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A SCOPING REVIEW OF CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS DECISION FACTORS IN HALAL FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG MUSLIM YOUTH

Nur Syuhada Jabarudin^{1*}, Norliza Che Yahya², Hazira Mohd Nasir³

¹Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

 nur.syuhada.jabarudin@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4723-595X>

²Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

 norliza9911@uitm.edu.my

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9794-2007>

³Faculty of Business and Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Rembau, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

 haziran7627@uitm.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4520-8441>

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Abstract:

As the Muslim youth demographic achieves greater representation within the economy, their halal food consumption, particularly in settings where the status of the food is ambiguous, is receiving more attention. While youth often possess a proficient understanding of halal rules, their dining decisions are frequently mediated by environmental cues, affordability pressures, contextual signals, and social dynamics. The purpose of this review is to understand the role of conscious and unconscious decision-making, along with the financial, contextual, and social influences, in shaping the halal food consumption behaviour of Muslim youths. Following the Arksey and O'Malley scoping review framework and guided by PRISMA-ScR recommendations, a systematic search was conducted across Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. After screening and assessing eligibility, researchers found that 35 out of the 308 total records matched the inclusion criteria. These studies were organised into five thematic categories: conscious decision factors, unconscious decision factors, financial influences, contextual influences, and social influences. The findings show that, although deliberate halal verification continues to be important, many youths' choices are influenced by more intuitive decision-making processes, heuristic-based patterns, and emotional cues, especially in quick and unclear food service situations. Financial constraints decrease the probability of systematic evaluation, leading to a greater reliance on shortcuts like familiarity, perceived outlet trust, and environmental cues. Social and contextual conditions further reinforce the use of intuitive feelings when making decisions, which contributes to the gap between halal knowledge and actual consumption behaviours. These

conditions often dictate immediate choices over personal knowledge or complex information-seeking. In summary, the review concludes that halal consumption among Muslim youth is not solely a rational process and recommends the adoption of more holistic and context-sensitive research approaches, including experiential qualitative methods, to better capture the interaction of cognitive, financial, and contextual influences in real dining situations.

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Conscious And Unconscious Decision-Making, Food Choice Behaviour, Foodservice Context, Halal Food Consumption, Muslim Youth



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Introduction

The consumption of halal food is an integral part of the Muslims' way of life and continues to attract growing interest in the global food market, especially in Malaysia (Ahmad, Mafaz, & Rahman, 2023). Due to changes in eating patterns toward greater reliance on pre-prepared food, cafés, fast-food chains, and casual dining outlets, Muslim youth have become one of the most prominent consumer groups within the foodservice industry (Febriandika, Wijaya, & Hakim, 2023; Khalek, Ismail, & Ibrahim, 2017). Although many youths are highly aware of halal requirements, their actual food choices are shaped by a mix of social, situational, and environmental influences (Fatmasari, Rahma, & Dharma, 2024; Hashim, Fauzi, Zan, & Eksan, 2024). Examining how lifestyles influence youths' decision-making processes requires an understanding of their halal food consumption. Although the consumption of halal food is primarily associated with purposeful and rational decision-making, recent studies indicate that a high number of everyday food choices are made in a spontaneous and stream-of-consciousness manner (Fernqvist, Spendrup, & Tellström, 2024). Youth frequently rely on visible cues, such as halal logos, Arabic-style typography, colour schemes associated with halal branding, Muslim-looking staff, and the reputation of an outlet to judge halal status without engaging in detailed verification (Salleh, Ismail, Ramli, & Abdullah, 2024). The intuitive judgements made here are examples of unconscious cognitive processes that function automatically, as opposed to the more cognitive, effortful evaluations that search for certification and review ingredient lists (Ares, Mawad, Giménez, & Maiche, 2014; Miles, Khan, & Samim, 2025). The coexistence of these conscious and unconscious pathways suggests that rational models alone cannot fully understand halal decision-making.

