

# Halal Compliance Readiness among Restaurant in Japan

Diana Rose Faizal<sup>1</sup>, Zariyawati Mohd Ashhari<sup>2</sup>, Chikako Hironaka<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Technology Management and Technopreneurship, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Malaysia, <sup>2</sup>School of Business and Economics, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia,

<sup>3</sup>School of Policy Studies, Chukyo University, Japan

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v14-i4/23708> DOI:10.6007/IJARAFMS/v14-i4/23708

Published Online: 21 December 2024

## Abstract

The increasing global demand for Halal practices, driven by the growing Muslim population and expanding Halal tourism market, presents significant opportunities for the hospitality and restaurant industries. In Japan, a non-Muslim-majority country, addressing the needs of Muslim tourists has become increasingly important. Despite efforts to cater to this market, challenges such as fragmented Halal certification systems, inconsistent practices, and limited awareness among restaurant owners persist. This study examines the readiness of restaurant owners in Japan to adopt Halal compliance, focusing on the roles of Halal awareness, Halal understanding, and their influence on Halal intention. The study analyzes data collected from restaurant owners through structured questionnaires, revealing that while Halal understanding influences compliance intentions, Halal awareness plays a more pivotal role in driving behavioral changes. The results show notable gaps in awareness and understanding, significantly impacting Halal adoption in Japan's restaurant industry. The findings offer practical recommendations for policymakers, certification bodies, and industry stakeholders. By addressing these challenges, Japan can strengthen its position as a Muslim-friendly destination and capitalize on the growing demand for Halal tourism.

**Keywords:** Halal Compliance, Muslim, Restaurant Industry, Japan

## Introduction

The demand for Muslim tourism has been steadily increasing, aligning with the growth of the global Muslim population in Japan, where the number of Muslim tourists, especially from countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, has shown a significant upward trend. According to the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), the number of Malaysian visitors to Japan surged in 2024 compared to 2023. In September 2024, 39,900 Malaysians visited Japan, a 44.9% increase from the 27,543 visitors in September 2023. Cumulatively, from January to September 2024, 318,200 Malaysian visitors traveled to Japan, reflecting a 23.2% growth over the 258,358 visitors in the same period of 2023. These figures highlight the strong recovery in Malaysian tourism to Japan, showcasing 2024 as a significant milestone.

The surge in Muslim tourism to Japan can be attributed to several factors. Following the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023, international travel has resumed with significant growth. Moreover, Japan's visa-free policy for ASEAN countries has significantly contributed to the influx of visitors from Muslim-majority nations. However, the most notable factor driving this growth is Japan's proactive approach to catering to the needs of Muslim tourists. Realizing the economic potential of the Muslim market or Islamic tourism, Japan has implemented various initiatives such as prayer rooms at airports, Halal-certified restaurants, and mobile applications to locate Halal dining options (Rahman, Ahmed, Sifa and Hossain, 2023).

A significant number of restaurant owners in Japan who recognize the growing demand for Halal food among Muslim tourists are actively striving to meet these requirements. The concept of Halal in a Quranic version means lawful or permitted, which all foods are Halal except those are mentioned explicitly as Haram, which is prohibited or unlawful, for example, alcohol and pork (Alam and Nazura, 2011). Many restaurants in Japan comply with the concept of halal serving, which serves food without alcohol, pork, and meat that follows the slaughtering process. However, there are various Halal concepts in Japan, such as Halal Certificate, Local Halal, and Muslim Friendly (Yoza, 2016). This happens because no specific organization is authorized in Japan to monitor the compliance of Halal status by restaurants in Japan.

In Japan, Halal certification is managed by various entities, including the Japan Halal Association (JHA), the Japan Muslim Association, and private Halal consultants. This decentralized approach can create confusion for Muslim tourists regarding the authenticity of Halal compliance. For instance, some "Muslim-Friendly" restaurants may use the same cooking utensils for both Halal and non-Halal food preparation, which does not align with proper Halal standards. Such practices undermine the confidence of Muslim tourists in the Halal status of food establishments in Japan, potentially affecting their dining choices and overall experience.

