

HALALSPHERE

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The importance of halal-labelled meat for Muslim consumers, producers and government in Brunei Darussalam: A preliminary results

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Abstract

Halal logo has played an essential role in bringing the end product to market with trust and confidence given by producers to the consumers. Hence, labelling the halal logo on meat is crucial in Brunei Darussalam, as Muslims are required to consume only halal food. Thus, this study aims to determine the importance of halal-labelled meat towards Muslim consumers, producers and the government in Brunei Darussalam in the eyes of the local producers. A qualitative method is employed to satisfy the objective. Data were collected using primary data sources, and semi-structured interviews were conducted. Literature was reviewed to support the interview. Three local abattoirs of halal meat production were chosen, and two persons who held the halal officer and plant manager positions from the first company, farm controller and director of the second and third companies, respectively, were selected to be interviewed. Findings showed that when the halal logo is displayed, it will play a vital role in convincing the consumers, mainly Muslims, to purchase the meat without having any suspicions about the integrity and quality. Muslim consumers need to seek halal-labelled meat as it is guaranteed that the procedures from farm to consumption point were observed.

1. Introduction

Halal logo has played an essential role in bringing the end product to market with trust and confidence given from producers to the consumers. Without a halal logo, the product may seem to be doubted by the consumer as it might contain non-halal ingredients or be contaminated by non-halal things (Wel *et al.*, 2022). Hence, labelling the halal logo on meat is vital in Brunei Darussalam, as Muslims are required to consume only halal food because Islam has its dietary laws for food consumption. The fundamental element is that the food must be both halal (lawful or permitted) and also toyyib, which means wholesomeness (hygienic, safe, quality and healthy) (Aghwan, 2018; Aghwan, 2022; Aghwan, 2019). It has been mentioned in *Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah* verse 168;

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

It means:

"O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."

Thus, before meat has been certified halal by the government, the producers first need to confirm the halal integrity of meat, where every aspect of the food chain (farm to consumption point) must adhere to halal rules (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Soon *et al.*, 2017). These aspects cannot be taken lightly, but they must be thoroughly checked, from the slaughtering procedure to any processes the meat goes through (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Soon *et al.*, 2017). However, to reduce the possibility of contamination, meat should be stored separately throughout the supply chain (Aghwan, 2018; Aghwan, 2019). Hence, producing halal and high-quality meat must satisfy the various requirements of consumer groups and food safety authorities (Aghwan, 2021).

Therefore, the study aims to determine the importance of halal-labelled meat on Muslim consumers, producers and the government in Brunei Darussalam in the eyes of a local producer. Thus, the objective could be achieved by finding the answers to the following questions;

What is the importance of halal-labelled meat;

- Muslim consumers;
- Producers; and
- Government.

Hence, the study is significant in providing information to Muslim consumers, producers, and the government on the importance of consuming meat that has a halal logo, as the

procedures have been thoroughly checked by the producers and government. It also gives insight to the new stakeholders who desire to cater meat for public consumption and label it with a certified halal logo before putting it on the market.

2. Materials and methods

A qualitative method is employed to satisfy the objective mentioned above. Data were collected using primary data sources, and semi-structured interviews were used. Aside from that, the literature was reviewed to support the interview. The reason behind this chosen method is the limited resources focusing on the importance of halal-labelled meat to Muslim consumers, producers, and the government from the point of view of local producers. Hence, the researcher believes that a field study in the form of an interview must get specific and detailed information to fulfil the research objective. An interview is an effort to gather information either orally by asking some questions or via email, and it is to be answered orally or via email. The main feature of the interview is between the information seeker, known as an interviewer or the informant, and the interviewee, known as the information source. (Azizi Yahya, 2017).

The researcher used a method of a semi-structured interview, which means the questions were created prior to the interview and based on the relevance of the scope of the interviewee's job descriptions to the research objective, also adopting open-ended questions, which let the selected respondents concentrate on issues brought by them instead being limited to or restricted to researcher's question. The questions were designed in accordance with the field of the respondents, where the interview will be absorbed in the research objective, which is to determine the importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers, producers and government in Brunei Darussalam. Their responses were then recorded, transcribed, organised, thematically analysed and presented per the research objective (Creswell, 2014). For this reason, the researcher hoped to have systematised and comprehensive data from the interview.

