The Perception of The Muslim Community in Malaysia on The Causes of The Halal Crisis In The Country: A Preliminary View

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Abstract

The halal industry in Malaysia has witnessed remarkable growth, projected to reach RM30 billion by 2025. However, recent scandals have engendered concerns regarding halal certification processes, resulting in a decline in public trust among Muslims. This preliminary survey investigates the perceptions of Malaysian Muslims concerning the causes of the halal crisis. A total of 195 Muslim respondents, aged 18 to 90 years, were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected via WhatsApp questionnaires over 30 days and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal significant factors contributing to the crisis, including a lack of awareness regarding halal issues, insufficient public education, modern lifestyles prioritizing convenience over compliance, weak enforcement, ineffective punishments, and a perceived lack of government commitment to halal matters. The study highlights the need for increased public awareness, comprehensive halal education, enhanced enforcement, and a more robust governmental commitment to address the crisis. Recommendations include establishing a dedicated halal agency, launching awareness campaigns, and fostering collaboration among enforcement agencies. Further research into the socio-cultural dynamics influencing halal perceptions is imperative to develop strategies that enhance public understanding and compliance with halal standards.

Keywords: *Halal certification; Malaysia, Muslim community; Halal crisis; Halal industry; Islamic principles*

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia has firmly established itself as a significant player in the global halal industry, renowned for its robust certification processes and comprehensive regulatory framework. The Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) serves as the primary authority, overseeing halal certificates, the formulation of standards, and the recognition of foreign halal certification bodies. JAKIM ensures adherence to halal practices across the food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals sectors (JAKIM, 2025).

The halal industry in Malaysia has experienced substantial growth, with market projections reaching RM30 billion by 2025 (Halal Development Corporation, 2022). This growth reflects an increasing demand for halal products both domestically and in international markets, particularly in regions with substantial Muslim populations. The country's initiatives, including the Halal Industry Master Plan 2.0, aim to bolster Malaysia's position as a global halal hub by promoting innovation and facilitating trade (Ministry of International Trade and Industry, 2023).

Nevertheless, the halal certification process is not without its challenges. Recent years have been marred by a series of scandals and controversies that have raised questions regarding the integrity of halal certification in Malaysia. High-profile cases, such as the 2020 scandal involving the sale of non-halal food items labelled as halal, have significantly undermined public trust in the halal certification system (The Star, 2024). This erosion of confidence necessitates a critical examination of public perceptions among the Muslim community regarding the causes of the halal crisis in the country.

Initial surveys indicate that Muslims are increasingly concerned about the transparency and accountability of halal certification processes. Many believe that the existing mechanisms are inadequate to prevent fraudulent practices, leading to a growing demand for stricter regulations and more rigorous enforcement (Muhnidin & Br Pinem, 2024). This article aims to explore these issues in depth, shedding light on the perceptions of the Muslim community concerning the underlying causes of the halal crisis in Malaysia.

Halal certification holds paramount importance for the Muslim community, as it assures adherence to Islamic dietary laws, which are integral to their faith. The term "halal" translates to "permissible" in Arabic and encompasses not only food but also a wide range of products and services that comply with Islamic principles. For Muslims, consuming halal products is not merely a matter of preference but a religious obligation that affects their spiritual well-being (Wiyono et al., 2022).

The significance of halal certification transcends individual dietary choices; it fosters a sense of community and shared values among Muslims. The assurance that products are halal encourages social cohesion. It strengthens the identity of the Muslim community in Malaysia, where approximately 60% of the population identifies as Muslim (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). Furthermore, halal certification carries significant economic implications, as it enhances consumer confidence and drives demand for halal products in both domestic and international markets.

In recent years, the global halal market has expanded, with an estimated worth of USD 2.3 trillion, underscoring the increasing relevance of halal certification in international

trade (Ahmed, 2024). For Malaysia, this presents an opportunity to position itself as a leader in the halal industry, attracting investments and boosting the economy. However, recurring halal crises threaten this potential, as they undermine consumer trust and could deter both local and foreign investors from engaging with the Malaysian halal market.

