

# HALAL IN FOOD INDUSTRY AROUND THE GLOBE

Mansoor Abdul Hamid<sup>\*1</sup>, Yeap Chi Hong<sup>1</sup>, Oslida Martony<sup>2</sup>, Mazarina Devi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Malaysia Sabah, Jalan UMS, Kota Kinabalu, 88400, Sabah, Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup>Politeknik Kesehatan Kemenkes Medan, Jl. Jamin Ginting, Km 13.5, Kel. Lau Cih Medan, Tuntungan 20136 Medan, Sumatera, Indonesia.

<sup>3</sup>Prodi Pendidikan, Tat Boga, Fakultas Teknik, Universitas Negeri Malang, Jalan Semarang 5, 65145 Malang, Indonesia.

<sup>\*</sup>Corresponding author: [chot@ums.edu.my](mailto:chot@ums.edu.my)

## ABSTRACT

The concept of Halal is well understood and practised by Muslims. Muslims are restricted to only consuming foods that are certified as Halal. However, today, the consumption of Halal food is no longer regarded only as a religious obligation for Muslims but is also sought after by non-Muslim society due to the rising health concern as Halal foods are often classified as ones that have high quality from the perspectives of safety and hygiene. The fact that there are already 1.9 billion Muslims in the globe is indisputable proof that the halal food sector is promising for both Muslim and non-Muslim participants in the industry. Many Muslim-minority countries, such as New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, the United States of America (USA), India, and Argentina are also exporting Halal foods to foreign countries as they believe that this can generate substantial revenue for them. Nevertheless, low awareness of the concept of halal, uncertainties regarding the ingredients used in the products, and misleading information on a product's packaging are a few of the challenges in the Halal food industry. In order to popularize the concept of Halal to more non-Muslims, the authority, plays a significant role in this scenario by providing public information related to the concept of Halal as well as taking more stern actions in combating the occurrence of Halal food frauds.

**Keywords:** *Halal food industry, Opportunity, Challenge, Issues, Recommendation*

## 1. Introduction

According to Rohman (2012), Halal is a term from the Arabic language that means permissible, legal, and complies with Islamic or Shariah law. The concept of Halal encompasses cosmetics, personal care, pharmaceutical products, foods, and beverages. It was observed that there is a significant positive correlation between Halal products and consumers' willingness to purchase them as most consumers are fond of buying foods and products that are certified with the logo of Halal (Ahmed, et al., 2018). Halal industry, both in food and non-food industries has opened room for both Muslim and non-Muslim industry players due to the increasingly high demand from consumers. Nevertheless, the food industry is considered the most imperative area in the Halal sector as human beings cannot live without food (Hanni, S. N. A., et al, 2022). The rising demand for Halal foods can be attributed to two factors, namely the increased Muslim population around the globe and the change in socio-economic. First, it was estimated that there was a total of 1.9 billion Muslims in 2020, covering almost 25% of the world's population and the figure was expected to surge to 2 billion by 2030 and 3 billion by 2060, covering around 30% of the global population (Bashir, 2020). As for the latter, Muslims nowadays are more knowledgeable as compared to the older generations and they are more assertive and take an interest in their purchase behaviour (Bamba et al., 2017). According to Aniqoh and Hanastiana (2020), the global halal market absorbs approximately 16.7% of the entire food industry in the world. Besides, a total of about \$1,369 billion were spent by 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide in 2018 and this figure is forecasted to reach \$1,972 billion by 2024 (Dinar Standard, 2019). Now, apart from being a religious requirement for Muslims, Halal foods are also widely consumed by non-Muslims due to hygiene, cleanliness and safety issues that arise from foods (Yusuf et al., 2015). The advanced technology and the growth in the halal hub are said to be the main contributor to the surge of the Halal food industry (Hanni, S. N. A., et al, 2022). Even though Asian countries house the largest Muslim nations, non-Muslim countries are said to be the

nations that export most of the Halal foods which dominate nearly 90% of the world's Halal food market (Raja Adam, 2006). For instance, most Halal meats come from New Zealand, Canada, India, Australia, Argentina, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) (Wan-Hassan & Awang, 2009).

