

The Development of Malaysia's Halal Management System: Insights and Recommendations for Vietnam

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ABSTRACT: The development of the Halal economy and trade has become the goal that many countries in the world aspire to in the period of economic integration and sustainable growth. Vietnam is also not outside the “vortex” of this global phenomenon brought by the Halal market, as its proximity to large Halal-consuming markets. However, the Halal management system in Vietnam has not yet fully met the Halal product consumption standards set by Muslim countries. Vietnamese enterprises often lack a comprehensive understanding of the consumer culture of Muslim markets, leading to numerous industries being underdeveloped in this sector. Therefore, studying the Halal management system in Malaysia - a nation with the highest Muslim population ratio in Southeast Asia will provide Vietnam with valuable insights to overcome the above situation. This paper will study the experience of the Halal management system application in Malaysia and propose recommendations for Vietnam to foster its own Halal industry.

Keywords: Halal, Islam, Malaysia, management system, Vietnam

1. INTRODUCTION

The Halal market in recent years has been assessed as a highly promising sector with immense growth potential, actively explored by many countries. According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the global Halal market has great potential in terms of the size of the Muslim population, which reached approximately 1.94 billion in 2022 accounting for nearly one-quarter of the world's total population and continues to grow at an annual rate of 1.5%. The size of the global Halal economy will reach 7,000 billion USD in 2022 and is expected to increase to about 10,000 USD in 2028. However, to participate in the Halal market, for Vietnam to participate effectively in the Halal market, it is imperative to make strategic advancements in defining objectives and directions, specifically targeting countries within Southeast Asia that have significant Muslim populations such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei . These neighboring countries make it easy for Vietnam to explore and access the Halal market and then expand into other regions. To access this market, Vietnam is also urgently completing facilities, Halal standard management systems, and comprehensive legal framework to ensure that businesses in Vietnam can both easily access the market and ensure legality.

The term Halalan Toyyiban originates from Arabic, as cited in the Quran and Sharia Law, and signifies that all consumables and services must be lawful, natural, hygienic, safe, nutritious, and free from elements prohibited under Islamic principles (Novi Yanti Sandra Dewi et al., 2021). Halal standards encompass an entire chain of processes to ensure that goods, food products, and services consumed are legally permissible under Islamic law. These standards may differ between countries or regions, leading to inconsistencies in the application of Halal certification for identical products. Therefore, the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) and the World Halal Council (WHC) have made concerted efforts in developing and harmonizing global Halal standards. In this context, each nation needs to urgently establish and refine its Halal management system in alignment with international Halal policies and standards.

Studying international experiences in Halal consumption, operational methods, and Halal system governance has become an inevitable trend of developing countries in general and Vietnam in particular. In particular, Malaysia is the country with the highest Muslim population ratio in Southeast Asia. Halal standards in Malaysia or Indonesia are often used as a reference by countries aiming to enter the Halal market. The Halal management system in Malaysia is highly regarded by the World Halal Council for its comprehensive and stringent framework, encompassing legal foundations, certification procedures, and mandatory Halal labeling for products. Therefore, studying the experience of managing the Halal system in Malaysia is an opportunity for Vietnam to quickly promote the transition process, towards a potential Halal market.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In fact, research on the development of the Halal management system in Vietnam is still quite new, there are not many articles and research papers on this issue. Within the scope of the research, the author found that the following research works are quite suitable for the topic of the article such as: Author Huynh Thanh Tam (2024), Development of the Halal market in Vietnam from the perspective of state management, *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, No. 2, 2024; Alzeer., & colleagues. (2018). Rational and practical aspects of Halal and Tayyib in the context of food safety, *Trends in Food Science and Technology*, No. 71, pp. 264-267; Nguyen Thi Phuong (2025), Solutions to promote the development of the Halal industry in Vietnam, *Industry and Trade Magazine* No. 22, November 2024; Novi Yanti Sandra Dewi, Ahadiyah Agustina (2021), Halalan Toyyiban: Theory and implementation of food products consumers, *Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IIJSE)* 4(1):179-189; Kiriara Midori (2021), Halal Certification as a Modern Application of Shariah Morality: An Analysis of Malaysian Halal Standard, *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*, 14 (March 2021), pp. 87-103;... These research articles have shed light on several important aspects of the Halal market and are an important premise for the author's article to be clear. However, to shed more light on the management of the Halal market in Vietnam, it is necessary to focus on studying the development of Halal market management in some countries around the world. That is why the author focused on researching the experience of developing the Halal management system in Malaysia to gain more lessons for Vietnam when implementing its development strategy.

