

Exploring the Concept, Implications, and Business Potential of Halal Products and Services

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Abstract

The interest in the halal industry has witnessed a surge in recent times, with practitioners, including entrepreneurs, academics, and policymakers, now exploring halal markets for economic expansion. This development has triggered a new trend in Islamic economic scholarship with massive studies on the halal sector. Given the above, there is a growing need to elucidate the concept, principles, and market opportunities in the halal sector to enhance stakeholders' understanding of the sector. There is a dearth of studies in this area of knowledge, particularly innovative services in the halal sector. This paper, therefore, attempts to explain the concept, principles, and market opportunities in the halal sector to establish the implications on entrepreneurship and business growth. Through a qualitative approach, the paper uses secondary data sourced from peer-reviewed journals to explain products and innovative services in the halal market. The article identifies key factors driving consumer preferences and presents strategic recommendations for businesses seeking to enter or enhance their presence in the halal market. Ultimately, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the burgeoning halal economy and its significance for both local and international markets.

Keywords

Halal products, entrepreneurship, Islamic economics, innovative services, Shari'ah

Introduction

Halal is an Arabic term which refers to something 'permissible' or 'lawful' particularly in Islamic law. It entails a wide range of practices, habits, and products. Halal is one of the most important concepts in Islam because it indicates what is acceptable in human actions. The use of the word 'halal' in a business context has become increasingly popular across the globe despite being a religious terminology. Shahabuddin *et al.* (2020) noted that business use of the Quranic and fiqhi word halal has become conspicuous due to the penetration of halal products into global business enterprises. One common feature in the halal industry is the concentration of practitioners on food items

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and other edibles, which in turn, attracts so much interest in the area of certification of products. As a result, halal certification has become a growing sub-sector in global halal markets. Azam and Abdullah (2020) observe that the ever-increasing Muslim population, growing economic development, and the emergence of the halal market in non-Muslim nations are the main factors driving the growth of the halal industry. Despite the wide scope of coverage of the halal industry, halal services have not been well established to fill the yearnings and satisfaction of potential halal consumers, thereby leaving a gap in the spectrum of potential halal markets across the globe.

In addition, the emergence of the concept of halal entrepreneurship in both theory and practice is an indication that there is potential for the halal industry. Halal entrepreneurship is described as establishing and operating businesses and engaging in economic activities permitted under the shari'ah law (Abdullah & Azam, 2020). With the evolution of this new business window, the dynamics of doing business need to be expounded epistemologically to promote research opportunities among students and academics. Also, the need for enhancing services to meet up with the spate of halal products is inevitable. Looking at the expected lifestyle of Muslims based on shari'ah dictates, there can be a wide range of opportunities in halal entrepreneurship strides such as halal educational services, halal fashion, beauty salon services, halal entertainment services, halal wellness and fitness services, and halal transportation services, among others. In addition, establishing more halal services is a better and more effective way of engaging the Islamic finance capital that may be available in various outlets that are probably under-utilised. Raimi *et al.* (2023) posit that the rapid growth in the Islamic finance industry makes it an input to mobilise investment funds for halal products and services.

Apart from widening the scope of services, enhancing the awareness of critical stakeholders about the significance of halal products and services is necessary to strengthen nations' economic prowess. This is because awareness of individuals can motivate entrepreneurial decisions in halal-based enterprises, which can have a cumulative impact on the sustainable development project. Halal is known only to a segment of Muslims, and it is considered lawful because of its purity and safety for individuals and society. Corroborating this fact, Ambali and Bakar (2014) assert that halal products symbolize hygiene, quality, and safety. They further contend that the awareness of consumers describes their perception and cognitive reaction to products or food in the market. It is equally established that knowledge of what constitutes halal is a prerequisite to the level of awareness of potential consumers about halal products and halal services, which subsequently motivates the desire to demand it (Usman *et al.*, 2023).

