



Malaysia's Halal Industry Model: Prospects and Policy Lessons for Socio-Economic Development in Bangladesh

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Abstract – The halal sector has evolved from a largely food-based religious compliance system to a diversified global economic ecosystem of food and beverages, medicines, cosmetics, modest fashion, tourism, logistics, finance and other services. Through a comprehensive strategy of credible certification, regulatory governance, industrial expansion, international commerce, technical innovation, human-capital formation and strategic state support, Malaysia has emerged as one of the most robust countries in the global halal economy. Bangladesh is a Muslim majority country with wide consumer market, competitive industrial base, developing pharmaceutical and agro-processing industry and huge human resource base. All these factors make Bangladesh a very promising environment for the development of a competitive halal economy. This study reviews the model of halal industry in Malaysia and analyzes the applicability of it to the socio-economic growth of Bangladesh. The study adopts a qualitative research design, secondary data, and thematic and comparative analysis of academic literature, policy documents, government publications, and institutional reports. The findings revealed that Malaysia's strength is not only halal certification, but an integrated ecosystem connecting certification with industrialization, supply-chain integrity, SME development, investment, innovation and access to international markets. This experience can be useful for Bangladesh if it prioritizes halal food and agro-processing, medicines, cosmetics, modest fashion, tourism, logistics and related services. However, fragmented governance, lack of international recognition of certification, insufficient halal-specific infrastructure, weak branding, technology restrictions and shortage of specialist human capital all remain important constraints. The report suggests a national halal industry master plan, institutional governance, internationally credible certification, halal industrial clusters, SME support, digital traceability, university-industry collaboration, and strategic partnership with Malaysia. It concludes that a well-designed and implemented halal sector strategy can play a prominent role in Bangladesh's export diversification, employment generation, entrepreneurship, rural industrialization, foreign investment and inclusive socio-economic development.

Keywords - Halal industry, Malaysia, Bangladesh, halal economy, halal certification, socio-economic development, SMEs, export diversification, halal supply chain.

I. INTRODUCTION

The global halal business has experienced a major development in the last few decades. Traditionally halal was considered largely in terms of food permissible under Islamic law. However, in the current economy halal has become a multidimensional concept that includes not only ingredients and food preparation, but also production, processing, packaging, transportation, warehousing, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, tourism, fashion, financial services and supply-chain management (Wilson & Liu, 2010; Tieman, 2011). This has brought about the development of what one may rightly call a worldwide halal economy. Halal is becoming more and more related with religious compliance, product safety, hygiene, quality assurance, ethical consumption, traceability and customer confidence. With the increase of Muslim populations and middle-class consumer markets, halal products and services have been gaining recognition by businesses and governments as a significant aspect of international trade

(Ambali & Bakar, 2014; Bashir, 2019). Malaysia is in a very significant position in the growth.

Malaysia has moved beyond the approach of considering halal as a religious certification issue, and has gradually integrated halal into industrial policy, investment promotion, international trade, SME development, education, logistics, technology and national branding. Malaysia has established an internationally recognized halal ecosystem with the establishment of a strong institutional framework comprising the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), Halal Development Corporation (HDC), Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) and other agencies. This strategic focus is also apparent in Malaysia's Halal Industry Master Plan 2030 (HIMP 2030). The goal is to develop a "Prominent, Visible and Globalized Halal Malaysia" and to strengthen Malaysian firms in the halal value chain (Halal Development Corporation [HDC], 2023). Thus Malaysia is a relevant



case for countries wanting to exploit the economic potential of halal compliance. This is especially true when we look at Bangladesh. Bangladesh, a country with majority Muslim population has huge home market for halal products and services. It has competitive advantages in agriculture, fisheries, food processing, pharmaceuticals, textiles, leather goods and in labor intensive manufacturing. But Bangladesh has not been able to translate these advantages into a globally recognized and integrated halal economy yet. Specifically, the limitations of Bangladesh's halal certification system as a limitation to the country's potential and the importance of Malaysia's experience with standardized procedures and certification as a source of lessons have been noted in previous studies (Aziz & Moniruzzaman, 2024). But certification is only the tip of the iceberg. Bangladesh needs to think about how to incorporate the concept of halal in industrialization, trade, investment, employment, entrepreneurship, rural development and export diversification. This article therefore argues that the Malaysian experience has important policy lessons for Bangladesh but these lessons must be adapted, not mechanically copied. The goal should be to develop a Bangladesh-specific halal ecosystem through leveraging the country's comparative advantages, institutional capability and socio-economic priorities.

Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to explore the Malaysia's halal sector model and its potential relevance to the socioeconomic development of Bangladesh.

The Specific objectives are to

- Identify the key elements of the Malaysian halal business model including the institutional and economic dimensions;
- Search for the academic literature on halal certification, supply chains, SMEs, consumer trust and development of the halal ecosystem.
- To investigate the possibility of halal business in Bangladesh.
- To know the impact of the development of the halal sector on employment, entrepreneurship, export, rural development and investment in Bangladesh.
- Determine institutional, infrastructural, technological and regulatory obstacles of Bangladesh. 6. Policy recommendations based on Malaysian experience and Bangladesh's development aspirations

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

From Halal Compliance to Halal Economy

The academic understanding of halal has broadened tremendously. Halal is not a product attribute but a multi-dimensional branding phenomenon involving religion, identity, consumer attitudes and business strategy (Wilson and Liu, 2010). Their investigation shows that firms need to comprehend halal in both religious and market terms. Lada et al. (2009) investigated consumer intention toward halal items and established the efficacy of behavioral

techniques in explaining halal consumption. Similarly, the study of Mukhtar and Butt (2012) revealed that religiosity is a significant factor in Muslim consumers' attitudes and purchasing intentions toward halal items. Ambali and Bakar (2014) also found that awareness, religious views, health considerations and exposure to halal information were key factors affecting halal consumption. Aziz and Chok (2013) found that halal awareness and certification affected purchasing intentions and emphasized the value of having genuine certification for commercial purposes. The research show that the procedure of halal certification is not only administrative. It is a trust mechanism that binds producers, regulators, retailers and consumers.

Halal Supply-Chain Integrity

Safeguarding the halal status throughout the supply chain has gained increasing importance in the literature. According to Tieman (2011) the halal supply-chain management is to ensure halal integrity from production to the end consumption with some measures. The principles identified by halal supply chain were also discussed by Tieman et al. (2012) which they highlighted the importance of segregation, preventing contamination situation, logistics and supply chain control. This technique has changed the definition of halal from "halal product" to "halal value chain". In the same way, Zulfakar et al., (2014) stress the importance of integrity within the food supply chain in halal food. Their data shows that it needs cooperation between the actors in the supply chain to maintain consumer confidence and product authenticity. The problems are raised by recent studies. The main element of a good traceability system was identified to include certification, documentation, halal policy, technology, and human-resource management (Shahrudin et al., 2025). Shahrudin et al. (2025) have carried out a systematic review of literature about the Halal traceability system in Malaysian logistics. The halal integrity can therefore be supported by a technology like the warehouse management system, transportation management and blockchain-based traceability systems.

Malaysia's Halal Institutional Model

Malaysia's position in the halal economy has been built up over decades through institutionalization. The country's model comprises religious authority, government policy, certification, industrial development, investment promotion and export facilitation.

According to HDC (2023), the Halal Industry Master Plan 2030 is a strategy to strengthen the domestic ecosystem in Malaysia and to promote the internationalization of Malaysian halal businesses. The objective is not only certification but also the development of competitive domestic companies that can operate along the global halal value chain. The Malaysian system shows the need for a division of institutional functions in the development of the halal industry. JAKIM is the main body for certification and religious assurance while HDC focuses on industry development. Market access and capital formation are



supported by trade and investment institutions. Thus, Malaysia's comparative advantage is partly in its institutional ecosystem where halal policy is linked with national economic policy.

Halal Certification and Consumer Confidence

Certification is crucial to the halal ecosystem, as consumers cannot always see production methods or ingredients for themselves. Certification therefore lowers information asymmetry.