Also, in the research, the researcher explicitly chose 'Producers' as the primary respondents because the abattoir producers were responsible for labelling each of the meat before it was sold to the supermarket and market. They are the first ones that need to confirm the halal integrity of meat, where every aspect of the food chain (farm to consumption point) must adhere to halal rules (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Soon *et al.*, 2017). These aspects cannot be taken lightly, but they must be thoroughly checked, from the slaughtering procedure to any processes the meat goes through (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Soon *et al.*, 2017). Secondly, the reason for this is that they need to abide by the rules and regulations stated by the authority of Brunei Darussalam. The third reason is that producers need to know the comprehensive reason behind the importance of the halal logo, as they are responsible for catering meat to Muslim consumers in Brunei Darussalam, and most Brunei consumers are Muslim consumers. Lastly, apart from the other reasons, being an Islamic country that has also imposed Sharia law has ensured that Brunei Darussalam's Halal Certification is very strict, rigorous and stringent (Brunei Today, 2010). Officially, government certification and auditing are also conducted by qualified and experienced members of the Islamic Religious Council of Brunei Darussalam. On the contrary, private organisations issue some halal certificates, and third-party auditors audit them. Hence, producers must follow the guidelines and regulations and set an example for other countries.

With that, three local abattoirs of halal meat production, namely, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn. Bhd., Mufairif farming and Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn. Bhd. has been chosen via purposive/judgmental sampling, where two persons who held the positions of halal officer and plant manager from the first stated company, one person who held the positions of farm controller and director from the second and third company stated respectively were selected to be interviewed via email and were given a duration of one week to answer the interview questions. The chosen abattoir is because it is one of the abattoirs well known for supplying their meat (poultry) to the supermarket and market. They also customise orders from local fast-food restaurants in Brunei. Hence, the researcher believes that the abovementioned abattoir is best suited to answer the research objective. Below is the table that mentions the local abattoirs and their positions;

Table 1: Selected respondents in this research

Name of Company	No. of respondents	Position held
Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd.	2	Halal Officer Plant Manager
Mufairif Farming	1	Farm controller
Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd.	1	Director

Therefore, to summarise the data analysis process for both interviews and the literature review process, the participants' responses from the interviews gathered by the researcher were subsequently documented, transcribed, categorised, thematically examined, and presented in alignment with the research goal (Creswell *et al.*, 2014). Before that, the researcher needs to examine the literature reviews first to find what is in common among the journals and articles that the researcher has used, of which the researcher has roughly examined fifteen journals and articles in this research. In this research, the researcher has employed thematic analysis to examine fifteen journals and articles related to the significance of halal-labelled meat to ascertain the research objective (Creswell *et al.*, 2014). The researcher can determine the recurring patterns or themes that emerge consistently (Creswell *et al.*, 2014). This method was also employed in the participants' responses to identify recurring patterns or themes. From here on, the researcher created themes for each of the responses gathered from the interview and data gathered from supported literature reviews.

3. Results and discussion

This section presents a detailed analysis of the findings from the interview approach, supported by a review of past literature regarding the importance of halal-labelled meat for Muslim consumers, producers, and the government in Brunei Darussalam. The findings are structured to provide insights into each stakeholder's perspective.

3.1 From the interview approach

Tables 1, 2, and 3 below show information related to the importance of halal-labelled meat towards Muslim consumers and producers. These details were taken from interviews conducted with one local abattoir for halal meat production in Brunei Darussalam.

