

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

Comparison and Challenges in the Implementation of Halal Food Laws Midst Covid-19: Evidence from Malaysia and UK

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1. Introduction

According to the Holy Al Quran, every Muslim is obligated to consume halal goods. This strong mandate might be read as requiring halal products and services for the world's 1.8 billion Muslims, which is expected to grow to 2.2 billion by 2030. As a result, the halal market has a lot of attraction for entrepreneurs as well as multi-national companies to tap into halal food supplies. Current trend of global halal regulatory requirement shows that halal certification now becoming non-trade barriers to exporters. Non-Muslim countries however must comply with the non-tariff barrier imposed by the importing countries such as Halal certification to get clearance of goods at port of entry.

Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) that authorised by the Ministry in The Prime Minister Department (Religious) for example has recognised over 78 Halal certification bodies reside worldwide to support the requirement of halal certification at exporting countries (JAKIM; 2019). Like UAE, the Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA) that has been authorised under the Ministry of Industry and Advanced Technology to implement a specific Emirati system for the control of Halal products, which was issued initially by the 19 Council of Ministers Resolution No.10 of the national legislative system for Halal products in January 2014 where Halal goods entering the country must be certified by the accredited Halal certification body. As for now, 79 Halal certification bodies have been accredited according to the category approved by ESMA (ESMA; 2021)

2. Literature Review

A study by Usman, Chairy and Projo (2021) found that the inclination to buy halal-certified food is significantly influenced by perfectionist/high-quality aware and price-sensitive individuals. Meanwhile, halal consciousness and recreational/hedonic consciousness both have a substantial positive influence on the desire to purchase halal-certified food apart from the religion factor that has a significant positive impact on the intention to purchase halal-certified food. Various nations, on the other hand, may have different definitions of halal. Halal is a lifestyle for Muslim clients, whereas it relates to product quality for non-Muslim customers (Samori et al., 2016).

As a result, many nations are taking major steps to establish national plans to attract international tourists, particularly Muslim travelers, owing to their large numbers (Wilson et al., 2014).

Background of Halal Laws

In Malaysia, according to Othman, Shaarani and Bahrom (2017) Halal is defined as adhering to the country's halal certification as determined by "competent authorities" (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia/ Islamic Religious Council of the States). As a result, halal is defined as follows:

- does not include or consist of any part or matter of an animal that is banned by Syarak for a Muslim to ingest or that has not been killed in accordance with Hukum Syarak dan Fatwa.
- it does not contain anything unclean.
- it does not intoxicate.

The law was enacted under the supervision of Domestic Trade, Cooperatives, and Consumerism Ministry which has been in effect since 1972, when it was originally enacted and later amended twice, first in 1975 for Trade Descriptions (Use of Expression Halal Order) 1975 and the Trade Descriptions (Marking of Food) Order 1975 and latest in 2011 for the Trade Descriptions - Definition of Halal Order. However, Zakaria and Ismail (2014) argued that Malaysia followed in the footsteps of the United Kingdom when the Malaysian Parliament first passed

the Trade Description Act since there was no legal framework that provided JAKIM specific legal jurisdiction to grant halal certification as an authority body. Not only that, but JAKIM has always overseen conducting halal audits and monitoring throughout the nation and at international level.

Having said that the industry has been provided with a legislation, standards, processes, and recommendations to follow to ensure that food items fulfill the halal principles. It contains MS1500: 2009 Halal Food – Production, Preparation, Handling, and Storage – General Guidelines (Second Revision), Manual Procedure of Halal Certification Malaysia (Third Revision), and 2014 Malaysian Halal Assurance Management System Certification, Malaysian Protocol - Malaysian Protocol for Meat and Poultry Production, "Sertu" Guidelines which are governed separately under Food Act 1983, Trade Description Act 2011 and others.

