

RESEARCH ARTICLE

How do attitudes towards halal food, life satisfaction, and restaurant choice affect dining for Muslim residents in South Korea?

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how attitudes toward halal food influence food satisfaction, life satisfaction, and restaurant selection among overseas Muslim residents in South Korea. A survey of 511 Muslim individuals from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Uzbekistan, residing in Gimhae, was conducted. The results show that positive attitudes toward halal food significantly enhance both food satisfaction and life satisfaction. However, length of stay in South Korea did not significantly moderate the relationship between attitudes and restaurant choice, indicating that preferences remain stable over time. Additionally, attitudes toward halal and Korean restaurants were statistically similar, suggesting that Muslims assess restaurants based on available halal-friendly options rather than the restaurant type. Many rely on rooted knowledge of ingredients to identify suitable meals such as fish, shrimp, or vegetarian dishes enabling informed dining even in non-halal-certified restaurants.

This study also clarifies the misconception that Muslims cannot eat Korean food at all. The restriction primarily applies to dishes containing pork or non-halal meat. However, when restaurants use halal-certified meat or offer vegetarian and seafood alternatives, Muslims can and do enjoy Korean cuisine. These findings underscore the importance of increasing halal-friendly options and transparent ingredient information to support Muslim consumers. The study has practical implications for restaurant owners, policymakers, and the food service industry in South Korea, emphasizing the need for inclusive dining environments, clear labeling, and culturally sensitive service to enhance the well-being and satisfaction of Muslim residents.

Keywords: halal food attitudes; food satisfaction; life satisfaction; length of stay; restaurant selection

1. Introduction

The present world's halal food is repressing religious belief, culture and identity. Muslims living in non-Muslim-majority countries like South Korea, adhering to halal dietary laws is a crucial aspect of maintaining their religious practices and ensuring overall life satisfaction. The residents are not getting their food available in non-Muslim countries. Halal food, which adheres to Islamic dietary guidelines, plays a fundamental role in the daily lives of Muslims. Research has shown that food is a significant contributor to life satisfaction,

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especially when it aligns with cultural and religious values^[1]. The rise of halal tourism and government initiatives to streamline halal certification processes highlights a growing recognition of the needs of Muslim consumers.

Halal food is not merely a dietary preference but is deeply tied to a person's identity. According to^[2], halal food represents food security, where both the ingredients and preparation methods comply with Islamic principles, symbolizing an ethical and purified lifestyle. However, Muslims residing in non-Muslim-majority countries, such as South Korea, face significant challenges in accessing halal-certified restaurants and products due to their minority status^[3]. These challenges not only influence their eating habits but also affect their broader social life and overall fulfillment.

The demand for halal food is growing globally, particularly among Muslims living in non-Muslim countries. The term halal, meaning "permissible" in Arabic, refers to both the food itself and the processes involved in its preparation according to Islamic law. Although South Korea has a traditional culinary inclination, it is actively establishing itself as a major player in the global halal market with the goal of becoming a "halal powerhouse." The economic significance of halal consumers is demonstrated by the fact that, although being a minority, the nation's Muslim population provides about \$1.11 billion to the food industry each year. This growth reflects both the consumption preferences of Muslims and the increasing interest among non-Muslims, who perceive halal products as higher quality and safer. However, Muslims in non-Muslim countries continue to face significant obstacles in accessing halal food, prompting efforts from local governments and organizations like the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) to provide halal certification and meet the rising demand for halal products.

Food attitudes are integral to life satisfaction, especially when food is connected to culture, religion, or personal celebrations. Life satisfaction often derives from fulfilling both physical and psychological needs, including the enjoyment derived from eating^[4]. In Islam, practices such as fasting during Ramadan not only fulfill religious obligations but also offer health benefits, including reduced cholesterol levels and improved overall well-being. Studies have shown that food satisfaction among Muslims is strongly linked to the enjoyment derived from halal food choices.

This study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which traditionally explains the relationship between attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control^[5]. Here, we apply TPB to explore the role of halal food attitudes in shaping food and life satisfaction among Muslims in South Korea. The TPB model provides insights into how attitudes towards halal food and the influence of length of stay interact to affect satisfaction, building on previous research that has explored attitudes, satisfaction^[6].

By investigating the experiences of Muslims in South Korea, this study aims to understand how halal food attitudes influence food satisfaction. According to TPB, individuals with positive attitudes toward halal food are more likely to experience higher levels of food satisfaction, which, in turn, enhances their overall life satisfaction. However, in South Korea, where Muslims are a minority, living in foreign countries may push some individuals to adapt their food preferences and follow local eating habits.

Furthermore, Muslims who have lived in South Korea for over three years report higher satisfaction levels, which underscore the significance of length of stay in influencing food and life satisfaction. This finding suggests that as Muslims become more familiar with local food culture; their ability to navigate dietary challenges and access halal food options improves, leading to greater satisfaction.

This study investigates how South Korean Muslims' attitudes toward halal restaurants, length of stay in South Korea influence their food and life satisfaction, particularly concerning halal food availability. The

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) emphasizes the role of length of stay in shaping food choices, especially in non-Muslim-majority contexts like South Korea^[7].

