

# Intellectual Discourse

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**Religion, Culture and Governance**



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# *Intellectual Discourse*

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*Guest Editor*  
***M. Moniruzzaman***

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# Halal Food Industry in Southeast Asia's Muslim Majority Countries: A Reference for Non-Muslim Countries

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**Mochammad Fathoni\*\*\***

**Abstract:** This paper attempts to discuss Halal food industry in Southeast Asia and its global role. The increasing number of Muslim tourists in non-Muslim countries opened an opportunity to develop halal food Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei to become reference for non-Muslim majority countries in developing this industry. The goal of this paper is to give a reference for non-Muslim countries in developing similar industry in their home countries. This study focuses on: (a) understanding halal food, (b) how Muslim majority countries regulate policy regarding halal food standardization, (c) and, the opportunity to implementing the similar regulation to the non-Muslim countries. The need to accommodate Muslims' food requirements abroad especially in non-Muslim countries found that some countries have already been promoting halal food. The growing demands for Halal food for Muslims either visiting or living in non-Muslim countries can open opportunity for global spread of halal food industry.

**Keywords:** Halal food, Standardization, Muslim tourists, Halal food industry

**Abstrak:** Kajian ini membincangkan industri makanan halal, terutamanya di kawasan Asia guna memberikan kesan untuk meningkatkan pertumbuhan

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penduduk muslim pada kawasan tersebut. Kenaikan pelancong muslim di kawasan Asia membuka peluang terhadap industri makanan halal berkembang dan negara majoriti muslim seperti Indonesia, Malaysia atau Brunei dapat menjadi sumber bagi negara majoriti non-muslim untuk mengembangkan industri halal dinegaranya. Kajian ini amat penting kerana mampu memberi tumpuan bagi keselesaan pelancong muslim bila hendak melancong ke pelbagai negara majoriti non-muslim. Ketika seorang muslim melancong ke negara majoriti non-muslim, satu perkara yang amat dijaga ialah pasal makanan halal. Mereka berfikir mengenal pasti, apakah makanan yang di makan memiliki kandungan pemakanan halal atau tidak? Perkara tersebut dapat di benahi dengan di-aplikasikan piawaian kandungan makanan halal bagi aktiviti perdagangan mereka. Fokus kajian ialah: (a) memahami arti halal food. (b) Bagaimana negara majoriti muslim guna polisi berasaskan piawaian makanan halal. (c) Peluang negara majoriti non-muslim mengguna pakai peraturan piawai makanan halal yang ditakrifkan. Perlunya perkhidmatan untuk pelancong muslim diluar negaranya khas berkenaan di negara majoriti non-muslim, terlebih bagi negara yang telah menggalakan industri makanan halal. Justeru perkara ini akan menjadi peluang bagi negara muslim yang telah mengasaskan industri halal kerana dapat berperanan sebagai sumber.

**Kata Kunci:** Makanan halal, Industri, Piawaian, Muslim, Pelancong, Peraturan

## Introduction

In Islam and for Muslims Halal food is a primary requirement. Halal means Islamically permissible and prescribed. It refers to a set of Islamic rules that should be abide by in food items such as meat. But the concept itself actually is not just limited to handling foods that can categorized as halal foods. Halal as a concept has already grown as a big industry nowadays, not just in food but also in other aspects of Muslim life such as medicine and cosmetics (Morlin-Yron, 2016).

Halal food itself already exist for more than 1400 years, but only in recent decades that halal products gained its famed. The global Muslim population has exceeded 1.6 billion and and is expected to reach 2.2 billion by 2030 (International Trade Center, 2015). So, it will be not surprising that the market for halal product and service become more attractive.

Another reason why this industry has become so attractive is the growing number of Muslim travelers in non-Muslim countries as well

as the growing number of Muslim population settling in those countries (Table 1). The growing number of Muslim travelers means increasing their spending when they go traveling. According to the data in 2014 from MasterCard and Crescent Rating, Muslim travelers are the biggest spenders when it comes to international travel (Ramakrishnan, 2015). Muslim travel market is worth 145 trillion dollars in 2014 (Nisa & Sujono, 2017). Therefore, it could become vital for the destinations, businesses and travel-related entities take the need of this market segment into consideration when devising business models and plans.

