

The Practice of Halal Certification: A Case of Malaysia's Halal Meat-Based Industry

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Abstract

Global demand for Halal meat products is expected to grow exponentially, significantly impacting Malaysia's Halal food industry. Halal is an essential part of the Muslim faith. Since the early 2000s, Malaysia has established its procedures and standards to protect consumer interest through Halal certification. Protecting its Muslim consumers' assurance that Halal meat-based products include all elements, processes and Halal certification procedures and practices poses a huge challenge. Therefore, this study discusses the nature practice of Halal certification and its importance in Malaysia's meat-based industry. Library research and document analysis were employed to incorporate detailed ideas by referring to primary and secondary sources such as article journals, official portals, and conference papers. The extracted data were analysed thematically based on the practice, importance, and agencies involved in Halal certification. This study reveals that JAKIM is the key agency in the Halal certification system, attending to the current practice and issues of the Halal certification system in Malaysia. Recommendations based on the research findings suggest that the Malaysian government and JAKIM need to strengthen Halal certification processes and monitoring methods, while the industries must fulfil all requirements that the government has set and provide lawful food for consumers.

Keywords: Halal Certification Practice, Halal, Meat-Based Industry, Malaysia.

Introduction

According to Halal Food Market: Global Industry Trends, Share, Size, Growth, Opportunity and Forecast 2022-2027, by 2027, Halal food exports in global markets are expected to reach USD3 trillion (RM13.3 trillion) from USD2 trillion in 2021. The current international scenario suggests an increase in Halal food demand is imminent. Thus, the global market demand for Halal products and services significantly impacts the growth of Malaysia's domestic Halal food industry. The Halal market demand has risen due to the increase in the Muslim population and awareness of the consumption of Halal products (Tarmizi et al., 2020), but Halal demands also go beyond religious obligation (Adekunle and Filson, 2020). Therefore, every individual is

responsible for ensuring the food's status, including the ingredients source, the ingredients themselves, and the method of slaughter (Ishak et al., 2018). According to Ariffin et al (2021), consumers' attention has been drawn to concerns about Halal integrity and ethical values practiced by Halal governance agencies. These agencies are the responsible bodies that monitor the Halal status of products in the Halal market. Being an integral part of the Halal industry, the integrity of Halal assurance on products is crucial because it protects Muslim and non-Muslim consumers rights as it relates to the objective of ensuring societal well-being was written in the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 to (Sungit et al., 2020).

Despite Malaysia's growing Halal food industry, it remains vulnerable to threats of fake and fraudulent Halal products in the local market. According to Laporan Penyata Rasmi (2020), a meat cartel syndicate based in Senai, Johor Bahru was reported in late 2020 and led to concerns about the adulteration of Halal labeling and tarnishing Malaysia's reputation as a global Halal pioneer. The cartel operated for four decades due to a lack of effective enforcement by respective agencies and Halal governance agencies (Yaacob et al., 2016). This criminal case sparked public outrage and demands for justice against those responsible for supplying fake Halal meat to Malaysians.

As a result, the nature of the meat-based industry posed a huge challenge for authorities in Malaysia who are established to protect Muslim consumers from consuming haram and unsafe meat-based products. The community has been made aware of non-Halal imported meat that uses fake Halal labels via the meat cartel's distribution mechanism. Halal is the image of Islam, and these negative issues threatened local and international consumers trust of the country's Halal standards practices. Previous literature identified that Halal certification is often fraught with issues and challenges (Shaari et al., 2021; Maichum et al., 2017). The Malaysian Halal certification and logo are issued by a body authorised by the Malaysian government. The government controls the system with multi-agencies support under the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). JAKIM is a legally mandated competent authority for Halal certification. JAKIM is responsible for determining the product's Halal status at every stage and process by conducting official inspections, administering and issues Halal certification, and the monitoring and enforcement of Halal regulations in Malaysia. The Halal certification will be issued if the basic principles and procedures are complied with and revoked if not complied with.

Therefore, this study is aimed at discussing the practice of Halal certification and its importance in the Halal meat-based industry to maintain and safe-guard the integrity of Halal food in Malaysia and its ecosystem.

