



Influence of Halal Certification on Export Markets. Case Study: Halal Institute Certification Impact on Spanish Meat Market Exports

Salud Serrano Jiménez¹ , Said Bouzraa^{1,2} , Muhammad Escudero² ,

Bárbara Ruiz³ , Inmaculada Rodríguez¹

¹ University of Córdoba, Spain

² Halal Institute Spain

³ Halal Academy-Escuela Halal, Spain

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to study the certification activity of the Halal Institute (HI), based in Córdoba (Spain), with more than 20 years' experience in this field: more than 1000 applications have been processed and a total of 515 certified companies, currently. Data from 2006 to 2021 have been analyzed; the evolution of halal certification from 2006 to 2014 shows a slow evolution, from 2014 to 2016 a stable one, from 2016 to 2018 a high increase, from 2018 to 2020 stable, and from 2020 to 2021 a high increase. Halal Institute has made huge progress in a short time and has become a strong, professional organization and a reference for Halal in Spain and Latin America. It has been recognized and accredited by several authorities around the world, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Emirates, Morocco, and Qatar. Halal Institute has also signed mutual recognition and memorandum of understanding with several organizations (certification bodies, standardization bodies, religious authorities...). Halal Institute has contributed to developing the halal concept and facilitating halal certified companies to achieve a share of the market over the globe to export halal products; from 2015 to 2021, Spanish halal products have been exported to 91 countries, especially to the Emirates, Qatar, Morocco, Algeria, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. From 2017 to 2022, halal bovine meat product exports reached 31.8%, ovine/caprine meat products reached 12.5%, and poultry meat and other products, 55.8%.

Keywords: *Halal, Certification, Accreditation, Halal Meat Market.*

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical framing

As Bonne and Verbeke (2008) expose, halal is a credence quality attribute. As a concept, halal refers to the essence, origin, and processing method of the food product, which can be considered as a similar process in comparison with organic foods and foods produced, including animal welfare or sustainability issues. Halal certification enhances consumer trust and product credibility. Similarly, Alqudsi (2014) argues that halal-certified products enjoy a competitive advantage in international markets due to religious, ethical, and health-conscious consumer preferences. Halal certification has emerged as a significant factor influencing consumer trust and market access, especially in Muslim-majority countries. The presence of such credence quality has to be clearly communicated in this case, e.g., through an indication on-pack or on-label. The communication source and message conveyed with respect to this quality must be trustworthy and believable to be useful for the consumers and influence purchasing decision-making. Social rules and meaning associated with cultural habits and rituals (religious and secular) have a significant impact on consumption, especially in meat and meat products (Fiddes, 1992). A study conducted by Ahmed (2008) on marketing halal meat in the UK finds that all selected respondents stated that

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Corresponding author's email: bt2sejis@uco.es

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the authenticity of the meat being halal was the most important factor. In line with these findings, religiosity, halal awareness, and ingredient clarity have all been shown to positively influence Muslim consumers' purchase intention, reinforcing the importance of credible certification systems (Mutmainah, 2018; Shaari & Arifin, 2010). Thus, certification activity acquires an unprecedented role that has changed the management of the global food system due to the recent development of new regulations and verification mechanisms for the safety and quality of agricultural, livestock, and food products. Halal certification has made huge progress in a short time and has become more professional nowadays (Hatanaka et al., 2005), supported by regulatory, religious, and commercial actors across global networks (Lever & Miele, 2012; Noordin et al., 2014). Moreover, the market expansion has also facilitated the rise of new certification bodies (Lever & Miele, 2012). Furthermore, the intense migration dynamic of the Muslim population, together with market globalization, places halal markets outside Islamic nations and involves non-Muslim countries both as producers and as consumers (De Boni & Forleo, 2019). Halal meat and halal animal products are increasingly available in non-ethnic stores, particularly supermarket chains and fast-food restaurants, and just as Jewish diners in the US are attracting large numbers of non-Jewish consumers, so the consumption of halal meat products by non-Muslims is also increasing across Europe (Campbell, 2011).

Certifiers, government, and non-governmental control agencies have contributed significantly to the halal food trade and have been able to ensure that Muslim consumers can access genuine food products fit for consumption (Talib & Hamid, 2015)(Bergeaud-Blackler, 2004). The strategic integration of halal certification within supply chain governance and value chain frameworks, such as in the Malaysian halal ecosystem, has shown that efficiency, standardization, and stakeholder coordination are key to global market access (Noordin et al., 2009; 2014; Shafie & Othman, 2004). The topic of halal certification is seldom explored in academic literature, particularly regarding the efficiency of certification systems, which remains largely unexamined. There is a need for deeper insight into the organizational challenges that influence halal certification, especially those stemming from religious requirements. These challenges often involve variations in governance structures, inconsistencies in enforcement authority, and differing interpretations of Islamic fatwa.

