




## Navigating Halal Certification Challenges in Japanese Restaurants: Insights and Strategies for Success

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### Abstract

The burgeoning demand for Halal food in Japan opens profitable avenues for its restaurants. However, the journey to Halal certification is fraught with challenges such as cultural nuances, regulatory obstacles, high costs, and a dearth of certified ingredients. This study unravels these complexities from the viewpoint of certification authorities, highlighting the need for standardized processes, heightened awareness, and supportive policies. It proposes strategies to augment the availability of Halal food in Japan, aiming to streamline certification and align industry practices with Islamic dietary laws, catering to a diverse consumer base. This study underscores the significance of consumer behavior understanding and the impact of Halal certification on restaurant competitiveness and performance. By tackling these challenges and adopting the suggested strategies, Japanese restaurants can adeptly navigate the Halal certification labyrinth, thereby enhancing the quality and accessibility of Halal food in Japan.

**Keywords:** *Halal Certification, Japanese Restaurants, Challenges, Certification Process, Cultural Differences, Regulatory Hurdles, Industry Implications*

### INTRODUCTION

Halal certification, a process that validates compliance with Islamic dietary laws and ethical standards, is of paramount importance for Muslim consumers. It aligns with their religious beliefs and values and presents businesses with opportunities to penetrate the rapidly expanding global halal market, which is projected to be worth \$2.6 trillion by 2023 (Dinar Standard, 2020). Despite its potential benefits, halal certification poses significant challenges, particularly in countries like Japan where Muslims are a minority and halal awareness is relatively low. As of 2019, Muslims constituted approximately 0.18% of Japan's total population (The Economist, 2021). The availability of halal products and services in Japan is inconsistent although some sources suggest a recent increase (Halal In Japan, n. d.). The growing popularity of Japan among Muslim tourists further underscores the need for halal food and accommodation, which are often difficult to find (Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016).

Restaurants, in particular, stand gaining significantly from halal certification. It allows them to cater to the needs and preferences of Muslim customers, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and reputation. Halal certification can boost a business's market share, consumer confidence, and regulatory compliance. It also provides a competitive edge and access to global markets. However, obtaining halal certification for restaurants in Japan is fraught with challenges. The process is complex and prohibitively expensive, leading many companies and municipalities to abandon it (Yamaguchi, 2019).

Halal certification bodies (HCBs), which audit and verify a business's compliance with Islamic law and halal certification standards, play a pivotal role in this process. This study

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contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining the challenges faced by HCBs in managing halal certification for Japanese restaurants. The research question guiding this study is as follows: What are the major challenges and issues that HCBs encounter in their halal certification process for Japanese restaurants? This paper reviews the literature on halal certification, halal standards, and the halal market in Japan and identifies the challenges and issues. The objective of this study, presented in the final section of the paper, is to discuss the implications and recommendations for HCBs, restaurants, and other stakeholders to surmount these challenges, thereby improving the quality and availability of halal food and services in Japan.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have highlighted the potential of the Halal market in Japan. According to [Riaz and Chaudry \(2003\)](#), Japan is one of the largest importers of Halal products in the world, with a market size of approximately \$1.5 billion in 20021. However, acquiring Halal certification is becoming complicated and expensive, leading numerous companies to abandon it. There is also a lack of awareness and understanding of Islamic dietary laws, leading to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of Halal certification requirements.

The concept of halal certification for restaurants in Japan has become a significant issue in recent years, as the Muslim population in the country has flourished. However, despite the growing demand for halal-certified food, restaurants in Japan face several challenges and issues when seeking halal certification. This literature review explores these challenges and issues from the perspective of halal certification bodies.

