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## Foreword

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Dear Readers,

It is our pleasure to present Volume 3, Issue 2 of the Journal of Halal Quality and Certification, which continues to serve as an international scholarly platform dedicated to the advancement of knowledge, best practices, and professional dialogue in the fields of halal quality, certification, standardization, and related sectors.

The halal industry is experiencing accelerated global growth, driven by increasing consumer awareness, regulatory developments, and the growing importance of trust, transparency, and compliance within increasingly complex supply chains. In this context, scientific research and professionally grounded analyses play a crucial role in strengthening halal assurance systems, improving certification practices, and supporting the sustainable development of halal industries. The papers published in this issue reflect these priorities and address both theoretical and practical challenges faced by stakeholders within the halal ecosystem.

This issue brings together five scientific and professional papers that collectively examine key aspects of halal quality, management systems, education, standardization, and tourism.

All papers published in this issue confirm the interdisciplinary nature of halal quality and certification, linking food science, management systems, standardization, tourism, and socio-cultural studies. We believe that the findings and perspectives presented will be of significant value to researchers, certification bodies, policymakers, industry professionals, and all stakeholders involved in the development and continuous improvement of halal systems.

We express our sincere appreciation to the authors for their valuable contributions, to the reviewers for their rigorous and constructive evaluations, and to the members of the Editorial and Scientific Boards for their continued support. We hope that this issue will encourage further research, dialogue, and collaboration aimed at excellence, credibility, and innovation in the field of halal quality and certification.

*Prof. dr. Midhat Jašić, Editor-in-Chief*  
*Dr. sc. Damir Alihodžić, Editor*



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**JOURNAL  
OF HALAL QUALITY AND CERTIFICATION**

**The Impact of Formal Authorization and Halal Education on Effective non-Conformity Management in the Halal Food Industry**

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*Original Scientific paper*

**ABSTRACT**

This paper presents the results of a study examining the impact of employees' formal authorization and halal education on the effectiveness of non-conformity management in the implementation of halal standards within the food industry of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study is based on the assumption that the formal authorization of halal-competent employees, operationalized through membership in a halal team, positively influences an organization's ability to identify and effectively address deviations from halal standard requirements in a timely manner. The methodological framework employed a survey research design conducted on a sample of 150 employees from 44 halal-certified food companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Data were analyzed using independent-samples t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results indicate a statistically significant positive difference in the mean evaluation of non-conformity management effectiveness between employees who possess formal authorization and those who do not. The analysis further explored the effect of formal halal education, which was also found to have a statistically significant positive impact, although of a smaller magnitude. In addition, significant differences in perceived effectiveness were observed across job positions, with quality managers reporting higher effectiveness evaluations than production employees. Overall, the findings clearly demonstrate that formal authorization represents a key factor contributing to higher perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management systems. The study offers practical recommendations for improving existing practices, including the extension of formal authorization and targeted education to all employees involved in the halal production chain, with particular emphasis on operational staff.

**Keywords:** formal authorization; halal education; non-conformity management; halal quality; Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Acknowledgment**

This study provides a new empirical insight based on data collected as a part of the author's master's research at the Faculty of Economics, University of Tuzla (defended in October 2025), which were not analyzed within the scope of the master's thesis.

## INTRODUCTION

The global halal industry is experiencing dynamic growth and significant expansion of its normative and regulatory scope, evolving from a primarily religious compliance framework toward management and quality assurance-oriented systems. This evolutionary progression has been manifested through the standardization of certification processes, as reflected in halal standards such as BAS 1049:2023 and SMIIC 18:2021, which define requirements for product compliance across the entire halal value chain “from farm to consumer” and for the establishment of a halal quality management system (HQMS). However, standards alone do not guarantee the effective implementation of halal requirements, as achieving effectiveness depends on the consistent execution of specific procedures, including internal audits and non-conformity management (NCM).