Institutional development of the HI

The Halal Institute (HI) began to implement the certification process in 1998 under the umbrella of Junta Islámica, an Islamic organization founded in 1989 and officially registered in the office of religious affairs of the Ministry of Justice. Within the Spanish Islamic Council, as a founding member, HI achieved signing the cooperation agreement in 1992 (Law 26/1992, of November 10, which approves the State Cooperation Agreement with the Islamic Commission of Spain, 1992).

To develop and fulfill Article 14 of the agreement, the HI registered a Halal Guarantee trademark applied to products and services as a way to manage, protect, and guarantee the halal product to the Muslim consumer (Reglamento de Uso de La Marca de Garantía Halal de Junta Islámica, 2013). Until 2006, very few companies had been certified, mainly slaughterhouses and processed meat product companies. From 2006, the HI has become internationally known and got its first recognition from the Emirates Ministry of Environment (First certificate 26.12.2005 nº WMQ1/3/18/-180), followed by accreditations from Majlis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) and the Malaysian Ministry of Islamic Affairs, valid until 2025 (last certificate updated 15th March 2023. Nº: JAKIM. (S).700-2/10/5 Jld. 3 (55). Due to the growing global demand for halal products- driven in part by the doubling of the global Muslim population between 1990 and 2021 (El Shafaki, 2022), more companies have pursued halal certification as a requirement for export to Islamic countries (Majeed et al., 2019; Othman et al., 2016).

In 2016, a new scheme of halal certification accreditation appeared in Gulf countries, and HI got its first accreditation in 2017 from the Emirates International Accreditation Center (Emirates International Accreditation Centre, 2024) (EIAC directory ref. HBN-CB-011). The huge demand for halal products across the world, due to the crescent demography of the Muslim population, makes the certification activity more professional, and to export, the halal certification body must be recognized or accredited by the competent authority in the destination country (Lever & Miele, 2012) (Emirates International Accreditation Centre, 2024).

In 2021, 1.9 billion Muslims across six real-economy sectors spent \$2 trillion, according to the Global Islamic Economy Report (2022). This demographic and economic transformation is reshaping global food and certification systems.

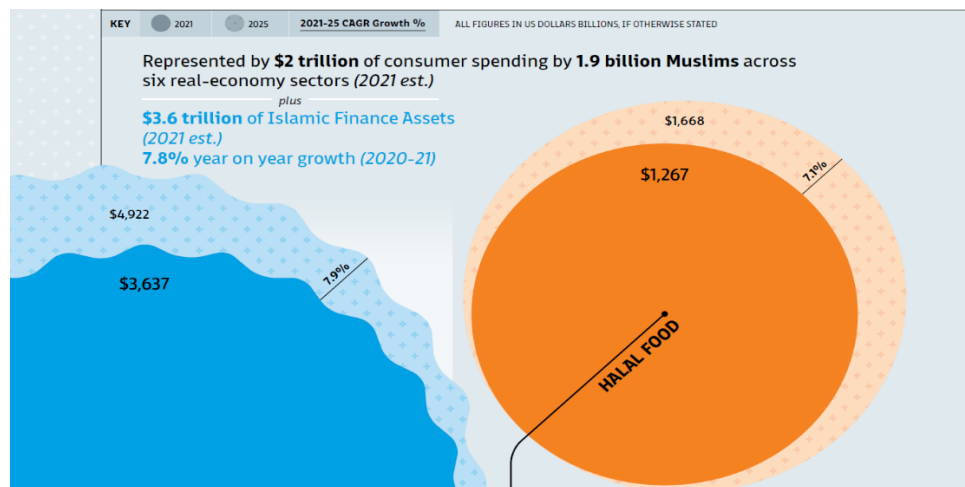


Figure 1. The evolution of the Muslim population in billions and consumer spending according to the Global Islamic Economy Report (El Shafaki, 2022).

The halal certification accreditation process is a well-studied topic, and it has been addressed from different perspectives. However, practical examples of certification bodies' development remain unexplored, especially in non-Muslim countries.

This paper aims to contribute to the literature by adopting a supply-side perspective on halal certification development in Spain, an area that remains underexplored. By analyzing the characteristics, drivers, and strategic implications of the Spanish case, this study offers insights that may support broader comparisons and policy reflections across the European context. In particular report on meat and meat products certification in Spain is given.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The global halal meat industry is experiencing rapid growth, driven by the increasing Muslim population and demand for ethically sourced products. In the past, Muslims simply avoided foodstuffs that did not meet their dietary standards. Nowadays, Muslims are making their presence felt socially and politically and are requesting halal-labeled food products (Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Therefore, marketers, certifying organizations, and policymakers need better insights into halal meat consumption. However, the industry faces critical challenges, including variations in religious interpretations, consumer trust in certification systems, and the balance between religious requirements and animal welfare standards. Animal slaughter, halal logo, food quality, and religious commitment have a positive effect on the willingness to pay for halal food (Chandia & Soon, 2018). The majority of the non-Muslims have positive perceptions regarding the halal products and

services as far as quality is concerned (Fuseini et al., 2020).

