

Halal Supply Chain in Malaysia: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Abstract - This review article delves into the intricacies of the halal supply chain in Malaysia, emphasizing its significance, current challenges, and potential advancements. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the halal supply chain, fostering a scholarly discourse on enhancing its efficiency and compliance. Key insights are drawn from recent literature, offering a critical perspective on the operational and regulatory frameworks governing halal supply chains in Malaysia. Ensuring halal integrity in production involves strict adherence to certified ingredients and processes, while logistical efficiencies are hampered by inadequate infrastructure and Malaysia's tropical climate, highlighting the need for robust cold chain solutions. Regulatory complexities and variable standards across regions pose significant hurdles, emphasizing the importance of international harmonization and mutual recognition of halal certifications. Investing in logistics infrastructure through government incentives and public-private partnerships can significantly reduce delays and spoilage. Additionally, supporting SMEs with financial aid, training, and accessible certification services is crucial for their active participation in the halal market, ultimately strengthening the supply chain's overall competitiveness. This analysis underscores the importance of a coordinated effort to address these challenges and leverage opportunities for a resilient and efficient halal supply chain in Malaysia.

Keywords: Halal Logistics, Halal Supply Chain, Islamic Compliance, Supply Chain Management

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The halal supply chain in Malaysia is an essential component of the global halal industry, contributing significantly to the country's economy and international trade. The concept of halal extends beyond food products to include pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and logistics, necessitating rigorous compliance with Islamic laws (Talib, Ali, & Jamaludin, 2008). Malaysia, being a predominantly Muslim country, has established itself as a global hub for halal products, driven by robust regulatory frameworks and certifications (Zailani et al., 2011). This article reviews the current state of the halal supply chain in Malaysia, focusing on key operational challenges and future directions.

The integration of halal principles into the supply chain ensures that products meet the religious and ethical requirements of Muslim consumers. This involves meticulous control over sourcing, production, transportation, and storage processes (Tieman, 2011). Despite these efforts, the halal supply chain faces numerous challenges, including logistical inefficiencies, lack of standardized practices, and rising operational costs (Kamaruddin et al., 2012).

Efficient management of the halal supply chain is critical for maintaining the integrity and trust of halal-certified products. This includes the adoption of advanced technologies and practices such as blockchain for traceability and cold chain logistics to ensure product safety (Haleem & Khan, 2017). The following sections will delve deeper into the components of the halal supply chain in Malaysia, the challenges faced, and potential solutions to enhance its effectiveness.

2.0 HALAL SUPPLY CHAIN IN MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVES

The Halal supply chain in Malaysia is an intricate system designed to uphold the principles of Halal integrity, ensuring that all products consumed by Muslims are compliant with Islamic laws. This involves a comprehensive approach where every stage, from sourcing raw materials to delivering the final product to consumers, adheres to stringent Halal standards. Malaysia, known for its strong Halal certification processes, has established a sophisticated Halal supply chain that serves as a model for other countries (Halal Development Corporation, n.d.).

The term "Halal" refers to anything that is permissible or lawful according to traditional Islamic law (Shah, 2020). It is often used to describe food and drinks that Muslims are allowed to consume under Islamic dietary guidelines. The opposite of Halal is "Haram," which refers to anything that is forbidden under Islamic law (Khan, 2018). A supply chain encompasses all the steps involved in delivering a product from the supplier to the customer, including production, handling, storage, and delivery. Effective supply chain management ensures efficiency and quality control at each stage (Christopher, 2016). Table 1 below shows that definition of Halal of Islamic Law, conventional, ISO and other related.