In an effective HQMS, the internal audit serves as a mechanism for the systematic monitoring of implemented requirements and the identification of deviations from standards, which in turn inform and guide NCM. By definition, a non-conformity (NC) represents a deviation from prescribed norms (ISO, n.d.), which, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, may undermine halal integrity, erode consumer trust, and jeopardize market position.

Non-conformity management is a core component of the quality management system, whose effectiveness relies not only on technical procedures but also on the human factor. Halal standards require responsible personnel, such as internal auditors, to be formally appointed and adequately qualified and trained. These requirements are commonly addressed through a quality manual, which outlines general provisions for policy implementation, quality objectives, and the authority and responsibilities of different management levels and quality managers (Umihanić et al., 2013).

Accordingly, this study focuses on the role of employees’ *formal authorization*, operationalized as membership in a formal halal team, in order to examine its relationship with the perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management. Guided by this focus, the central

research question is formulated as follows: *Is there a statistically significant difference in the perception of non-conformity management effectiveness in the halal food industry between employees with formal authorization and those without it?* To address this research question, the empirical analysis draws on data collected from halal-certified food companies operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Halal certification in Bosnia and Herzegovina is based on the standard BAS 1049:2023 – Halal Food, Requirements and Measures, while the halal quality management system relies on SMIIC 18:2021 (HQMS). Both standards recognize the central role of employees by emphasizing training and the formal appointment of responsible personnel (e.g., internal halal auditors) with clearly defined authorities and responsibilities (SMIIC 18, clauses 7.2 and 7.3) as key mechanisms for halal quality assurance. Within this regulatory and organizational framework, the term *halal context* is used to encompass the broader setting in which halal requirements are implemented. It includes all organizational aspects, business functions, and practices grounded in halal principles and standards. In the literature, this domain is also referred to as the *Islamic economy* (Dinar Standard, 2019), *halal industry* (International Trade Centre, 2015), *halal economy* or *halalonomy* (Hodžić, 2022), and the *halal ecosystem*, denoting an institutional and operationally networked system of actors, processes, and norms for the implementation of halal requirements (Noordin et al., 2014).

This paper provides a structured discussion, with chapters One and Two focusing on the key variables — formal authorization and non-conformity management within the halal context. Chapter Three examines the contribution of halal training to effective non-conformity management, while chapters Four and Five present the research methodology, the formulated hypotheses, and the analysis of the collected data. The final chapter provides a discussion and conclusions, followed by recommendations for practice and future research.

## 1. FORMAL AUTHORIZATION FOR NON-CONFORMITY MANAGEMENT IN THE HALAL CONTEXT

Halal quality standards explicitly define management obligations regarding the appointment of competent personnel and the establishment of internal control mechanisms to ensure the consistent application of halal principles. To capture these requirements at the organizational level, this study conceptualizes *formal authorisation* as an analytical construct that encompasses the formal appointment of employees to specific roles and the assignment of corresponding authorities required for effective halal quality management.

Within this framework, the *formal authorization* denotes a documented appointment that assigns individuals to specific halal roles and grants them explicit operational, decision-making, and reporting authority necessary for the effective management of non-conformities in halal standard implementation. While halal standards such as BAS 1049:2023, OIC/SMIIC 18:2021 and ISO/IEC 17065:2012 refer to the act of *appointment* or *assignment* (e.g., shall appoint, shall assign), the *formal authorization* extends this notion by encompassing *the authority and responsibilities to act independently and ensure compliance*.

In halal context, formal authorization primarily relates to the appointment of members of the halal team, particularly *internal halal quality auditors*. This approach enables a clear distinction between an employee's job position and the explicit delegation of authority within the quality management system, which constitutes a fundamental requirement of relevant halal standards.

