

# THE PRACTICES OF HALALAN THAYYIBAN ASPECT IN JAPANESE RESTAURANTS IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

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## ABSTRACT

The *halalan thayyiban* concept has been mentioned in *al-Quran* and *sunnah*. The popularisation of Japanese cuisine is a global phenomenon and Brunei Darussalam is not an exception. With the growing number of non-Islamic food products dominating the *halal* food industry, the status of *halal* food has become uncertain and controversial. The Brunei Government has emphasised the importance of Brunei restaurants complying with the requirements of *halal* eligibility and *shariah* law. Therefore, the need for Japanese restaurant management to comply with the *halal* norm is inevitable. This study has been conducted in an attempt to explore *halalan thayyiban* practices that are being implemented in Japanese Restaurants in Brunei Darussalam. Data was collected from six participants who were involved in semi-structured interviews. The major findings have shown that respondents were excellent in practising *halalan thayyiban* in terms of healthy food, food safety, and hygiene in Japanese restaurants. These findings are very important and hopefully can be used as a guide to restaurant employees in other ethnic restaurants and also greatly benefit Muslim and non-Muslim readers who consume *halal* food.

**Keywords:** Practices, Halalan Thayyiban, Japanese Restaurants, Safety, Healthy, Hygiene

## 1. Introduction

Islamic faith or belief is a pillar of faith for Muslims. All aspects of Muslim life are regulated by *shariah* law. Muslims are required to abide by the rules laid down in *al-Quran*, which obligates all Muslims to consume *halal* food, which refers to food that is permissible and does not contain any prohibited elements under *shariah* law. The global *halal* market is expanding in Muslim countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and India. Moreover, non-Muslim countries such as China, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines have been investing heavily in the *halal* industry and the market size is expected to reach USD 9.71 trillion by 2025 (Stagemanhp, 2019). The rise and development of the *halal* industry, especially in *halal* food services such as restaurants, has opened up opportunities for both Muslim and non-Muslim *halal* industry players.

## 2. Background of Study

The *halalan thayyiban* industry is an appropriate step towards attaining *Negara Zikr* (Zikr Nation) and achieving Brunei Vision 2035. *Negara Zikr* intend to ensure that the people of Brunei Darussalam live a high standard of living and obey the commands of Allah SWT. On July 15, 1997, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkiyah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Negara Brunei Darussalam, shared his concerns on *halal* and *haram* issues, in a *titah* during His Majesty's 51<sup>st</sup> birthday:

“Lately, there have been concerns about food and beverages, as well as consumable products that are contaminated with non-*halal* ingredients, including particular concern on imported meats that are currently circulating in the market. In this context, it is time for relevant parties in the government to study the possibility of developing a body or its equivalent as the authority to control *halal* and non-*halal* food ingredients, including all types of meat and other consumable products in the country.

This has become a priority because of our position as an Islamic country, and it is obligatory to protect our religion, *Ibadah* of the people, and the country's population" (Danial Norjidi, 2019).

Therefore, the relevant authorities need to ensure that all *halal* food production must comply with the *halal* standard in this country. In light of globalisation, Brunei's population has had the opportunity to taste delicacies from other countries or cultures without travelling, including Asian or Oriental cuisines from China, Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Korea (Oh, Hamir, & Shah, 2018). Moreover, Brunei is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, and many Muslims eat international food and enjoy dining out in restaurants in the country. Japanese cuisine is the most lucrative oriental food market compared to other Asian or ethnic food. Japanese cuisine has effectively infiltrated global gastronomy for nearly three decades (Cwiertka, 2007).

**Table 1:** Number of Japanese Restaurants in Brunei Darussalam

Districts	Number of Restaurants
Brunei – Muara	19
Belait	7
Tutong	-
Temburong	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

Source: List of the Japanese Restaurants in Brunei Darussalam, (BKMh, 2020)

Table 1 shows that the growing number of Japanese restaurants is evident and a total of 26 Japanese restaurants in Brunei Darussalam have been established. The number of Japanese restaurants has increased over the years and this is due to affluent Bruneian Muslims becoming more interested in Japanese cuisine. Asian cuisine is expected to comply with *halalan thayyiban* principles. *Halal* sustainability issues include the implementation of *halalan thayyiban* practices amongst Muslim and non-Muslim employees, particularly in Japanese restaurants, which may cause a loss of *halal* value.

### 3. Literature Review

#### 3.1 The concept of Halalan Thayyiban

*Halal* products agree with *shariah* compliance and do not involve any *haram* (prohibited) ingredients (Rehman & Shahbaz, 2010). Allah SWT advises humankind to eat only *halal and tayyib* (good) food. Moreover, the word *thayyiban* means that *halal* food must be clean, pure, and wholesome and does not have impurities. (Sharbini, n.d). Several studies have deliberated that nothing is forbidden except what is expressly prohibited either by a verse from the *al-Quran* or *sunnah*. *Haram* such as carrion or dead animals; animals slaughtered without announcing the name of Allah; carnivorous animals, birds of prey and land animals such as frogs; food contaminated or mixed with any of the aforementioned products; and *haram* elements (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004).