Table 1. Definition of Halal of Islamic Law, conventional, ISO and other related

Aspect	Definition	Source
Definition under Islamic Law	Permissible or lawful in traditional Islamic law, often used to describe food and drinks that Muslims are allowed to consume under Islamic dietary guidelines.	Traditional Islamic Law Texts and Scholars
Conventional Definition	Generally, refers to anything that is lawful or permitted.	General English Dictionaries
ISO Definition	As per ISO 17065, Halal certification is a process that ensures the features and quality of the products according to the rules established by the Islamic Council.	ISO 17065:2012
Other Related Definitions	In finance, Halal refers to financial practices that comply with Sharia law, such as prohibition of interest (Riba) and speculative transactions (Gharar).	Islamic Finance Principles, AAOIFI Standards

The integration of Halal principles with modern supply chain practices is crucial for maintaining consumer trust and ensuring the authenticity of Halal products. According to a study by Zainuddin et al. (2019), effective implementation of Halal certification and labeling processes significantly enhances the performance of the Halal supply chain. The study highlights that the current practices in Malaysia's Halal certification system are essential for maintaining Halal integrity throughout the supply chain. Fig. 1 shows the illustration of the Halal Supply Chain Implementation Framework, adapted from Zainuddin et al. (2019).

Another research by Arshad et al. (2018) points out that ensuring Halal integrity across the supply chain is crucial for avoiding risks of contamination and adulteration. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive Halal integrity assurance across all stages of the supply chain to maintain consumer confidence in Halal products. Fig. 2 shows the illustration of the Conceptual Model of Halal Supply Chain Management, adapted from Arshad et al. (2018).

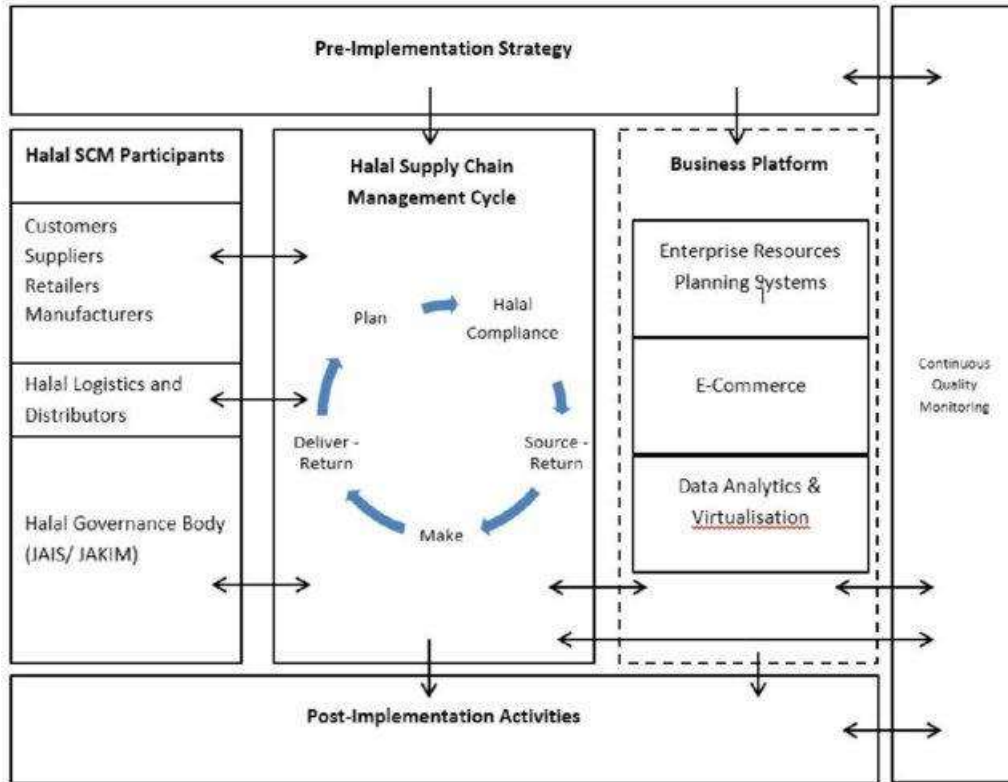


Fig. 1. Halal Supply Chain Implementation Framework.
 Source: Hassan et.al, 2017.

