, these three attributes have the highest percentages in the cross-tabulation analysis. Hertzberg et al. (1959), as cited in Wilson and Liu (2010, p. 111), mentioned that *halal* often represents something of a “hygienic factor”. Traceability is shown as the highest mean (4.41) in Table 6.4, whereas *halal* certification signifies trust indicated a lower mean that is 4.37. However, traceability has been grouped under Islamic attributes in the factor analysis. Here, *halal* certification increases the confidence level among Muslim customers that relates to trust.

The result of this study gives an indication that trust and confidence level is one of the influential factors before making a decision to visit a restaurant. Trust about *halal* food is widely discussed in past studies (Al- Nahdi et al., 2009; Mohamed Nasir & Pereira, 2008; Shafie & Othman, 2006; Wan Hassan & Hall, 2003) and thus supports the findings in this study. These attributes are common when dealing with Muslim customers as they require that their religious needs be fulfilled. Restaurant managers who participated in the interviews also

placed great importance in trust and confidence level in attracting customers and for them to trust the suppliers during the food supply chain. Above all, Wilson and Liu (2010) suggested that organizations that choose to use the term *halal* will also have to consider much wider societal implications as not only Muslims crave such food. This study further extends their suggestion that it will become more critical when dealing and offering *halal* food in a country with different races and religions like Malaysia with respect to verification and enforcement.

Are There Different Expectations Between Muslim and Non-Muslim Restaurant Managers With Respect to *Halal* Certification?

The true fact is that the term *halal* on certain food has different views and interpretations by numerous denominations within the Islamic faith. According to the findings in the cross-tabulation, the gap was relatively small. Almost all of the tables in the findings showed almost similar expectations between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents in relation to *halal* certification attributes, marketing aspects and certification issues. It is worth noting that the Chinese respondents have the lowest percentages compared to other religions. However, the findings for certification issues highlighted that the Chinese believed that other restaurant managers expected that *halal* certification in Malaysia costs a lot, takes too much time and creates some bureaucracy in getting the approval that showed high percentages. This is supported with the findings during the interviews where almost all of the participants shared common expectations with respect to *halal* certification issues.

In contrast, during the cluster analysis, the respondents were categorized into three different cluster groups such as “Certification Advocates”, “Certification Ambivalents” and “Certification Cost Focused” (Table 6.8). The two major groups contain the major races that represent the high population rate in Malaysia – “Certification Advocates” consist of the Malay respondents whereas “Certification Ambivalents” comprise the Buddhist restaurant managers. It is found that the Malay respondents had the highest market signal, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, non-Islamic attributes and local awareness score.

In comparison, the “Certification Ambivalents” group is found to be of opposite ratings. This difference is due to the fact that the “Certification Advocates” were working in *halal* certified restaurants whereas the “Certification Ambivalents” were likely to work in non-*halal* restaurants. It showed that the Buddhist respondents who worked in non-*halal* restaurants did not expect that *halal* certification offered some benefits as their target market is different

compared to the Malay respondents. As there is no study that has ever been performed on the differences between Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers, these findings can be a source for further research work.

Similar results are also shown by the independent t-test where there are significant differences between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents on factors like market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, cost of compliance and local awareness. However, cost of certification and non-Islamic attributes show that the differences are not significant. It can be concluded that although the respondents expect that halal certification is important in the restaurant sector, there are still differences in the factors mentioned above in relation to their aspiration in seeking commercial drivers but at the same time their need to fulfill their spiritual aspects.

9.4 Evaluating the Research Work and Limitations of the Study

The investigation of restaurant manager expectations, and more specifically those aspects pertaining to *halal* certification in the hospitality industry, are still in their infancy. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there is an absence of academic literature on this topic focusing on the Malaysian perspective. However, looking at the wider implications associated with *halal* and its potential has initiated the author to conduct this study. The research work that has been conducted found that what Islam states within its text and what is practised by Muslim and non-Muslim respondents offers some interesting insights. Upon analysis from both mixed methods, it is felt by the author that respondents were aware and sensitive of the Islamic values with respect to *halal* food and at the same time it showed that they were willing to understand the deep structured interpretations in gaining a *halal* certificate. Looking at the whole process of administering the mail survey and conducting interviews, limitations of study do exist.

