

# HALAL MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT IN CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

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## ABSTRACT

The halal industry in Brunei is not just focusing on food and beverages but also attempts to bring forward other sectors including pharmaceutical, cosmetics, finances, tourism, and media and entertainment. The establishment of the Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre is an initiative to disseminate and develop halal awareness in society. One of the objectives of the Centre is to offer academic programs in the field of Halalan Thayyiban. As this program is still new and the Halal industry is still developing in Brunei, this raises concern among the halal science graduates on the rate of unemployment in this country is quite high. Therefore, this study aims to achieve three main objectives. Firstly, to provide an overview of the halal media and entertainment industry in Brunei. Secondly, to identify the challenges and opportunities in developing this sector. Thirdly, to explore the job opportunities and career paths available for Halal Science graduates. To achieve these objectives, a semi-structured interview was conducted to assess employers' suggestions on potential careers available in this industry. The process of research and data collection was also done by analyzing all the resources and materials related to the topic such as reviewing research papers, books, journals, and articles as secondary sources. The finding of this study indicates Halal Science graduates have higher chances to secure jobs and careers in the private sector compared to the government sector

**Keywords:** *Brunei, Halal, Job, Media*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In the past years, the target of the Islamic economy is not merely focused on food and beverages but also other sectors including media and entertainment. The Dinar Standard narrated based on the State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) in 2022, estimates that Muslim expenditure on media increased by 7.2% in 2021, from \$216 billion to \$231 billion, and is expected to grow by further 7.5% in 2022 to \$249 billion and reach \$308 billion in 2025 at a four-year compound annual growth of 7.5%.

Islamic-themed media including films, TV shows, mini-series, and online content continue to gain acceptance and demand from Muslim consumers. Various software applications catering to the lifestyle of Muslim needs such as Muslim Pro, Verify Halal, Islamic Mind, and Mushaf Brunei are thriving steadily while Islamic cultural values are being developed targeting the young generation across different platforms. Social media, for instance, can be used as the best platform to spread da'wah (Islamic teaching). However, in the context of Brunei, it can be observed that the halal media and entertainment industry is underdeveloped. Due to this, Brunei has not been able to fully tap the potential opportunities available in the global media market which can be regarded as one of the important components of maintaining a halal lifestyle.

### 1.2 Objectives of this Study

This study aimed to understand the halal media and entertainment industry in Brunei. Specifically, the research questions that this study aimed to address are:

- a) What is the category of halal media and entertainment in Brunei?

- b) To what extent does challenge the development of halal media and entertainment in Brunei?
- c) To explore the job opportunities and career paths available for Halal Science graduates in the media and entertainment industry?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Halal Education in Brunei

In Brunei, gaining Islamic education is mandatory for all children. Under the Compulsory Religious Education Act 2013, every child is mandated to go to a religious school. Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK) and Melayu Islam Beraja (MIB) are core compulsory education for primary and secondary schools (for both Muslims and non-Muslims). The halal industry in Brunei has vast possibilities to grow and strengthen its position as a global halal hub as decreed by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam in his speech during the 6th Hafl al-Takharruj (Convocation) Ceremony of Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) on 20th Muharram 1438H:

*“There is still a wide range of opportunities that need to be explored by UNISSA. During this time, the halal industry has become one of the most rapidly-developing fields which spread globally. Has it not that the Halal aspect has been demanded in the religion of Islam? The global market value is increasing and it is estimated to be large. It increases by 16% of the total of the world’s food industry and can reach up to 20% of the world’s commerce in food products alone. Therefore, I fully support UNISSA’s plan to establish the Centre of Excellence for Halal Research at UNISSA; as a catalyst for my wish to make Brunei Darussalam the ‘global halal hub, wherein will aid in boosting the country’s economic growth.”*

Following the decree from His Majesty, the Brunei government has taken a significant step to offer halal knowledge and education by establishing Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre at Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA). One of the objectives of this research centre is to offer academic programs in the field of halalan thayyiban (refer to Table 1). It is important to highlight for this paper that; Information Technology in Halal Industry module is offered for postgraduate students enrolled in the Master of Halal Science at UNISSA. However, Halal education has only been taught in-depth at the tertiary level.