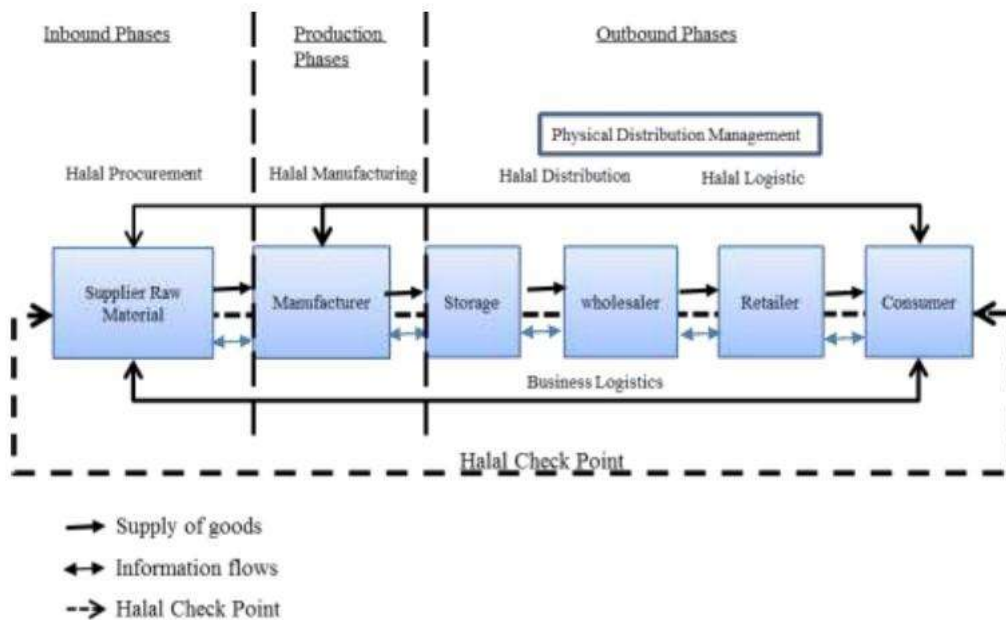


Fig. 2. Conceptual Model of Halal Supply Chain Management
 Source: Mohamed et al, 2016.

2.1 Components of the Halal Supply Chain

The halal supply chain is an intricate system that ensures the integrity and compliance of products with halal standards from the initial stages of raw material sourcing to the final delivery to the consumer. Each stage of this supply chain must adhere to strict guidelines to ensure that the products meet the religious and ethical requirements of halal consumers. The process begins with the sourcing of raw materials, which must come from certified halal sources. For instance, in the case of meat products, animals must be slaughtered according to Islamic laws, ensuring that the animal is healthy at the time of slaughter, and that it is slaughtered by a Muslim who invokes the name of Allah (God) before the act. Plant-based raw materials must also be free from contamination with non-halal substances, such as alcohol or products derived from animals not slaughtered according to halal practices. The halal supply chain encompasses various stages, from raw material sourcing to end-consumer delivery. Each stage requires stringent adherence to halal standards to maintain product integrity (Tieman, van der Vorst, & Che Ghazali, 2012).

Once the raw materials are sourced, the next critical stage is production and processing. This stage involves transforming raw materials into finished products while maintaining Halal compliance. It is essential that the production environment is clean and free from any contaminants that could compromise the Halal status of the products. This includes using dedicated equipment and facilities for Halal products or implementing thorough cleaning procedures if the equipment is shared with non-Halal products. The personnel involved in the production process must also follow strict hygiene and handling protocols to ensure that the products remain uncontaminated. Additionally, the production processes themselves must avoid the use of non-Halal additives, such as certain preservatives or flavor enhancers derived from non-Halal sources (Halim & Salleh, 2019).

Packaging, storage, and transportation are equally crucial components of the Halal supply chain. Packaging materials must be Halal and protect the product from contamination. Clear labeling indicating that the product is Halal-certified helps consumers make informed choices. During storage, Halal products must be kept separate from non-Halal items to avoid cross-contamination, which often requires dedicated storage facilities or strict protocols to clean shared spaces. Similarly, transportation of Halal products should be managed to maintain their Halal status, often necessitating dedicated vehicles or rigorous cleaning protocols. The distribution network must ensure that Halal products are handled correctly and displayed appropriately in retail environments, preventing any compromise to their Halal integrity. Ultimately, the delivery of the product to the end consumer must ensure that the product's Halal status is preserved through all stages of handling and sale, whether through physical stores or online platforms (Ahmad & Hassan, 2020).