This study has faced some limitations that contributed to a lengthy duration of data collection. The author had to wait for four months to generate the data from both survey and interviews following some constraints in terms of time and follow-ups, poor early response rate and language barriers. At the beginning, the response rate was not convincing where the return rate was about 10 questionnaires per week and this has forced the author to do follow-ups by reminding the respondents through phone calls and visits to eating premises. The initiative has in fact turned out remarkably well.

As a result of the follow-ups it was discovered that some restaurant managers claimed that the title of the study was sensitive and they needed to refer to their headquarters before answering the questions. In some cases, the restaurant managers were not in place and left the business operation to the workers. Unfortunately some follow-ups had to be done in the fasting month (*Ramadhan*) when restaurant managers were busy with taking orders and preparing for breaking the fast as some of the restaurants were closed during the day. In addition, many restaurants did not operate during the Eid celebration. In another aspect, language seems to create problems during data collection as some restaurants employed foreign workers as restaurant managers such as Bangladeshi's, Nepalese, Vietnamese, Siamese and Indonesians. They could only understand simple English or basic Malay language.

Time has again proved to be the main limitation during data collection for interview sessions where it was difficult to get the restaurant managers to participate. They would give their reasons and excuses such as too occupied with their work and schedule, limited time to be interviewed, had other appointments and required approval from their headquarters. Interviews with elderly Chinese restaurant managers proved to be more difficult compared to the younger ones as far as language is concerned. The old generations could not converse in English language at all and only spoke little Bahasa Melayu. Some sessions were disturbed by multiple interruptions such as customer complaints and important phone calls that required immediate attention from the participants.

9.5 Research Implications

Awareness of *Halal* Food and Food Safety

According to Wan Omar et al. (2008), *halal* food is a huge market for food industry players. Whatever it takes, compliance to Islamic dietary laws must be given the utmost priority in fulfilling the growth of the demanding *halal* market. Economic significance aside, the realm of *halal* affects human life and includes protecting the environment, humane treatment for animals, ethical investment, and decent service and providing wholesome food. Therefore, *halal* certification has now become a religious compliance in fulfilling the high demand of Muslim consumers in food products. By having the status, they are certain that the food follows the ritual process of their religion. Importantly, the increasing awareness about the *halal* concept is a clear indicator for further progress of the *halal* food industry. Here, *halal* is not only seen from

the religious viewpoint but it extends as an important aspect in the business world with the emerging global *halal* market.

Academic study of *halal* certification from the perspectives of restaurant managers has never been done in Malaysia. Two academic studies were on Muslim customers with respect to the *halal* eating environment where Al-Nahdi et al. (2009) did their research specifically on *halal* restaurants in Malaysia, while Mohamed Nasir and Pereira (2008) conducted a qualitative survey in Singapore. Wan Hassan (2008) and Wan Hassan and Hall (2003) wrote on the *halal* certification issues in New Zealand. Apart from that, some of the studies focused on Muslim consumers' attitudes towards *halal* food products (Wan Omar, 2008), *halal* meat (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Bonne et al., 2007) and the *halal* concept (Dahalan, 2008). To the author's knowledge, this study is the first to examine the *halal* certification attributes in three different eating options – *halal* certified, *halal* claimant and non-*halal* restaurants.

The food safety issue is considered critical in the food service industry and the recent occurrence of several food crises has emphasized food safety and the protection of consumers' health as the main objectives for the food labeling legislation (Mafra et al., 2008). This further suggested that food authentication is in need to establish that species of high commercial value declared are not substituted, partially or entirely, by other lower value species to avoid mislabeling. With the *halal* certification that emphasizes good manufacturing practices, it is expected that the verification processes is a crucial aspect for food authorities like JAKIM.

As such, this study is very significant in terms of its contribution to new knowledge apart from providing important information to various local authorities in realizing the government's project of a *halal* hub as the *halal* market will likely become one of the great market forces in the coming decades. Restaurant managers who operate *halal* restaurants must be fully aware that the whole process in the premises must follow the judgments of *halal* and *haram*. This study provides the evidence that all of the participants who run *halal* and *halal* claimant restaurants maintain and conform to the *halal* standards. In a way, the findings confirmed that the participants have demonstrated a value of sensitivity in this multi-religious society where Muslims are a significant proportion of the population. Restaurants with a *halal* status create a trust mark for the Muslim customers and also to their community.