Therefore, this paper aims to explore job opportunities and career paths available in the halal media and entertainment industry for Halal Science graduates.

**Table 1.** Academic Programmes offered by Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre, UNISSA.

Academic Programmes	Descriptions	Courses
<b>Bachelor (BA) Degree Programme</b>	The program specifically caters to all applicants, with Islamic backgrounds/social science/Science/Technology/Information and other disciplines, who have work experience or otherwise. It is uniquely designed to enhance the skills of students in making professional decisions, and expand and increase their knowledge which can help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shariah and Life</li> <li>● Introduction to Halalan Thayyiban</li> <li>● The objective of Islamic Law in the Halal Industry</li> <li>● Legal Maxim in Halal Industry</li> <li>● Halal Fatwa</li> <li>● Halal Logistics</li> <li>● Philosophy of Halal-Haram in Islam</li> <li>● Halal Slaughtering Management</li> <li>● Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh in Halal Industry</li> <li>● Halal Industrial Food and Management</li> </ul>

	students to think, act and have piety towards Allah SWT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Halal Policy, Standard and Regulation</li> <li>● Halal Product Service and Management</li> <li>● Verses of the Quran on Halal-Haram</li> <li>● Hadith on Halal-Haram</li> <li>● Halal Science in ASEAN</li> <li>● Fiqh Management and Administration of Halal Industry</li> <li>● Halal Tourism</li> <li>● Halal Restaurant Industry</li> <li>● Halal Product Entrepreneurship</li> <li>● Academic Research</li> </ul>
<b>Minor Programme in Halal Science</b>	It is a collection of subjects totalling 15 credits with at least 50% (6 credits) of subjects in year 3 or above according to the program offerings by the Centre/Department. Offered to all UNISSA students who Obtained a CGPA of at least 3.00 in Year 2, Semester 1; and	<p>Mandatory (9 Credit Hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Philosophy of Halal-Haram in Islam</li> <li>● Verses of The Quran on Halal-Haram</li> <li>● Hadith on Halal-Haram</li> </ul> <p>Choose TWO Courses (6 Credit Hours):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fiqh Management and Administration of Halal Industry</li> <li>● Halal Science in ASEAN</li> <li>● Halal Policy, Standard and Regulation</li> <li>● Halal Slaughtering Management</li> <li>● Halal Product Entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
<b>Master Degree Programme (by coursework and dissertation)</b>	<p><b>Master (M.A) of Halal Management:</b> The program will equip students with advanced and professional knowledge through courses and practices as well as expose them to the latest developments in the field of halal. Graduates of this program can have a career in planning, management, research, academia, and industry related to the management of the halal industry.</p> <p><b>Master (M.A) of Shariah and Halal Laws:</b> This field of study focuses on Shariah laws and civil laws of the national and international halal industry. The development of new legal rules under the laws of the State, <i>maqasid shariah</i> and <i>fiqh</i> jurisprudence, policies, standards, and fatwa for halal products is one of the main research projects in this field. In addition, the administration of Islamic laws, international trade laws, consumer protection laws,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Philosophy of Halalan Thayyiban</li> <li>● Halal Science and Globalisation</li> <li>● Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh in Halal Industry</li> <li>● Current Issues in Halal Industry and Product</li> <li>● Halal Product Innovation</li> <li>● Halal Product Research Seminar</li> <li>● Halal Law and Fatwa in ASEAN</li> <li>● IT in Halal Industry</li> <li>● Halal and Haram in Quran and Sunnah</li> <li>● Halal Service Management</li> <li>● Dissertation</li> <li>● Research Methodology for Science/Social Science</li> </ul>

	and laws of product liability and safety will also be studied.	
<b>Master and Doctor of Philosophy Degree Programmes (by Research)</b>	The program aims to develop students' ability to integrate knowledge and expertise gained through research using critical thinking and analytical skills, thus contributing to progress in the study of <i>halalan thayyiban</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Research Field (1<sup>st</sup> phase):</b> Science of Religion &amp; Cluster of Research: Social Science, Shariah, and Laws</li> <li>● <b>Research Field (2<sup>nd</sup> phase):</b> Islamization of Contemporary Science &amp; Cluster of Research: Information, Science &amp; Technology</li> </ul>

**Source:** Nurdeng Deuraseh, *Halal Studies in UNISSA for Global Reach*.

## 2.2. Overview of Halal Media and Entertainment in Brunei

Brunei is an Islamic country upholding a national concept of Malay, Islam, and Monarchy. Based on this concept, the people of Brunei have practised Islam as a way of life whereby the government incorporates Islam in its administrative policies. The broadcast media in Brunei is dominated by government-controlled Radio Television Brunei (RTB). It broadcasts a wide range of programs, including government campaigns, quiz shows, religious, educational, and drama.

