

KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF WORKING WOMEN IN PURCHASING BRUNEI HALAL FROZEN FOOD BRAND FOR FAMILY MEAL PREPARATION

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ABSTRACT

This pilot study investigates the knowledge, awareness, and usage patterns of Brunei Halal frozen food products among working women in Brunei Darussalam. A cross-sectional survey was administered to a sample of 100 working women, aged between 18 and 50 years, using a snowball sampling technique. The study aimed to assess participants' understanding of the Brunei Halal frozen food brand, their awareness of halal certification, and the frequency of product usage for family meal preparation. The findings reveal that while respondents are generally aware of the brand's halal certification and purchasing locations, there is a significant gap in their knowledge of the full range of products available. This highlights the need for enhanced communication strategies by Brunei Halal to improve consumer education. Participants also exhibited varying levels of awareness regarding the product's benefits, with some expressing uncertainty about its nutritional value and ingredients. Despite these gaps, the study found that marketing channels such as advertisements, social media, and promotions are effective in raising awareness, although there is room for improvement in consumer engagement and product education. Furthermore, purchasing patterns indicated that while Brunei Halal products are used occasionally, the frequency of their use for meal preparation is inconsistent, with cultural preferences for fresh, home-cooked meals being a significant influencing factor. The study concludes that Brunei Halal must refine its communication strategies to increase consumer confidence and product usage, particularly through clearer product information and more targeted educational initiatives. These efforts could significantly improve both the understanding and adoption of Brunei Halal frozen food products among working women in Brunei.

Keywords: Knowledge, Awareness, Working Women, Brunei Halal Frozen Food, Family Meal Preparation

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, the role of women in the workforce is increasingly prominent, significantly impacting family dynamics and daily lifestyles. Over the years, there has been a significant rise in the participation of women in various industries and professions, including Brunei Darussalam. This increase has reshaped traditional family dynamics as more women juggle their careers with family responsibilities (Itam & Warriar, 2024).

As in other countries, Brunei Darussalam has witnessed a significant increase in female workforce participation, with a labour force participation rate of 55.4% for women in 2023 compared to 72.7% for men (International Labour Organization, 2024). This rising trend since 1990 underscores the growing role of women in the workforce. However, balancing work pressures and family responsibilities presents ongoing challenges for working women, particularly in ensuring nutritious meals for their families, a crucial aspect of maintaining family well-being. Studies on gender roles underscore how these responsibilities and work-life balance impact women's mobility and career progression, delaying their progress (Ojwala, 2024).

In this context, issues related to halal food awareness are gaining critical attention. Adebayo (2016) defines work-life balance as crucial for maintaining stability in personal and professional lives and enhancing employee productivity and job satisfaction. The feminist political ecology (FPE) framework reveals how gendered knowledge, roles, and responsibilities influence women's participation in professions and decision-making, particularly in patriarchal societies like Kenya (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996). This framework is also applicable in Brunei, where socio-cultural norms define gender roles, particularly for working women balancing professional and domestic responsibilities. In the context of this study, FPE helps to analyze how these roles influence the purchasing behaviour of working women, particularly in choosing halal frozen food brands for family meals. It also reveals how systemic gender norms shape their access to information about halal certification and their decision-making processes, highlighting the intersection of gender, knowledge, and food security in Brunei's unique socio-cultural setting. While not directly addressing halal food, this framework emphasizes the significance of work-life balance and gendered knowledge, linking them to halal food awareness among working women. For example, working women in Brunei often have limited time to prepare meals due to professional commitments. To manage this, they may rely on frozen halal food brands that meet the dual requirements of convenience and religious compliance. Their choice of products is influenced by their knowledge of halal certification and their trust in regulatory bodies. This reflects how gendered

responsibilities—such as being the primary meal preparer—shape their decision-making process and highlight the importance of balancing professional and domestic roles in maintaining family well-being.

This pilot study aims to explore the knowledge and awareness of Brunei Darussalam's working women regarding halal frozen food products, particularly local brands, and their usage in family meal preparation. The study intends to shed light on this environment to better understand working women's needs and the role they play in choosing and using halal frozen food items to satisfy their families' dietary needs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 *Halal Knowledge & Awareness*

Halal knowledge encompasses understanding various aspects such as categories, brands, characteristics, composition and the marketing specifics of the products (Nurhayati & Hendar, 2019). Working women acquire this knowledge through diverse channels, including social media, official websites, local communities, and personal networks, thereby enhancing their awareness and comprehension of halal products. The convenience of preparation and alignment with their busy lifestyles are pivotal considerations, as halal frozen foods that are easy to prepare yet uphold halal standards provide practical and safe choices.

Accurate product knowledge empowers consumers to make informed decisions, a critical factor for Muslims adhering to Islamic principles (Suki & Salleh, 2018). Familiarity with fatwas related to products also significantly influences consumer choices (Nurhayati & Hendar, 2019). Therefore, halal knowledge not only reflects the depth of information consumers possess but also plays a central role in their decision-making processes and predicting consumer behaviour (Lin & Chen, 2006).