This is in contrast to Malaysia, which has established a Halal Certification system under the responsibility of Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM) and is associated with the legal system. Although Japan is not a Muslim country, it is not a reason for not establishing a specific organization that can recognize the Halal status for a restaurant or food production. By contrast, non-Muslim countries such as the United States have established centralized bodies like the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) to ensure compliance with Halal standards (Zainuddin and Harun, 2022).

Hence, current study examines Japan's readiness for Halal compliance in the restaurant industry. The findings will provide insights for policymakers and stakeholders on improving the Halal certification system in Japan. Specifically, the study emphasizes the importance of establishing a single, government-authorized organization to regulate Halal certification and compliance. This measure is expected to enhance Halal certification's credibility in Japan, thereby boosting Muslim tourist confidence and contributing to Japan's tourism-driven GDP growth. As Halal tourism represents one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, improving Halal compliance could position Japan as a leading destination for Muslim travelers.

## Literature Review

Halal is a term used by Muslims as a way of life. It is an obligation for every Muslim to consume accepted foods whenever and wherever possible, even when he or she is away from Islamic society. The Halal certification body in Japan is divided into three categories: non-profit organizations, religious corporations and other organizational forms (Sasaki, 2014). Certification for Halal food in Japan was first established in 1986, administered by the Japan Muslim Association (Jp. Shūkyō Hōjin Nihon Musurimu Kyōkai). However, this organization then was not focused on Halal certification for business purposes because it is a religious corporation whose main activity is voluntarily assisting the community (Kawabata, 2015). These Halal certification bodies were established between 1986 and 2012. According to Numajiri (2015), it is a significant trend that certification bodies with a long history of certification experience tend to have stricter Halal standards compared to newly established ones. This loose Halal standard in Japan is known as “Local Halal”. Japan is a non-Muslim country with significant halal industry development. However, compared to other East Asian countries, Japan is late in addressing the Halal market due to less interest in religion in Japanese society (Halal Challenge Project, 2013). In Japan, Islam adherents account for approximately 0.18 percent of the total population. Given that Tokyo has been chosen to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, it is no exaggeration to say that Japan needs to be able to handle the demands of visitors from different countries and cultures. Moreover, since the global Muslim population is approximately 1.6 billion, the demand for Halal-certified products and services is expected to grow, creating an urgent need to expand Halal offerings in Japan.

Recent studies have highlighted the challenges and opportunities within Japan's Halal industry. Hasnan and Kohda (2023) examined the complexities of the Halal supply chain in Japan, noting the absence of a centralized governmental body overseeing Halal certification, which has led to a proliferation of over 30 certification bodies with varying standards. This fragmentation poses challenges for businesses seeking certification and for consumers seeking assurance of Halal compliance. In addition, the Kyoto Tourism Federation organized monthly Halal seminars throughout 2015 under the theme of Muslim hospitality. These seminars aimed to enhance awareness and understanding of Halal principles and Islamic tourism among professionals in the tourism sector, including hotel managers, restaurant owners, and other business operators. Furthermore, since the Halal mark has become a significant tool for attracting more customers, companies sometimes use it as a shortcut to attract Muslim consumers more efficiently. According to Kaori Nusantara (2015), the Halal mark is used by Japanese industry to reap economic benefits. They have misunderstood that by obtaining Halal certification or printing the Halal mark on their products, Muslims will purchase their products (Komura, 2015), however, the reputation of the company is potentially very vulnerable if they put on a fake Halal mark.

In contrast with the anti-Halal movement, Japanese people and companies in general are very welcoming of the development of Halal in Japan. Currently, various stakeholders, including government agencies, Halal certification bodies, and community organizations, are actively engaged in introducing the Halal concept to Japanese communities and companies. These efforts aim to enhance understanding and address misconceptions surrounding Halal practices. Japanese society is becoming more aware of Halal food when they invite their co-workers to eat out together (Adidaya, 2016). According to Adidaya, Japanese society and

enterprises are becoming more aware and interested in Halal, looking at the number of seminar participants and the number who passed the examination conducted by the Japan Halal Association.