Nowadays, this industry is gaining attraction and adapting to the needs of Muslim millennials. New films and documentaries with Islamic content portraying Muslim culture, history, and life are released to grab market share. Recently, in efforts of nurturing Islamic media and entertainment in Brunei, the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and RTB co-published the first Arabic drama series titled 'Fatihah'. It is the first drama in Brunei's history of broadcasting to be published using the Arabic language as the medium. In addition, Pusat Da'wah Islamiah is joining hands with RTB to create various religious programs and activities such as a religious talk called Rancangan An-Nuur, where qualified *Daie* (Arabic term for Islamic preacher), counsellors, and religious officers from diverse backgrounds are invited to give a talk and discuss on the current religious issues happening in Brunei such as; Cinta Al-Quran, Irsyad Hukum, Al-Hidayah and much more.

However, in the context of da'wah creativity, various aspects need to be considered including utilizing the media as an effective da'wah dissemination platform. For example, 'Matters of Choice' is a content creator that utilizes a digital platform to create videos and brand identity for other companies which at the same time infused Islamic values into it. Short Islamic comedy, da'wah capsules, sketches, and short dramas are created as alternative entertainment, particularly to serve Muslim audiences. Moreover, various applications that cater to Muslim lifestyle needs have been developed in Brunei including Islamic Mind, iManasik, iBantuSolat, etc.

Although there are still few productions focusing on Sharia-compliant films and television series or digital applications that fulfil Muslim needs and lifestyles, Brunei has high potential to grow in this sector of the halal industry. This is because Brunei is an Islamic country that upholds MIB and implements Syariah law. To add, Brunei is ranked 10th in Halal Media and Recreation by Thomson Reuters in his Global Islamic Economy report published in 2019.

### 3. Materials and methods

This research has employed two methods of data collection namely semi-structured interviews and library research. A semi-structured interview is suitable for finding previously unknown qualitative trends and issues, exploring new areas of research interest, and in phenomenographic studies (Mohammad M Rahman, 2019). While library research manages to discover resources and materials related to the topic. Both methods helped to discover a general overview of halal media and entertainment in Brunei and generate information given job opportunities for Halal Science graduates.

Expert interviews from the government and private sectors were conducted with five respondents of various backgrounds to gain additional insights for this study, such as:

- i. TV Producer from Radio Television Brunei
- ii. Head of Censorship and Exhibition division, Pusat Da'wah Islamiah
- iii. Religious Officer of Censorship of Books, Magazines, and Newspaper, Ministry of Home Affairs
- iv. Founder of MarhainEntertainment.bn
- v. Creative Director of Matters of Choice
- vi. Photographer of Hubb.lifestyle

Research in the library with articles, journals, and related books or documents to be the primary reference source. While secondary reference is encyclopaedias, magazines, newspapers, seminar papers, the internet, and anything printed material related to the title of this study can be consulted to get as much information to complete this research. This includes the State of Global Islamic Economy Reports produced between 2013 and 2020, prepared by Thomson Reuters in conjunction with Dinar Standard.

The data collected were analysed using the inductive method to make a general conclusion. This process is an analysis of data through a pattern of thought that seeks evidence of things that are specific to the evidence of a general nature. In other words, a method is defined as a way of analyzing data to make inferences or evidence of information that is specific to the information of a general nature.

### 4. Results and Discussion

This study reveals that Brunei demonstrates high awareness and interest in halal media and entertainment. This fact is due to Islam playing a central role in the life of every Muslim in this country (Awang, 2014).