The concept of formal authorization is implicitly embedded in the requirements of numerous standards, including OIC/SMIIC 1:2019, OIC/SMIIC 18:2021, ISO/IEC 17065:2012, BAS 1049:2023 and HACCP guidelines. Based on these requirements, three key dimensions were identified and systematized as prerequisites for comprehensive formal authorization:

- **Formal appointment through a written document** that explicitly assigns an individual to specific halal-related roles (e.g., “internal halal auditor”), defines

its scope of work, responsibilities, and authorities in relation to implemented halal standard, and ensures that this appointment is communicated to all relevant organizational units.

- **Operational authority for action and decision-making**, enabling the authorized individual to access all quality management system documentation and production facilities without additional approval. This authority also includes the issuance of corrective action requests (CARs), monitoring their implementation, and, where necessary, suspending production in cases of critical non-conformity.
- **Authorization for reporting and communication of findings** (e.g., audit reports), which are submitted directly to senior management, along with responsibility for monitoring the implementation of recommended corrective measures.

Formal authorization is conceptually aligned with employee participation, a key component of contemporary human resource management (HRM) practices. At the fundamental level, participation refers to the degree of employee involvement in decision-making processes, implying that employees are empowered to contribute – through their knowledge, experience, and initiative – to performance improvement and the achievement of organizational objectives (Bahtijarević-Šiber, 1999). Similarly, Self-Determination Theory emphasizes employee autonomy as a central predictor of engagement and work effectiveness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In this sense, participation represents a managerial instrument as well as a value-based dimension that promotes active contribution of employees.

Each working position related to quality management shall get appropriate authority to ensure the achievement of organizational objectives concerning quality and compliance, whether the role involves a quality manager, a production supervisor, or a quality control employee. It is important to note that these positions do not necessarily entail responsibility for the entire quality management system but

may relate to one or more partial management systems (Alić, 2010). For example, an individual responsible for ISO standards, hygiene, or health requirements may not necessarily be responsible for halal compliance.

Employee involvement and formal authorization are anchored in the requirements of international standards, such as ISO 9001:2015 (Clause 5.3), which requires top management to ensure (shall) that the responsibilities and authorities for relevant roles are assigned, communicated, and understood within the organization. Similarly, halal standards BAS 1049:2023 (Clause 11.4) and SMIC 18:2021 (Clause 9.2) require the internal halal audit to be established as a documented procedure and mandatory mechanism for supervision, evaluation, and improvement.

Furthermore, a specific form of appointment is also applied in the work of certification bodies, which, in accordance with the provisions of ISO 19011:2018 (Clause 5.4 and Clause 7), shall ensure that auditors are competent, appropriately selected, and formally assigned responsibilities within the audit programme.

The distinctive nature of appointing responsible personnel and assigning authority in the halal context stems from the fact that it extends beyond technical competence to encompass moral responsibility and personal integrity. Halal auditors are required to possess knowledge of Shariah requirements and to demonstrate consistency with Islamic values (Dz & Nurhayati, 2019). In addition to meeting technical requirements, halal certification entails continuous involvement of employees in internal control, training, and the implementation of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), thereby contributing to process integrity (Razalli et al., 2016).

Based on these considerations, formal authorization may be regarded as a significant human resource management practice, as it ensures that individuals within the organization possess the necessary knowledge and skills, as well as the authority and legitimacy to act if deviation from standards occurs. Formal authorization and employee competence are critical for effective non-conformity management reflected in the timeliness and

adequacy of corrective actions. Both dimensions depend on whether employees are granted a clear mandate to act.

An employee without formal authorization may identify a non-conformity but must obtain approval from an authorized person before taking action, thereby prolonging response time and increasing the risk to halal product integrity. By contrast, a formally authorized member of the halal team has both the right and obligation to respond immediately, initiate corrective action, and report implemented measures to management. This approach ensures that formal authorization transcends mere administrative compliance and functions as a strategic management tool for strengthening consumer trust and safeguarding the credibility of halal certification (Jašić et al., 2022b).