Knowledge comprises factual understanding, sentiments, and awareness acquired through learning processes (Ahmad et al., 2015; Rahman et al., 2015). It is integral to shaping consumer preferences and determining their acceptance or rejection of products (Suki & Suki, 2018). A comprehensive understanding of halal products is developed through experiences and information gathering, which is crucial for informed product selection (Simanjuntak & Dewantara, 2014; Maichum et al., 2017). Such knowledge significantly influences attitudes towards the consumption and use of halal foods, cosmetics and medicines (Sudarsono & Nugrohowati, 2020; Maichum et al., 2017). Therefore, a thorough

understanding of halal product knowledge is essential to ensure consumer familiarity with relevant offerings (Bashir et al., 2018).

Halal awareness refers to the level of understanding that consumers have concerning issues related to the concept of halal, encompassing both the notion of halal and the production of products according to halal standards (Nurcahyo & Hudrasyah, 2017). This awareness is obligatory for Muslims, as it involves obtaining pertinent information to enhance their knowledge about what is permissible for Muslims to consume and use (Mohd Yunus et al., 2014). For both consumers and entrepreneurs, halal awareness can be interpreted as a concern for producing and consuming what is permitted in Islam. Thus, the more Muslims understand the concept, process, and principles of halal, the more selective they tend to be in choosing the products they consume (Setyaningsih & Marwansyah, 2019).

Research by Alitakrim et al. (2022) indicates that while the Islamic branding variable does not significantly affect the decision to purchase products, the variables of halal awareness and product quality positively influence the purchase decisions of halal brand products. Similarly, Muslichah et al. (2019) emphasize that halal awareness is predicated on understanding what halal is, knowing the correct slaughter process, and prioritizing halal food for consumption. This awareness is crucial for Muslims because halal products are not exclusively produced by Muslim producers but are also handled by non-Muslim groups. As individuals become aware of the importance of consuming halal food, this awareness positively impacts their interest in buying halal products.

The findings also suggest that a higher level of understanding of halal principles among Muslims leads to more positive behaviour regarding halal-related issues, thereby increasing their interest in purchasing halal products. This underscores the significance of halal awareness in influencing consumer behaviour. For instance, Mohd Yunus et al. (2014) found that greater knowledge about halal products correlates with a higher intention to purchase halal foods. Hence, in the context of working women in Brunei, understanding and awareness of halal standards play a critical role in their decision to purchase Brunei halal frozen food brand for family meal preparation, highlighting the essential link between halal knowledge and consumer purchasing behaviour.

2.3 Working Women Purchasing Frozen Food

The food industry has continuously adapted to meet the evolving demands of contemporary consumers, notably adjusting to accommodate

millions of women who began working from home during the global COVID-19 pandemic. This transformation is embedded within a dynamic history of food advertising and consumer culture, where products such as Kraft-Heinz Lunchables are strategically marketed towards women balancing professional and domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, manufacturers of cooking appliances, including slow cookers and microwaves, have tailored their offerings to cater to the needs of working women, offering diverse cooking solutions. Particularly, the microwave, invented in 1946, surged in popularity a decade later, sparking a trend for quick frozen dinners targeted at working women that remains influential today. This historical backdrop is crucial for understanding the knowledge and awareness of working women in Brunei when selecting halal frozen food brands for family meal preparation (Hysmith, 2023).

With an increasing number of women joining the workforce and societal shifts, there has been a corresponding rise in demand for frozen foods due to their time-saving benefits. The convenience and efficiency of frozen meals have proven compelling for many parents and working women, driving their purchasing decisions (Saini et al., 2022). This trend is particularly relevant in Brunei, where working women seek swift and convenient meal solutions that align with *halalan thayyiban* (lawful and good/wholesome) dietary guidelines for their families.

The growing workforce participation among women necessitates the availability of quick-to-prepare frozen foods (Prasad, 2017). The importance of enhancing agriculture through food processing to meet evolving urban lifestyles, highlighting frozen products as pivotal in ensuring profitability by providing convenience and accessibility has been emphasized. The increasing mobility and expanding workforce have heightened the demand for pre-prepared foods, with frozen meals emerging as an economical and practical choice for working women, underscoring their appeal in the marketplace.

2.4 Brunei Halal Food Brand

Brunei practices *Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB: Malay Islamic Monarchy, the national philosophy of Brunei Darussalam) alongside shariah law. The 9th National Development Plan (2007–2012) identified the halal industry as a crucial development resource. The branding of 'Brunei Halal' endorsed in August 2007, highlighted the importance of the halal food industry, ensuring its validity (Brunei Halal, 2016). This initiative involved several government agencies, including the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, the Islamic Religious Council of Brunei Darussalam, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance. All food products under this

brand are certified by Brunei Halal (MUIB). Figure 1 shows an example of a product and an advertisement for Brunei Halal brand products that can be found in supermarkets. Additionally, the brand established its first halal food processing plant in Birmingham, United Kingdom, and launched various frozen products at Tesco.