Aziz and Chok (2013) found that certification increases the buying intentions of the consumers. Ambali and Bakar (2014) also point out the awareness and confidence of halal products.

Certification schemes though also create practical problems. A 2024 study on Malaysian halal-certified food SMEs highlighted main causes of certification non-conformity, including documentation, training, management commitment, and compliance concerns. The study also emphasized on continuous halal-awareness training and comprehensive record keeping (Food Control, 2024). Likewise, in his study on food and beverage SMEs in Johor, Othman (2025) found that the level of knowledge of halal certification was high, but the problems were related to documentation and fees related to certification. The investigations provide an important qualifier of idealistic representations of the Malaysian halal approach . Malaysia has a sophisticated system but for firms, especially SMEs, there remain costs and administrative difficulties to applying it.

SMEs and Halal Industrialization

SMEs play an important role in the development of an inclusive halal economy. Their collaboration can drive job creation, innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth of the region. According to Hamzah and Ali (2023), the orientation of a supply chain has a positive effect on the success of halal certified SMEs in Malaysia. Reputation plays an important part from the supply-chain partners. Showole and Jaiyeoba (2024) concluded that integration and innovation of the value chain will help improve the performance and competitiveness of Halal SMEs. It's a matter of innovation and organizational capability that must be certified. Samsudin et al. (2024) noted that the decision of SMEs to join in halal food supply chain is also influenced by employee acceptance and readiness for technology. It also implies that a national halal plan, which is mostly targeting big business organizations, may miss the socio-economic benefits of the halal industry.

Halal Certification in Bangladesh

The prospects of the halal economy in Bangladesh have increasingly come under academic focus. Aziz and Moniruzzaman (2024) contend that Bangladesh has substantial halal-food potential but suffers from certification and institutional development problems. Their

comparison analysis revealed that Bangladesh might learn from Malaysia's standardized certification systems.

Bangladesh's local religious and demographic features offer a considerable consumer base but demographic demand cannot guaranty international competitiveness. The global halal markets need credible standards, transparent certification, quality assurance, testing that is acceptable worldwide, and traceable supply chains. Therefore, the key research need is not whether Bangladesh has promise or no. The more critical question is how Malaysia's integrated halal ecosystem may offer lessons for a development-oriented halal strategy for Bangladesh. This study is intended to answer this question by correlating the policy of halal with socio-economic development.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative, descriptive, and comparative in design and is based on secondary data.

The study uses peer reviewed journal articles, scholarly publications, government papers, institutional reports and policy materials on the development of halal industry in Malaysia and Bangladesh. Sources from HDC and other relevant Malaysian entities are combined, together with academic studies on halal certification, supply-chain management, consumer behavior, SMEs and industry development. The evidence is organized under six main themes using a thematic analysis:

Institutional Governance → Certification and Standardization → Supply-Chain Integrity → SME Development → Trade and Investment → Socio-Economic Outcomes

A comparative policy approach is then utilized to examine which Malaysian approaches can be transferred or adapted to Bangladesh. Methodological limitations. Because the study is based on secondary sources, it does not directly measure the sentiments of Bangladeshi producers, exporters, regulators or consumers. Future research could thus complement this study using interviews, surveys, focus groups, and firm level case studies.

IV. RESULTS AND THEMATIC DISCUSSION

Theme One: Institutional Coordination as the Foundation of the Malaysian Model

The first important result is that Malaysia's performance is substantially related to institutional cooperation. An internationally competitive industry may be created only with halal certification. Certification has to be tied to industry development, investment, logistics, research, human capital and trade promotion. For instance, Malaysia's HIMP 2030 aims to establish local halal



champions that can take advantage of global market opportunities and participate in the halal supply chain (HDC, 2023). This shows the incorporation of halal into the national economic plan. The policy lesson for Bangladesh is simple. Bangladesh has to move away from a fragmented certification-oriented viewpoint toward a coordinated halal economic governance. A National Halal Industry Development Council or a similar platform for coordination might be set up to bring together the necessary ministries, BSTI, Islamic Foundation, investment and export agencies, universities, chambers of commerce and industry associations.

