HALALSPHERE
International Islamic University Malaysia - INHART

Preparing future-ready graduates through halal entrepreneurship education: Reflections from four years of teaching and income-generation training

Amal A.M. Elgharbawy[a*], Wan Syibrah Hanisah Wan Sulaiman[a], and Avicenna Yuhan[b]

[a]International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART), International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Jalan Gombak, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
[b]Occupational Safety and Health Study Program, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Indo Global Mandiri (UIGM), Palembang, Indonesia.
*Corresponding author: E-mail address: amalgh@iium.edu.my

Received: 16/12/2025
Accepted: 11/1/2026
Published: 31/1/2026

Keywords:
Halal entrepreneurship; Digital economy; Income generation; *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*; Education innovation

Abstract

The rapid expansion of the global halal economy presents new opportunities for graduates to create value through ethical, innovation-driven enterprises. This paper reflects on four years of teaching the Halal Entrepreneurship course at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), where the pedagogical approach intentionally goes beyond theoretical instruction to train students in halal-compliant income generation, digital business models, and ethical entrepreneurial behaviour grounded in *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* principles. The study adopts an autoethnographic approach, using the instructors' self-reflection, supported by teaching notes, course artefacts, and informal feedback collected over four consecutive years. The course design integrates value-centric teaching, digital marketplace training, and project-based entrepreneurship, enabling students to apply halal concepts to practical business activities that generate real revenue. Cross multiple student cohorts delivered over four academic years, during which the course was offered twice per year, students demonstrated the capacity to conceptualise halal business models, conduct fundamental market analysis, price products responsibly, and utilise digital platforms for sales and branding. Observations indicate that early exposure to Halal Entrepreneurship reduces fear of business failure, strengthens ethical decision-making, and improves student confidence in economic participation through self-employment and small-scale start-ups. The paper illustrates how a values-based entrepreneurship curriculum supports the development of future-ready talent for the digital economy, encourages inclusive economic governance, and contributes to the broader halal innovation landscape.

1. Introduction

The halal economy is projected to exceed USD 3 trillion by 2028, driven by demand for ethical consumption, halal pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, food, hospitality, and Islamic finance (SGIE, 2023). The rise of digital platforms has opened pathways for young entrepreneurs to create halal-compliant online businesses, making entrepreneurship a viable alternative to traditional employment in increasingly competitive labour markets (Baierl *et al.*, 2019).

Halal entrepreneurship education is increasingly recognized as a vital component in preparing future-ready graduates, particularly in integrating Islamic values into business practices and fostering ethical conduct. Several studies highlight the importance and impact of such education on students' entrepreneurial intentions and awareness (Bae *et al.*, 2014; Ghouse *et al.*, 2024; Ismail *et al.*, 2025; Munawar *et al.*, 2023; Zhao & Collier, 2016).

In this context, higher education institutions bear the responsibility of preparing graduates not only for employment but also for self-directed economic participation. Halal entrepreneurship represents a strategic approach to education because it integrates economic skills with the ethical principles of Islam and encourages creativity within the boundaries of halal and *toyyib* values. (Abdullah *et al.*, 2022; Soltanian *et al.*, 2016). Scholars note that Islamic entrepreneurship is not merely a commercial activity, but a holistic practice aligned with *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* – protecting wealth, dignity, health, and social welfare (Azam & Abdullah, 2021).

The Halal Entrepreneurship course at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) was designed to translate these principles into practical training, enabling students to generate income through product development, halal auditing awareness, digital marketing, pricing strategies, and basic financial literacy. The core intention is to foster a future-ready mindset in which students recognise opportunities, mobilise resources, and implement small-scale business activities while upholding Islamic values.

The Halal Entrepreneurship course has been offered since 2020 as a 3-credit undergraduate core course. The course provides an overview of entrepreneurship with a specific focus

on halal-oriented business concepts, strategies, and practices aligned with Malaysian halal certification schemes. It is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills required to generate halal business ideas, develop viable halal ventures, and understand the roles of halalpreneurs and innovation in the entrepreneurial process.