Apart from cognitive processes, halal food consumption decisions among youth are also influenced by financial, contextual, and social influences (Usman, Chairy, & Projo, 2022). Price sensitivity, budgeting, and the rising cost of dining out often lead individuals to prioritise affordability over deliberate verification (M.G. Kim & Moon, 2025). In many situations, youth rely on convenience, familiarity, and an outlet's reputation, especially when dining in groups or under time pressure (Geuens, 2023). The social context, peer suggestion, and communal eating behaviours further strengthen impulsive decision-making, where the presence of Islamic imagery or Muslim employees is often taken to mean that the establishment is halal (Begum, Alamgir, Sharmin, & Chowdhury, 2025). These financial and situational pressures necessitate increased reliance on cognitive heuristics, illustrating the interrelation of diverse external factors with both conscious and unconscious decision-making processes (Bargh, 2022; Zik-Rullahi, Jide, & Onuh, 2023).

Despite the growing interest in halal food consumption, the existing literature remains fragmented, with most studies focussing on attitudes, intention-based models, or surface-level determinants of halal behaviour (Akın & Okumuş, 2021; Aslan, 2023; Fatmi, Ahmad, & Kartika, 2020; Hanafiah & Hamdan, 2021; Iranmanesh, Senali, Ghobakhloo, Nikbin, & Abbasi, 2022; Pradana, Huertas-García, & Marimon, 2020; Rahim, Rasool, Rusli, & Awang, 2021; Syed, Ahmad, & Shah, 2023; Vanany, Soon, Maryani, & Wibawa, 2020). While research has studied halal consumption from various attitudinal and intention-based perspectives, limited attention has been given to examining the interplay of conscious reasoning and unconscious cognitive functions for real-time halal food decisions, particularly among Muslim youth. Most existing studies discuss halal decision-making as predominantly rational and deliberative, with less emphasis on the automatic and more intuitive decisions made under everyday constraints. Utilising cognitive decision-making theories, this review employs Dual Process Theory (DPT) to differentiate between deliberate, analytical reasoning (System 2) and fast, intuitive judgement (System 1), while Unconscious Thought Theory (UTT) elucidates how affective impressions and heuristic processing influence decisions without conscious awareness. By using these cognitive perspectives, it allows the review to articulate how youth navigate halal ambiguity in foodservice settings and highlights the need for further integrated and cognitively informed approaches to understanding the behaviour of halal food consumers.

Methodology

This review was conducted following the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework and was further supported by PRISMA-ScR guidelines to ensure transparency, rigour, and systematic reporting (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Tricco et al., 2018). The purpose of this review was to map existing evidence on conscious and unconscious decision factors influencing halal consumption among Muslim youth. A particular focus was directed toward foodservice settings where ambiguity in consumption choices frequently arises. A comprehensive search strategy was used, which involved utilising three prominent academic databases: Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Relevant studies were retrieved using a combination of keywords related to halal consumption, youth, decision-making, unconscious processes, financial influence, and foodservice. The application of Boolean operators (AND, OR) served to refine the search parameters, and supplementary articles were identified through citation tracing.

Table 1: Search Phrase Used for Literature Search

(halal consumption OR halal food OR halal decision-making AND Muslim youth)
 (food choice OR dining preference OR eating behaviour)
 (unconscious processing OR intuitive OR heuristic OR automatic OR cognitive duality)
 (financial affordability OR price sensitivity OR budgeting AND foodservice context OR
 restaurant OR café OR dining-out environment)

A total of 308 records were retrieved from the databases (Scopus = 128; Web of Science = 96; Google Scholar = 84). After removing 90 duplicates, 218 records remained for title and abstract screening. Of these, 162 records were excluded based on the inclusion criteria, which focused on studies related to halal consumption, Muslim youth, decision factors, and foodservice settings. Out of the 56 full-text articles assessed for eligibility, 21 were excluded based on significantly low relevance and a mismatch in methodology. 35 studies were therefore included in the thematic synthesis.

Data from the included studies was charted, organised, and analysed to identify recurring patterns and thematic categories. A structured extraction approach was applied to systematically document each study's author, year, country, methodology, sample characteristics, and key findings. The extracted data were subsequently synthesised into five major themes: conscious decision factors, unconscious decision factors, financial influences, contextual influences, and social influences. These themes reflect the multidimensional nature of halal decision-making among Muslim youth and constitute the foundation for the findings presented within this review.