#### 3.2 Healthy and Quality Food

The *halal* concept of food products is now gaining global recognition as a quality assurance benchmark in terms of health, safety, and quality. *Halalan thayyiban* refers to food permitted by Allah SWT which is good quality and will not harm the mind, spirit, and body (Maraghy, 2001). Norazilawati and Fadzila (2016) claimed that *halalan thayyiban* in a food quality management context is used to determine and measure quality when producing food products that are suitable for Muslims. The *halal* supply chain ensures the quality of handling and processing, which begins from the source until it reaches the consumer. It is understood that when Bruneian consumers seek quality products, they will look for fresh meat,

vegetables, and fruit in Malaysia. The freshness of the products was the most frequently given response about food quality. Quality is associated with freshness, food safety, nutrition, and value (Chamhuri & Batt, 2013).

### 3.3 Food Safety

Food safety doesn't only protect food production or processing but also enhances health and nutrition. Moreover, it is by the *halalan thayyiban* principle, which entails clean, safe, and nutritious food (Mohamad, Man, & Ramli, 2015). Food safety awareness is primarily acquired through training. This includes attending a professional training course where participants are introduced to the value of time-temperature monitoring, personal hygiene, proper food handling, and causes of foodborne illnesses (Dora-Liyana et al. 2018). Moreover, the consumption of raw fish or any raw animal product carries health risks from pathogenic microorganisms. Therefore, appropriate preparation and compliance with cooling protocols during production, transportation, and storage are of the utmost importance (Viktoria, Reich, & Klein, 2008).

### 3.4 Hygiene

Food hygiene includes steps and procedures that control the operating conditions of food establishments, to provide favourable environmental conditions in the production of food that is safe and appropriate (Ratanamaneichat & Rakkarn, 2013). This is another approach taken by the *halal* executive to ensure that cleanliness is practised during food processing to produce safe and hygienic food. This practice is aimed at setting and developing the procedural standard for monitoring the movement of workers during food processing (Hassan, Arif, & Sidek, 2015). Hygiene has been emphasised in terms of *halal* maintenance and includes personal cleanliness, clothing, equipment, and the working premises for processing or manufacturing food, drinks, and products.

*Halalan thayyiban* encompasses quality and health. This previous literature could help the researcher grasp the main ideas concerning health and quality issues in restaurants, particularly on how the Japanese restaurants in Brunei Darussalam can guarantee that they serve food that is nutritious, fresh, and good for humans' health, safety, and hygiene.

## 4. Research Objective

It has been recognised that there is a lack of research on *halalan thayyiban* practices in Japanese restaurants in Brunei Darussalam. This study aims to explore *halalan thayyiban* practices that have been implemented in Japanese restaurants in Brunei Darussalam. In other words, *halal* products should be recognised as an indicator of good health and high quality that are good for human consumption and prevents foodborne illnesses from occurring. The objectives of this research are to explore *halalan thayyiban* associated with health, to explore *halalan thayyiban* associated with food safety, and to explore *halalan thayyiban* associated with hygiene. Therefore, this section serves as the solution regarding the implementation of *halalan thayyiban* practices, which includes preparation procedures or food handling in restaurants.

## 5. Methodology

The employment of a qualitative research design for this study has helped the researcher to explore and discover the topic area in great depth. Moreover, this study adopted a qualitative approach and used convenience sampling or non-probability to engage with participants who were easily accessible by the researcher and situation. Data were obtained from semi-structured interviews and analysed using thematic analysis.

## 6. Result and Discussion

Data was collected from six participants who were involved in semi-structured interviews and surveys, which each took between 20 to 30 minutes. The researcher conducted interviews with two respondents and four interview surveys were sent through email. Interviews were conducted in Malay to allow participants to provide their understanding of *halalan thayyiban*. The researcher used an audiotape to record the interviews and all the participants gave their consent for the use of the technology.

### 6.1. Demographics of Participants

The researcher listed down the biography of participants referred to below as “respondents”

**Table 2:** Profile of Respondents

No	Acronym	Position	Gender	Race	Religion	Type of restaurant
1	Respondent A	Employee	Male	Indonesian	Islam	<i>Halal</i> Certified
2	Respondent B	<i>Halal</i> Supervisor	Male	Indonesian	Islam	<i>Halal</i> Certified
3	Respondent C	<i>Halal</i> Supervisor	Female	Indonesian	Islam	<i>Halal</i> Certified
4	Respondent D	<i>Halal</i> Liaisons	Female	Bruneian	Islam	<i>Halal</i> Certified
5	Respondent E	Supervisor	Male	Philippine	Christian	<i>Halal</i> Certified
6	Respondent F	Manager	Female	Philippine	Christian	<i>Halal</i> Certified

Table 2 shows the profile of respondents, including their job position, gender, race, religion, and type of restaurant. To protect the employees’ identity, the researcher used the letters “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, “E”, and “F” instead of their names; six respondents took part in the interview, and three males and three females. The researcher managed to interview Japanese restaurant employees who hold different job positions, such as restaurant manager, *halal* supervisor, and *halal* liaison. The majority of participants were Muslims from Brunei, Indonesia, and the Philippines, while two non-Muslim participants were from the Philippines.