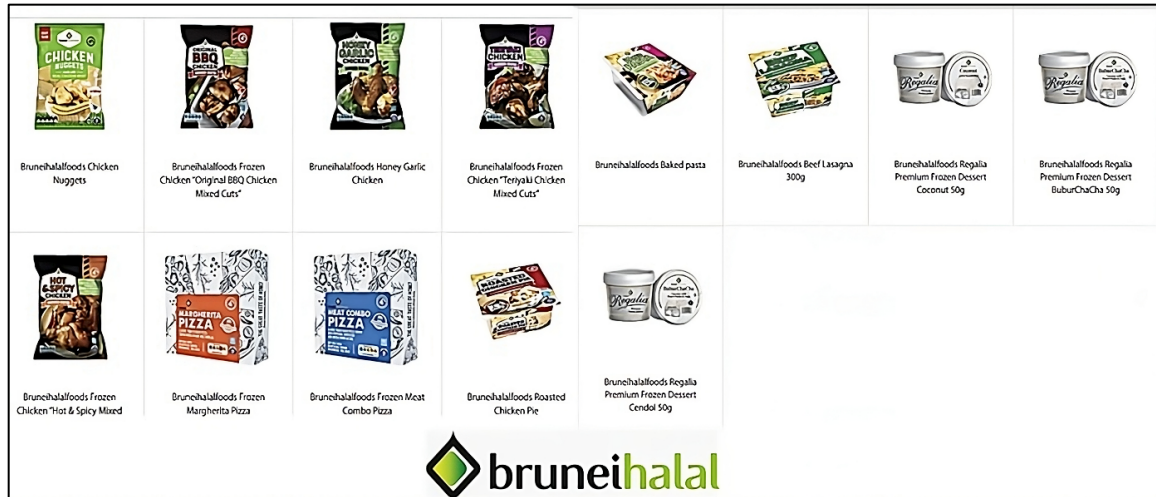


Figure 2.1 Brunei Halal Brand Products That Can be Found in Supermarkets

As Brunei promotes its halal industry globally, significant government and public support bolster local halal products. Brunei's halal brand-Brunei Halal has made considerable efforts to gain a global reputation through promotion and sales. In an interview by The Worldfolio (2017), the Chief Executive Officer at Ghanim International Corporation (Brunei Halal Foods), stated that Brunei Halal Foods is a strong, government-backed brand. The CEO emphasized that any product created under this brand would be of high quality and manufactured in Brunei, earning customers' respect and preference. The organization focuses on five pillars for developing the product lines: quality, innovation, competitiveness, price, and convenience.

Brunei has opportunities to stabilize its economy by expanding its halal industry due to rising global demand for halal goods. Brunei is currently preparing to capitalize on its halal market and further establish itself as a global halal hub. Promoting and developing reputable organizations within the Brunei halal industry is a key strategy to achieve Wawasan Brunei 2035 (Brunei Vision 2035) (Sulaiman et al., 2023). Understanding the knowledge and awareness of working women in Brunei regarding the purchase of Brunei Halal frozen food brand for family meal preparation is essential to supporting this vision and enhancing consumer engagement.

2.5 MABIMS and the Presence of Other Halal Certified Frozen Foods

The MABIMS (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) initiative plays a crucial role in harmonizing halal standards across its member countries, with a particular focus on food safety and quality in the frozen food sector. These harmonized standards ensure that frozen food products comply with shariah law, guaranteeing that they are free from non-halal ingredients and processed in halal-compliant facilities (MABIMS, 2017). This is essential in preventing cross-contamination, a major concern in frozen food production and storage.

With the growing demand for halal-certified frozen foods, driven by a rising Muslim population and increasing awareness of halal dietary laws, several halal certification bodies, such as IFANCA and HFA, ensure that frozen food products meet stringent halal standards (Khan et al., 2021; Hassan & Rahman, 2020). These organizations conduct thorough audits to verify that food is produced in environments that adhere to halal principles.

Despite MABIMS' central role in regional harmonization, other independent halal certification bodies operate globally, resulting in variability in standards and practices for frozen food products (Ali & Zain, 2019). This can create challenges in maintaining consistency across markets. However, the diversity of certification bodies provides consumers with a broader selection of halal-certified frozen food options to cater to various preferences and needs.

In conclusion, while MABIMS is essential in standardizing halal practices in frozen foods, the wider presence of multiple certification bodies contributes to a more diverse global market for halal frozen products. Future research should examine the influence of these standards on consumer preferences and the frozen food market. Below are figures presenting a comparative analysis of the food processing requirements for halal-certified frozen food products (MABIMS, 2017).