Muslim travelers like any other tourists have same reasons when they go traveling – to explore the different destinations and experience their unique culture. However, majority of them do not wish to make any compromise with their beliefs in food. They have certain requirements and needs when they go travelling such as praying facilities and the food they will eat must be halal. So, the growing number of Muslim population and Muslim travelers around the world can be seen as a chance to develop and spread halal industry worldwide.

Asia has the largest Muslim population comprising more than 50 per cent of the global total. As such Asia could become one of the largest contributors in spreading the halal industry in the world. According to 2015 data, more than half of Muslim travelers reside in Asia (EFE, 2016).

*Table 1: World Muslim Population*

Continent Population (in millions)	Total Population in 2016 (in millions)	Muslim Percentage	Muslim Population in 2016 (in millions)
Africa	1199.99	53%	635.67
Asia	4437	32.43%	1438.88
Europe	737.69	7.66%	56.52
North America	488.7	1.8%	8.25
South America	508.51	0.42%	2.15
Oceania	38.04	1.63%	0.66
Total	7412.19	28.26%	2142.13

Source: [www.muslimpopulation.com](http://www.muslimpopulation.com)

Usually Muslim countries provide foods that are halal. However, modern processed foods require industrial ingredients that might compromise with the halal requirements. As such some Muslim countries in Asia such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and some countries in Middle East have already have their own regulation regarding halal labeling. Those countries have halal certification authorities. Indonesia has Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) before the establishment of Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH), Malaysia has Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM), and Brunei has Bahagian Kawalan Makanan Halal Jabatan Hal Ehwal Syariah. Some bureaus mentioned above already have good reputation in halal certification, especially in their region, so when Muslim travelers go to their countries, they feel comfortable because it is easier to find halal label when they choose what they want to eat in those countries.

Many non-Muslim countries, especially in Europe, north America and Australia, have a large number of Muslim population who require halal food. In addition, those countries receive a sizeable number of Muslim tourists who also require the same. Therefore, some countries such as Japan and South Korea have already been promoting *halal tourism* to attract more tourists of the Islamic faith to their countries. So it is not surprising that non-Muslim countries are also trying to grab that potential market. However, modern industrial-based foods require stringent regulations that non-Muslim countries lack. In this regard some Asia's Muslim majority countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei could become references for them to halal food industry in their countries. In this way it can be mutually beneficial for Muslim majority countries which can give expertise, guidance and experience in implementing such industry in the non-Muslim countries in their attempt to enter this potential market.

### **Understanding Halal Foods**

Halal is an Arabic term which means lawful or permissible and the opposite of halal is haram which means prohibited or unlawful. In case of the foods, it can be understood as food and beverages that are Islamically prescribed and permissible for use and consumption by Muslims. Generally, all foods are permissible except for those derived from prohibited animals such as dogs, pigs, predators, as well as foods and beverages containing alcohol or other harmful ingredients. Mostly



particularly, in the case of meat the birds or prescribed animals must be slaughtered in humane and Shariah-compliant manner, and in the name of God (Touré, 2012).

The Qur'an has given specific instructions on halal foods which read:

He has forbidden you the *maytah* (dead animals), and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered idols, on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, or transgressing due limits, - then is he guiltless. For Allah is Oft-forgiving Most Merciful (Al-Baqarah; 173).

Forbidden to you (for food) are: Al-Maytah (the dead animals), blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering (that which has been slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah, or has been slaughtered for idols) and that which has been killed by strangling, or by violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by the goring of horns and that which has been (partly) eaten by a wild animal. ...But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination or transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful (Al-Ma'idah: 3).

Say: I find not in that which has been revealed to me anything forbidden to be eaten by one who wishes to eat it, unless it be a *maytah* (dead animal) or blood poured forth (by slaughtering or the like). Or the flesh of swine (pork); for that surely is impure or impious (unlawful) meat (of an animal) which is slaughtered for idols or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering. But (even so), if a person is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, - thy Lord is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful" (Al-An'am: 145).