A gap in the above-discussed current literature lies in the limited empirical investigation of how the length of stay in non-Muslim-majority countries, such as South Korea, influences food satisfaction among Muslim residents particularly in relation to halal food consumption. While prior studies have often assumed that longer residence leads to greater adaptation and satisfaction, this relationship had not been clearly tested. This study addresses that gap by empirically examining whether length of stay moderates the relationship between halal food attitudes and satisfaction, finding that halal food availability and ingredient awareness are more influential than duration of residence.

The research framework, shown in **Figure 1**, examines how length of stay moderate attitudes toward halal and Korean restaurants. Longer stays contribute to greater familiarity with local food culture, influencing these attitudes and, consequently, overall fulfillment^[8]. This study provides valuable insights into the factors shaping dining choices and satisfaction for Muslims in multicultural environments, offering practical recommendations for restaurateurs and policymakers^[9].

Note: The purpose of this study was to examine how overseas Muslims' attitudes toward halal food influence their food and life satisfaction in South Korea, with a focus on halal food availability and dining choices. It aimed to clarify whether restaurant type or length of stay affects these relationships, and to address common misconceptions about Muslims' ability to engage with Korean cuisine based on ingredient awareness and halal compliance.

Research Question: How do overseas Muslims' attitudes toward halal food influence their food and life satisfaction in South Korea, and what role do halal food availability and dining choices play in shaping these experiences?

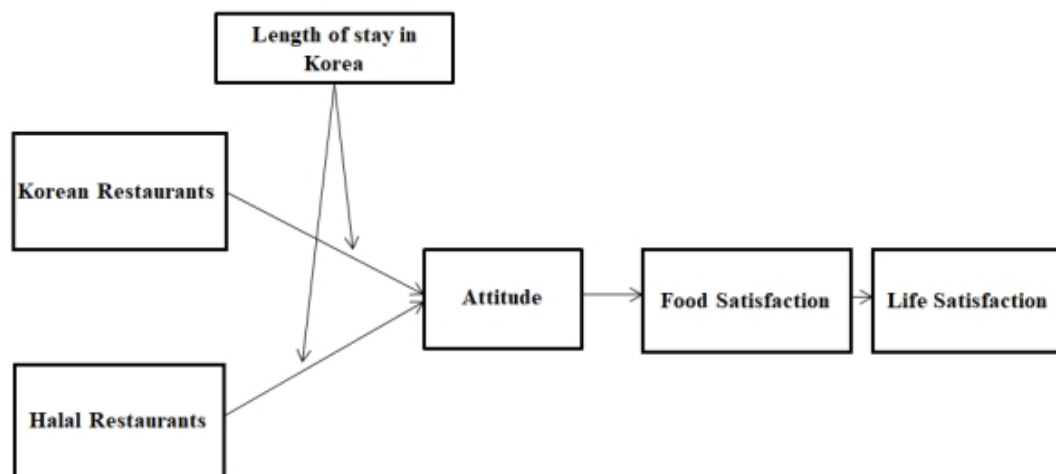


Figure 1. Research model.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Theory of planned behavior (TPB) relationship with Korean and halal restaurants

This study explores how Muslims in South Korea perceive Halal food and their food and life satisfaction, with a focus on the moderating role of length of stay. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the research examines the relationships between attitudes toward Halal food, food satisfaction, and life satisfaction. TPB concepts interpret such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to assess their combined

impact on behavior^[10]. Multi-group Analysis evaluates whether these relationships differ across demographic groups (e.g., age, gender, or religious observance) to ensure results are not generalized across diverse groups^[11].

The findings show that positive attitudes toward Halal food lead to higher food and life satisfaction, but the intensity of length of stay moderates this effect, with stronger leading to living. Additionally, Muslims who have resided in South Korea for more years might have higher levels of happiness, indicating that length of stay influences overall contentment. Multi-group analysis confirms that the effects hold across different groups, though their strength varies.

This study enhances our understanding of how cultural and religious factors influence well-being in non-Muslim settings^[12,13]. The results suggest that meeting the demand for Halal food could improve Muslim residents' satisfaction, with implications for policymakers and restaurateurs in South Korea. As highlighted by^[14], higher pressure may reduce contentment, even for those with positive attitudes toward Halal food, while less pressure aligns approval with their beliefs.

2.2. Attitude towards halal and Korean restaurants

In South Korea, Muslims face challenges in finding Halal-certified food, making their attitudes toward Halal restaurants closely linked to their religious beliefs and cultural identity^[15]. Despite the strong cultural connection to Halal food, the limited availability of options and societal pressure to follow local cuisine often results in lower understanding with dining experiences^[16]. As Muslims acculturate, their attitudes toward Korean food become more favorable, especially with longer stays in the country^[17]. However, societal pressure to eat at Korean restaurants, even at the expense of religious dietary restrictions, may lead to reduced overall gratification and a conflict between personal beliefs and social expectations^[18].

Hypothesis (H1): Muslims' attitudes toward Korean restaurants are more positive than their attitudes toward Halal restaurants.