## **2. NON-CONFORMITY MANAGEMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HALAL STANDARDS**

Effective non-conformity management (NCM) represents a critical risk control mechanism and constitutes a core element of quality management systems. In the context of this study, effective non-conformity management refers to an organization's ability to systematically and timely identify, document, analyze, and eliminate deviations from halal standard requirements, as well as to prevent their recurrence through the establishment of appropriate corrective and preventive mechanisms. Within the halal industry, such mechanisms are particularly critical due to the pronounced risks to product integrity and consumer trust.

According to ISO, a non-conformity is defined as the "non-fulfilment of a requirement" (ISO, n.d.). In the halal context, this term refers specifically to deviations from defined criteria related to prohibition (*haram*), quality (*tayyib*), purity, and the avoidance of contamination in raw materials, products, processes, or employee practices. This characteristic of the halal context implies that even minor deviations may have serious consequences for halal product integrity, thereby elevating non-conformity management from a purely operational procedure to a strategic organizational process.

The Halal Quality Management System (HQMS) is compatible with the fundamental principles of quality management systems (QMS), including customer focus, leadership, engagement of people, process approach, system approach to management, continual improvement, evidence-based decision-making, and mutually beneficial supplier relationships (Umihanić et al., 2013). In this study, the process approach is emphasized as a fundamental dimension of the HQMS, as it forms the backbone of rational and standardized operational execution and enables the systematic monitoring and optimization of processes (Natsir et al., 2024; Rehmani et al., 2020). Internal control and auditing, in combination with non-conformity management mechanisms, enable organizations to continuously assess compliance with applicable standards and initiate corrective actions, while customer satisfaction serves as an external indicator of overall system effectiveness (Othman et al., 2019; Rehmani et al., 2020).

Non-conformity management is a concept that derives directly from the requirements of relevant halal standards. In BAS 1049:2023, it is addressed in the chapters on Preventive and Corrective Measures (Clause 11.5) and Identification and Traceability (Clause 11.7), while in SMIIC 18:2021 it is systematized through requirements related to corrective actions and continual improvement (Clauses 10.2 and 10.3). Both BAS 1049:2023 and SMIIC 18:2021 explicitly require organizations to establish, implement, and maintain a documented process for non-conformity management, including identification, control, and corrective action.

SMIIC 18:2021 (Clause 8.7.1) further stipulates that, when a non-conformity is identified, organizations shall undertake one or more of the following actions: corrective action, segregation, isolation, withdrawal or recall of products from the market, customer notification, and, where necessary, notification of relevant authorities and certification bodies. The primary purpose of these measures is to prevent the unintended release and use of non-conforming products.

According to Jašić et al. (2022), a **critical non-conformity** with halal standard requirements

occurs when an action, activity, procedure, or the use of raw materials directly compromises the halal status of a product, effectively rendering it *haram*. Similarly, a **minor non-conformity** refers to cases in which a process or its segment, activity, or use of raw materials that does not fully comply with halal standard requirements but does not affect the halal status of the product (Jašić et al., 2022a).

Given the potentially severe consequences of both, critical and minor non-conformities for halal product integrity, effective non-conformity management in this study is operationalized through two key dimensions:

1. **Speed and timeliness of non-conformity identification** – measured as the time elapsed between the occurrence of a non-conformity and its detection. Timely identification is critical, as delayed detection may have severe consequences for the integrity of halal products or services.
2. **Effectiveness of corrective actions** – referring to the extent to which the corrective measures are adequate and effective. This dimension is directly linked to halal standard requirements concerning the implementation of corrective actions and the verification or validation of their effectiveness.

The processes of identifying, analyzing, and eliminating non-conformities should be implemented as organizational measures operating within systems where responsibilities and authorities are clearly defined and explicitly assigned through formal authorization, rather than being left to individual initiative. Such an approach establishes a positive association between the formal delegation of authority and the effectiveness of non-conformity management. Under these conditions, formal authorization functions not merely as an administrative arrangement but as a strategic instrument that connects the human factor with quality system mechanisms and the specific requirements of halal standards.

