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ISLAM NUSANTARA: Journal for the Study of Islamic History and Culture facilitates the publicationof article and book review on study of Islam, Muslim culture, social, politics and history in Southeast Asia (Nusantara) and beyond. It is published twice a year and written in Indonesia, English and Arabic. It aims to present academic insight of social and cultural complexity of Muslim world in Southeast Asia under the frame of dialectic between Islam and local culture or cultural realities.

The journal invites scholars and experts working in various disciplines in Islamic studies, humanities, and social sciences. Articles should be original, research- based, unpublished and not under review for possible publication in other journals. All submitted papers aresubject to a review of the editors, editorial board, and blind reviewers.

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Satomi Ohgata

Halal Standards and Certification Systems: Adapting to the Global Era and Addressing Challenges in Muslim-Minority Countries

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, halal standards have become increasingly stringent, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. This movement, originating in Southeast Asia, has expanded to the Middle East and now forms the foundation for an emerging international halal standard. Initially aimed at regulating exports to Muslim-majority nations, these standards are now influencing domestic services in non-Muslim-majority countries like Japan. Japan faces challenges in producing halal products in conventional facilities because the new strict standards from Muslim countries prohibit shared production lines for processing non-halal products, even if properly washed. Japan also faces serious issues, particularly regarding the unclear regulations surrounding alcohol in traditional fermented seasonings such as soy sauce and mirin. Additionally, the lack of clarity around stunning practices affects halal meat production, particularly in Europe, where animal welfare concerns are prominent. The growing rigor of halal certification risks complicating the daily lives of Muslims in non-Muslim

countries, potentially leading to social isolation. This paper focuses on Indonesia's halal certification system, examines the current situation in Japan, and analyzes the global implications. It argues that halal standards must be realistic and adaptable, especially in non-Muslim-majority contexts. A restructured approach that balances Islamic principles with practical considerations is necessary to prevent the standards from becoming trade barriers and ensure they promote global fairness and justice.

Keyword: Halal standards, Muslim-majority countries, Japan, Alcohol regulations, International halal certification

Abstrak

Selama dua dekade terakhir, penerapan standar halal semakin ketat, terutama di negara-negara mayoritas Muslim. Gerakan ini, yang berasal dari Asia Tenggara, telah meluas ke Timur Tengah dan kini menjadi dasar bagi standar halal internasional yang sedang berkembang. Awalnya ditujukan untuk mengatur ekspor ke negara-negara mayoritas Muslim, standar ini kini mulai memengaruhi industri dalam negeri di negara-negara non-mayoritas Muslim seperti Jepang. Jepang menghadapi tantangan dalam memproduksi produk halal di fasilitas konvensional karena standar ketat baru dari negara-negara Muslim melarang penggunaan jalur produksi bersama dengan makanan non-halal, meskipun telah dibersihkan dengan baik. Jepang juga menghadapi masalah serius, terutama terkait dengan peraturan yang tidak jelas mengenai alkohol dalam bumbu fermentasi tradisional seperti kecap dan mirin. Selain itu, kurangnya kejelasan terkait praktik pemingsanan hewan berdampak pada produksi daging halal, terutama di Eropa, di mana kekhawatiran tentang kesejahteraan hewan cukup menonjol. Ketatnya sertifikasi halal yang semakin meningkat berisiko mempersulit kehidupan sehari-hari umat Muslim di negara-negara non-Muslim, yang berpotensi menyebabkan isolasi sosial. Makalah ini berfokus pada sistem sertifikasi halal di Indonesia, meninjau situasi saat ini di Jepang, dan menganalisis implikasi globalnya. Makalah ini berpendapat bahwa standar halal harus realistis dan adaptif, terutama dalam konteks negara non-mayoritas Muslim. Pendekatan yang disusun ulang dan seimbang antara prinsip-prinsip Islam dengan pertimbangan praktis sangat diperlukan untuk mencegah standar ini menjadi penghalang perdagangan serta memastikan bahwa standar tersebut mendukung keadilan dan kesetaraan global.

Kata-kata kunci: Standar Halal, Negara mayoritas Muslim, Jepang, Regulasi Alkohol, Sertifikasi Halal Internasional

الملخص

على مدى العقدين الماضيين، أصبح تطبيق معايير الحالل أكثر تشدًدا، خاصة في الدول ذات األلغلبية المسلمة. وقد توسعت هذه الظاهرة التي نشأت في جنوب شرق آسيا لتمتد إلى الشرق األلوسط، والتي أصبحت

آلان أساًسا لمعايير الحالل على المستوى العالمي. تهدف هذه المعايير في ألصل إلى تنظيم الصادرات إلى الدول ذات ألغلبية المسلمة، وقد بدأت هذه المعايير آلان في التأثير على الصناعات المحلية في الدول ذات ألقلية المسلمة مثل اليابان. وتواجه اليابان تحديات في إنتاج المنتجات الحالل في المنشآت التقليدية حيث تحظر المعايير الصارمة الجديدة من الدول إلسالمية استخدام خطوط إلنتاج المشتركة مع ألغذية غير الحالل، حتى لو تم تعقيمها بشكل صحيح. وتواجه اليابان أيًضا مشاكل خطيرة تتعلق بشكل رئيسي باللوائح غير الواضحة فيما يتعلق بالكحول في التوابل المخمرة التقليدية مثل صلصة الصويا والميرين. باإلضافة إلى ذلك، فإن عدم الوضوح فيما يتعلق بممارسات ذبح الحيوانات يؤثر على إنتاج اللحوم الحالل، خاصة في أوروبا، حيث تبرز المخاوف بشأن الرفق بالحيوان. إن التشدد المتزايد في إصدار شهادات الحالل يهدد بتعقيد الحياة اليومية للمسلمين في الدول غير المسلمة، مما قد يؤدي إلى العزلة االجتماعية. يركز هذا البحث على نظام إصدار شهادات الحالل في إندونيسيا، كما يستعرض الوضع الحالي في اليابان، ويحلل آثاره العالمية. تؤكد هذه المقالة أن معايير الحالل تحتاج إلى أن تكون واقعية وقابلة للتأقلم، ال سيما في سياق الدول ذات ألغلبية غير المسلمة. ومن الضروري اتباع نهج منظم ومتوازن بين المبادئ إلسالمية واالعتبارات التطبيقية لمنع تحول هذه المعايير إلى عائق أمام التجارة ولضمان دعمها للعدالة واإلنصاف العالمي.

الكلمات المفتاحية/الرئيسية: معيار الحالل، الدولة ذات ألغلبية المسلمة، اليابان، تنظيم الكحول، شهادة الحالل العالمية.

1. Introduction

Over the past 20 years, halal standards promoted by Muslim-majority countries have significantly tightened. This movement, which began in Southeast Asia, has spread to the Middle East and is now forming the basis for an emerging international halal standard. Standards initially intended for exports to Muslim-majority countries are now increasingly influencing domestic services in Muslim-minority countries. As a result, countries like Japan face challenges in producing halal products in regular facilities and in providing the necessary services for Muslim consumers.

The situation is particularly concerning in Japan due to the lack of clear information about changes in alcohol-related standards, which directly affects the use of traditional fermented seasonings like *shoyu* (soy sauce), *mirin* (sweetened sake), and *chorisyu* (cooking-sake)—all of which contain alcohol as a byproduct of fermentation. Similarly, confusion surrounding the requirements for stunning (a pre-slaughter practice to reduce animal suffering) has a significant impact in Europe, where animal welfare concerns are prominent.

If these trends continue unchecked, there is a strong risk that Muslims living in non-Muslim-majority regions will face increased difficulties in their daily lives, hindering their integration into local societies and potentially leading to social isolation or ghettoization.

This paper primarily examines Indonesia's halal certification standards and system, explores the current state of halal compliance in Japan, and analyzes the global implications of these conditions. The goal is to discuss the necessary reforms for halal standards and certification systems in the global era.