2.3. Length of stay influence on attitude

Foreign Muslim residents' attitudes toward Korean cuisine and restaurants are significantly influenced by their length of stay, which serves as a key indicator of acculturation. Individuals with longer stays tend to develop more positive attitudes and a stronger preference for Korean food^[19]. However, this relationship is not purely linear, as other external and individual factors, such as subjective knowledge and personal preferences, also play a role in shaping food choices^[20]. Thus, marketers should account for these factors when targeting foreign Muslim residents, especially those who are newer to Korean food culture.

The duration of stay goes beyond mere exposure, providing foreign Muslim residents with a deeper understanding of Korean cultural and culinary nuances^[21]. Over time, as they integrate traditional Korean flavors, ingredients, and dining habits into their daily routines, their appreciation for Korean cuisine grows. This process of acculturation allows foreign Muslim residents to transition from basic impressions of Korean food to a more sophisticated understanding of its regional variations and complexities.

Hypothesis (H2): The attitude toward visiting Halal and Korean restaurants improves with a longer length of stay in South Korea among foreign Muslim residents.

2.4. Attitude with food satisfaction

Muslims in South Korea prioritizes halal food due to its alignment with their religious and cultural values. A positive attitude toward halal food is associated with higher food satisfaction, as those confident in their halal choices, such as halal-certified chicken, tend to report greater satisfaction^[22]. Research by^[23] suggests

that Muslim residents often form communities to share information on halal options, further enhancing their satisfaction. Additionally, the availability of halal food vendors can encourage Muslims to stay in South Korea for education or work^[24]. Contrary to common beliefs, perceived risk has a positive impact on trust, satisfaction, and the intention to recommend halal foods^[25]. The tripartite model of attitude highlights that attitudes towards halal food are driven more by behavioral and psychological factors than cognitive ones^[26]. Intrinsic religiosity plays a key role in shaping these attitudes^[27].

Hypothesis (H3): South Korean Muslim residents' attitudes positively influence food satisfaction.

2.5. Food satisfaction on life satisfaction

Life satisfaction plays a crucial role in the experience of living abroad^[7], and is closely connected to individuals' contentment with food and eating habits^[28]. Adhering to a Halal diet, which is central to Muslims' faith, can contribute to overall life satisfaction. A positive attitude toward Halal food is likely to predict higher life satisfaction^[29]. For Muslims, the satisfaction derived from consuming Halal food extends beyond personal enjoyment; it fosters social connections and a sense of community among fellow Muslims. Additionally, Halal food consumption reinforces cultural identity and spiritual well-being, which can contribute to a higher quality of life^[30].

Furthermore, adherence to Halal dietary requirements often encourages mindful eating, focusing on moderation and respecting the origins and quality of food. Halal food attitudes are influenced by factors such as brand image, trust, satisfaction, and spirituality^[31]. Studies on brand image, trust, and satisfaction consistently show that these factors positively affect consumer attitudes toward purchasing Halal-labeled food. Spirituality also plays an indirect role in shaping Halal food consumption, mediated through the influence of brand image, trust, and satisfaction^[32].

Hypothesis (H4): South Korean Muslim residents' attitudes positively influence their life satisfaction.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

The data collected from only Muslim residents live in South Korea for different purposes. The survey was conducted in Busan and Gimhae, South Korea, Out of 600 surveys distributed, 511 responses were received and completed. About 89 responses become excluded for incomplete and error information. Respondents were classified into three groups based on restaurant preferences: those who frequented only Halal restaurants, only Korean restaurants, or both restaurants^[33]. Participants were living in Korea from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Uzbekistan, and categorized by age groups (18-30), (31-40), (41-50), (more than 51) and gender (male and female). Length of Stay in South Korea grouped as those living more than three years or less than three years.

Participants completed both online and offline surveys. The online survey, created via Google Forms, was shared through Gmail, WhatsApp, Kakao Talk, IMO, and other platforms, yielding 432 responses. Additionally, 168 offline random samples were collected over six months^[34]. The survey was available in English and Korean. SPSS software was used for validity and reliability analysis, group linear regression, and independent t-tests. Responses were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with "1" as "Strongly Disagree" and "7" as "Strongly Agree," and "Neutral" was assigned a value of "4".

3.2. Research instrument (Measurement of scale)

These measurement scales showed sufficient internal consistency, and their adaptation from established literature strengthens the construct validity and dependability of this study. Attitude items assessed the general

perception and comfort toward Korean and halal restaurants^[35]. These were focusing on satisfaction, comfort, and perceived safety of dining establishments. Food satisfaction items focused on measuring food quality, taste, ingredient freshness, and menu diversity^[36]. Life satisfaction items explored the broader impact of food experiences on personal well-being^[37]. The measurement instruments used in this study all survey items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 7 (“Strongly Agree”), with “Neutral” assigned a value of 4.