By maintaining strict adherence to halal standards at every stage of the supply chain, businesses can ensure that their products meet the expectations and religious requirements of halal consumers. This meticulous process not only builds consumer trust but also opens opportunities in the growing global market for halal products. The comprehensive nature of the halal supply chain underscores the importance of maintaining product integrity from farm to fork, ensuring that every step complies with the rigorous standards set forth by halal certification bodies. This dedication to quality and compliance is essential for the success and credibility of halal products in the marketplace.

2.2 Raw Material Sourcing

Sourcing halal-compliant raw materials is the cornerstone of ensuring the integrity of halal products. This process begins with selecting suppliers who are certified by recognized halal certification bodies. These certifications are crucial as they affirm that the raw materials meet stringent halal standards, ensuring that they do not compromise the halal integrity of the end products. According to Noordin et al. (2009), the certification bodies conduct rigorous inspections and verifications to ascertain that the suppliers adhere to Islamic dietary laws. This includes verifying the source of the materials, the methods of procurement, and ensuring that there is no cross-contamination with non-halal substances. The

importance of this initial step cannot be overstated, as it sets the foundation for the entire halal production process.

The certification process for halal compliance is comprehensive and demanding. Suppliers are required to undergo thorough training to understand the principles and practices of halal production. Ngah et al. (2014) emphasize that this training is essential for suppliers to maintain the high standards expected in the halal industry. Additionally, regular audits are conducted to ensure ongoing compliance. These audits examine every aspect of the supplier's operations, from sourcing and handling to storage and transportation of raw materials. The objective is to maintain a continuous and uncompromised halal supply chain. This meticulous approach not only assures consumers of the halal integrity of the products but also helps build trust and credibility in the marketplace, fostering a loyal customer base that values adherence to halal standards.

2.3 Production and Processing

In the production stage, maintaining halal compliance is a meticulous process that begins with the selection of ingredients. Halal-certified ingredients are fundamental to ensuring that the final product adheres to Islamic dietary laws. This certification process involves rigorous checks to verify that the ingredients do not contain any components derived from haram (forbidden) sources such as pork or alcohol. Additionally, ingredients must not be contaminated by such sources at any stage of the supply chain. To facilitate this, producers often rely on suppliers who are themselves certified halal, creating a trusted network of compliant sources (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). This initial step is crucial because the use of non-halal ingredients would render the entire production process void of halal status, making it unacceptable for Muslim consumers.

Furthermore, the production facilities where halal products are processed must also adhere to stringent standards. These facilities need to be certified halal to ensure that all equipment and processes involved do not compromise the halal integrity of the products. This involves a comprehensive inspection of the production line to confirm that there is no cross-contamination with non-halal substances. For instance, equipment used for producing halal foods must not have been used for processing non-halal foods, or it must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized according to halal guidelines if it has been previously used for non-halal purposes. Maintaining hygiene standards is another critical aspect, as cleanliness is a core principle in Islamic teachings. This includes regular cleaning schedules, proper waste disposal, and ensuring that all workers adhere to hygiene practices, thereby preventing any form of contamination (Fischer, 2011). By following these protocols, producers can maintain the halal status of their products, ensuring they meet the religious requirements of Muslim consumers and gain their trust and loyalty.

2.4 Logistics and Transportation

In the realm of logistics and transportation, maintaining halal integrity is paramount. This involves utilizing dedicated halal transportation systems designed specifically to prevent cross-contamination with non-halal products. These systems often include segregated compartments within transport vehicles, ensuring that halal products are kept separate from non-halal items throughout the journey. For instance, a truck used to transport halal meat should not be used for transporting pork or alcohol, or it must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized according to halal standards if it has been used for such purposes. The adherence to these guidelines ensures that the products remain halal from the point of production to the destination, thus preserving their religious compliance and consumer trust (Tieman, 2011).