Theme Two: Certification as Market Infrastructure **The second finding concerns certification.**

Certification has a religious and economic function. Religiously, it ensures that products meet Islamic standards for consumers. It reduces economic uncertainty, boosts consumer confidence, eases entry into the market, and helps to build the brand (Aziz & Chok, 2013; Ambali & Bakar, 2014). Malaysia shows the benefits of certification and systematic standards and internationally-oriented institutional legitimacy. Bangladesh has already developed the halal certification system. The challenge is to improve harmonization, technical competence, transparency, laboratory infrastructure, digital verification and global recognition. More specifically, Aziz and Moniruzzaman (2024) identify certification development as one of the areas in which Bangladesh could learn from Malaysia. But also that accreditation needs to be available to SMEs as well as demonstrated by Malaysia. Complex procedures, documentation loads and prices may put off smaller enterprises (Othman, 2025). Hence Bangladesh needs to blend strict requirements with technical and financial assistance for the SME's.

Theme Three: Halal Supply Chains and Digital Traceability

Third, the research finds that end-to-end supply-chain integrity is required for internationally competitive halal industries. The products may be compromised with non-halal ingredients during processing, storage and transportation. Thus halal needs to be in the whole procurement, manufacturing, warehousing, logistics, retailing and distribution processes (Tieman, 2011; Tieman et al., 2012). Recent studies in Malaysia also highlight the role of documentation, technology, human resource and traceability in protecting halal integrity (Shahrudin et al., 2025). Bangladesh can thus develop an integrated digital halal platform linking certification authorities, manufacturers, suppliers, laboratories, exporters, customs authorities, and consumers. The QR verification and digital certificates could enable buyers to quickly verify the status of the product. Finally, in the long term export-oriented supply chains might be equipped with more advanced traceability technologies.

Theme Four: SMEs, Employment, and Entrepreneurship

The fourth finding is the socio-economic role of the SMEs. Research in Malaysia has demonstrated that, apart from certification, other factors such as supply-chain credibility, management capability, technical preparedness, innovation and employee engagement impact on the performance of SMEs in the halal sector (Hamzah & Ali, 2023; Samsudin et al., 2024; Showole & Jaiyeoba, 2024). This is especially the case in Bangladesh where SMEs and microenterprises represent a major source of employment and entrepreneurship. Bangladesh's halal policy can benefit small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in processed food, spices, bread items, cosmetics, leather goods, modest fashion, packaging, handicrafts and tourism services. The mechanism of development can be outlined as: SME Market Access → Halal Certification → Business Growth → Employment → Household Income → Socio Economic Development But barriers to entry could be certification fees, testing costs, documentation requirements and technology spend. This would require targeted support from the government.

Theme Five: Export Diversification

The structure of Bangladesh's exports is still strongly oriented on ready-made clothes. Additional export sectors are consequently of economic importance to develop. The halal economy gives chances in food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, leather goods, modest fashion and services. Malaysia's HIMP 2030 is linked to the internationalization and worldwide market leadership of the domestic halal industry (HDC, 2023). Bangladesh might also add halal in its export-diversification strategy. Bangladesh should not try to compete in all halal sectors at the same time but should initially focus on industries for which it currently possesses production capability.

High-Potential Halal Sectors for Bangladesh

Halal Food and Agro-processing

Food and agro-processing may give the most immediate potential. Bangladesh is a producer of fish, vegetables, fruits, rice, spices, poultry and cattle products. With further investment in certified processing, packaging, cold-chain systems, food safety, traceability and international marketing, Bangladesh may transition away from low-value agricultural output toward higher-value halal exports. This could at the same time help to rural development, by linking farmers to processors and to worldwide markets.

Pharmaceuticals

Bangladesh has built up a large pharmaceutical manufacturing industry. This opens up the potential to manufacture halal drugs for Muslim majority markets. Pharmaceutical Certification. Halal certification of pharmaceutical products needs a thorough examination of ingredients, gelatin, enzymes, alcohol-based additives, production facilities and contamination controls. Malaysian companies' move into medicines and other non-



food halal areas shows the potential for diversification outside traditional food markets.