#### 4.1. Availability for Employment

The result shows that there are a few challenges in developing halal media and entertainment in Brunei such as:

- a) Limited availability of quality talent, resources, and sincere commitment to developing the Islamic entertainment industry. Despite the fact, that Islamic entertainment in Brunei is improving, there is still a scarcity of skilled professionals who specialize in

generating Islamic content such as Islamic graphic designers. Likewise, there are limited places to gain knowledge that is related to this field.

- b) 'Limiting public perception of 'religious media': perception of Islamic media both from consumers and potential investors is limited to religious education media only. Not seeing the wider appeal and potential of entertainment and recreation media that is based on Islamic culture is limiting the interest of both consumers and investors.
- c) There is a limited range available for entertainers due to certain forms of entertainment, being labelled as Islamic, thus, inviting a higher level of scrutiny and sometimes leading to heated debates in terms of permissibility and acceptance.

#### **4.2. Opportunity for Employment**

Fortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed the demand for halal media and entertainment in Brunei to grow and develop further, opening new opportunities such as:

- a) Broadening the genre: Islamic media and entertainment is a booming sector with a large customer base. Islamic media and entertainment not just focus on producing *tazkirah* (religious talks) and Islamic music but it can also be a comedy, films, short dramas, sketches, and games that might cater to the needs of Muslim millennials nowadays.
- b) Marketing partnerships with other sectors: given media and recreation draw large audiences, and in this case, Muslim audiences, halal media and entertainment services should be able to develop strong marketing relationships with other Islamic economy sectors of food, finance, fashion, personal care, and others.
- c) Digital platforms: technological innovations such as the Internet and mobile platforms have opened new doors for the industry and have facilitated market entry. Islamic entertainers such as Muslim comedians gained popularity through their YouTube channels which gave them the exposure, they needed to allow them to later go into mainstream media.
- d) Islamic arts and Calligraphy: Islamic art and calligraphy such as Jawi writing in Brunei are underrated. There are various knowledge, capabilities, and skills that can be learned in the Islamic arts. Furthermore, the heightened and continued interest in Islamic arts, whether outside the Muslim world or within, promises an improvement and provides opportunities in this area.

#### **4.3. Halal Science Graduate's Potential Career**

Many studies have mentioned that with the growth of the global Islamic economy, halal media and entertainment deserve more attention (Elasrag, 2017). The awareness and potential of this sector will create thousands of opportunities for Halal Science graduates.

Media and entertainment jobs include reporters, journalists, film and video editors, photographers, designers, researchers, producers and directors, technical staff, copywriter, announcers, content writers, graphics designers; performers – from actors to musicians and composers. As the halal media and entertainment sector is still growing in this country, there might be more job opportunities for Halal Science graduates in the future. However, there

are various forms of potential employment opportunities that they could be engaged in. Some of them are stated in the table below:

**Table 2.** Potential Career

Organisation	Position	Description	Qualification Required
Radio Television Brunei	Producer	to create content, select script, coordinate writing, direct, edit, and arrange to finance for the Religious Program	No specific qualification. Added relevant skills are recommended
	Scriptwriter	to write a script for screenplays on films, television programs, a video that is related to Halal knowledge or Islamic content	
	Script supervisor	A member of a film crew whose focus is mainly to oversee the continuity of the film including wardrobe, props, set dressing, etc. In terms of halal entertainment, this position is to be tasked with making sure the film always strictly complies with Islamic rules.	
	Researchers	to develop program ideas on Islamic content, drawing on their knowledge and understanding of industry requirements, and current trends, and present their findings to the decision-makers.	
	Graphic Designer	to create Islamic visual concepts by hand or by using computer software	
	Marketing	to be active in making promotion/marketing of religious content to their audiences across all platforms including social media.	
	Censorship Board	Responsible for censoring obscenity, pornography, and hate speech which aims to protect children and other vulnerable groups from negative content, to promote or restrict political and religious views, etc.	
	Editorial	supervise during the editing phase of the film. Which is to make sure everything is Sharia compliance before the film is to be submitted for a final cut to the producer	
Public Entertainment and Publication Control Division, Ministry of Home Affairs	Officer	Responsible to monitor and control general public entertainment. Its function is to regulate and censor the publishment of magazines, newspapers, photos, and movies as well as public entertainment such as cinemas in Brunei	
Pusat Da'wah Islamiah, Ministry of Religious Affairs	Censorship Officer	ensure the published materials do not contain materials that are undesirable and contradict the	Holds shariah, Arabic and theology background