In Malaysia, a major halal market, trust in halal certification has been significantly impacted by food fraud scandals. Lee et al. (2023) highlight how illicit use of halal logos, mislabeling, and meat contamination have eroded consumer confidence, particularly after the exposure of the "meat cartel" scandal. Their study underscores the necessity for stringent halal certification practices and greater oversight by regulatory bodies to ensure the integrity of the industry. The intersection of halal practices and animal welfare remains a subject of ongoing debate. Aghwan et al. (2016) propose that efficient halal bleeding, when combined with proper animal handling and the use of appropriate restraining methods, can maintain meat quality while minimizing animal suffering. Their holistic approach suggests that religious slaughter can align with welfare standards if scientifically guided practices are adopted.

Consumer behavior studies show that preferences for halal meat are closely linked to perceptions of religious compliance. Fuseini and Knowles (2020) surveyed in England and found that about 70% of halal meat consumers preferred meat from animals slaughtered without stunning, citing religious authenticity as the primary reason. These preferences also have implications for policy-making and the framing of animal welfare laws in multicultural societies. The growth of halal markets in Europe has been accompanied by increasing competition among certification authorities, each promoting different interpretations of "authentic" halal. Lever and Miele (2012) argue that market dynamics are increasingly influenced by the supply-side initiatives of both religious and commercial actors. They also emphasize how legal frameworks, particularly EU regulations and World Trade Organization guidelines, complicate the standardization of halal practices across countries. In this sense, it is different when certification comes from a private regulatory body (European countries scenario) or comes from a public entity.

Halal food certification has gained prominence as both a religious necessity and a strategic business tool. Ab Talib (2017) explores the motivations and benefits of halal food safety certification, identifying both internal drivers, such as improved operational efficiency and product quality, and external benefits like enhanced brand reputation and increased consumer trust. The concept of *Halalan Toyyiban* (permissible and wholesome) has reshaped the meaning of halal to encompass food safety, hygiene, and overall quality, integrating Islamic values with modern food safety frameworks such as HACCP and ISO 22000. Furthermore, consumer purchasing behavior in the halal market is significantly influenced by religious adherence, social norms, and perceived product quality. Alam and Nazura (2011), using the Theory of Planned Behavior, demonstrated that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control all significantly influence halal food purchasing intentions in Malaysia. Their findings support the notion that religious certification serves not only a spiritual function but also a psychological assurance of product trustworthiness.

Wilson et al. (2013) introduce the concept of "Crescent Marketing," which contextualizes Islamic branding within the wider discourse of identity, authenticity, and geopolitical narratives. The study argues for a paradigm shift in marketing scholarship, viewing Islam not merely as a niche but as a comprehensive worldview that influences consumption. This includes the symbolic power of halal certification as part of a broader cultural and ethical brand identity. Otherwise, the efficiency of the halal certification is dependent on the organizational structure of the holistic system.

The halal market's expansion is fueled by the increasing global Muslim population and rising demand from non-Muslim consumers who perceive halal products as safer, cleaner, and ethically superior. The market is estimated to exceed \$2.5 trillion, with major multinationals (e.g., Nestlé, KFC, McDonald's) incorporating halal-certified product lines to capture this consumer base (Ab Talib, 2017). However, this rapid expansion also necessitates harmonization in certification standards, cross-border trust in logos, and greater regulatory alignment.

The development of halal production in non-Muslim countries is not only aimed at supplying the established Muslim population but also at accessing the global halal market through certification bodies. Countries like Spain, known for their advanced food safety and high-quality food production, aim to increase their market share at the international level

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive quantitative case study design based on real data collected by the Halal Institute (HI) between 2006 and 2023. All relevant information was provided directly by the HI. This period represents the core phase of the Halal Institute's certification activities. Before 2006, only a few companies had obtained certification, primarily to meet limited community needs, with no recorded export activity. As such, data from the initial period (1998–2005) were excluded from this analysis.

The data were collected, standardized, and transferred into Excel format to facilitate graphical analysis of the evolution of certification activities (see Table 1) and export shipments. Each application in the database is registered under a unique identifier, ensuring traceability and availability for verification by relevant authorities or accreditation bodies.

To analyze the progress of halal-certified product exports, particularly meat products, two sources of data were used: (1) periodic declarations completed by each company, either quarterly or annually, and (2) shipment certificates issued for halal meat exports (see Figures 2–3).