Furthermore, under Section 29 of Informative Marking and Certification Orders of Trade Descriptions empowers the Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer to impose requirement for goods to be certified, marked, or accompanied and regulate or prohibit supply of goods that are not meeting the said requirements. Any conviction under this Act will be liable to a fine not exceeding RM200,000 for the first time and RM500,000 for the subsequent offence (Laws of Malaysia; 2011). The following are offence in breaching Halal requirements:

5. *Any person who supplies or offers to supply any food, goods or service in relation to the food or goods which is described as 'halal' or any other expression which is not in compliance with this Order shall be guilty of an offence.*

6. *Offence for an act of deceit or mislead:*

(1) *Any person who supplies or offers to supply any food through any representation or an act which is likely to deceive or mislead those who have been supplied or offered to be supplied that the food is either "halal" or can be consumed by Muslim commits an offence.*

(2) *Save in accordance with the interpretation of "representation and conduct" as in subparagraph (1), the representation or conduct includes the usage of holy words of Al-Quran or any matter or object in relation to Islam either in the premises of which such food is sold or in the container of which such food is supplied;*

(3) *In any proceeding for the offence under subparagraph (1), the onus in proving that the food which is being supplied or offered to be supplied is "halal" in accordance with paragraph (3) shall lie on the person charged.*

Shockingly, JAKIM's monitoring and enforcement has revealed that the industry fails to maintain certification, as evidenced by a non-compliance notice issued, in which 126 of the 1,437 inspections conducted from January to December 2013 were non-compliant due to minor, major, or significant errors (Kertas Laporan Pemantauan dan Penguatkuasaan Halal; 2012).

This finding was supported by the recent cases reported by local newspaper, Sinar Harian on a "cartel" importing frozen meats from China, Ukraine, Brazil, and Argentina into Malaysia, where they were repackaged with Malaysian halal labels and sold in domestic markets. The cartel was discovered during a warehouse search in Senai, Johor, when officials confiscated 1,500 tons of imported frozen beef worth RM30 million (Malay Mail; 2021). According to Malaysian Department of Quarantine and Inspection Services (MAQIS), the cartel was imitating a well-known local frozen meat provider, then the warehouse was allegedly used as a repacking center, with the items being branded with a fake JAKIM halal logo. However, Halal certification was, however, elective rather than required under existing systems.

Having said that, Malaysia's Muslim Consumer Association (PPIM), a local non-profit organization, has earlier urged the government to push for the implementation of independent Halal Act which could provide authorities greater clout in enforcing more rigorous halal meat supply chain oversight and enforcement (MSN News; 2020).

While in the UK, Halal laws is intensively discussed at the point of halal slaughtering process should the animal is pre-stunned or not in complying with both the existing UK and European Union (EU) laws. According to Adams (2011) the influx of substantial Muslim communities into the EU since the 1970s, certain EU nations have begun to include their dietary demands and religious practices into their national legislation. Regarding the slaughtering process, EU regulates that an irreversible stun (120-150 mA per bird; 50-400 Hz) is employed, and the birds are shocked to death in this scenario of irreversible stunning where the birds can breathe after a few second (EC No.1099/2009; 2009). In line with the EU laws, UK through the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations (1995) (Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 1995/731, as modified by SI No. 1999/400, allows animals to be slaughtered (cattle, sheep, goats, turkeys, chickens, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, and quail). Schedule 5 Part II (which deals with animal stunning and slaughter) does not apply to any animal murdered under Schedule 12 Part 3 (relates to religiously sanctioned slaughter). In the case of Halal slaughter, the activity must be handled by a licensed Muslim Slaughterman and must be done at a licensed abattoir or slaughterhouse (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; 20019). Nevertheless, to meet the only demand of non-religious slaughtered

chicken, large-scale poultry processing factories are intended to handle between 4,000 and 12,000 birds per hour on a single line, according to food experts (Schilling et. al;2014).

Halal Food Authority Ltd (HFA) has been operating in the United Kingdom since 1994 and was one of the first few halal certification bodies in the country established by Muslim owned non-profit organisation, Halal Food Foundation (HFA;2017). There are more than one Halal certification bodies established in the UK to carry out Halal supervision that voluntarily engaged by the food manufacturers which are HMC and Halal Certification Europe (or formerly known The Muslim Food Board) (JAKIM;2019), and RACS Quality Certificates UK LTD, Halal Certification Organisation (HCO) and Islamic Chamber Halal Certification Services (ESMA;2021). For instance, HFA continues to defend their approach of certifying both non-stunned as well as electrical water bath stunning for poultry, claiming that the growing demand for halal meat necessitates the use of mechanisation and stunning to immobilize the animal. The stunning method in the UK is governed under WATOK (2015) where the goal of stunning is to make the animal lose awareness and sensitivity so that it can be killed and bled without suffering. HMC, on the other hand, solely uses non-stunned killing methods which must comply with Guidance of Halal and Kosher Slaughter under the UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA; 2015).