Table 1: Importance of halal labelled meat towards Muslim consumers

Muslim consumers	Importance of halal labelled meat	
	Consumers' awareness (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024a; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is essential to consume meat that complies with Islamic law.
	Consumers' purchasing decision (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024a; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The halal logo assures consumers to purchase the meat without hesitation/do ubt. No halal logo-cast suspicion on consumers.
	Consumers' protection (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024a; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect consumers from purchasing meat from ambiguous sources.
	Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belief in the governments

(Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024a)	and the producers' ability to provide halal and high-quality meat.
Branding tool (Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Halal logo acts as a branding tool representing reliable sources and hygienic meat products.

Source: (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024a; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a).

Table 2: Importance of halal labelled meat for producers

Producers	Importance of halal labelled meat	
	Trust and confidence (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022b; Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024b; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The halal logo represents quality assurance, encompassing meat safety, hygienic and proper procedures.
	Awareness to the producers (Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024b; Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of producing meat by <i>hukm syara'</i> and the government-stated regulations.
	Potential market (Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract consumers to only purchase meat that has a halal logo.
	Traceability (Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verify the halal integrity of meat at every stage of the food chain from farm to consumer's plate.

Source: (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022b; Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024b; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024b).

Table 3: Importance of halal labelled meat for government

Government	Importance of halal labelled meat	
	Inspection (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022c; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024c; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not containing any non-halal substances prohibited by <i>Shari'ah</i> law.
	Public assurance (Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meat products meet strict religious and safety standards.

Source: (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022c; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024c; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024c).

3.2 Evidence from past literature

Tables 4, 5, and 6 below show information related to the importance of halal-labelled meat for Muslim consumers, producers, and the government in Brunei Darussalam. The information is extracted from a compilation of past literature.

Table 4: Importance of halal labelled meat for Muslim consumers

Muslim consumers	Importance of halal labelled meat	
	Consumers' awareness (Wel <i>et al.</i> , 2022; Abdul Raufu Ambali and Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar, 2014; Ruslan <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is essential to consume meat that follows Islamic guidelines.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To only purchase meat that has a certified halal logo.
	Consumers' purchasing decision (Wel <i>et al.</i> , 2022; Aghwan, 2022; Ruslan <i>et al.</i> , 2018; Darwanto and Usmandani, 2021; Perdana <i>et al.</i> , 2018; Ishak <i>et al.</i> , 2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a halal logo, consumers will gain confidence to purchase without doubts.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No halal logo-raises consumers' doubt.
Time management (Fadholi <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchasing makes it easier when the halal logo is displayed. 	

Consumers' protection (Abdul Raufu Ambali and Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar, 2014; Darwanto and Usmandani, 2021; Rahman <i>et al.</i> , 2018; Fadholi <i>et al.</i> , 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect consumers from dishonest, deceitful or unjust business practices.
	Assurance (Ruslan <i>et al.</i> , 2018; Darwanto and Usmandani, 2021; Sumpin <i>et al.</i> , 2019).

Source: (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Aghwan, 2022; Abdul *et al.* Bakar, 2014; Ruslan *et al.*, 2018; Darwanto and Usmandani, 2021; Perdana *et al.*, 2018; Ishak *et al.*, 2016; Rahman *et al.*, 2018; Mohamed *et al.*, 2008; Fadholi *et al.*, 2020; Sumpin *et al.*, 2019).

Table 5: Importance of halal labelled meat for producers

Producers	Importance of halal labelled meat	
	Trust and confidence (Wel <i>et al.</i> , 2022; Darwanto and Usmandani, 2021; Fadholi <i>et al.</i> , 2020; Sumpin <i>et al.</i> , 2019).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Halal logo is a symbol of quality assurance.
	Awareness to the producers (Aghwan, 2022; Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, 2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of producing meat is aligned with <i>hukum syara'</i> and government regulations.
	Potential market (Ahmad <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract consumer.
	Traceability (Wel <i>et al.</i> , 2022; Soon <i>et al.</i> , 2017; Ruslan <i>et al.</i> , 2018; Sumpin <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Alqudsi, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the halal integrity of meat in every phase of the food chain from farm to plate.
Big profit (Ruslan <i>et al.</i> , 2018; Darwanto and Usmandani, 2021; Perdana <i>et al.</i> , 2018).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumers purchase meat, which leads to an increase in profit for the producers. 	