Cold chain logistics play a particularly crucial role in the transportation of perishable halal products. The cold chain ensures that products such as meat, dairy, and other perishables are kept at consistent temperatures to maintain their quality and safety. This is vital not only for preventing spoilage but also for maintaining the halal status of these products. Any break in the cold chain could result in contamination or spoilage, compromising the halal integrity. Hence, specialized cold storage units and refrigerated vehicles are utilized to ensure that perishable halal products remain at the required

temperatures throughout the supply chain. This meticulous management of temperature and conditions is essential for preventing any potential breaches of halal standards, ensuring that the products arrive at their destination in a state that is both safe to consume and compliant with halal regulations (Zulfakar, Anuar, & Ab Talib, 2014). By maintaining rigorous controls over logistics and transportation, the halal status of products is preserved, reinforcing the reliability of halal certification for consumers.

2.5 Storage and Warehousing

In the context of storage and warehousing, maintaining the halal status of products necessitates strict segregation practices. Halal products must be stored separately from non-halal products to prevent any form of cross-contamination. This segregation is typically achieved through the use of dedicated storage areas within warehouses that are clearly marked and physically separated. Such measures ensure that halal products do not meet haram (forbidden) substances, thereby preserving their halal integrity. For instance, a warehouse storing halal food products must have designated sections that are exclusively used for these products, ensuring that even indirect contamination from non-halal products is avoided. Regular audits and inspections by halal certification bodies are essential to ensure that these segregation practices are consistently followed, and that the facility adheres to halal standards (Awan, Siddiquei, & Haider, 2015).

Proper storage conditions are equally critical in preserving both the quality and halal status of products. This includes maintaining appropriate temperature controls to prevent spoilage, which is particularly important for perishable items like meat and dairy products. Halal storage facilities must be equipped with reliable refrigeration and climate control systems to ensure that these products remain in optimal condition throughout their storage period. Cleanliness is another key factor, as Islamic principles emphasize the importance of hygiene. Storage areas must be kept clean and free from contaminants, with regular cleaning schedules and strict hygiene protocols in place. This includes ensuring that all equipment and surfaces are sanitized according to halal guidelines. By adhering to these stringent conditions, warehouses can maintain the halal status of stored products, ensuring they remain safe for consumption and compliant with halal standards from storage to distribution (Talib & Hamid, 2014). These efforts in storage and warehousing are essential components of a holistic halal supply chain, reinforcing consumer confidence in the integrity of halal-certified products.

3.0 CHALLENGES IN THE HALAL SUPPLY CHAIN

Despite the structured framework, the halal supply chain in Malaysia faces several challenges that hinder its efficiency and reliability.

3.1 Regulatory and Certification Issues

The complexity and variability of halal certification standards across different regions present significant challenges for businesses involved in international trade. While JAKIM (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia) is renowned for its comprehensive halal certification guidelines, the lack of a universally accepted standard complicates matters. Each country may have its own halal certification bodies with distinct requirements and processes, leading to discrepancies and misunderstandings. For instance, what is deemed halal in one country might not be recognized as such in another due to differences in interpretation of Islamic dietary laws or specific procedural requirements. This lack of uniformity requires businesses to navigate a complex landscape of multiple certification authorities, each with their own set of rules, thereby increasing the administrative burden and the potential for compliance issues (Zailani et al., 2011).

These inconsistencies in certification processes can also lead to operational delays and increased costs for businesses. Obtaining multiple certifications to satisfy different regional requirements can be time-consuming and expensive, often involving extensive documentation, inspections, and modifications to production processes. These added costs can be prohibitive, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) attempting to enter the global halal market. Moreover, delays in certification

approval can disrupt supply chains and lead to missed market opportunities. For example, if a shipment is held up due to pending certification in the destination country, it can result in spoilage of perishable goods, financial losses, and damaged business relationships. Such challenges highlight the need for greater harmonization and mutual recognition of halal certification standards internationally, which would facilitate smoother trade flows and reduce the compliance burden on businesses, ultimately benefiting both producers and consumers (Ab Talib & Chin, 2018).