Generally, the halal food industry refers to the industries that are involved in the manufacturing of foods and beverages which comply with Islamic law from the aspects of inputs, the process of production, packaging as well as marketing (Noor *et al.*, 2016). The consumption of Halal foods is mandatory for all Muslims. Currently, Halal becomes an essential issue in food production and is required to penetrate the market of Islamic countries. However, the lack of knowledge, awareness and understanding of the Halal concept may lead to a loss of appreciation towards Halal. Rosli *et al.* (2022) mentioned that Halal products are not only limited to Muslims but are also gaining popularity among non-Muslims who seek ethical, quality and safe products offered by the concept of Halal. Hence, even non-Muslim yet developed countries like the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and Japan whose productions are mainly dependent on automotive and electronic are focusing on this sector as the Halal food sector is considered a catalyst in pushing other potential sectors which are negatively affected from the economic turmoil (Nurrachmi, 2017). With regard to the rising demand for more and more Halal foods and realizing that Halal food is a must for Muslims and slowly gaining attention among non-Muslims, this review paper shares some findings of Halal in the food industry, including its opportunity, challenges and recommendations on popularizing the concept to more people.

## 2. Materials and methods

A qualitative descriptive approach is applied throughout this whole research which involves review and analysis of secondary data of the extant literature, primarily journals, conference papers, books and relevant websites to develop a preliminary conceptual framework on the emerging growth of Halal in the food industry around the globe. Based on the topics selected, relevant and topic-related theories and information from the literature are used to support the title of this review article as well as its subsequent topics.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 The Opportunity of the Halal Food Industry

The growth of the Halal food market is very much dependent on the population of the Muslim population of the world. Shoib *et al.* (2022) mentioned that the second largest religion in the world is Islam, with an approximate population of 1.9 billion people at the present and a major presence in about 50 nations and territories. Asia Pacific houses the most Muslims, followed by the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, North and finally Latin America (Aniqoh & Hanastiana, 2020). Deuraseh *et al.* (2022) stated that the population of Muslims will always increase and is believed to dominate up to two-fifth of the world's population in the future. Due to the presence of the largest population of Muslims, Asia Pacific is the largest market available for the growth of Halal foods and beverages from the aspect of revenue (Handani, 2021). Furthermore, the availability of Halal products during travelling was determined to be the top priority by 66.8% of Muslim consumers and thus Halal products are considered a basic necessity to them and making Halal products more approachable to them can eventually win their hearts (Aniqoh & Hanastiana, 2020).

More and more non-Muslim countries are producing Halal products as they believe this can be a very good opportunity to penetrate the Halal market and they are well aware of the significance of this market, as the halal niche market can essentially generate a large

amount of revenue to the countries. For instance, Wan-Hassan and Awang (2009) mentioned that approximately 60% of cattle and 98% of sheep are slaughtered Halal in New Zealand and such figures in the said country can be partly accredited to the fact that companies there are finding it easier and more cost-effective to have their production processed shifted to be completely halal. Besides, Wong (2020) mentioned that there is also promising Halal marketability in Vietnam even though Muslims are the minority in Vietnam. Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are encouraged to exploit the Vietnamese Halal market which is forecasted to be worth & 2.3 trillion every year as part of the national trade promotion program of the Vietnamese Ministry of Industry and Trade. In order to encourage more SMEs to export their Halal products to foreign countries, Halal Industry Master Plan (HIMP) was created by the Malaysian government and a total export worth RM42 billion was observed in 2015. Japan and South Korea, despite being manifested primarily in Shinto and Buddhism and Buddhism and Christianity respectively, are also giving a lot of attention to the Halal issue. This is because both are famous tourist destinations among Muslims. Japan was visited by about 300,000 Muslim tourists in 2013 and this figure was expected to strive 1 million by 2020 (Crescent Rating, 2020). As for the latter, it was expected that the number of Muslim travellers visiting South Korea will reach 1 million in 2017 and then rises to 1.3 million in 2020. On top of it, around \$40 billion (production cause) and \$20 billion (value added) were estimated to be the impact of inbound Muslim tourists in South Korea and more than 80,000 jobs related directly or indirectly to Islamic tourism were expected to be generated from this sector (KTO, 2015). Hence, many approaches have been taken by the local authorities to make these two countries Muslim-friendly. For example, the Japanese government offered subsidy up to \$820 to local restaurants which earn Halal certification and they held a Halal Expo which attracted 120 exhibitors in 2016 (Nurrachmi, 2017). Besides, support is provided by the government to the Japanese Muslim Association (JMA) for Halal certification of local products and certain Halal certification bodies, including JAKIM (Malaysia) and MUI (Indonesia) have already recognized the certification released by JMA. The Korean Muslim Federation (KMF) is also taking initiative by working with JAKIM and MUI. Besides, various promotional activities, including exhibitions, international conferences and festivals have been conducted by KMF to establish relationships with internal Halal organizations, such as United World Halal Development (UNWHD), the Association for the Regional Cooperation of South Asia (SAARC) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OKI). A total of 148 Korean companies have received the Halal certification from KMF (Deniar & Effendi, 2020).