Source: (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Soon *et al.*, 2017; Ruslan *et al.*, 2018; Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021; Perdana *et al.*, 2018; Fadholi *et*

al., 2020; Sumpin *et al.*, 2019; Fatmi *et al.*, 2020; Aghwan, 2022; Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, 2010; Ahmad *et al.*, 2013; Alqudsi, 2014).

Table 6: Importance of halal labelled meat for government

Government	Importance of halal labelled meat	
	Inspection (Rahman <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free from non-halal substances prohibited by Shariah law.
	Avoid illegal activities (Borneo Bulletin, 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of selling meat with the approval of the government.

Source: (Rahman *et al.*, 2018; Aghwan, 2022; Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, 2010; Borneo Bulletin, 2021; Brunei Today, 2010).

3.3 Muslim consumers

With regards to the importance of halal labelled meat for Muslim consumers, firstly, the information collected during the interview revealed that the usage of the halal logo on meat has spawned Muslim consumer’s consciousness on the significance of consuming meat that adheres to the Islamic rules and principles (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024a; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a; Abdul *et al.* Bakar, 2014). This indirectly has generated more awareness to only purchase meat that has been certified halal by the Brunei government (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024a; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a). The interviewee highlighted that the meat will gain added value by incorporating a halal logo as an additional product feature. Hence, Muslim consumers must ensure their meat is certified as halal (Syarikat *et al.*, 2024a). Additionally, this has been stated in the previous literature where it showed that Muslim consumers uphold the religious duty/obligations given to them as it was prescribed for every Muslim individual to seek only “Halal/permissible” matters and avoid the “Haram/prohibited” things (Ruslan *et al.*, 2018). This was clearly stated in Surah al-Baqarah verse 168:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

It means:

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”

Secondly, in consumers’ decision to purchase meat, the halal logo has served its crucial function (Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021). From the statement gathered through the interview, and along with the findings from previous studies, accordingly, when the halal logo is displayed, it will play a vital role in convincing the consumers mainly Muslim to purchase the meat without having any suspicions about the integrity and quality (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024a; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a; Ruslan *et al.*, 2018; Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021; Perdana *et al.*, 2018). One of the interviewees also asserted that the halal logo helps consumers select meat with complete assurance and is devoid of any reluctance (Syarikat *et al.*, 2024a). Thus, without any halal logo, it would immediately raise consumers’ doubt, which may influence their decision to purchase the meat. This could inadvertently result in the purchase being cancelled (Perdana *et al.*, 2018). The interviewees also accentuated the same thing that in the absence of a halal label on the meat, a significant number of Muslim consumers in Brunei Darussalam would probably be reluctant or even refuse to buy it (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024a). Also, to add on, one of the interviewees pointed out that the absence of a halal logo on products will undermine trust in consumers and will demonstrate a lack of respect for our Muslim beliefs. It will also have an adverse reputation for the local producers’ brand and decrease demand in the market (Syarikat *et al.*, 2024a). It also has to be emphasized that the absence of a halal logo could naturally open up possibilities of mixing halal and non-halal things, where doubtful matters will arise, which then ultimately create confusion among consumers (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Aghwan, 2022; Ishak *et al.*, 2016). This doubtful matter should be avoided entirely as it could fall into haram categories. Based on the hadith Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recorded in Sahih al-Bukhari:

((إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ فَمَنْ اتَّقَى الشُّبُهَاتِ اسْتَبْرَأَ لِدِينِهِ وَعَرْضِهِ وَمَنْ وَقَعَ فِي الشُّبُهَاتِ وَقَعَ فِي الْحَرَامِ كَالرَّاعِي يَرَعَى حَوْلَ الْحِمَى يُوشِكُ أَنْ يَرْتَعَ فِيهِ أَلَا وَإِنَّ لِكُلِّ مَلِكٍ حِمًى أَلَا وَإِنَّ حِمَى اللَّهِ مَحْرَمُهُ))

“Verily, the lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear, and between the two of them are doubtful matters about which many people do not know. Thus, he who avoids doubtful matters clears himself in regard to his religion and his honour, and he who falls into doubtful matters will fall into the unlawful as the shepherd who pastures near a sanctuary, all but grazing therein. Verily, every king has a sanctum and the sanctum of Allah is his prohibitions. Verily, in the body is a piece of flesh which, if sound, the entire body is sound, and if corrupt, the entire body is corrupt. Truly, it is the heart.”