Findings

A total of 35 studies were included in the final synthesis, and their key patterns were organized into five major themes.

Theme 1: Conscious Decision Factors

Conscious decision factors refer to deliberate, effortful, and rational processes through which consumers evaluate food legitimacy and ethical compliance (Abadie & Waroquier, 2019; Beratan, 2007; Simonson, 2005). The review reveals that youth frequently depend on explicit knowledge regarding halal requirements, certification status, ingredient transparency, and the perceived credibility of a food provider (Bowono, Saputra, & Annur, 2022). Studies also highlight the role of perceived risk, suggesting that youth might consciously avoid establishments associated with ambiguous halal status or based on past concerns (Miftahuddin, Wiwiek, Pradipta, & Wihuda, 2022). However, the frequency of these intentional behaviours differs across contexts, with conscious verification becoming more probable when youth have sufficient time, access to information, or personal motivation to confirm compliance (Nagesh, Bharath, Nanjundeswaraswamy, & Tejus, 2024; Zhang & Yu, 2020). Conscious decision factors embody the analytical, System 2 aspect of decision-making as described in Dual Process Theory. Deliberate decision-making processes are more probable under beneficial circumstances and may be diminished or replaced by intuitive judgement when youths encounter financial limitations, contextual pressure, or social influences in everyday foodservice settings.

Theme 2: Unconscious Decision Factors

Unconscious decision factors refer to automatic, intuitive, and effortless cognitive processes that guide consumption choices without deliberate reasoning (Sutil-Martín & Rienda-Gómez, 2021). The review outlines various unconscious mechanisms that influence youth behaviour, especially in fast-paced or ambiguous foodservice environments. Dual Process Theory posits that these processes align with System 1 thinking, which functions swiftly and depends on cognitive heuristics rather than analytical assessment (Durning et al., 2015; Silva, 2023). Youth often depend on heuristic cues, such as Arabic-style typography, colour schemes associated with halal branding, outlet ambience, or the perceived religiosity of staff, to infer halal compliance (Gojali & Asih, 2020; Islam et al., 2023; W. R. W. Ismail, Othman, Rahman, Kamarulzaman, & Rahman, 2018; Khan & Khan, 2019). These cues activate intuitive trust, allowing youth to make quick decisions when thorough verification is not feasible or impractical. Unconscious influences are seen in habitual dining behaviours, when continuous exposure to familiar establishments results in intuitive assumptions regarding halal status. Social mimicry also contributes, as young people adhere to group decisions or adapt to peer behaviour during shared dining experiences (Ertz, Lecompte, & Durif, 2017; Jiang, Deng, Yao, & Yang, 2024; Newell & Shanks, 2014).

Furthermore, elements in Unconscious Thought Theory exist in scenarios where individuals make decisions based on intuitive feelings or emotional impressions developed without deliberate contemplation (Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006). These intuitive judgements are further amplified under financial pressure or in restricted time, leading to the increasing reliance on quick, unconscious evaluations rather than thorough analysis (Antonietti, Borsetto, & Iannello, 2016; Krava, Ayal, & Hochman, 2021). Consequently, these findings indicate that unconscious processes are a significant, yet underexplored study focus in the halal food decision-making of Muslim youth. These unconscious decision processes frequently occur when intentional verification is limited and challenged by financial pressure, contextual ambiguity and social dining situations, reflecting the interplay between intuitive judgement and other decision factors in daily halal food selections.

Theme 3: Financial Influences

Financial influences refer to the economic factors that influence consumers' decisions regarding halal food, which include price sensitivity, affordability, budgetary practices, perceived value, and the trade-offs individuals make between cost and halal assurance (M. Q. Ali & Ahmad, 2023; Q. Ali, Salman, Yaacob, & Parveen, 2019; Begum et al., 2025; Fachrurrozie, Muhsin, Nurkhin, Mukhibad, & Daud, 2023; Miftahuddin et al., 2022). These influences extend beyond rational price comparison to include behavioural finance mechanisms such as loss aversion, mental accounting, and heuristic reasoning that emerge when consumers experience financial pressure (Iranmanesh, Mirzaei, Hosseini, & Zailani, 2019; Madenci, Bayramoğlu, Türker, Ağızan, & EyiZ, 2020; Skwara, 2023).