He has forbidden you *Al-Maytah* (the dead animal), blood, the flesh of swine, and any animal which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah (or has been slaughtered for idols or on which Allah's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering). But if one is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (An-Nahl: 115).

## Halal Food Market and Halal Industry

Even though halal food has already been traded and consumed for more than 1400 years, the first modern industrial use of the term ‘global halal market’ can be traced back in 2004, when Malaysia under Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi at The Malaysia International Halal Showcased (MIHAS) published its first official halal standard MS 1500:2004 (International Trade Center, 2015). For the first time, the event brought together buyers and sellers of halal-certified products from around the world and also demonstrated the extent of global halal market. The inaugural World Halal Forum in Kuala Lumpur in 2006 gathered industry leaders from the world’s largest food companies such as McDonald’s, Nestle and Tesco. This event gave rise to the term ‘halal industry’ by the covers of major international news media. In halal market, halal certification becomes vital issue especially with meat and poultry products, and to a lesser extent with cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

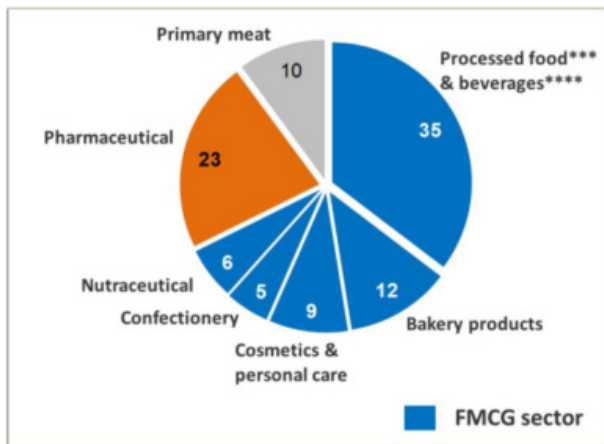
Ever since the Halal industry has grown enormously. A recent report, commissioned by the Dubai government, and prepared by Thompson Reuters and DinarStandard, valued the halal food and beverage market at US\$1.37 trillion in 2014 (Hidayat & Rafiki, 2016). That represented 18.2 per cent of the total global food and beverage market and was a 6.2 per cent increase over 2013 figures.

While halal market was spreading across various countries and cultures, comparatively, if it is viewed as a single collective market, in 2014 it was larger than that of China (US\$ 797.8 billion), the United States (US\$ 741.2 billion), Japan (US\$ 367.3 billion) and India (US\$ 353.7 billion) (Thomson Reuters, 2015). In addition, youth generations of the Muslim population – with 60 per cent under age 30 – indicates that demand for halal product and services is likely to continue its upward growth and become an increasingly influential market for the next decade.

As mentioned before, halal products are actually not limited to food. Halal products encompass many other products that might be grouped together as halal industry. However, as one of the major industries, halal food showed rapid growth due to higher demand by the increasing awareness among Muslims about the sanctity of Islam while the non-Muslims are becoming more sensitive toward the hygienic

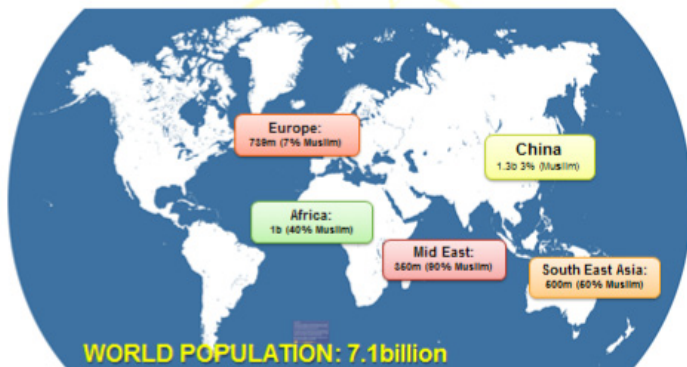
foods for consumption. As such halal industry can include all the different product range such as meat, processed foods and beverages, pharmaceuticals, Nutraceutical, confectionery, cosmetics and toiletries, and bakery products (Fig 1).