Cosmetics & Personal Care

Growing consumer awareness is leading to the development of halal cosmetics and personal-care products. Bangladesh should encourage local entrepreneurs and foreign investors to manufacture certified skin care, herbal products, toiletries and cosmetics. The sector can also give opportunities for women-led SMEs and young entrepreneurs.

Modest Fashion

Bangladesh already has world class clothing manufacturing capabilities. So the modest-fashion sector is a natural expansion of current skills. Bangladesh may graduate from contract manufacturing to design and brand modest clothes for international Muslim consumer markets. This method can result in more value addition than traditional production alone.

Halal Tourism

Halal or Muslim-friendly tourism is comprised of halal food, prayer facilities, family-friendly services, and culturally appropriate hospitality.

Bangladesh has beaches, natural scenic beauty, Islamic history, archeological sites and rural tourism prospects. The development of tourism with Muslim-friendly amenities can attract visitors from the Muslim majority countries and create jobs in the area.

Halal Logistics

One of the important factors of halal logistics is product integrity. Food, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics exports could benefit from specialized warehousing, transport, cold chains and contamination-control systems. The study in Malaysia showed that traceability and logistics are important to maintain the halal purity (Shahrudin et al., 2025).

Malaysia–Bangladesh Comparative Analysis

“Malaysia and Bangladesh have significant common features, such as Muslim majority populations and an eager interest in expanding international trade. But their halal environments are very different. Malaysia has developed a relatively integrated institutional framework that includes certification, industrial growth, investment, promotion of commerce, logistics, research and international branding. Bangladesh’s system still focuses more on certification and specific products. HIMP 2030 is also a firm long term strategy for the country. While some other countries have a detail master plan for the halal industry, Bangladesh has not. But Bangladesh has certain comparative advantages that should inform its own model. They include a large labor pool, significant agricultural output, established garment manufacturing, developing pharmaceutical capabilities, competitive production costs and access to key Asian markets. Hence, Bangladesh

should not try to replicate the economic structure of Malaysia. But that doesn’t mean the money’s not being used. Bangladesh-specific model for halal development = Malaysian experience + Bangladesh’s comparative advantages. This is adaptive policy learning, not policy imitation.

Prospects for Socio-Economic Development in Bangladesh

A well-organized halal economy has a number of socio-economic benefits.

First, it may create jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, logistics, tourism, laboratories, certification, marketing and professional services.

Second, it may help diversify exports and reduce dependence on apparel.

Third, halal industrialization can boost the development of SMEs and entrepreneurship especially among young entrepreneurs and enterprises located outside the major industrial zones.

Fourth, agro-processing can promote rural–industrial links. Farmers could gain from more coordinated supply chains, standards of quality, processing facilities and demand for export.

Fifth, a credible halal ecosystem worldwide could attract foreign direct investment from among others, Malaysia, Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Indonesia and other Muslim majority economies.

Finally, growth of the halal industry may increase the demand for a new set of professional skills such as halal auditors, food scientists, lab technicians, supply-chain professionals, Islamic law experts, marketers and digital traceability professionals.

The socio-economic journey can therefore be stated as follows:

Certification + Industrialization + Innovation + Commerce



Investment + SMEs + Growing Exports



Employment + Entrepreneurship + Rural Connectivity



Inclusive Socio-Economic Development

Major Challenges for Bangladesh

Several challenges could restrict these opportunities.

First, the breaking up of institutions might get in the way of consistent policy implementation.

Second, certification needs to be reliable and recognizable in foreign markets. Therefore Bangladesh needs more international recognition and harmonization.



Third, many SMEs may lack the requisite resources or knowledge to comply with certification and paperwork standards. These challenges exist even in enterprises functioning in a developed halal ecosystem, as is the case in Malaysia (Food Control, 2024; Othman, 2025).

Fourth, the specialized halal logistics, laboratories, industrial clusters and traceability infrastructure are underdeveloped.

Fifth, Bangladesh has to build more specialized human capital. There is a lot of scope for universities to build research and professional education programs in the fields of halal science, supply chains, food technology, tourism, Islamic economics and certification.