Table 2.1 Comparative Analysis of Processing, Storage, Transportation, Display, Sale and Serving of Halal Food

	BRUNEI PBD 24: 2007	INDONESIA HAS 23201	MALAYSIA MS 1500:2019	SINGAPORE MUIS HC-S001
Processing Of Halal Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Products are prepared, processed or manufactured using equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production systems established must assure and ensure the halalness of the process and product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food or its ingredients shall be processed using only halal components products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The product is prepared, processed or manufactured using equipment and facilities free from

<p>and facilities free from contamination with <i>najis</i> as decreed by Hukum Syara'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the process chain, all halal foods must be separated from any other food that does not meet the requirements specified above, or any other things decreed as <i>najis</i> by Hukum Syara'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must ensure the process and products are free from haram and <i>najis</i> contamination. • Use only materials for production according to the list of material approved by LPPOM-MUI. 	<p>and facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The processed food and ingredients are safe for consumption, non-poisonous, non-intoxicating or non-hazardous to health. • Throughout the process chain (preparation, processing, handling, packaging and storage distribution and serving) all halal foods must be physically separated from any other food that does not meet the requirements specifies above, or any other things decreed as <i>najis</i> by Shariah Law. 	<p>contamination of <i>najis</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its preparation, processing, packaging storage and/or transportation is fully separated from any other food that does not meet the requirements halal specifications or the specifications as per Shariah Law.
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3. METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey was conducted to gather data for this pilot study, which aimed to assess the knowledge and awareness of frozen food and Brunei Halal frozen products among working women in Brunei Darussalam,

as well as to evaluate the frequency of using this local brand for meal preparation. The snowball sampling technique was employed in this study due to its ability to identify participants from hard-to-reach populations. Initially, a small group of women working in Brunei was recruited based on specific criteria, such as being employed full-time or part-time, aged between 25 and 45 years, and being involved in the decision-making process of halal food purchases for their families. As the study progressed, these participants referred to others who met the inclusion criteria, creating a snowball effect. The inclusion criteria for the study required participants to be women employed in any sector, aged between 25 and 45 years, and involved in the purchase of halal food products for their families. In contrast, the exclusion criteria involved excluding women who were not working, women who were not involved in food purchasing decisions, and individuals who had not made halal food purchases in the past year. By using snowball sampling, a diverse group of participants was identified, ensuring the study's findings were more representative of the target population. The survey link was sent via email to an employee in the marketing department of Brunei Halal food, who then distributed it to the study sample and connected them to the Google Forms questionnaire. Data collection took place in June 2024.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections: demographic information (Section A), knowledge about Brunei Halal frozen food brand (Section B), awareness about Brunei Halal frozen food brand (Section C), and the frequency of purchasing Brunei Halal frozen food brand for meal preparation (Section D). In Sections B and C, the questions were presented on a Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Meanwhile, in Section D, the questions were on a Likert scale ranging from "never" to "often."

The data were downloaded from the Google site and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis was descriptive, presenting the study's variables in frequency tables.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

4.2 Demography Data

This pilot study included a total of 100 respondents who completed an online survey. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the respondents' demographic characteristics. Most respondents were working women who identified as Muslim (95.0%), with only 5.0% identifying as non-Muslim. Most respondents were within the age range of 18-30 years old (60.0%), followed by 35.0% aged 31-40 years old, and 5.0% aged 41-50 years old.

In terms of educational background, most respondents had attained either a diploma or a degree (60.0%), while 25.0% had postgraduate qualifications, and 15.0% had completed secondary education. Regarding marital status, 55.0% of the working women in this study were married, 40.0% were single, and 5.0% were widowed. Marital status is a significant factor influencing purchasing decisions, particularly in food choices. Research suggests that married individuals often prioritize family preferences, including their children’s likes and dislikes, when making food-related decisions, sometimes even over considerations like cost (Pearson et al., 2009). This trend is especially apparent in the context of purchasing food, where family-oriented factors tend to outweigh economic ones (Pearson et al., 2012). In this study, the high proportion of married women may reflect a similar trend, where their food purchasing behaviours are likely shaped by family needs and preferences.

When examining the number of children, it was found that 70.0% of the working women respondents did not have children, which includes both married and single women, while 20.0% had 1-2 children, 5.0% had 3-4 children, and another 5.0% had five or more children. Despite the majority not having children, the household sizes were relatively large, with 45.0% having a household size of seven or more people, 15.0% with 5-6 people, 30.0% with 3-4 people, and 10.0% with 1-2 people.

Most respondents were employed in the private sector (75.0%), followed by 15.0% in the government sector, and 10.0% who were self-employed. Regarding monthly income, 35.0% of respondents earned less than BND 1,000 or between BND 1,000 - 2,000. Additionally, 20.0% had an income of BND 2,001-3,000, and 10.0% earned more than BND 3,000.