The course typically enrols approximately 40–50 students per semester and is open to undergraduate students as part of the elective curriculum. Key learning objectives include describing the fundamental concepts of Halal Entrepreneurship, analysing halal business problems and evaluating appropriate solutions, and applying business model concepts to the design of halal products and services. Through a combination of lectures, case studies, self-directed learning, and applied assignments, students develop practical skills in opportunity recognition, business model development, basic financial planning, ethical decision-making, teamwork, and professional communication. The course also emphasises halal compliance awareness, risk mitigation, and responsible business conduct, in line with Islamic values and the broader role of entrepreneurs as Khalifah in society.

This paper adopts an autoethnographic approach, a reflective, practice-informed method grounded in four consecutive years of teaching the Halal Entrepreneurship course. Insights presented are derived from teaching observations, course planning notes, student reflections, and informal feedback collected during course delivery. The paper does not aim to measure outcomes quantitatively, but rather to document observed trends, pedagogical evolution, and recurring patterns in student engagement and learning.

2. Methodology: Approach and scope of reflection

This study employs an autoethnographic approach, grounded in the instructor's self-reflection over four consecutive years of teaching the Halal Entrepreneurship course at the International Islamic University Malaysia. Autoethnography refers to the study of the self (Reed-Danahay, 2021). The analysis also draws on the instructor's teaching notes, course artefacts (e.g., student proposals, product documentation, and sales reflections), and informal end-of-course feedback. The purpose is to document pedagogical evolution and recurring patterns in student learning and engagement, rather than to report an empirically measured intervention effect.

3. Reflections from four years of teaching

3.1 Transition from theory to practice

In the Halal Entrepreneurship class, early cohorts demonstrated a firm grasp of theoretical concepts, including the principles of halal business, basic entrepreneurial frameworks, and ethical decision-making grounded in Islamic values. However, despite this solid conceptual foundation, many students lacked confidence when translating theory into practice. They were often hesitant to initiate substantive business activities, particularly those involving financial risk, market exposure, or direct customer engagement. In response to these observations, the course gradually shifted towards a more action-based learning approach. Students were required to design and launch small-scale entrepreneurial projects, test their ideas through direct customer interaction, and engage in basic income-generating activities. Although the financial outcomes were modest, this experiential process proved critical in building students' self-efficacy, practical problem-solving skills, and readiness to apply halal principles in real market settings. Research on entrepreneurship education confirms that doing, rather than passively learning, increases entrepreneurial intention and reduces perceived risk (Nabi *et al.*, 2018).

3.2 Embedding halal values into business action

Students were trained to assess product sources, ingredients, and production methods in accordance with halal requirements, thereby linking theoretical knowledge of halal standards directly to their entrepreneurial activities. In practice, these involved students scrutinising ingredient lists, verifying the origin of raw materials, and evaluating processing methods used by potential suppliers. For example, groups developing food-based products were required to identify suppliers of flavourings, emulsifiers, and packaging materials, and to request specification sheets or product data to confirm the absence of non-halal or doubtful components such as alcohol-based solvents, animal-derived emulsifiers, or non-certified processing aids.

Similarly, students working on cosmetic and personal care products were guided to investigate the halal status of oils, surfactants, preservatives, and fragrances. This process included contacting local suppliers, comparing multiple ingredient options, and requesting samples to conduct preliminary assessments of suitability, safety, and compliance. In several cases, students rejected cheaper raw materials after discovering incomplete documentation or ambiguous sourcing, opting instead for suppliers that could provide more precise traceability and, where available, halal certification.

Through these activities, students experienced first-hand the complexity of halal supply chain decision-making and developed a deeper appreciation of halal governance beyond textbook definitions. The exercise not only strengthened their technical understanding of halal standards but also cultivated ethical awareness, as students learned to balance cost, quality, and compliance while maintaining consumer trust.

These practices directly support the course learning objectives by translating halal standards from conceptual knowledge into applied competence. The benefits include improved student capability in recognising halal risks (e.g., doubtful ingredients and unclear supply chains), stronger ethical reasoning in trade-offs between cost and compliance, and enhanced consumer trust-building through documentation and transparent claims.

The goal was to avoid "halal branding without substance", and instead promote practices aligned with safety, integrity, and transparency—principles central to halal governance (Bae *et al.*, 2014; Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015).