One of the fundamental challenges faced by restaurants in Japan is the lack of understanding and awareness of halal certification requirements. Many restaurants find it challenging to understand the complexities of halal food handling, storage, and serving, which hinder their ability to obtain certification. The foundational challenge lies in the inadequate understanding and awareness of Halal requirements among Japanese restaurant owners and staff. Insufficient knowledge leads to improper training and education, raising the risk of cross-contamination and the use of non-Halal ingredients ([Yamaguchi, 2019](#)). Cross-contamination and the use of non-Halal ingredients can compromise the integrity of Halal certification. Such consequences require a closer examination of the educational needs within the Japanese culinary industry to ensure compliance with Halal standards. In halal meat slaughtering, [Abas et al. \(2021\)](#) noted that training and education are crucial for improving animal welfare knowledge and the efficient execution of the meat slaughtering process, particularly in the context of halal meat production.

The scarcity of Halal-certified ingredients and products in Japan poses a significant hurdle for restaurants seeking certification. It rooted this challenge in the limited availability of such items, impeding restaurants' ability to fully comply with Halal standards. According to a study by [Yusof and Shuttob \(2014\)](#), there are only approximately 110,000 Muslims in Japan, and they often have difficulty finding halal foods and other goods in the market. The implications extend to the certification process, as restaurants face difficulties in sourcing suitable ingredients that meet the stringent requirements for Halal preparation ([Korea Herald, 2014](#)). For instance, a study by [Abdallah et al. \(2021\)](#) compared four different halal standards (namely GSO 993:2015, OIC/SMIIC 1:2019, HAS 23103:2012, and MS 1500:2019) representative of different geographic areas. The study found that some of these standards have different definitions and criteria for animal stunning, which is a critical step for slaughtering

animals according to Islamic rules. Therefore, restaurants should be aware of these differences and ensure that their suppliers follow the appropriate halal standards.

Fikadu et al.'s (2023) study highlights the challenges in the Halal certification system within Ethiopia's food industry, which impact the meat import capabilities of countries with high demand. This context is crucial for understanding the potential obstacles Japan may face in implementing a similar system in its restaurant industry. The study also emphasizes the role of Halal entrepreneurship, self-efficacy, and risk propensity in the Halal food industry, which could be key strategies for successful Halal certification adoption in Japan's restaurant sector (Fikadu et al., 2023).

Its complexity and time-consuming nature characterize the Halal certification process in Japan. Restaurants are required to adhere to stringent guidelines and undergo thorough inspections to ensure compliance with Halal standards, which poses a substantial challenge, particularly for smaller establishments. In Japan, unlike predominantly Muslim countries, there is no governmental body responsible for overseeing and approving halal certifications, as discussed by the NPO Japan Halal Association (2024a).

Instances of fraudulent practices and misrepresentation of Halal compliance have contributed to a climate of skepticism among Muslim consumers. Halal certification was explored by Rafiki (2019) and Bux et al. (2022) in their respective studies. The lack of trust stemming from fraudulent practices underscores the need for comprehensive measures to authenticate and validate Halal certification claims in the Japanese culinary scene, as highlighted by Fujiwara and Ismail (2017) and Islam et al. (2023). A study by Priantina et al. (2023), which examined 200 culinary producers in the Bogor area of Indonesia, found that trust significantly influenced intention. Functional factors and subjective norms also influence trust. Trust also influences attitude, along with functional factors and perceived behavioral norms. They found that trust mediated the effects of perceived behavioral norms and subjective norms on intention.

On the other side, Adidaya (2016) discusses the problem of fake Halal certification and inauthentic Halal marks in Japan. The study further highlights organizations that are allowed to issue Halal certification and marks in a country, such as Halal certification bodies or local mosques appointed to issue Halal certification. However, the lack of regulations governing Halal in Japan has led to the creation of fake Halal certification bodies, making the authenticity of Halal products produced by some Japanese manufacturers uncertain. This situation has resulted in a lack of control over the Halal certification process, leaving retailers and consumers with no option but to trust the producer or dealer of the product. The study mentions that the fake Halal mark can attract Muslim customers, and they relate it to the low Halal standard in Japan compared with other countries.