Definition and Concept of Halal

The word 'Halal' is derived from an Arabic word that means allowed or permitted according to Shariah (Islamic) law (Rejeb, 2018). On the other hand, *tayyiban* means good quality, safe, clean, nutritious, and authentic (Shaikh, 2006). Halal and *tayyiban* conceptualises the aspects of hygiene, safety, and quality. The concept of *Halalan tayyiban* helps determine all the physical and spiritual benefits of food befitting mankind. In this context, *Halalan tayyiban* can be defined as foods permissible to eat (Halal) and benefits the human body (Ariffin et al., 2021). The Halal certification is issued based on the basic principles and procedures that the

products must be good, safe, and fit to consume. Allah SWT explains about food that is Halal and *tayyib*, avoiding the steps of the devil and his misguided whispers, especially about the matter of faith and worshiping Allah SWT as stated in the Qur'an:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوْا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.

(Surah Al-Baqarah: 168)

For Muslims, not all ingredients are allowable. Prohibition is good for the sake of humanity because eating harmful and unlawful foods is both spiritually and physically dangerous. According to the Department Standard of Malaysia (2019), Halal products include food and drink permitted under the Shariah law and fulfil the following conditions, which are a) does not contain any parts or products of animals that are non-Halal by Shariah law or any parts or products of animals that are not slaughtered according to Shariah law; b) does not contain *najs* according to Shariah law; c) safe for consumption, non-poisonous, non-intoxicating, or non-hazardous to health; d) not prepared, processed, or manufactured using equipment contaminated with *najs* according to Shariah law; e) does not contain any human parts or their derivatives that are not permitted by Shariah law and; f) during its preparation, processing, handling, packaging, storage, and distribution, the food is physically separated from any other food that does not meet the requirements stated in items a), b), c), d), or e) or g) any other things that have been decreed as *najs* by Shariah law.

In the context of Halal meat-based products, Islam contains detailed prescriptions for animal-derived foods. Before being eaten, all permissible livestock must be slaughtered in accordance to Shariah law (Hashim et al., 2019). Allah SWT forbids His servant from eating carrion, an animal that dies before being properly slaughtered or killed (Sidek and Ridzwan, 2018). The following verse describes what is Halal and what is prohibited (haram) for Muslims to eat (Fuseini et al., 2016). It is important to remember that at the end of the verse, Allah SWT makes it clear that these dietary rules do not exist in emergency situations that stated in the Quran:

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالِدَّمُ وَالْخِنْزِيرُ وَمَا أَهَلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْحَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْفُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ الْيَوْمَ يَئِسَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمْ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than God, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so, fear them not, but fear me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin then indeed, God is Forgiving and Merciful.”

(Surah Al-Mai'dah: 3)

Zabiha or *Dhabihah* or the killing of animals for Muslim use, must follow the requirements stated in the Quran and Hadith (Marzuk and Yazid, 2012). Slaughtering is a practice that requires cutting the throat in order to sever the trachea, oesophagus, and main blood arteries that run from the head to the heart. The left and right carotid arteries (from the heart to the head) and the left and right jugular veins are the main blood vessels (from the head to the heart). The act of slaughtering must sever the trachea (*halqum*), oesophagus (*mari'*), carotid arteries, and jugular veins (*wadjain*), according to Halal slaughtering process (Hashim et al., 2019).

Not all ingredients are permissible for Muslims to eat. Allah SWT told all Muslims in the Qur'an to take only what is good and Halal. Allah S.W.T said in the Quran:

﴿لَهُمْ حَلَّالٌ وَطَعَامُكُمْ لَكُمْ حَلَّالٌ أَوْثُوا الَّذِينَ وَطَعَامُ

"This day [all] good foods have been made lawful, and the food of those who were given the Scripture is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them."

(Surah Al-Mai'dah: 5)

All animals slaughtered according to Islamic practices are Halal except for Haram animals mentioned in the holy Qur'an. Consuming Halal products earned through Halal means is an important obligation of Muslims, wherever they live. It is the responsibility of every Muslim to follow norms and values as provided by the Holy Quran and Hadiths as best as they can in their daily life.