Table 4.1 Demography characteristics of the respondents (n = 100)

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percent
Age	18-30	60	60.0%
	31-40	35	35.0%
	41-50	5	5.0%
Education Level	Secondary education	15	15.0%
	Diploma/Degree	60	60.0%
	Postgraduate	25	25.0%
Marital Status	Single	40	40.0%
	Married	55	55.0%
	Widowed	5	5.0%
Number of Children	None	70	70.0%
	1-2	20	20.0%
	3-4	5	5.0%
	5 and above	5	5.0%
Monthly Income	Less than BND1,000	35	35.0%

	BND 1,000 – 2,000	35	35.0%
	BND 2,001 – 3,000	20	20.0%
	BND 3,001 – 4,000	10	10.0%
Type of Employment	Government	15	15.0%
	Private Sector	75	75.0%
	Self-Employed	10	10.0%
Religion	Islam	95	95.0%
	Christianity	5	5.0%
Household	1-2	10	10.0%
	3-4	30	30.0%
	5-6	15	15.0%
	7 and above	45	45.0%

4.3 Knowledge About Brunei Halal Frozen Food Brand

Figure 3.2 shows that most people are aware of the existence of the Brunei Halal frozen food brand and are knowledgeable that it complies with the established halal standards. However, despite knowing where to purchase Brunei Halal products, most respondents are not aware of the various products offered by the brand. This indicates that while there is awareness about the purchasing locations, there is a gap in consumer knowledge regarding the range of products available. Consequently, immediate and strategic actions are required to enhance product awareness and improve marketing strategies to ensure that product information effectively reaches and influences consumers.

Additionally, respondents mostly agree that they understand the difference between halal and non-halal frozen food. However, many respondents have unclear or uncertain perceptions about their knowledge of the ingredients, nutritional value, and halal certification process used in Brunei Halal frozen food products. This highlights an important opportunity for Brunei Halal to improve their communication and product education strategies to ensure that consumers are more confident and informed about the ingredients used in their halal frozen food products.

Furthermore, most respondents have good awareness of the halal certification bodies in Brunei, indicating a high level of knowledge about the organizations responsible for halal certification. Despite this, Figure 3.2 reveals that most respondents have never attended workshops or seminars related to halal food products. This points to a significant gap in educational efforts and awareness.

These findings underscore the need for Brunei Halal and halal certification bodies to intensify their efforts in organizing and promoting educational activities. Ensuring that important information about halal products is

effectively communicated to consumers is essential for improving product knowledge and consumer confidence.

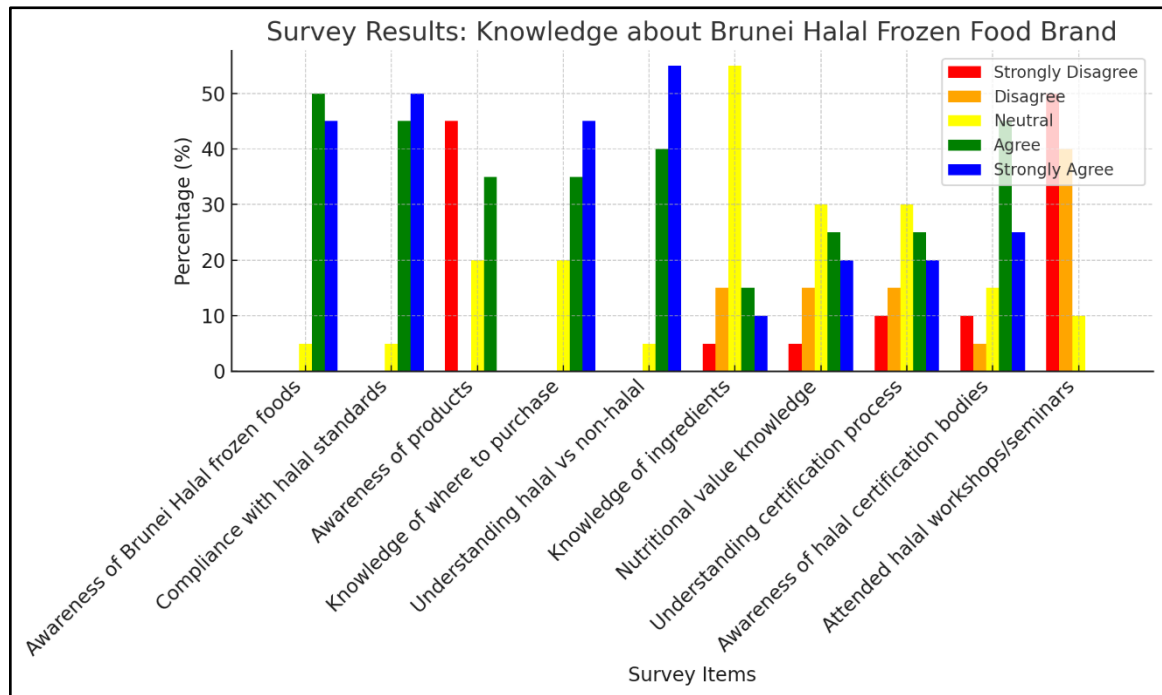


Figure 4.1 Knowledge about Brunei Halal frozen food brand

4.4 Awareness About Brunei Halal Frozen Food Brand

Figure 3.3 shows that some respondents lack clarity in their awareness of the Brunei Halal frozen food brand through advertisements, social media, friends, and family. However, upon reviewing the table, it is evident that many respondents are aware of the Brunei Halal frozen food brand through these channels. This reflects the successful marketing and advertising efforts of Brunei Halal frozen food brand in reaching their target audience. Nonetheless, there are opportunities to enhance and expand advertising campaigns to convey more product information to consumers, thereby increasing their knowledge and confidence in Brunei Halal frozen food products.