Given the preceding enunciation, this paper seeks to explore the business potential of halal products and services, emphasizing how to enhance services in the halal market through innovation. By and large, understanding the potential of enhanced halal services would expand available literature and

broaden the scope of businesses for entrepreneurs. This would also help policymakers make sound decisions. Thus, the paper is further organised as follows: section two discusses the concept and principles of halal, section three discusses the understanding of halal products, section four explores the innovation in halal services, section five examines the implications of halal products and services on business growth, while section six deals with the conclusion and recommendation.

The Concept and Principles of Halal

Halal is an Arabic term that means lawful, legal, allowed, permissible, and authorized (Farah *et al.*, 2011). In shari'ah, it refers to that which is permitted, to which no restriction exists, and the doing of which the Law-Giver, Allah, has allowed (Qaradawi, 2011). From the shari'ah perspective, halal refers to any phenomenon that is authorized because it is legal and thereby permissible either as consumption or as an action. The opposite of halal is haram. Haram refers to something illegal, not allowable, and unauthorized (Bux *et al.*, 2022). Generally, halal is what is sanctioned in the various sources of the shari'ah, which include the Qur'an, the Hadith, and other subsidiaries of both, while haram is prohibited. Muslims, therefore, seek only halal consumption for the sake of compliance with the shari'ah and fear of retribution by the Law-Giver, Allah. Kamali (2013) clarifies that halal may be identified by explicit evidence in the shari'ah or by reference to the presumption of permissibility. Allah, in the Qur'an, explicitly declares that some affairs are regarded as lawful (halal) while others are not (Qur'an 7: 30, Q5: 4, Q2: 168,172, 275, etc). The Sunnah also indicates that certain items of consumption are regarded as halal (Sabiq, 1995). The four major schools of fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) have varying perspectives on determining halal sources. The Hanafi school allows a wide range of animal products unless explicitly prohibited. The Maliki school follows local custom and considers only items outrightly mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Shafi'i school relies on evidence from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and analogical reasoning, while the Hanbali school places priority on textual evidence and adopts a more stringent interpretation (Herdiana *et al.*, 2024). From the various sources cited above, some actions are declared permissible and praised, while others are unlawful and sanctioned.

In the Shari'ah, it is inherent that actions become permissible generally until there is a specific declaration to the opposite. This covers all endeavours, including those that entail economic activities. Kamali (2013) hints that any textual evidence that nullifies the presumption of permissibility must be decisive in meaning and authenticity. It implies that Allah alone determines what is halal and what is not. This is because He created and knows what is

good, pure, and safe for His creatures. Qaradawi (2011) emphasizes that Allah reserves the right to define what is halal and what is haram by Himself. To bolster this claim, it is established in the Qur'an thus "Say: tell me what Allah has sent down for you of sustenance, then you make (a part) of it unlawful and (a part) lawful. Say: Has Allah commanded you, or do you forge a lie against Allah?" (Qur'an 10: 59). This injunction unequivocally points to the fact that declaring an act lawful or unlawful in itself is illegal in shari'ah. The point that needs to be clearly understood is that declaring a matter halal (permissible) is exclusively meant for Allah and not even His Prophet or anyone else. Therefore, a declaration by Prophet Muhammad regarding the subject of halal is only an echo of what Allah orders and permits. Stressing this fact, Qaradawi (2011) clarifies that Allah alone has the right to make lawful or prohibit a matter, either through His Book or through the tongue of His Messenger.

Further to the above, it is unambiguous that there is a wider range of permissibility than restrictions concerning human freedom. Since the general rule is permissibility except when otherwise stated, it implies that the shari'ah expands the scope of halal as against the confines of the haram. Allah declares that He created all that is on earth solely for the use of humanity (Qur'an 2: 29). This injunction emphasizes 'all that is on earth' as if nothing exists except for human benefit. While one may easily remember that certain items or actions are restricted, the overwhelming notion from this message is that the majority of what exists is lawful for human consumption and usage. Qaradawi (2011) corroborated that Allah could not have created all other creatures for the benefit of humanity and still made the same prohibited, hence, He has forbidden only a few for specific reasons beneficial to His creation.