The Muslim population in Europe is forecasted to increase by 33% for the next 20 years, growing to 58 million from 44 million by 2030. Europe also houses the fourth largest Muslim population in the world, with a population of 43 million in 2020. As a result, an approximate yearly increase of 15% in the European Halal market has been observed (Aniqoh & Hanastiana, 2020). According to Pew Research Center (2017), the United Kingdom (UK) will eventually surpass France and Germany, being the country that has the highest number of Muslims in Europe, with a projected population of 13 million Muslims in 2050, followed by France (12.6 million) and Germany (8.5 million). The ever-rising population in Europe shows very promising potential in their Halal market and offers great opportunities to foreign food manufacturers to export their products to these markets to fit their demands because Halal products are mandatory for all Muslims, whether they come from Muslim-majority or minority countries. Manufacturers around the globe should pay great attention to this potential market and prepare their products according to the local legislations, particularly in countries with developed Halal systems as the Halal system in European countries might not be as good as theirs. Aniqoh and Hanastiana (2020) mentioned

that the Islamic laws are strictly adhered to by European Muslims and they do not eat anything that is *haram*, and only consume foods certified with Halal.

### 3.2 Challenges and Issues of Halal in the Food industry

#### a. Low Awareness of the Concept of Halal

This can be attributed to the Halal literacy of the consumers. The level of Halal literacy among consumers today differs even though most consumers today are highly educated and various types of information are at their fingertips (Ismail & Ibrahim, 2011). Many non-Muslims might have come across the word “Halal” but might not have any further knowledge regarding it, other than knowing that it is paramount to Muslims. This is because the concept of Halal is not applied to their daily lifestyle and they are not restricted to the two Islamic dietary rules, Halal and Haram. Also, the fact that the majority of non-Muslims may not understand well the implications of these two rules perceives challenge to the whole sector. According to Elasrag (2016), the true meaning of Halal might even be misunderstood by some, relating it to religious rituals, particularly slaughtering. Hence, some feel unpleasant towards products certified with Halal. No doubt, the concept of Halal has something to do with religion, but the overall concept focuses on wholesome and sanitary food, which appeals to those who are concerned about their health (Khan & Haleem, 2016). Apart from that, a study by Suhaiza *et al.* (2011) even showed that the rate of application for Halal certification among hotels in Malaysia was still considered as low even though the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia has been taking efforts to make Malaysia one of the tourism hubs among the Islamic countries. This statement somehow shows the low awareness of the importance of implementing Halal in the hotels, even though Muslim tourists, especially those from West Asia are very concerned about the Halal status of the accommodation and food during their visit to a nation. Apart from that, Halal food frauds occur occasionally. For instance, in 2017, 30 tons of containers containing Halal (lamb meats) and non-Halal frozen meats (believed to be the intestines of pigs) were stored together in a cargo shipment at the Port of Tanjung Pelepas and were seized by The Department of Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Service (MAQIS). Specifically, the non-Halal meats were sandwiched by the lamb meats (Said 2017). This incident is another clear example reflecting the low awareness of the Halal implementation of many foods.

#### b. Uncertainties Regarding the Ingredients Used in the Products

There are many different food ingredients which are originated from either plant or animal sources, thanks to the growing advanced food industry today. Often, reading the label on a product's packaging does not help consumers to determine which foods are Halal as some manufacturers employ certain specific terminology that typical consumers are probably unable to understand (Batu & Regenstein, 2014; Davies & Wright, 1994). In particular, gelatine which is one of the most controversial ingredients used in the food industry. It is a collagen extracted from animal sources by boiling the skins, bones and cartilage. According to Bhat and Karim (2009), gelatine is widely used in bakery and dairy products as a plasticizer, thickener, emulsifier, moisture retentor, texture improver, foaming agent and gelling agent. There are two varieties of gelatine, which are made from pork skins and the skins of cows and calves or demineralized cattle bones, poultry skins as well as other permitted animals. However, the production of Halal gelatine is projected to be less than 1% in the world and the ones made from pork skins are usually preferable over any other type of gelatine as it is easier to produce and cheaper (Zin *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the issue of

genetically modified (GM) foods is one of the recent developments in food technology that is bugging consumers' minds. When genetic material is transferred between two different kingdoms, such as from an animal to a plant, the result is thought to be extremely critical, and the Halal status is not Halal if the origin is a non-Halal animal. The matching aspect and the law of compatibility remain an issue in this case (Alzeer, 2018). Besides, even the transfer of genetic material from plant to plant is also categorized as a highly critical process and will only be accepted if beneficial effects are clearly shown by the outcome with no safety issues on health and the absorption, distribution, and metabolism of the outcome is similar to those of its natural counterpart (Bawa and Anilakumar, 2013). Hence, Muslim consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about consuming Halal products that contain genetically modified elements as it elicits suspicious thoughts over the ingredients contained in the food.