Another challenge is the additional cost and time involved in acquiring and maintaining halal certification. The resource-intensive nature of the certification process becomes a deterrent for smaller establishments, as the associated costs and efforts may outweigh the perceived benefits. This is highlighted in the study by Hasnan and Kohda (2023). Various restaurants find it financially burdensome to invest in new equipment, training, and compliance measures to meet stringent halal requirements. This can deter smaller establishments from pursuing certification, thus limiting the availability of halal-certified options for Muslim consumers (Rahim et al., 2021).

Halal guidelines ensure that food and processes meet Islamic standards for permissibility. Global challenges include inconsistent definitions, a lack of collaboration

between certification bodies, and the speed of issuing halal logos. The halal logo reassures Muslim consumers, but enforcement of its use needs improvement. Stakeholders must address challenges to realize the benefits of the halal market. In Japan, there is a lack of standardized halal certification processes and regulations, which leads to confusion and inconsistency among certification bodies. This makes it challenging for restaurant owners to navigate the complex landscape of halal certification, as they may encounter different requirements and expectations from various certifying organizations (Shafie & Othman, 2022; Idris et al, 2022).

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, halal certification has become a cornerstone of food security and consumer trust. However, understanding halal law among MSMEs is a concern, impacting public confidence and sales (Azis et al., 2023). Regulatory bodies like the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Ministry of Health play a crucial role in certifying halal products. Halal certification, while a religious requirement, also ensures that products meet specific criteria, contributing to food security by maintaining their halal status.

MSMEs face challenges in understanding and obtaining halal certification due to limited knowledge and awareness of the halal process. Addressing these challenges is crucial for the industry's overall well-being and consumer confidence (Azis et al., 2023). In the Japanese context, these challenges may be amplified by cultural and language barriers, differing food practices, and a smaller Muslim population. It underscores the need for robust support systems and educational resources to enhance the understanding and implementation of halal certification.

In addition to these challenges, cultural and social barriers hinder the adoption of halal certification in Japanese restaurants. The perception of halal food as foreign can create resistance from some restaurant owners and consumers, making it difficult for halal-certified options to acquire widespread acceptance in the Japanese food industry. Notably, there is also a lack of understanding of the religion and a shortage of services and facilities for Muslim travelers in Japan (BBC, 2018). Many Japanese mistakenly assume that halal foods are only for Muslims. Halal foods, however, have the potential to meet the needs of non-Muslim Japanese consumers seeking safe and trustworthy options (japan-guide.com, 2023).

In the study by Marohom and Fuerzas (2022), knowledge and subjective norms play a crucial role in influencing the intention to purchase and consume halal food products. This finding is particularly relevant to current research on the challenges of halal certification for Japanese restaurants in Japan. It underscores the importance of consumer awareness and societal norms in the acceptance and consumption of halal-certified food. By understanding the influence of knowledge and societal norms on consumer behavior, we can shed light on the potential difficulties that Japanese restaurants might encounter in securing and maintaining halal certification. Furthermore, it can provide insights into how these restaurants can meet the preferences and expectations of halal-conscious consumers in Japan.

In conclusion, this literature review highlights the various challenges and issues faced by restaurants in Japan in obtaining halal certification from the perspective of halal certification bodies. A lack of understanding, high costs, inconsistent regulations, and cultural barriers all contribute to the complexities of achieving and maintaining halal certification in the Japanese restaurant industry. Expanding halal-certified options and meeting the demand of Japan's Muslim population depend on addressing these challenges (Yamaguchi, 2019).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative research approach to investigate the complexities of

Halal certification in Japan. This study focuses on the experiences and insights of key figures in the Halal industry, including Madam Hitomi Remon, the President of the Japan Halal Association, and other stakeholders such as representatives from Halal-certified restaurants, Halal certification bodies, and consumers of Halal products. These diverse perspectives provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by restaurants seeking Halal certification and the strategies employed to overcome them (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2014).