Issues in the Malaysian Halal Meat-Based Industry

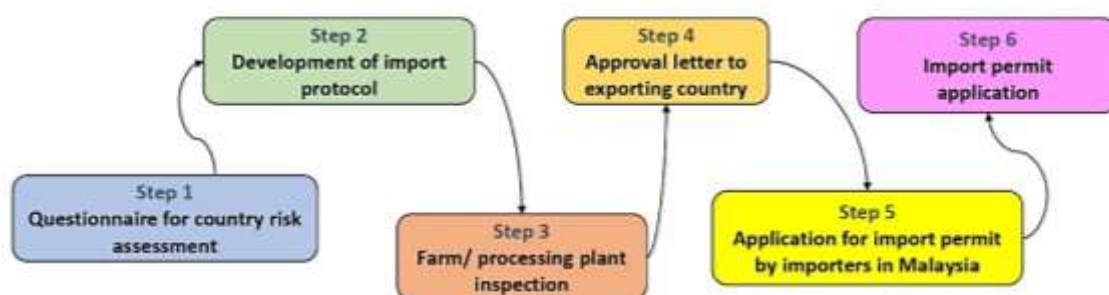
Malaysia aims to be the Global Halal Hub since 2010. To achieve this goal, the Halal Development Corporation (HDC) recommends that the country's Halal food industry have at least 10,000 competitive and internationally marketed Halal food firms (Noor and Wahid, 2015). The Halal meat-based industry has undergone industrialization, and it must comply with certain Halal regulations to guarantee that its products are Halal and *tayyib* within contemporary methods (Ruzulan et al., 2021). The demand trend for Halal meat and meat-based products among Muslims worldwide has increased in recent years. In general, the meat industry in Malaysia involves two main commodities, namely the production of beef, buffalo, mutton, and sheep (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries, 2021).

Malaysia has recently experienced a scandal involving Halal meat, which has caused distrust and uncertainty among the Muslim community regarding the safety of available Halal meat products in the market (Riza et al., 2022). There is no doubt that Halal meat-related issues have frequently been discussed in public discussion, particularly with the Halal status of locally produced and imported (Ruzulan et al., 2021). According to Laporan Penyata Rasmi (2020), a group has allegedly smuggled illegal meat from four nations (China, Ukraine, Brazil, and Argentina) into Malaysia using fraudulent documentation such as falsified customs forms, import permits, Halal certificates, and payment receipts to bypass unauthorized checks by the authorities. Indeed, the meat scandal had stoked the flames of discontent among the Muslim majority and, as a result compromised the Malaysian Halal system (Whitehead, 2021).

Prioritizing the consumers' need for Halal integrity is of utmost importance. Religious sensitivity has raised significant concerns among the Muslim community in Malaysia,

prompting heightened awareness and attention (Idris and Noor, 2013). Numerous stakeholders, particularly consumers, demand reassurance and certainty and requests explanation of the Halal status of the imported meat products (Laporan Penyata Rasmi, 2020).

The topic of meat cartels has sparked a discussion among the community, with one of the key concerns being how the syndicate operated without the authorities' detection. This is particularly puzzling given that all meat products must be thoroughly inspected before being sold to consumers (Riza et al., 2022). The journey of the meat product starts with its entry at the national border, followed by transportation to a factory where it is repackaged, and finally, it is branded before being distributed to entrepreneurs and markets (Ariffin et al., 2021). Meanwhile, other worse issues related to fake meat created from recycled human waste were reported by a team of researchers in Japan waste (Salahudin et al., 2018). Besides that, other Halal issues related to meat cartel crime are the origins of raw materials, distinguishing Halal products, expired certificates, and abuse of Halal labelling and logo (Ali and Suleiman, 2018). The general procedure to import livestock or animal product to Malaysia is shown in Figure 1.



Notes: Source from Department of Veterinary Services Malaysia (2023)

Figure 1: General procedure to import livestock or animal product to Malaysia

Over the last decades, issues in the Halal meat-based industry have been studied from various perspectives, for instance, on attributes of Halal products, awareness of Halal products, consumer perception, and consumer behavior when purchasing Halal meat-based products, and it reflects the important of Halal certification as it provides recognition of quality and assurance. For instance, the entry of meat-based products into the country with the purpose of consumption by Muslims is subject to strict restrictions, only allowing those endorsed by JAKIM-certified entities and acknowledged as Halal. Consumers often perceive the presence of the Halal logo on products as a guarantee of their cleanliness, being free from any impurities (*najs*-free), and conforming to the concept of *tayyib* (wholesomeness) (Tieman et al., 2012). This association assures Muslim consumers that their products comply with Halal standards and meet religious dietary requirements. The Halal logo symbolises trust, enabling consumers to make informed choices when selecting Halal-certified meat-based products (Tieman et al., 2012).