Effective non-conformity management performs a preventive function through root cause analysis and the continual improvement of procedures,

in accordance with SMIIC 18:2021 (Clause 10.3). Through this function, it contributes to enhanced organizational effectiveness and resilience to errors, thereby supporting the long-term integrity and credibility of halal certification.

### **3. THE ROLE OF HALAL EDUCATION IN NON-CONFORMITY MANAGEMENT**

The preceding chapters have outlined the theoretical overview of formal authorization and non-conformity management, as well as the elements linking these two aspects into a unified mechanism. It has been emphasized that the effectiveness of non-conformity management systems in the halal context depends not only on formal authorization but equally on the competencies of employees who understand and consistently apply these mechanisms in everyday practice. This perspective further highlights the role of halal education as a critical component and a strategic approach to human resource development aimed at safeguarding halal integrity.

Halal standards explicitly require that personnel, whose activities may affect the halal status of products or processes, possess appropriate competencies acquired through education, training, or relevant experience (BAS 1049:2023, Clause 11.2; SMIIC 18:2021, Clause 7.2). This requirement reflects the understanding that human capital aligned with halal principles, represents a valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate resource that contributes to sustainable organizational effectiveness (Lado & Wilson, 1994).

Accordingly, halal standards conceptualize education as a systematic process rather as a one-time or ad hoc activity, requiring it to be planned, documented, and evaluated in accordance with the objectives of the halal quality management system (Alić & Hadžić, 2022). In the context of non-conformity management, educational programs should, therefore, focus on developing employees' specific capacities for the timely identification of deviations, their proper documentation, and the initiation and monitoring of corrective actions. These capacities can be analytically examined through competency-

based models, such as the framework proposed by The Peak Performance Center (2025), which conceptualizes competencies as a combination of *knowledge, attitudes, skills, and habits* (KSAH/KASH). This competency-based approach enables a holistic understanding of the competencies expected of employees within the halal system, as it addresses behavioral competencies alongside technical ones.

When KSAH/KASH approach applied to the halal competency framework, **knowledge** refers to an understanding of the Shariah foundations of halal, the technical requirements of relevant halal standards, and potential causes of non-conformities within specific production processes. A lack of such knowledge has been identified in the literature as one of the key barriers to the effective implementation of halal requirements (Harwati & Sopha, 2024; Talib et al., 2015). **Skills** encompass the practical capacity to apply halal-related knowledge, including the ability to recognize non-conformities, conduct root causes analysis, and perform accurate reporting and communication of findings.

**Attitudes** constitute the value-based behavioural dimension of halal competences and reflect an ethical sensitivity, sense of personal responsibility, and intrinsic motivation including religiosity (Adnan et al., 2019; Yousef, 2000) of employees to safeguard halal integrity. This dimension is essential for moving beyond passive compliance with procedures toward proactive engagement and initiative in preventing errors (Dz & Nurhayati, 2019). Work **habits** represent the another behavioural dimension of halal competencies, reflected in the consistent and reliable performance of prescribed checks, controls, and procedures as part of routine practice, without excessive effort or reliance on external prompting or supervision. Education and formal authorization are interdependent functions and serve as complementary and synergistic factors within the non-conformity management system. An educated employee without appropriate formal authorization may understand required actions but lacks the legitimacy and authority to intervene promptly. By contrast, an employee with formal authorization but without adequate

education may face limitation in judgment, potentially resulting in inappropriate or ineffective responses to identified non-conformities.