3.2 Technological Barriers

The adoption of advanced technologies within the halal supply chain remains relatively limited, presenting significant barriers to enhancing traceability and transparency. Technologies such as blockchain and the Internet of Things (IoT) offer promising solutions by enabling real-time monitoring and recording of product information throughout the supply chain. Blockchain technology, for instance, can provide an immutable ledger of transactions and product histories, ensuring that halal compliance is maintained at every stage from production to distribution. Similarly, IoT devices can monitor environmental conditions, such as temperature and humidity, ensuring that halal products are stored and transported under optimal conditions. However, implementing these technologies requires substantial investment in infrastructure and specialized expertise to manage and operate these systems effectively (Ali & Suleiman, 2016).

For many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia, the financial and technical resources required to adopt such advanced technologies are often beyond reach. SMEs play a crucial role in the halal supply chain, but their limited access to capital and technological know-how creates significant gaps in the system. Without the ability to invest in blockchain or IoT, these businesses may struggle to meet the growing demand for transparency and traceability from both regulators and consumers. This lack of technological integration can result in inefficiencies, increased risks of non-compliance, and potential loss of market trust. Moreover, the technological divide exacerbates the challenge of maintaining consistent halal standards across the supply chain, as smaller players may be unable to provide the same level of assurance as larger, tech-enabled enterprises. Addressing these technological barriers requires targeted support, such as government incentives, training programs, and collaborative efforts to make advanced technologies more accessible and affordable for SMEs, thereby strengthening the overall integrity and efficiency of the halal supply chain (Aziz & Chok, 2013).

3.3 Logistical Inefficiencies

Logistical inefficiencies present a formidable challenge to the halal supply chain, particularly in Malaysia. One of the primary issues is the inadequate infrastructure and transportation networks, which hinder the efficient movement of goods. Many regions may lack the necessary roads, ports, and logistics hubs to facilitate smooth and timely transportation, leading to bottlenecks and delays. For halal products, especially those that are perishable, such delays can be critical. The tropical climate of Malaysia exacerbates this problem, as the high temperatures and humidity can quickly spoil perishable items like meat and dairy products if they are not transported under proper conditions. Therefore, robust cold chain solutions are essential to maintain the integrity and quality of these products throughout the supply chain (Zulfakar et al., 2014).

However, the implementation of effective cold chain logistics comes with its own set of challenges. These systems require significant investment in refrigeration technology, insulated transport vehicles, and skilled personnel to manage and monitor the cold chain processes. For many businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the costs associated with establishing and maintaining a robust cold chain infrastructure can be prohibitive. As a result, inefficiencies in logistics can lead to frequent delays, increased spoilage rates, and higher operational costs. For instance, if a shipment of halal meat is delayed and the refrigeration units fail to maintain the required temperature, the entire consignment may be rendered non-halal due to spoilage, leading to financial losses and reputational damage. Additionally, these inefficiencies can disrupt the overall supply chain, making it difficult for businesses to meet consumer demands and regulatory standards consistently. Addressing these

logistical challenges requires coordinated efforts to improve infrastructure, invest in advanced logistics technologies, and provide support for SMEs to enhance their cold chain capabilities, thereby ensuring the reliability and efficiency of the halal supply chain (Ab Talib, Hamid, & Zulfakar, 2015).

3.4 Cost and Resource Constraints

Implementing and maintaining a halal supply chain involves significant costs and resource constraints, which can be particularly burdensome for businesses. To comply with halal standards, companies must invest in obtaining halal certification, which often involves a comprehensive audit of their processes, ingredients, and supply chain practices. This certification process requires thorough documentation, regular inspections, and adherence to stringent guidelines, all of which incur considerable costs. Additionally, businesses need to invest in continuous training for their staff to ensure that they are knowledgeable about halal requirements and capable of maintaining compliance throughout the production, handling, and distribution stages. This training is crucial for preventing inadvertent breaches of halal standards, which can result in product recalls and damage to the company's reputation (Omar & Jaafar, 2011).