3. METHODOLOGY

To research this topic, the author has used many different methodologies to clarify issues related to the development of the Halal market. The author uses research methods such as secondary research, analysis, comparison, synthesis, sociological statistics, and induction to assess the issues of the Halal market in Malaysia and assess the legal issues of the Halal market in Vietnam.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Malaysia's Experience in Developing a Halal Management System

Legal Framework and Halal Regulatory Authorities in Malaysia

The Halal market in Malaysia includes all industries serving the common needs of Muslim consumers such as food and beverages, fashion, healthcare, tourism, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics with Halal standards. Because of the diversity of the Halal industry, Malaysia's regulatory legal system is assessed to have a high level of completion and strictness, ensuring the stable development of the Halal market. According to Clause 1, Article 3 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia (1957, as amended in 2022), “Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation”. This constitutional provision affirms Islam as the official religion of Malaysia, thereby providing a solid legal and institutional foundation for the development and enforcement of Halal regulations.

In addition, Malaysia enacted the Trade Descriptions Act 1972, which was designed to prevent manufacturers, retailers and service providers from misleading consumers through false or misleading commercial descriptions and practices in the provision of goods and services. After 39 years in effect, the Act was repealed and replaced by the Trade Descriptions Act 2011, which came into effect on November 1, 2011, with some notable changes but still retaining the original objectives. One of the most important features of the new Act is the introduction of the Trade Descriptions (Definition of Halal) Order 2011 which provides specific legal framework regarding Halal-related matters. For the first time, legal definitions and provisions were formally established regarding Halal certification and labeling. elaborate, the Trade Descriptions Act 2011 stipulates that any food, product, or item described as Halal or otherwise implied to be permissible for Muslim consumption or use must strictly comply with the requirements imposed by Islamic law (Shariah) relevant to that particular category of goods.

In addition, since 1974, Malaysia has emerged as a global leader in the Halal industry by establishing the Research Center at the Islamic Affairs Department under the Prime Minister's Department. This center is responsible for issuing Halal certifications for products in compliance with Shariah Law (Islamic Law). Moreover, by 1981, the Halal guideline was considered as the first of its kind in the world, issued and introduced by the Mahathir administration. In the early 2000s, Malaysia implemented Halal guidelines in the form of Malaysian Standard 1500:2000. This standard has converted three revisions : MS 1500:2000; MS 1500:2004; MS 1500:2009, and currently, the applicable and effective version is Malaysian Standard 1500:2019. The Malaysian Certification Standards, also known as

Malaysian Standards, are documents developed and developed based on consensus among Halal-affected entities. Most Malaysian standards have been adapted to international standards or adopted international standards. The approval process for a standard to become part of the Malaysian Standards System is governed by the Malaysian Standards Act 1996 (Section 549). The Malaysian Standards System is reviewed periodically. The adoption of the Malaysian Standards System is voluntary, except in cases where mandatory application is regulated by legal authorities, statutory regulations, or similar instruments.

It is evident that the Government of Malaysia—especially through two key agencies, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia - JAKIM) and the Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC)—has facilitated the establishment of a foundational legal framework for the construction and advancement of the Halal industry in Malaysia. JAKIM is a Government body responsible for Islamic national affairs, performing roles such as Halal certification management, Halal education, and the provision of advisory services on Islamic law. HDC, operating under the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry of Malaysia, is the principal corporation responsible for promoting the development of the Halal industry, with the goal of positioning Malaysia as a global Halal hub. According to TDA, JAKIM and the Council of Religious Affairs (MAIN) are designated as the sole authorities empowered to issue Halal certificates for any Halal food, goods or services. All previously issued Halal certificates by other competent bodies must be re-submitted to JAKIM in order to comply with legal requirements. Furthermore, the TDA also stipulates sanctions for certain violations of the provisions of the Act, which are subject to penalties.

Thus, in addition to the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act 2011 and Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019 on Halal, there are still Acts that specify each type of Halal product and service. For example, regulations on Halal food are specified in the Food Act 1983 or Food Regulations 1985, Consumer Protection Act 1999, Road Transport Act 1987, Customs Act 1967, Drugs and Cosmetics Control Regulations 1984. Therefore, these regulations serve to operationalize and systematize the management of the Halal industry system in Malaysia, thereby enabling structured and sustainable development. At the same time, the capacity to monitor and control Halal products and services imported into Malaysia is improved.