2. Indonesia's Halal Standards and Halal Certification System

2.1 The "Pancasila State" and the Islamization of Society

Although around 87% of Indonesia’s population is Muslim, the country does not designate Islam as its state religion. Instead, Indonesia embraces a pluralistic society, underpinned by its foundational philosophy, Pancasila, which promotes belief in one God and officially recognizes multiple religions. However, the societal landscape has gradually shifted over time. In 1974, Indonesia enacted a marriage law that applies Islamic principles to Muslims in areas such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, thereby increasing the authority of religious courts. Additionally, in 2014, the state assumed control of the Halal certification system, enacting a law that mandates Halal certification for food, beverages, medicines, and various other daily necessities. These developments suggest that Indonesia is gradually aligning more closely with Islamic principles, indicating a subtle shift toward becoming an Islamic state.

2.2 System Changes Following the Enforcement of the Halal Product Guarantee Act

Indonesia's Halal Product Assurance Law, enacted in 2014 and enforced in 2019, made halal certification state-controlled. The certification bodies previously overseen by the MUI were replaced by the newly established BPJPH, which operates under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This change mandates that all products not certified as halal must be labeled as "non-halal." The shift aimed to ensure the integrity of halal certification, address corruption, and increase transparency by allowing the state to manage certification revenue.

In recent years, the scope of halal certification in Indonesia and Malaysia has expanded beyond food, beverages, cosmetics, and medicines to include refrigerators, scarves, pet food, and more. Under Indonesia's new law, it will gradually become mandatory to obtain Indonesian halal certification or label products as "non-halal" when exporting to Indonesia. By 2024, halal certification will be required for food, beverages, and slaughter services, and by 2034, for medicines, cosmetics, electrical appliances, stationery, office supplies, medical equipment, and other items.

In Indonesia, the government subsidizes the acquisition of halal certification, so domestic consumers do not bear the cost. In contrast, in countries like Japan, companies bear the high cost of obtaining halal certification. Some companies are obtaining certification for export

purposes, but the associated costs are ultimately passed on to both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers.

For example, a Japanese supplement company aiming to export to Indonesia reported spending 5 million yen as the first year's cost for halal certification, which is borne by all consumers[1]. These high certification costs are an obstacle to the spread of halal services in non-Muslim countries. Additionally, audit fees for foreign products are often set at the discretion of auditing organizations. While BPJPH certification is valid for life if there are no changes to raw materials or manufacturing processes, this rule does not apply to foreign companies. For them, LPPOM MUI sets the audit validity at four years, while another organization limits it to one year[2].

With Indonesia's law requiring all products to be labeled as halal certified, it is expected that in Muslim-minority countries like Japan, there will be a growing push to obtain halal certification for most daily necessities to export to Indonesia. As a result, non-Muslim consumers purchasing these products may also bear additional costs, which could become a significant issue in the future.

2.3 Stricter Halal Standards

2.3.1 Characteristics of MUI Fatwa and Associated Issues

The MUI Fatwa Committee, consisting of 35 members, is renowned for its meticulous decision-making process, which primarily considers the perspectives of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence and often adopts the strictest interpretations[3]. The legal system introduced in 2014 mandates that all uncertified products be labeled as "non-halal." This creates a systemic issue where, even if a product is deemed halal by one school of law, it may be considered non-halal or haram by another if it is not universally accepted.

For example, it is well known that the Hanafi school considers alcohol to be halal if it evaporates during cooking, even if the dish initially contains alcohol like khamr. Based on this understanding, Japanese Muslims have traditionally had no issue consuming dishes that use *mirin* or *chorisyu*. However, other schools of thought do not consider such dishes halal. The problem is that Japanese cuisine heavily relies on traditional fermented seasonings like mirin, and labeling these dishes as haram could sever Muslims from an integral part of Japanese food culture.

[1] Based on a phone interview with the halal manager of this supplement company conducted in February 2024.

[2] Based on interviews conducted in May 2024 with a Japanese consulting company collaborating with LPPOMMUI and the director of an auditing organization, conducted via phone.

[3] Based on information from several individuals who have worked at LPPOM MUI.

While some argue that ethnic cultures should adapt to Islamic doctrine, the act of labeling these dishes as haram, despite differing interpretations within Islamic jurisprudence, warrants reconsideration. For Japanese people, traditional fermented seasonings are as essential as chili peppers and garlic are to Indonesians, making it nearly impossible to prepare traditional dishes without them. If these seasonings are banned, it would not only deprive Japanese people of the chance to practice Islam in a way that aligns with their cultural identity, but it would also alienate foreign Muslims from Japanese cuisine. This could lead to a social divide between Muslims and non-Muslims, undermining efforts to create a sustainable, harmonious society.

2.3.2 Sharing Production Lines is No Longer Permitted

International guidelines set by the FAO in 1997 [4] initially allowed the sharing of production lines, provided they were thoroughly cleaned. However, in the 2010s, stricter halal standards were introduced in Muslim-majority countries, leading to a complete ban on shared production lines in Malaysia. Recently, Indonesia has also established similar rules, following this trend[5]. In Europe, while still not a few certification bodies continue to accept production line sharing for the European market and other regions with similar standards, they now require more rigorous processes, such as buffering and swap testing, in addition to cleaning[6]. Over the past decade, there has been a growing trend in Europe towards adopting stricter halal standards[7]. This shift represents a movement from locally-rooted, practical halal standards to more stringent, internationally recognized standards.

2.3.3 The Ajinomoto Incident and Its Impact

The Ajinomoto scandal in Indonesia during 2000-2001 triggered significant controversy when it was revealed that pork-derived catalysts were used in the manufacturing process. Although no pork DNA was found in the final product, the use of such catalysts was deemed problematic. This incident led to the implementation of stricter halal standards in Indonesia, including a prohibition on enzyme culture media coming into contact with pork-derived ingredients.

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[4] FAO, Codex General Guidelines on the use of the term "Halal" were adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 22nd Session in 1997: https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/en/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252FStandards%252FCXG%2B24- 1997%252FCXG_024e.pdf

[5] According to the current Malaysian standard (MS1500:2019), halal products are not allowed to be manufactured in the same facility that uses pork-derived raw materials. Furthermore, the newly issued Decision No. 20 by BPJPH on 2 March 2023 stipulates that "Pork products and non-pork products shall not be alternatingly used with utensils even if they have undergone a refining process." (" Suatu peralatan tidak boleh digunakan bergantian antara produk babi dan non babi meskipun sudah melalui proses pensucian." C-10-d.-4, p.10)

[6] Based on an interview with a director of a European certification body conducted on September 5, 2023, at their office.

[7] Basing on interview with several HCBs in Europe in August-September 2023.

On the other hand, the definition of “khamr” that should be avoided in "Halal" is limited to only alcoholic beverages, and a fatwa issued by MUI in 2003 has permitted the use of vinegar made from khamr(alcoholic beverages) and also industrial ethanol, based on the concept of istihalah. This fatwa also allows industrial ethanol in colorings, flavorings, and preservatives[8]. However, the concept of istihalah is not applied to pork products[9]. In Malaysia, recently there is some debate about using concept of istihalah for products like Bone China derived from pork[10], but such discussions are not yet present in Indonesia.

Previously, Sheikh Yousuf al-Qaradhawi issued a flexible fatwa to accommodate Muslim minorities in Europe, permitting the use of pork-derived ingredients like gelatin under the concept of istihalah [11]. However, advances in science later revealed trace amounts of pig DNA in gelatin, raising concerns about the validity of istihalah in this context. As a result, international standards now generally do not recognize pork-derived gelatin as halal. Despite this, some individuals who were exposed to earlier views still consider gelatin to be halal, although halal experts.

Banning pork-derived emulsifiers could pose major problems in Muslim-minority countries like Japan, where many Japanese Muslims are concerned about the widespread adoption of international halal certification standards that would deem pork-derived emulsifiers non-halal.

3. Current status of Halal services in Japan

3.1 Background of Halal Product Imports to Japan

As halal standards become stricter in predominantly Muslim countries, the expectations of foreign Muslims visiting Japan are also evolving. This shift is driving a growing demand for halal services to accommodate Muslim tourists and workers. Since around 2015, the number

[8] MUI's 2003 fatwa, 2009 fatwa, and 2018 fatwa define the treatment of alcohol in Halal.