Moreover, halal certification serves as a benchmark for quality assurance, ensuring that products meet specific standards of hygiene, safety, and ethical sourcing. This is particularly crucial in a multicultural society such as Malaysia, where non-Muslims may also seek halal-certified products for quality and safety reasons (Chong et al., 2021). Thus, the integrity of halal certification is vital not only for Muslims but also for the broader Malaysian society, warranting urgent attention to the ongoing halal crisis.

The Muslim community's reliance on halal certification necessitates transparency and accountability. As fraud and mislabelling emerge, the community's faith is jeopardised, leading to calls for reform. Addressing these concerns is vital for restoring trust in halal certification. The halal crisis in Malaysia has arisen from incidents that have alarmed consumers and stakeholders. In 2020, an investigation revealed food outlets selling non-halal products under false halal certification (The Edge Markets, 2020). This scandal sparked outrage and demands for stricter halal regulations.

Statistics indicate that consumer confidence in halal certification has waned significantly in recent years. A survey conducted by the Halal Research Council in 2021 revealed that 65% of Malaysian Muslims expressed concerns about the authenticity of halal products available in the market (Halal Research Council, 2021). This decline in trust is exacerbated by the perception that regulatory bodies, such as JAKIM, have been slow to respond to emerging issues and have not adequately addressed public concerns regarding transparency and accountability.

The halal crisis is further complicated by the increasing globalisation of the halal market, which presents both opportunities and challenges. As Malaysian companies expand their reach into international markets, they face the dilemma of maintaining halal integrity while navigating diverse regulatory environments (Khan & Ahmad, 2023). This complexity can lead to inconsistencies in halal practices, further fuelling public scepticism about the reliability of certification processes.

The halal crisis impacts sectors beyond food, including cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. The rise of halal-certified cosmetics has garnered attention, yet mislabelled products have raised questions about the efficacy of certification in these industries (Zulkifli, 2022). Such incidents highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to halal certification across sectors to ensure consistent adherence to halal principles. The repercussions extend beyond consumer trust to pose economic risks for Malaysia's halal industry. As public confidence declines, businesses may face decreased sales, and investors may reconsider engaging with the Malaysian halal market. This situation requires urgent reforms to restore faith in halal certification and ensure industry sustainability.

The objective of this study is to explore the perceptions of the Muslim community in Malaysia regarding the causes of the halal crisis. By understanding these perceptions,

the research aims to identify key factors contributing to the erosion of trust in halal certification processes. This understanding is crucial for developing effective strategies to address community concerns and enhance the integrity of halal certification in Malaysia. This research addresses a critical issue in Malaysia's halal industry. Understanding the perceptions of the Muslim community is vital for restoring trust amid the crisis. The study aims to provide insights by examining the causes of crises. The research enhances knowledge of halal certification by analyzing consumer perceptions. These findings can inform certification processes aligned with community needs. The research implications extend beyond Malaysia, as lessons can benefit other countries' halal certification systems. The study's emphasis on regulatory reform supports efforts to strengthen monitoring and maintain the credibility of certification.

This paper explores halal certification issues in Malaysia. The sections are:

1. Current Issues and Developments Related to Halal: Examines incidents affecting the halal industry.
2. Methodology: Outlines the research design and methods for assessing perceptions within the Muslim community.
3. Findings: Presents key findings on Muslim community perceptions of the halal crisis.
4. Discussion: Interprets findings in relation to halal certification literature, exploring stakeholder implications.

Conclusion: Summarizes insights and offers recommendations for Malaysia's halal crisis, with a focus on trust and sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CURRENT ISSUES & DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO HALAL

Definition and Principles of Halal

Halal, an Arabic term meaning "permissible" or "lawful," encompasses not only dietary regulations but also a broader ethical framework that governs the lifestyle of Muslims. The principles of halal are rooted in Islamic law (Sharia), which stipulates that all food and drink must adhere to specific guidelines to be deemed permissible for consumption. The Quran and Hadith provide the foundational texts that define what constitutes halal, including the prohibition of certain substances such as pork and alcohol (Asgar, 2020). Furthermore, halal practices extend beyond the food itself to include the methods of slaughter, preparation, and the overall treatment of animals, ensuring that they are treated humanely and ethically.