The UK government, on the other hand, has refused to modify the legislation that controls halal labeling to ensure the authenticity of halal food items and strengthen halal certification in the halal business (Thomas et. al;2017). The UK laws do not prohibit any use of trademark on the labelled according to Section 29 of the Labelling of Food Regulations 1970 (Food and Drugs; 1973). The trademark must be registered under Section 68(1) of the Trademark Act 1938 (j). In addition to that Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 22nd Session in 1997 has adopted earlier that a food is claimed to be halal, the phrase halal or similar words should appear on the label (Codex Alimentarius Commission; 1997).

In addition to that, the Section 5 of the Labelling of Food Regulations 1970 (Food and Drugs; 1973) has outlined the labelling requirements which are specification of ingredient(s), name and address of producer, proportion of ingredients by weight, and constituents to be listed, if any such as emulsifier.

Section 13 of the said laws also stipulated that any chocolate confectionery containing intoxicating liquor must provide description by inserting the name of liquor or fortified wine and its quantity. This regulation indirectly helps Muslim consumers to make right decision about the halal status of product in the absence of halal logo amid strict regulation on food makers and marketers to provide clear and accurate information about the ingredients content in the product labelling.

Apart from that, Fuseini (2017) argued that most Halal meat processing facilities in the Europe also handle and process swine alongside Halal meat products, pork appears to be the most crucial product of concern for most Muslims communities residing in the West. This method raises the potential of cross-contamination between Halal and pork goods, especially if segmentation is lacking.

This situation causes less compliance to Halal requirements among the foods manufacturers in the country hence Fuseini (2017) suggested Muslim communities to play greater roles in ensuring the requirements are always observed by the certificated manufacturers. In fact, there were cases where local city council has acted against misrepresentation of halal logo. For instance, Birmingham City Council filed the complaint after Trading Standards officials visited the business on 26 April 2013 and discovered posters with illegal HMC trademarks implying that the premises and meat were HMC-certified (Birmingham News; 2015).

A Food Safety Officer or a Trading Standards Officer can determine whether or not a food labeled as Halal as part of a normal inspection, an investigation into a complaint, or a sampling program from who food companies acquire their meat from on a regular basis in all situations (Guidance Note on Halal Food; 2011). Bradford Council in addition has written a Halal Manual for Facilities Management outlining Halal slaughtering and supply chain procedures to ensure halal food served, for example, in school meets the requirements approved by Bradford Council for Mosque and Muslim scholars (Halal Manual; 2012). Similarly, Halal certification was voluntary rather than mandatory on the food manufacturers.

Midst COVID-19 Pandemic

Mankiw (2010) the well-known economist described a circular flow of money between firms and households of producing bread. Richard Baldwin later in 2020 clarified the flow-disruptions that may occur due to COVID-19 outbreaks. For better understanding we plotted on the page, it looked like an electrical network which interconnects each component and challenges in the economy of producing Halal goods. The diagram illustrates the major alarms in the relationship established between Halal manufacturer and other components. The future of Halal industry in this country lies in the hand of manufacturers but now they are facing greater challenges ahead especially on raw material supply disruption, affordable halal goods, halal travel and halal policy available. Obviously, the main concerns are more on the food security and government policy as people do need nutrition.