This issue is further exacerbated because consumers put their trust in agencies and major players who act as key regulatory bodies in monitoring the quality assurance to safeguard the

Halal product integrity from farm to fork. Serious crimes such as corruption and bribery among government officers must be eradicated because these activities damage the management system, increasing the crime rate (Azrae et al., 2018). The trust and authority given to law enforcement officials is tainted and abused with corruption and profiteering. According to reports by Suruhanjaya Pencegahan Rasuah Malaysia (2021), corruption and bribery are suspected to be the root cause of this issue. It must be taken seriously because this problem can hinder the country's development in all aspects, including Halal industry development.

Methodology

The study focuses on the issue in the Halal meat-based industry, the practice of Halal certification, and its importance in the Halal meat-based industry. This research applied a qualitative research design via the library research approach; relevant data were extracted from authoritative sources as a research base. The main base data was used to complete the research, reference, or secondary bibliographic materials such as articles, journals, conference proceedings, books, and other related sources. Then, the data were analysed from a Halal meat-based perspective before further discussing the Halal certification process and its importance. The analysis outcome was analysed according to the thematic method. The analytical approach was used to develop an understanding of Halal certificate practice in Malaysia's meat-based industry by analysing the opinions of scholars, researchers, and reporters in disseminating information. The flow chart for this study is shown in Figure 2.

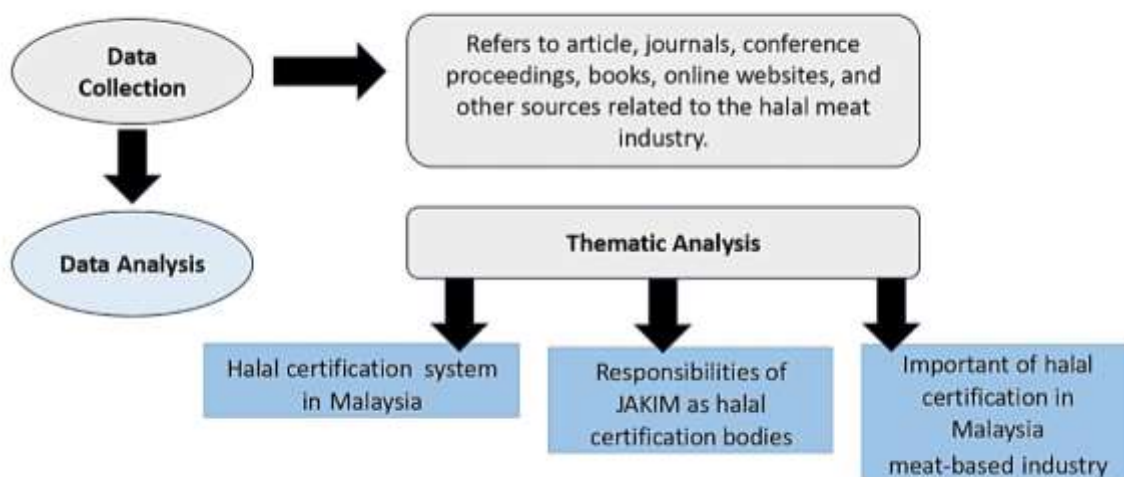


Figure 2: Flow chart for this study

Literature review

Halal Certification System in Malaysia Meat-Based Industry

In Malaysia, Halal certification is issued by a body that the Malaysian government authorizes. The government controls the system with major support from multi agencies and organisations led by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), an important body that plays a significant role in Halal certification practice and process in Malaysia (Noordin et al., 2009). Since 1994 until 2008, JAKIM is an authorised body to handle the certification process (Noordin et al., 2009). Besides, the State Islamic Religious Department

(JAIN) and State Islamic Religious Council (MAIN) have the authority to issue Halal certificates and logos for the domestic market (Noordin et al., 2009). In April 2008, the government appointed Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) to handle local and international Halal certification processes (HDC, 2008). HDC is a private company wholly owned by the Malaysian government. It was established in 2006 to facilitate Malaysia's Halal hub project. In fact, until October 15, HDC had successfully certified 637 companies of which 627 were local companies and 10 for international companies (Shahrul, 2008).