According to Takayuki (2018), the relaxation of visa requirements in 2017 for travelers from Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia is highlighted as a pivotal factor contributing to the increasing number of Muslim tourists visiting Japan. This policy change significantly simplified travel to Japan, sharply increasing visitors from these regions. Furthermore, the Tokyo 2020 Olympics acted as a significant catalyst, drawing global attention to Japan's tourism industry and prompting an influx of international tourists, including those from Islamic countries. The post-Olympics period has seen sustained growth in Muslim tourism, reinforcing the need for infrastructure and services tailored to their unique needs. Scholars have emphasized the critical role of Halal compliance in fostering a positive experience for Muslim visitors. For instance, efforts to introduce Halal-friendly restaurants, prayer facilities, and mobile applications for locating Halal-certified establishments have been instrumental in positioning Japan as a Muslim-friendly destination (Henderson, 2016; Mohamed et al., 2023). However, the literature also notes challenges, including inconsistent Halal certification standards and limited awareness among local businesses, which can undermine Muslim tourists' confidence in the availability of authentic Halal options.

Since 2017, interest in Halal practices has been growing; not only have international airports, such as Narita (NRT) and Kansai International Airport (KIX), started offering Halal menus, but there has also been a push for Muslim-friendly accommodations at Kansai International Airport. Specifically, these efforts include the preparation of Halal menus and the installation of prayer rooms. Catering companies with Halal-certified kitchens in their facilities, primarily for international airlines' in-flight meals, also provide Halal dishes for group tours. Some restaurants at Kansai International Airport also serve Halal food (Takayuki, 2018).

Halal is religion, so it is not forced, but should eventually be left to an individual, and there is a difference by country. Islamic scholar Ko Nakata emphasizes that imposing Halal certification as a mandate contradicts the essence of religious autonomy. Nakata stated, "I think as for Halal certification, to force things, is a mortal sin, and it's almost the same as the snatch of the prerogative of God" (Uchida and Nakata, 2014). This perspective underscores the importance of respecting individual beliefs and cultural differences in implementing Halal practices.

The Halal certification process requires strict adherence to guidelines, including completely segregating Halal and non-Halal items throughout transportation and storage. In Japan, where the Muslim population is approximately 100,000, meeting these stringent requirements presents significant challenges. Even with the inclusion of Muslim tourists, the overall demand for Halal products remains relatively limited, making the associated costs considerably high (Takayuki, 2018). Furthermore, the absence of standardized screening criteria across the multiple organizations issuing Halal certifications in Japan has led to ambiguity and inconsistencies in the certification process. Muslims are expected to abide by rigid regulations regarding diet (Chaudry and Riaz, 2014) and access to halal food is a cause of anxiety for many travelers (Battour, Ismail and Battor, 2011; Bon and Hussain, 2010; Halal

Focus, 2013), especially when visiting non-Islamic destinations (Abodeeb, Wilson and Moyle, 2015).

There are no formal published statistics for Muslims, but Crescent Rating (2016) deems Japan to be eighth in the top 20 destinations for these travellers for non-organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). They have been targeted in promotion, focusing on South East Asia, whose citizens have been beneficiaries of the more relaxed visa regime (APEC, 2014).

The study adopts Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a theoretical framework to assess Japan's readiness for Halal compliance within the restaurant industry. The TPB framework is instrumental in understanding how an owner's behavioral intention is influenced by factors such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, ultimately driving the actual performance of that behavior. This approach allows the study to systematically identify, measure and analyze critical determinants influencing Halal compliance practices in the Japanese restaurant sector.

According to Ajzen (1991, 2006), the TPB posits that human behavior is driven by individuals' intentions to perform a specific action, with intention as the immediate determinant of behavior. These intentions are influenced by two key factors: one personal and the other social. Previous research has extensively utilized TPB to explore behavioral intentions related to Halal practices. For instance, Alam and Sayuti (2011) and Abu-Hussin, Johari, Hehsan, and Nawawi (2016) investigated how consumer attitudes and awareness shaped Halal food purchasing behavior. Similarly, Pratiwi (2018) demonstrated that factors such as awareness and understanding significantly influenced adherence to Halal principles, even in non-Muslim majority settings. These findings underscore the importance of knowledge and perception in fostering compliance.

Building on this foundation, the study examines how these behavioral determinants align with restaurants' operational readiness to meet Halal standards in Japan. By leveraging the TPB framework, this research aims to provide a structured understanding of the factors driving or hindering Halal compliance, thereby contributing to policy and operational improvements in Japan's restaurant industry. The conceptual framework guiding this study is presented in Figure 1.