9.6 Recommendations for Related Authorities and Restaurant Managers in Malaysia

This study highlighted that restaurant managers had high expectations about *halal* certification, and thus has a positive impact towards the food service industry as well as the country. The findings and analysis of the study have suggested that the government, religious authorities, municipal councils, industry players and individuals need to work together when it comes to *halal* and its certification. These authorities need to be sensitive and aware of the rising trend in the *halal* demand. They must be very forceful in handling the situations that occur in Malaysia, specifically regarding non-recognized organizations that issue *halal* certification. Again, *halal* covers the whole process in the food supply chain and restaurant managers must conform to the Islamic dietary rules to maintain the standard. If this matter is not being closely monitored by the food operators, or even by the responsible authorities, *halal* certification issues will never be resolved. There are several recommendations that are important for Malaysia to retain its globally recognized *halal* certification and standards. Furthermore, businesses should indeed be aware of and utilize this growing *halal* market segment.

Educating the Restaurant Managers

The government and JAKIM should work together in educating the restaurant managers on *halal* matters including *halal* certification. Seminars and talks on the importance of applying and maintaining the *halal* status should become regular activities, although the Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers have the basic understanding of Islamic dietary laws. A non-Muslim participant has submitted this request during one of the interview sessions.

By taking this move, it is expected that restaurant managers in the country will be more aware of Muslim religious certification and fully monitor their business operations according to the *halal* standards and procedures. This standard lays out comprehensive requirements according to the *Shariah* law where hygiene, sanitation and safety are among the pre-requisites in preparing *halal* food.

Promotional Strategy

Halal certification has attributes such as trust, food quality, hygiene, safety and *halal* sources which can be highlighted during a promotional strategy. Effective advertising and promotions are vital to persuade customers to visit *halal* certified restaurants. The government and related

authorities must be proactive and aggressive in selling the idea of a *halal* hub in the commercial arena, at the same time ensuring that *halal* certification follows the *Shariah* law. In fact, every step from ‘farm to fork’ has its own functions and appears to be crucial as far as *halal* certification is concerned.

Taking the marketing mix as the fundamental elements, together with a trusted mark, is seen to be one of the strategies in attracting potential restaurant patrons and maintaining current customers. Communication to customers will be much effective in sending the message that the food available in that particular restaurant is *halal*. Therefore, it is expected that Muslim customers will have the trust to visit the eating premises and dine with peace of mind.

In another aspect, the name of the restaurant has a significant impact for customers, although they trusted the *halal* certification displayed at the eating premises. A certified *halal* eating premises should select a suitable name that symbolizes the foods served are according to the *halal* standards or acceptable to all the races. This is due to the fact that there are some restaurants with *halal* status that have names that refer to a niche market.

Enforcement

JAKIM, state religious departments and municipal councils must conduct regular inspections in order to check that the *halal* certified restaurants conform to the *halal* standards. Stringent action must be taken to ensure that those eating premises that claim to serve *halal* foods will not display something that may create confusion among the Muslims at their restaurants like “no pork, no lard” signage. Furthermore, the authorities should monitor closely the issuance of *halal* certification from unauthorized private companies that will create a negative reputation for the credibility of the authorities in handling the issue.

Lack of enforcement must be attended to immediately as the number of restaurants that are applying for *halal* certification is growing. In this context, current holders of the *halal* status should not be excluded and their eating establishments must also be inspected from time-to-time. The issue of enforcement is very critical and related authorities must accommodate this situation by having qualified and credible enforcement officers to safeguard the *halal* food service industry from irresponsible acts. Interestingly, Islamic teachings stress that a ruler is responsible in whatever circumstances that might occur in performing their duties. If they fail in

the sense of not following the *Shariah*, they will be judged accordingly during their afterlife as stated in *Surah Sâd* – The Letter ‘S’ (verses 59-61).

Here is a troop rushing headlong with you! no welcome for them! truly, they shall burn in the Fire!

(*Surah Sâd* [The Letter ‘S’], verse 59)

The followers shall cry to the misleaders: Nay, ye (too)! no welcome for you! It is ye who have brought this upon us! Now evil is (this) place to stay in!

(*Surah Sâd* [The Letter ‘S’], verse 60)

They will say: Our Lord! Whoever brought this upon us, add to him a double Penalty in the Fire!

(*Surah Sâd* [The Letter ‘S’], verse 61)

Above all, the purpose of certification is to reach a defined performance, and in terms of Islamic dietary laws, restaurants must comply with the *halal* standard in order for the premises to be *halal* certified by JAKIM.