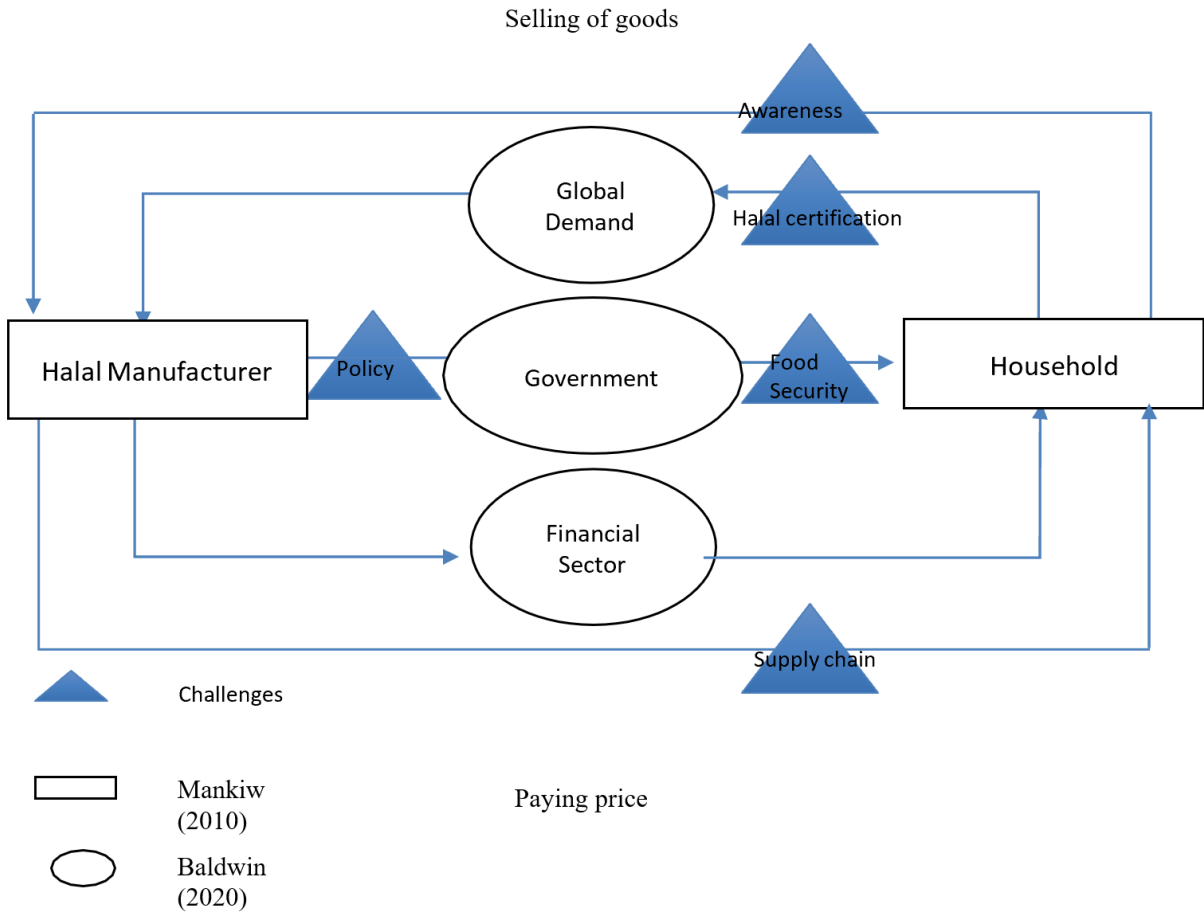


Diagram 1: Enhanced Flow of Disruption in Halal Industry Midst Covid-19

3. Methodology

The study employs descriptive methodology to analyse, evaluate and obtain a better understanding of phenomena, generate new insights, and develop a more focused research issue or hypothesis. Inductive analysis of the articles was used to produce a description of the research findings concluded by article writers.

The articles were specifically chosen to provide a concise overview in Halal law studies, as well as the steps used to attain the study goals. Literature reviews support the researchers further to expand the view on Halal laws and its application in both countries.

4. Findings and Discussions

Based on the literature reviews and desktop research, the following issues or challenges are discussed earlier by the articles related to regulations, standards, and guidance on halal laws. The findings of the research publication are grouped accordingly based on the enhanced circular flow of disruption in Halal industry to understand the current challenges in these two countries in regulating Halal requirements:

Table 1: Issues and Challenges in Malaysia and UK Based on Enhanced Flow of Disruption

Issues	Challenges	
	Malaysia	United Kingdom
Community Awareness	Customers are ready to pay a somewhat higher price for halal items since the producers must follow a strict process while making halal food. Ingredients and product awareness, on the other hand, have a negligible influence on purchase intent due to complacent belief that product sold in Malaysia must be Halal (Chong et.al;2021)	Subjective norms are the most significant predictors of customers' desire to purchase halal-labeled food goods, according to the data, for both high and low Islamic religiosity (Elseidi; 2017)