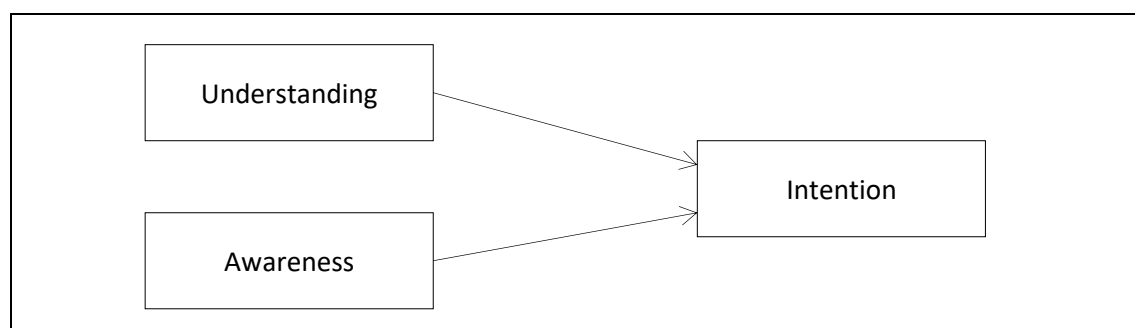


Figure 1: Proposed Framework

Understanding Halal principles has been identified as a significant determinant of restaurant owners' intentions to comply with Halal practices. Studies have shown that knowledge and comprehension of Halal requirements strongly influence the willingness of business owners

to implement such practices within their establishments. For instance, Mohamed et al. (2023) highlighted that awareness and understanding of Halal concepts are critical in fostering compliance intentions, particularly in non-Muslim-majority countries. Similarly, Alam and Sayuti (2011) demonstrated that a thorough understanding of Halal principles positively impacts the behavioral intention of food operators toward adopting Halal certification. These findings suggest that enhancing Halal knowledge through targeted education and training programs could effectively drive compliance intentions among restaurant owners.

Awareness of Halal principles is a critical factor influencing individuals' and business owners' intentions to comply with Halal practices. Research has consistently highlighted that higher awareness of Halal requirements significantly impacts decision-making processes. For example, Ahmad, Harun and Hanafiah, (2020) found that awareness plays a pivotal role in shaping the intentions of business owners to adopt Halal certification, as it directly affects their perception of the benefits and necessity of compliance. Similarly, Rahman and Musa (2022) demonstrated that awareness campaigns and educational initiatives effectively increase food business operators' willingness to comply with Halal standards. This suggests that raising awareness among stakeholders is essential for fostering greater compliance with Halal practices in the restaurant industry.

### **Methodology**

This study aims to evaluate the intention of restaurant owners in Kyoto, Japan, to implement Halal compliance practices. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed, considering constraints related to costs, time, and difficulty accessing respondents during their busy operational hours. This approach is commonly utilized in similar research contexts to collect data from specific populations efficiently (Hanafiah et al., 2022). As a result, 160 restaurant owners successfully completed the questionnaires.

The questionnaire was structured into four key sections: (1) restaurant profile, (2) restaurant characteristics, (3) awareness and understanding of Halal, and (4) intention to implement Halal practices. This design aligns with prior studies, such as those by Alam and Sayuti (2011), which explored the factors influencing Halal compliance in the food industry through structured surveys. Similarly, Pratiwi (2018) highlighted the importance of measuring awareness and understanding to assess readiness for Halal adoption among businesses in non-Muslim majority areas.

The data collected were analyzed using Smart-Partial Least Squares (Smart-PLS), a statistical tool effective for structural equation modeling and ideal for small to medium sample sizes. This method is widely acknowledged in studies examining behavioral intentions and compliance frameworks, such as the research by Yusof et al. (2024) on Halal certification systems and their impact on organizational practices.

### **Result & Discussion**

The results of this study provide critical insights into the readiness of restaurant owners in Kyoto, Japan, to implement Halal compliance, shedding light on their business characteristics, awareness, and intentions toward Halal practices. The analysis reveals a diverse profile of restaurant establishments in terms of years in operation, workforce size, customer demographics, and mixed levels of awareness and understanding of Halal requirements.



The vast majority of the total highest respondent business establishments were in the year 1901 – 2000 (23.1%), followed by the year 2011 and above (19.4%) and year 2001 – 2010 (8.1%). This suggests that newer restaurants may have a different perspective on adopting Halal practices than long-established ones.