### 6.2 *Halalan Thayyiban in association with Health: Food Quality and Trust on Suppliers*

During the interview sessions, concerns were shared on food quality that may affect human health. Many respondents talked about the connection between food quality and suppliers that are compliant with *halal* standards. Some said they would reject products that are poor quality or not *halal*:

*“(Bad quality food) should be informed to the head, (they should) not be served and should instead be discarded because they do not comply with the conditions for physical, spiritual, and mental (well-being).”* (Respondent E, Male, Filipino)

It is a must for restaurant employees to not serve food that will affect human health. According to the respondents, it is important to report to the head and not serve food that does not comply with the well-being of humans. According to the Emergency (Public Health) (Food) Order (1998) and the Public Health (Food) Regulations (2000), the quality of the frozen meat or fish must be preserved appropriately. The aforementioned elements (of preserving meat or fish) coincide with the restaurants’ good practices, from choosing the supplier and food quality process until the food is served on the table. Moreover, Islam highlights the importance of having a balanced diet. Surah Al-Maidah, verse 87, mentions:

تَعْتَدُوا وَلَا لَكُمْ اللَّهُ أَحَلَّ مَا طَيَّبَتْ مُحَرَّمُوا لِأَمْنُوا الَّذِينَ يَتَأَيَّبُوا

Means: “Oh you who believe! Forbid not the good things which Allah hath made lawful for you, and transgress not.”

This verse is a strong reminder to consume pleasing food because what is delicious is permissible. Qualities such as pleasant, delightful, sweet, healthy, and beautiful are summed up in the word “*tayyib*” (Ibn Hajar, 1978).

### 6.3 *Halalan Thayyiban in association with Food Safety: Safety and Hygiene*

The majority of respondents believed in avoiding food contamination to ensure that the restaurants’ hygiene is maintained. Below is a statement from one of the respondents on food safety:

*“We concentrate on two things. First of all, cleanliness is paramount. It must be in good shape until the goods reach the restaurant. For example, we have bought goods or products from suppliers, such as beef, and we will ensure that the meat is of good quality and fresh. Secondly, when the products are in the restaurant, we will keep them in a suitable and safe location, such as the refrigerator.”* (Respondent D, Female, Bruneian)

The respondent has described product safety and food quality as important factors to avoid food contamination and with these two elements, *thayyiban* practices in their restaurant were achieved. Some respondents also believed that food contamination can be avoided during the early stages, starting from the purchase until it reaches the restaurants. According to Ratanamaneichat et al. (2013), sanitation, food additives, genetic engineering and irradiation, food packaging, quality assurance and laboratory testing, and contaminated food are all components of food safety. Therefore, businesses such as restaurants need to maintain food safety and hygiene as they help to protect consumers from foodborne illnesses and food poisoning.

### 6.4 *Halalan Thayyiban in association with Hygiene: Personal Hygiene and Cleanliness*

Food that is clean and safe starts from the production and preparation process. During the interview sessions, the respondents emphasised that they follow relevant instructions and apply appropriate food hygiene measures, such as personal hygiene and cleanliness of the restaurants.

*(We) take care of personal hygiene, especially short nails, and hair in a comb or on the side straps, and make sure the surroundings are clean and always washed. “FIFO”, “SOP”, and “clean as you go” should always be obeyed by everyone.* (Respondent B, Male, Indonesian)

Furthermore, one respondent mentioned that the restaurant’s cleanliness could be better if the employees attended food hygiene training. This is an important observation, as food hygiene training not only emphasises the restaurant’s cleanliness but also other aspects, such as personal hygiene and equipment:

*Usually, we assign someone to do an inspection, and training or orientation often plays an important role. From here, they will always remember to keep their personal hygiene and the restaurant’s cleanliness, such as utensils. We’ll also make sure*

*they're wearing PPE (personal protection equipment), so they won't be exposed, and if the clothes are dirty, we'll ask them to change to prevent the bacteria from being transferred to the food.* (Respondent D, Female, Bruneian)

It is essential to include cleaning procedures in the kitchen and ensure that the equipment is carefully washed and stored. Furthermore, maintaining personal hygiene is also very important. Food handlers should be qualified and trained in safe food handling, to ensure that good personal hygiene greatly decreases the risk of cross-contamination and transmission of infections.

## 7. Conclusion

The concept and application of *halalan thayyiban* have been mentioned in *al-Quran* and *sunnah*. Furthermore, restaurants and the food industry in Brunei Darussalam need to operate their businesses in association with Islamic principles. It is their responsibility to practise and gain knowledge on *halalan thayyiban* and to ensure the food is compliant with the requirements of *shariah* law. *Halal* value is not only measured through food that is permissible for human consumption, but it encompasses the *thayyiban* aspect, which includes food that is healthy and of good quality. Food handlers must also ensure that their workplace is clean and tidy. Overall, the design and layout of *halalan thayyiban* will create a healthy, safe, and hygienic environment to conduct a proper food establishment business.

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