

3rd INTERNATIONAL HALAL MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE (3rd IHMC 2021)

Current Issues on Job Description and Specialization of Halal Executive in Malaysian SMEs

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Abstract

Currently, Halal industry is growing rapidly across many countries due to the increasing of demand towards halal products. Thus, a lot of company including non-Muslim owner company apply for the Halal certification. Therefore, the role of Halal Executives being introduced to ensure that every process of making halal product follow the guideline given by Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM). In recent years, it has been reported that the Halal Executives (HE) were burden by abundance of workload but still underpaid by the organizations. Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify the current issues on job description and specialization of Halal Executives in Malaysian small and medium enterprise (SME). Besides, the objectives of this study are (i) to determine the current job requirements and specialization of Halal Executives in Malaysian SMEs, and (ii) to study the current issues regarding Halal Executives position. This research paper was conducted using exploratory method. The data were obtained from numerous websites about job vacancy and opportunity all around Malaysia from 2019 until 2021. The data were assorted based on the company, job position, job descriptions, job requirements, job specialization, salary, gender and year of the job offered. The findings show that most of the Halal Executives position offered in Malaysian SME paired with other position such as quality control, quality assurance and hygiene executive. Salary offered by some of the company or organization are not equal with the knowledge, skills and positions offered. Plus, there is gender bias occur in some of the company for the job recruitment. This study was only focus on the halal executive position in Malaysian SME. Thus, other researcher could conduct research on a bigger area or different job position.

Keywords: Job Description, Job Specialization, Halal Executives

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

One strategic initiative has been develop by government to empower Malaysia's Halal industry through the 11th Malaysia Plan 2016–2020. Halal industries is clearly mentioned in the six core strategies (Rafida et al. 2020). Halal industry requires talents that work as Halal Executives, Halal Consultants, Halal Auditors, and those that work in abattoirs and many more. Previous research have pointed out that there are still limited talents in this industry (Rafida et al. 2013), specifically those who are competent in the values aspects of the halal requirement. This particular problem is more critical in the context of SMEs (Ali & Suleiman 2017), particularly those operated by non-Muslims. For example, current practices for non-Muslim food providers in getting Halal certification is by hiring a Muslim Halal Executives, as required by the standard operating procedure (SOP) of JAKIM. Besides, at least one HE must be appointed to implement Halal Assurance System (HAS) in a company, depending on the company size (Nuratifah et al., 2019). But recently, it has been reported that HE was burden by a lot of workload regarding the Halal matters such as Internal Halal Committee, halal assurance products, auditing, halal application process and monitor the production lines and also become representor during the inspection carried out by JAKIM

which is only done by two worker. Besides, Halal talents in Malaysian industries reported to have lack of career path development, lack of training provided and poor salary paid by the organization are the reasons of turnover occurs among Halal talents in Malaysia industries (Rafida et al. 2020). Thus, the turnover will cause a great problem to the industries as the recruitment and training for the new employee will be costly and will lead to have an inexperienced staff. Having an inexperienced staff is not only cause time and cost but also the risk of not adapting to the organizational culture (Marjan et al. 2017). Besides, some SMEs company tend to use fake certification Halal logo or not really implementing and understand the Halal practices to maintain the Halal compliance (Siti Aminah et al., 2020). These findings align with the study done by Noordin et al (2009) that found lack of knowledge on halal matters as the regular problem faced by the food producer.

1.2 Research Objectives

Main objective:

To identify the current issues on job description and specialization of Halal Executives in Malaysian SME.

- (1) To determine the current job requirements and specialization of Halal Executives in Malaysian SMEs
- (2) To study the current issues regarding Halal Executives position

1.3 Research Questions

Q1: What are the current job requirements and specialization of Halal Executives in Malaysian SMEs?

Q2: What are the current issues regarding Halal Executives position in Malaysia?

1.4 Significant of the Research

Talent management is not new in the world's industry and a lot of research have been done to understand and improve talent management in an organization. Talent management is really important in order to ensure the sustainability of a company and improve the organization performance.

A lot of studies had been conducted regarding the talent management but not many studies have been done specifically about Halal Executives' talent in Halal industry since Halal industry is still new to the world. Beside Halal auditor and Halal regulatory officer that work under JAKIM, Halal Executives play a really important role in ensuring the company or any organization to follow the guideline by JAKIM and implement Halal assurance system accordingly upon certified by Halal JAKIM. Thus, some research on Halal Executives' talent should be conducted to understand, maintain and improve the quality of the Halal Executives' roles.