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the financial burden of these investments can be prohibitive. Unlike larger companies that may have more substantial financial resources and economies of scale, SMEs often operate with limited budgets and narrower profit margins. The costs associated with halal certification, infrastructure upgrades, and employee training can therefore be a significant barrier to entry into the halal market. This limitation restricts their ability to compete effectively with larger, well-established businesses that can more easily absorb these expenses. Moreover, the need for specialized equipment and facilities, such as dedicated halal production lines and segregated storage areas, further adds to the operational costs. As a result, many SMEs may find it challenging to meet the growing demand for halal products, thereby missing out on lucrative market opportunities. Addressing these cost and resource constraints requires targeted support from governments and industry bodies, such as subsidies for certification costs, grants for infrastructure improvements, and training programs to help SMEs enhance their competitiveness in the halal market (Ngah et al., 2014).

4.0 FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND SOLUTIONS

Addressing the challenges in the halal supply chain requires a multifaceted approach, combining regulatory reforms, technological advancements, and industry collaboration.

4.1 Enhancing Regulatory Frameworks

Enhancing regulatory frameworks to streamline halal certification processes and harmonize standards internationally is critical for reducing complexities and improving efficiency in the halal supply chain. Currently, the lack of uniformity in halal standards across different countries creates significant barriers for businesses engaged in international trade. Each country may have its own set of certification requirements and procedures, leading to duplication of efforts and increased costs. By working towards harmonization of these standards, businesses can benefit from a more straightforward and cohesive certification process. For example, if a product is certified halal by JAKIM in Malaysia, having that certification recognized by other countries' halal bodies without additional scrutiny would greatly simplify international trade. This mutual recognition of halal certifications can reduce administrative burdens, shorten the time to market, and lower operational costs for businesses (Zailani et al., 2017).

Collaborative efforts between JAKIM and international halal bodies are essential to achieve this harmonization. Such collaboration can involve joint development of standardized guidelines, regular dialogues to address differences in interpretation of halal principles, and mutual audits to ensure consistency in certification practices. Establishing global forums or working groups where these bodies can share knowledge, and best practices would facilitate the development of a unified approach to halal certification. Furthermore, leveraging technology to create centralized databases of certified products and companies can enhance transparency and trust among certification bodies, regulators, and

consumers. By fostering a collaborative international framework, the halal industry can enhance its credibility, promote global trade, and meet the growing demand for halal products more efficiently. This unified approach not only benefits businesses by easing market entry and expansion but also ensures that consumers worldwide have access to authentic and reliable halal products, reinforcing their confidence in halal certification (Zailani et al., 2017).

4.2 Leveraging Technology

Leveraging technology, particularly blockchain, can revolutionize the halal supply chain by enhancing traceability and transparency. Blockchain technology provides an immutable ledger that records every transaction and movement of products throughout the supply chain. This real-time tracking ensures that all participants in the supply chain, from producers to retailers, can verify the halal status of products at every stage. For instance, blockchain can document the entire journey of halal meat, from slaughterhouses following Islamic practices to the final retail destination, ensuring that no contamination occurs along the way. This level of traceability not only helps in maintaining halal compliance but also builds consumer trust, as customers can access information about the product's origin and handling through secure, tamper-proof records (Tieman, 2011).

In addition to blockchain, the integration of Internet of Things (IoT) devices can significantly enhance the monitoring and control of storage and transportation conditions in the halal supply chain. IoT devices, such as smart sensors and GPS trackers, can continuously monitor critical parameters like temperature, humidity, and location in real-time. For perishable halal products, maintaining specific environmental conditions is crucial to prevent spoilage and ensure compliance with halal standards. For example, IoT-enabled refrigeration units can alert operators if temperatures deviate from the set range, allowing for immediate corrective actions to preserve product integrity. These devices can also provide comprehensive data logs that demonstrate adherence to halal requirements during audits and inspections. By integrating IoT technology, businesses can achieve greater operational efficiency, reduce the risk of non-compliance, and enhance the overall reliability of the halal supply chain (Haleem & Khan, 2017).