Since the Trade Description Act amendment in 2011, JAKIM has been Malaysia's exclusive Halal certification authority, certifying local and exported products. It also acts as a regulatory body in monitoring and enforcing Halal standards. Under this act, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) was granted the legal authority to audit companies that held Halal certification, with the power to renew, suspend, or revoke such certifications based on the audit outcomes (Adham et al., 2022). This newfound authority enabled JAKIM to implement a structured and systematic Halal certification process, resulting in the evolution of best practices within the Halal assurance system in the industry. The only Halal certification that can be recognized is the certification issued by JAKIM. The government has recently restructured the certificate issuance process, with JAKIM responsible for certifying food products for both domestic and international export (Shirin, 2017). Meanwhile, JAIN will issue certificates bearing the same Halal logo to companies producing food solely within their respective states (Suhaimi et al., 2019; Asa and Azmi, 2011).

In Malaysia's Halal meat-based industry context, the Malaysian protocol for Halal meat and poultry production was developed by JAKIM to give clear guidance in Halal meat production. This protocol is intended to support implementing Malaysia's requirements for Halal meat-based products. This protocol also applies to all establishments producing Halal meat and poultry and its products. This protocol prescribes practical guidelines for abattoir and poultry processing plants on stunning method, slaughtering, further dressing process, storage, and transportation of Halal meat.

Responsibilities of JAKIM as Halal Certification Bodies

By the 2010s, the Halal certification process had achieved a more stable and established state, with the certification program by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) emerging as the predominant model and the widely accepted standard among various stakeholders, including the government, industry players, and consumers (Adham et al., 2022). JAKIM is the competent authority in Malaysia stipulated by law for Halal certification (JAKIM, 2020). JAKIM has the power to enforce Halal-related matters following their relevant act and jurisdiction with other enforcement authorities. JAKIM officers have been appointed as assistant controllers of Trade descriptions and given the authority the card to warn, suspend and revoke the business license. With JAKIM assuming the central authority in managing Muslim affairs in Malaysia and introducing Orders under the Trade Description Act 2011, JAKIM gained increased power and jurisdiction to effectively oversee Halal certification programs (Adham et al., 2022).

According to Buang and Mahmud (2012), to acquire Halal certification, JAKIM must ascertain the product's Halal status throughout each stage and process. It also involves conducting official on-site inspections of factories to assess the maintenance of the Halal status of raw materials. By performing these inspections, JAKIM ensures adherence to Halal standards and guarantees the integrity of the certification process.

Under JAKIM, Malaysia has enacted several laws regulating the Halal meat-based industry. Effective law enforcement is critical to guarantee that Halal food producers follow the laws' requirements and, more critically, to increase Muslim customers' faith in Halal meat-based products (Rahman et al., 2018). JAKIM published the Malaysian Halal Certification Procedure Manual (MPPHM) in 2005, which was recently amended in 2014 and further enhanced in 2019. It gives JAKIM the authority to act as the Halal certification body. MPPHM includes Halal certification criteria for JAKIM and MAIN inspection officers. MPPHM includes information on Halal certification application methods, certification process, and financial levied, in addition to defining the terms and requirements for Halal certification (Rahman et al., 2018). The Halal certification practices standards and guidelines are written in the Malaysian Halal Certification Procedure Manual 2020 MPPHM (2020), MS1500:2009 Halal Food - Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage - General Guidelines (Third Revision), Food Act 1983 and Trade Description Act 2011. The industry players must comply with this guideline to obtain Halal product certification. The Malaysian Halal Standards were created in response to the increased demand for Halal products, services, and infrastructure as a counterpoint to Malaysia's Halal ecosystem. Muslim consumer understanding of the Halal problem has also contributed greatly to this need. The Malaysian Halal Standards series was developed with the idea of Halal built-in by the relevant parties (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2019). In addition, the empowerment of the Food Act of 1983 by the Ministry of Health (MOH), as well as laws such as the Food Regulations of 1985 and the Food Hygiene Regulations of 2009 implemented to protect consumers by guaranteeing that any food supplied does not include dangerous materials in terms of food preparation and safe to consume (Rahman et al., 2018). This law was created to ensure that food safety control is more secure and maintained in the food industry and that food preparation is also protected from harmful things to consumers. The Malaysian Halal certificate program is divided into nine schemes: food and beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceutical, food premise, slaughterhouse, logistics, original equipment manufacturer (OEM), medical devices, and consumer goods. Halal certification means that the product and its production methods (including raw materials, ingredients, processing equipment, and other handling equipment used in manufacturing) adhere to the Islamic law (Shariah Law) requirements.

