

Halal Restaurant: Lifestyle of Muslims in Penang

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Abstract

This paper is an outcome of a research project investigating on the scenario surrounding Halal restaurants in major cities and tourism destinations in Malaysia. It investigates factors that influence Muslim confidence level in choosing Halal restaurant to dine in and/or purchase food for their friends or relatives. From researcher exhaustive reviews on existing literature related to Halal concepts and extensive fieldwork studies, four variables were proposed, namely Devoutness; Awareness; and Lifestyle; tested for their influence on Confidence Level. For this paper, the report is on 247 questionnaires analyzed from 260 distributed at 10 restaurants deemed to be the most popular and mostly visited around Penang Island, one of the most popular tourism destinations in Malaysia, well known as food haven. Although the results show that all variables are significantly correlated, regression analysis indicates that only Lifestyle as the influencing factor for Muslim confidence level in selecting halal restaurant in Penang

Keywords: Halal; Tourism; Awareness; Lifestyle, Restaurant

Introduction

Malaysia is a various ethnic, diverse cultural, and a multilingual society with the population of 28.6 million, consisting of 50 percent Malays who are in general and by constitution are Muslim, 22.5 percent Chinese, 6.7 percent Indians, with the remaining populations are minorities, indigenous groups, and non-citizens (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010). Penang, a Northern state of Malaysia with the population of 1.56 million has been recognized by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage Site for her capital city Georgetown offering historical architectures of building with various ethnicities. It is also known among Malaysian to be among the best places to savor delicious foods. While it is common to have a well known restaurant to be flocked by diverse consumers with different background, for Muslim consumers, Halal is always the prerequisite. Most Muslim will only dine at a Halal restaurant;