[9] University Institute of Halal Products https://www.academia.edu/5103791/The_Theory_of_Istihalah_from_Fiqh_Perspective_Analysis_of_Determining_halal

[10] Mahyeddin , M., Salleh, M., Deuraseh , N., Subri , IM, & Others. (2017). The Use of Ceramic Product Derived from Non-Halal Animal Bone:Is It Permissible From the Perspective of Islamic Law? https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.1/2017.7.3/1.3.192.198 。 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/309290170_THE_USE_OF_CERAMIC_PRODUCT_DERIVED_FROM_NON-HALAL_ANIMAL_BONE_IS_IT_PERMISSIBLE_FROM_THE_PERSPECTIVE_OF_ISLAMIC_LAW_Contribution_Originality から取得

[11]Shaykh Yousuf al-Qaradawi (2003) Fiqh of Islamic Minorities: Controversial Issues and Recommended Solutions, Al-Falah Translation Foundation, pp.134-135.

of visitors from Islamic countries has surged, largely due to the increase in low-cost airline flights[12].

In response, national and local governments have been working to expand halal dining and lodging options by offering subsidies for seminars and consultations with private consultants, publishing guides book, and organizing halal-focused events. Despite these efforts, the results have not met expectations.

The primary challenges include the stringent halal standards that are difficult to align with Japan's existing infrastructure and the high cost of halal certification. While there is a push to incorporate "halal meat" and "halal products" into inbound services and international events, the broader understanding and provision of halal food in Japan remains limited. Imported halal meat is often preferred for its lower cost compared to domestic options. However, it is rarely labeled as halal in stores due to the use of shared slicers and its placement alongside pork, practices that do not comply with international halal standards set by organizations like JAKIM or BPJPH. Additionally, store staff are often unfamiliar with the concept of halal itself.

Despite claims from Indonesian halal researchers that "halal products are safe and nutritious," these assurances have little impact in Japan, where safe and nutritious food is readily available without halal certification.

3.2 The Gap Between Japanese Muslims Opposed to Halal Certification and Foreign Muslims Sensitive to Halal Standards

Currently, halal-certified products produced in Japan are primarily intended for export and adhere to the stringent standards of importing countries. As these rigorously certified products began to be exported, a misconception emerged among researchers, consultants, and industry professionals in the halal sector that common seasonings available domestically in Japan are not halal.

Now that some Japanese seasonings are halal-certified, some foreigners may suggest simply replacing standard seasonings with these certified options. However, halal-certified seasonings tend to be very expensive—often 2 to 5 times more costly. Some Japanese halal seasonings, like *okonomiyaki sauce* and mayonnaise, must be imported from Malaysia, while those produced domestically are also costly due to the expenses involved in obtaining halal certification. Additionally, these products are not sold in ordinary supermarkets, making them difficult for regular restaurants to use. Furthermore, halal-certified *shoyu*, produced by

[12] Japan Tourism Agency "Muslim Hospitality Handbook" First edition August 2015 https://www.mlit.go.jp/kankocho/content/810003290.pdf

evaporating alcohol, often requires synthetic preservatives since the natural preservative (alcohol) has been removed. Similarly, halal-certified *mirin* alternatives, which are much more expensive, do not have the same properties, making professionals reluctant to use them due to the difference in taste. As a result, ordinary seasonings are increasingly being judged as non-halal and deemed unsuitable for halal menus. This situation has led many Japanese Muslim activists to oppose the current certification system.

From 2015 to 2016, Muslim leaders from mosques across Japan held a national conference on the halal certification system and issued a statement opposing its commercialization[13]. Ahmed Maeno, one of the prominent imams among Japanese Muslims, declared, "Muslims must firmly say NO to the trend toward certification!" He also opposed participating in the development of domestic halal standards[14]. Most Japanese Muslims, who understand the language and are familiar with Japanese food culture, have no difficulty finding halal food for themselves. They see little need for halal certification and resist strict standards that even scrutinize the use of emulsifiers.

Figure 1

On August 6, 2016, the "Second National Muslim Meeting" was held at Keio University, where representatives from mosques in Sapporo, Nagoya, Kanagawa, Fukuoka, and other locations gathered to issue a joint statement opposing halal certification.（ Souce;https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1171100026295526&set=pb.100064791875566.-2207520000）

[13]https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1171100026295526&set=pb.100064791875566.-2207520000

[14] Maeno, Naoki (2016) “Islamic Food and the Obstacles to ‘Halal Certification’” Gospel and the World, June 2016 issue, Shinkyo Publishing, pp.28-33.

◆ **共同声明文**

第 2 回全国ムスリムミーティング共同声明文

- ヒロシマ原爆投下から 71 年の日に際し、改めてイスラームが平和を希求する教えであることを宣言する。人々の日常と平和を脅かすいかなる暴力も、イスラームの教えとは相容れないことを確認する。
- ムスリム（イスラーム教徒）に平和の価値を教えるのがイスラームであり、その具体的な行為が、唯一なる創造主アッラーに対する祈りである。祈りはいわゆる礼拝行為に限らず、日々の善行の積み重ねでもある。地道な努力で平和を守り続けてきた人々とともに平和の祈りを捧げたい。
- 「ハラール」や「ハラル」とは、ムスリムのためだけの宗教的な戒律ではなく、全人類が、現世のみならず、死後においてもまた幸せになるための規準である。商業主義的でごく一部の限られた者の利益にしかならないような活動や、ムスリムと信者ではない人々との間に新たに壁を築くような行いを強く非難する。
- 事物の原則は許容であり、聖典クルアーンと預言者ムハンマドの言行であるスンナに明確な根拠がない限りハラーム（禁止）とはされない。ハラールの認証（マーク）がなくとも、ムスリム消費者が日本で摂ることのできる飲食物は数多く存在する。
- ハラールとハラームを決定できるのは、至高なるアッラーだけである。ムスリムは、ハラール認証の有無にとらわれることなく個々人の判断で商品やサービスの選択を行うべきである。日本国内では、たとえば原材料表示やピクトグラム等による情報提供があれば判断を行うことが十分可能であるため、ハラール認証は原則として不要であると言える。
- ジハードを、「価値観や宗教の違いを超えて、良好な関係を築くためのよい言葉とよい態度と叡智による不断の努力」とする。一人一人のムスリムは、アッラーの下僕であることを強く自覚し、自らの欲望に対して戦うとともに、周囲との良好な関係を築こうと努力することが求められる。
- 平和を愛し、信仰の違いにかかわらず、平和裏の共生関係を築くべく、教えと経験の両面から研究と協議を行うための実践的な学びの場として、「日本イスラーム学術会議」を、慶應義塾大学 SFC 研究所イスラーム研究・ラボに設立し、情報の発信と共有に努める。

2016 年 8 月 6 日

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- ″Halal″ and ″halal″ are not religious rules only for Muslims, but are standards for all humankind to be happy not only in this world but also in the afterlife. We strongly condemn commercial activities that only benefit a small minority, and actions that build new walls between Muslims and non-believers.

- The principle of things is permissible, and nothing is considered haram (prohibited) unless there is a clear basis in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, the words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad. There are many foods and drinks that Muslim consumers can consume in Japan, even without a halal certification (mark).

- Only Allah, the Exalted, can determine what is halal and what is haram. Muslims should choose products and services based on their own judgment, regardless of whether they are halal certified or not. In Japan, it is possible to make a judgment based on information provided, for example, through ingredient labels and pictograms, so in principle, halal certification is not required.

Figure 2 Joint statement and an excerpt from the "Second National Muslim Meeting," held on August 6, 2016.

Conversely, Muslims from Muslim-majority countries are increasingly sensitive about halal compliance, adhering to their countries' strict halal standards. Many still believe that all forms of alcohol are haram, despite most international halal standards having evolved since around 2003. This traditional view makes it challenging for them to dine out or find suitable food in Japan, where many dishes rely on fermented seasonings like *shoyu*, *mirin*, *chorisyu*, *miso*, and vinegar. For these individuals, halal certification offers convenience and peace of mind, though the high price remains a significant issue.

As a result, a growing gap is emerging between Japanese Muslims who oppose the halal certification system and foreign Muslims who rely on it for their dietary needs.