This study determine the issues regarding the HE job requirement and specialization as the halal industry currently expanding rigorously around the world. There are still lack of research that has been conducted regarding the current issues faced by Halal Executive in Malaysian SMEs. Thus, understanding the HE job description and specialization clearly by the organization is needed to retain and attract more Halal Executive in Halal industries. With the findings from this research, it hopes that the Halal certified company will be more understand and clear about the Halal Executives' roles and the requirement needed by the Halal Executives. Some of the issues regarding the Halal Executives also could be solve at instant.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Halal Industries in Malaysia

In Islam, Muslims are obligate to follow the Islamic rules in every aspect of their life as Islam itself means submitting to the will of God (Allah) and to His Law (Erfan et al. 2021). In the Qur'an in Surah Al Maidah verse 88,

it states: "And eat of the clean and lawful things that Allah has given you and fear have piety towards Allah in whom you believe." Therefore, Muslims are obligated to consume Halal products in their daily life. Halal refers to the teachings of the Quran and Prophet Muhammad's exemplary conduct as recorded in Hadith (Samori, Ishak, & Kassan, 2014; Yusuf, Shukor, & Bustamam, 2016). In the context of food products, there are several criteria in Islam that considered the food as Halal food. The ingredients of the food and drinks must be from the animals or plants that are not forbidden in Islam, the process must follow the Islamic guidelines and not involving bribery or stealing (Erfan et al. 2021).

Majority of the 7.2 world population has been accepted the trend of consuming halal products. Muslim's population especially in the developing countries is growing at fastest rate including in United States, United Kingdom and European countries. Thus, the Halal markets rigorously scale-up to all around the world. The Halal market is not only exclusive to Muslims but has gained awareness among non-Muslims' consumers due to the believes of cleanliness and safety of the halal products (Ezanee et al. 2017). Similarly stated by Erfan et al (2021) that nowadays Halal products are not only important for Muslims but also for millennial customers. Thus, non-Muslims' business owner also compete with Muslims owned company to penetrate Halal market. As a result, 10 major exporters of Halal products are from non-Muslim countries, including India, Brazil, Australia, America, New Zealand, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines and France (New Straits Times, 2018). One of the major reasons of the existence of Halal markets is because the Muslims' obligation to eat from the Halal sources. The Halal global market is not only limited to food product but also other product, such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, toiletries, finance and tourism (Moloud et al. 2015; Erfan et al. 2021).

Halal certification is really important in Halal industry as it provides confidence and trust among the purchaser and consumers that are not only Muslims, but also non-Muslims (Siti Aminah et al. 2020). Therefore, a lot of company own by Muslims and non-Muslims seen that it is their opportunity to expand their products into Halal market that are currently expanding throughout the world. In order to obtain Halal certificate, the business owners must undergo certain process to ensure the manufacturing process comply with the Halal procedures. Therefore, there is a need for Halal talents to monitor and documented all the manufacturing process. Referring to Manual Procedure for Halal Certification (Third Revision) 2014, three professional groups (Halal Auditors, Halal Executives and Halal Certification Panel) are involved in the process of Halal certificate application. However, to obtain Halal certificate is not only involving manufacturing process but also through the supply chain management such as warehousing, transportation and logistics, which are important in maintaining and demonstrating Halal integrity, since Halal is a 'farm-to-fork' process (Nadzirah et al. 2020). Thus, Halal talents play a vital role in ensuring the implementation and the integrity of Halal system of the process from 'farm-to-fork' for every company that are applying for the Halal certification. There are several institutions, organizations and government sectors such as JAKIM, Institute of Halal Research and Management (IHRAM) and Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) that provide training for developing Halal talents through various program in order to fulfill the hiking demand of Halal industry (Rafida et al. 2020). The purposes of the programs are not only to gain more halal talents but also to improve and introduce the Halal talents abroad.

Malaysia is well known as a Muslim's country although Malaysian people have different races and religious. In the Halal industry, Malaysia are one of the greatest exporter countries of Halal products with a strong support from the government and agencies such as JAKIM, Halal Development Corporation and Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). In addition, Malaysia has invested millions of dollars attract and strengthen the Halal industry players, especially the local's manufacturer including the small and medium enterprise (Ezanee et al. 2017). In the manufacturing sector, SMEs are defined as enterprises with sales turnover not exceeding RM50 million or number of full-time employees not exceeding 200. Meanwhile, sales turnover not exceeding RM20 million or number of full-time employees not exceeding 75 in service and other sectors. SMEs is covering 98.5% of the total business community in Malaysia which contributed more than one-third of the Malaysian economy (Ezanee et al. 2019).