In the context of Muslim youth, financial influences reflect both conscious evaluations and unconscious shortcuts, activated when economic limitations reduce cognitive capacity for deliberate verification. The review shows that financial considerations play a critical role in shaping halal consumption behaviours among Muslim youth, particularly in foodservice contexts where price differences between certified and uncertified outlets are common (Alfiani & Priantina, 2024; Dewi, Dina, Komariah, & Zaroni, 2021). They often manage under limited

budgets, making them highly sensitive to menu prices, value promotions, and perceived affordability (Hamilton, Mittal, Shah, Thompson, & Giskevicius, 2019; Nie, Bo, Liu, & Li, 2021). Financial limitations often lead to behavioural trade-offs, where people choose less expensive or familiar alternatives over certified ones, especially if the option seems trustworthy or is supported by social approval. Affordability also influences the cognitive mechanisms underlying decision-making. Research suggests that financial stress diminishes cognitive capacity, thereby decreasing the likelihood of deliberate verification and augmenting dependence on intuitive, unconscious heuristics (Adamkovič, 2020). Under such conditions, youth tend to depend on heuristic cues such as pork-free signage, Muslim-looking staff, or Islamic visual cues as substitutes for formal halal certification.

This pattern aligns with behavioural finance theories, which indicate that individuals experiencing financial challenges often utilise loss aversion, mental accounting, and intuitive reasoning to justify their consumption choices (Cheng, Yu, Wang, & Zheng, 2023; Faizal, Jaffar, & Muyop, 2025; Rafiki, Hidayat, & Nasution, 2024). The interplay between financial constraints and unconscious cognitive processes contributes to the awareness–practice gap evident in halal consumption, revealing how economic factors may outweigh conscious efforts to adhere to halal guidelines. As such, financial influences act as a significant factor that determines whether halal decisions are made via conscious evaluation or intuitive judgement, while simultaneously engaging with contextual and social factors in daily foodservice settings.

Theme 4: Contextual Influences

Contextual influences encompass the situational and environmental factors within the foodservice setting that affect consumer decisions (Jung, Sydnor, Lee, & Almanza, 2015; Kuo & Lin, 2019; Nguyen & Nham, 2021; Peters & Remaud, 2020). This review indicates that many decisions made by youth occur in fast-paced, uncertain, or convenience-oriented dining settings, where clear information about halal status is not consistently accessible (Ghazali, Mutum, Waqas, Nguyen, & Ahmad-Tarmizi, 2022; I. Ismail et al., 2023; Wahyudin, Chen, Tsai, & Maksum, 2025). Outlet ambience, visual branding, menu presentation, and the overall aesthetic of a food establishment serve as significant indicators that shape consumer perceptions of halal compliance (Damit, Harun, & Martin, 2017; Madun & Kamarulzaman, 2023). Specifically, establishments that project trustworthiness, familiarity, or cultural resonance with Muslim identity frequently elicit instinctive assumptions of halal compliance, thereby diminishing the perceived necessity for formal validation. Situational factors including time pressure, convenience, hunger urgency, and proximity also play a significant role in shaping decision behaviour (Huseynov & Palma, 2021; M. Kim, Kim, & Lee, 2023; Otterbring, Folwarczny, & Gasiorowska, 2024).