Standardization of *Halal* Certification

In consumer food products, a *halal* logo ensures an easily recognizable and trusted item. In addition, this call for standardization is also extended to the food service industry. According to JAKIM, the department will only issue *halal* certification for the restaurants that apply from the institution, whereas other eating places like food courts and stalls have to apply through the state religious body in their areas. With this, a *halal* certification that indicates the specified state religious body will appear on the document. The issue of standardization of *halal* certification in Malaysia is being resolved as the government has taken actions and urged that uniformity is important towards a single recognition (Idris, 2010; Saifulizam, 2010).

Issues of standardization have frequently been brought up around the world whether it is for organic, GMO or religious food (Siderer et al., 2005). The prevalent issue in *halal* food standardization is that the existence of different organizations and governments that define differently what a *halal* food is and what certification process it requires, thus making international trade in *halal* products a difficult process. It is suggested that there should be

harmonization of standards, or an international process, so that the comparison between various *halal* standards from different school of thoughts is standardized for the development of worldwide trade in *halal* products.

The other area of concern is the actual implementation of the *halal* standards among the non-Muslim countries that supply *halal* raw materials or finished products manufacturers. In order to protect the interest of Muslims in *halal* matters, the World Halal Council, for example, should execute effective efforts for the unity of all *halal* certifying bodies for the development of a truly standards *halal* processes and procedures. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) can also create liberalization and promotion of a single and standard worldwide *halal* logo. However, this is seen as difficult to materialize as different Islamic countries have different approaches towards *halal* certification matters due to different schools of religious laws. As highlighted in Chapter Two, debates on conditions in relation to *halal* food are a prevalent issue.

9.7 Recommendations for Future Research

This research is very significant as there are very limited academic studies on *halal* certification in the food service industry, particularly in the restaurant sector. *Halal* may seem a sensitive issue in relation to race and religion and appears to be one of the reasons why researchers are not interested in exploring it. However, there are many aspects that can be derived through investigating its supply chain, demand and growth as the impact of traceability and certification is expected to increase.

To date, there is little documentation on the *halal* certification attributes as most of the studies done on *halal* topics focused more on customers' demand or on slaughtering requirements and not exclusively on *halal* certification. As a result, further research on *halal* claimant eating establishments, expectations of foreign Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers who work in Malaysia, as well as Muslim customers towards *halal* certification are recommended.

As the samples of the study were generated from restaurant managers in Malaysia, perhaps future studies can make comparisons on restaurant managers' expectations towards *halal* certification in *halal* certified restaurants elsewhere in South East Asia or in the American and British context. As highlighted in the literature, *halal* certification has becomes important in

the restaurant sector specifically in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand and it is therefore seen as crucial to the *halal* industry to generalize these findings internationally. Another interesting area that requires further research is on *halal* tourism as it has become an important source of income for many countries. In fact, this is a new phenomenon in the tourism industry (Zailani et al., 2011).

Furthermore, despite the increase of the *halal* market, little research has been performed on restaurant managers and the customers with questions relating to their understandings about *halal* food and its standards. It is therefore also recommended that future research be conducted on the element of trust and confidence towards *halal* certification and the *halal* supply chain, as there is a paucity of academic literature on the matter. In addition, there may be value in comparing trust in *halal* with other food certification programs. Finally, better insights into the standardization of a single *halal* logo worldwide would be advantageous as the issue has long been in public debate and remained unaddressed. These further studies are needed to generate ideas and recommendations for effective implementation of the *halal* certification as a source of competitive advantage for the *halal* market as well as assurance for Muslims around the world.

9.8 Conclusion

The influence of religion on the food practices of Muslims is well documented, the most well-known being the prescriptions within the *Quran* and *hadith* forbidding certain food and drinks as well as those guiding the slaughter of animals for consumption (Nicolaou et al., 2009). Food is the basic needs for humans and some people have dietary restrictions according to their religions and beliefs in relation to food consumption (Muslims with *halal*, Jews with *kosher*, Hindus restricting themselves from eating beef and some people being vegetarians). *Halal* food is not mainly about slaughtering animals or *halal* meat. Instead, it entails more than that. It starts from the production, handling, distribution, storage, display, packaging and labeling of food through to its preparation and serving. In fact, the whole food supply chain must be *halal*.