### **c. Misleading Information on the Product's Packaging**

The Halal logo is one of the most critical elements of the packaging of Halal food products. Muslim consumers mainly depend on the existence of the Halal logo to determine the edibility of the product. Hence, Muslims may view the presence of Halal logos on the product packaging as a crucial factor and becomes a guarantee of security assurance for them to be able to consume the product. The presence of the Halal logo also indicates that the particular product is safe for consumption due to good quality from the aspects of cleanliness, security and efficiency. Nevertheless, Halal logo fraud has always been a common occurrence in the food industry. There are always some irresponsible and money-minded food manufacturers who use unrecognized or unauthorized Halal logos on their food packaging in order to penetrate the Halal food market. For instance, products sold in France under the brand Aqdas Foods from Romania counterfeited the Halal logo of the Halal Monitoring Committee in the UK and were warned by the body (Hamid, 2014). Apart from this, a livestock company in Busan distributed chicken and duck meat with fake Halal certificates worth 140 million won (Choi, 2015).

The printing on the packaging is another alarming issue in the Halal market. There are also cases where consumers are tricked by the words or images printed on the packaging. Specifically, certain food packaging is printed with Arabic words and images related to the Islamic religion to deceive consumers (Damit *et al.*, 2017). Hence, this can lead to the occurrence of misunderstanding among consumers, thinking that the product is made in an Islamic country and thereby boosting their trust towards purchasing it. Ruslan *et al.* (2018) also mentioned that certain unethical companies consciously adopted Arabic-sounding or Islamic-themed brand names, even going so far as to display a few Quranic verses to deceive customers into thinking their products are Halal. Besides, the label of the product's origin is another trick used by immoral manufacturers to trap consumers into buying their products. Bonne *et al.* (2007) mentioned that Halal food products from one's own country or other Islamic countries are usually preferred by Muslim buyers. Hence, in order to improve their market share among Muslim consumers, unscrupulous manufacturers will fake their products' origin by changing them to countries with predominantly Muslim populations, such as Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, Pakistan and so on. Since Islam is the official religion of these countries and can boost the confidence of the Muslim buyer in their products and increase their sales. This phenomenon is usually seen in countries with a minority of Muslims where they distrust the certification released by the local government as it is not easy to obtain Halal certifications. Yusuf *et al.* (2015) said that cost is one of the challenges faced by producers to apply for Halal certification. This statement is supported by Liow

(2011) who stated that Halal-certified businesses would increase the manufacturing cost up to 10% higher than the standard manufacturing cost and such an increase is said to be quite a burden to many, especially for the new entrants. This is due to the use of segregated equipment and transportation for Halal and non-Halal products including segregated storage and production. However please note in the manuscript that this is not always the case. For example, halal certifications from certain Italian Halal certification bodies only require ritual cleansing between the production of halal and non-halal products. In addition to sourcing, halal ingredients and training can also add to the cost of halal manufacturing. Apart from that, consultation and certification processes also lead to an increase in cost. On top of that, Arif and Sidek (2015) stated that the issuance of Halal certification is tedious, where it involves a lot of documentation as well as an inspection from the local authority. During the application, submission of supporting documents is needed and obtainment of recognizable Halal certification will be requested by the auditors for each of the raw materials and ingredients listed as the content of the food. The process also involves the official site inspection of factories and an investigation into the upkeep and continuous monitoring of the halal status of the raw materials by reputable or reliable Halal certification bodies. The incident of Halal logo fraud once happened in Urumqi, which is a Muslim-populated region in China. A company named Tianren International Ltd. labelled their domestically-produced food products as imported certified items from Malaysia, an Islamic country, for the sake of improving its market share in the region as the products are popular among the locals (Lipes, 2013).