The unlawful are so declared for their potential danger for human consumption and their protection just as permissibility results from their inherent benefit for human society. For instance, Allah enumerates a variety of creatures ranging from living and nonliving with varying natures of purposes for which they are useful for humankind; these, He asserts, were bounties for humanity (Qur'an 16: 10-18). In specific terms, Allah asserts that His Prophet was sent to command good, forbid evil, and make what is good for people lawful and forbid for them what is impure (Qur'an 7: 157). Qaradawi (2011) elucidates that whatever is beneficial is halal, whatever is harmful is haram, and if there is more harm than benefit in an item, it is for that reason declared forbidden in shari'ah. This fact is confirmed through modern technology and research findings. For instance, Nurdeng (2009) posits that unlawful foods declared by the shari'ah are meant to protect against diseases. Typical examples of prohibitions include flowing blood and swine; while the former is scientifically established as a disease carrier, research confirms that the latter may easily be infected with roundworm, which may be transferred to humans with severe complications (Nurdeng, 2009). Apart from edibles, examples of haram in trade include *riba* (interest), *gharar* (uncertainty), and *maysir* (gambling), which are forbidden for their inherent harm to trade partners and

society in general. As such, there is always a healthy alternative that constitutes halal elements in trade.

In Islam, adhering to halal practices is a religious obligation, indicating that one obeys Allah and His injunctions. This is by the real meaning of 'Deen' as denoted by Islam. Badawi (2001) noted that Islam in the context of 'deen' is a way of living that embraces the creedal, spiritual, moral, social, educational, economic, and political aspects of life. Similarly, Raimi *et al.* (2023) posit that halal is a code of conduct or divine law that governs all aspects of Muslims' religious and secular lives. Therefore, conscious Muslims live with the habit of holding fast to halal consumption in all aspects of endeavour. This is in response to the command of Allah about consuming what is good and consciousness of the Day of reckoning (Qur'an 23: 51). As such, adhering to halal is a principle of halal as a necessity for Muslims in fulfilling their duties to Allah.

Further to the preceding enunciation, halal embodies ethics that underpin the *Maqasid al-Shariah*. In Islamic jurisprudence, *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* refers to the fundamental goals of Islamic law. The goals are to promote the well-being of people and protect their rights (Abdur-Rauf & Raimi, 2023). Al-Ghazali, as cited in Abdur-Rauf and Raimi (2023), stated that the divine law aimed to preserve five fundamental rights: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. Contextually, therefore, Muslims are to seek halal through these phenomena. Adhering to Halal will preserve religion and protect the sanctity of life, the sanity of intellect, the protection of generations, and the purity of wealth. With halal consumption, individuals protect their faith from deviation by upholding a lifestyle that complies with the rules of Islam. They are to live a secure and ethical life through good food and a healthy environment (Elgharbawy *et al.*, 2023). They maintain a healthy intellect while equally preserving ingenious generations through ethical social relations and ethical economic activities.

Halal Products Enterprise

Halal products enterprise has to do with businesses that produce, distribute, or sell goods that comply with Islamic law. One of the ways to sustain an ethical business environment while equally maintaining one's faith is to engage in halal products as a business enterprise. Engaging solely in halal products is a market strategy and a business brand that stands out in the contemporary business enterprise. The choice of a product has become a significant factor in determining consumers' preferences and entrepreneurs' fortune. The quality of a product now greatly determines customer behavior regarding the products to purchase. Product strategy is therefore essential to significantly impact a

business enterprise. Indices that determine the acceptability of products include quality, features, style, and design (Isololipu & Hardianto, 2022). It is important to note that halal products will attract large patronage because of the inherent potential to satisfy adherents of Islam who are primarily concerned about their faith at the expense of any other competing factor. Isololipu and Hardianto (2022) assert that the quality of a product is the attribute of the product that serves the customer's needs and ultimately determines their satisfaction. They also noted that such satisfaction increases patronage, which leads to high profitability that impacts business growth and sustainability. Hence, venturing into halal products is a viable enterprise for potential entrepreneurs.