Before a shipment certificate can be issued, the applicant company must have completed the full halal certification process, which includes an on-site audit and a document review, followed by official approval of the certified product list. A specific issuance procedure is then applied for each shipment certificate and monitored through internal audits. Traceability is ensured through supporting documentation, such as slaughtermen and controller reports, packing lists, and health export certificates.

In contrast, for non-meat products, the certification process relies on the company's self-declaration, which is subsequently cross-referenced with official export reports issued by the authorities. This approach supports a growth rate modelling framework and allows for tracking the actual evolution of certification body (CB) activities. However, the focus of this study is on meat products, particularly bovine meat exports.

All data templates and certification formats comply with halal standards and procedures established by the HI, which is internationally accredited and recognized. The documentation reviewed includes the halal certification manual, application forms, the official list of certification charges, and the Institute's certification brochure. Similar to other supply chains, an efficient halal supply chain requires a strong information system backbone. The halal information system is a special case information system that is regulated by a religious view, which in this case it is the Shariah law in Islam.

Table 1. The evolution of certified companies by HI between 2006 and 2023.

Year	Nº of companies	Annual variation (%)
2006	25	---
2007	32	+28%
2008	40	+25%
2009	55	+37.5%
2010	83	+50.9%

2011	105	+26.5%
2012	130	+23.8%
2013	182	+40%
2014	252	+38.5%
2015	263	+4.4%
2016	271	+3%
2017	351	+29.5%
2018	437	+24.5%
2019	440	+0.7%
2020	459	+4.3%
2021	515	+12.2%
2023	525	+1.9%

Source: Halal Institute (2024)

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شهادة استيفاء شروط حلال
للمنتجات التي تستوفي إجراءات استيفاء علامة ضمانة حلال

HALAL APPROVAL CERTIFICATE
FOR PRODUCTS SATISFYING THE REGULATIONS OF THE HALAL GUARANTEE TRADEMARK

معهده الحلال المنصوبي في إطار المجلس الإسلامي في إسبانيا التي هي الهيئة الفنية المسجلة في وزارة العدل تحت رقم 8123-SE/A ينهت أن الشركة
Según los requerimientos del INSTITUTO HALAL, departamento de Junta Islámica de España, entidad religiosa inscrita en el Ministerio de Justicia con el nº 8123-SE/A, y en base a los estudios y valoraciones técnico-religiosas realizadas, ESTÁNDAR GLOBAL DE CERTIFICACIÓN HALAL S.L. CERTIFICA que la empresa:
Under the requirements of Halal Institute, Department of Junta Islámica de Spain, a religious organization registered in the Ministry of Justice with the number 8123 -SE A, and based on technical and religious assessment, ESTÁNDAR GLOBAL DE CERTIFICACIÓN HALAL S.L., CERTIFIES that the company:

COMPANY

رقم تعريفها الشرعي: و عنوانها
Con / with NIF/CIF: ID TAX y domicilio / and address in: ADDRESS

Nº LICENCIA/ LICENSE Nº IH- /

لقد خضعت لنظام المراقبة الذي ينص عليه القانون الداخلي للمعهد، وبعد تقييم نتائج المراقبة، تبين أن المنتجات المنتجة أثناءه في الملحق ، قد تم صنعها وفقا لمقتضيات الشريعة الإسلامية.

Ha sido sometida al régimen de control definido en el Reglamento de uso de la marca de Garantía Halal de Junta Islámica, por lo que tras la evaluación de dichos controles, se determina que los productos que están incluidos en el Anexo son declarados conformes con la Ley Islámica.

Has been subject to the control procedures stipulated in the Halal Standard of the Halal Institute of Spain, and after the evaluation of such controls, it is determined that those products included in the Annex are compliant with the Islamic law.

نوع المنتج / Product	Nº Registro Certificado de Producto	رقم الشهادة
(Producción de alta en el expediente)	IH-20032025000-	
Nº de Certificado por lote/ Lot Certificate nº:		
Peso Neto/ Net weight:	Si la información viene en el anexo aquí se pone (Ver anexo)	الوزن الصافي
Peso Bruto/ Gross weight:	Si la información viene en el anexo aquí se pone (Ver anexo)	الوزن الإجمالي
Unidades/Units:	Si la información viene en el anexo aquí se pone (Ver anexo)	الوحدات
País de origen/ Country of origin:		بلد الاصل
País de destino/ Country of destination:		بلد الوجهة
Proveedor/ Supplier:	Venta Nacional	المزود
Cliente/client:	Venta Nacional	الزبون
Exportador/ Exporter:	Exportación	المصدر
Importador/ Importer:	Exportación	المصدر
Transporte/Transport:		النقل
RGSA Nº/ Sanitary Number:		رقم التسجيل الصحي
Fecha de producción/ Production date:	Si la información viene en el anexo aquí se pone (Ver anexo)	تاريخ الإنتاج
Fecha de caducidad/ Best before date:	Si la información viene en el anexo aquí se pone (Ver anexo)	تاريخ صلاحية
Supervisor/ Supervisor:		مسؤول المراقبة الداخلية
Nº Lote/ Lot Nº:	Si la información viene en el anexo aquí se pone (Ver anexo)	رقم
Nº Albarán/ Invoice nº:		الفاكس التجارية
Tipo de Empaquetamiento/ Packaging:		التغليف
Observaciones/Observations		ملاحظات