2.2 Halal Executive as Talent

Current requirements in the manual procedure, Halal Executive need to be appointed by management in a multinational company and medium industry, apart from establishing Halal Assurance Systems (HAS) and Internal Halal Committee (IHC) (Sahir, 2019). While, in a small medium and micro industry category, the management need to appoint one Halal supervisor and Muslim worker to be responsible for the halal certification matters (Fazilah et al., 2018). In general, HE is the person that is responsible in managing tasks regarding Halal matters, such as application of Halal certification in the company. (Muhammad et al. 2020).

The first and main criteria of the Halal Executive is that the person need to be a Muslim. Gender is not an issue because there are no Shariah requirements that prevent or discourage women from serving as Halal Executives. In terms of education, the person must have a suitable academic background in Islamic education or its equivalent. Those without a degree should have at least five years of experience in the industry managing Halal. JAKIM also requires that Halal Executive should obtained halal executive certification that are registered with the Halal Professional Board (HPB). Besides, HE also must have some basic Information Technology (IT) knowledge as the Halal certificate application not only by hardcopy but also must be done through JAKIM's MYeHALAL system which previously known as e-halal system (Muhammad et al. 2020). The Halal Executive job was formed to lessen the company's reliance on certifying agencies in managing and implementing Halal at the operational level, in collaboration with the Internal Halal Committee. Internal Halal Committee is responsible for ensuring the compliance of *halalan tayyiba* by the employees. *Halalan toyyiba* means every aspect that related to the process, preparation, and food handlings that comply with the Islamic law (Nuratifah et al. 2019). Halal Executive was appointed as the company's manager and controller of all Halal-related functions, with the goal of establishing a long-term, accountable Halal control mechanism. This resulted in trustworthy Halal reliability while keeping the halal status at the highest level as possible. They also serve as the Halal certification bodies' eyes and ears, ensuring that halal certificate holders follow Shariah law, particularly when halal is at issue. Halal compliance is ensured throughout the supply chain if the job is done appropriately. (Sahir, 2019).

In referring to Manual Procedure for Halal Certification (Third Revision) 2014, the process of Halal certification involving three experts which are Halal Auditors, Halal Executives and Halal Certification Panel. Halal Auditors are the person that qualified with the Islamic or food technology background. All the Halal applications from the HE must be passed to Halal Auditors first, and Halal Auditors will review the documents, ensure the fee payment, conduct an on-site audit at the premise, prepare reports and submit it to the Halal Certification Panel for approval. Halal Executive is the person that is responsible to prepare all the documents needed for the Halal certificate application, monitoring the manufacturing process and provide training to all the workers that are involved in the manufacturing of the products. Besides, if any non-conformance detected during the on-site audit, HE must record and do a corrective action. Once the corrective action has done and all the requirements meet, the HE will re-submit the application to the Halal Auditors again. Experts that involved as Halal Certification Panel are Chairman, Secretary and two experts in shariah and technical committee. The contract to be in the Halal Certification Panel committee is for two years and can be renewed. The Halal Certification Panel is responsible for the final decision of the Halal certificate application, whether to accept or reject the application. They cannot be directly involved with the auditing and reviewing process to avoid bias (Muhammad et al. 2020).

There was no requirement for Halal Executive mentioned in the MS1500:2000 and MS1500:2004 until the requirement for Halal Executive was first addressed in the second revision of the Malaysian Halal food standards, the MS1500:2009 Halal Food - Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage – General Guidelines". The terms "Halal Executive" were later removed from the "Management Responsibility" section and substituted with "Muslim Personnel" in the new revision of MS1500:2019. The HE was modelled out from Clause 3.5.2, while the IHC were from Clause 3.4 – Shariah Advisory Committee (SAC) and Clause 3.5.1 - Shariah Compliance Unit of the MS1900:2005 standards (Sahir, 2019).

As the Halal Executives mentioned and addressed in the Malaysian Halal food standard, Halal Executives is indeed an important role regarding the Halal requirements as it as the backbone of the Halal certification integrity.

Only Halal Executives that can only monitor all the manufacturing processes regularly, whether it is really meet the Halal requirements or not. Because the on-site audit by the Halal Auditors only several times in a year depends on JAKIM. Therefore, it is crucial to sustain and maintain the interests of halal talents (Halal Executives) across the halal industry by using providing an adequate training, rewards and promotion (Rafida et al. 2020).