Generally, many people particularly non-Muslims, perceived *halal* as food that only Muslims could consume (Abdul Talib et al., 2008; Muhammad, 2007). Thus, they became skeptical when in fact people of all religions could consume it without any reservations. Wilson and Liu (2010) also stressed that *halal* food is not only for Muslims but the consumption is currently being actualized in a much wider sense. The Islamic dietary laws have guided Muslim followers to eat food that is good and pure according to the *Quran* and *hadith*. Therefore, *halal*

certification is seen as a potential source to build trust among the Muslims to ascertain the status of food to be consumed.

This study suggested that *halal* certification offered seven dimensions on market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, and cost of certification, cost of compliance, non-Islamic attributes and local awareness. Respondents were also categorized into three major groups who belong to “Certification Advocates”, “Certification Ambivalents” and “Compliance Cost Focused”. The three groups expected that *halal* certification indicated several attributes in terms of healthy food, taste, food quality, authenticity, safety and being hygienic under factor analysis. Again, descriptive results supported this where safety, hygiene and food quality are among the significant attributes which have high mean scores. Cross-tabulation has also highlighted that the Malays, Chinese and Indian have many similar opinions on *halal* certification attributes specifically on increasing the confidence level among Muslim customers. The independent t-test also showed that there are statistically significant differences between the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents.

In this context, people tend to feel better and safe on seeing a certification as it signifies a standard that needs to be followed (Essousi & Zahaf, 2008). As this study is the first to identify the expectations of restaurant managers in Malaysia, it appears that comparison with other studies is very limited. Factors like market signals, Islamic attributes, marketing benefits, cost of compliance and local awareness have statistically differences but cost of certification and non-Islamic attributes are not significant at all. Marketing benefits associated with *halal* certification was found to be important in earlier research (Al-Nahdi et al., 2009) and to be essential in the t-test result. It appears that *halal* certification is trusted to generate commercial aspects in the quantitative research.

In relation to trust, restaurants that were *halal* certified would ensure that they obtained the raw materials from *halal* sources, and handled and prepared foods according to the *halal* standards. The results also showed that respondents expected *halal* certification to create no boundary between Muslim and non-Muslims. With the *halal* status, both Muslims and non-Muslims could sit together in an eating premises and at the same time dine with peace of mind (Shafie & Othman, 2006). In a way, the restaurateurs were not only generating more customers and profits but also developing a harmonious environment for patrons.

The findings suggested that the respondents from a different culture had different understandings towards *halal* certification although the fundamental aspect was typically similar. Almost all the respondents who were Malay restaurant managers who represented the *halal* certified, and *halal* claimant restaurants agreed that *halal* certification is an important aspect in the restaurant industry and they follow the *halal* standards accordingly. Apparently, the non-Muslim restaurant managers, particularly the Chinese, have lower expectations towards the benefits of *halal* certificates but they have been respecting the Muslim religious food for generations as well as the processes that are from ‘farm to table’. The respondents who were neutral thought that obtaining a *halal* certificate would incur a lot of costs with respect to the monetary aspects, process and compliance to meet the *halal* standards.

In general, the respondents viewed *halal* certification as maintaining good behaviour in both this life and the afterlife. They believed that in operating their daily business operations, one should carry out the social responsibility to others, become a good person and gain rewards during eternal life. The results seem to support Sardar’s (2000, p. 120) observation that:

Malaysia seems to have learned that multi-culturalism is easy to talk about but that as a sustainable and need sensitivity because we are all sensitive about who we are, where we come from and how we feel we should live, the place distinct traditions should occupy in our individual lives and in the organization of our society at large.

In conclusion, the restaurant managers have high expectations towards *halal* certification as it has prominent attributes that benefit the entire community in Malaysia. The important aspect is that *halal* foods and *halal* certification are for everyone. Specifically, it is back to the fundamentals of Islamic dietary rules where Islamic teachings emphasize that eating *halal* foods has a relationship with human spiritual development. Thus, good food delivers a good mind and soul. It is expected that the recommendation provided will enhance the reputable status of *halal* certification in Malaysia, although some restaurant managers have different expectations towards the *halal* status. The critical aspect of *halal* certification that needs to be considered is to follow the Islamic principles while operating a business in the food service industry. This is to protect the religious values of a Muslim society as well as maintaining the social unity among the people in Malaysia through food consumption. In relating to this, the area of *halal* tourism is an obvious extension of this study that requires further research.