Important of Halal Certification in Malaysia Meat Based Industry

The Halal market is growing domestically and globally. In 2018, the Malaysian Halal market grew to USD 68.4 billion and was targeted to achieve USD 113.2 in 2030. According to Ekonomi (2020), the global Halal market's net worth became USD 3.1 trillion in 2018 and is expected to achieve USD 5.0 trillion in 2030. Expanding the Halal market will give a huge opportunity to the country and society. In the Muslim majority country like Malaysia, the concept of Halal is an absolute key to consumption. The Halal certificate is one of the Malaysian government's initiatives designed to help Muslim consumers.

Besides, the growth of the Muslim population worldwide encourages the growth of the Halal meat-based industry since all Muslim customers are obligated to seek out Halal products and services. The consumer's sensitivity was affected by the Halal meat-based industry issue. The Halal meat market will drop due to the loss of trust, especially the Muslim consumers in Malaysia. The meat-based industry must comply with the Halal certification process to build consumer trust and interest. The worst part is the potential lack of trust by consumers in Malaysia toward the Halal certification authorities, especially JAKIM. A low level of assurance

in the Halal meat products in the Halal meat-based industry would have adverse impacts on consumers' confidence in consuming the products, which will lead to low producers' sales, as well as might jeopardize the credibility and status of JAKIM Halal certificate, which is supposed to preserve the Halal, *tayyib* and well-being of Muslim consumers. Thus, the Halal certificate practice is important to fulfill the quality and requirements in the Halal meat-based industry. Halal certification is important to make sure the product is free of toxins and contamination, includes no dangerous ingredients, and is clear of fraud in terms of weight, quality, expiry date, ingredient, and name (Ariffin et al., 2021; Nakyinsige et al., 2012; Zulfakar et al., 2014; Ngah et al., 2014; Yaacob et al., 2021).

According to Baharuddin and Ismail (2018), Halal meat is meat from a permissible animal slaughtered in a Shariah-compliant manner. Furthermore, meat imported from other countries with the Halal logo recognized by JAKIM does not violate Halal standards and is safe for customers. Meat production must meet industry, economic, and manufacturing needs and government health standards without negatively impacting Islamic religious requirements derived from the Qur'an and Hadiths (Shahdan et al., 2016). According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries, meat demand is expected to increase from 1.4 million tons in 2010 to 1.8 million tons in 2020, with a growth of 2.4% per annum. As a result, Malaysia became one of the significant Muslim countries involved in Halal meat production. The Halal market is expanding both domestically and internationally. Malaysia's Halal market grew to USD 68.4 billion in 2018 and is expected to reach USD 113.2 billion by 2030. The world Halal market's net worth increased to USD 3.1 trillion in 2018 and is expected to reach USD 5.0 trillion by 2030 (Riza et al., 2022).

Halal certification practices must be controlled strictly to maintain the quality and integrity of Halal food. Due to that, all parties, either the government, the industries, the workers, or the consumers themselves, must cooperate and be responsible for empowering Halal industry values. The Halal certification system in Malaysia has undergone significant development over the past five decades, starting from a lack of any Halal assurance system to widespread distrust of Halal integrity and assurance in the 1970s, and ultimately leading to the establishment of a reputable Halal assurance system (Adham et al., 2022). This development was made possible by implementing various laws, policies, regulations, standards, guidelines, and fatwa decisions. These systems were designed to adapt to the diverse, multicultural industry contexts of Malaysia and to ensure that the practices of food handlers, service workers, and providers did not conflict with the needs of Muslims in Malaysia to observe Halal rules in consumption and other aspects, under Shariah requirements (Adham et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Nowadays, Halal meat products are widely used throughout the world market. The production and supply chain of Halal meat products consists of many critical control points and risks, ranging from raw materials, through the production phase, to the final consumers. Therefore, in order to ensure and maintain the safety, quality and Halal integrity of this type of food, with the aim of protecting the health of citizens from foodborne illnesses, it is mandatory for slaughterhouses, food manufacturers, processors, food packaging companies, logistics providers and all parties involved in the distribution and sale of these products to comply with the legal requirements imposed by the relevant authorities and agencies in Malaysia. The practice of Halal certification as one of the existing effective regulatory mechanisms in the Halal meat industry must therefore stand for quality, safety, hygiene and