The primary data collection process for this study spanned a period of 6 months, from January to June 2023. This timeframe was chosen to ensure a thorough collection of data, while also allowing for the observation of any seasonal variations in the Halal certification process. The secondary data of document analysis begins from January 2023 to April 2024.

The study design and methods were chosen to align with the research question. The use of semi-structured interviews allows flexibility in exploring these challenges and strategies while ensuring the research remains focused on the key research question (Silverman, 2016). In addition, document analysis of Halal certification standards, industry reports, and government regulations supplemented the interview data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the Halal certification landscape in Japan.

To ensure the rigor and validity of the study, several steps were taken. First, member checking was conducted, which involved reviewing the preliminary findings with the interviewees to ensure accuracy and completeness. Second, multiple data sources were incorporated and triangulated to enhance the study's overall rigor and validity (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The results of the study were triangulated using a combination of methods. First, the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which allowed for the identification of key themes and patterns in the data. Second, these themes were cross-verified with secondary data sources, such as industry reports and academic literature, to ensure their validity and reliability.

The methodology and administration of the study were conducted in a systematic, clear, accurate, and replicable manner. The interview protocol, including the interview questions and procedures, was developed on the basis of best practices in qualitative research. All interviews were conducted consistently, with the same set of questions being asked all interviewees. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy in the data analysis. This study adheres to ethical guidelines for conducting research, with all interviewees providing informed consent before their participation. The confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees were maintained throughout the study.

In this study, the primary source of data was a collection of publicly accessible video interviews. These interviews were conducted by various organizations and featured a range of stakeholders in the Halal restaurant industry in Japan, including chefs, Halal meat suppliers, Halal consumers, and Halal restaurateurs. This approach is similar to that used by Borish et al. (2021), who used documentary film as a strategy for qualitative inquiry.

The videos were sourced from public platforms such as YouTube. This approach allowed for a diverse range of perspectives to be included in the study, enhancing its richness and depth. Each video was meticulously reviewed, and relevant information was extracted and analyzed. This method of data collection has been used in various studies (de Villiers et al., 2021).

It is important to note that although this method provides valuable insights, it also has limitations. The researcher does not control the questions asked in the interviews, and the data depend on the quality and content of the available videos. Despite these limitations, the use of

public video interviews offers a unique and valuable perspective on the challenges faced by actors in the Halal certification process (de Villiers et al., 2021). The methodology of this study is grounded in previously published procedures and methodologies in qualitative research.

This study underscores the significance of qualitative research methods in guaranteeing rigor, validity, and depth. By utilizing a multi-method approach and implementing measures to bolster the credibility of the findings, this study offers valuable insights into the realm of Halal certification in Japan. The knowledge derived from this study will play a crucial role in shaping future policies and practices in the Halal certification process, fostering the expansion and evolution of the Halal industry within the country.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Key Actors in Halal Certification**

The key actors in the halal certification process include halal certification bodies, restaurants seeking certification, and consumers of halal food. Each plays a crucial role in the halal certification ecosystem:

1. **Restaurants Seeking Certification:** Restaurants, like Ali's Kitchen, navigate the complex certification process, adhere to the halal standards set by the HCBs, and maintain the quality and integrity of their food and services.
2. **Halal Certification Bodies (HCBs):** HCBs, such as the NPO Japan Halal Association (JHA) and the Muslim Professional Japan Association (MPJA), set the standards and procedures for halal certification. They conduct audits and issue halal certificates to restaurants that meet their criteria (Muslim Professional Japan Association, 2020; NPO Japan Halal Association, 2024b).
3. **Consumers of Halal Food:** Consumers trust and rely on the halal certificates issued by HCBs. Their confidence in the authenticity of halal certification is crucial for the success of halal-certified restaurants. Interaction and collaboration among these key actors are essential for the effective functioning of the halal certification process in Japan.