Formal halal education operates on at least two interrelated levels that directly contribute to the effectiveness of non-conformity management. First, education enhances individual employee effectiveness and motivation. According to Self-Determination Theory, knowledge and developed skills satisfy the psychological need for competence, resulting in greater confidence and an increased capacity to recognize problems, report them, and actively participate in their resolution (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This sense of competence reinforces autonomy and intrinsic motivation, which is directly reflected in the speed and timeliness of non-conformity identification. Second, continuous education contributes to the development of organizational halal awareness as a shared value framework and a common understanding of the importance of halal integrity across all organizational levels. Razalli et al. (2016) emphasize that organizational effectiveness depends on employees' knowledge and skills in developing and delivering services. Accordingly, by developing specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits, education directly enhances the effectiveness of non-conformity management through faster detection and effective corrective actions. This theoretical framework leads to conclusion that employees who have undergone relevant education will possess deeper insight into working system and procedures, greater capability to implement them, and a higher perceived effectiveness of the overall non-conformity management process compared to their non-trained counterparts. Consequently, formal halal education constitutes a fundamental prerequisite for the professional, responsible, and effective use of delegated authority in practice.

## 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Dimensions and Indicators of Formal Authorization

The empirical analysis of formal authorization was conducted using data collected through a

structured survey administered to employees of halal-certified food companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study examined indicators related to respondents' job position and their formal membership in a halal team responsible for implementing, supervising, and improving halal quality assurance activities. In this research, formal authorization was operationalized through membership in a formally established halal team, which presupposes the simultaneous fulfilment of three essential criteria: **formal appointment**, **operational decision-making authority**, and **authorization for reporting**.

Based on responses to the survey item "*I am a member of a formal (halal) team responsible for supervising and improving halal practices,*" with binary response options (*Yes/No*), respondents were classified into two groups:

- **Group 1 – Formally authorized employees:** respondents who answered *Yes* (members of the halal team).
- **Group 2 – Employees without formal authorization:** respondents who answered *No*.

This dichotomous classification was used as the independent variable (X) in the statistical analysis.

This approach, grounded in explicit formal appointment, is fully consistent with the requirements of halal standards and provides a clear basis for assessing the effect of formal authorization on the perceived system effectiveness. Furthermore, the analysis was extended to identify differences in perceptions across functional positions, specifically among quality managers, quality control staff, and production employees.

### 4.2. Dimensions and Indicators of Effective Non-Conformity Management

Effective non-conformity management, operationalized as the dependent variable (Y) in this study, was measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The measurement instrument captured two primary dimensions:

- **Speed of identification:** "*Non-conformities with halal standards are*

*identified immediately after they occur.”*

- **Effectiveness of corrective actions:** *“Corrective actions implemented following the identification of non-conformities are effective and timely.”*

For each respondent, the overall score for the variable *Effective Non-Conformity Management* was calculated as the mean value of the two related items – the speed of detection and the effectiveness of corrective actions. Higher mean scores indicate a more favorable perception of non-conformity management effectiveness within the organization.

#### 4.3. Research Objectives and Hypotheses

The primary objective of this study is to examine the **effect of formal authorization**, operationalized through membership in a halal team, on employees’ evaluations of non-conformity management in halal-certified food companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, the study seeks to **assess the impact of formal halal education** on employees’ perceptions of non-conformity management effectiveness.

Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formulated:

- **H1:** There is a statistically significant positive difference in the mean evaluation of non-conformity management effectiveness between employees who possess formal authorization as members of a halal team and employees without such authorization
- **H2:** There is a statistically significant positive difference in the mean evaluation of non-conformity management effectiveness between employees who have completed formal halal education and those who have not.
- **H3:** There is a statistically significant difference in the mean evaluation of non-conformity management effectiveness among quality managers, quality control staff, and production employees.

#### 4.4. Methods of Analysis

The analytical sample consisted of employees from halal-certified food companies in Bosnia

and Herzegovina (N = 150), distributed across three occupational categories: quality managers (N = 41), quality control staff (N = 31), and production employees (N = 78).

To test Hypotheses H1 and H2, **independent-samples t-tests** were conducted to compare mean values of the dependent variable (*Y – evaluation of non-conformity management effectiveness*) between two independent groups defined by dichotomous variables (*X1 – formally authorized / not authorized; X2 – educated / not educated*).

To test hypothesis H3 and further explore differences across functional groups, a **one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)** was performed, with job position serving as the grouping factor. Prior to performing the ANOVA, relevant statistical assumptions were examined. When statistically significant differences were found, the **Tukey HSD post-hoc test** was applied to determine pairwise group differences.