3.3 Building digital literacy and market adaptability

In the last three batches of course delivery (2024/2025 Semester 1 and Semester 2, and 2025/2026 Semester 1), students were increasingly exposed to social media platforms. They received structured coaching in digital engagement and content writing. This enabled them to apply social media analytics and digital branding techniques to test their products in micro-markets. Students analysed basic engagement metrics such as views, reach, and interaction rates on platforms including Instagram and TikTok to evaluate interest in their products. Digital branding activities focused on developing clear product visuals, concise messaging, and halal-compliant

claims to communicate value and build trust. Through limited online promotions and pre-order enquiries managed via direct messaging, students were able to gauge demand with minimal financial risk. This process strengthened data-informed decision-making and enhanced students' understanding of how digital platforms can support Halal Entrepreneurship at an early stage. This mirrors shifts in the global halal economy, where halal start-ups increasingly rely on digital ecosystems for reach, trust building, and traceability (Mergel *et al.*, 2019). The exposure helps students understand Halal Entrepreneurship within broader digital governance frameworks.

3.4 Impact on student mindset

Student reflections and repeated classroom observations over the four years suggest a progressive shift in entrepreneurial mindset. In the early cohorts, students primarily engaged with entrepreneurship at a conceptual level, focusing primarily on pitching business proposals and theoretical feasibility analyses. While these activities strengthened presentation and planning skills, many students continued to perceive entrepreneurship as risky, abstract, or inaccessible, particularly in the absence of real market exposure.

In contrast, recent cohorts moved beyond proposal pitching to conduct actual sales activities, including limited product launches and direct customer engagement. By experiencing the whole cycle from product preparation to transaction and revenue generation, students developed a more grounded understanding of business operations. Even when profits were modest, completing a real sale had a significant psychological impact. It reduced fear of failure, increased self-confidence, and reframed entrepreneurship as an achievable and meaningful activity.

Importantly, students began to recognise business not merely as a profit-driven endeavour, but as a platform for ethical contribution, value creation, and service to the community. This shift reflects the effectiveness of structured guidance and values-based training in cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset aligned with halal principles and social responsibility. The reported changes in student mindset are derived from repeated classroom observations and thematic patterns emerging from end-of-semester reflective reports. As part of the course requirements, students were asked to submit a one-page reflection at the conclusion of each semester, focusing on their learning experience, challenges, and perceived personal development. To date, approximately 75 reflection reports have been collected from the last 3 batches. No formal interviews or quantitative pre–post assessments were conducted; therefore, the findings are presented as practice-informed observations rather than empirically measured outcomes.

3.5 Technological integration and future skills

Integrating technological advancements, such as AI and 6G, into Halal Entrepreneurship education can enhance graduates' readiness and competitiveness. AI-focused training prepares students to innovate and thrive in a technology-driven economy, while future research may explore automated compliance and immersive consumer engagement through AR and blockchain technologies.

While advanced technologies such as AI, 6G, and blockchain were not directly implemented within the classroom activities, their discussion provided students with awareness of emerging tools that are likely to shape future halal industry practices and compliance mechanisms. Table 1 highlights the key components in preparing ready halal graduates.

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 is grounded in the authors' cumulative teaching experience over four years of delivering the Halal Entrepreneurship course.

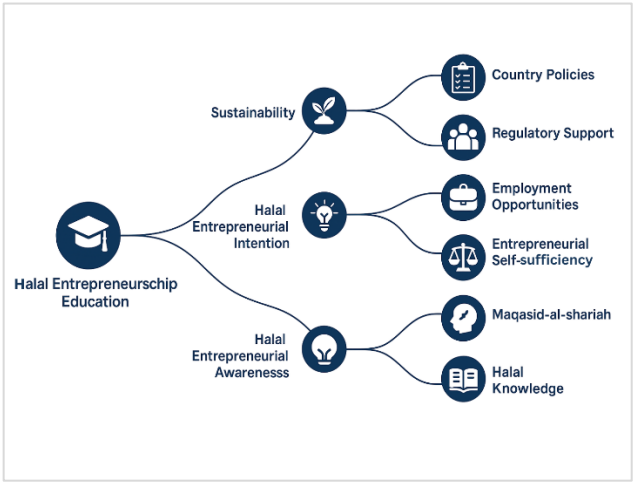

Figure 1: The conceptual framework illustrates the role of Halal Entrepreneurship education in shaping sustainability, entrepreneurial intention, and halal awareness, along with their associated socio-economic and ethical outcomes.

The three core dimensions, namely, sustainability, halal entrepreneurial intention, and halal entrepreneurial awareness, emerged consistently as dominant learning outcomes observed across successive cohorts. Sustainability reflects the increasing emphasis on ethical production, responsible sourcing, and long-term value creation in student-led business activities, which are frequently aligned with policy awareness, regulatory considerations, and employment-related outcomes.