The concept of halal is often misrepresented as only edible, which is permissible for eating or drinking. For this reason, attention has always been concentrated on food items in the halal products industry. However, the halal concept encompasses all aspects of consumables, be it food or not. The crux of halal is for the item at hand to meet specific criteria stipulated by the shari'ah. These include the source, ingredient, processing, and distribution procedure. Foods offered for sale are to be strictly permissible groups as stipulated by the *Shari'ah*. Non-halal foods are consciously avoided by the Muslim community. For example, blood, carcasses, and swine, in *Shari'ah*, are forbidden in whatever form; hence, these items are not to be offered as products or as ingredients in products among the Muslims. Rather, there can be high prospects in offering food products like poultry items, meat (consciously processed in halal requirements), dairy products, cereal and confectionery, relaxation drinks, fish, and other seafood, among others. There can also be beverages and bakery products. In offering these products, it has to be borne in mind that halal requirements entail how each product is processed, packaged, and distributed till it gets to consumers. In this manner, halal production requirements, guidelines, and procedures must be formulated to boost the confidence of consumers in promoting the food products sector. It is noteworthy to mention that the consciousness of providing halal content details is key to consumers' awareness and purchase decisions (Riaz & Chaudry, 2003).

Cosmetics and personal care products can also be offered in halal versions to numerous consumers who are consciously looking for halal-compliant products. Kumar in Zaidun and Hashim (2018) explains that cosmetics are used for beautifying purposes to make the body look attractive and cover a wide range of products, including cleaning body parts, enhancing features, and changing skin tones and colours, such as makeup, perfume, toothpaste, shampoo, and deodorant. It is common knowledge that most perfumes, for instance, contain alcoholic content, which puts many consumers in the dilemma of validity in the consumption of such products. Zaidun and Hashim (2018) emphasise that the manufacturing of halal cosmetics is a sort of innovation in the skincare and cosmetics industry. In this regard, potential

entrepreneurs could make products with basic halal ingredients to provide markets for halal consumers, thereby enhancing market opportunities in the cosmetics industry. Similarly, entrepreneurs will do better by marketing only halal-certified products with established trademarks that consumers can easily identify. This makes an outstanding, unique selling point in the sector.

Halal household products are also a window for economic empowerment and growth in business enterprises. This refers to items used mostly for domestic activities, such as soap, detergent, insecticides, pesticides, and air fresheners. Furniture and picture frames are other products in this category. These items are so important because they enhance hygiene practices. While soap, detergent, air fresheners, and other cleaning agents are sometimes made of prohibited ingredients, furniture and picture frames sometimes contain images that are forbidden in Islamic law. For instance, Tukiran and Hisham (2024) confirm that the sources of some enzymes used in detergent production are ambiguous and do not conform to the halal certification procedure. Potential entrepreneurs fill the gap by offering halal-compliant household products, taking cognizance of the needs of halal product consumers in this regard. With this offer, consumers find permissible alternatives for daily use.

Halal fashion products are also viable ventures that can easily transform the fortunes of prospective entrepreneurs and marketers. Halal fashion products in this context refer to various outfits that align with the rules of Shari'ah. The demand for Muslim fashion is growing due to the need to comply with Islamic injunctions (Timur & Ratnasari, 2022). Apart from this, the Muslim way of dressing is fast becoming a fashion trend in some parts of the world (Nurani & Adinugraha, 2022). These revelations imply that halal fashion has a huge prospect of creating a sustainable income for individuals and growing society's economy while equally satisfying consumers' needs. Given this, prospective marketers will explore making varieties of male and female outfits available, taking cognizance of style, texture of materials, quality, and price ranges for different categories of consumers in respective societies. Nurani and Adinugraha (2022) noted that halal fashion has become a significant subject because Muslim clothing is not restricted to religious activities but is worn by Muslims in every activity as an obligation.