When youths are pressed for time or limited by location, they are less likely to verify things carefully. This leads them to rely more on quick judgements based on what they see around them. Additionally, the reputation of an establishment, how popular it is in the community, and the presence of other customers all help to build trust in the situation (Han, Nguyen, & Lee, 2015; Seo, 2020; Wu, Zhang, Van Klinken, Schrobback, & Muller, 2021). Contextual ambiguity, including unclear signage, assertions of pork-free status, and the presence of mixed-culture food environments, presents circumstances wherein youths are compelled to interpret their surroundings through both conscious and unconscious cognitive reasoning (Cohen & Babey, 2012; Fernqvist et al., 2024; Plaza, Saulais, & Delarue, 2022; Song, Ding, Xu, Kim, & Chang, 2023; Song, Yang, & Ma, 2022). These contextual cues exert a significant influence,

interacting with cognitive and financial considerations, thereby establishing the environment's influence as a crucial yet frequently underrated factor in determining halal food choices. Thus, contextual conditions not only mould individual cognitive responses but also intensify financial considerations and social cues, collectively shaping whether halal decisions are based on deliberate verification or intuitive judgement within the context of everyday dining experiences.

Theme 5: Social Influences

Social influences encompass interpersonal and group dynamics that shape food choices and consumption behaviour among consumers, especially youth (Begho & Liu, 2024; Mitić & Vehapi, 2021; Shah & Asghar, 2023). The review reveals that Muslim youth frequently make dining decisions in social settings such as with friends, classmates, colleagues, or peers, where collective preferences, group norms, and social expectations significantly affect individual choices (Ellison, 2014; Exline, Zell, Bratslavsky, Hamilton, & Swenson, 2012; Harun, Idris, & Bashir, 2023; Khalek, Mokhtar, & Yao, 2019). In these shared circumstances, adolescents generally rely on the assessments of their peers, perceiving group consensus as a sign of halal adherence (Chene, Fossati, Weber, Plassmann, & Koban, 2025; Higgs, Bouguettaya, & Ruddock, 2022; Zulkifli, Jamian, Razak, & Ridzuan, 2025). This inclination towards social conformity reduces the necessity for personal assessment and reinforces intuitive evaluations, particularly when peers exhibit confidence or demonstrate familiarity with the food establishments. Peer influence also interacts with both financial and contextual factors. When youth dine in groups, they might prioritise price, convenience, or the popularity of a restaurant to avoid social discomfort or being seen as difficult people (Billah, Rahman, & Hossain, 2020; Bowono et al., 2022; Greene, Nguyen, & Dolnicar, 2024; Mohamad Rasdi, Khalid, Kueh, Janang, & Abdullah, 2023). Group dining often involves heuristic-based decisions, where individuals follow the choices of others without fully checking if the food is halal, especially when time is short or the status of an establishment is unclear (Al-Kwif, Farha, & Ahmed, 2019; Higgs & Thomas, 2016; Xu, 2025; Zafar & Abu-Hussin, 2025).

Furthermore, the visibility of Muslim patrons or endorsements from acquaintances fosters a perception of social approval, thereby reinforcing implicit confidence in the establishment (Hamzah, Rashid, & Ngah, 2020; Saaidin, Hamid, & Nurbayah, 2018). These observed patterns indicate the significant impact of social factors on halal consumption, acting as both a catalyst and a potential source of vulnerability when group norms replace deliberate verification. In combination, this review suggests that social influences reinforce contextual cues and financial considerations while shaping cognitive reliance on intuitive judgement, thereby reducing the likelihood of deliberate halal verification in shared dining situations.

Discussion

This review reveals that a multi-layered interaction of cognitive, financial, contextual, and social factors shapes halal consumption among Muslim youth. Conscious decision-making remains important, particularly in situations where youth have the time, knowledge, and motivation to verify halal status (Abadie & Waroquier, 2019; Bowono et al., 2022; Jannah & Al-Banna, 2021). However, deliberate verification is not the dominant pattern in everyday foodservice contexts (Miftahuddin et al., 2022; Nagesh et al., 2024). Instead, unconscious processes such as reliance on visual cues, ambience, familiarity, and intuitive impressions play a substantial role in shaping rapid halal judgements (Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006; Gojali &

Asih, 2020; W. R. W. Ismail et al., 2018; Khan & Khan, 2019). This pattern supports the Dual Process Theory perspective that youth frequently shift between analytical (System 2) and automatic (System 1) processing depending on situational demands (Durning et al., 2015; Kahneman, Daniel, 2011; Silva, 2023; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974).