### **Restaurant Owners' Perspective**

Insights from a conversation with Ali, the owner of the renowned Halal restaurant Ali's Kitchen in Osaka, illuminate the complexities of halal certification from the restaurant owner's perspective. Ali's meticulous approach to ensuring his ingredients were 'halalan tayyiban', a term referring to the Islamic dietary laws of consuming food that is not only permissible (Halal) but also wholesome and pure, highlights the rigor involved in maintaining halal standards (Ali, 2023). Despite challenges with suppliers, Ali maintained strict quality control, a commitment reflected in the restaurant's Michelin Star awards in 2017 and 2018. Ali also highlighted the high costs associated with sourcing high-quality ingredients, underscoring his dedication to quality over cost (Ali, 2023).

Ali's unwavering dedication to upholding the principles of 'halalan tayyiban' emphasizes the importance of quality and integrity in achieving culinary excellence. His efforts align with the rigorous standards set by the Michelin Guide, which recognizes restaurants for their quality of ingredients, mastery of flavor and cooking techniques, the chef's personality expressed through the cuisine, value for money, and consistency (Michelin Guide, 2022). This study, through the lens of Ali's Kitchen, highlights several key challenges in the halal certification process in Japan, providing valuable insights from the perspective of a halal

restaurateur.

1. High Cost of Halal Certification

The financial burden of halal certification is a significant deterrent for many restaurants, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises. The average cost for restaurants ranges from 300,000 to 500,000 yen, potentially exceeding this range (Food Diversity Today, 2021). Ali's Kitchen, despite its success and Michelin Star awards in 2017 and 2018, also faced these high costs, underscoring the financial challenges of maintaining halal certification.

2. Complex Certification Process

The certification process is complicated by the lack of a centralized authority and the presence of over 30 Halal Certification Bodies (HCBs) in Japan, each with different standards and procedures (Hasnan & Kohda, 2023). Ali's Kitchen navigated this complex process, demonstrating the diligence and commitment required to meet various halal standards.

3. Consumer Trust and Confidence

The lack of a centralized authority for halal certification in Japan can lead to concerns about the authenticity of Halal certification, undermining consumer trust and confidence (Hasnan & Kohda, 2023). Despite these challenges, Ali's Kitchen has managed to build a strong reputation and trust among its customers.

4. Lack of Awareness and Understanding of Islamic Dietary Laws

A significant challenge identified in this study is the lack of awareness and understanding of Islamic dietary laws among Japanese businesses. Ali's Kitchen, however, has shown a deep understanding of these laws, ensuring that not only the raw materials themselves but also the manufacturing process of the product and raw materials, the packaging materials used, and the internal management methods were halal.

5. Consumer Trust and Confidence

The JHA and MPJA are both recognized by international halal authorities, which helps to build consumer trust and confidence. However, the lack of a centralized authority for halal certification in Japan can lead to concerns about the authenticity of Halal certification (Muslim Professional Japan Association, 2020).

6. Lack of Awareness and Understanding of Islamic Dietary Laws

The lack of awareness and understanding of Islamic dietary laws among Japanese businesses is a significant challenge. For example, Igagoe Co., Ltd., a company that produces soy sauce, obtained halal certification for its products. However, the company had to ensure that not only the raw materials themselves but also the manufacturing process of the product and raw materials, the packaging materials used, and the internal management methods were halal. This shows the complexity and potential misunderstandings that can arise when businesses in Japan attempt to comply with halal requirements.

### **The HCB Perspective**

In an interview with Madam Hind Hitomi Remon, founder of the Japan Halal Association (JHA), the findings underscore the concerns raised by Madam Hind Hitomi Remon, founder of the Japan Halal Association (JHA), about the proliferation of entities claiming to be halal certification bodies. The multitude of certification options can create confusion for businesses seeking legitimacy, with some entities offering only a basic "halal" certificate.