Halal Certification Procedures in Malaysia

Halal certification in Malaysia plays an important role in legalizing products and services that meet Halal standards and are circulated and used in Muslim countries. When products and services meet Halal standards, it means that Muslims are assured that the food and services are in accordance with their religious regulations. Not only that, for businesses and enterprises, being granted Halal certification not only ensures legal obligations but also creates a competitive advantage over competitors in the same market. Therefore, it is possible to evaluate the Halal certification process in Malaysia through the following steps (CHENG ZHE YING, 2024):

Step 1: Create an online account via the official Malaysian Halal portal at <https://myehalal.halal.gov.my/portal-halal/v1/index.php>. The account is typically verified within one (1) working day.

Step 2: Submit the required documents through the registered online account for Halal certification of the intended product(s) or service(s).

At this stage, the applicant must provide a complete application dossier, including but not limited to: Legal documents of the business entity, Detailed product or service information, Production process descriptions, Other relevant certificates (eg, HACCP, ISO, GHP, if applicable), Any additional supporting information (if available). Providing comprehensive and accurate documentation enables JAKIM to conduct a thorough evaluation of the product or service being submitted for Halal certification.

Step 3: The competent authority reviews the application form and the supporting documents. If amendments or additions are needed, additional submissions or amendments will be requested. Upon acceptance of the documentation, the applicant is required to pay the processing fee.

Step 4: An on-site inspection is carried out by JAKIM. The authority will schedule a site visit to the applicant's premises. It is essential to maintain a dedicated file containing all documents related to the Halal certification application. During the inspection, inspectors may collect product samples for laboratory analysis as part of the overall assessment process.

Step 5: If the enterprise meets the conditions for being granted a Halal certificate, JAKIM will proceed with the issuance of the Halal certificate. Typically, Halal certificates in Malaysia are valid for 02 years and the application for renewal must be submitted at least 03 months prior to the expiry date in order to maintain the Halal standard.

Malaysia is considered to be the country with the leading Halal industry in the world and Southeast Asia owing to its well-established legal and institutional framework that facilitates businesses to issue Halal certificates. This process ensures compliance with both domestic and international standards, enabling the country to gain a strategic position in the global Halal market. However, despite these strengths, the certification process in Malaysia still faces certain limitations and challenges in its implementation.

For example, in the conditions for granting Halal certificates, JAKIM requires businesses to have Muslim personnel to supervise the production, processing, and implementation of Halal-compliant products and services. This requirement has resulted in many businesses failing to meet the criteria, thereby preventing them from obtaining Halal certification. Additionally, the certification process is complicated that requires high knowledge and expertise in the Halal field. Businesses need to strictly comply with the conditions on raw materials, production processes, and hygiene, which causes difficulties and is a major barrier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access the Halal market. Furthermore, adherence to stringent conditions often requires the establishment of dedicated zones and modern machinery, which may be economically unfeasible for SMEs. Looking ahead, Malaysia will certainly have further breakthroughs in building a Halal management system to meet the requirements of society, in accordance with the reality in Malaysia. Notably, in 2023, Malaysia announced the Halal Industry Master Plan to 2030, which focuses on promoting the improvement of the quality of Halal human resources. This initiative represents a promising step toward addressing the shortage of experienced Muslim professionals in Halal industry development.

Key Requirements in the Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019 on Halal

Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019 (Halal Food - General Requirements) is considered a key legal document that outlines in detail the procedures and conditions for Halal food in

Malaysia. This standard covers aspects such as food production - processing - handling - preservation and is applied at the international level, gaining trust and adoption in many Halal markets globally. Moreover, Malaysian standards functions as a Malaysian measurement and accreditation authority to perform core responsibilities such as consolidating and enhancing the application of systems, standardization and recognition of standards in various fields of Halal. The Malaysian standards system is formulated and developed on the basis of consensus of members representing each process , involving representatives from different stages of the process, including manufacturers, users, consumers and other entities. The requirements and conditions in the Malaysian Halal standards are either aligned with or adapted from internationally recognized standards to ensure compatibility and global acceptance. In addition, the Malaysian Halal standards are applied voluntarily, except in cases where it is mandatory to follow the conditions, regulations, and Halal standards for particular industries.