Additionally, Figure 3.3 reveals variability in respondents' perceptions regarding their awareness of the benefits of choosing the Brunei Halal frozen food brand. Some respondents are neutral regarding the benefits of selecting the brand. However, as shown in Figure 3.3, respondents demonstrate varying levels of awareness regarding the quality of products from the Brunei Halal frozen food brand. These variations in awareness may be attributed to multiple factors, such as the different sources through which respondents are exposed to information about the brand. For example, 50% of respondents are neutral about the product quality, indicating limited or inconsistent exposure to quality-related information. Meanwhile, awareness through advertisements

and social media may vary depending on individuals' media consumption habits and the effectiveness of promotional efforts. To address this variation, marketing strategies and educational efforts need to focus on enhancing consumer knowledge and confidence in the quality of Brunei Halal frozen food products. Strategies may include increasing the use of user testimonials, providing clearer quality assurances, and adopting a more open and transparent approach to customer communication.

Furthermore, Figure 3.3 shows variability in respondents' engagement levels with Brunei Halal frozen food brand social media pages and their awareness of promotions or events related to the brand. A significant proportion of respondents (50% and 30%, respectively) reported being neutral or inactive in following the brand's social media pages and attending events. This may be due to factors such as lack of interest, limited social media usage, or insufficient marketing efforts to engage potential customers effectively. In contrast, when viewing promotions or events related to the brand, respondents demonstrate a higher level of engagement, indicating that they have seen such promotions or events. This underscores the importance of better education and information dissemination regarding the packaging, labelling, and added value of Brunei Halal frozen food products to consumers.

From the findings in Figure 3.3, the study reveals significant variation in respondents' participation in food events or exhibitions featuring the Brunei Halal frozen food brand. Most respondents indicate that they have never attended such events. Conversely, a significant portion of them have attended these events, indicating the success of Brunei Halal's marketing and promotional efforts in capturing consumer attention and involvement through food exhibitions.

The findings from Figure 3.3 highlight both successes and areas for improvement in the marketing and consumer engagement strategies of Brunei Halal frozen food brand. While the brand has effectively utilized advertisements, social media, and promotional events to create awareness among respondents, there remains a need to address gaps in consumer understanding and perception of product benefits and quality. Enhancing advertising campaigns to provide clearer product information, leveraging user testimonials, and fostering more active engagement on social media platforms could significantly bolster consumer confidence and increase product uptake.