And then there's still the weak worldwide brand. The success of a halal approach depends on convincing overseas customers that 'Halal Bangladesh' is reliable, high quality, safe, ethically manufactured and good value for money.

Policy Lessons and Recommendations

Formulation of Bangladesh Halal Industry Master Plan 2035

Bangladesh should develop a comprehensive long-term plan that is equivalent in ambition (but not necessarily in structure) to Malaysia's HIMP 2030. The strategy should set targets for exports, certification, investment, SME involvement, employment, skills development, technology, and access to foreign markets.

Develop Coordinated Halal Governance

A National Halal Industry Development Council might coordinate key entities without duplicating their existing legislative obligations. All stakeholders such as government, certifying authorities, exporters, business associations, colleges and consumer representatives should be involved.

Improved Certification and International Certification.

The process of certification must be clear, scientifically valid, and have to be easily and independently verifiable and internationally trusted. Lab facilities in Bangladesh must be enhanced, training of auditors should be conducted, more lab accreditation may have to be achieved, lab documentation should be streamlined, and international cooperation should be encouraged.

Development of Cluster in Halal Industry

Shared laboratories, cold-chain facilities, warehouses, assistance with certification, packaging, logistics and export service will allow the establishment of a pilot of halal industrial clusters in some economic zones. Compliance costs can be lower where industrial clustering has occurred, particularly for SMEs.

Introduce a Halal SME Support Program

SMEs need technical assistance, assistance for subsidized certification, training, finance, international exhibitions and branding assistance. This recommendation is supported by the Malaysian evidence on documentation, expense, and the training and management competency are obstacles even in an existing halal ecosystem (Samsudin et al., 2024; Othman, 2025).

Developing the HR "Halal Way" Halal Tourism and Hospitality Development

Specialized Courses, Research Centers and professional training on Halal Science and Management should be provided at Universities. Some of the connections that may exist between Malaysian and Bangladeshi institutions may result in a joint degree programmes, research projects, staff exchange, professional certification and technology transfer.

Halal Digital Traceability Introduction

Having a national halal food products digital database may enable instant verification of food product certificates. These produce - supplier - logistics providers - certification bodies - customs - customers links could be made around digitization.

Enhancing Malaysia-Bangladesh Collaboration

In addition to being a model, Malaysia could be a strategic partner. The possibilities for bilateral cooperation: certification expertise + trainings + joint research + technology transfer + investments + industrial alliances or partnership + market access These could help speed up Bangladesh's entry into the global halal value chain.

Proposed Bangladesh Halal Development Framework

The thematic findings of this study are the basis of the following model:



The framework shows that certification should be the basis for halal industry development, not the end goal.



V. CONCLUSION

The halal economy has grown into an increasingly important segment of worldwide trade and economic development. Malaysia is among the most instructive instances of the integration of halal certification with industrial strategy, supply-chain management, SME development, investment, technology, education and export promotion. Malaysia's experience shows that a successful halal business calls far more than religious compliance. It needs institutional legitimacy, standardization, competitive business, innovation, competent human resources, efficient logistics and access to worldwide markets. Bangladesh has a great potential to establish such an industry. Its enormous domestic market is based on its Muslim-majority population and its agricultural, fisheries, medicines, textiles, garments, leather, and manufacturing capabilities provide it with a strong base for production. But Bangladesh should not just copy Malaysia. Instead, it should seek to establish a halal policy that is flexible, based on its competitive advantage and its own socio-economic interests. This can be accomplished by the development of a Bangladesh Halal Industry Master Plan, enhanced institutional coordination, internationally credible certification, halal industrial clusters, SME support, university-industry collaboration, digital traceability and strategic cooperation with Malaysia. Thus the key policy lesson from Malaysia is the transformation:

Halal Ecosystem (HE) > Halal Economy (HE) > Socio Economic Development.

If Bangladesh can make this shift successful, the halal business can be an essential instrument for export diversification, entrepreneurship, employment generation, rural transformation, foreign investment and sustainable economic development.

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