2.3 Issues and challenges for Halal Executives

According to Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him mention about the halal and haram in the hadith narrated by Al-Nu'man Ibn Bashir in Jami' at-Tarmidhi (12:1205). Between the halal which is lawful and which is unlawful, there are matters that known as doubtful (unclear), which causes many people not to know whether something is lawful or unlawful. Therefore, it has become one of the challenges to provide a clear understanding about the concepts of halal and haram to the Muslims and non-Muslims business owners particularly in Malaysia that known for its plural society. According to Azis Jakfar et al. (2017), educating people about the halal certification process and the role of each body involved are other challenges that need to be faced by the government. These issues occur due to the hiking demand in the halal industry and the business owners including non-Muslims fight to obtain the Halal certification while they themselves lack of basic knowledge on Halal regulations and Islamic law.

Siti Aminah (2020) reported that some of the business owner took advantage on the inclining of Halal industry by using fake certification logo. Besides, some of them are using the logo only for profit purpose, without really applied and understand deeply the practices to maintain the integrity of the Halal compliance for their manufacturing plant. As the results, Halal certificate from some of the company has been revoked. This unethical behavior could give a bad image to the integrity of the Halal compliance. Awareness of the consumers regarding the Halal compliance are increasing throughout the years. Recently, consumers are also concern about the process of the halal products rather than only simply buying the products with halal logo. Therefore, the process of halal product manufacturing must follow the Halal standards in order to maintain and make the halal status assurance more reliable (Nuratifah et al. 2019). The future of the Halal industry depends on the consumers purchase intention towards the halal products and their believes towards the cleanliness and safety of the halal products. With the presents of Halal talents could help the country to maintain the integrity of the Halal compliance and certification.

However, there are some findings found that Halal talents in Malaysia are currently facing some issues and challenges. Halal talents is still new in the Malaysian industry as the beginning of the Halal industry just started not long ago. Rafida et al. (2020) reported lack of clear halal talents development in Malaysia is due to a poor career path development, lack of training provided for the participants in various field of halal knowledge and poor salary structure. These issues could lead to the incompetency among the employees which will cause demotivation and dissatisfaction with their current job. Majan et al (2017) stated that due to a lack of knowledge and qualification, most of the top management tend to outsource their needs, instead of inside promotion because it will consume time and cost for the talents development. Thus, with the cooperation of all the halal sectors in providing an easy access of training, a clear halal talents development in Malaysia could be achieved and the morale and satisfaction of the employees also will be increase (Debarun and Wendrila, 2019). New knowledge and training are essential elements for talent development that leads to long-term success (Tang et al., 2018; Jabbour et al., 2017) As an employee, the future of their job is important for them to motivate themselves to be more competent in the industry.

Numerous responsibilities performed by the halal executive were found to be demanding due to the fact that the company only had two people assigned to handle halal problems (JAKIM, 2014). In Mauritius during 2018, some of the unemployed citizen quit their previous job because of job dissatisfaction. Duties are not clearly described as well as not align with the current responsibility and have a bad career prospect are among the reasons of employees dissatisfied with their job (Ketan, 2019). But, according to (Debarun and Wendrila, 2019), when the employees are against to do work except the task that have been given, they fail to develop a teamwork which set a barrier for the organization to achieve their goal. Haziq et al, (2015) stated that although the job related to the food technology and safety is not directly related to the job responsibility of Halal Executives, but having extra knowledge on food technology is an additional skills that helps them to make decision regarding the use and handling or the raw

materials and critical ingredients. To conclude, additional skills and knowledges are important for the Halal talents but roles and task that are not even related to job description of Halal Executives will be burdensome. Therefore, a clear job descriptions and roles is important to ensure all the employees are on the right track, which will be beneficial to the organizations.

The halal industry in Malaysia too faces a high rate of turnover among the halal talents in an organization. The cost of turnover is high since it necessitates the recruitment and training of new staff (Hanini Ilyana and Sariwati) (2016). This might lead to issues with unskilled staff, and repeat training would be a waste of time, energy, and money (Rafida et al., 2020). Similarly stated by McCracken et al., (2017) which losing talents through turnover may lead to more turnover of other talents, resulting in a knowledge and memory deficit or even deprivation in the organization. Many talents are not recognized and appreciated and organizations have failed to achieved their objectives because of the poor techniques applied in the talent management. Thus, strategy to retain and attract talent is one of the challenges that an organization must face. The organization should recognize their most important resource which is human capital with developing reward system. Although the organization could not afford to monetarily reward the employees, they could use other alternative such as career progression and annual or monthly group activities (Beatriz, 2020). According to Maslow (1943), promotion opportunities could enhance employees job satisfaction through the personal growth. Having appropriate career opportunities, development, or strategies is critical for an organization.