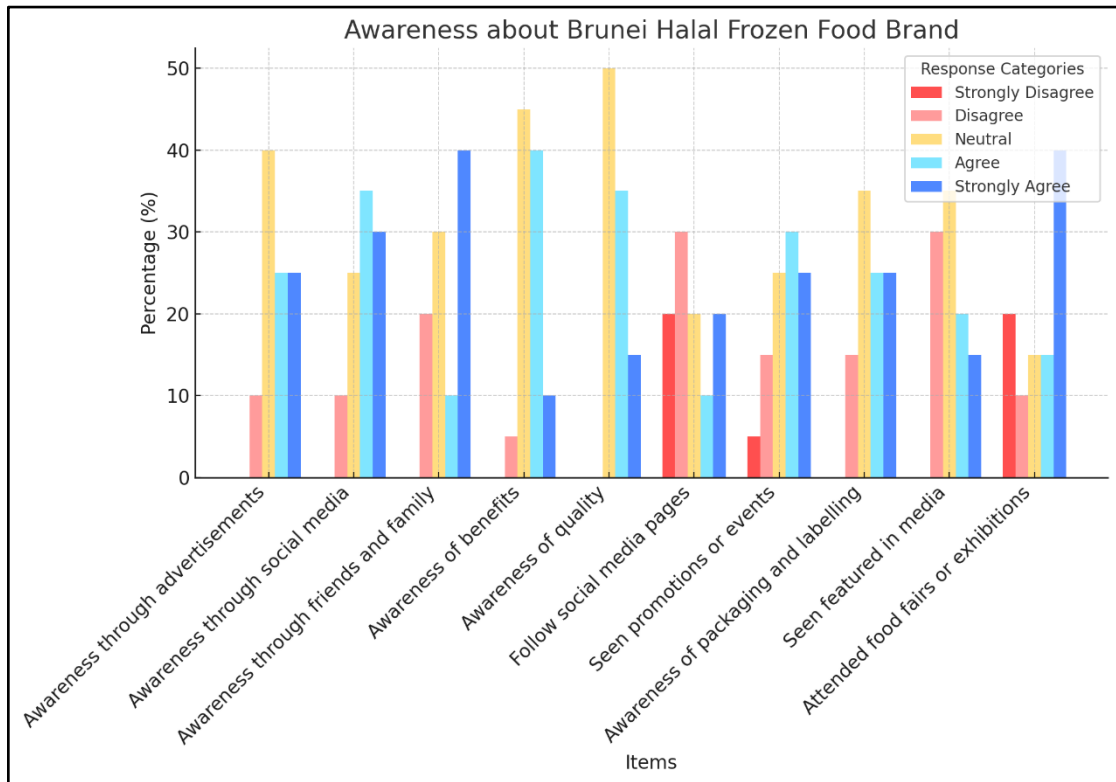


Figure 4.2 Awareness about Brunei Halal frozen food brand

4.5 Frequency of Purchasing Brunei Halal Frozen Food Brand for Meal Preparation

Figure 3.4 illustrates varying patterns in respondents' purchasing of the Brunei Halal frozen food brand for meal preparation. Most respondents purchase Brunei Halal frozen food occasionally. However, the table also reveals different usage frequencies among respondents, with most opting to buy Brunei Halal frozen food irregularly. While respondents did not directly provide reasons for this irregular usage, factors such as limited availability, price sensitivity, or preferences for other food brands may contribute to their purchasing habits. Further exploration into respondents' motivations could help clarify the underlying causes of this behaviour. Although a small portion choose to purchase consistently or frequently, most respondents still prefer to buy this product less often. Implications from these findings include the need to assess and understand the factors influencing their purchasing decisions, as well as to improve marketing strategies that could potentially increase the usage of Brunei Halal frozen food products among respondents.

The varying usage patterns of Brunei Halal frozen food products among respondents may reflect the dietary lifestyle of working women, which is often influenced by factors such as time constraints, work-life balance, and meal preparation habits. For instance, the lower frequency of usage for breakfast and snack preparation may suggest that working women prioritize convenience or

time-saving options during these meals, whereas lunch and dinner could involve more varied or home-cooked meals. This highlights the importance of understanding the eating patterns and lifestyle of working women when designing marketing strategies and product offerings, as aligning with their preferences could increase product usage.

From Figure 3.4, it can be concluded that the use of Brunei Halal frozen food products for meal preparation varies depending on the time (weekends versus holidays or special occasions). Although a small minority of respondents consistently use these products, the majority do not take the opportunity to use them on weekends or during holidays. The low usage of Brunei Halal frozen foods on weekends and holidays may be due to several factors. First, weekends are typically non-working days for most Bruneians, providing ample free time for preparing home-cooked meals. Secondly, weekends are often a time for family gatherings, where fresh, traditional meals are preferred over frozen options. The cultural preference for cooking from scratch, combined with the desire for quality family time, may lead to a reduced reliance on frozen food products during these occasions. This suggests an opportunity for Brunei Halal to consider more targeted marketing strategies to increase product usage in these situations.

Regarding the frequency with which respondents purchase Brunei Halal frozen food products during regular grocery shopping, the data shows that a significant majority tend to buy these products infrequently, with most choosing not to purchase them or doing so rarely. Similarly, the analysis indicates that respondents use Brunei Halal frozen food products rarely for family gatherings and school or office lunches. In Brunei, family gatherings often feature traditional dishes such as 'ambuyat', a starchy dish made from the sago plant, served with a variety of fresh side dishes and vegetables, including grilled prawns, fish, beef, and tropical sauces. These freshly prepared meals hold cultural significance, emphasizing home-cooked flavours, which may explain why frozen foods are not preferred for such occasions. The preference for cooking meals from scratch fosters family bonding, which can overshadow the convenience of frozen foods. Furthermore, traditional dishes requiring fresh ingredients may not align with the offerings of frozen foods. As a result, frozen foods are seldom used for family gatherings or school and office lunches. In Brunei, meals are often a central part of family bonding, with food serving as an important reason for gathering. These findings highlight a gap between consumer awareness and the regular incorporation of Brunei Halal frozen food products into daily meal planning and special occasions. Therefore, addressing this gap presents an opportunity for Brunei Halal to enhance its market presence through targeted marketing efforts and educational campaigns that emphasize the convenience, quality, and halal assurance of their products. By

strategically promoting these aspects, Brunei Halal can potentially increase consumer engagement, expand product usage frequency, and ultimately strengthen brand loyalty among its target audience.