Halal entrepreneurial intention captures the progressive shift in student mindset from passive learning and proposal-based activities to active engagement in income-generating initiatives. This dimension was particularly evident in later cohorts, where hands-on selling activities and real customer interaction contributed to enhanced entrepreneurial self-efficacy and employment readiness. Meanwhile, halal entrepreneurial awareness underscores the foundational role of halal knowledge and *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* principles in shaping students' ethical reasoning and business decisions, particularly regarding ingredient selection, supplier evaluation, and consumer trust.

While the framework is not presented as a validated model, it provides a structured lens for understanding how values-based entrepreneurship education can contribute to graduate readiness, ethical enterprise formation, and broader sustainable development outcomes. Future empirical studies may further examine and validate the relationships proposed in this framework.

4. Discussion

The experience aligns with literature, indicating that entrepreneurship education is most effective when it empowers students through identity formation, ethical reasoning, and

Table 1: Key components for preparing future-ready halal graduates (Fenton *et al.*, 2025; Ghouse *et al.*, 2024; Ismail *et al.*, 2025; Rahman & Awal, 2025; Yang *et al.*, 2022)

Component	Description
Structured Curriculum	From primary to tertiary, with dedicated Halal training institutes
Experiential Learning	Mentorship, internships, and real-world exposure
Policy and Infrastructure Support	Regulatory, government, and industry collaboration
Technological Integration	AI, 6G, blockchain for compliance and innovation
Entrepreneurial Mindset	Early development, adaptability, and resilience
Research and Evaluation	Addressing gaps in impact assessment and diverse student backgrounds

real-world tasks (Elgharbawy *et al.*, 2025; Khan *et al.*, 2022). The Halal Entrepreneurship course demonstrates that:

- Halal ethics provide a decision-making framework that balances profit with social welfare.
- Digital tools make entrepreneurship accessible and scalable for students.
- Practical income generation increases confidence and fosters future-ready competencies.
- The availability of capital or seed funding would help to lessen students' financial burden, enabling greater experimentation and more sustainable entrepreneurial learning outcomes.

This supports the argument that Halal Entrepreneurship education can catalyse inclusive economic development, particularly in Muslim-majority countries seeking to strengthen participation in the Islamic digital economy (Elgharbawy *et al.*, 2025).

Moreover, reflecting on four years of teaching highlights a potential model for higher education institutions interested in industry-relevant, values-based innovation, a key concern addressed in the intersection of governance, ethics, technology, and economic development.

6. Limitation

This study is limited by its reliance on an autoethnographic approach grounded in the instructor's self-reflection. While this method provides rich, practice-informed insights, it does not involve systematic observation or quantitative measurement. Consequently, the findings reflect personal interpretations and observed patterns rather than empirically validated outcomes. Future research should incorporate mixed methods approaches, including structured interviews, surveys, and longitudinal data, to strengthen generalizability and provide deeper evidence of impact.

7. Conclusion

Halal entrepreneurship education demands a comprehensive approach that transcends traditional business training, integrating structured curricula, experiential learning, ethical grounding, and digital awareness. This model emphasizes Islamic principles to instil accountability and integrity in students while aligning their practices with *Shari'ah* requirements. Sustainability, innovation, and adaptability are critical components that prepare graduates to confront global challenges and thrive in the halal digital economy. The cultural context enhances their employability in diverse markets while fostering practical skills and lifelong learning. As the halal sector grows, the significance of such education in higher learning remains vital for sustainable economic development.

8. Acknowledgement

The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART) in developing the Halal Entrepreneurship course. The author also acknowledges the collaborative grant between Universitas Indo Global Mandiri (UIGM) and INHART under project reference [I-CRGS23-006-0006].

9. Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

10. AI declaration

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were used exclusively to outline the article and proofread the final version. The tool used was ChatGPT (OpenAI, San Francisco, CA). The authors have thoroughly reviewed and verified all content and take full responsibility for its accuracy and integrity. No AI tools were used for data analysis, result interpretation, or the formulation of scientific conclusions.

11. Open access

The article will be published under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0), allowing others to share and adapt the work for non-commercial purposes, with appropriate credit.