Madam Remon advocates proper accreditation, viewing it as a strategic move that

could enable Japanese companies to expand their global halal exports beyond just Muslim consumers or tourists in Japan. She emphasizes the importance of viewing halal certification not as a commercial venture but as a community service that ensures a reliable certification system and qualified personnel for quality assurance. She elucidated the variety of services offered by the JHA to help businesses achieve Halal certification and overcome their challenges. She outlined the key activities:

1. Halal Certification

The JHA conducts audits across four categories of halal certification: products and raw materials, slaughter, restaurants and kitchens, and transportation. The certification process includes knowledge acquisition, training, pre-inspection, application for Halal Certification, document audit, non-conformance report, corrective action report, and on-site audits

2. Education and Training

As an integral part of the certification process, the JHA imparts knowledge acquisition and training. They also organize monthly courses and seminars, and provide support to businesses seeking to understand halal and Islam

3. Support for Entry into the Halal Industry

The JHA counsels businesses to meticulously gather information beforehand, determine whether it is truly essential to acquire halal certification, and then proceed with certification acquisition

4. Auditing

The halal certification audits conducted by JHA disclose all information about the products and services that are subject to certification and affirm that they do not contain any “potentially or suspicious haram.”

5. Consumer Needs

Madam Remon emphasizes that the sole purpose of halal certification is to enhance the added value to consumer needs

These activities underscore the JHA's comprehensive approach to aiding businesses on their journey toward Halal certification. They not only furnish the necessary certification but also provide educational resources and strategic advice to help businesses successfully navigate the Halal industry. Madam Remon offers a thorough guide to halal certification. She underscores its significance in the global halal industry, which extends beyond food to encompass all facets of daily life. She clarifies that halal certification is a process that ensures that products and services do not contain anything prohibited by Islam, or ‘haram’.

She notes that they conduct audits for four types of halal certifications, and for businesses contemplating entry into the halal industry, they recommend meticulous information gathering and determining the necessity of halal certification. She emphasizes that halal certification is intended to enhance its value to consumer needs and highlights that the absence of a uniform global certification standard makes it complex to understand. For more detailed information, she invites everyone to visit their website, as they are there to assist in navigating the world of halal certification. Incorporating Halal certification into domestic industries is proving difficult for Japan during the rising global demand.

### **Consumers Perspective**

Consumer trust and confidence are pivotal for the success of halal-certified restaurants. However, concerns about the authenticity of halal certification can undermine this trust,

particularly considering reported fraudulent practices and misrepresentation of halal compliance (Adidaya, 2016). Such instances underscore the need for rigorous oversight and enforcement of Halal standards.

The absence of a centralized authority for halal certification in Japan further intensifies these concerns, potentially undermining consumer trust and confidence (Hasnan & Kohda, 2023). Ultimately, according to Madam Remon's interview, the primary purpose of halal certification is to enhance the added value to consumer needs, reinforcing the importance of authenticity and transparency in the certification process.

Muslims residing in Japan face significant challenges in accessing assured halal food and beverages, with the availability of Halal-certified food being a persistent issue (Ahmad et al., 2023). The study found that participants frequented stores offering imported goods and placed trust in established international brands. The research suggested that further studies should delve deeper into the awareness of subhash products, customers' understanding of cross-contamination concerning halal products, and the logistics surrounding halal products (Ahmad et al., 2023).

The insights presented are derived from a methodological approach that involves summarizing the content of a video titled "Halal food/restaurants Tour in Tokyo!! 8 gourmet halal food! [Japan Travel Guide]" posted by the YouTube channel FOOD in JAPAN and presented by the host named iNok (iNok, 2023). This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the challenges faced by Muslims residing in Japan, particularly the limited availability of Halal-certified food options. The video highlights several Halal-certified restaurants, demonstrating the strict requirements of being Halal-certified. Some restaurants have ceased serving Halal food or closed, further intensifying the issue. Despite these challenges, there are still various Halal food options available in Tokyo, albeit not as many as one might hope for.