2.4 Job Description and Specialization

A job description is a list of tasks that are expected by the organization for the employees to take responsibility and achieved (Dessler, 2013; Marsden et al., 2013). Job description is a basic means of communication in the workplace (Beáta, 2017). According to (Gökhan Torlak et al., 2018), Job description does not involve rules, procedures, work objectives or desired abilities and personal attributes, but only includes assigned duties and responsibilities. Clear and well explain job description is important for better performance and prevent confusion among the employees (Jia et al. 2018). When it comes to finding the right people, job analyses and job descriptions are crucial. A clear definition of a position's functions and responsibilities ensures that everyone at every level of the organization understands their role which increase the value of product/service development (Yong et al., 2019). The development of a methodology for job analysis and job description could help the organization in selection and recruitment of a right person that fit with the job position. Although the positions have similar job description, sometimes the culture are contrasting. Thus, the classic set of job description features does not help in recruiting an employee that fit with the job even the position is the same with the equal or higher salary (Mariusz, 2017).

Job specification or specialization describe the criteria that need the employees should have (Sparrow, 2000). Usually, job seeker will study the details of the job requirement whether they fitted to be in that position with the skills and knowledge that they have. Nowadays, job seekers are hardly to find relevant job position suited with their level of knowledge and skills due to overwhelming volume of data and requirements. The presence of job vacancies is due to dismissal of employees because they are not fitted with the job given. Thus, it is important to improve the quality of matching between job descriptions and job vacancies (Sisay et al., 2018). Job seekers prefer to work for companies that are worth for their skills and knowledge (Jing et al., 2019). Each employee has their own specialty and skills that should be explored and nurtured by the superiors to obtain the best outcomes from them (Debarun and Wendrila, 2019).

2.5 Sex-stereotype in Organization

According to a research paper written by Van Esch et al. (2018), female candidates that are not highly qualified or equally qualified to male candidates are less likely to be selected and receive less salary. Female may face even higher hurdles gaining entry to senior levels of management than previously as they need to have clear and highly successful records of accomplishment. Based on the findings by Medaline et al. (2019), women are less benefit and

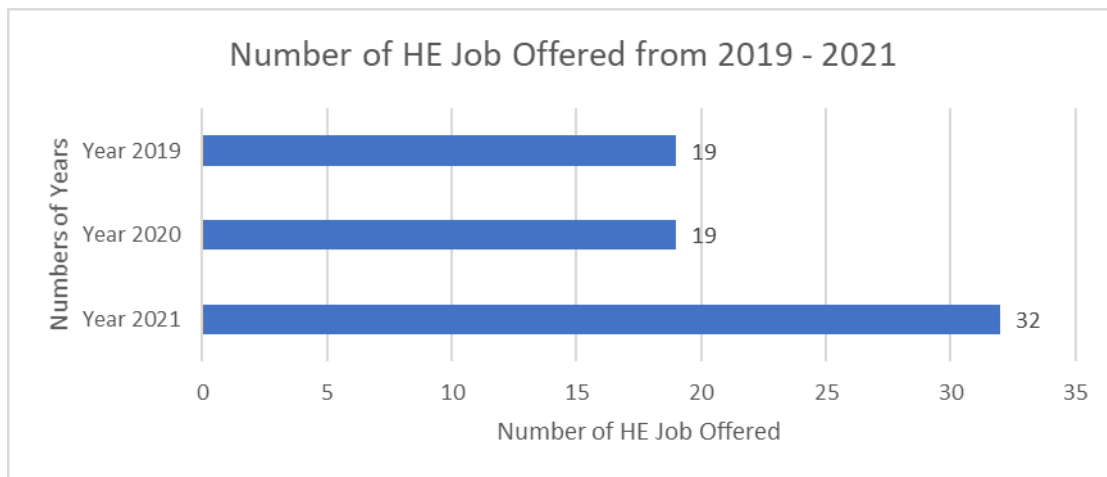
in disadvantage compared to men in the male gender-typed field. Oppositely with the result obtained when the field was female gender-typed. Gender bias is only dormant when the gender disparities are absence and surfaced when it is presence. Male students' gender stereotypes are stronger than female students' when an occupation is seen as masculine. When an occupation is mostly seen as feminine, however, female students' gender stereotypes for that occupation are greater than male students' (Cigdem, 2019).

3. Method

This research is conducted using an exploratory method. Numbers of articles are collected from two search engine which are Scopus and Web of Science. The articles were refined with the keywords of “Halal Executives”, “Job Description”, and “Job specialization included in the title, abstract and keywords. With regard to timeline, a period of 5 years is selected between 2017 and 2021, an adequate period of time to see the evolution of research and related publications. The data of the current job description and job specialization were obtained from numerous website such as Job Street, Indeed, Facebook and Joblum from 2019 until 2021. Then, Microsoft Excel was used to sort the data based on the company, job position, job descriptions, job requirements, job specialization, salary, gender and year of the job offered. Later, the data were analyzed using SPSS version 22.