Figure 1: Global Market for Potential Halal Products



The potential market size of halal product is staggering indeed. This can be measured in terms of consumer spending on these products. According to Thomson Reuters, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region spends the most on food and beverages (US\$ 441 billion), followed by South Asia (US\$ 238 billion), East Asia (US\$ 230 billion), Central Asia (US\$ 218 billion) and sub-Saharan Africa (US\$ 127 billion) (Thomson Reuters, 2014).

Figure 2: Potential Halal Market by Region



## **Professionalism in Halal Industry: Halal Certification**

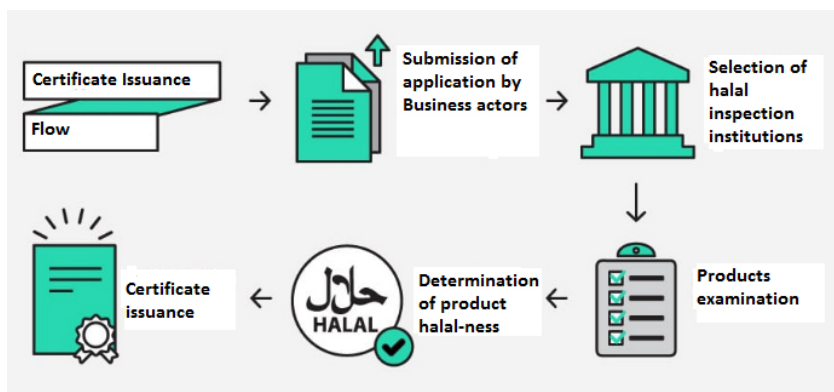
Halal industry is a growth industry now both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. But industrial complexities have turned the industry complexed as well. The industry needs close scrutiny of maintaining stringent Islamic policy requirements which ordinary producers may not be well-versed of. Therefore, the industry needs to be certified by appropriate authorities. In this part we will talk about the implementation of certification policy in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia as standard.

### **a. Indonesia's Halal Policy implementation**

In Indonesia, almost all the products are required to have the halal certification to be sold in the Indonesian market. To get the halal certification in Indonesia, the products must earn the certification by following through all the procedures required by the certification bodies in Indonesia. In 2017, Indonesian Religious Affairs Ministry issued Law no. 33/2014. That Law contain establishment of The Halal Products Certification Agency (BPJPH) as the sole halal certification body (Salama, 2017).

There were two bodies that were put in charge of halal certification before the establishment of BPJPH. The first one is Majelis Ulama Indonesia or known as MUI, and the other one is The Drug and Cosmetics Assessment Agency known as LPPOM. After the establishment of BPJPH, there is slight shifting in MUI roles regarding halal certification. First, to issue Fatwa regarding halal-ness of a product. This means that before BPJPH issued halal label, it has to obtain halal-ness fatwa from MUI. Second, to certify the halal assessment body (Lembaga Pemeriksa Halal/LPH). Third, the auditors which operated in halal industry must hold MUI acceptance (Pujiyanto, 2017). After a long await, since 2014, the establishment of BPJPH expected to ease the issuance of halal certification in Indonesia. The flow to get the certification by BPJPH is shown on Fig 3:

Figure 3: Halal certificate Issuance by BPJPH



Based on that flow, we can see Indonesia’s Halal permit process looks very simple. However, to issue Halal label, BPJPH has its own criteria.