In this perspective, the review differentiates explicitly between conscious and unconscious influences. Conscious factors comprise deliberate, effortful reasoning processes, including halal verification, logo inspection, and ingredient checking, where decisions are predicated on analytical evaluation aligned with System 2 processing. On the other hand, unconscious factors occur through intuitive judgements, habitual choices, and social mimicry, which are indicative of automatic System 1 mechanisms. Financial and contextual factors often function across both domains: affordability constraints can diminish cognitive control and induce intuitive reliance, while environmental cues may either provoke conscious verification or bolster unconscious trust. Acknowledging these dual pathways clarifies how cognitive depth varies in response to financial pressure, contextual ambiguity, and social influence, thereby highlighting that halal decision-making arises from the interaction, rather than the isolation, of these factors.

Financial influences contribute to this situation, as many youths navigate under limited budgets, thereby allowing affordability to be a central determinant of where and what they choose to eat (Alfiani & Priantina, 2024; M. Q. Ali & Ahmad, 2023; Q. Ali et al., 2019; Hamilton et al., 2019). Hence, when faced with financial pressure, cognitive capacities are impacted, leading to an increased dependence on intuitive shortcuts and reducing the likelihood of detailed halal verification (Adamkovič, 2020). Furthermore, behavioural finance principles, including mental accounting and perceived value, become particularly salient in this context (Cheng et al., 2023; Faizal et al., 2025; Thaler, 1985). These findings imply that the disparity between awareness and practice frequently cited in halal studies is not exclusively a cognitive phenomenon; rather, it is also influenced by financial factors (Iranmanesh et al., 2019; Rafiki et al., 2024). Although financial factors have been incorporated in prior behavioural and marketing research, the significance within the context of halal consumption has yet to be thoroughly explored. In this review, affordability is reframed not merely as an economic constraint but as a behavioural financing mechanism that moderates cognitive engagement and decision depth. By connecting affordability to unconscious reliance and bounded rationality, this study introduces a novel theoretical linkage that extends current halal decision frameworks. This review differentiates itself from prior studies that considered price sensitivity or cost aspects as secondary factors, rather than as primary moderators affecting cognitive processing. This framing enhances the review's originality by indicating that financial considerations interact with cognitive processes, thereby influencing whether halal decisions are reached through deliberate evaluation or intuitive judgement within the context of everyday foodservice.

Contextual factors within the foodservice environment further intensify these effects. Ambiguous signage, culturally blended menus, pork-free claims, and outlet reputation force youth to interpret halal status through situational cues rather than reliable certification (Cohen & Babey, 2012; Ghazali et al., 2022; Madun & Kamarulzaman, 2023; Song et al., 2023). Time pressures, convenience needs, and routine dining behaviours further reduce the likelihood of conscious evaluation. Social influences interact strongly with these contextual conditions, as youth often follow group preferences or assume halal safety based on peer confidence or the presence of other Muslim patrons (Begho & Liu, 2024; Ellison, 2014; Harun et al., 2023; Higgs & Thomas, 2016; Huseynov & Palma, 2021; M. Kim et al., 2023; Zulkifli et al., 2025). These

findings demonstrate that halal consumption decisions are not isolated individual choices but are shaped by the interaction of contextual conditions and social dynamics, which together reinforce intuitive judgement and reduce the likelihood of deliberate halal verification.

Altogether, the review shows that current research does not fully capture the combined effects of cognitive, financial, contextual, and social influences on youth's halal behaviour. Existing studies frequently cover these areas in isolation, thereby yielding incomplete perspectives. The integration of unconscious processes, financial considerations, and the inherent uncertainties of real-world foodservice has received scant attention (Wahyudin et al., 2025). This review emphasises the necessity for forthcoming enquiries to embrace a more comprehensive methodology, one that acknowledges the interplay of these elements within the context of actual dining experiences. Additionally, by addressing these gaps, future research studies can provide a more precise comprehension of the underlying mechanisms that govern halal decision-making among Muslim youth. Furthermore, beyond these contextual shortcomings, significant theoretical limitations still exist within the existing body of halal research.