4. Results and findings

4.1. Descriptive analysis

Table 1 shows that males preferred halal formations (80.3%) significantly more than females (19.7%). Often visited participant responses about halal and Korean restaurants collected 78% male and 22.0% female. Halal and Korean restaurant genders showed equal preference and Korean restaurants have the similar participants^[38]. Among age groups, 62.5% of respondents aged 21–30 preferred Korean restaurants. The 31–40 age groups showed a similar preference for halal restaurants (44.1%). The 41–50 and 51–60 groups had the lowest restaurant preferences, with no preference for Korean restaurants in the 51–60 groups. Uzbek respondents (45.5%) preferred both types of restaurants, while Indonesians favored Korean restaurants (50.0%). Bangladeshis had balanced preferences, while Pakistanis and Indians preferred halal eateries. Longer-term residents (over three years) showed a preference for both halal and Korean restaurants, while newer residents (under three years) slightly preferred halal restaurants. These findings demonstrate that length of stay and cultural background influence food preferences. Newer residents tend to favor familiar foods, while long-term residents show broader acceptance of various cuisines^[39].

Table 1. Descriptive analysis.

Items		Halal Restaurants	Both Restaurants	Korean Restaurants
Gender	Male	80.3	78.0	50.0
	Female	19.7	22.0	50.0
Age	21-30	44.1	48.5	62.5
	31-40	44.1	33.0	12.5
	41-50	8.8	15.9	25.0
	51-60	2.9	2.7	62.5
	Uzbekistan	36.1	45.5	25.0
Country	Indonesia	13.9	12.9	50.0
	Bangladesh	23.9	17.0	25.0
	Pakistan	17.2	20.5	00.0
	India	8.8	4.2	00.0
Length of stay	Less than 3 Years	26.5	32.6	25.0
	More than 3 years	73.5	67.4	75.0

4.2. Factor analysis and reliability test

Regarding the psychometric properties of the attitude measurement scale, factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha values indicated moderate to strong correlations between the latent construct of attitude and the observed variables. **Table 2** shows that factor loadings for attitude items ranged from 0.627 to 0.765. The Cronbach's alpha values of 0.668, 0.721, 845 and 0.747 reflect acceptable internal consistency levels, as values exceeding 0.6 are considered sufficient for preliminary studies.

In **Table 2**, farther indicates that the internal consistency of the attitude measurements is adequate, with values exceeding 0.7 being preferable. For Halal, Both, and Korean restaurants, the Cronbach's alpha values were 0.697, 0.729, and 0.774, respectively, indicating strong internal consistency for the measurements. Factor loadings for food satisfaction ranged from 0.583 to 0.717, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.609, 0.717, and 0.588 for Korean, Halal, and both types of establishments. The lower alpha values for Korean and Halal eateries (below 0.7) suggest potential limitations in reliability for these metrics in certain contexts. The life satisfaction item factor loadings ranged from 0.545 to 0.698, demonstrating moderate-to-strong correlations. The corresponding Cronbach's alpha values for Korean, Halal, and Both restaurants were 0.545, 0.674, and 0.638, respectively, indicating that the internal consistency of life satisfaction measures did not meet the target threshold of 0.7, particularly for Korean restaurants^[40].

The combined factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha values suggest that the attitude, food satisfaction, and life satisfaction measures generally show reliability, though with varying degrees across different restaurant types^[41]. Higher alpha values for attitudes, compared to food and life satisfaction, imply more consistent measurement of these constructs across restaurant categories^[42].

The internal consistency of the constructs varied across different restaurant categories, according to the factor analysis and reliability assessments in **Table 2**. While attitude measures demonstrate good reliability, food and life satisfaction measures particularly for Korean restaurants may require refinement. These findings highlight areas for improvement in measurement instruments; ensuring greater validity and reliability in future research^[43].

Table 2. Factor analysis and reliability test.

H. R. O.			B. R.		K. R. O.		T. F.	
Items	F. L.	α	F. L.	α	F. L.	A	F. L.	α
Attitude	.702		.753		.918		.696	
	.765	.668	.684	.685	.745	.683	.598	.681
	.720		.789		.888		.742	
	.627		.809		.995		.748	
FS	.671	.845	.625	.794	.984	.780	.585	.761
	.791		.541		.902		.596	
	.676		.716		.769		.661	
LS	.638	.747	.645	.741	.996	.777	.571	.711
	.545		.581		.954		.528	
	.698		.674		.921		.670	

Note: Results obtained supported by research [9,44]

In this case, H. R. O. (Halal Restaurants Only), B. R. O. (Both Restaurants), K. R. O. (Korean Restaurants Only), T. F. (Total Factors), F. L. (Factors Loading), LS (Life Satisfaction), and FS (Food Satisfaction).

4.3. Correlation and AVE

The correlation matrix with the relationships between different constructs shows in **Table 3**. The AVE for "Attitude" is 0.926, indicating that this construct explains a substantial amount of the variance in its corresponding indicators, suggesting good convergent validity^[45]. The AVE for "Food Satisfaction" is 0.6893, which is close to the recommended threshold of 0.7, suggesting reasonable convergent validity. However, the AVE for "Life satisfaction" is 0.4036, which is below the recommended threshold, indicating potential issues with the measurement of this construct and the need for further investigation or improvement^[46].

Table 3. Correlation and AVE.

	AT	SN	FS	LS	C.R	AVE
AT	1	.378**	.419**	.187**	0.773	0.532
FS	.419**	.484**	1	.270**	0.757	0.511
LS	.187**	0.044	.270**	1	0.403	0.652

Note: The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). FS denotes Food Satisfaction, and LS represents Life Satisfaction. The given, C.R (Composite Reliability), AVE (Average Variance Extracted).