In Malaysia, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) is the primary authority responsible for halal certification, which is crucial for businesses catering to the Muslim population. The halal certification process involves rigorous checks and audits to ensure compliance with Islamic laws and standards. According to a report by JAKIM (2021), the halal certification system has played a crucial role in fostering consumer confidence among the Muslim community, with over 20,000 businesses in the country certified as halal. This certification not only serves as a guarantee of compliance with Islamic principles but also enhances the marketability of products and services in a predominantly Muslim nation.

The importance of halal extends beyond religious observance, as it has significant economic implications. The global halal market is estimated to be worth over USD 2 trillion, with Malaysia being a key player in the halal industry (MIFC, 2022). This economic aspect underscores the necessity for stringent halal certification processes to maintain the integrity of the halal brand. The principles of halal thus serve as a dual mechanism for ensuring ethical consumption while also fostering economic growth within the Muslim community.

Historical Context of Halal Certification in Malaysia

The history of halal certification in Malaysia dates back to the 1970s, when the need for a systematic approach to halal compliance became apparent. The establishment of JAKIM in 1997 marked a significant milestone in the formalisation of halal certification processes in the country. Initially, halal certification was managed by various Islamic organisations, leading to inconsistencies and confusion among consumers. The consolidation of these efforts under JAKIM provided a cohesive framework for halal certification, ensuring that all products and services met the required standards (Mohamed et al., 2021).

Over the years, Malaysia has developed a comprehensive halal certification framework that includes not only food products but also cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and even logistics services. The Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) was established in 2006 to further promote the halal industry, providing support for businesses seeking certification and facilitating training programs to educate stakeholders about halal standards (HDC, 2022). This historical evolution highlights Malaysia's commitment to becoming a global leader in the halal industry, positioning itself as a model for other countries seeking to implement similar systems.

Despite these advancements, the halal certification landscape is not without challenges. The emergence of counterfeit halal certifications and fraudulent practices has raised concerns among consumers about the authenticity of halal products. A notable incident occurred in 2020 when a cartel was exposed for importing meat from non-Muslim countries using fake halal certificates, leading to significant public outcry and calls for stricter enforcement of halal regulations (The Star, 2020). This incident underscores the importance of maintaining rigorous certification processes to uphold the integrity of the halal industry in Malaysia.

Previous Studies on Halal Perceptions in the Muslim Community

Numerous studies have explored the perceptions of the Muslim community regarding halal certification and its implications for consumer behaviour. Research conducted by Ali et al. (2021) revealed that Malaysian Muslims place a high level of trust in halal certification, viewing it as a vital assurance of compliance with Islamic dietary laws. The study found that consumers are willing to pay a premium for halal-certified products, indicating that the perceived value of halal extends beyond mere compliance to encompass ethical considerations and quality assurance.

Furthermore, a study by Rahman and Mohamad (2022) highlighted the role of education in shaping perceptions of halal among the Muslim community. The researchers found that individuals with higher levels of education were more likely to

understand the complexities of halal certification and its importance in ensuring food safety and ethical consumption. This suggests that educational initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of halal principles could play a crucial role in enhancing consumer confidence and promoting responsible consumption.

However, despite the overall positive perception of halal certification, there are underlying concerns regarding transparency and accountability in the certification process. A qualitative study by Ismail et al. (2023) revealed that some consumers expressed doubts about the authenticity of halal certifications, especially in light of recent scandals involving counterfeit certificates. This highlights the need for continuous improvement in the halal certification system to address consumer concerns and maintain trust in the halal brand.

Factors Contributing to the Halal Crisis Globally and Locally

The halal crisis faced by the Muslim community in Malaysia is not an isolated phenomenon; it reflects broader global challenges related to halal compliance and certification. One of the primary factors contributing to this crisis is the lack of standardization in halal certification processes across different countries. As highlighted by Bakar and Hassan (2021), the absence of a universally accepted definition of halal has led to discrepancies in certification practices, resulting in confusion among consumers and a potential erosion of trust in halal products.