P.A. Moustapha Hassane



P.A. Muhammad Escudero Uribe

Date/ تاريخ: Córdoba, (20th March of 2025)



تحتوي هذه الوثيقة على المعلومات الخاصة بالمنتجات التي تم فحصها وموافقتها لمواصفات الشرع.
Este documento contiene la información sobre los productos que han sido examinados y que cumplen con las normas de la Sharia.

Junta Islámica de España a través de su departamento Instituto Halal, crea la entidad/creates the entity Estándar Global de Certificación Halal, S.L. y la autoriza para la gestión y control del uso de las marcas/and authorise it for the management and control of the brands Marca de Garantía Halal de Junta Islámica de España e Instituto Halal.

C/Claudio Marcelo nº 17, Planta 1º, 14002 Córdoba Tel: 0034 957634071
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Figure 2. Shipment halal certification template .

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Figure 3. Halal slaughter declaration template. This template registers date, cattle sex, carcass number, weight in kg, and signature of the authorized slaughterman

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the activity of the HI in Spain between 2006 and 2023 demonstrates a clear growth trajectory in the number of certified companies (Figure 4). This growth reflects not only increasing demand within Spain's domestic Muslim population but also the strategic orientation of Spanish producers towards export markets. This trend aligns with a broader global pattern: for example, the halal meat market in the United Kingdom experienced a 30% growth over a similar period (Lever & Miele, 2012). Responding to this expansion, red meat producers worldwide have increasingly adopted halal-compliant practices, even in regions with minimal Muslim populations, to maintain competitiveness in a growing market (Zulfakar et al., 2018). As the demand for halal meat globally has grown in recent years (Othman et al., 2009a, 2009b), red meat producers have started to shift their focus to the more lucrative and significant demand markets. Traditional red meat producers, predominantly from Western countries that have a minimal Muslim background, have changed their way of meat production to incorporate the halal production requirements. This

has created an impetus for all meat producers around the world to follow their competitors' steps so they will not be left out of their fair share of the market (Zulfakar et al., 2018).

The case of Spain exemplifies how halal certification has enabled the transformation of national producers into globally competitive players. The adoption of halal practices is not limited to fulfilling religious obligations, but also responds to changing consumer perceptions. According to Chandia and Soon (2018), factors such as proper slaughter procedures, certified halal logos, food quality, and religious commitment significantly increase consumers' willingness to pay for halal food. Additionally, the positive perceptions of halal products by non-Muslim consumers, based on quality and hygiene standards, reinforce the value of certification (Fuseini et al., 2020). The growing emphasis on religious compliance has prompted debates around practices such as pre-slaughter stunning and mechanical slaughtering. While hand slaughter remains the gold standard for many certifiers, some authorities accept stunning provided it does not cause animal death before exsanguination and that a qualified Muslim performs the slaughter with invocation (Randeree, 2019a; Maman et al., 2018). These standards are crucial to maintain consumer confidence and uphold religious observance, which has been shown to positively influence willingness to pay for halal products (Chandia & Soon, 2018).

As shown in Figure 4, the number of companies certified by the Halal Institute increased markedly during the study period. This growth has been driven by both internal and external motivations: internally, companies seek organizational improvement and market differentiation; externally, certification is often spurred by regulatory requirements and export market pressure (Parvin Hosseini et al., 2020; Ayyub, 2015).

The demand for halal-certified meat products has experienced a significant evolution, especially in the last ten years (Anonymous, 2024). Between 2017 and 2022, the Halal Institute certified the export of more than 175 million kilograms of halal meat products. The distribution by species is dominated by poultry (55.8%), followed by cattle (31.8%) and small ruminants such as goats and sheep (12.5%) (Table 2). This aligns with global consumption trends, where poultry has become the most consumed meat due to its lower price, shorter production cycle, and greater acceptability across religious and cultural boundaries (Sohaib & Jamil, 2017). The rapid expansion of poultry meat production in Pakistan, for example, illustrates how Muslim-majority countries have responded to this demand by investing in modern, high-output facilities to meet both domestic and international needs (Magsi et al., 2021).