4. Results and Discussions

(i) Number of Halal Executives' position vacancy from years 2019 until 2021



(ii) Number of Halal Executives' job position paired with other positions

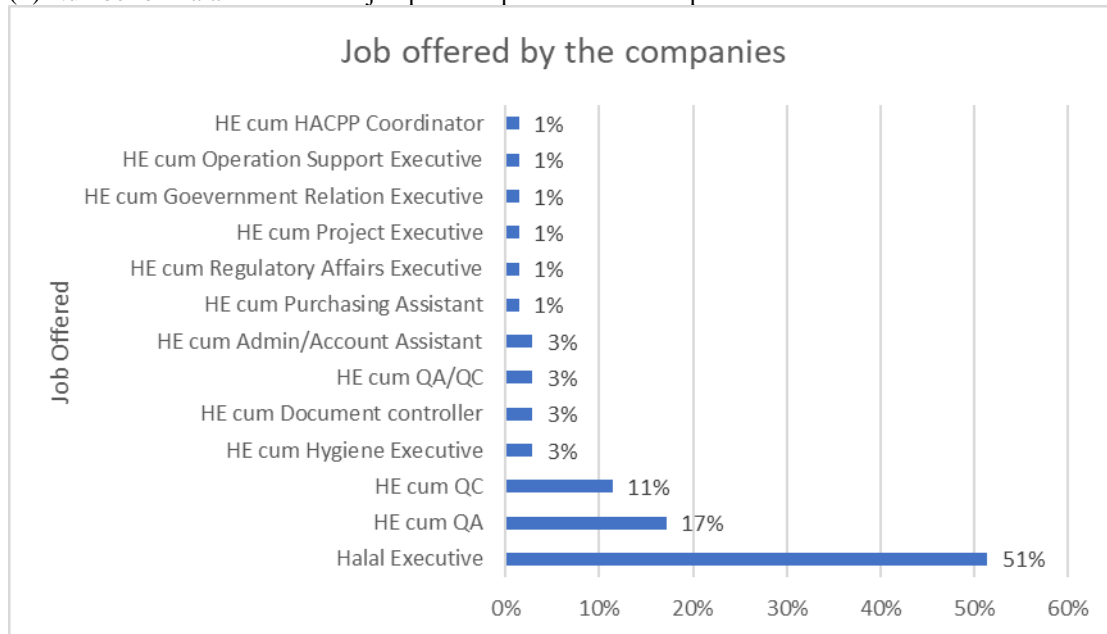


Figure 4.2: (i) Number of Halal Executives' position vacancy from years 2019 until 2021; (ii) Number of Halal Executives' job position paired with other position

Based on the data collected, 70 companies offer job position related to Halal Executives from the year of 2019 until 2021. 32 companies offered Halal Executives job vacancy in 2021, 19 companies in 2020 and 19 companies in 2019. Out of 70 companies, only 51% of the companies offer Halal Executives job position without other roles, while 11% of the companies offer Halal Executives position cum with Quality Control and 17% of the companies offer Halal Executives position cum with Quality Assurance. The remaining companies offer a Halal Executives job position cum with either Hygiene Executive, Regulatory Affairs Executive, Project Executive, Government Relation Executive, Operation Support Executive, Halal Coordinator and Document Controller. The results indicate that almost majority of the company offer Halal executive position together with other management roles. These results are relevant with the findings by Haziq et al. (2015), other than Halal Executives roles, they need to monitor the pest control whether by hiring external pest control or even worse is do it on their own.

Thus, it become a burdensome to the HE to do other management role, while themselves already appointed with a lot of tasks related to Halal matters. In addition, this issue become more serious when some of the Halal Executives does not clear with the task given due to the lack of training provided by the authorities and the organizations (Ketan, 2019). A sufficient training must be provided by the authorities or organizations with an adequate amount of knowledge and experience in order to become among the halal talents that being recognized in the halal industry. Rafida et al. (2020) proposed some solutions to retain and maintain the Halal talents in the Halal industry. They suggested that an alternative learning environment that compliments the existing training should be provided for the Halal talents in Malaysia. Besides, each organization should be more well aware towards the needs of halal talents which could motivate them stay longer in the organizations. Easy to access and flexible system also need to be provided for the Halal talents to help them easily adopt with the changes made by the organizations.