“Food Satisfaction” (0.419), and “Life Satisfaction” (0.187). This suggests that individuals with more positive attitudes toward International restaurants are likely to perceive stronger environments favoring International restaurants and report higher food and life satisfaction. “Food Satisfaction” is also positively correlated with “Life Satisfaction” (0.270), suggesting that satisfaction with food choices contributes to overall life satisfaction.

4.4. Visit Comparison: Halal vs. Korean restaurants

Figure 2 presents a line graph comparing the average food and life satisfaction scores between "Halal Restaurants" and "Korean Restaurants." The average score for visiting Korean restaurants (4.5417) is slightly higher than that for visiting Halal restaurants (4.3116)^[47]. This suggests that Muslim residents in South Korea are generally more satisfied with or have a more positive opinion of Korean restaurants. The difference in mean scores may indicate how these factors influence restaurant preferences and satisfaction levels among the Muslim community in South Korea.

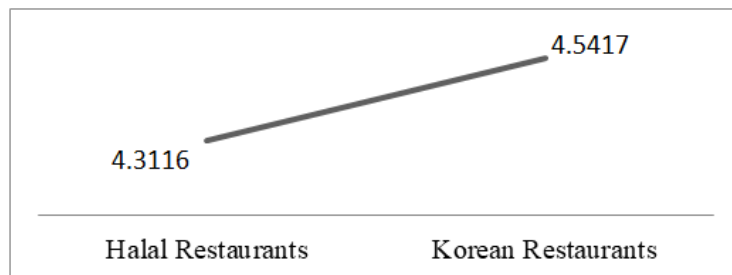


Figure 2. Difference between visiting Korean vs. halal restaurants.

4.5. Result of H1: Attitude for halal VS. Korean restaurant

This study aimed to examine whether Muslim consumers have the same attitudes toward Korean and Halal restaurants. To test this, an independent sample t-test was conducted comparing the attitudes toward the two restaurant types. The mean attitude scores for Halal restaurants ($M = 4.3116$, $SD = 0.64039$) and Korean restaurants ($M = 4.5417$, $SD = 0.50198$) were calculated. The t-test revealed a t-value of -1.005 and a p-value of 0.316. Given that the p-value is greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05, the result is not statistically significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in attitudes toward Halal and Korean restaurants among Muslim consumers cannot be rejected. The findings suggest that, despite a slight difference in the means (with Korean restaurants having a slightly higher mean attitude score), the observed difference is not statistically significant. This indicates that Muslim consumers' attitudes toward both Halal and Korean restaurants are statistically similar, and there is insufficient evidence to suggest a preference for one over the other.

These results highlight that, at least within the context of this sample, attitudes toward both types of restaurants appear to be comparable, with no substantial preference observed.

Generally positive attitudes observed toward both Halal and Korean restaurants are reflected in the mean scores. Specifically, Muslim consumers reported a mean attitude score of 4.3116 toward Halal restaurants and 4.5417 toward Korean restaurants on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating an overall favorable perception of both. It is important to note that these values demonstrate the direction of attitudes, namely, that they are positive but not whether the difference between them is statistically significant. The t-test performed in this analysis serves to determine whether the difference in means is statistically meaningful, not whether the attitudes themselves are positive or negative. Although the mean for Korean restaurants was slightly higher, the t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between the two ($t = -1.005$, $p = 0.316$).

Although attitudes were generally positive, the larger sample size for Halal restaurants may affect the reliability of the results for Korean restaurants. These findings suggest stable acceptance of both restaurant types, with no major differences.

This lack of significance suggests that, despite the numerical difference, Muslim consumers hold similarly positive attitudes toward both restaurant types. However, it is possible that other underlying factors such as length of stay in South Korea may influence these attitudes and could partially explain the absence of a significant difference. Therefore, to further understand these dynamics, the next phase of analysis will investigate whether the duration of residence among foreign Muslim consumers moderates their attitudes toward Halal and Korean restaurants.

Table 4 presents the independent t-test results, revealing significant relationships between attitudes toward halal and Korean restaurants. These findings highlight the impact of attitude with halal and Korean restaurant basis of food, life satisfaction in a non-Muslim country.

Table 4. Independent sample T-test.

Hypothesis	Items	Mean	S.D	N	T value	P value
H1	Attitude * Halal Restaurants	4.3116	.64039	238	-1.005	.316
	Attitude * Korean Restaurants	4.5417	.50198	8	-1.262	.243

Note: $F = .174$, $D.F = 244$, $S.D$ (Standard Deviation) F (Levene's test statistic) and $D.F$ (Degrees of Freedom)

Note. For Halal restaurants, the average attitude score was 4.3116, and for Korean restaurants, it was 4.5417. Both had no significant difference in perceptions, the t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between the two, overall favorable perceptions of both. (Halal: $T = -1.005$, $P = 0.316$; Korean: $T = -1.262$, $P = 0.243$).

4.6. Results for H2: Moderation analysis

The **Table 5** results of group-based Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis were performed to determine whether the duration of stay in South Korea moderates the relationship between attitudes toward Halal and Korean restaurants and actual restaurant selection behavior. Participants were split into two groups: those who had stayed for more than three years and those who had stayed for less than three years.