Halal has always been relevant in the mainstream market with a significant growth of the Muslim population. Not only that, *halal* certification is making its mark among non-Muslims as well (Muhammad, 2007). The findings in this study have highlighted the marketing benefits gained in operating a *halal* certified restaurant, and it is definitely an indication that the certificate is perceived to have an impact on customer trust and return visits. In order to remain competitive in the *halal* food service industry, it is imperative that restaurant managers consistently work towards promoting the *halal* certification and *halal* foods. It is indeed a long-term investment as the awareness of *halal* is developing rapidly. In fact, *halal* certification covers not only religious needs but also commercially and community-based needs. The study indicates that *halal* certification acts as a quality signal and communication medium to the restaurant patrons that the premises adhere to the *halal* standards. As such, a call for standardization of a single *halal* logo has been suggested and the implementation of Halal Act in April 2011 has made it clear that only accredited *halal* certification from JAKIM is being recognized starting from 1 January 2012 (Abdul Rahman, 2011). With this in force, it is expected that restaurant managers will have more conviction about the reliability of *halal* certification issued by JAKIM.

Whatever it takes, it is back to the fundamental aspect where Muslims need to consume *halal* food because it is stated in Islamic dietary laws. Above all, *halal* certification is important to the restaurant sector as it recognizes some attributes that include hygiene, safety, healthy, food quality and authenticity although different expectations may exist between the Muslim and non-Muslim restaurant managers. With this in mind, the restaurant managers need to adapt with the situation in order to accommodate and preserve the essence of the profound meaning of *halal*.

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APPENDIX 1:

QUESTIONNAIRE BY MAIL SURVEY

This survey is on "**Understanding Restaurant Manager Expectations of *Halal* Certification in Malaysia**". There are **FIVE** sections for you to fill in your responses. All information provided is **strictly confidential**.

Section A: Business Demographics

The Business Profiles is about the general information on the eating establishment that you own. All details provided will be used for this research and academic purposes only. Please **write clearly** or **select your best answer**. Please tick \checkmark in the circle provided.

1. **Name of the eating establishment:** _____
2. **City:** _____
3. **Seating capacity:** _____
4. **Number of employees:** _____ (Full Time) ____ (Part Time)
5. **Number of years working in current position:** _____
6. **Number of years working in food service industry:** _____
7. **Type of eating establishment:**
 - Certified *Halal***
 - Non certified *Halal* but serves *Halal* foods**
 - Non *Halal***

Section B – Perceptions of Your Own Restaurant

This section is on the perceptions of the restaurant that you are operating. Please read the questions carefully and choose only **one** appropriate number using the 1-5 Likert scale: **Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neither Agree nor Disagree (3), Agree (4), Strongly Agree (5).** Please tick \surd in the circle provided.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

This restaurant...

- 8. ... emphasizes on the convenience of location. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 9. ... emphasizes value for money ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 10. ... emphasizes atmosphere. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 11. ... serves quality foods. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 12. ... serves cultural familiar food. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 13. ... serves food that meet some religious dietary prohibitions. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 14. ... serves food that meet all religious dietary prohibitions. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 15. ... serves healthy options. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 16. ... serves international cuisine only. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 17. ... serves local cuisine only. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 18. ... serves local and international cuisine. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 19. ... prepares food that is according to the food safety standard. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
- 20. ... prepares food according to the ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

This restaurant...

religious dietary restriction of the owner.

21. ... meets the religious values of the owner.

owner.

22. ... maintains hygienic working environment.

environment.

23. ... welcomes routine inspection from related authority.

related authority.

24. ... ensures safe food handling during the food supply chain.

during the food supply chain.

25. ... ensures that all workers follow hygienic working practices.

hygienic working practices.

26. ... emphasizes employee friendliness.

27. ... emphasizes efficient service.

28. ... ensures cleanliness in the dining area.

dining area.

29 ... ensures cleanliness of restrooms.

restrooms.

30. ... ensures cleanliness in the kitchen.

kitchen.

31. ... ensures cleanliness during food preparation.

food preparation.

32. ... is aware that there are some customers that demand *Halal* foods.

customers that demand *Halal* foods.

33. ... have taken actions due to related certification standard (e.g: Malaysian Standard on *Halal* food, General Principles of Food Hygiene, Food Safety and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point-HACCP).

related certification standard (e.g: Malaysian Standard

on *Halal* food, General Principles of Food Hygiene,

Food Safety and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point-HACCP).

Section C – Perceptions Toward *Halal* Certification In General

This section is on your perceptions toward *Halal* certification that is being practiced at restaurants in Malaysia. Please choose only **one** answer.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

I think that *Halal* Certification in restaurants...