The main contents of Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019 on Halal include 07 sections: Scope of the standard; Normative References, Terms and Definitions, Requirements, Compliance with the Standard, Halal Certification, and Halal Marking. structured, the standard sets out several key requirements for food products , are as follows (Halal Certification Agency - HCA Vietnam, 2019):

- (i) Must not contain any part or substance derived from animals that are prohibited for Muslims to consume under Shariah law and Fatwa, or from animals that were not slaughtered in accordance with Shariah and Fatwa guidelines;
- (ii) Must not contain any elements considered najis (impure) as defined by Shariah law and Fatwa;
- (iii) Must not be harmful or poisonous, in accordance with Shariah law and Fatwa;
- (iv) Must not contain any human body parts or derivatives thereof that are not permitted under Shariah law and Fatwa;
- (v) Must not be toxic or pose any health hazard to consumers;
- (vi) Must not be prepared, processed, or manufactured using equipment that has been contaminated with impurities (najis) as defined by Shariah and Fatwa; and
- (vii) During handling, processing, storage, or distribution, the product must not come into contact, be mixed with, or be stored together with any products that fail to comply with the above requirements.

In addition, Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019 on Halal also specifically stipulates conditions regarding facilities such as premises for preliminary processing, slaughtering, processing, transporting, packaging, storage, distribution, serving and trading of food to ensure the process of controlling the risk of contaminating the product or being suitable for a pre-planned purpose of use (Clause 4.2, Article 4, Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019); kitchen equipment, machinery, processing support means and equipment must meet the conditions specified in Clause 4.3, Article 4, Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019. This standard clearly defines the types of food eligible for Halal certification , including animals, plants, microorganisms, natural minerals, chemicals, and beverages that meet the prescribed conditions and standards will be granted Halal certification. Compared to MS 1500:2009 and MS 1500:2019, the new version MS 1500:2019 introduces more detailed provisions

regarding traceability of food sources, control of cross-contamination with Haram elements, and the integration of international best practices and standards such as HACCP, ISO 22000, and GMP. This demonstrates that the Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019 has made more progress, aligning with global norms, thereby expanding opportunities for Halal industry development.

However, the specific regulations on Halal food conditions and standards in Malaysian Standard MS 1500:2019 greatly affect the operations and development of small and medium enterprises, especially in terms of human resource investment and food control systems. In addition, the standard requires human resources with specialized technical knowledge, a certain understanding of religious principles, and the ability to manage and implement rigorous Halal-compliant procedures. As a result, this Standard creates notable obstacles for enterprises and organizations that are entering and expanding within the potential Halal market. In addition, Standard MS 1500:2019 remains focused primarily on the food and beverage sector, and does not cover other sectors targeted by the broader Halal economy such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, logistics, tourism, Halal finance. This poses difficulties for businesses aiming at multi-field Halal strategy, but operating in a legal environment that has yet to fully accommodate such diversification.

4.2. Policy implications for Vietnam in developing a Halal management system

According to many experts, the market for developing the industry serving the needs of Muslim consumers (Halal market) in Vietnam is still in its early stages in Vietnam. Numerous opportunities and challenges are asked for the Halal market in Vietnam, necessitating the establishment and development of a comprehensive legal framework that meets Halal standards internationally recognized. In addition, Vietnam possesses significant potential to develop its Halal market as Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia - a region that is home to nearly 300 million Muslims. From a global economic perspective, the Halal industry is projected to reach 3,200 billion USD by 2025 with an annual market growth rate of up to 6.2 % (Nguyen TQH, 2024).

Furthermore, Vietnam is increasingly viewed as a strategic market by several Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and South Korea, which are seeking to cooperate and expand Halal product development within Vietnam. Vietnam possesses substantial advantages in agriculture, food, tourism, services and strengths in exporting agricultural and aquatic products in the world. Vietnam also participates in numerous Agreements and plays a vital role in international economic integration Such as the Free Trade Agreement between Vietnam and the European Union (EVFTA), the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Therefore, Vietnam is considered a country with strong potential to develop the Halal market in the coming years.

Currently, Vietnamese law lacks specific regulations governing the Halal certification process. Halal management activities in Vietnam are not carried out by a Government authority but rather assigned to private organizations and economic entities that have been recognized by international Halal bodies as having the competence to inspect and issue Halal certifications within Vietnam. Some organizations responsible for Halal testing and certification include:

Firstly, the National Halal Certification Center (HALCERT) operates under the Conformity Certification Center, the National Committee for Standards, Metrology and Quality, the Ministry of Science and Technology according to Decision No. 689/QĐ-TĐC dated March 29, 2024 of the General Department of Standards and Metrology. The Center has the function of supporting the director in managing Halal activities in Vietnam; providing consultancy on Halal certification; research products and organizing activities related to Halal standards in Vietnam.