Table 5. Moderation analysis for H2 for less than 3 years.

Hypothesis	Items	S.E	T value	P value	Beta
H2	Attitude *Halal and Korean Restaurants	.087	-1.414	.159	-.115

Note: Statistical significance is indicated by a T-value greater than 2 and a p-value less than 0.05 [98].

The group of Muslim residents who have stayed in South Korea for less than 3 years, the interaction between attitude and preference for Halal and Korean restaurants is not statistically significant ($T = -1.414$, $P > 0.05$). This suggests that a shorter duration of stay does not significantly moderate the relationship between attitude and restaurant selection.

Table 6. Moderation analysis for H2 for more than 3 years.

Hypothesis	Items	S.E	T value	P value	Beta
H2	Attitude *Halal and Korean Restaurants	.059	-.137	.891	-.007

Note: Statistical significance is indicated by a T-value greater than 2 and a p-value less than 0.05 [99].

In **Table 6** Among the group of Muslim residents who have lived in South Korea for more than 3 years, the moderation effect of stay duration on the relationship between attitude and restaurant preference is also not statistically significant ($T = -0.137$, $P > 0.05$). The very low Beta value indicates almost no interaction effect.

Although it was expected, that longer residency in South Korea would strengthen the positive relationship between attitude and preference for Halal and Korean restaurants, the findings do not support this assumption. The group with less than three years of stay showed a weak and non-significant negative association, while the group with over three years of residency. These results suggest that the impact of attitude on restaurant choice affects over time slightly. Further research can identify clearly the relationship for getting significant results for long stay in non-muslim countries^[12]. However, the results indicated no statistically significant moderation effect for either group: those who had stayed less than 3 years ($T = -1.414$, $p > 0.05$) or more than 3 years ($T = -0.137$, $p > 0.05$). The low beta values suggest that the interaction between attitude and length of stay is minimal.

This outcome indicates that Muslim consumers' preferences for Halal or Korean restaurants are not meaningfully influenced by how long they have lived in South Korea. One explanation may lie in the nature of religious dietary adherence: food choices among Muslim consumers are often driven by religious commitment rather than familiarity or length of exposure to local cuisine. Thus, while attitudes toward both restaurant types were generally positive, they appear to be rooted in stable cultural and religious values that remain consistent over time.

Additionally, many Muslim consumers may possess strong knowledge about ingredients and food preparation methods, enabling them to make informed decisions regardless of restaurant type. By carefully considering the ingredients used in dishes, they can confidently choose food that aligns with their dietary beliefs even in non-Halal-certified establishments. This practical awareness may reduce reliance on restaurant classification alone and contribute to consistent attitudes over time.

4.7. Results for H3 & H4

In **Table 7** the results of the linear regression analysis support Hypothesis H3. The t-value is 8.737 and the p-value is 0.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between attitudes and food satisfaction at the 0.01 significance level. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.361$) suggests a moderate positive effect, meaning that more positive attitudes among South Korean Muslim residents are associated with higher levels of food satisfaction. The analysis also supports Hypothesis H4. The t-value is 7.619 with a p-value of 0.000, again indicating statistical significance. The beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.320$) demonstrates a moderate positive relationship, suggesting that higher food satisfaction is associated with greater life satisfaction among South Korean Muslim residents.

The results suggest a strong influence of attitudes on consumer behavior toward restaurants, particularly in terms of food satisfaction, supporting Hypothesis H3^[48]. In addition, the analysis confirms a significant

relationship between food satisfaction and life satisfaction ($t = 7.619$, $p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.320$), providing support for Hypothesis H4. These findings highlight that restaurant experiences significantly impact customer attitudes, which in turn contribute to both food-related satisfaction and overall life satisfaction among South Korean Muslim residents^[49].

Table 7. Regression analysis for H3 & H4.

Hypothesis	Items	S.E	T value	P value	Beta
H3	Attitude *Food satisfaction	.079	8.737	.000	.361
H4	Food Satisfaction *Life satisfaction	.011	7.619	.000	.320

Note: Statistical significance is indicated by a T-value greater than 2 and a p-value less than 0.05 [81].

Note. H3: Attitudes \rightarrow Food Satisfaction; H4: Food Satisfaction \rightarrow Life Satisfaction. All coefficients are standardized beta values. All relationships are statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.001$).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the attitudes of Muslim consumers toward Korean and Halal restaurants, with a particular focus on the influence of food satisfaction and its impact on life satisfaction. To gain deeper insights, we conducted interviews with restaurant owners and employees to better understand Muslim customers' food satisfaction in Korean restaurants, utilizing the resource-based theory (RBT) as a framework.

Restaurants in Busan and Gimhae exemplify how Korean food culture is evolving to meet the tastes of people around the world, including the Muslim community. These restaurants demonstrate a commitment to accommodating Muslim customers by adhering to the principles of RBT, ensuring that customers enjoy a satisfying meal while respecting their dietary needs. Traditional Korean food often contains pork or non-Halal ingredients, but many restaurants have adapted by offering vegetarian and seafood alternatives. Interestingly, Muslim newcomers may initially feel uncertain about the lack of Halal labeling, but long-term residents report no issues with the ingredients used.