The video highlighted several Halal-certified restaurants, such as Gohan Cafe in Shibata, Soleil in Ginza, Ko-so Cafe in Ebisui, and Oskar's Chicken Man in Uno, demonstrating the strict requirements for Halal certification. The continuation of the video provides further evidence of the challenges of finding Halal-certified restaurants in Japan. It mentions additional Halal-certified restaurants and shops, underscoring the strict requirements for Halal certification. However, the video suggests that finding more Halal-certified restaurants, especially those offering Japanese food, remains a significant challenge. These findings provide valuable insights into the consumer perspective of Halal food availability and trust in the Halal logo in Japan (please see the video at FOOD in JAPAN (2023)).

Similarly, in the YouTube video titled "Can Muslims Eat Japanese Food?" by influencer Khalid Al Ameri, who boasts a substantial following of 3.56 million subscribers, he details his experience with Halal food in Japan. This video provides valuable insights into the challenges, requirements, and issues related to Halal food in a non-Muslim majority country like Japan.

The video reveals that the Halal status of food is determined not only by the ingredients but also by the method of preparation. For instance, fish, which is Halal by default, may not be considered Halal if it is cooked with alcohol or pork fat. Similarly, common ingredients in Japanese cuisine, such as rice wine vinegar in sushi or alcohol in soy sauce, may not be Halal.

Al Ameri's (2024) video also highlights the difficulty of finding Halal food, suggesting that this can be a source of stress for Muslims, particularly those who are traveling. Despite these challenges, the video shows a growing demand for Halal food options in Japan, driven by the increasing Muslim population in the country and the rising number of Muslim visitors.

The video underscores the importance of Halal certification for restaurants. Even if the

food is made from Halal ingredients, it needs to be prepared in a Halal way, and the establishment itself should be Halal certified. This highlights the complexity of ensuring that food is Halal and the need for education and awareness about what Halal means and entails.

[Al Ameri's \(2024\)](#) video provides a comprehensive overview of the Halal food scene in Japan, shedding light on the unique challenges and opportunities in this space. It serves as a valuable resource for Muslims planning to visit Japan and for those interested in the intersection of food, culture, and religion.

### **Strategic Roadmap for Implementing Halal Certifications in Restaurants**

This study presents a strategic roadmap for the successful implementation of Halal certification in Japan, focusing on the following key areas:

1. Educational Initiatives

The Japan Halal Association (JHA) has launched a pioneering Halal chef training course to educate restaurant owners and staff about Halal requirements. This initiative, in collaboration with the Osaka Prefecture Japan Chef Technical Association and the Japanese Cuisine for Future organization, enhances understanding and adherence to Halal practices. The training, now conveniently offered online due to COVID-19 restrictions, covers basic knowledge of Islam, Halal certification management, and Muslim customer service.

2. Halal Standards Implementation

The importance of embedding Halal standards in daily operations is emphasized. Madam Hitomi Remon's efforts in promoting Halal certification and understanding Muslim culture in Japan have been instrumental. Halal certification, based on Shariah principles, assures consumers of the Halal status of products, fostering confidence in their adherence to Islamic dietary guidelines.

3. Awareness and Education Enhancement

Under Madam Remon's leadership, JHA has been proactive in educating Japanese students about Islam and Halal practices, fostering multicultural acceptance, and laying the foundation for future coexistence in a diverse society.

4. Halal-Certified Ingredients Availability

Collaborations with suppliers and distributors to expand the range of Halal-certified options can facilitate the certification process for restaurants. As Japanese consumers become more aware and interested in Halal food, the focus should be on providing high-quality, safe, and authentic Halal products that meet their expectations.