3.3 Halal Certification System in Japan

In Japan, interest in halal products is largely confined to companies catering to foreign Muslim tourists and those looking to export to Muslim-majority countries. However, as a secular country, Japan's government does not involve itself in religious matters, and many Japanese Muslims do not see the need for standardized halal certification. Consequently, there has been little discussion about developing halal standards that align with Japanese culture and the domestic context.

Several certification bodies in Japan issue halal certificates based on strict international standards, including for restaurants serving domestic customers. However, the standards vary: some certification bodies enforce very strict guidelines, while others are more lenient. Additionally, several local mosques issue halal certificates for domestic services, also applying more flexible standards.

This situation has led to criticism from non-Muslim Japanese researchers, who argue that the stringent standards required for exports should also be applied to domestic services. They also criticize HCBs for using different standards for exports and domestic services[15]. They label more flexible, Japan-specific halal standards as "not 100% halal" and accuse them of being "double standards[16]." As a result, consultants and businesspeople often adopt these views and disseminate them to restaurant workers and others in the industry. This has created confusion within the halal industry and has hindered the adoption of practical halal standards in Japan.

3.4 Contradictions in Halal Certification Standards

The core issue arises from a misunderstanding of Islamic law's inherent flexibility and the pressure from international halal certification bodies to enforce strict, uniform standards. In practice, these standards are not truly unified, as subtle differences persist. Muslim-majority countries have developed a system that promotes free trade but fails to address these discrepancies. Instead, they send individual auditing teams to Muslim-minority countries, demanding strict adherence to these standards and mutual certification agreements. This approach results in significant costs and essentially shifts the burden onto Muslim-minority countries, treating halal certification as a business opportunity.

In practice, however, significant contradictions exist. Domestic halal certification bodies (HCBs) in Japan, which enforce strict standards for export products, often apply more realistic and lenient standards to domestic restaurants.

[15]Mariko Arata (2018) "Introduction to Halal Food: Starting to Accommodate Muslims Today" published by Kodansha, and Ryoichi Namikawa (2019) "Halal Product Compliance Manual : From Product Planning to Certification Marks, Manufacturing, Management, and Sales " published by Sotensha .

[16]As a researcher, her publications include Mariko Arata (2018) “Introduction to Halal Food: Starting to Accommodate Muslims Today” published by Kodansha, and Ryoichi Namikawa (2019) “Halal Product Compliance Manual: From Product Planning to Certification Marks, Manufacturing, Management, and Sales ” published by Sotensha .

Figure 3 Information about seasonings that are used for halal menus in Cafeteria of APU(Ritusumeikan Asia Pasifice University in Beppu).

For example, when it comes to seasonings for halal menus in restaurants, they are allowed to use seasonings manufactured on a common production line as long as the ingredients are halal-certified. However, these seasonings themselves are not issued halal certification. The stated reason is to prevent cross-contamination with export products, but it would be sufficient to distinguish them with different labels. This reluctance likely stems from fears of criticism for 'double standards' from researchers and consultants, and concerns about maintaining good relationships with overseas certification organizations. Without mutual certification from these overseas bodies, their business would not be viable, so they are very concerned about losing trust from international certification organizations.

Ideally, halal bento boxes would be available in supermarkets and convenience stores, but strict standards imposed by some Muslim countries make this challenging. For example, if a production line is shared for making bento boxes, the products from that line cannot receive halal certification. In Japan, halal departments and customer service managers at supermarkets and convenience stores are eager to offer halal bento boxes due to demand. However, they are hindered by the stringent standards that prohibit the use of shared production lines. They are willing to produce halal bento boxes if certified by one of the halal certification bodies listed by the Japanese government (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) as internationally recognized. This situation differs from European countries, where resistance to halal-certified products often stems from concerns about slaughter methods. While some local mosques in Japan issue certificates based on more relaxed standards in line with basic Islamic teachings, large companies do not consider these sufficient due to concerns about business risks, similar to those faced by Ajinomoto in 2000. Japan’s halal certification system has been influenced by the mistaken belief that adhering strictly to overseas standards is always the correct approach.

3.5 Business Models of Halal Consultants

Halal consultants in Japan, who are mostly non-Muslim, primarily advise restaurants on offering halal menus rather than developing products for export. They often conduct seminars for local governments, promoting very strict halal practices. This includes avoiding pork dishes from the same premise and requiring halal certification for almost all ingredients, like mayonnaise, *shoyu*, *miso* vegetable oil, and even *wasabi*. They also recommend alternatives to common items, such as cane sugar instead of white sugar. Selling these halal-certified products to the restaurants they consult for has become a key part of their business model.

This strict approach significantly increases restaurant costs, making halal services less accessible. Imported halal products, like *okonomiyaki* sauce, can be four to five times more expensive than domestic ones. Consultants often suggest labeling menus as 'Muslim-friendly' rather than 'halal' and charge listing fees for promoting restaurants on their own websites that use the word “halal”. Consequently, restaurants face high consulting fees and expensive products, which are ultimately passed on to consumers, making halal options substantially more costly.

Some tourists visiting Japan for a few days might say, 'I’d pay double if it was halal.' However, most Muslims who live in Japan year-round, such as workers and international students, cannot afford to eat at restaurants that cost twice as much. For them, such restaurants are not practical for regular dining.

4. Why Halal Services Are Not Popular in Japan

4.1 Cost Issues

4.1.1 Expensive Domestic Halal Meat and Its Background

Despite all efforts by the Japanese government to improve services for the growing number of Muslim tourists, the impact has been limited, primarily due to the high cost of halal meat. Domestically produced halal Wagyu beef, which undergoes strict inspections by overseas certification agencies, is 1.5 times more expensive than regular meat. The high cost of certification, amounting to several million yen annually, is passed on to consumers, driving up prices.

Distribution is tightly regulated, with a certification fee of 10,000 yen required for each shipment, and each package of halal-certified products must bear a costly sticker. This process is both time-consuming and labor-intensive. Certification fees also vary widely: they may be 10,000 yen per animal, 10,000 yen per certification form (covering individual identification

numbers for 1, 3, or 5 animals), or calculated per kilogram based on the export weight certified each time.

As a result, a major halal slaughterhouse reports that most beef slaughtered as halal is sold in Japan as non-halal, with only about 3% of high-quality parts being exported overseas as halal meat [17]. The strict standards and high costs in Japan have significantly hindered the widespread availability of halal meat. Consequently, meat slaughtered in regular slaughterhouses by local Muslims is often sold at lower prices as 'halal meat' in the market, despite not meeting official certification standards.

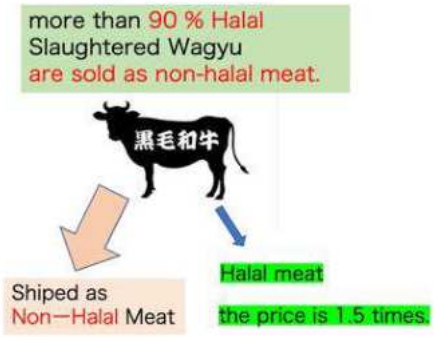

Figure 4. Created by the author, based on an interview with a Halal manager at a slaughterhouse in Kyushu, Japan.

Regarding chicken, there is an abundance of cheap imported chicken products, many of which are considered halal. However, due to issues with transportation, storage and slicing equipment, these products are not sold as halal meat. If a restaurant advertises that its chicken is from Brazil, Muslims will happily eat it. There is a disconnect between the official standards and the actual reality.

Moreover, no Japanese chicken slaughterhouses have fully converted their production lines to halal, primarily due to the higher costs of halal slaughter. Only a few facilities perform halal slaughter on a limited basis. To meet JAKIM's stringent halal standards, all chickens would need to be halal slaughtered, but the associated costs make this impractical[18].

This situation highlights how strict standards set by Muslim-majority countries can inadvertently hinder the availability of halal services in Muslim-minority countries like Japan.

[17] Based on several interviews with the director of a halal meat production company in January 2023.
[18] Based on multiple interviews with the halal manager of a halal chicken production company from 2019 to the present.