Halal Certification	Halal goods are verified by a respected certification for food safety. This gives customers trust and makes it their first option (Abdul Aziz, Y. and Chok, N.V; 2013) However, the use of sophisticated technology has the potential to significantly improve Malaysia's halal sector which gives Muslim customers more confident in their dietary choices(Kamarulzaman, Muhamad and Naw; 2021)	Because of the existing scenario, anybody with no special credentials or experience may form a Halal certification body, which has resulted in the development of several HCBs across the world (Fuseini et. al;2021) However, none of them were judged to demonstrate a comprehensive supply chain approach to halal cosmetic product quality assurance (Annabiand Ibidapo-Obe; 2015)
Food Security	Current religious logos on food (such as the kosher and halal emblems) only give information about religious conformity. These, on the other hand, do not consider nutritional requirements. By including nutritional analysis into the religious emblem, consumers will be better informed to make healthier food choices (Tieman and Hassan; 2015)	Even though there are more unresolved problems than solutions, it is critical to remember that halal is a way of life that includes excellent behavior and integrity or ethics in Islamic dietary habits as well. So, with the ever- changing world of science and technology vs. consumerism, as well as population growth and migration cycles that bring various groups with ethical diets together (Chandia and Soon;2017)
Policy	All human variables affecting halal practices, such as knowledge, attitude, and sensitivity to government policy (Othman, Shaarani and Bahrom; 2017)	There are perhaps 15 HCBs in the UK alone, all vying for a piece of the market. These uncontrolled certifiers follow a variety of Halal standards and have differing perspectives on what defines Halal (Fuseini et. al;2021)
Supply Chain	The aim to embrace Halal transportation was verified to have a favorable link with customer pressure apart from perceived benefits provided the Halal logistics give full explanation (Ngah et. al;2021)	To decrease customers' doubt about the halal logo and certify the halal status of these items, food makers and marketers should give clear and accurate information about the halal procedure (Elseidi; 2017)

5. Limitation and Implication

This research has potential limitations. Apart from the time constraint, the current study is unable to represent the research results heavily reliant on the desktop search. For this cause, future studies should be carried out in collaboration with relevant authorities to focus on qualitative methods which include interviewing and reaching out to industry players and law makers. Further research also can be extended into other relevant journals.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

To conclude, this study explores the existing Halal laws enforced and implemented in both countries. There are lacunas in the enhanced flow of disruption explained earlier on the challenges faced by both countries amidst Covid-19 which require further attention from Muslim communities and relevant authorities.

Halal food is the most significant food business for Muslim consumers, and as a result, the food industry in non-Muslim nations is expanding. This establishes the western company as a leader in the provision of halal meals in non-Muslim nations (Wilson et. al; 2013). On the other hand, under the perceived behavioral area, product safety was used to assess non-Muslims' willingness to buy halal items (Haque et al; 2015). However, the main motivation in offering halal food to Muslim-majority nations arose in industrialized countries that mostly manufactured in Non-majority Muslim countries (Bergeaud-Blackler; 2010). Norazmi and Lim (2015) also concurred that in the halal food business, industrialized countries with minority Muslim populations are the largest producers of meat destined for halal markets, such as Australia (beef), New Zealand (lamb), and Brazil (a chicken producer).

Even though there are more unresolved problems than solutions happening in the West, Chandia and Soon (2017) argued that it is critical to remember that halal is a way of life that includes excellent behavior and integrity or ethics in Islamic dietary habits as well.

Because of Covid, things have changed, and additional steps are needed to be able to carry out Halal audit as well as surveillance on site. Hence, the Halal requirements must not be compromised amid the pandemic Covid-19 especially at the areas identified earlier in the enhanced flow of disruption. Muslim communities are also urged to play a greater role in implementing latest technology in ensuring the Halal requirement is always met by all stakeholders.

Apart from that the Muslim communities worldwide must work together to create awareness in harmonising Halal standards globally beyond meat consumption. This is because when the amendment to the Consumer Rights Bill (new clause 13) had been tabled in the UK Parliament to label meat as halal or kosher by Philip Davies MP, the

Consumer Affairs Minister Jenny Willott, however, stressed that many stores, restaurants, and fast-food chains currently offer information about whether meat is halal or kosher on a voluntary basis, and Halal meat does not have a single, unambiguous definition. (Religious Slaughter of Animal; 2014).

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