### 3.3 Popularizing the Concept of Halal to more non-Muslims

The concept of Halal is well understood and practised by Muslims around the globe, but that is not the case for non-Muslims. Elasrag (2016) mentioned that the true meaning of Halal might even be misunderstood by some, relating it to religious rituals, particularly slaughtering. This statement is supported by Wibowo *et al.* (2020) who stated that the Islamic slaughtering method is often perceived as inhumane by many non-Muslims. This is considered normal because the concept of Halal is not rooted in any other religion except for Islam, not to mention that in most countries, Muslims are considered a minority in the regions. Nevertheless, the need to spread this concept to them is of paramount importance as Halal is one of the standards that ensures the safety and quality of food.

Government should provide information related to the concept of Halal to the public. In this scenario, communication plays a crucial role in reaching out to the public. Particularly, broadcasting advertising that includes radio, television and the internet is one of the effective ways in this context. Research by Rezai *et al.* (2012), increasing awareness of Halal principles through advertisements was perceived as an effective way to increase the awareness of Halal principles by 79% of non-Muslim Malaysian respondents. In accordance with modernization, the internet may be the best way to reach consumers. This is because according to one research, on average, a person spends 6 hours and 53 minutes on the internet (Kemp, 2022). Hence, the possibility is, consumers might come across Halal-related information when they are surfing the net. Related videos on the whole Halal production should be made viable to the public in form of videos to make them know that Halal is not solely about religious ritual, but is also a gatekeeper in ensuring the quality and safety of foods we consume every day. This can help in dispelling the thought of non-Muslims who may have little understanding of Halal and look at Halal products from the side of religion and the way how an animal is slaughtered. In fact, apart from the Muslim practice of slaughtering animals, other issues like environmental friendliness, care for animal welfare,

sustainability and food safety are embraced by the principles of Halal (Rezai *et al.*, 2012). Knowing that people are becoming more health-conscious, the local authority can take the advantage of this phenomenon by emphasizing the beneficial characteristics of Halal to non-Muslims. With regard to the rising health concern, Halal food product is a wise choice for the public as Talib and Ali (2009) stated that the accreditation of Halal is known for its stringency to meet many of the food safety programs, such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), Good Hygienic Practice (GHP), International Standardization of Organization (ISO) and Codex Alimentarius. Moreover, Halal-certified products are much better as compared to those produced by conventional standards.

Halal food frauds never cease to appear in the headlines of newspapers. This includes fake product origin, fake certification, fake Halal logo used and food adulteration that involves the use of Haram ingredients. More stern actions should be taken by the authorities in combating the occurrence of Halal food fraud. The monitoring by the relevant authorities on the food manufacturers should be more aggressive and often, preferably impromptu on-site inspections, rather than announced ones. From this, the most “natural” production lines of the food manufacturers will be revealed. Corresponding actions can be taken by the authorities in this scenario. Also, punishments should be commensurate with the offence rather than just issuing fines to the criminals. All these frauds, if left uncontrolled, will affect consumers’ confidence in the accreditation of Halal. Eventually, they may perceive Halal certification as a food safety program with low stringency and subsequently question about the quality and safety of Halal-certified products. For example, a Halal-certified Malaysian bakery shop named Port View Bakery Shop misplaced its Halal certification after traces of porcine DNA have been detected by the Department of Chemistry, Ministry of Energy, Science, Environmental Technology and Climate Change in their mooncakes on 1 November 2021 following a complaint lodged on 16 September 2021 (Vanar, 2021). That is why unannounced on-site inspections should be more frequent and should not just inspect upon receiving a complaint from the consumers.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, the demand for Halal foods is on the rise. Other than Muslims who are restricted to the Islamic dietary laws, Halal-certified foods are also slowly gaining attention among non-Muslims. This is due to the rising health concern as Halal food products are often recognized as having high quality from the aspects of hygiene and safety that can promote better health. The fact that the population of Muslims is constantly increasing around the globe opens room for more and more industry players to be part of this promising sector. However, we cannot deny that the presence of certain obstacles is bothering the implementation of Halal in the food industry, such as low awareness of Halal’s concept, uncertainties regarding the ingredients used in the products and misleading information on the product’s packaging. The first is due to the consumers themselves, while the followings are very much related to unethical food manufacturers. Even though many non-Muslims are gradually accepting Halal foods, the majority are still unsure about the consumption of Halal foods. Hence, government, in this context, plays a crucial role in introducing the concept of Halal to non-Muslims to make them a better understanding of the concept of Halal. Thus, the government can possibly achieve this by broadcasting advertisements related to Halal as well as taking more stern actions in combating Halal food fraud. These can boost the confidence of more non-Muslims in Halal products, and gradually adopt Halal foods into their daily meals.

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