Secondly, Halal Certification Agency Company Limited (HCA) was established in 2007 and quickly affirmed its position, becoming a trusted partner of export companies and customers in need of Halal certification. HCA has been recognized by several prestigious organizations such as JAKIM (Malaysia), GCC Accreditation Center (GAC) or MOIAT (UAE), MUIS (Singapore). Therefore, HCA has been widely selected for inspection and issuance of Halal certificates.

Thirdly, Halal Vietnam Company Limited (HVH) is a professional center specializing in inspection, assessment and issuance of Halal certification with prestige and value for all products from Vietnam exported to countries around the world to meet the Halal market. HVH is a trusted partner of globally recognized Halal accreditation bodies such as WHC Global Halal; JAKIM Malaysia, MUI Indonesia, GCC Accreditation Center, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Institute of Standards and Metrology of Islamic Countries (SMIIC).

Fourthly, Halal Vietnam Inspection and Certification Company Limited (VINAHIC) is the only Halal inspection and certification body recognized by the Representative Boards of the Muslim Community and actively participates in the Sharia Council for the approval and issuance of Halal certifications.

These organizations are not only subject to regulatory oversight of Vietnam's enterprise registration authorities for their testing and certification activities but must also comply with the provisions of the law on religion. The Halal certification operations conducted by these entities are mainly based on three certification schemes: (i) Malaysia's JAKIM certification program is exported to all Muslim countries except Indonesia and the GCC member states ; (ii) The GCC certification scheme , which is valid exclusively for exports to GCC countries including Dubai-UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen and (iii) the MUI certification scheme , applicable for exports to Muslim countries except Malaysia and the GCC. However, these certification schemes generally follow a similar process, which includes: Step 1: Submission of the application to a recognized certification body; Step 2: Review and evaluation of the documentation and on-site inspection at the production facility; Step 3: Issuance of the Halal certificate or formal notification of rejection. It is obvious that the legal framework governing Halal activities in Vietnam remains incomplete, particularly with respect to the management, regulation, and development of the Halal ecosystem. Some suggestions and solutions, inspired by Malaysia's experience in building and managing the Halal system, include:

Firstly, it is necessary to issue a national Halal implementation and evaluation standard in Vietnam, which clearly outlines key aspects such as regulations on Halal products; certification process; authority to grant and inspect; implementation procedures; handling

violations; etc. These regulations could be integrated into the existing Law on Food Safety. This will not only provide enterprises with a clear legal foundation for compliance but also create a significant competitive advantage over other countries in the region. Moreover, it would ensure a sustainable legal framework to attract both domestic and foreign investors to participate in the Halal market in Vietnam. In addition, it is recommended that Vietnam establish an agency or combine specialized Islamic functions in localities to manage and handle violations of Halal laws by organizations and enterprises.

Secondly, Vietnam's infrastructure development must be strengthened to meet the demands of the Halal market. The Government should introduce supportive policies for enterprises to create capital to build and improve infrastructure, especially for the food and beverage industry. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) meet the criteria of capacity, expertise, creativity, and application of science and technology but do not have enough capital. Therefore, preferential loan packages and financial support for SMEs will create an important premise for the growth of the Halal market in Vietnam.

Thirdly, in terms of training human resources to meet the needs of the Halal market, it is necessary to design and implement Halal training programs to equip individuals with knowledge about the Halal industry as well as its regulations and standards for products. Stakeholders may initially participate in short-term Halal courses to keep pace with market demands, then participate in specialized courses on Islam and Halal to expand development opportunities. Establish distance learning centers or organize expert exchanges to learn management and operational experiences from international organizations.

Fourth, it is important to raise public awareness and understanding of the Halal market, ensuring that all individuals and organizations are informed and empowered to participate in this high-potential sector. Enhancing public awareness will not only foster wider participation but also generate a stronger competitive advantage for Vietnam. Early training of human resources, full preparation of material resources when implementing the Halal market.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in Vietnam, the management, operation and certification of Halal activities are currently implemented according to the conditions and procedures specific to each certification scheme chosen by enterprises. While each organization involved in Halal market has its own goals but all ultimately aim to access and expand within promised Halal markets. Therefore, to ensure long-term development and to attract Investors to participate in the Halal market, Vietnam must undergo timely institutional reform, meet its internal socio-economic conditions and in accordance with international practices. These reforms will support Vietnam in becoming one of the countries contributing to the development of the global Halal market.

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