Some restaurants, such as Choryang Milmyeon and Leegane Tteokbokki, go above and beyond to ensure their food is safe for Muslim customers. They take extra precautions, like preparing dishes separately, to prevent cross-contamination and avoid dissatisfaction^[50]. This customization, transparency, and clear labeling of products along with detailed information about allergens and special food needs empower Muslim customers to make informed choices. Establishments like Matchandeul Wang, Sogeum-gui, and Sureungwon provide this level of service, helping build trust with their customers.

The results of Hypothesis (H1) revealed no statistically significant difference in Muslim consumers' attitudes toward Halal and Korean restaurants, indicating that attitudes toward both are generally positive and comparable. This finding suggests that Muslim consumers are open to dining in Korean restaurants, provided their dietary requirements are respected. This reflects a growing level of trust and comfort among Muslim residents in evaluating food based on ingredients and preparation practices rather than solely on Halal certification.

For Hypothesis (H2), the analysis found that length of stay in South Korea does not significantly moderate the relationship between attitude and restaurant preference. This indicates that Muslim consumers maintain consistent attitudes and decision-making patterns over time, likely due to deeply held religious values and strong ingredient knowledge that guide their food choices regardless of their duration of residence. Many

Muslim customers, especially long-term residents, rely on their understanding of food preparation and ingredients, which enables them to select appropriate meals even from non-Halal restaurants.

Hypothesis (H3) was supported, showing that more positive attitudes are significantly associated with higher food satisfaction. This aligns with our qualitative findings, where Muslim customers reported greater satisfaction when restaurants accommodated their needs and communicated openly about ingredients. The positive dining experience was not only about food quality but also about feeling respected and valued, which contributes significantly to satisfaction.

Hypothesis (H4) was also supported, revealing a significant positive relationship between food satisfaction and overall life satisfaction among Muslim residents. This highlights that dining experiences in Korean society impact not only immediate satisfaction but also contribute to broader well-being and quality of life. When food-related anxieties are reduced, and when customers feel welcomed and respected, this enhances their overall perception of living in South Korea.

The restaurants' responsiveness to customer feedback demonstrates their adaptability. For instance, Mallihyang has expanded its menu to include more vegetarian-friendly options after listening to customer needs. This not only improves satisfaction but also helps foster loyalty within the Muslim community. Furthermore, beyond food, these restaurants place a strong emphasis on respecting cultural practices, creating welcoming environments that make Muslim diners feel valued and included. This aligns with the broader hospitality culture of Korea, contributing to the popularity of these establishments among both local and international customers.

These practices support South Korea's emerging Muslim tourism industry, where the demand for Halal-friendly dining options is steadily increasing. Restaurants in Busan and Gimhae are positioning themselves as leaders in meeting the needs of this growing demographic. By blending traditional Korean cuisine with innovation and inclusivity, they enhance the dining experience for Muslim customers while promoting Korean food on the global stage^[51].

Overall, the efforts of these Korean restaurants reflect the integration of positive consumer attitudes, cultural adaptability, and trust-building key elements validated by the quantitative findings. By embracing flexibility, transparency, and attentiveness to customer feedback, they align with the ideals of RBT, fostering inclusivity and building trust. This approach not only meets the dietary needs of long-term Muslim residents but also enhances South Korea's reputation as a welcoming destination for all.

It is important to recognize that visiting Korean restaurants by Muslim consumers does not imply that all Korean restaurants are considered suitable. In reality, Muslim individuals generally avoid restaurants that serve only pork or non-Halal meat-based dishes, as these do not align with Islamic dietary laws. However, when Korean restaurants offer a variety of options such as seafood, vegetarian meals, or clearly labeled dishes that avoid prohibited ingredients, Muslim customers are more likely to dine at these establishments. This reflects a practical approach grounded in religious values, where the decision to eat at a particular restaurant is based not only on the type of cuisine but also on the availability of permissible food choices. Therefore, openness to Korean restaurants should be interpreted within this context Muslim customers selectively choose restaurants that respect their dietary requirements while allowing them to engage with local food culture.

6. Conclusion and implications

This study investigates the attitudes of Muslim consumers toward Halal and Korean restaurants in South Korea and examines the impact of these attitudes on both food satisfaction and life satisfaction. The results demonstrate that Muslim consumers hold positive attitudes toward both Halal and Korean restaurants, with no

significant difference in their perceptions of these two types of dining establishments. This finding suggests that the availability of Halal options, rather than the type of restaurant, is a more significant factor influencing dining choices among Muslims in South Korea. This aligns with the idea that dietary requirements rather than restaurant type play a key role in shaping the attitudes of Muslim consumers.

The research also reveals a strong relationship between positive attitudes toward food and higher food satisfaction. Muslims who report favorable attitudes toward Halal food tend to experience greater satisfaction with their meals, which, in turn, positively impacts their overall life satisfaction. This underscores the important role that food satisfaction plays in enhancing general well-being among Muslim residents in South Korea. It suggests that when Muslim consumers are satisfied with the food choices available to them, particularly those that comply with Halal standards, it contributes not only to their dining experience but also to their quality of life^[50].