4.1.2 Excessively Strict Standards for Slaughterhouses

In Japan, most slaughterhouses slaughter pigs and cattle on the same premises. The slaughterhouses for cattle and pigs are completely separated, but Indonesian standards require that halal slaughterhouses be at least 5 km away from pig farms, and it has been thought that most slaughterhouses in Japan do not meet the strict halal standards of countries such as Indonesia. As a result, there have been several attempts to establish halal-only slaughterhouses with government support, without adjacent pig slaughterhouses.

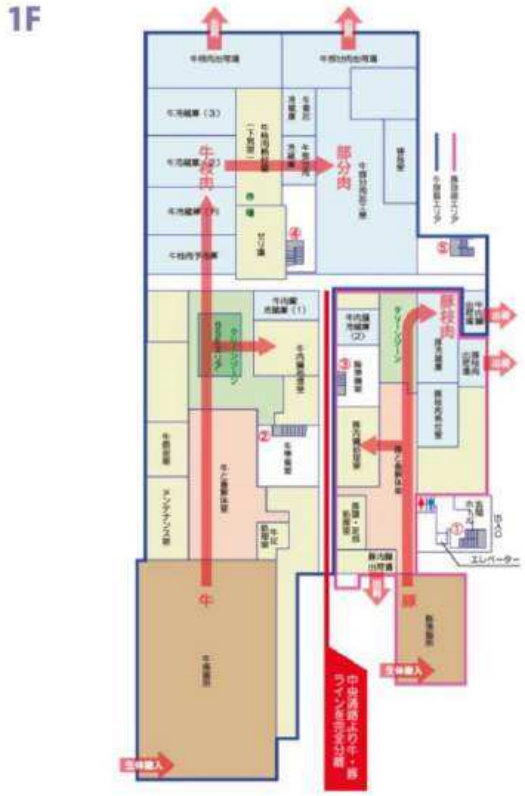

Figure 5 Layout of a typical slaughterhouse in Japan, where cows and pigs must be kept completely separate. (https://shiga-shokuniku.or.jp/layout)

However, this does not seem to have been based on a correct understanding. In Indonesia, facilities that slaughter pigs and cattle on the same premises have been managed and operated by the government since the Dutch era. According to Indonesia's latest halal standards, the rules allow cattle and pig slaughterhouses to be adjacent to each other, provided that the pig processing facility and the cattle processing facility are separated by a wall of at least 3 meters

and the risk of contamination is avoided (note19). In other words, it seems correct to understand that pig slaughterhouses and pig farms are treated separately.

As for Japanese slaughterhouses, of course, separate buildings with dedicated entrances and exits are prepared for cattle and pigs, and appropriate contamination control is guaranteed, so there should be no problem. It is a serious problem that accurate information has not been provided.

By the way, regarding the standard that 5 km must be kept away from pig farms, one of the former LPPOMMUI's executives, the rule that 5 km was set based on the idea that it would be okay if it was about that far away, so it is possible to set different requirements for non-Muslim countries 20. These strict regulations, based on preventive measures rather than the Quran or Hadith, are unrealistic for Japan's infrastructure and has to be adjusted.

These stringent regulations, based on precautionary measures rather than the Quran or Hadith, are impractical for Japan's infrastructure. Japanese slaughterhouses have separate buildings and dedicated entrances for different animals, which ensures proper contamination control. Consequently, Japanese imams generally recognize meat from these facilities as halal. Japan's rigorous hygiene practices further make the 5-kilometer rule unnecessary.

Slaughtering standards in Muslim-minority countries like Japan can be stricter than those in Muslim-majority countries. For example, cattle with cracked skulls due to stunning are considered halal in Indonesia and Malaysia, but in Japan, such meat is deemed non-halal. Similarly, a severed chicken head is still halal in Muslim-majority countries but not in Japan[21]. This inconsistency reveals a double standard, where Muslim-majority countries impose stringent halal standards on Muslim-minority countries that are not always enforced in their own countries.

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[19] Keputusan Kepala Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal Nomor 77 Tahun 2023, Tentang Pedoman Penyelenggaraan Sistem Jaminan Produk Halal Dalam Pemotongan Hewan Ruminansia dan Unggas.

77_2023_SK_Pedoman_Penyelenggaraan_Sistem_Jaminan_Produk_Halal_dalam_Pemotongan_Hewan_Reuminansia_dan_Unggas_b28c409d0e.pdf

Keputusan Kepala Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal Nomor 20 tahun 2023 tentang Perubahan Atas Keputusan Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal Nomor 57 Tahun 2021 Tentang Kriteria Sistem Jaminan Produk Halal.

Kepkaban_No_20_Tahun_2023_Perubahan_SJPH_3_bca72daa00.pdf (halal.go.id)

[20] Based on an interview with a former executive of LPPOMMUI on early 2024.

[21] Based on multiple interviews with halal slaughtering experts in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Japan conducted from 2022 to 2024.

Malaysia's requirement that slaughterhouses must be exclusively halal is not even consistently applied. Indonesia allows halal slaughter in the morning and non-halal processing afterwards, but Malaysia does not allow non-halal slaughter on the same line. On the other hand, it requires slaughterhouses in Islamic minority countries to separate "non-halal meat" if halal slaughter "fails". This practice essentially produces both halal and non-halal meat on the same production line, which goes against the principle that halal lines should be dedicated to halal products. This contradiction and the imposition of such unreasonable standards reveals the disconnect between words and actions. However, stakeholders in Islamic minority countries are in a situation where they cannot challenge these unreasonableness due to the comprehensive management by certification bodies in Islamic majority countries.

4.1.3 High Certification Fees and Transportation Issues

Domestic products certified as halal under strict standards in Japan face high certification fees, often making them several times more expensive than non-halal products. In addition, these products are not typically available in regular stores but are sold through specialized wholesalers and online shops. This distribution method adds further costs, restaurants that want to use these special products must pay additional transportation fees.

For example, most white sugar produced in Hokkaido is certified halal, but it does not carry the halal logo due to the logistical challenges of separating halal and non-halal products during transport[22]. Under such situation, halal-only transportation options have emerged[23], but these services are expensive, exacerbating the already high costs and further limiting the spread of halal services in Japan.

[22] Based on an interview with staff from Hokkaido Sugar Co., Ltd. conducted on October 18, 2022.

[23] Nippon Express obtained halal logistics certification in Malaysia in 2014 and began offering halal logistics services in Japan in March 2021. For more details, see the Nippon Express news release: 国内航空貨物でハラール認証品質に対応した輸送サービスを開始 (last accessed September 2, 2024).

（日本通運のハラール物流ブランドロゴ）

Figure 6 Halal logistics services by Nippon Express, launched on March 8, 2021. (https://www.nipponexpress-holdings.com/ja/press/2021/20210305-1.html)

To purchase halal-certified white sugar as a 'halal product,' consumers must go through specialized halal wholesalers. However, since the sugar is delivered by courier services with halal and non-halal products mixed on the same trucks, the practical difference is negligible, highlighting an irrational practice. This situation adds unnecessary complexity and expense. High certification fees, elevated product prices, and stringent standards mean that only a limited number of restaurants offer halal menus, primarily in major cities that host international events and experience a significant influx of tourists.

Many Muslims living in Japan are immigrant workers and international students who cannot afford the high prices associated with certified "halal menus" on a daily basis. As a result, in areas with fewer tourists, there is little demand for halal specialty restaurants, except for certain ethnic cuisines like Indian curry. The combination of high costs and limited availability has made it challenging for halal services to gain widespread popularity in Japan.

4.2 Standards That Are Too Strict and Misaligned with Local Culture

4.2.1 Halal-Only Production Lines Are Unrealistic

Despite recognizing the growing demand for halal services in Japan, many food manufacturers and retailers have given up on producing halal products as it is not practical to meet the strict requirements [24]. Establishing a dedicated halal production line, as mandated by strict international standards, is costly and impractical, especially when the Muslim population

[24]The survey was conducted at major supermarkets and convenience stores from 2020 to 2021 and was based on interviews with headquarters officials in several countries.

in Japan accounts for less than 0.2% of the total population. This makes it nearly impossible for supermarkets and convenience stores to produce and sell halal bento lunches or other ready-to-eat meals.

The Japanese food and beverage industry relies heavily on intermediate ingredients to keep labor costs down. However, these ingredients often share production lines with non-halal products, which disqualifies them from being considered halal. This presents a significant challenge to the widespread adoption of halal services in restaurants and food services.