		customs, ethics, religion, and morals that can influence, confuse the public and harm public order, national security and the people of Brunei Darussalam. This position works under the authority of the Undesirable Publication Act, Chapter 25 (Akta Terbitan-Terbitan Yang Tidak Diingini, Penggal 25)	
Ministry of Education Ministry of Religious Affairs	Educator	provide Halal education knowledge and training to future Halal Science students that specialize in Media and Entertainment from undergraduate to postgraduate level or in any institutions related to the field	Holds shariah, Arabic and theology background
	Researcher	to assist in academic research related to Halal or Halal Media and Entertainment in any research institution.	Holds shariah, Arabic and theology background
	<i>Daie</i>	provide and offer religious talk related to halal or Islamic education by utilizing various forms of mass media such as Facebook, Instagram, and Tik Tok as a medium of community interaction.	Holds shariah, Arabic and theology background
Entrepreneur		One of the most promising business areas will be market business targeting consumers in Islamic countries. In other countries, businesses targeting Muslims include halal food, an application designed to serve Muslim demands such as indicating qibla direction or providing prayer times, which turned into a big success. Brunei Darussalam's government is highly supportive of developing the halal industry in Brunei. Hence this widens the opportunity for graduates to venture into the field of entrepreneurship that targets Muslim needs such as creating applications similar to Verify Halal (a Malaysian app), that allow the consumer to make an informed decision when shopping for Halal products that are certified by the authorized council or to ease the consumer in finding mosques and Halal restaurants in the country. This might be a great initiative and effort in disseminating halal awareness in Brunei. In addition, in the context of da'wah creativity, various aspects need to be considered including utilizing social media as a place for effective da'wah dissemination. According to internet world stats, there are 417,500 thousand internet users in	No specific qualification. Added relevant skills are recommended



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Brunei Darussalam as of January 2021, of which 99 per cent of the population are social media users.

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The respondent expressed that there is a great opportunity for Halal Science graduates to seek a career in this sector. In terms of television and radio broadcasts, they may apply for any job position but are not limited to. On the other hand, some of the job positions stated above may need other requirements to apply for the job vacancy. For instance, graduates must possess a bachelor's degree or diploma in screen and media, writing, graphic design, and film. According to one of the respondents, having a bachelor's degree in any field is enough to apply for a position in a TV station, however having hands-on experience, training, and skills related to the job are the most important requirements to succeed in this industry. One respondent also shared Halal Science graduates may be responsible to regulate and censor the publishment of magazines, newspapers, photos, and movies as well as public entertainment such as cinema to protect the interests of the government and society from negative influences contrary to morals, religion, and customs and consider the quality of the films. Halal education is only offered at the higher institutions in Brunei, therefore the awareness among children and teenagers are inadequate, thus the prospect of halal science graduates as an educator is highly valuable in running a halal lifestyle (Dali, 2017).

## 5. Conclusion

The result of this study showed that the significant effort to offer halal science education to cater halal industry in Brunei is the right move for the government as the halal industry is rapidly expanding with the growing population of more than 1.8 billion Muslims around the world. Moreover, Brunei Darussalam is currently among the top 15 out of 73 countries and ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the Halal Media and Recreation sector. Hence this shows Brunei has higher opportunities and can go even further in this sector.

Although, the high unemployment rate and limited job availability might serve as a challenge for halal science graduates that do not indicate their lack of marketability. Halal science graduates should be encouraged to seek alternatives to finding their careers in this industry. For instance, searching for job opportunities in the private sector rather than in the government sector or providing themselves with various skills and training to be more competitive in the future and towards achieving Brunei's vision of 2035 which is to be recognized for its well-educated and highly skilled people.

## 6. Acknowledgement

The completion of this work could not have been possible without the support from Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali under the research grant entitled "Potential Employment opportunities in Halal Industry for UNISSA Halal Science Graduate Students from Stakeholders Perspective".

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