The number of full-time employees in restaurants around Kyoto were less than 5 (47.5%), followed by the number of 6 – 20 (16.9%) and 21 – 50 (3.8%). While the highest part-time of employed were 6 – 20 (35.6%), followed by 21 – 50 (22.5%), and less than 5 employees (5.6%). The owner of respondent own annual turnover at about 10,001 – 40,000 (14.4%). The missing value system was because the respondents refused to disclose the answer.

Table 1

*Owner of Restaurant Profile (N = 160)*

Variables		Frequency (%)
When do you start a business?	<1800	3 (1.9)
	1801-1900	4 (2.5)
	1901-2000	37 (23.1)
	2001-2010	13 (8.1)
	>2011	31 (19.4)
	Missing system	72 (45)
	Total	160 (100)
No of employees: Full Time	<5	76 (47.5)
	6-20	27 (16.9)
	21-50	6 (3.8)
	51-100	3 (1.9)
	>101	8 (5)
	Missing system	40 (25)
	Total	160 (100)
Part Time	<5	9 (5.6)
	6-20	57 (35.6)
	21-50	36 (22.5)
	51-100	2 (1.3)
	>101	4 (2.5)
	Missing system	52 (32.5)
	Total	160 (100)
Average Annual turnover	<10,000	15 (9.4)
	10,001-40,000	23 (14.4)
	40,001-80,000	2 (1.3)
	>80,001	10 (6.3)
	Missing system	110 (68.8)
Total	160 (100)	
Type of Respondent	Owner	10 (6.3)
	Manager	36 (22.5)
	Staff	98 (61.3)
	Missing system	16 (10)
	Total	160 (100)

This respondent demographic underscores the importance of offering diverse cuisine options, as reflected by (40.6%) of restaurants serving Japanese cuisine, western cuisine (18.8%) and beverage only (15%). The missing value system was because the respondents refused to disclose the answer

Table 2

*Details of Customer Visit (N = 160)*

Variables		Frequency (%)
Ratio of international customers	<10	38 (23.8)
	11-30	67 (41.9)
	31-60	24 (15)
	61-90	3 (1.9)
	Missing system	28 (17.5)
	Total	160 (100)
Food and beverage category	Japanese	65 (40.6)
	Chinese	9 (5.6)
	Western	30 (18.8)
	Asian, Ethnic	2 (1.3)
	Beverage only	24 (15)
	Others	16 (10)
	Missing system	14 (8.8)
	Total	160 (100)

Table 3 shows the restaurant characteristics being asked of respondents who own or manage a restaurant in Kyoto. It shows that every respondent restaurant provided an English menu (90%), and the restaurant owns an English-speaking staff (59.4%). Moreover, the presence of alcoholic beverages (83.8%) and pork (72.5%) in most establishments highlights a lack of alignment with Halal requirements, which could deter Muslim tourists from seeking Halal-compliant options. This finding echoes similar challenges non-Muslim majority countries face in accommodating Halal preferences (Mohamed et al., 2023).

Table 3

*Restaurant Characteristic (N=160)*

Variables		Frequency (%)
English Menu is provided in my restaurant.	Yes	144 (90)
	No	16 (10)
My restaurant has English-speaking staff.	Yes	95 (59.4)
	No	65 (40.6)
Alcoholic beverages are served in my restaurant.	Yes	134 (83.8)
	No	26 (16.3)
Pork is served in my restaurant.	Yes	116 (72.5)
	No	44 (27.5)

The findings of this study indicate a notable gap in awareness of Halal food practices among restaurant owners and managers in Kyoto, with 53.1% of respondents reporting no awareness of Halal food requirements (Table 4). This lack of awareness poses significant challenges to the adoption of Halal compliance, particularly in a city like Kyoto, which serves as a major



tourist destination with a growing arrival of Muslim visitors.

Table 4

*Restaurant Characteristic*

Variables	Frequency (%)
I am aware of Halal food	Yes 75 (46.9)
	No 85 (53.1)

In this study, the measurement of the analysis by Smart PLS is divided by two processes, which are the measurement model and structural model. Table 5 shows the result of the measurement model. The measurement model focuses on identifying the relationship between constructs and items, and the correlational relationship between constructs. Hence, first, indicator reliability which to assess the item loadings. A value of loadings less than 0.5 will be removed from the measurement model to improve the convergent and discriminant validity assessment. Thus, an item below shows factor loadings greater than 0.5 in all items constructed.