While there are Halal Certification Bodies (HCBs) and local masjids that issue halal certifications with standards more adapted to the domestic context, supermarkets and convenience stores typically only trust HCBs that are recognized by overseas institutions and listed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, that apply strict halal standard for halal certified products. Japan's proximity to Muslim-majority countries in Southeast Asia, which enforce strict halal standards, further complicates the situation. These external influences create additional barriers to the spread and acceptance of halal services in Japan, making it difficult for local businesses to accommodate the needs of the Muslim population.

4.2.2 Strict Restaurant Standards

Halal standards in countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia demand rigorous measures, including separate kitchens with designated halal sinks, refrigerators, freezers, cookware, and tableware. And such standards are taught in detail in chef schools too[25]. For small eateries in Japan, meeting these exacting standards is exceedingly difficult.

[25]（Sumber: https://halalchef.jp/ハラール研修用マニュアル/)

Figure 7 A scene from a halal services training video made for prospective chefs, explaining that everything in the kitchen for halal menu preparation must be separated. In the video, the instructor explains about special fan that was installed in the ventilation duct to prevent halal and non-halal air from mixing during cooking.（Source: https://halalchef.jp/ハラール研修用マニュアル/）

Japan needs to adopt more flexible standards that allow restaurants and hotels to offer halal menus without requiring a separate kitchen. Some local mosques have already implemented such adaptable standards to accommodate local conditions [26].

Figure 8 This is the kitchen of the restaurant 'Kiwamiya' in Fukuoka City. Although the restaurant does not serve any pork, they use green tape to separate the storage areas for halal

[26]Fukuoka, Beppu and other cities have issued halal certification based on these standards.

and non-halal cooking utensils and ingredients. The restaurant has obtained halal certification from the Fukuoka Masjid for its menu. Photo: Author.

Figure 9 These are the tools used to prepare the '100% Black Wagyu Halal Hamburger' served at the restaurant 'Kiwamiya.' While the machines are shared, all parts that come into direct contact with the meat are dedicated halal utensils. This, too, is halal-certified by Fukuoka Masjid. Photo: Author.

Figure 10 This is a photo of the restaurant 'Kiwamiya,' which serves halal hamburgs in Tokyo, Fukuoka, and Kitakyushu, along with a photo of its halal certification from Fukuoka Masjid. Photo: Author.

Figure 11 This is a ramen shop in Oita Prefecture with a halal menu certified by Beppu Masjid. While it primarily serves tonkotsu (pork bone broth) ramen, the shop also offers a seafood-based halal ramen for Muslim customers. Photo: Author.

However, there is a risk that some overseas Muslim consumers might not accept restaurants in Japan that do not adhere to the strictest halal standards. For instance, a Japanese host once invited an important client to a restaurant offering halal menus, but the client left after noticing a glass of bear being served at another table. This incident, reported in a well-known online business magazine, highlighted the challenge of balancing local business practices with halal requirements.

In Japan, serving alcohol at a low price is often crucial for restaurant profitability, making it impractical for general eateries to fully comply with the stringent standards observed in predominantly Muslim countries.

Figure 12 **Weekly Toyo Keizai Editorial Department (Ed.). (2018).** *Is it Okay to Call it Halal?* (Weekly Toyo Keizai e-Business Paperback No. 92). Paperback – May 1, 2018.（**そのハラル大丈夫？—週刊東洋経済eビジネス新書** No.92 **ペーパーバック** – 2018/5/1 (https://amzn.asia/d/c9DCtyG）

In response to these challenges, Singapore's Warees Halal Limited (WHL), which was started in 2006 as a Halal division within Warees Investments Pte Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura or Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (Muis), has introduced more flexible "Muslim-friendly certification", that allows serving non-

Halal menu items such as alcoholic beverages and non-Halal meat. There are systems and processes in place to safeguard Halal integrity of the Halal menu items[27]. These standards permit restaurants to offer halal menus even if they also serve non halal menu, including alcoholic beverages, reflecting an attempt to balance adherence to halal principles with practical business operations.

4.2.3 Issues with condiments containing alcohol

Traditional Japanese fermented seasonings such as *mirin* and *chorisyu* contain alcohol, but they are not intended for drinking [28]and should be distinguished from haram substances. These seasonings play an important role in Japanese cuisine, such as preventing bacterial growth, making food less likely to fall apart, and helping flavors to soak in easily. It is very unfortunate that there are outrageous statements that do not understand such important roles and that do not respect regional and ethnic cultures, such as saying that culture should be changed to not use seasonings that contain alcohol.

In fact, many Japanese Muslims have not found this problematic and generally eat dishes that use *mirin* or *chorisyu* as halal. The same is true for many foreign Muslims who have lived in Japan for a long time and follow the Hanafi sect, which is tolerant of alcohol. They know that the alcohol in food evaporates when heated, making it safe for small children and pregnant women. However, many Muslims who have just come from overseas and do not know the interpretations of the Hanafi sect do not understand Japanese food culture, and are often concerned about the alcohol content of seasonings and refuse to accept Japanese seasonings or dishes. And the main reason is that currently, halal standards led by internationally influential Muslim-majority countries do not recognize these as halal. This determines people's awareness of halal and hinders the spread of halal services in Japan.

4.2.4 Southeast Asia's Food Culture and Halal Standards

Indonesia's halal standards differ significantly from those in the Middle East, particularly regarding fermented foods. Unlike the Middle Eastern approach, which generally does not recognize fermented foods as halal, Indonesian standards include *tape*—a fermented food made from cassava or glutinous rice that contains 7-9% alcohol—as halal.

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[27] Warees Halal. "What is Muslim-Friendly Certification." https://wareeshalal.sg/muslimfriendly/ (last accessed September 1, 2024).

[28] *Mirin* is taxed at one-ninth the rate of beer, making it much cheaper (National Tax Agency, n.d.). Additionally, because *chorisyu* is defined as *sake* used for cooking, salt and vinegar are often added to make it unpalatable and undrinkable (National Tax Agency. Liquor Tax Rate Table. Retrieved from https://www.nta.go.jp/taxes/sake/qa/01/03.pdf. Accessed May 19, 2024).

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The discussion on alcohol within Islamic jurisprudence began in Indonesia in 1993, when K.H. Ibrahim Hosen, a notable Indonesian ulama, presented a document to the MUI conference. This document provided a thorough review of classical Islamic jurisprudence on alcohol [29], including the opinion of the classical ulama that if a Muslim drinks alcohol and becomes intoxicated after the fourth drink, the first three drinks are considered halal, but only the fourth drink is not. In the end, the most conservative interpretation was adopted, leading to the current strict halal certification standards, but it can be noted that this denies the flexibility inherent in classical Islamic doctrine.

Traditional fermented foods such as *tape* are not considered halal in the Middle East but are accepted in Indonesia and Malaysia. This discrepancy highlights broader cultural and doctrinal differences within the Islamic world. The acceptance of tape as halal in some Muslim-majority countries, while excluding traditional Japanese fermented condiments like *mirin* and *chorisyu*, may reflect a disregard for the diversity of Islamic practices. It could also be seen as an ethnocentric stance that discriminates against Muslim-minority countries.

As global halal standards evolve, international pressure to standardize halal practices may eventually spark debate over the acceptability of traditional Japanese seasonings as well as foods like tape. The issue of seasonings containing alcohol is not unique to Japan; such seasonings have traditionally been used in Europe and China, where spices do not grow, to eliminate odors. In Europe, wine has been used, and in China, alcoholic seasonings have been a staple. It is important to remember that only by respecting the flexibility of ethnic food cultures and Islamic teachings can we facilitate the global propagation of Islam and create a peaceful, harmonious, and symbiotic society."