Job descriptions for Halal executive are vary for each of the company, but some of the descriptions are similar. For instance, HE must comply with the requirements of the Food Safety Management System (FSMS) and Halal Assurance Management System (HAMS) that meets the ISO 22000, MS 1480, MS 1500 & HAS 23000. Besides,

HE needs to coordinate the HAMS, Halal Assurance System (HAS) in the company and report to the Management on the effectiveness and suitability of the systems. HE must ensure all staffs are strictly adhere at all times to the Halal & food safety standards as set by JAKIM, JAIS, LPPOM MUI etc. Besides, HE should provide in-house training to all operators related to Halal requirements including new employee. In addition, HE needs to lead the Internal Halal Committee (IHC) / Halal Management Team (HMT) and train all staff to ensure the company enforcement and manufacturing meet the standard. They also in-charge in all type of application (New Product, New Application and Renewal) of Halal & food safety certification. Handle audit & inspection from any certification body, such as JAKIM, JAIS, LPPOM MUI also must be done by HE. Furthermore, HE also has to ensure all raw materials used are qualified and halal compliance. Besides, they need to ensure the critical activity such as raw materials selection, development of new product, cleaning of production facilities, materials purchasing, incoming material checking, handling and storage of material or product and transportation should be conducted as per procedures. These results are aligned with the job descriptions outlined by Sahir et al. (2019) and Haziq et al. (2015).

Some of the company did not disclose their job description through the online platform but stated the requirements needed. This kind of lack information that could lead to problems and fraud in the future. Besides, the worst problems happened when there are even some companies use fake job descriptions (Minh Thanh, 2021). As the results, the employees felt betrayed and dissatisfied with the job and roles given. In return, the employees do not give full effort and responsibility in fulfilling their tasks. In addition, Mariusz Tomasz (2017) found that the classic set of job description features does not help in creating a better job-person fit for newly recruited employee. This issue will be more serious as the person that should be recruited are not applying for that position. Therefore, a lot of complaints related to the mismatched of the positions occurs.

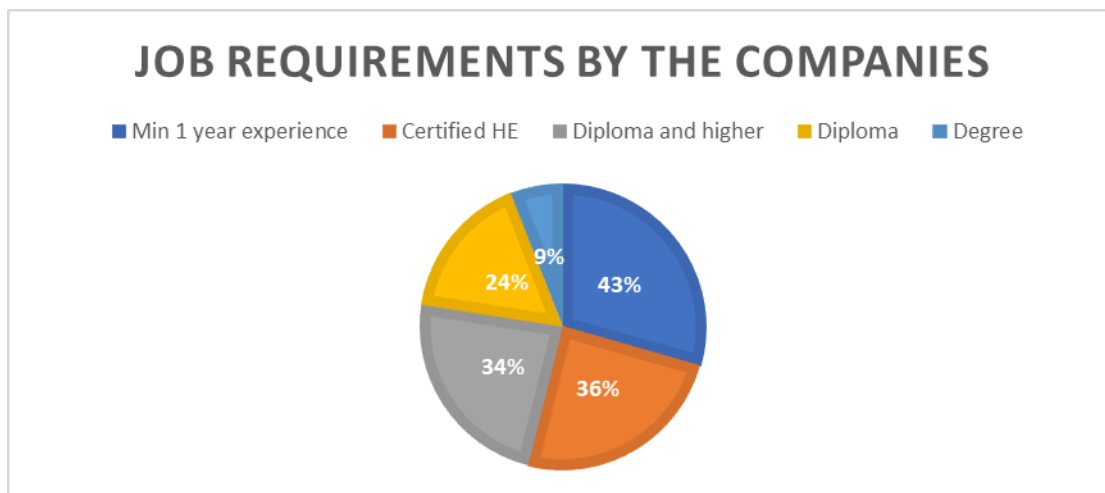


Figure 4.3: Job requirements by the companies

Figure 4.3 illustrated the basic job specializations or requirements for Halal Executive position. HE must possess Diploma or higher level of education that related to the Halal management, Syariah and food technology and also certified with Halal Executive certificate that recognized by Halal Professional Board. 34% of the companies did not state the requirements need while 24% of the companies stated that the applicant must have at least Diploma and 9% of the companies stated the applicant must be Degree holder. The other companies (34%) stated in the job requirements that the applicants must obtain Diploma or higher level of education. Besides, 36% of the companies

need to possess Halal certification that are approved by Halal Professional Board. Majority of the companies (43%) need to have a good knowledge in Halal matters and have at least one year of experience in the related field.