12. Author contribution

AMAL A.M. ELGHARBAWY: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Data Curation, Project Administration, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. WAN SYIBRAH HANISAH WAN SULAIMAN: Writing – Review & Editing. AVICENNA YUHAN: Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

References

Abdullah, M. A., Elgharbawy, A. A. M., & E Azam, M. S. (2022). Halal entrepreneurship. IIUM Press.

Azam, M. S. E., & Abdullah, M. A. (2021). Halal Standards Globally: A comparative study of unities and diversities among the most popular halal standards globally. Halalpshere, 1(1), 11–31.

Bae, T. J., Qian, S., Miao, C., & Fiet, J. O. (2014). The relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions: A meta-analytic review. Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice, 38(2), 217–254. https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12095

Baierl, R., Behrens, J., & Brem, A. (2019). Digital entrepreneurship. Springer. Barigozzi, F., Tedeschi, P.(2019). On the Credibility of Ethical Banking, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 166, 381–402.

Elgharbawy, A. A. M., Yuhan, A., Kotachi, M., & Schianchi, M. (2025). Empowering students for economic self-sufficiency: Insights into entrepreneurial education bt - Integrating Artificial Intelligence, Security for Environmental and Business Sustainability: Volume 2 (A. Hamdan, Ed.; pp. 1003–1013). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-96641-5_85

Fenton, A., Rohde, A., Humphrey, K. G., Goode, C. K., & Akomah, J. (2025). Empowering nurse practitioners for entrepreneurship: Addressing educational gaps and training strategies for success. The Journal for Nurse Practitioners, 21(8), 105460. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nurpra.2025.105460

Ghouse, S. M., Barber III, D., & Alipour, K. (2024). Shaping the future of entrepreneurs: Influence of human capital and self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intentions of rural students. The International Journal of Management Education, 22(3), 101035. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.101035

Ismail, I. J., Marua, N. M., & Changalima, I. A. (2025). Enhancing halal entrepreneurial intention: The impact of Halal Entrepreneurship education and halal entrepreneurial awareness. Social Sciences & Humanities Open, 11, 101548. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101548

Khan, P. A., Johl, S. K., Akhtar, S., Asif, M., Salameh, A. A., & Kanesan, T. (2022). Open innovation of institutional investors and higher education system in creating open approach for SDG-4 quality education: a conceptual review. Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity, 8(1), 49.

Mergel, I., Edelmann, N., & Haug, N. (2019). Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews. Government Information Quarterly, 36(4), 101385.

Munawar, S., Yousaf, H. Q., Ahmed, M., & Rehman, S. (2023). The influence of online entrepreneurial education on entrepreneurial success: An empirical study in Pakistan. The International Journal of Management Education, 21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2022.100752

Nabi, G., Walmsley, A., Liñán, F., Akhtar, I., & Neame, C. (2018). Does entrepreneurship education in the first year of higher education develop entrepreneurial intentions? The role of learning and inspiration. Studies in Higher Education, 43(3), 452–467. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1177716

Rahman, M. M., & Awal, M. R. (2025). Chapter 23 - 6G-Enabled smart halal industry: Enhancing compliance, sustainability, and efficiency (A. K. Tyagi & S. B. T.-H.-C. I. of 6G-E. T. for M. S. Tiwari, Eds.; pp. 345–358). Academic Press. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-443-27434-3.00023-4

Reed-Danahay, D. (2021). Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social. Routledge.

SGIE. (2023). State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) Report 2023/2024. DinarStandard, 65–66. https://haladinar.io/hdn/doc/report2018.pdf

Shafaei, F., & Mohamed, B. (2015). Malaysia's branding as an Islamic tourism hub: An assessment. Geografia Malaysian Journal of Society and Space, 11(1), 97–106.

Soltanian, M., Zailani, S., Iranmanesh, M., & Aziz, A. A. (2016). Motivations of SME entrepreneurs to become halalpreneurs. Journal of Science and Technology Policy Management, 7(2), 173–189.

Yang, M., Jaafar, N., Al Mamun, A., Salameh, A. A., & Nawi, N. C. (2022). Modelling the significance of strategic orientation for competitive advantage and economic sustainability: The use of hybrid SEM–neural network analysis. Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 11(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-022-00232-5

Zhao, F., & Collier, A. (2016). Digital entrepreneurship: Research and practice. 9th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business, September 2173–2182. http://eprints.staffs.ac.uk/6274/