5. Halal Certification System in the Global Era

5.1 Halal Certification and Market Expansion

In 2022, Muslim consumer spending on food is estimated to reach $1.4 trillion [30]. However, this figure does not directly translate to a demand for "halal-certified" products. For instance, Japan imports halal-certified products not necessarily because of a certification requirement but often due to their lower cost. For example, while halal-certified meat is imported into Japan, it is typically sold without the halal logo and is valued primarily for its affordability. Also rice from Thailand. Japan import Halal certified rice from Thailand but Japanese people don't need halal certification. Similarly, domestic halal-certified *shoyu*, though available, is significantly more expensive than regular alternatives. Additionally, as I

[29] Muhammad Nadratuzzaman Hosen, (Ed.), (2022) Pemikhiran dan Pandangan Pemikiran Ibrahim Hosen Tentang Kemasyarakatan, Kumpulan Tulisan Major Mimbar Ulama MUI, Yayasan Ibrahim Hosen.

[30] Dinar Standard, *2023/24 State of the Global Islamic Economy Report,* https://salaamgateway.com/reports/state-of-the-global-islamic-economy-2023-report

mentioned above, some halal products replace natural preservatives with synthetic ones, which does not align with the preferences of Japanese Muslims.

Malaysia, as part of its national policy, enforces strict halal standards and maintains 14 extensive halal parks covering 800,000 hectares[31]. This strategy has allowed Malaysia to produce and export a large volume of halal products, benefiting from its proximity to other Islamic markets and its favorable business environment, which is conducive to Western companies. In contrast, if Indonesia's halal standards were to become stricter, foreign companies might relocate to Malaysia to set up production facilities, leaving Indonesia as merely a market for these products.

Indonesia and Malaysia signed a treaty on June 8, 2023, allowing for the mutual acceptance of each other's halal-certified products[32]. However, this agreement does not extend to products certified by JAKIM and BPJPH from other countries. For instance, if a Japanese company obtains a BPJPH certificate, it still cannot export to Malaysia. Conversely, if the company acquires a JAKIM certificate, it cannot export to Indonesia. As a result, companies must obtain both certifications, incurring double the cost. Alternatively, they might choose to build a factory in Malaysia to facilitate exports to Indonesia. This system appears exclusive and potentially unfair, likely benefiting Malaysia disproportionately.

5.2 Audit Regimes in Muslim-Majority Countries

In the halal certification system developed over recent decades, an imbalance has emerged where certification bodies from Muslim-majority countries unilaterally audit those from Muslim-minority countries. The high costs associated with these audits are borne by the Halal Certification Bodies (HCBs) in the audited countries and, ultimately, by consumers in these Muslim-minority regions. Unlike organic or vegan certifications, which do not require foreign audit teams, halal certification demands that each country sends its own audit team, significantly increasing the costs [33].

[31] マレーシアは国家政策として、その戦略的な地理的位置を生かし、ハラール開発公社（HDC ）が指定した 20 万エーカーの土地にハラール・マレーシア（HALMAS）工業団地を建設している。https://hdcglobal.com/halal-parks/

[32] **Media Statement Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia Statement on the Memorandum of Cooperation Between the Government of Malaysia and the Republic of Indonesia Regarding Mutual Recognition of Halal Certification for Local Products (**Media Statement Kenyataan Media Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia Berkenaan Memorandum Kerjasama Antara Kerajaan Malaysia Dan Republik Indonesia Mengenai Pengiktirafan Bersama Pensijilan Halal Bagi Produk Tempatan） https://www.islam.gov.my/en/（last accessed 1 September 2024）

[33] Online interview with a representative from Japanese halal meat production company Z on June 8, 2022 .

For example, a Japanese slaughterhouse seeking halal certification must accommodate audit teams from each relevant Muslim-majority country, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and the United Arab Emirates. This involves covering travel expenses, accommodation, and daily allowances, which can be exorbitant. There are reports of audit teams demanding five-star hotel accommodations and business class flights, with daily allowances reaching around 30,000 yen per person. This represents a substantial financial burden.

In contrast, mutual acceptance of halal-certified products among Muslim-majority countries is often based on trust and does not require rigorous audits. For instance, Indonesia and Malaysia have an agreement allowing for mutual acceptance of halal certifications without additional audits. Conversely, Muslim-minority countries face costly and distrustful auditing processes based on skepticism, which can make the halal certification system unsustainable and financially burdensome.

To address these issues, some local Islamic leaders in Japan have started issuing halal certificates based on standards adapted to the social conditions of Muslim minorities, often at minimal or no cost to consumers. However, skepticism from non-Muslim consultants about the reliability of local imams—due to perceived lack of expertise in halal standards—further complicates the situation. This skepticism reinforces the belief that overly strict standards are the only acceptable ones, discouraging practical adaptations and undermining trust in local Islamic leadership.

The combination of strict standards that are not tailored to local conditions, a costly auditing system based on skepticism, and high certification costs have hindered the growth of halal services in Muslim-minority countries like Japan, ultimately imposing a heavy financial burden on both Muslim and, in some cases, non-Muslim consumers. According to one small halal slaughterhouse, obtaining halal certification has forced it to sell halal meat at 1.5 times the price of non-halal meat, which is now sold at 1.3 times the cost price. This means that non-Muslims who do not need halal meat are also bearing the cost of halal certification.

5.3 The Limits of Science Supremacy

In contemporary Indonesian Islam, the slogan "return to the Quran and Hadith" reflects a shift towards a more rational and science-oriented approach to religious practices. Historically, as long as food did not contain pork, it was considered acceptable. However, in recent years, the emphasis has shifted towards ensuring that food is halal by eliminating pork-derived ingredients at a molecular level. Or in the case of Indonesia, as if that wasn't enough, it also stipulates that raw materials must never come into contact with raw materials of pig origin, even if no DNA remains in the final product. This shift has resulted in food scientists

taking a leading role in determining halal compliance, sometimes overshadowing traditional religious scholars.

Scientific advances now allow the detection of substances like alcohol in food, enabling industrial alcohol to be recognized as halal under certain conditions. This has led to more practical solutions, but many consumers remain unaware of updated halal standards because of due to the secrecy surrounding halal standards. Some standards, such as those in Brunei Darussalam, still prohibit industrial ethanol, despite its use in halal products imported from Indonesia and Malaysia. This inconsistency is less of an issue in regions with widespread halal products but creates challenges in Muslim-minority countries like Japan, where halal-certified products are less common.

A particularly contentious issue is the treatment of pig DNA. In Islamic countries with minority populations, advances in technology have necessitated the elimination of pig-derived ingredients to the DNA level. For instance, Indonesian halal standards are so stringent that emulsifiers and other substances, even without detectable DNA, are excluded. However, as science progresses, it is becoming increasingly unrealistic to avoid pig DNA entirely. Because technology has advanced to the point where DNA can be extracted from the air [34]. This new finding indicates that environmental DNA can be detected in the air several hundred meters from the source, which suggests that it is virtually impossible to avoid all traces of pig-derived DNA in daily life. This illustrates the limitations of applying scientific principles rigidly and highlights the need to reconsider overly strict standards that demand avoiding pig derivatives at such minute levels.

Imposing standards that reject products merely because they have come into contact with pig-derived materials, even if no DNA is present in the final product, undermines principles of resource efficiency and recycling. Such standards also conflict with global trends towards sustainability and practicality. Additionally, while not covered in this article, stricter regulations for animal feed could have significant repercussions. Muslim-majority countries, especially Indonesia, need to carefully balance religious rigor with practical realities to avoid disrupting global industries or causing social divisions within Muslim-minority countries. Adapting halal standards to be both scientifically informed and culturally sensitive is crucial for ensuring their relevance and effectiveness in a global context.

5.4 Religious Centrism and Criticism of Halal Certification

[34] Elizabeth L. Clare et al. (2021) "Measuring biodiversity from airborne DNA" https://www.cell.com/current-biology/fulltext/S0960-9822%2821%2901650-X

Proponents of the current halal certification system often assert that "Halal for everyone, because halal is good for non-Muslims too." However, this viewpoint reflects a religiously centric perspective. Inspectors from Muslim-majority countries often engage with their local Halal Certification Bodies (HCBs) and are typically well-received by local business partners for mutual recognition. However, they frequently lack a genuine understanding of the contexts in Muslim-minority countries.

This system is rooted in the religious frameworks of Muslim-majority countries, which may overlook or dismiss the cultural and practical realities of Muslim-minority regions. In contrast, members of other religions rarely advocate their own dietary laws to followers of other religions. This attitude, which can be perceived as a form of religious superiority, contradicts the Islamic principle of respecting the beliefs and practices of others. True coexistence requires mutual respect and understanding.