Thirdly, Muslim consumers can minimize their time examining or verifying with the meat seller where the meat comes from to ensure that non-halal substances or materials are not found in the meat if the halal logo is displayed. As a consequence, the consumers will not experience any hassles when purchasing meat, thus leading to the purchase of the meat.

Fourthly, before consumers decide to purchase, they have a right to know what they consume. Thus, by the presence of the halal logo on meat, they are made to be aware and informed about the meat they are considering purchasing. The inference is that enforcing a halal logo on the meat will shield the consumers against dishonest, deceitful or unjust business practices (Abdul *et al.* Bakar, 2014; Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021; Rahman *et al.*, 2018). The interview conducted also can protect consumers from purchasing meat from ambiguous sources such as meat from illegal activities (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview). This is because Muslim consumers are known to be vigilant regarding the halal status of the food as consuming halal food is mandatory in Islam (Ruslan *et al.*, 2018; Mohamed *et al.*, 2008; Fadholi *et al.*, 2020).

Lastly, meat that has halal logo could provide imperative assurance to the Muslim consumers" (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022a; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024a; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024a; Ruslan *et al.*, 2018; Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021; Sumpin *et al.*, 2019). The interviewee has pointed out that the halal logo is not just a mere sticker; it acts as a verification that the meat has been processed and prepared by rigorous halal standards. When consumers perceive it, they acquire confidence that the product they purchase is genuinely halal. Furthermore, it signifies the adherence to proper hygienic practices and stringent quality control measures during meat processing, hence simplifying the buying experience (Mufaiirif Farming, 2024a). Also, to add on, the interviewee stressed that by prominently displaying the halal logo as a powerful branding tool, producers could directly instil confidence in Muslim consumers that their meat products, which are certified with the halal logo, are not only guaranteed to be halal but also sourced from a reliable supplier and clean production (Syarikat *et al.*, 2024a). From this point forward, consumers have built trust and confidence in the local producers as well as the government by providing them with halal and high-quality meat as they can purchase meat without any doubts or hesitation. This statement also aligned with what the literature has disclosed.

3.4 Producers

Regarding the significance of labelled meat towards producers, firstly, it showed that the use of a halal logo on the meat has built Muslim consumers' trust and confidence towards the producers (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022b; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024b; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024b; Fatmi *et al.*, 2020). This is because halal logo is considered an essential tool in consumers' purchasing decisions as the halal logo reflects the symbol of quality assurance which represents the food's purity, security and quality (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022b; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024b; Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021; Fadholi *et al.*, 2020; Sumpin *et al.*, 2019). To elaborate further on the meat quality from the past literature, it implies that the animals before slaughtering are free from defects, both physically and emotionally (Aghwan *et al.*, 2016). This has

indirectly enclosed all areas of animal handling, slaughtering, well-being, meat quality and consumption (Aghwan *et al.*, 2016). Consequently, it has served as a means of reassuring and informing consumers that the meats adhere to Shariah law (Sumpin *et al.*, 2019).

Secondly, the above statement indicates that local producers have proficiently produced and prepared meat according to what has been laid out by the rules and regulations stated by the government and also following the Islamic dietary law. Hence, they will necessarily imply the *farḍhu kifayah* to ensure that they are always compliant with the principles of Shariah (Aghwan, 2022; Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, 2010). The interviewee also highlighted that in Brunei Darussalam, where the predominant religious affiliation is Islam, adhering to religious dietary guidelines is not only a recommended practice but also a crucial factor for the survival of the local businesses (Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024b). Additionally, one of the interviewees also emphasised that local producers must adhere to Brunei government regulations by registering their company under the Islamic Religious Council of Brunei, known as "*Majlis Ugama Islam Brunei (MUIB)*" as a certified supplier of halal meat (Syarikat *et al.*, 2024b).