Halal pharmaceuticals and health products are good for business purposes because of human concern for health and safety. In particular, religious scholars have raised concerns about the lawfulness of certain ingredients in the production of pharmaceuticals (Halim *et al.*, 2014). More so, the proliferation of counterfeit drugs, which is prevalent in some parts of the world, makes it a sensitive issue. Despite this sensitivity, there is generally a low level of awareness about the halal status of pharmaceuticals (Alserhan *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the availability of certified halal pharmaceutical products is bound

to attract huge patronage among the populace who desire ethical goods for purity and safety purposes. This means that products in this category must be consciously manufactured with only permissible ingredients and be distinctly branded as halal to gain the attention of consumers accordingly.

Exploring Innovative Halal Services

There can be services to enhance individuals' wealth and nations' economic growth through innovative exploration. To expand the scope of services in the halal industry, prospective entrepreneurs must create alternative services that align with shari'ah dictates to existing conventional models. Such a gesture is bound to enhance the satisfaction of halal product consumers with viable economic prospects. Some of the services that could be innovatively explored include halal educational services, halal banking services, takaful services, halal transportation services, halal accommodation services, halal lifestyle and fashion, halal fitness services, and halal entertainment.

The emerging market in the halal industry is a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs in the education sector to key in by providing services to prospective entrepreneurs in the halal market for proper training and orientation in the industry. Offering educational services for practitioners regarding knowledge trends can provide a competitive edge, which leads to better performance to sustain the increasing demands of the halal market (Bin Salman *et al.*, 2019). This type of service is needed to shape the conduct of practitioners within the scope of shari'ah and preserve the heritage of Islam. In carrying out this initiative, study centers may be established to issue certificates on short courses. At the same time, research centers can also be established to facilitate the certification of products as appropriate. Services of educational institutions may also be useful for manufacturers to acquire halal knowledge on the selection of halal raw materials, processing, and best practices in the production chain. Therefore, halal education becomes an important requirement to develop a clear understanding of halal awareness for industrial players as well as the community (Harun & Abdullah, 2022).

Similarly, halal educational services can be offered with a halal-compliant curriculum and structure. The need to fill this gap is necessary due to the awareness that educational policies and scientific paradigms in many societies are influenced by secularism, materialism, and humanism (Suwitri & Larasati, 2021). For this reason, there is a prospect for the growth of halal educational services for the Muslim population in such societies. Faith-based institutions and other institutions with growth-driven aspirations at all levels will have to offer halal-based content that preserves the thoughts and ideology of consumers as dictated by the shari'ah. Also, such a service will protect the culture and tradition of consumers' religion socially and spiritually. The values of Godliness, chastity, and probity are top priority in a halal-compliant educational system. It is, however, important to ensure there is a balance between Islamic epistemology and emerging functional knowledge systems

like technology, which, according to Baba and Zayed (2015), is a problem in the education programmes of some Muslim countries.

Halal Financial services are vital to the realisation of sustainable economic growth and can be prospective if offered with unique features against the common practice in the conventional models. Due to its ethical features, halal financial services can provide business-friendly capital for a series of business models to a sustainable degree. Despite this seeming prospect, halal business owners are not utilizing the opportunities significantly (Martin *et al.*, 2020; Hassan *et al.*, 2021). Halal financial services can be targeted at the large Muslim population for sustainable businesses. It has the potential to cater for consumers who require ethical and compliant financial solutions.

There is a prospect for the growth of halal transportation services if innovatively offered in a Muslim community. Transportation is an inevitable means that is bound to offer consumers the required comfort as well as ethical satisfaction. A transportation experience that can offer privacy and the Islamic culture of modesty, where free mixing of the opposite sex is structurally prevented, will be a very prosperous business model. It will provide an exciting feeling to shari'ah-conscious consumers who are bound to derive deep satisfaction, while it can also enhance brand reputation and expand globally.

