

## **An Ethnographic Study of Food Behaviour of Muslim Students at California State University, Long Beach Campus**

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**Abstract:** This ethnographic research examines the ways Muslim students at California State University Long Beach (CSULB) cope with food behavior to meet their specific religious requirements while attending University. Twenty participants - ten female students and ten male students of CSULB were selected through snowball sampling for intensive study. Data were collected by conducting interviews, taking case studies, and canvassing a questionnaire.<sup>1</sup>

The findings of this research reveal how the Muslim students of this campus adjust with eating non-*halal* when there is unavailability of *halal* food within the Campus. This article also explores students' perception that *halal* is not pork and wine; *halal* is slaughtering animal in a specific way; intentionality determining choices being made in terms of eating non-*halal* chicken or beef, facing the prospect of being booked; eating to survive; eating non-*halal* meat under obligations; significance of *halal* which is cleaner and healthier; scientific reason of slaughtering as prescribed in *halal*; not feeling sick or sick of eating non-*halal*; and personal and psychological reasons of eating *halal*. Although the responses did not follow a uniform pattern, yet there was a perceptible desire on the part of the students to find their own way of meeting the situation they were placed in. In this respect, they can claim ingenuity in some form. This research provides valuable insight into how a University with international students coming from different countries with diverse faith and cultural background can best serve the needs of an under-served specific minority group on campus. In the same way the needs of other potentially underserved groups can be met with.

*Key words* : Muslim Students, non- Muslims, *halal*,<sup>2</sup> non-halal/ *haram*,<sup>3</sup> maqrooh,<sup>4</sup> adjustment, experience, CSULB