Thirdly, meat with an affixed halal logo has an advantage in acquiring a market requirement and a more extensive consumer base as most Bruneian consumers are Muslim (Interview, 2022b; Ahmad *et al.*, 2013). One of the interviewees also emphasised that to succeed in the local market, producers must ensure their products are certified as Halal to attract Muslim consumers (Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024b). This is because, without a halal logo, meats are not allowed to be sold in Brunei Darussalam as the halal logo needs to be displayed by the producer, which must remain there throughout the sale of the meat as stated in the Halal Meat Act Chapter 183.

Fourth, the halal logo has played a pivotal role in consumers' decisions to purchase meat (Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021). When the halal logo is presented, it will be helpful for Muslim consumers to purchase their meat without having any doubts about its authenticity or quality. This could increase the profit of halal meat production (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022b; Interview; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024b; Ruslan *et al.*, 2018; Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021; Perdana *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, when no halal logo is displayed, it would immediately cast suspicion on consumers, which could then affect their decision to purchase the meat (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022b; Interview, Mufaiirif Farming, 2024b; Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024b; Ishak *et al.*, 2016). Inadvertently, this can cause the purchase to be cancelled, which may result in a loss for the producers (Ruslan *et al.*, 2018; Darwanto & Usmandani, 2021; Perdana *et al.*, 2018). In fact, producers who provide the meat of exceptional quality and on time will receive credit from the end consumers (Aghwan, 2018). It also has to be emphasised that producers must recognise consumers as the link in the supply chain (Aghwan & Regenstein, 2019).

Lastly, meat with a halal logo indicates that the procedures adhere to the halal rules stated. To put it in another way, in order for the producers to confirm the halal integrity of the meat, every phase of the food chain from farm to consumption point must adhere to halal rules (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Soon *et al.*, 2017; Sumpin *et al.*, 2019). Accordingly, in preparing halal meat, the procedures will cover the preparation, slaughtering process, hygienic handling, packaging and labelling and

serving of the meat (Wel *et al.*, 2022; Ruslan *et al.*, 2018). This shows that the producers have given consideration to animal welfare (Aghwan, 2021; Aghwan *et al.*, 2016), for meat to be wholesome and hygienic to be consumed by the consumers, proper halal slaughtering procedure must be carried out (Aghwan *et al.*, 2016). Thus, if the outcome of the meat is halal, it will automatically reflect that all procedures in preparing for halal meat adhere to halal rules. In addition, one of the interviewees also emphasised that by displaying the halal logo on the meat, the producers indirectly conveyed to the consumers that they were adhering to the anticipated religious dietary law and the quality requirements. Also, establishing and preserving consumer relationships is highly dependent on this trust, especially in a market where religious observance and food safety are of utmost importance (Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024b).

3.5 Government

In relation to the value of halal labelled meat towards the government, firstly, meat that has a halal logo shows that the slaughtering procedure and preparation have passed the inspection or safety check by the government and are free from any form of non-halal substances and also does not violate the Islamic precepts (Interview, Golden Chicks Abattoir Sdn Bhd., 2022c; Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024c; Rahman *et al.*, 2018). From here, it indicated that the government responsible for the halal logo demands meticulous procedures from the producers so that the producers who cater meat for public consumption comply with the rules and regulations of Brunei Darussalam. One of the interviewees highlighted that the halal logo is a crucial tool for local producers in their interactions with the government. This tool serves as a standard for local producers to demonstrate their commitment to comply with Government authority regulations (Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024c). He also accentuated that this will directly demonstrate a solid working relationship with local producers and government agencies, as well as a robust network, by aligning their own ambitions and goals with the modernization of the country, particularly in the local halal meat industry (Interview, Syarikat Hussyn Rahman CMS Sdn Bhd., 2024c).