Moreover, the rise of globalization and the increasing complexity of supply chains have exacerbated the halal crisis. The Cartel Meat Scandal of December 2020 serves as a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities within the halal supply chain, where a syndicate operated for over 40 years, importing meat from non-Muslim countries using fake halal certificates (The Star, 2020). This incident not only undermined consumer confidence but also raised questions about the effectiveness of the existing halal certification system in safeguarding the integrity of halal products.

Additionally, socio-economic factors play a significant role in the halal crisis. The increasing demand for halal products, driven by both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers, has led to a surge in the halal market. However, this demand has also attracted opportunistic players who may prioritize profit over compliance with halal standards. A study by Zainuddin et al. (2022) found that some businesses resort to unethical practices, such as using counterfeit halal logos, to capitalize on the lucrative halal market. This trend poses a significant threat to the halal industry and necessitates a collective effort from stakeholders to uphold the principles of halal.

Current Issues and Developments Related to Halal

The halal landscape in Malaysia has been significantly impacted by various recent developments that have raised concerns within the Muslim community. One of the most notable issues is the Cartel Meat Scandal, which exposed a syndicate that had been operating for decades, importing meat from non-Muslim countries with fake halal certificates. The scandal not only resulted in the seizure of over RM30 million worth of frozen beef but also sparked widespread outrage and calls for stricter enforcement of halal regulations (The Star, 2020). This incident has highlighted the

urgent need for enhanced monitoring and transparency within the halal supply chain to restore consumer trust.

Another significant development is the withdrawal of halal certification for the Alagappa brand in 2024 due to violations of halal procedures. This incident underscores the importance of compliance with halal standards and the consequences of failing to adhere to them (JAKIM, 2024). Such actions serve as a reminder to businesses that maintaining halal certification is not merely a marketing strategy but a commitment to ethical practices that resonate with the values of the Muslim community.

In 2021, the discovery of pig DNA in moon cakes sold in Sabah, using a fake halal logo, further exacerbated concerns regarding the authenticity of halal products. This incident not only violated the principles of halal but also raised questions about the effectiveness of the certification process in preventing such fraudulent activities (Bernama, 2021). The implications of these developments are far-reaching, as they contribute to a growing sense of skepticism among consumers regarding the reliability of halal certifications.

Moreover, the issue of non-Muslim food service workers in halal establishments has emerged as a contentious topic. Reports indicate that some halal premises employ non-Muslim workers who openly display religious symbols, raising concerns among consumers about the authenticity of the halal food being served (Sinar Harian, 2023). This situation underscores the importance of increased awareness and training among food service providers to ensure that all staff members understand and adhere to halal principles, thereby fostering a more trustworthy dining experience for Muslim consumers.

Finally, the ongoing scrutiny of popular restaurants without halal certificates, such as Johnny's Restaurant and Black Canyon, has further intensified discussions around halal compliance. The revelation that these establishments do not possess valid halal certifications has prompted calls for greater accountability and transparency within the food industry (Harian Metro, 2024). As the halal crisis continues to unfold, it is imperative for stakeholders, including regulatory bodies, businesses, and consumers, to work collaboratively to address these challenges and uphold the integrity of the halal brand.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was conducted as a preliminary survey aimed at gaining an initial understanding of the perceptions held by the Muslim community in Malaysia regarding the causes of the halal crisis. The halal crisis, which has emerged as a significant concern among Malaysian Muslims, pertains to issues surrounding the authenticity and certification of halal products. In light of the increasing complexities in global supply chains and the rising demand for halal goods, it is essential to gauge community perceptions to identify key areas of concern and potential solutions.

The preliminary survey approach allows for the collection of qualitative data that can reveal underlying sentiments and attitudes within the community. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is particularly effective in exploring the 'how' and 'why' of human behaviour, which aligns with the objectives of this study. By employing a survey methodology, the research aims to encapsulate a broad spectrum of opinions, thereby providing a foundational understanding that can inform future, more extensive studies on halal perceptions in Malaysia.