Second, composite reliability (CR) shows a value of more than 0.8, Halal Understanding (0.810), Halal Awareness (0.836), and Halal Intention (0.889), which demonstrate high levels of internal consistency reliability. Thus, it shows that the items used to represent the constructs have satisfactory consistency reliability. Third, convergent validity is to assess the average variance extracted (AVE) which the value must be equal to 0.5 and more. Thus, Halal Understanding (0.518), Halal Awareness (0.508) and Halal Intention (0.669) are more than 0.5 which shows that the constructs reflect the overall amount of variance indicators.

Table 5

*Result of the Measurement Model*

Construct	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
<b>Halal Understanding</b>	I know that all seafood can be served to Muslim.	0.802	0.810	0.518
	I know that Halal meat such as chicken, beef and lamb must be slaughtered following Islamic Law.	0.693		
	I know Halal food processes content of preparing, processing or storing with Halal ingredients and materials.	0.627		
	I have knowledge about Halal certificate processes.	0.745		
<b>Halal Awareness</b>	We change food choices if necessary.	0.677	0.836	0.508
	I would like to meet international customers' needs.	0.704		
	I would like to meet Muslim customers' needs.	0.777		
	I think Muslim market is growing.	0.588		
<b>Halal Intention</b>	I will make my restaurant Muslim friendly.	0.797	0.889	0.669
	I always concern with halal issues.	0.866		
	I am willing to learn about Halal.	0.671		
	Customer often ask/inquire about Halal food.	0.865		
	I will apply halal certificate in future.	0.853		

The next process in the measurement model is an assessment of discriminant validity. Hence, Table 6 shows a Fornell Larcker criterion, where all square roots of AVE exceeded the off-diagonal elements in their corresponding row and column. Thus, the bolded values 0.713, 0.818 and 0.719 are higher than the correlations for other constructs. This finding indicates that the constructs are distinct and measure unique aspects of the proposed framework. Such robust discriminant validity further validates the structural model, as supported by Henseler et al. (2015).

Table 6

*Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

	<b>Halal Awareness</b>	<b>Halal Intention</b>	<b>Halal Understanding</b>
<b>Halal Awareness</b>	<b>0.713</b>		
<b>Halal Intention</b>	0.599	<b>0.818</b>	
<b>Halal Understanding</b>	-0.142	-0.241	<b>0.719</b>

Next, Table 7 shows the result of the structural measurement model. The path coefficient result was significant at the 95 % confidence interval with p-values less than 0.011: Halal Understanding → Halal Intention ( $\beta = -0.160$ , t-value 2.552) and 0.00: Halal Awareness → Halal Intention ( $\beta = 0.576$ , t-value 11.018).

Halal Understanding showed a significant relationship between Halal Intention ( $\beta = -0.160$ , t-value = 2.552,  $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that while knowledge of Halal principles is essential, it may not be the primary driver of intention. This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting the varying impact of understanding versus other factors like awareness and perceived behavioral control in influencing intentions. For instance, Alam and Sayuti (2011) found that while knowledge of Halal practices contributes to intention, its effect can be limited when individuals lack immediate incentives or supportive environments for compliance.

Halal Awareness showed a strong positive relationship with Halal Intention ( $\beta = 0.576$ , t-value = 11.018,  $p < 0.01$ ), highlighting the critical role of awareness in motivating restaurant owners to adopt Halal practices. This aligns with the findings of Ahmad et al. (2020), who emphasized that awareness creates a cognitive recognition of the importance and benefits of Halal compliance, thereby directly influencing the intention to act. The study demonstrated that business owners aware of the growing demand for Halal products and services are more likely to prioritize compliance to meet market needs and gain competitive advantages.