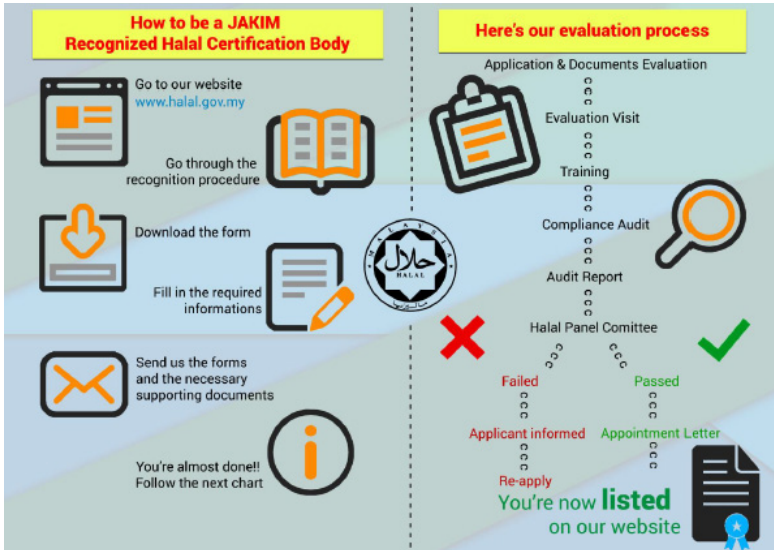
**b. Malaysia’s Halal Policy Implementation**

In Malaysia, Halal is not only about product to be consumed by Muslims, it is also about the industry and the market overall. The Malaysian government supports the halal food industry under JAKIM, also known as Department of Islamic Development Malaysia. JAKIM is the competent and the responsible authority for issuing halal certificate in Malaysia. It is the result of the enforcement of Trade Descriptions Act 2011, which tried to curb the issuance of fake halal certificate to zero (Bernama, 2018). This Act was implemented to replace the Trade Description Act 1972 restricting the halal certificate issuance to the JAKIM and the State Islamic Religious Department. Under Trade Description Act 1972, anyone could issue the certificate. Any company or private organization could also issue certificate when they registered halal related companies (Bernama, 2018).

The halal policy implementation in Malaysia has been made simple. Based on the view that many raw material used in local food production in Malaysia are mostly imported products. It requires the appointment of reputable and reliable foreign halal certification bodies to monitor the halal status of these raw materials and also recognize the halal status of finished products. So, rather than re-validate the product itself, JAKIM as the authority choose to check and validate the foreign halal

certification bodies who issuing the halal certification of imported raw materials as part of complete process of halal assurance from farms in other countries to tables in Malaysia. So the process becomes easier for the industry players. The flow to get the halal certification by JAKIM is shown in fig 4:

Figure 4: Halal certificate Issuance by JAKIM



Based on the flow the process to obtain halal certificate from Indonesia and Malaysia, we can see the different orientation between the two countries. Indonesia focuses on the product to be certified as halal, so the orientation is to be the leading country in halal assurance. While Malaysia focus on the whole processes of certification as halal value-chain, so the orientation is to be the halal hub.

Malaysia's orientation was in line with the third National Agriculture Policy as an effort to positioning Malaysia as a halal food hub. As a part of the plan to developing a comprehensive halal standard, Malaysia also launched The Malaysia Halal Standard –“Halal food: Production, Preparation, Handling and Storage- General Guidelines (MS 1500:2004) (DagangHalal). In implementing this standard, it is also compliant to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygiene Practice (GHP) which further made Malaysia's halal certification as one of the most recognized halal logo in the world.

### c. Brunei Darussalam's Halal Policy Implementation

As one of majority Muslim countries, Brunei Darussalam also has its own Halal permit regulation. Just like in Indonesia and Malaysia, Brunei has one special bureau to handle this issue known as Majlis Ugama Islam Brunei (MUIB). In this country, the Halal label would be issued to some products which meet the standard of Halal itself. Some claims that it also provides opportunity to investigate the effects of standardization towards food businesses. (Azrein, 2016)

According to the Brunei Darussalam Standard, the standards are subjected to be reviewed periodically based on the current needs of the local Halal food industries to keep abreast of progress in the industries (The Religious Council Negara Brunei Darussalam, 2007). Brunei Darussalam's halal implementation has four steps as shown in fig 5:

Figure 5. Halal Permit Procedure in Brunei



It looks very simple, yet a product which is in process to obtain a Halal label needs to have two approvals: one by the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Inspection Committee, and the other by The Majlis Ugama Islam. Brunei's government also did an amendment to Halal regulation in 2017 to improve its Halal label's standard.