Secondly, the need to have a halal logo on the meat is to eradicate illegal activities done by any supplier or individual about the smuggling of meat and selling meat without government approval. It has been highlighted that smuggling activities are said to have a detrimental effect on the country's economic sector and weaken the nation's income stream (Borneo Bulletin, 2021). For this reason, the nation's consumers and producers must cooperate with the government to eradicate and eliminate unlawful smuggling operations (Borneo Bulletin, 2021). Thus, it is essential to label the meat with a halal logo so consumers can consume it safely.

Furthermore, when the halal logo is displayed on the meat, the government ensures that the meat products adhere to rigorous religious requirements and safety standards (Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024c), as stated by one of the interviewees. The interviewees also point out that this will enhance consumer confidence and guarantee public health protection (Interview, Mufairif Farming, 2024c). As the government is responsible for catering halal meat to Bruneian Muslim consumers, it should be considered a collective obligation, better known as *Fardhu Kifayah* (Aghwan, 2022; Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, 2010). In other words, it is the responsibility of the government to fulfil the religious

obligation of *Fardhu Kifayah* by producing halal and high-quality meat for the Muslim population (Aghwan, 2022; Brunei Today, 2010).

4. Conclusion

To conclude this study, it can be seen from the result and discussion above compiling information conducted from an interview with one local halal meat production in Brunei Darussalam and also findings from previous studies that labelling halal logos on meat is crucial to Muslim consumers, producers and government. This is because meat with a halal logo has a massive impact on consumers, producers, and the government regarding purchasing decisions, trust and confidence, awareness, quality assurance, and traceability. For this reason, all Muslim consumers, producers, and government must protect the country and the people from consuming ambiguous meats. Thus, it is important for Muslim consumers only to seek halal-labelled meat as it is guaranteed that the procedures from farm to consumption point were observed. This indirectly gives credit to the producers who are determined and diligently preparing for halal meat while abiding by the rules and regulations stated by the government. One hadith narrated by Anas *RadiyaAllahu anhu*, the Prophet (PBUH) said: "The striving to earn halal is compulsory for every Muslim". (*Riwayat Imam Ad-Dailani in Musnad al-Firdaus*).

Hence, the researcher would recommend that the government and producers construct research and development from this research. The need to allocate resources towards research and development is to foster innovation and enhance the local halal meat industry in Brunei Darussalam, giving importance to halal-labelled meat. This will involve investigating novel technologies, manufacturing techniques, and product options to satisfy Muslim consumers' changing demands and preferences. On the other hand, the researcher would also recommend that the government enhance the regulations, supervision and enforcement to guarantee adherence to halal standards and deter fraudulent activities and misrepresentation. This encompasses routine inspections, sanctions for failure to comply, and cooperation with local halal meat stakeholders in Brunei Darussalam to maintain the authenticity of halal labelling. In addition, the government should offer incentives and assistance to promote the growth of the halal industry in Brunei Darussalam. Examples of support that can be provided include financial aid, research and development grants, and infrastructure establishment to manufacture, deliver, and market halal-certified products.

Furthermore, the researcher would also suggest that future research assess the halal certification base in Brunei Darussalam, encompassing the functions of government agencies, halal certification bodies, and any related industry involved in halal certification processing. Research can investigate methods to optimise certification procedures, create uniformity in halal criteria, and foster cooperation among relevant parties to uphold the authenticity of halal labelling. Furthermore, future research should also analyse the regulatory structure and enforcement procedures for halal labelling in Brunei Darussalam. Research might centre on finding deficiencies in current legislation, enhancing enforcement mechanisms to deter fraud and mislabelling, and guaranteeing adherence to the halal standards throughout the meat business. On the other hand, future research should also create instructional initiatives and campaigns to educate Brunei Darussalam's Muslim consumers on the value of halal certification, the authenticity of halal products, and the importance of having halal-labelled meat. This research may

evaluate the efficiency of various instructional techniques in changing consumer behaviour.

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