Hence, the relationship framework was supported in this study. Besides, although the effect size ( $f^2$ ) is small, Halal Understanding (0.041) and Halal Awareness (0.527) show the effect of each exogenous and endogenous construct in demonstrating  $R^2$  value at (0.383) Halal Intention as shown in Figure 2. These findings echo the results of Rahman and Musa (2022), who found that awareness-building initiatives are more impactful than knowledge enhancement alone in promoting Halal compliance. The  $R^2$  value for Halal Intention (0.383) indicates that 38.3% of the variance in intention is explained by Halal Understanding and Halal Awareness, which demonstrates a moderate explanatory power. This is consistent with Chin (1998), who suggested that  $R^2$  values between 0.3 and 0.5 indicate acceptable predictive accuracy in social science research.

Table 7

*Result of the Structural model (N=160)*

Path	Direct Effect ( $\beta$ )	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Effect Size $f^2$	T-Value	P-Value	Discussion
Halal Understanding → Halal Intention	-0.160	0.063	0.041	2.552	0.011	Supported
Halal Awareness → Halal Intention	0.576	0.052	0.527	11.018	0.000	Supported

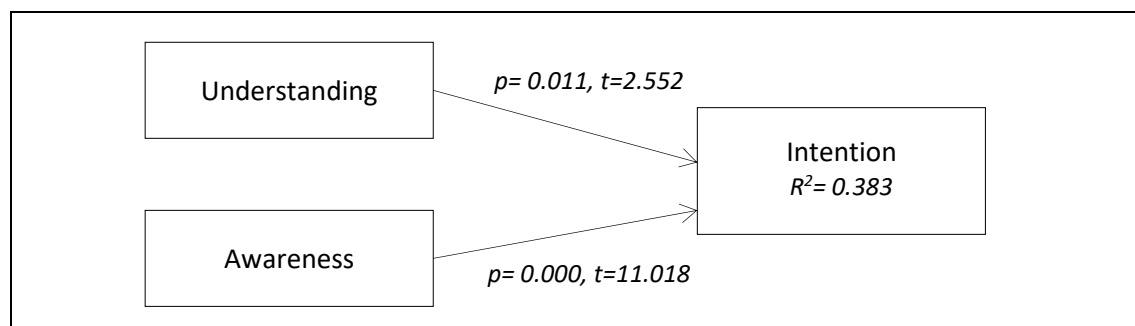
Note:  $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ 

Figure 2: Structural model

## Conclusion

The growing global Muslim population has significantly increased the demand for Halal practices in hospitality and tourism. This study aims to assess the readiness of Japanese restaurant owners to adopt Halal compliance by examining the role of Halal Awareness and Halal Understanding in shaping their behavioral intentions using Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The findings provide actionable insights to improve Halal compliance in Japan, enhancing its appeal as a Muslim-friendly destination.

The results of this study have several practical implications. First, targeted awareness campaigns and training programs tailored for restaurant owners can significantly enhance their intention to comply with Halal standards. These initiatives should emphasize the growing economic potential of the Muslim market and provide practical guidance on implementing Halal practices. Second, establishing a unified Halal certification system in Japan could address inconsistencies and enhance trust among business owners and Muslim consumers. Collaboration between government bodies, tourism authorities, and Halal certification organizations is crucial to achieving this goal.

While the study is limited to restaurant owners in Kyoto, future research could expand the geographic scope to include other regions of Japan to capture a more comprehensive understanding of Halal readiness. Additionally, exploring other factors, such as perceived behavioral control, cultural influences, and external market pressures, could provide a deeper understanding of the drivers and barriers to Halal compliance.

This research makes a significant theoretical contribution by applying Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to the context of Halal compliance in a non-Muslim-majority country.

By focusing on the constructs of Halal Awareness and Halal Understanding, the study extends TPB's application to include niche market practices in the hospitality sector, thereby enriching the literature on behavioral intentions in tourism and foodservice industries. It provides empirical evidence that awareness plays a more pivotal role than understanding in shaping compliance intentions, adding to the nuanced understanding of how cognitive and social factors influence behavior.

Contextually, the study addresses a critical gap in research on Halal practices in Japan, where the hospitality industry is increasingly catering to a diverse, international clientele. By highlighting the challenges of fragmented certification systems and limited awareness, this research underscores the urgency of creating a unified Halal framework. This has broader implications for non-Muslim-majority countries seeking to tap into the growing Halal tourism market, offering a model for leveraging Halal practices as a competitive advantage in the global tourism and hospitality sectors.