In comparison to Spain's total meat exports, the halal-certified portion constitutes a significant share: 28.4% of bovine exports, 27.7% of ovine/caprine, and 19.7% of poultry (CEXGAN, 2021, 2022). These figures underscore the growing relevance of halal certification as a trade facilitator. Moreover, the distribution patterns across species suggest that halal meat production in Spain is well-aligned with consumer preferences and international market opportunities (Figures 5 and 6).

A comparative analysis with national export data (CEXGAN, 2021, 2022) reveals that halal-certified products represented a substantial portion of Spain's total meat exports: 28.4% for bovine, 27.7% for ovine/caprine, and 19.7% for poultry between 2017 and 2022 (Figures 5 and 6). These figures underscore the strategic relevance of halal certification as a mechanism to enhance international trade competitiveness, particularly in markets with Muslim-majority populations. In detail, according to CEXGAN annual reports (CEXGAN, 2021, 2022), from 2017 to 2022 the total exported meat product from Spain is as follow: for bovine it was achieved 196.611.000 kg (39.322.200 kg/year), for ovine/caprine 79.216.000 kg (15.843.200 kg/year), and for poultry 497.390.000 kg (99.478.000 kg/year), including halal and non halal product. As per our study the halal meat products exported from Spain between 2017 to 2022 were: 55.825.740 kg -31,8%*- (11.165.148 kg/year; 28,39%***) for bovine, 21.952.565 kg -12,5%*- (4.390.513 kg/year;

27,71%** for ovine/caprino, and 98.047.568 kg -55,8%* (19.609.513 kg/year; 19,71%** for poultry.

*: % of animal type halal meat of total halal meat exported from 2017 to 2022 (Figure 5)

**: % of the halal meat product in comparison with total meat product, CEXGAN report 2022 of each type of animal (Figure 6).

This export performance not only reflects growing consumer demand but also reveals the dual motivations driving halal certification. As described by [Parvin Hosseini et al. \(2020\)](#), [Randeree \(2019a\)](#), and [Ayyub \(2015\)](#), internal drivers such as resource optimization, human capital, and procedural consistency interact with external factors like regulatory pressure, international recognition, and market access. The Halal Institute's alignment with international halal standards, including recognition by JAKIM and MUI, has allowed it to certify products for high-demand markets in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

These findings resonate with observations from [Qureshi et al. \(2012\)](#), who emphasized the trade potential of halal-certified meat and associated products, particularly for non-Muslim countries with strong food safety infrastructure. In the same vein, Malaysia and Pakistan have leveraged their national halal certification systems to increase competitiveness in the global meat market, with halal exports accounting for a growing share of their trade balances ([Shafie & Othman, 2006](#); [Magsi et al., 2021](#); [Sohaib & Jamil, 2017](#)).

Beyond meat volumes, the diversification of halal-certified product categories exported from Spain points to a strategic maturation of the country's halal industry. As shown in Table 4, halal-certified exports include not only meat and canned foods, but also eggs, food contact materials, cleaning products, additives, oils, and vinegars. This product diversification highlights how halal certification is extending into various agri-food sectors, in line with global trends in halal lifestyle and ethical consumption ([Randeree, 2019b](#); [Ab Talib et al., 2017](#)).

Importantly, halal has evolved beyond a purely religious domain to become a symbol of quality, hygiene, and ethical production. Studies show that non-Muslim consumers increasingly perceive halal products as trustworthy and of superior quality ([Fuseini et al., 2020](#)). This perception adds further value to halal certification beyond its religious scope, aligning with global trends toward ethical and clean-label consumption ([Sohaib & Jamil, 2017](#)).

Given that halal certification is often a prerequisite for entry into certain international markets (e.g., the Middle East, Southeast Asia), and that it enhances product credibility among Muslim consumers ([Alserhan, 2011](#)), it is reasonable to hypothesize that halal-certified products may experience higher export performance across several dimensions.