### 5. RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS

#### 5.1. Reliability Analysis of the Measurement Instrument

To assess the reliability of the scale used to measure perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management, the **Pearson correlation coefficient** was calculated between the two items constituting the construct:

- **Item 1:** *“Non-conformities with halal standards are identified immediately after they occur.”*
- **Item 2:** *“Corrective actions taken after the identification of non-conformities are effective and timely.”*

The correlation coefficient was  $r = 0.68$ , indicating a **moderate to strong positive association** between the two items. Given that the construct consists of only two items, the commonly used Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was not appropriate for interpretation. Instead, the inter-item correlation of 0.68 suggests an acceptable level of internal consistency for a preliminary evaluation of the construct (Briggs & Cheek, 1986; Clark & Watson, 1995). This result supports the validity of using the mean score of these two items to operationalize

the variable *Effective Non-Conformity Management*.

## 5.2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The sample consisted of 150 employees from 44 halal-certified food companies in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, operating across 11 food industry sectors. This structure ensures the representative coverage within the sample of the halal food industry's main sectors. The distribution of respondents by production sector is presented in *Table 1*.

*Table 1. Overview of surveyed companies by production category and number of responses*

Production category	Response No.	Response %	Company No.	Company %
Processing and preserving of meat and production of meat products	59	39%	10	23%
Manufacture of other food products	18	12%	4	9%
Manufacture of bakery products, flour-based goods, and confectionery	17	11%	5	11%
Manufacture of ready-made meals and prepared foods	13	9%	5	11%
Manufacture of dairy products	11	7%	6	14%
Manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats	10	7%	2	5%
Manufacture of grain mill products	6	4%	3	7%
Processing and preserving of meat – slaughterhouses and fresh meat production	5	3%	3	7%
Animal farming (or: Livestock breeding)	5	3%	2	5%
Processing and preserving of poultry meat	4	3%	2	5%
Manufacture of soft drinks; production of mineral and other bottled waters	2	1%	2	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>		<b>44</b>	

*Source: Author's calculation*

The meat industry dominates the sample, with 59 respondents (39%) from 10 companies (23%), reflecting its central role in the halal economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Other notably represented sectors include bakery products (11%), ready-to-eat food (9%), and dairy products (7%).

The average number of respondents per company ranged from 1 to 5.9, indicating heterogeneity in organizational size and varying levels of employee participation in the survey.

Three occupational groups were included in the analysis: quality managers, quality control staff, and production employees.

Table 2. Representation of formally authorized personnel by job position

Job position	N	With authorization		Without authorization	
		No.	%	No.	%
Quality managers	41	32	78%	9	22%
Quality control staff	31	25	81%	6	19%
Production employees	78	25	32%	53	68%
Total	150	82	55%	68	45%

Source: Author's calculation

The first step of the analysis examined whether respondents possessed formal authorization for internal halal compliance verification through appointment to internal halal audit teams. The results indicate that 55% of respondents reported having formal authorization, while 45% did not, with substantial differences across job positions. Among respondents, quality managers (78%; 32 of 41) and quality control employees (81%; 25 of 31) were predominantly authorized, whereas only 32% (25 of 78) of production employees reported having formal authorization.

The distribution of formal authorization by job position is presented in Table 2.