In conclusion, the findings highlight that increasing awareness and streamlining certification processes are critical for fostering Halal compliance in Japan's restaurant industry. By addressing these challenges, Japan can enhance its reputation as a Muslim-friendly destination, supporting Halal tourism's growth and contributing to its tourism sector's broader economic development. Furthermore, the study provides a foundation for future research and practical applications, encouraging collaborations between stakeholders to establish sustainable and inclusive hospitality practices.

## References

- Abodeeb, J., Wilson, E., & Moyle, B. (2015). Shaping destination image and identity: Insights for destination branding. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9(3), 297-315.
- Abu-Hussin, M. F., Johari, F., Hehsan, A., & Nawawi, R. (2016). Halal purchasing intentions among non-Muslim consumers: A preliminary study. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 7(4), 441-452.
- Adidaya, R. (2016). Increasing Halal awareness among Japanese companies. *Journal of Halal Research*, 2(1), 12-20.
- Ahmad, M., Harun, M. F., & Hanafiah, M. H. (2020). Factors influencing Halal compliance adoption in the foodservice industry. *Journal of Halal Studies*, 5(1), 45–58.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211.
- Ajzen, I. (2006). Constructing a theory of planned behavior questionnaire. Retrieved from <https://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.html>.
- Alam, S. S., & Nazura, M. S. (2011). Applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in Halal food purchasing. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 21(1), 8-20.
- Alam, S. S., & Sayuti, N. M. (2011). Applying the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in Halal food purchasing. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*, 21(1), 8-20.
- Battour, M., Ismail, M. N., & Battor, M. (2011). The impact of destination attributes on Muslim tourist's choice. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13(6), 527-540.
- Bon, M., & Hussain, M. (2010). Halal food and tourism: Prospects and challenges. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 10(3), 227-236.

- Chin, W. W. (1998). Issues and opinion on structural equation modeling. *MIS Quarterly*, 22(1), vii–xvi.
- Crescent Rating. (2016). Muslim travel market: Global Muslim travel index 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.crescentrating.com/>.
- Halal Challenge Project. (2013). Addressing Halal standards in Japan. *Halal Studies Quarterly*, 5(2), 14-22.
- Hanafiah, M. H., Harun, M. F., & Jamaluddin, M. R. (2022). Factors influencing Halal compliance adoption in the foodservice industry. *Journal of Halal Studies*, 5(1), 45–58.
- Hasnan, N., & Kohda, Y. (2023). Challenges and opportunities in the Halal supply chain: The case of Japan. *Journal of Halal Studies and Applications*, 8(1), 45-60.
- Henderson, J. C. (2016). Halal food, certification, and Halal tourism: Insights from Malaysia and Singapore. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 19, 160-164.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115–135.
- Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO). (2024). Visitor statistics and trends. Retrieved from <https://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/>.
- Kawabata, M. (2015). Monotheism and a state: An analysis of Halal compliance in Japan. *Shueisha Monograph Series*, 3(2), 64-68.
- Mohamed, R., Salleh, M., & Aziz, N. (2023). Halal tourism: A sustainable tourism model for Japan post-pandemic. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 45, 101-120.
- Numajiri, T. (2015). Trends in Halal certification in Japan. *Journal of Food Safety and Standards*, 12(3), 45-54.
- Pratiwi, F. R. (2018). Factors influencing Halal adoption in non-Muslim majority provinces. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 9(3), 215–230.
- Rahman, A. H., & Musa, R. (2022). Awareness campaigns and Halal adoption in food industries. *Journal of Islamic Economics and Business*, 12(4), 300-320.
- Sasaki, T. (2014). Halal certification in Japan: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18(2), 45-60.
- Takayuki, K. (2018). Halal practices and tourism development in Japan. *Japan Tourism Quarterly*, 5(3), 45-52.
- Uchida, K., & Nakata, K. (2014). Monotheism and state sovereignty: Halal certification and its challenges. *Shueisha Publications*, 2014, 45-50.
- Yoza, R. (2016). Halal food in Japan: The current issues. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 7(4), 422-439.
- Yusof, S. R., Ibrahim, M., & Latif, F. (2024). Comparative analysis of Halal certification systems: Lessons for Japan. *Journal of Halal Studies*, 8(2), 90–105.
- Zainuddin, S., & Harun, H. (2022). Halal certification and its role in tourism: A global perspective. *International Journal of Halal Studies*, 8(2), 95-110.