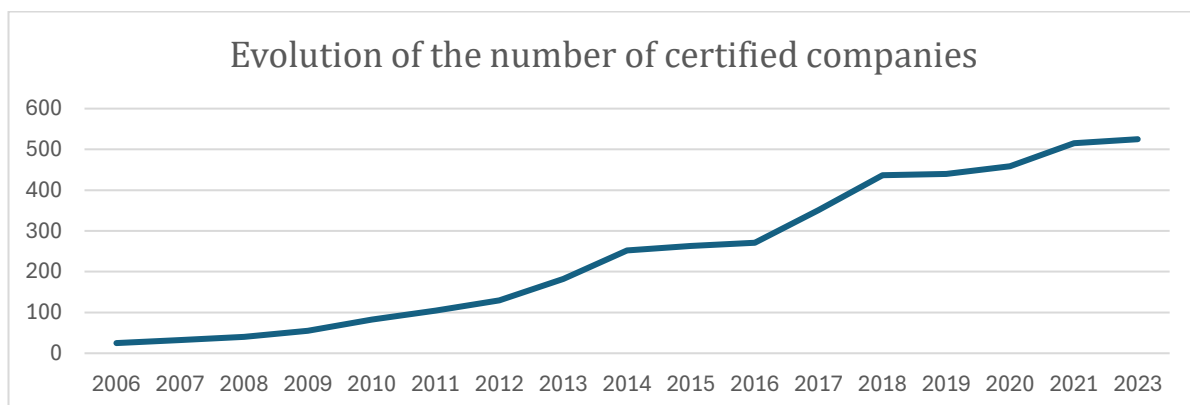


Figure 4. The evolution of certified companies by Halal Institute between 2006 and 2023.

From a trade perspective, the Halal Institute's certification has enabled Spanish companies to access diversified markets, as shown in Table 4. The top export destinations for halal-certified products span the European Union, ASEAN, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the MENA region. This reflects not only the growing acceptance of halal standards globally but also the strategic positioning of Spain as a reliable exporter of certified products.

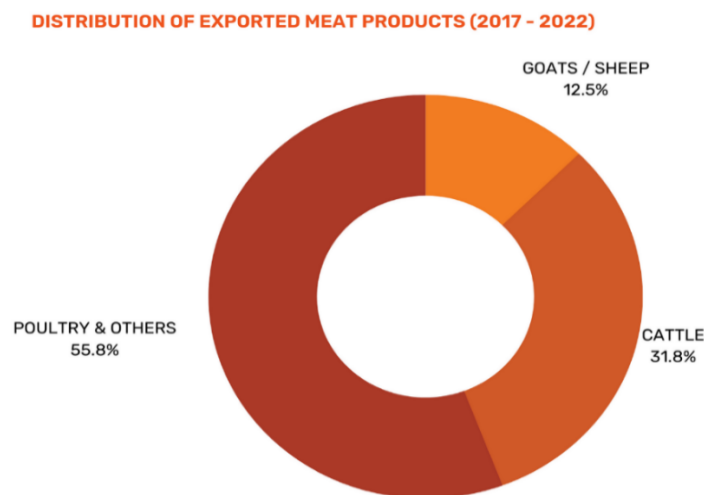
These results align with global patterns seen in other exporting countries such as Pakistan and Malaysia, where halal certification is a key driver of meat sector modernization and international market expansion (Magsi et al., 2021; Sohaib & Jamil, 2017; Qureshi et al., 2012). As Randeree (2019b) highlights, halal is now a global phenomenon that transcends religious identity to become a competitive business model in global food trade. Table 4 shows the main export zones from Spain.

Finally, this case study confirms the growing transformation of halal from a religious requirement into a globalized market standard. As Randeree (2019b) aptly notes, halal has emerged as a transnational value proposition, attractive to consumers and businesses alike. Spain's experience demonstrates that even in non-Muslim countries, a well-structured halal certification system can drive substantial growth, diversify exports, and strengthen ties with high-demand international markets.

Table 2. Exported halal-certified meat products by HI between 2017 and 2022.

Product	Exported (kg)
Goats / Sheep	21.952.565
Cattle	55.825.740
Poultry	98.047.568
Total	175.825.873

Source: Halal Institute (2023)



Source: Instituto Halal (2022) - until august 2022

Figure 5. Distribution of halal certified meat products by HI between 2017 and 2022 according to the different species.