Together, blockchain and IoT create a robust technological framework that supports the stringent demands of the halal industry. They provide end-to-end visibility and control, ensuring that halal products remain compliant, safe, and of high quality from production to consumption. These technologies not only help in meeting regulatory requirements but also offer a competitive edge by enhancing consumer confidence and satisfaction in halal products.

4.3 Improving Logistics Infrastructure

Improving logistics infrastructure, especially through the development of robust cold chain solutions, is crucial for enhancing the efficiency and reliability of the halal supply chain. Inadequate infrastructure can lead to significant delays, spoilage of perishable goods, and increased operational costs, which are detrimental to maintaining the halal integrity of products. Investing in advanced cold chain logistics ensures that perishable halal products, such as meat and dairy, are kept at optimal temperatures throughout transportation and storage. This prevents spoilage and contamination, thus preserving the products' halal status and quality. Efficient cold chain systems enable seamless integration from production to final delivery, minimizing the risk of breaches in the halal certification process and ensuring that consumers receive products that meet the stringent halal standards (Zulfakar et al., 2014).

Government incentives and public-private partnerships play a pivotal role in facilitating the development of dedicated halal logistics networks. Governments can offer subsidies, tax breaks, and grants to businesses investing in halal-compliant infrastructure, thereby lowering the financial barriers for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that might struggle with the high costs of such investments. Additionally, public-private partnerships can bring together the expertise and resources of both sectors to build state-of-the-art logistics facilities. For instance, collaborations between government agencies, halal certification bodies, and private logistics companies can lead to the creation

of specialized halal logistics hubs equipped with advanced cold storage facilities, dedicated transport fleets, and rigorous monitoring systems. These hubs can serve as central nodes in the halal supply chain, ensuring that products are efficiently consolidated, stored, and distributed while maintaining compliance with halal standards. Improved infrastructure not only reduces delays and spoilage but also enhances the overall competitiveness of the halal industry by ensuring timely delivery and consistent quality of halal products to global markets. This strategic investment in logistics infrastructure ultimately fosters greater consumer trust and expands market opportunities for halal-certified products.

4.4 Supporting SMEs

Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is essential to enable their active participation in the halal market. SMEs often face significant cost and resource constraints that can hinder their ability to meet the stringent requirements of halal certification and maintain compliance throughout their operations. To address these challenges, government grants and subsidies can play a crucial role in reducing the financial burden on SMEs. This financial aid can help cover the costs associated with halal certification, such as audit fees, infrastructure modifications, and compliance documentation. Additionally, providing low-interest loans or tax incentives can further ease the financial strain on these businesses, allowing them to invest in necessary improvements without compromising their operational viability (Aziz & Chok, 2013).

Moreover, offering comprehensive training programs and access to halal certification services can significantly enhance the capabilities of SMEs in the halal supply chain. Training programs can equip SME owners and employees with the knowledge and skills needed to understand and implement halal standards effectively. These programs can cover various aspects, including halal food handling, hygiene practices, and regulatory compliance. By improving their understanding of halal requirements, SMEs can better align their operations with these standards, thereby increasing their chances of obtaining and maintaining halal certification. Furthermore, facilitating access to halal certification services, such as by establishing local certification offices or providing online certification platforms, can streamline the certification process for SMEs. This technical support not only helps SMEs overcome resource constraints but also ensures that they can compete on an equal footing with larger companies. Enhancing the participation of SMEs in the halal market through such targeted support measures will strengthen the overall competitiveness and resilience of the halal supply chain in Malaysia, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic industry (Aziz & Chok, 2013).

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The halal supply chain in Malaysia is a critical component of the global halal industry, requiring stringent compliance with Islamic principles and efficient management practices. Despite facing challenges such as regulatory complexities, technological barriers, and logistical inefficiencies, there are significant opportunities for improvement. By enhancing regulatory frameworks, leveraging technology, improving logistics infrastructure, and supporting SMEs, Malaysia can further strengthen its position as a global hub for halal products. This review highlights the need for continued research and collaboration to address these challenges and promote the growth of the halal supply chain.

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