Being a basic necessity of life, providing halal-compliant accommodation is another prospective service that could be explored in the halal industry. Through an innovative brand, a shari'ah-compliant design that aligns with consumers' personal and religious values will attract large patronage. To offer this service, a prospective entrepreneur is expected to build residential spaces in tandem with Islam's ethical principles, where privacy is guaranteed for women from visitors and strangers. The interior spaces are to be constructed in a manner that preserves privacy, modesty, and hospitality as required (Othman, 2016). This represents a requirement for Muslim homes to align with Islamic guidelines for home-keeping. Othman *et al.* (2015) alluded to this point by stating that the principles of privacy, modesty, and hospitality are central to traditional Islamic teachings for the home sphere. It is instructive to note that the uniqueness of this type of accommodation is in the fact that members of the household can maintain privacy while still conveniently entertaining their guests without jeopardising their modesty and privacy. Halal accommodation must make provisions for religious worship with consideration for cleanliness etiquettes for households and guests, with no one obstructing the comfort of another.

There is a huge prospect in the innovative creation of halal restaurants and hotel services due to the high level of mobility among professionals, tourists, and business experts around the globe. These activities require hospitable avenues for relaxation with high-quality cuisines that meet safety and hygiene

standards as defined by the shari'ah. For instance, Muslim tourists are often concerned about how acceptable the hotel is to Muslim norms and facilities to carry out their worship. Muslim visitors require hotels that provide the *Qiblah* (Ka'bah direction for prayer), facility for ablution, mat for prayer, toilet with water facility convenient for ablution (not just tissue), staff with modest dress, acceptable Islamic music with flexibility for customers preference, absence of pork and other forbidden food, among other requirements (Bastaman, 2019). The provision of halal food and drinks with a significant level of certification as permissible in Islamic law is a boost for restaurants. It is found by a study that the number of halal restaurants has grown significantly due to the increase in Muslim societies around the world (Yama *et al.*, 2019). This fact suggests that a venture into the halal restaurant will be a prospective activity.

Halal lifestyle and fashion are other areas of life that can be lucrative for entrepreneurs offering service to consumers who have attachment and passion for shari'ah requirements. The halal lifestyle concept focuses on a way of life that prioritises and practices all that is commanded in Islam (Aziz & Ahmad, 2018). For example, a beauty salon in a halal context requires the use of halal ingredients that are not detrimental to health, the separation between male and female spaces to maintain chastity and avoid promiscuity, and providing services that pay attention to health and hygiene which are important aspects of protecting the soul and mind (Awwaliyah *et al.*, 2023). The Prophet echoes the prohibition of adding false hair to the original and tattoos to the body as a form of beautification (Abu Daud, Hadith 4156, 1935). All these are to be consciously preserved in halal fashion services. Specializing in salon services that maintain ethical standards and adhere to shari'ah rules of male haircuts will be substantially patronised. Consumers will be more comfortable in such an arena due to trust and satisfying services. Offering services in the production of halal dressmaking is equally bound to be viable for prospective entrepreneurs. Tarofder *et al.* (2022) submitted that while Muslims desire halal-compliant dressing as a shari'ah requirement, non-Muslims in many parts of the world are seeking halal dressing for cultural adaptation. For this reason, there is a large global market to patronise the services in this sector.

The necessity of fitness for healthy living makes it a vital service to all. For this reason, the number of fitness centers has grown exponentially across the globe (Freitas & Lacerda, 2019). Therefore, offering halal fitness services is undoubtedly a viable venture that could transform the economic profile of prospective entrepreneurs. Innovative services in the fitness centers for halal-conscious consumers will take cognizance of the privacy required of the opposite sex with halal refreshments and worship facilities. The availability of fitness instructors for respective genders is also critical to consumers' satisfaction with this type of service. The uniqueness of this offer makes it sought after and could attract a significantly large number of customers due to necessity. Similar to this is halal entertainment services. Relaxation is a desired activity for individuals and collective social events. The paucity of shari'ah-

acceptable entertainment activities and services makes it a worthwhile and viable venture. While the common music and media entertainment melodies are characterized by unacceptable content, there can be halal-compliant versions for the growing Muslim populations who are conscious of maintaining ethical standards even in relaxation.