The survey was designed to include open-ended questions that encourage respondents to elaborate on their views, thereby facilitating a richer collection of data. This qualitative approach is crucial, as it enables the identification of nuanced perspectives that may not be revealed by quantitative methods alone. The findings from this preliminary survey will serve as a springboard for more in-depth investigations into the halal crisis, highlighting specific areas where community education and policy interventions may be necessary.

Sampling Method and Participant Selection

A total of 195 Muslim respondents aged between 18 and 90 years participated in this study. The selection of participants was conducted using a purposive sampling method, which is particularly suitable for qualitative research as it allows researchers to target specific groups of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). In this case, the focus was on Muslim individuals who could provide insights into the halal crisis based on their personal experiences and knowledge.

The demographic diversity of the respondents was taken into account to ensure a comprehensive representation of the Malaysian Muslim community. Participants were recruited through social media platforms, community groups, and religious organizations, which helped to reach a broad audience. This method of recruitment not only facilitated a diverse sample but also ensured that the participants were familiar with the halal issues being investigated.

The age range of participants is significant, as it encompasses various life stages and experiences, thereby enriching the data collected. Younger respondents may have different perceptions influenced by contemporary issues and digital information sources, while older participants may draw from a more traditional understanding of halal practices. This diversity is essential for capturing a holistic view of the community's perceptions regarding the halal crisis.

Data Collection Techniques

Data for this study were collected using the WhatsApp platform as a medium for distributing the questionnaire. Given the widespread use of WhatsApp in Malaysia, this method proved to be an efficient and effective way to reach participants quickly and conveniently. The use of digital platforms for data collection is becoming increasingly common in contemporary research, as they enable immediate feedback and mitigate the logistical challenges associated with face-to-face surveys (Kumar, 2019).

The questionnaire was designed to be concise yet comprehensive, incorporating both closed and open-ended questions to facilitate a wide range of responses. The study period spanned 30 days, during which participants were encouraged to complete the survey at their convenience. This flexibility is crucial in ensuring higher response rates, as it accommodates the varying schedules of participants.

In addition to the quantitative data collected through closed questions, the open-ended responses provided valuable qualitative insights into the complexities of the halal crisis. This dual approach to data collection enables a more robust analysis of the community's perceptions, allowing researchers to identify common themes and divergent opinions regarding halal issues.

Data confidentiality and ethical considerations were paramount throughout the data collection process. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained before participation. This ethical approach not only fosters trust but also ensures the integrity of the research findings.

Data Analysis Methods

The analysis of the data collected from the survey employed a qualitative approach, which is particularly suitable given the exploratory nature of the study. Qualitative data analysis enables the identification of patterns, themes, and insights that inform our understanding of the perceptions held by the Muslim community regarding the halal crisis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis was utilised as the primary method for analyzing the open-ended responses. This method involves coding the data and identifying recurring themes that emerge from the participants' answers. By systematically categorizing the responses, the researchers can highlight key issues, concerns, and suggestions put forth by the respondents. This approach not only reveals the community's perceptions but also provides a framework for understanding the broader implications of these views.

In addition to thematic analysis, the study also employed a comparative analysis of responses based on demographic variables, including age and gender. This comparative approach allows for a deeper understanding of how different segments of the Muslim community perceive the halal crisis, potentially revealing disparities that warrant further investigation.

The findings from the qualitative analysis will be presented in a manner that highlights both the commonalities and differences in perceptions, providing a comprehensive overview of the community's views. This nuanced understanding is crucial for stakeholders, including policymakers and halal certification bodies, to effectively address the concerns of the Muslim community.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Table 1: Main Issues of Halal Ceisis