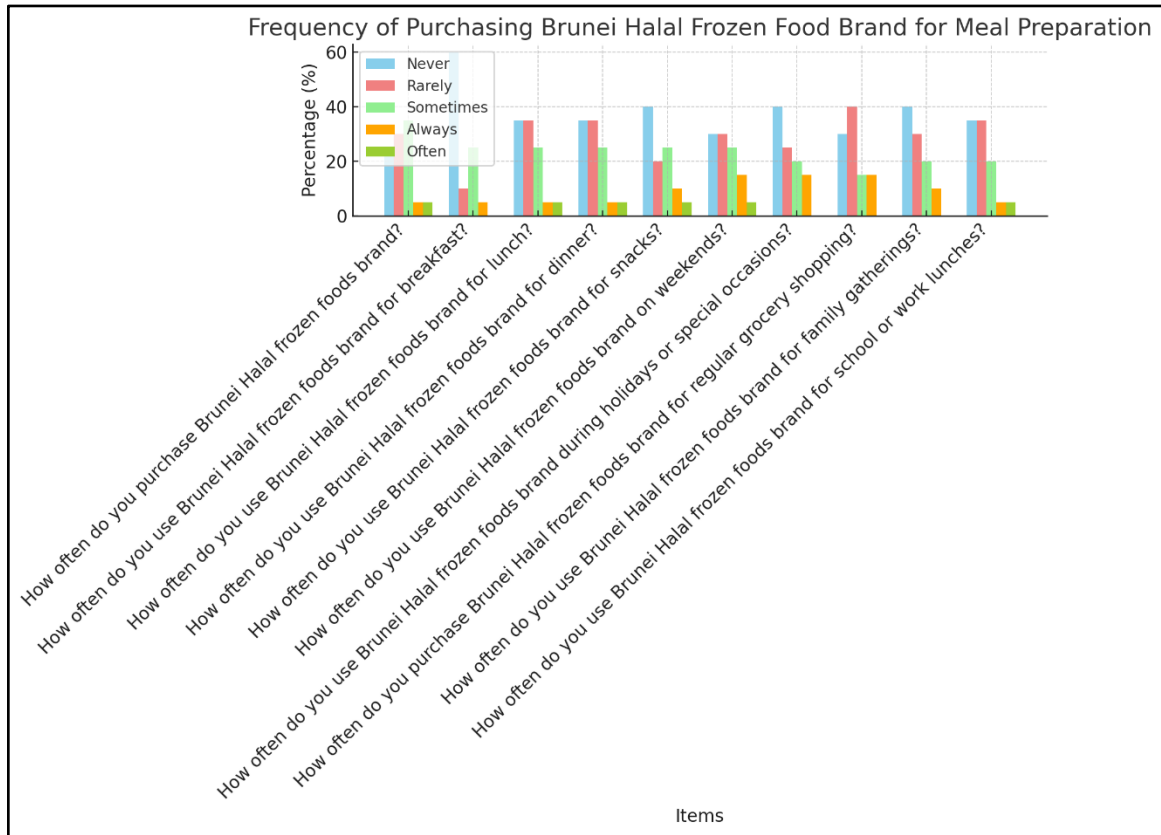


Figure 4.3 Frequency of Purchasing Brunei Halal frozen food brand for meal preparation

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this pilot study provides valuable insights into the knowledge, awareness, and purchasing behaviours of working women in Brunei regarding Brunei Halal frozen food brands for family meal preparation. The findings reveal varying levels of familiarity and engagement among respondents, indicating both successes and areas for improvement in the marketing strategies of Brunei Halal frozen food products. While the brand has achieved notable awareness through advertisements, social media, and promotional events, there remains a need to enhance consumer understanding of product benefits and quality assurance. Strategies to leverage user testimonials, clarify product information, and increase educational efforts could significantly enhance consumer confidence and encourage more frequent use of Brunei Halal frozen food products.

Moreover, the study underscores the importance of ongoing consumer education and transparent communication to foster sustained interest and loyalty in the competitive marketplace of Brunei Darussalam. By addressing these insights, Brunei Halal can strengthen its position as a trusted provider of halal frozen food products, catering effectively to the dietary needs and preferences of working women and their families. Future research could further explore additional factors influencing consumer behaviour and preferences towards halal products, thereby informing targeted marketing strategies and enhancing consumer engagement in the halal food industry.

This pilot study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the sample size of 100 respondents, while suitable for a pilot study, may not adequately represent the diverse population of working women in Brunei Darussalam, limiting the generalization of the findings. Moreover, reliance on self-reported data through a questionnaire introduces potential biases such as social desirability and recall bias, which could affect the accuracy of responses regarding knowledge and behaviours related to Brunei Halal frozen food products. Additionally, the study's geographical focus on Brunei restricts its applicability to other cultural contexts or regions where consumer behaviours towards halal products may differ due to varying socioeconomic factors and cultural norms.

To address these limitations, future research should employ a larger and more diverse sample size using random sampling techniques to enhance external validity and representativeness. This approach would provide a more robust foundation for understanding the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of working women towards Brunei Halal frozen food products. Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could offer deeper insights into the underlying motivations and decision-making processes influencing consumer choices. Longitudinal studies could also track changes over time in consumer behaviours and preferences, providing a dynamic perspective on trends and factors influencing the consumption of halal frozen food products. These efforts would contribute to developing targeted marketing strategies and educational campaigns aimed at promoting the benefits and consumption of halal products among working women and their families.

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