Implications of Halal Products and Services on Business Growth

Halal entrepreneurship is a recent development in the world economy, coming to the limelight with the World Halal Forum established by Malaysia in 2006 and the World Halal Research Center in 2010. Since then, European countries and the United States of America have given significant attention to halal studies, particularly for business purposes (Ahmad *et al.*, 2011). This has raised the status of the halal industry as one of the fastest-growing markets across the globe. For instance, Thailand is one of the largest exporters of halal-certified foods and products across the globe despite being a non-Muslim nation with only 4.3 percent of its population being Muslim (Mohd Nawawi *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, the demand for Halal food in Europe is increasing because of a preference for quality products verifiable through certification (Aniqoh & Hanastiana, 2020). It has also been found that consumers are positively motivated when products are branded as halal (Kasri *et al.*, 2023). In the same way, Indonesia, as the most populous Muslim nation, is ranked low in the category of halal food producers despite being at the forefront among consumers of halal food products (Arifin *et al.*, 2020). This points to the fact that the halal industry is a strength to advance the growth of development in the economic landscape of the global community.

With the above background, the halal industry appears to have immense prospects that should be explored by aspiring entrepreneurs and business practitioners who desire sustainable economic growth. Halal products and services have substantial markets in the increasing Muslim population across the globe. Alluding to this proposition, Aniqoh and Hanastiana (2020) state that the Muslim population grows rapidly with increased income and dynamic economic development. The obligation of the Muslim population to adhere to halal goods and practices as a requirement of worship is a factor that opens the way for halal entrepreneurs to exploit in any part of the world. Several studies also affirm that Muslim consumers prefer to choose products based on their religious affinity simply because Islam requires its adherents to consume products that are permissible by Islamic Law (Salman & Siddiqui, 2011; Idris *et al.*, 2020). This window, therefore, offers a wide opportunity to establish and expand businesses in a variety of halal products and services across human endeavours and regions of human settlements.

Due to the inherent prospect in the halal industry, it has been discovered that the shari'ah economy could be established and strengthened through halal markets (Yazid *et al.*, 2020). Further to this, the halal industry, when properly instituted, could enhance the foreign direct investment (FDI) of any nation through the exportation of products to potential destinations with a concentrated Muslim population. For instance, it was observed that the halal market, which stands at 21% of the total exports, can attract up to USD 1 billion to Indonesia's revenue, just as it is capable of reducing the country's deficit (Yazid *et al.*, 2020). Shifting attention to halal markets can stimulate increased entrepreneurial competition, which is a necessity for economic growth. This can further move local production to a macro level capable of enlisting a nation among producer-driven economies. In effect, the halal market is an opportunity to target Muslim-dominated nations for exports of halal goods. It is common knowledge that exports are the fuel of trade. A country like Pakistan has experienced continuous economic growth between 1972 and 2014 (Ahmad *et al.*, 2017). Vietnam and Nigeria are examples of other nations that have attracted net inflows through exports at certain periods in their economic history (Verter & Bečvářová, 2016; Nguyen, 2020).