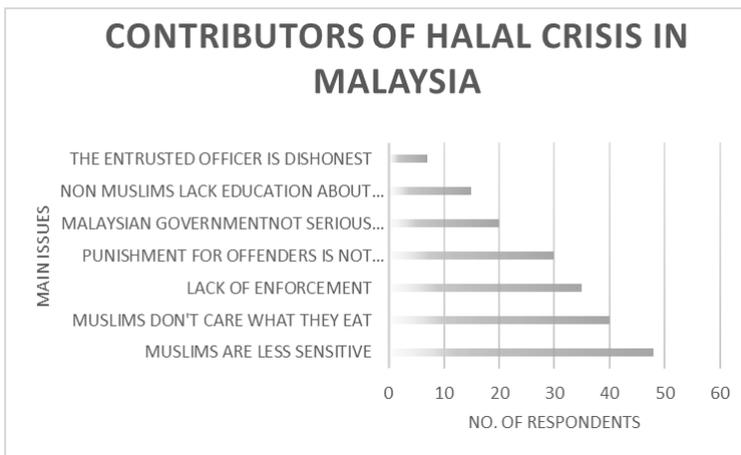| MAIN ISSUES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Muslims Are Less Sensitive	48
Muslims Don't Care What They Eat	40
Lack Of Enforcement	35
Punishment For Offenders Is Not Worth It	30
Malaysian Government not Serious About Halal Issues	20
Non-Muslims Lack Education About Halal	15
The Entrusted Officer Is Dishonest	7

Figure 1: Contributor of Halal Crisis in Malaysia

Lack of Awareness Among Muslim Communities About Halal Issues

The level of awareness regarding halal issues has a significant influence on the perception of halal within the Muslim community in Malaysia. A substantial number of Muslims tend to rely heavily on halal certification agencies, assuming that all certified products meet halal standards without conducting personal verification. According to a survey conducted by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM), approximately 60% of respondents admitted they rarely check the halal status of products themselves (JAKIM, 2022). This over-reliance can lead to a false sense of security regarding the consumption of halal products, which may inadvertently contribute to the halal crisis.

Moreover, this lack of awareness is compounded by insufficient public education campaigns aimed at informing the Muslim community about the importance of verifying halal status. Many Muslims are not fully aware of the implications of consuming non-halal products, which can range from spiritual concerns to health issues. A study by the Halal Research Institute found that only 30% of respondents were knowledgeable about the specific criteria that define halal (Halal Research

Institute, 2023). This knowledge gap can be attributed to a lack of comprehensive halal education in schools and community programs, which often overlook the significance of halal in everyday life.

Furthermore, the reliance on halal certification agencies can lead to complacency within the community. When individuals believe that these agencies are infallible, they may neglect to educate themselves about halal principles. This situation is exacerbated by the rapid influx of halal products in the market, where consumers may feel overwhelmed and less inclined to scrutinise each product's halal status. The perception that halal certification is sufficient can lead to a disconnect between the community's expectations and the realities of the halal supply chain.

To address this issue, stakeholders must implement targeted awareness campaigns that not only educate Muslims about halal standards but also encourage proactive engagement in verifying the halal status of products. For instance, initiatives that promote workshops and seminars focusing on halal education could empower consumers to make informed choices. By fostering a culture of awareness and responsibility, the Muslim community can play a pivotal role in mitigating the halal crisis.

Finally, the role of social media in shaping perceptions about halal cannot be overlooked. Many Muslims turn to social media platforms for information, which can sometimes lead to the dissemination of misinformation. The lack of credible sources can further exacerbate the confusion surrounding halal issues. Therefore, halal certification bodies and community leaders need to utilize these platforms effectively to promote accurate information and engage with the community in meaningful ways.

Lack of Halal Education and the Influence of Modern Lifestyles

The modern lifestyle in Malaysia presents both challenges and opportunities for the Muslim community regarding halal awareness and education. As urbanization continues to rise, many Muslims find themselves navigating a fast-paced environment where convenience often takes precedence over religious considerations. This shift has resulted in a growing number of individuals who may not prioritizes halal status, leading to potential conflicts between personal lifestyle choices and religious obliga- tions. A study by the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER) found that 45% of urban Muslims frequently prioritize convenience over halal compliance when purchasing food (MIER, 2023).