### Halal Industry: Opportunity for non-Muslim Majority Countries

Every Muslim all over the world should follow their obligation regarding halal food whether they are in Muslim majority countries or Muslim minority countries. It is easier for them to follow their belief

when they reside in Muslim majority countries. But when they live in Muslim minority countries they will find difficulties to fulfill their need in consuming halal food. As mentioned before, some countries are already providing halal food, whether provided by the governments regulation or some Muslim organizations in their countries.

With the potential of 2.2 billion Muslim populations in 2030 and 2.6 billion in 2050 which is 30 per cent of world population, a big opportunity for many countries, especially non-Muslim majority countries will be created to provide halal food for the Muslims residing or visiting their countries, or even for export abroad. As the largest opportunity in halal market, halal foods market continues to build its momentum across the global food supply chain (Elasrag, 2016). Muslim population is growing rapidly in the world thus fueling global demand for halal products. It is also followed by the increasing trend of consuming halal foods for ethical and safety reasons by non-Muslim consumers. In United Kingdom, there are over 2 millions Muslims, yet there are 6 million consumers of halal meat, meanwhile there are also interest in halal food in the Netherlands, where there are approximately US\$ 3 billion demand from non-Muslim Dutch consumers (Elasrag, 2016). Although Muslims still become minority group in Europe and America, they will constitute a growing share of the total population (Fleishman-Hillard Majlis). Europe's Muslim community is expected to increase to nearly 58.2 million in 2030, meanwhile in America the number of Muslims is expected to double during the same period (Research and Market, 2013).

To accommodate these opportunity, some Muslim minority countries like Australia, Canada, China, US, England, India, Brazil, Japan, New Zealand and Thailand also developed their halal certification bodies to ensure the halal food circulate in their markets. It has become an important issue, as an impact from the increasing demand of halal food in their countries. It indicated that some Muslim minority countries have great interest in developing their halal regulation for their countries.

Started from the concern to provide halal food products for specific targeted consumers, some non-Muslim majority countries have some achievements in halal food products. Several non-Muslim majority countries have become the global exporters of halal food to many Muslim countries. For example, Brazil has been well-known as exporter



of halal chicken to many Muslim countries in Middle East; Australia and India have been well known as exporters of halal meat to many Muslim countries in Asia; while Thailand is well known as the kitchen of halal products. From those examples, we can say that it is feasible to develop halal regulation even in non-Muslim majority countries.

### **Conclusion**

Halal food is a primary and essential daily requirement for Muslims worldwide. Industrialization of food and beverage with varieties of chemical and other ingredients has put the food and beverage items into questions whether these are Islamically allowed to be consumed. The increasing awareness about Islamic concerns among the Muslims on consumer items has given rise to the concept of halal industry. Food has gained the primary attention among all of the halal industries. Started as a need for the Muslims all over the world, halal food products transformed into a potential industry not only for Muslim majority countries, but also for some non-Muslim majority countries as well. Furthermore, the halal food industry is a rising phenomenon for various countries not only to meet the domestic demand but also has potential to be a competitive export industry.

However, industrial halal food products require many certifications from qualified bodies that may not be readily available to all the countries that intend to enter the business. So far Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia have developed professionalism in the industry supported their governments. Specific bodies are given responsibility to scrutinize every stage and ingredient of a food product whether they comply with Islamic values, norms and regulations. This has transformed the food market of these countries highly reliable for Muslims.

The success of the Southeast Asian Muslim countries in halal food industry can be an easy reference point for other Muslim as well as non-Muslim countries where the Muslim population require their food to be halal as well. However, many Muslim countries even may not have qualified Islamic scholars or institutions that can issue official and institutional certification to halal products. This problem is especially obvious in non-Muslim countries. So for potential domestic and international markets those countries can easily take help from the expert institutions in the Southeast Asian countries for their halal food industries.

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