Furthermore, the study highlights that living duration in South Korea does not significantly affect the relationship between attitudes toward Halal food and satisfaction. This suggests that regardless of how long Muslims have lived in South Korea, their attitudes toward food and the resulting food satisfaction remain consistent. While one might expect that longer stays would lead to increased adaptation to the local food culture, the findings indicate that the primary driver of food satisfaction and life satisfaction for Muslim consumers is the availability of Halal-compliant food options rather than the length of residence in the country^[52].

A common misconception is that Muslims cannot enjoy Korean food, but this is not entirely accurate. Muslim consumers can and do visit Korean restaurants, provided the restaurant offers Halal-compliant options or ingredients that align with their dietary requirements. For example, many Korean dishes can be adapted by using seafood such as fish, shrimp, or other Halal-friendly options (e.g., squid or cuttlefish) instead of pork or non-Halal meat. Additionally, many Muslims due to dietary restrictions generally avoid octopus, which is often found in Korean cuisine, but alternatives like fish or other food can be substituted. The key factor is the restaurant's ability to provide transparent information about ingredients and ensure the use of Halal-friendly alternatives. This flexibility allows Muslims to enjoy Korean cuisine while adhering to their religious dietary laws, and restaurants that cater to these needs can build a loyal Muslim customer base^[53].

These findings have important implications for the food service industry in South Korea, as well as for businesses and policymakers. The positive relationship between Halal food attitudes and food satisfaction suggests that there is a growing market for Halal-compliant dining options. Restaurants that provide Halal certification and transparent ingredient labeling can cater to this demographic, enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering a more inclusive dining environment. Additionally, these efforts can contribute to the social integration of Muslim residents, ensuring that they feel welcomed and respected within the local food culture.

This study emphasizes the crucial role that attitudes toward Halal food play in determining food satisfaction and life satisfaction among Muslim residents in South Korea. The findings highlight the importance of providing Halal food options and fostering inclusive dining experiences to improve both the food-related satisfaction and overall well-being of Muslim consumers in non-Muslim majority countries.

This study successfully addresses a significant gap in the literature regarding the influence of the length of stay in non-Muslim-majority countries on food satisfaction, specifically within the context of halal food consumption. While previous studies ^[19] had assumed that a longer stay would lead to increased food satisfaction and greater integration into local food culture, the findings from this research challenge that assumption. Instead, the results demonstrate that attitudes toward halal food, rather than the length of stay, play a more significant role in shaping both food and life satisfaction. This study answers the research question

by highlighting that halal food availability and ingredient awareness are the key factors influencing satisfaction among overseas Muslims in South Korea, thus providing a clearer understanding of how these variables interact to impact dining choices and overall well-being.

6.1. Limitations & recommendations for future research

The study's sample of respondents from five nation residents may not fully represent all Muslims in South Korea. The focus on the Busan and Gimhae city limits the generalizability of the findings, and language-related biases may have affected responses. Social desirability bias could also influence self-reported data, leading to discrepancies between actual beliefs and perceived acceptable responses. The data collection is very hard to have the maximum population become non- Muslim.

Future studies could focus on specific aspects of customer satisfaction Muslim and non-Muslim in halal restaurants and ingredients, such as ambiance and service. Additionally, investigating the long-term effects of halal food awareness in non-Muslim societies could offer insights into how attitudes and market demand evolve.

Author contributions

Nargis Dewan contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study. She provided continuous guidance, extensively revised and modified the manuscript based on reviewer feedback, reviewed the final draft, and ensured the academic quality of the final submission. Goni Md Osman was responsible for drafting the initial manuscript, collecting data, and conducting data analysis and interpretation. Sang-Kuck Chung supervised the conceptual aspects of the study, reviewed the final draft, provided critical recommendations for improvement, and granted formal approval for the article's submission. Nargis Dewan also served as the corresponding author, managing all communication related to the submission and peer-review process.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Appendix 1: Measurement items of the questionnaire

Items	Questionnaires	Adapted from	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude (A)			
A1	I am satisfied with the Korean restaurants	[90]	(.681)
A2	I feel comfortable to consume Korean restaurants	[90]	
A3	Korean restaurants are safer and more hygienic	[90]	
Food Satisfaction (FS)			
FS1	The quality of food significantly influences my overall dining satisfaction.	[91]	(.761)
FS2	The taste and flavor of the food are essential factors in determining my satisfaction with a meal	[91]	
FS3	The freshness of ingredients used in preparing food is an important aspect of my overall dining satisfaction	[92]	
FS4	I find that having a diverse range of food options significantly contributes to my satisfaction when dining out	[93]	
Life Satisfaction (LS)			
LS1	I consider the taste and flavor of the food as crucial factors in my overall life satisfaction.	[94]	(.711)
LS2	Positive food experiences contribute to my overall life satisfaction.	[94]	
LS3	The quality of the food I consume significantly influences my general attitude towards life.	[95]	
LS4	I believe that making mindful and positive food choices enhances my overall life satisfaction.	[96]	

Appendix 2: Halal and Korea Restaurants



Korean Restaurants



Halal restaurants