34. ... signifies food quality.
35. ... signifies taste genuinity.
36. ... signifies healthy food.
37. ... signifies authenticity.
38. ... signifies trust.
39. ... signifies being hygienic.
40. ... signifies safety.
41. ... signifies all food sources are *Halal* certified.
42. ... relies on trust on the suppliers when purchasing the food items.
43. ... signifies conformance to *Halal* standard.
44. ... has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.
45. ... increases demand from the Muslim customers.
46. ... increases demand from the non Muslim customers.
47. ... increases confidence level among the Muslim customers.
48. ... increases confidence level among the non Muslim customers
49. ... provides customers with peace of mind during the dining experience.
50. ... benefits everyone.

51. ... is a trademark establishment.
52. ... attracts the tourism market.
53. ... acts as a marketing strategy tool.
54. ... gives competitive advantage over non certified *Halal* restaurants.

Section D – Perceptions Toward *Halal* Certification in Malaysia

This section is to know what other restaurant managers think of *Halal* Certification in Malaysia as a whole.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

I believe that other restaurant managers think of *Halal* Certification in Malaysia...

55. ... as an important aspect in the food service industry.
56. ... is to cater for the Muslim customers only.
57. ... as a way to increase the number of customers.
58. ... as adding value to their restaurants.
59. ... is familiar to the local people.
60. ... is gaining acceptance from the local people.
61. ... is gaining acceptance from the foreign people.
62. ... is a standard that is difficult to follow.
63. ... is a standard that is difficult to maintain.
64. ... is a regulation to promote standardization.

65. ... is a better standard compared to other South East Asian countries.
66. ... takes too much time in getting the approval.
67. ... costs a lot in getting the approval.
68. ... creates some bureaucracy in getting the approval.
69. ... as a signal of trust to the related local authority in approving domestic food products.
70. ... as a signal of trust to the related local authority in approving international food products.

Section E - Personal Demographic

Section E consists of demographic details and please tick in the circle provided. Please answer **all** questions and fill in the required information where necessary.

71. Age

- Below 21
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51 – 60
- 61 and above

72. Gender

- Male
- Female

73. Religion

- Buddhist
- Christian
- Hindu
- Muslim
- Other Please specify: _____

74. Race

- Chinese
- Indian
- Malay
- Other Please specify: _____

75. Educational Background

- Doctor of Philosophy
- Masters Degree
- Bachelor Degree
- Diploma
- Certificate
- Secondary school
- Other Please specify: _____

Thank you for your time and participation.

SELAMAT MAJU JAYA

APPENDIX 2:

QUESTIONS FOR SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- 1) Impression on *halal* certification
 - Do you know what *halal* is?
 - Describe *halal* in your own understanding
 - How do you relate it to *halal* certification?

- 2) The importance of *halal* certification
 - Do you think *halal* certification is important and why?
 - How important is the *halal* certification in the restaurant context in general?
 - If you said that *halal* certificate is important, do you intend to apply one? (*halal* claimant and non *halal* restaurant)
 - What are the factors that *halal* certification has that makes it different if compared to other food certification?
 - How do you comply with the *halal* standard?

- 3) The reliability of *halal* certification
 - Do you have trust on *halal* certificate in your restaurant?
 - Do you have trust on *halal* certificate in other restaurant?

- 4) The connection of *halal* certification on customers
 - Do Muslim customers visit your restaurant?
 - How about the non-Muslim customers?
 - How significant is *halal* certification towards the customers?
 - What do you do to support your answer?

- 5) The reliability of the food supply chain
 - How do you get your food supply?
 - Do you trust your suppliers?
 - Are their products *halal* certified?
 - How many workers do you have?
 - How do your workers maintain the *halalness* in their working environment?

- 6) The problems of *halal* certification
- Do you have problem with *halal* certification?
 - What are the types of problems do you encounter?
 - What can you do to solve the problem?
 - What are the problems that might other restaurant managers face with *halal* certification?
- 7) The restaurant managers' views and experiences of operating an eating premise in relation to *halal* certification in a plural society like Malaysia
- What types of customers that always visit your eating premise?
 - Do they come as individual, family, couple or in groups?
 - Do you have Muslim and non-Muslim customers dining together?
 - How do you look at that scenario?