sanitation to ensure that the concept of "*Halalan Tayyiban*" is achieved. Many countries in the world realize the importance, awareness and involvement of Halal certification as Halal food compliance. In order to serve the Halal food market, the food manufacturers and related stakeholders must understand the practice and important of Halal certificate as Muslim requirements for Halal food compliance and regulatory requirement throughout the Halal food products consumptions.

Currently, many issues related to the integrity of Halal foods have raised public concern and awareness about the Halal status of Halal foods. Major food crime problems related to meat products include adulteration of meat, mislabelling of meat products, and tampering with meat, such as substituting buffalo meat for beef in sausage production. In addition, there have been cases of illegally substituting banned meat such as pork for beef or misrepresenting dog meat as mutton. In addition, meat from animals that have not been slaughtered in accordance with Halal regulations may be fraudulently marketed. These issues highlight the challenges faced by JAKIM as one of the key players in ensuring the integrity and compliance of meat products in the industry through Halal certification. Therefore, stakeholders involved in the Halal food industry need to develop and maintain good Halal certification practices to comply with Islamic ethics and integrity in handling Halal food throughout the Halal food supply chain (Ngah et al. 2014; Zulfakar et al., 2015).

JAKIM has become an effective regulatory body to strengthen the Halal certification process, practice and monitoring necessary to provide legal food to consumers. In the Halal meat industry, JAKIM plays an important role in monitoring the safety and quality of Halal meat throughout the Halal meat industry supply chain. The globally recognized and accepted standards and certifications help to improve the reputation of the local food industry in the global market. Halal certification and compliance is primarily about ensuring product safety and quality assurance. To ensure the safety and quality of Halal meat products, compliance with standards and regulations throughout the supply chain is essential. To achieve Halal certification, the entire supply chain, from farm to fork, must be Halal. The Halal meat supply chain, which includes raw material sourcing, production, packaging, transportation, and storage, is regulated and controlled by a robust legal framework. However, inadequate enforcement and monitoring by local authorities can lead to non-compliance, which can jeopardize Halal status, safety, and product quality. In addition, stakeholders in the Halal meat sector often lack understanding and knowledge of the proper legal framework for Halal operations. Improving operations in the Halal meat industry through proper Halal certification practise therefore requires greater awareness and preparedness among all stakeholders in the industry.

Halal certification can also attract the non-Muslim food market with additional and value-added characteristics of healthy, safe, hygienic and contamination-free food. Laws and regulations implemented through Halal certification would give consumers confidence in Halal status and help regulate proper business ethics and behaviour by producers and stakeholders. A better and improved monitoring process and enforcement of the Halal certificate by JAKIM is urgently needed to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the existing practice, JAKIM's responsibility and the importance of Halal certificate in the meat-based industry to protect and ensure the safety, quality and Halal compliance of Halal meat products in the Halal industry in Malaysia and dealing with the issues involved in the enforcement and compliance of the regulation.

This study adds to the current knowledge on the practice of Halal certification in the meat-based industry and proves that Malaysia currently has an adequate legal and regulatory framework to regulate the Halal meat-based industry in Malaysia through the implementation of Halal certification. It is critical that JAKIM and other regulatory bodies support the enforcement and proper monitoring of Halal certification practices among Halal meat industry players. Going forward, effective strategies and approaches are important to improve the effectiveness and reliability of Halal certification practices, thereby increasing consumer and stakeholder confidence in the Halal industry. In addition, recommendations for the government to improve the enforcement aspects for the authorities can be further elaborated. In addition, there is a need to improve awareness and knowledge of Halal food regulations among industry players to achieve better management of Halal activities in their business and industry practices. Understanding and knowledge of the practice and importance of certificates are important to ensure smooth compliance with Halal meat food regulations while ensuring the safety and quality of Halal meat products.

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