Conclusion

This review provides an overview of the key conscious, unconscious, financial, contextual, and social factors that shape halal food consumption among Muslim youth. The findings indicate that halal decision-making is far more complex than rational models suggest. While youth demonstrate awareness of halal requirements, their actual foodservice choices are strongly influenced by intuitive cues, affordability pressures, environmental ambiguity, and group dynamics. These interactions reflect a fluid shift between deliberate and automatic cognitive processing, underscoring the relevance of behavioural theories such as Dual Process Theory and Unconscious Thought Theory in explaining youth behaviour. The review also identifies several gaps in the existing literature, particularly the lack of integrated studies that examine how cognitive, financial, and contextual factors operate simultaneously in real dining situations. Research on the interplay between unconscious decision-making and these factors within the context of halal consumption is still emerging, with the majority of existing studies concentrating on attitudinal indicators, or self-reported intentions, rather than actual behavioural outcomes. Moreover, foodservice settings, where the ambiguity surrounding halal verification is most obvious, have received comparatively less attention than general purchase or retail contexts. These gaps signify the necessity for more comprehensive, context-specific investigations to uncover the mechanisms driving halal food consumption among youth, specifically by reconceptualising all the reviewed factors as a construct that influences cognitive processing and unconscious biases in real-world decision-making scenarios. To sum up, this review contributes to the ongoing discourse on halal consumer behaviour by integrating disparate evidence into a unified conceptual framework. By illuminating how conscious and unconscious processes interact with financial, contextual, and social factors, the review provides a more integrated explanation of youth decision-making. Importantly, it advances existing literature by introducing affordability as a behavioural finance mechanism that moderates cognitive depth and intuitive judgement in real foodservice contexts. This conceptual reframing strengthens the connection between cognitive and financial behaviour theories, offering a foundation for future empirical studies to refine theoretical models and guide practical strategies aimed at promoting consistent halal consumption among Muslim youth.

Implication

The findings of this review offer several important implications for research, practice, and policy. For researchers, the review highlights the need to move beyond intention-based models by employing methods that can capture real-time cognitive processes and unconscious reactions. Approaches such as photo-elicitation are particularly valuable, as they present participants with visual stimuli that mirror ambiguous foodservice environments, allowing a deeper exploration of how youth interpret halal cues, pricing information, ambience, and contextual triggers. This method overcomes the limitations of self-reported perceptions and provides a richer understanding of the intuitive and affective mechanisms underlying halal decision-making. For practitioners, especially in the foodservice sector, the findings emphasise the importance of transparent halal communication. Ambiguous signage, culturally blended menus, and inconsistent visual cues contribute to consumer uncertainty and reliance on heuristics. Foodservice operators can enhance consumer trust by adopting clearer halal indicators, improving staff knowledge, and ensuring greater consistency in halal-related branding. Understanding youth price sensitivity also suggests that offering affordable halal-certified options may reduce the need for consumers to rely on unconscious shortcuts that can compromise halal assurance. For policymakers and regulatory bodies, the review draws attention to gaps in halal literacy and the challenges youth face when navigating mixed cultural food environments. Enhancing public education on halal standards, strengthening enforcement of halal branding, and increasing the accessibility of verified halal information could help reduce ambiguity and improve consumer confidence. Inclusively, these implications highlight the importance of adopting a multifaceted approach that acknowledges how financial pressures, environmental cues, and social dynamics shape halal decision-making among Muslim youth.

Limitation

This review is limited to English-language, peer-reviewed studies indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. As a scoping review, it synthesises existing literature descriptively without quality appraisal or primary data collection; therefore, future empirical research involving relevant youth populations is recommended.

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AI Tool Usage Declaration

AI-assisted tools were used solely for language refinement purposes, including grammar checking and sentence restructuring, to improve clarity and readability. No AI tools were used in generating the research ideas, conceptual framework, analysis, or findings reported in this manuscript.

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