Criticism of halal certification has been notably harsh in countries like India[35], and has also sparked opposition in Europe, Australia, and the United States [36]. In these regions, practices such as halal slaughter without stunning are sometimes viewed as barbaric and inhumane, while the certification fees are seen as a form of "religious tax." Such views contribute to widespread, albeit often covert, resistance to halal practices.

It is crucial to recognize that the current halal certification system not only imposes religious norms on people of other faiths but also creates significant challenges for Muslims living in Muslim-minority countries. The stringent standards enforced by Muslim-majority countries can lead to inconvenience and restrictions, impacting the daily lives of Muslims who are trying to adhere to these standards. This situation highlights the need for a more inclusive and context-sensitive approach to halal certification that respects diverse cultural and religious landscapes.

5.5 Issues with Stunning in Halal Slaughter

In Europe, growing concerns about animal welfare have led to a shift in attitudes towards halal slaughter methods. Traditional halal practices, which do not involve stunning, are increasingly being questioned. While some Halal Certification Bodies (HCBs) continue to

[35]Morgan, S ., & Sulong , J. (2021). Challenges to the Halal Industry: A Study on Legal Acceptance from Some Non-Islamic Countries. International Journal of Business and Social Sciences, 11(12), 1279-1289. http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i12/11869 DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i12/11869

[36]Facebook , Halal Boycott in Australia, https://www.facebook.com/BH.Australia/about_details (accessed December 2 , 2023) Facebook , Halal Boycott in the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, https://www.facebook.com/groups/BoycottHalalNow (accessed December 18 , 2023)

insist on slaughter without stunning, many have begun accepting pre- or post-stunning methods. This change has created confusion about what constitutes halal meat[37].

Ulama who strictly adhere to the requirement of unstunned meat often express skepticism about the halal integrity of supermarket meat that has been stunned [38]. Their concerns are frequently communicated through sermons in mosques, contributing to consumer uncertainty. For example, in the Netherlands, a method involving a 40-second delay before cutting is classified by some as non-stunning, resulting in meat from such procedures being labeled as "unstunned." However, others consider this method as a form of post-stunning, leading to debates about the correct definition of stunning.

In addition to confusion among Muslims, there is significant resistance from non-Muslim consumers in Europe. In Austria, for instance, there have been boycott movements against halal meat sold in regular supermarkets. In some European countries, the display of the halal logo on products has also sparked controversy.

To address these issues and reduce prejudice against halal slaughtering, it is essential to communicate that many international halal certification standards now accept stunning from an animal welfare perspective. Providing clear, scientific evidence that proper stunning aligns with humane treatment and safety standards for slaughterers can help dispel misconceptions. Educating both consumers and ulama about the evolution of halal standards and the benefits of stunning is crucial for fostering a better understanding and acceptance of halal meat.

In Japan, slaughtering methods without stunning are not legally problematic, but opinions that the method is cruel are circulating on the Internet, such as on some YouTube channels, which may lead to a worsening of the image of Islam. Slaughterers are concerned that stunning can damage the skull and result in the cattle being classified as non-halal, so in the case of cattle slaughterers who have machines that can fix and turn the cattle, they often slaughter cattle for export without stunning.

In the case of Japan, it may be necessary to make the standards more realistic to avoid double standards between Muslim-majority countries, where skullcap defacement is still accepted as halal, and Muslim-minority countries, where it is not recognized.

5.6. The impact of secrecy of some Halal certification bodies

A major problem with the current halal certification system is the lack of transparency regarding halal standards. These standards are treated as proprietary commercial products, sold

[37] Based on an interview with the director of a halal certification body in Europe, September 5, 2023.
[38] Based on an interview with the Imam of Masjid D in Austria, August 24, 2023.

at high prices, and are not fully disclosed. For example, JAKIM's alcohol standards are not listed in MS1500:2019 but are shared only as guidelines for mutually recognized certification bodies, without being made public. Additionally, recent research papers on halal standards often omit regulations on residual alcohol (industrial ethanol) in their comparisons. Halal certification bodies (HCBs) seeking mutual recognition are required to undergo paid training, leading to trained certifiers and consultants needing to recoup their investments. Consequently, companies must pay high consultancy fees to obtain the information necessary for halal compliance. Consumers are also denied access to this information. Furthermore, HCBs do not proactively share their positive lists of raw materials, forcing companies to incur high consulting and certification fees to understand halal standards. While the current halal certification system is intended to safeguard Islamic beliefs, it has, in practice, become a business model where Muslim-majority countries exert dominance over Muslim-minority countries.

Incidentally, Indonesia has published alcohol standards in MUI fatwas, but they are only available in Indonesian and their impact is limited. Due to the lack of proactive disclosure of these standards, local imams and general consumers in Japan adhere to outdated practices, including Indonesian workers and students, still prohibiting the use of industrial ethanol for hand disinfection and cleaning kitchens and production lines. They remain unaware that many foods they consume already use industrial ethanol in accordance with the new standards. This leads to contradictory consumption behavior due to the lack of public information, making it challenging to produce halal products in Muslim minority countries.

Treating halal standards as a commodity and black-boxing important information to promote the halal certification business makes halal services more expensive and less accessible, especially in Muslim-minority countries. This hinders the spread of essential halal services in society. Transparency and reform in this area are crucial for a sustainable halal certification system. To avoid confusion in the market and among consumers, halal standards should not be bought and sold as commercial commodities but should be made more openly accessible.

Conclusion: The Need for Realistic Halal Standards in Muslim-Minority Countries

This paper has explored how halal certification systems, particularly those promoted by Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia, affect Muslim-minority countries such as Japan. It has highlighted the need for reforms to address the challenges faced by Muslim communities in these contexts.

International halal standards are increasingly driven by scientific and technological advances, often leading to stricter requirements. While these standards are ostensibly aimed at protecting consumers and improving the welfare of Muslims in Muslim-majority countries, they are essentially expected to serve to expand business opportunities. Halal certification fees are applied not only to food and beverages but to all products, imposing costs on both Muslims and non-Muslims. In Muslim-minority countries, such standards make it increasingly difficult to produce halal products, which could soon be recognized as a serious trade barrier issue. Additionally, Muslims in these countries should find their food options limited, and those forced to consume "non-halal" products might experience feelings of guilt. This could even lead to a social divide between those who consume "non-halal" products and those who do not.

The strict halal certification system, which poses significant challenges even for Muslim-majority countries, disproportionately burdens Muslim-minority countries. Small and medium-sized enterprises and the informal sector in these countries struggle to meet the rigorous standards, and most of them financially cannot afford to obtain halal certification.

Indonesia's new law mandating halal certification introduces additional uncertainties for companies from non-Muslim countries exporting products to Indonesia. As the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Indonesia must reconsider its approach, moving away from overly stringent technological standards and aligning more closely with the fundamental principles of halal based on Islamic values.

To address these issues in the global era, halal standards need to evolve beyond rigid scientific criteria. They should be re-evaluated with input from ulama to ensure they align with the core principles of Islamic law while being practical and adaptable for non-Muslim contexts. A restructured approach that respects regional cultures and does not impose excessive burdens is essential for the future of halal certification.

Efforts such as the international conference hosted by NU in Surabaya in 2023 will be pivotal in addressing these challenges. The ulama should have a crucial role in considering the welfare of Muslims in non-Islamic countries and ensuring that Islamic principles are preserved in a manner that fosters fairness and justice. Reforming halal standards to balance adherence to Islamic law with practical considerations in diverse global contexts will be key to promoting peace and equity. Indonesia, as a leading Islamic nation, is expected to play a central role in driving these necessary reforms.

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2. Papers' length is about 8,000-10,000 words;
3. All submission must include a 200-300 word abstract;
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Examples of footnote style:

[1]Ryan Sugiarto, *Psikologi Raos: Saintifikasi Kawruh Jiwa Ki Ageng Suryomentaram,* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ifada, 2015), p. 139.

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[5]Nur Syam, *Tarekat Petani*, p. 99.

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