Additionally, the lack of structured halal education in schools and community programs contributes to the perception that halal is merely an optional aspect of modern living. Many young Muslims are not exposed to the foundational teachings of halal principles, leading to a disconnect between their identities and their consumption choices. The absence of comprehensive halal education can result in a generation that is less informed about the significance of halal, ultimately contributing to the halal crisis.

Moreover, the influence of modern lifestyles often manifests in the form of dietary preferences that may not align with halal principles. The rise of health-conscious eating trends, such as veganism and gluten-free diets, has led some individuals to

overlook the halal status of products in favour of perceived health benefits. A survey conducted by the Malaysian Consumer Research Centre found that 35% of respondents prioritized health over halal compliance when selecting food items (Malaysian Consumer Research Centre, 2023). This trend underscores the importance of educational initiatives that clarify the connection between health and halal, emphasizing that halal consumption can be compatible with modern dietary preferences.

To address these challenges, it is essential to integrate halal education into the broader curriculum in schools and universities. By incorporating halal principles into subjects such as nutrition, ethics, and social studies, educators can foster a deeper understanding of halal among young Muslims. Furthermore, community initiatives that promote discussions around halal and modern lifestyles can encourage individuals to reflect on their choices and make informed decisions that align with their faith.

Weak Enforcement by Authorities

The enforcement of halal regulations in Malaysia is a critical factor in addressing the halal crisis. Despite the existence of comprehensive halal certification processes, the enforcement mechanisms often fall short of ensuring compliance among food producers and retailers. A report by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) revealed that approximately 40% of halal-certified establishments were found to be violating halal standards during routine inspections (MACC, 2023). This statistic underscores the need for more robust enforcement strategies to uphold the integrity of the halal certification process.

One of the primary reasons for weak enforcement is the inflexible actions taken by authorities in addressing violations. Many enforcement agencies face challenges in conducting regular inspections due to limited resources and personnel. As a result, procedural violations may continue unchecked, leading to a lack of accountability among food producers. The perception among the Muslim community is that enforcement agencies are not adequately equipped to handle the complexities of the halal supply chain, which can diminish public trust in halal certification (JAKIM, 2022).

Moreover, the lack of coordination among various enforcement agencies further complicates the situation. Different agencies may have overlapping jurisdictions, leading to confusion regarding responsibilities and accountability. This fragmentation can result in inconsistent enforcement practices, where some establishments may face penalties while others operate without consequence. A survey conducted by the Centre for Halal Studies revealed that 55% of respondents believed that inconsistent enforcement contributed to the halal crisis in Malaysia (Centre for Halal Studies, 2023).

To improve enforcement, authorities need to adopt a more proactive approach that includes regular training and capacity-building programmes for enforcement officers. By enhancing their knowledge of halal principles and regulations, officers can better identify violations and ensure compliance among food producers. Additionally,

fostering collaboration among various enforcement agencies can lead to more effective monitoring and accountability, ultimately strengthening public confidence in halal certification.

Punishments That Do Not Have a Long-Term Impact

The effectiveness of punitive measures in deterring violations of halal standards has been a topic of concern within the Muslim community in Malaysia. Many respondents in surveys expressed the view that existing punishments for perpetrators of halal violations were insufficient to serve as a deterrent or as a means of educating the community. According to a study conducted by the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (IKIM), over 70% of participants believed that the current penalties for halal violations were not stringent enough to discourage non-compliance (IKIM, 2023). This perception raises questions about the efficacy of the current enforcement framework.

One of the key issues surrounding punishment is the lack of a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of halal violations. Often, penalties are imposed after violations occur, but there is little emphasis on preventive measures that educate both producers and consumers about the importance of halal compliance. This reactive approach can lead to a cycle of violations without addressing the underlying issues. For instance, a case study involving a well-known food manufacturer revealed that despite facing penalties for halal violations, the company continued to operate without implementing significant changes to its practices (Halal Research Institute, 2023).

Furthermore, the perception that punishments lack long-term impact can undermine the credibility of halal certification agencies. When violations are not met with appropriate consequences, it can lead to a culture of complacency among food producers, who may believe that they can operate without fear of repercussions. This situation can further erode public trust in the halal certification process, as consumers may question the integrity of certified products.