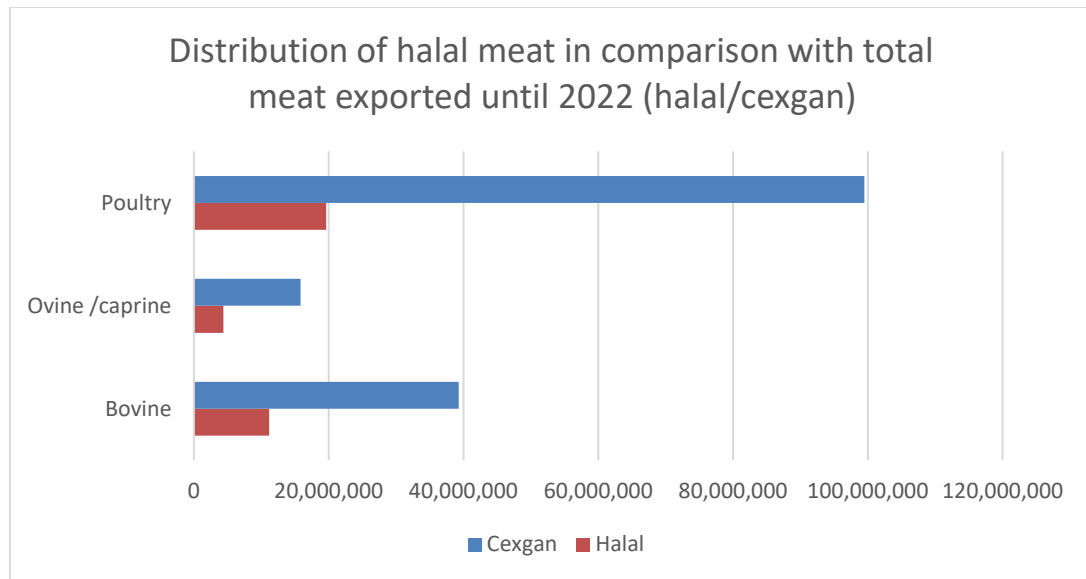


Figure 6. Distribution of halal meat export in comparison with total meat exported from Spain, 2022 (CEXGAN, 2022).

Table 4. The top ten export zones from Spain according to the halal product category certified by Halal Institute during the 2017-2023 period. UE: Union Europe, ASEAN: Asia Region, GCC: Gulf countries, MENA: Mediterranean and North Africa countries.

Category	Zones
Meat and Meat products	UE
Canned food and fruit	ASEAN
Food contact materials	ASEAN
Eggs and egg products	GCC
Industrial cleaning elements	UE
Cocoa and derived products	MENA
Soups and broths	MENA
Additives and sweeteners	UE
Vegetable oils	ASEAN / GCC
Vinegars	ASEAN / GCC

Source: Halal Institute (2024)

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the strategic importance of halal certification in enabling Spanish meat producers to access and consolidate their presence in global halal markets. Between 2017 and 2022, halal-certified meat exports represented a significant share of Spain's overall animal product exports: 28.39% for bovine, 27.71% for ovine/caprine, and 19.71% for poultry. These products, certified by the Halal Institute (HI), contributed an estimated total economic value of over €2 billion during that period, demonstrating the financial relevance of halal certification not only for religious compliance but also for national economic growth and trade diversification.

The role of the Halal Institute has been pivotal. By aligning certification protocols with international standards recognized by bodies such as JAKIM (Malaysia) and MUI (Indonesia), the HI has positioned itself as a credible certifier on a global scale. Its recognition has enabled Spanish

companies to export certified products to over 90 countries from 2015 to 2021, including key markets in the GCC (e.g., UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia), North Africa (e.g., Morocco, Algeria), and Europe (e.g., France, Italy, UK). This reflects the consolidation of Spain's reputation as a trusted supplier of high-quality halal goods, even from a non-Muslim majority country.

The results underscore that halal certification is no longer a niche practice but a growing pillar of international trade, especially in the agri-food sector. The global halal economy is expanding, driven not only by the demographic growth of Muslim populations but also by a rising global preference for products perceived as clean, ethical, and traceable. In this context, halal certification intersects with broader consumer trends related to sustainability, welfare, and transparency, making it a valuable asset beyond its religious connotation.

Moreover, this case study provides a reference model for other EU countries that wish to tap into the halal economy. The Spanish example illustrates how a robust, internationally recognized certification system can bridge religious, legal, and trade differences between exporting and importing countries. It also shows that non-Muslim-majority countries can succeed in halal trade by building institutional trust, ensuring procedural rigor, and actively engaging with international standards and accreditation bodies.

Despite this progress, challenges remain. Fragmentation of standards, variability in interpretations of halal jurisprudence, and limited harmonization at the EU level can still hinder trade flow and create uncertainty among producers. Future efforts could focus on advancing regulatory convergence, investing in traceability technologies, and expanding halal certification beyond meat into value-added categories such as processed foods, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and logistics.

In conclusion, the Halal Institute's activity from 2006 to 2023, particularly from 2015 onward, has not only facilitated international market access for Spanish producers but also contributed to the institutionalization of halal as a driver of quality, trade, and innovation. Its model demonstrates how halal certification can act as a bridge between diverse markets and cultural contexts, transforming religious principles into opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study is limited to quantitative data regarding the number of certified companies and the volume of halal meat exports. While this provides a valuable overview of the certification impact, it does not fully capture the underlying factors driving certification adoption and export strategies. Future research would benefit from incorporating qualitative and spatial analyses, such as the geographical distribution of certified firms, the motivations and expectations behind obtaining certification, and the criteria influencing destination markets. Additionally, surveys or interviews targeting certified companies and industry stakeholders could provide more practical and nuanced insights.

Given the rapid evolution of the halal industry, particularly in relation to regulatory frameworks, technological innovation, and standard harmonization, there is a need for alternative methodological approaches. These might include longitudinal case studies, policy analysis, or comparative assessments across different certification bodies and national contexts. Such approaches could better reflect the complexity of the halal certification ecosystem and support more targeted policy recommendations and business strategies.

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