The ethical standard that guarantees the trust of consumers is another opportunity to leverage in the halal market. The halal industry usually involves a process of certification for products to ascertain quality and maintain standards. Halal certification is the process of certifying products or services as of permissible quality as defined by the shari'ah law (Khan & Haleem, 2016). Due to product screening, halal business practitioners strive to adhere to ethical practices in the industry to maintain integrity and survive market competition (Yama *et al.*, 2019). This, to a large extent, attracts customers more than other uncertified products and implies better patronage in the market chain. Similarly, halal certification has been proven to be a catalyst through which small and medium enterprises compete and penetrate the international market (Giyanti & Indriastiningsih, 2019). Generally, halal certification is categorized as a parameter for integrity in the product supply chain (Ali *et al.*, 2017). Conversely, failure to adhere to religious beliefs and ethical standards can damage business performance and can result in its total collapse (Varinli, Erdem *et al.*, 2016). In situations where standards are not guaranteed, safety becomes elusive for the people. This further depletes trust and confidence in the organization and the business. In recognition of the importance of standard, the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC) has, in recent time came up with three set of Halal Standards which establish requisites for the inspection, manufacturing, transportation, and preparation of halal products that will comply with Islamic principles and global consumer expectations. These standards include that of halal pharmaceuticals (OIC/SMIIC 50-1:2022), that of halal inspection bodies (Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)/SMIIC 57:2022) and OIC/SMIIC 23:2022 for halal animal feed.

Certification practically implies that intending business actors and those willing to enhance their ventures will most likely perform better and grow faster with halal certification and halal branding of their products and services. Halal certification offers a unique opportunity for improved employment in a society with a large unemployment rate. Apart from businesses seeking approval to expand patronage of their products and services, halal certification agencies in large numbers will translate to massive employment for their various units. Halal certification normally requires the expertise of various professionals, ranging from scientists, Islamic jurisprudence scholars and administrators, among others. The assumption that the halal certification sector is capable of increasing employment rates emanates from the fact that halal businesses keep soaring due to the anticipated increase in the population of Muslims across the globe (Khan & Haleem, 2016). The implication of this perception is for aspiring entrepreneurs to key into the halal certification window for business growth.

With the growing Muslim population therefore, quality guarantees in terms of safety and hygiene, capacity for attracting investments, the potential impact on nations' gross domestic products, and possible reduction in the rate of unemployment, huge benefit awaits individual and collective acceptability of the halal business sector in the face of the growing aspiration for economic inclusiveness across the globe.

Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

This study explores the concept, implications, and business potential of halal products and services to enhance stakeholders' understanding of the sector. This will facilitate informed decisions among critical industry players at both local and international levels. An elaborate perspective of the concept of halal was given in the study with emphasis on basic principles guiding the application of halal actions in general. It was established that the vastness of halal activities indicates a wide range of economic opportunities for humanity if creativity is applied. Adherence to Halal has a strong relationship with the *Maqasid al-shari'ah* through the protection of religion, the sanctity of life, the sanity of intellect, the protection of generations, and the purity of wealth. The study also drew attention to numerous factors through which products can become attractive to consumers by way of innovatively recognizing the religious needs of people while still offering products for sale and making lawful earnings. Similarly, how services can satisfy the yearnings of halal consumers is also presented with an emphasis on the innovations needed for business growth.

It is noted that since the establishment of the World Halal Forum in 2006 and the World Halal Research in 2010, the halal industry has grown continuously in parts of the world. Muslim densely populated nations have been at an advantage due to the existing market with their population, even though this opportunity is not yet optimized. Also, some non-Muslim nations have become interested in the industry, with their focus on the exportation of halal products to attract net inflow. There is also an opportunity to establish and grow a halal economy through the halal business sector while equally maintaining ethical standards in the market through halal ethical principles. To further strengthen the foregoing discussion, the following are hereby recommended:

1. Entrepreneurs should establish and grow a convenient niche in the halal industry for a sustainable economy.
2. Developing countries should exploit the opportunities in the halal market to attract net inflows to enhance their economy.
3. Appropriate government agencies, as applicable, should create an enabling platform for the certification of halal markets to ease the task for aspiring entrepreneurs.

Limitations

Despite the wealth of insight of this study, it is necessary to acknowledge that an evidence-based approach would offer a more informed perspective to the conversation. Given the generic context of the study's contribution, a more specific, verifiable investigation is indispensable for future studies. Therefore, the incisive contributions of the current study must be empirically verified. In this context, the options of a survey, an interview, and case studies are proposed to validate some of the insights expressed in this work.

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