To address these challenges, it is essential to implement a more comprehensive approach to penalties that includes both punitive measures and educational initiatives. By combining enforcement with public awareness campaigns, authorities can foster a greater understanding of the consequences of halal violations. For example, educational workshops that highlight the importance of halal compliance and the potential repercussions of violations can encourage food producers to adhere to halal standards.

Lack of Government Commitment to Halal Matters

The perception of a lack of government commitment to halal matters is a significant concern among the Muslim community in Malaysia. Many respondents in surveys expressed the belief that the government has not taken sufficient steps to address the complexities of halal issues comprehensively. A report by the Malaysian Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) found that 65% of participants felt that the government's efforts to promote halal standards were inadequate (ISIS, 2023). This

perception raises questions about the prioritization of halal matters within the broader policy framework.

One of the key factors contributing to this perception is the inconsistency in government policies related to halal certification and enforcement. Although established guidelines and regulations exist, their implementation often lacks coherence and consistency. This inconsistency can lead to confusion among stakeholders, including food producers and consumers, regarding the expectations and requirements for halal compliance. A case study examining the halal certification process for a multinational food company highlighted the challenges faced by producers in navigating the regulatory landscape, resulting in delays and frustration (Centre for Halal Studies, 2023).

Moreover, the lack of a dedicated government agency solely focused on halal matters can hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address halal issues. Currently, multiple agencies are involved in halal certification and enforcement, leading to potential overlaps and gaps in responsibilities. The perception that halal matters are not prioritized at the government level can diminish public confidence in the halal certification process, as consumers may question the commitment of authorities to uphold halal standards.

To enhance government commitment to halal matters, it is essential to establish a dedicated agency that focuses exclusively on halal certification, enforcement, and education. By centralizing efforts, the government can streamline processes, improve coordination among agencies, and ensure that halal matters receive the attention they deserve. Additionally, increased investment in public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives can demonstrate the government's commitment to promoting halal compliance within the community.

CONCLUSION

This preliminary survey investigates the perceptions of the Muslim community in Malaysia concerning the underlying causes of the halal crisis within the nation. The study involved 195 Muslim respondents, aged between 18 and 90 years, who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through a questionnaire disseminated via WhatsApp over 30 days. Thematic analysis was employed to discern patterns and themes within the open-ended responses.

The findings elucidate several pivotal factors contributing to the halal crisis, as perceived by the Muslim community. These encompass a pronounced lack of awareness regarding halal issues, with many Muslims placing undue reliance on halal certification agencies without undertaking personal verification. The deficiency of public education campaigns and the absence of comprehensive halal education within schools and community programs further exacerbate this lack of awareness.

Contemporary lifestyles and dietary preferences that favour convenience and health over compliance with halal standards further complicate the situation. Inadequate enforcement by authorities, characterized by rigid actions, limited resources, and a lack

of coordination among enforcement agencies, emerges as another significant factor. Perceptions of punitive measures for halal violations as insufficient deterrents indicate a lack of a holistic approach to addressing the root causes of non-compliance.

Ultimately, the Muslim community perceives a deficiency in governmental commitment to halal matters, as evidenced by inconsistent policies, the absence of a dedicated halal agency, and insufficient efforts to promote halal standards. The findings underscore the imperative for enhanced public awareness, comprehensive halal education, improved enforcement, and a robust governmental commitment to address the halal crisis in Malaysia effectively.

This study is constrained by its reliance on a limited sample size and the subjective nature of self-reported perceptions, which may not fully represent the diverse views within the broader Muslim community in Malaysia. Theoretically, the findings suggest a need for further research into the socio-cultural dynamics influencing halal percep-tions. Policy implications include the necessity for the government to develop and im-plement cohesive strategies that enhance public   understanding and compliance with halal standards.

It is recommended that the government establish a dedicated halal agency to oversee halal certification and education, alongside launching comprehensive public awareness campaigns to enhance the community's understanding of halal issues. Additionally, fostering collaboration among enforcement agencies will be crucial in ensuring effective regulation and compliance.

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