5. Halal Certification Process Streamlining

Simplifying the certification procedure, providing financial support for smaller establishments, and offering incentives for businesses to adhere to Halal standards can encourage more restaurants to pursue certification. While obtaining Halal certification can be a significant investment, it can also open up new markets and opportunities for businesses.

6. Collaborative Improvement Efforts

The Halal certification process is a collaborative endeavor, requiring the concerted efforts of Halal certification bodies, government authorities, industry stakeholders, and restaurant owners. Collective commitment and cooperation are integral to achieving Halal compliance. All key actors play pivotal roles in this process.

In conclusion, the successful implementation of Halal certification in Japan requires a multifaceted approach that includes education, awareness, standard implementation,

ingredient availability, process streamlining, and collaboration. This study provides a comprehensive roadmap for achieving this goal.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This research highlights the growing demand for Halal food in Japan, along with the obstacles restaurants face in obtaining Halal certification. Understanding and supporting Halal practices is crucial for Japanese enterprises, as highlighted by these obstacles. The study further advocates for Halal certification bodies in Japan to adopt more accommodating and supportive strategies to facilitate the certification process.

The challenges in securing Halal certification are multifaceted, encompassing a lack of understanding and awareness of Halal requirements among restaurant proprietors and staff, limited availability of Halal-certified ingredients, and a complex certification process. These issues are further exacerbated by the scarcity of trained personnel and limited resources within Halal certification bodies.

Despite these challenges, it is of paramount importance for Japanese restaurants to meet the growing demand for Halal food among Muslim residents and tourists. With an estimated population of 100,000 Muslim residents and a growing influx of Muslim tourists visiting Japan annually, there is a clear economic incentive for restaurants to pursue Halal certification. To address these challenges, Halal certification bodies must continue to educate restaurant owners and staff about the significance of Halal compliance. Efforts should also be directed toward increasing the availability of Halal-certified ingredients and providing training on the proper handling and preparation of Halal food. The certification process needs to be streamlined, and we should augment Halal certification bodies to meet the growing demand.

This study illuminates the complexities of obtaining Halal certification for Japanese restaurants, offering a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges from the perspectives of key stakeholders. The proposed comparative analysis of Halal certification regulations in other Muslim-minority countries provides innovative insights to address Japan's current challenges. This approach enriches the study's findings and recommendations, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of Japan's Halal certification landscape.

In conclusion, while attaining Halal certification presents significant challenges, the potential benefits of tapping into the Muslim market are substantial. As the Japanese government and private sector continue to promote Halal tourism and hospitality, restaurants must overcome these barriers and secure Halal certification to remain competitive and capitalize on the economic opportunities presented by the Muslim market.

## **LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study has been insightful and novel, providing a valuable perspective on the challenges faced by Halal certification bodies in managing certification for Japanese restaurants. It has successfully incorporated the viewpoints of consumers, restaurant owners, and predominantly the perspective of JHA President Madam Hind Hitomi Remon, thereby enhancing our understanding of Halal certification.

An innovative and important methodological approach in this study was the incorporation of YouTube video analysis. This approach has added a unique dimension to the research, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The study also highlighted the importance of considering cultural, economic, and political dynamics in the Halal certification process. Future studies could provide a more holistic view

of the certification process by delving into these areas.

The methodology of this study, based on a qualitative research approach, was systematic and clear. Future research could enhance the robustness of integrating quantitative methods to complement the findings. Furthermore, exploring the impact of Halal certification on the competitiveness and performance of restaurants would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implications of certification in the food industry.

In conclusion, this study has laid a strong foundation for future research. By addressing these areas, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and implications of Halal certification for Japanese restaurants. Incorporating diverse perspectives, adopting mixed-method approaches, and exploring broader contextual factors can enrich the knowledge base and inform policies and practices in the Halal industry to meet the evolving needs of consumers and stakeholders. This study, therefore, serves as a valuable and insightful stepping stone toward this goal.

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