Based on the results, most of the companies required at least one year of experience. This could be a problem for the fresh graduate student to applied for the job position as they only have 6 months or 4 months experience during the internship course according to the requirement by the university. But it is also a concern by the organizations to take the risk in recruiting the staff with lack of experience. Mindset of every employer, the longer the experience in the related industry the better the knowledge and skills of the employees. By having an experience and knowledgeable employee would increase the organizational learning and creativity (Zaina, 2019). Therefore, in order to solve this problem, the fresh graduate student that are applying to be one of Halal talents must undergo and participate in professional course that will enhance the skills and knowledges such as Halal Executives certificate. Besides, the government also should provide an affordable training for the fresh graduate student as they do not have any income and maybe some of them come from poor family.

In addition, most of the company required the applicants must have at least Diploma and higher level of education that related to the Halal field. Knowledge level is the important key that will be the measurement and indicator for the employer to evaluate the applicants. Knowledge is important as it is minimized and prevent from any incompatibilities in Halal requirements (Nuratifah et al. 2019). Haziq et al. 2015 reported that most of the common problem among food producers was the lack of knowledge on halal requirements and procedures. Thus, most of the companies and organizations required the applicants to have Halal Executive certification.

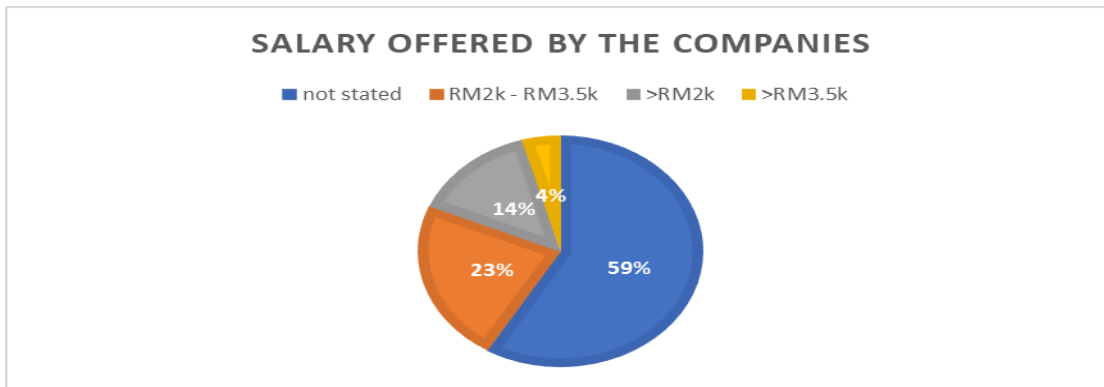


Figure 4.4: Salary offered by the companies

59% of the companies did not state the amount of the salary for the job offer, 23% of the companies state the range between RM2 thousands and below RM3.5 thousands, 14% of the companies offered below than RM2 thousands and 4% of the companies offered more than RM4 thousands. Based on the result obtained, it proved that the HE positions majority are poorly paid by the organizations (Rafida et al. 2020). Most of the company stated in the recruitments that the applicants should have at least one year of experience but still reluctant to provide sufficient and enough amount of salary that suit with the positions and roles given. Some of the company does not disclose their salary offered in online platform due to some reasons.

Among all the data collected from the companies' job vacancy, 2 of the company need only female workers and 4 of the companies need only male workers. This indicated that there are still sex-stereotyped occurs in the application of job for HE (Medaline et al. 2019). Contradict with the Halal requirements that proposed by the government that allowed either man or women to be the Halal Executives. There is no Shariah requirement that prohibit or discourage women from taking the role as Halal Executives (Sahir, 2019) Thus, it explains that there should be no gender bias in recruiting Halal Executives. Sex-stereotype could limit the the opportunity of the company to have a competent employee as women are also knowledgeable compared to man.

5. Conclusion

The role of Halal executive in Malaysian SMEs is indeed burdensome due to workload not only regarding the halal matters but also other management role. Even though they are appointed with a lot of tasks, the salary offered by the organization are not worth with the roles and tasks given. Gender bias or sex-stereotyped also still happened in some of the companies, while there is no gender concern in the requirements addressed by JAKIM.

Thus, every Malaysian company including SME need to understand the right job description and job requirement or specialization in order to retain and attract Halal talent in Halal industries. Besides, all the authorities that related in the Halal field should put efforts together in developing the Halal talents in Halal industry. More of research should be conduct degrading the Halal talents especially Halal executives to carter any issues that occurs and improve the development of the Halal talents. The organizations should reconstruct again the approach to maintain and retain Halal talents in the industry. Clear career path and job descriptions, sufficient amount of salary and sufficient amount of training are important for the Halal talents (Halal Executives) to always motivate and give full energy in fulfill their responsables.

Acknowledgement

No funding sources had involved in conducting this research.

6. References

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