APPENDIX 3:

JOURNAL ARTICLE

RESTAURANT MANAGER

AND

HALAL CERTIFICATION IN MALAYSIA

Journal of Foodservice Business Research

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Restaurant Manager and Halal Certification in Malaysia

Sharifah Zannierah Syed Marzuki^a, Colin Michael Hall^b & Paul
William Ballantine^b Faculty of Business Management,
Universiti Teknologi Mara,
Malaysia^b Department of Management, College of Business and
Economics, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

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APPENDIX 4:

JOURNAL ARTICLE

**RESTAURANT MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVES
ON
HALAL CERTIFICATION**



Restaurant managers' perspectives on *halal* certification

Restaurant *halal* certification

Sharifah Zannierah Syed Marzuki

Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kampus Pahang, Bandar Pusat Jengka, Malaysia, and

Collin Michael Hall and Paul William Ballantine

Department of Management, College of Business and Economics, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the attitudes of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification.

Design/methodology/approach – In total, 33 interview sessions were conducted among restaurant managers in *halal* certified, *halal* claimant and non-*halal* restaurants and the data were coordinated into common themes.

Findings – Restaurant managers feel that *halal* certification is very prevalent in the hospitality industry, as it promotes the importance of restaurant managers having knowledge of Muslims' dietary restrictions, sensitivity and religious practices; *halal* certification signifies that it has some attributes that make it unique and at the same time conforming to the Islamic dietary rules.

Originality/value – This study is very significant as this is the first paper to examine attitudes of restaurant managers in relation to *halal* certification in Malaysia. It is gathered that very few researches were performed in the hospitality industry pertaining to *halal* certification, although the demand for *halal* foods is growing.

Key words Malaysia, Islam, Diet, Law, Catering industry, Restaurant managers, *Halal* certification, Islamic dietary law, Attributes, Multiculturalism

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Food is an important aspect in our life. As well as being vital for existence it is also considered an essential factor for interaction among various ethnic, social and religious groups (Riaz and Chaudry, 2004). All human being are concerned about the food they eat. Some of them have their own food restrictions, such as Muslims want to ensure that their food is *halal*. As far as *halal* food is concerned, the relationship between *halal* and Islam has created a unique and special value to the Muslims when food is discussed.

Malaysia, like other countries, consists of different religions and followers. Religion plays one of the most influential roles in the choices and subsequent selection of foods consumed in certain societies (Dindyal and Dindyal, 2004). Malay people who are Muslims and consume *halal* food represent the majority of the population. Apart from them, the Indians and Chinese also have their own religious dietary prohibitions.

Halal food has its own regulations as found in the *Quran*. Muslims who want to become good followers must adhere to the standards and stay away from the *haram* foods. The *halal* concept under Islamic dietary laws is precise and clear. In fact, the permissible food is large while the prohibited is small but with reasons. Taking the demand for *halal* food that is growing inevitably, restaurant managers in Malaysia have their own perspectives



APPENDIX 5:

CHAPTER OF THE BOOK

(Available in hard copy of thesis.)

Chapter 14

Sustaining *halal* certification at restaurants in Malaysia

Sharifah Zannierah Syed Marzuki, C. Michael Hall, & Paul W. Ballantine

INTRODUCTION

Food is the most basic of human needs and some people have dietary restrictions according to their religions and beliefs. Religious foodways can have profound implications for the economic sustainability of hospitality and tourism businesses but just as importantly being able to satisfy such foodways also acts as to further the cultural sustainability of different communities and ways of being. Although there is clear recognition of the regulatory and institutional issues surrounding the role of certification for organics, GE free and food miles in food supply chains for the tourism and hospitality industries (see Chapter 1), there is much less awareness of the significance of religious food certification.

This chapter examines *halal* food and certification in the context of the Malaysian restaurant sector. *Halal* food is not mainly to do with slaughtering animals or *halal* meat, which is often how it is primarily understood in many Western countries. It entails more than that. It relates to issues of production, handling, distribution, storage, display, packaging, labelling, preparation and serving. In fact the whole food supply chain must be *halal*. *Halal* means permitted or lawful or fit for consumption under Islamic dietary laws. The realm of *halal* affects all dimensions of human life including protection of the environment, humane treatment for animals, ethical investment, decent service and providing wholesome food. This chapter discusses the nature of Islamic dietary laws and the concepts of *halal* and *haram* before going on to examine the regulatory structures surrounding *halal* food in Malaysia. The chapter then presents the results of a survey of the expectations of restaurant managers toward *halal* certification in Malaysia.