The second question aimed to determine whether the participants in the study had attended **formal halal education**. The results showed a high proportion of respondents (82%; 123 of 150) who had participated in formal halal training, while a smaller proportion (18%; 27 of 150) reported not having attended such education. The distribution of respondents who completed halal education across different job positions is presented in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents who attended formal halal education by job position

Job position	N	Educated / Trained		Not educated / Not trained	
		No.	%	No.	%
Quality managers	41	39	95%	2	5%
Quality control staff	31	31	100%	0	0%
Production employees	78	53	68%	25	32%
Total	150	123	82%	27	18%

Source: Author's calculation

The descriptive statistics for the key variables are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for key variables

Sample characteristic	Category	N	%
Attendance of halal education	Educated / Trained	123	82%
	Not educated / Not trained	27	18%
Formal authorization	With authorization	82	55%
	Without authorization	68	45%

Source: Author's calculation

Descriptive analysis of halal team composition (Table 1.; with authorization) indicates that quality managers and quality control employees account for 69.5% (57 of 82) of quality control personnel, while production employees constitute only 30.5% (25 of 82), despite their

central role in daily operational processes. This pattern reflects a prevailing practice of assigning compliance-related authority primarily to quality-related job positions, with limited inclusion of operational employees.

### 5.3. Testing H1 – Effect of Formal Authorization on Perceived Effectiveness

To test Hypothesis H1, an independent-samples **t-test** was conducted to compare the mean score

of perceived non-conformity effectiveness between employees with and without formal authorization. The results are summarized in *Table 5*.

*Table 5. Differences in Perceived Effectiveness by Formal Authorization*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	p-value
With authorization	82	4.87	0.35	4.92	148	< 0.001*
Without authorization	68	4.58	0.72			
Mean difference		<b>0.29</b>				

(\* $p < 0.001$  statistically highly significant); Source: Author's calculation

The analysis revealed a **highly significant statistical difference** in perceived effectiveness between formally authorized employees ( $M = 4.87$ ,  $SD = 0.35$ ) and those without authorization ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ). The mean difference of 0.29 indicates a positive effect of formal authorization.

Accordingly, **H1 is accepted**, confirming a statistically significant positive difference in perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management between employees with and without formal authorization.

### 5.4. Testing H2 – Effect of Formal Halal Education

To test **Hypothesis H2**, an independent-samples **t-test** was performed to compare mean scores of perceived non-conformity management effectiveness between employees who had completed formal halal education and those who had not.

The results are presented in the following *Table 6*.

*Table 6. Differences in perceived effectiveness with respect to formal halal education*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	p-value
Educated / Trained	123	4.78	0.53	2.01	148	0.046*
Not educated / Not trained	27	4.56	0.78			
Mean difference		0.22				

(\* $p < 0.05$  statistically significant); Source: Author's calculation

The t-test results indicate a **statistically significant difference** ( $p = 0.046$ ) in the mean evaluation of effectiveness between employees who completed formal halal education ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 0.53$ ) and those who did not attend such training ( $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ). The mean difference of 0.22 indicates a positive effect of formal halal education.

Accordingly, **Hypothesis H2 is accepted**, indicating the presence of a statistically significant positive difference in the perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management between employees who attended formal halal education and those who did not.

### 5.5. Testing H3 – Differences Across Job Positions

To examine whether there are differences in perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management among the three functional job groups, a **one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)** was conducted. The results are presented in *Table 7*.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA – Differences in perceived effectiveness by job position

Job position	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Quality managers	41	4.85	0.42	3.5	5.0
Quality control staff	31	4.79	0.48	3.5	5.0
Production employees	78	4.65	0.67	2.5	5.0

Source: Author’s calculation

Source of variance	SS	df	MS	F	p-value	$\eta^2$
Between groups	1.24	2	0.62	3.87	0.023*	0.05
Within groups	23.56	147	0.16			
Total	24.80	149				

(\* $p < 0.05$  statistically significant); Source: Author’s calculation

The ANOVA results indicate a **statistically significant difference** in the mean evaluation of non-conformity management effectiveness among the three job groups ( $p = 0.023$ ). The effect size ( $\eta^2 = 0.05$ ) suggests a **small to**

**moderate effect** of job position on perceived effectiveness.

To identify specific group differences, a **post hoc analysis** was performed using the **Tukey HSD test**. The results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Tukey HSD post hoc analysis

Group comparison	Mean difference	95% CI	p-value
Quality managers vs. Production employees	0.20	[0.02, 0.38]	0.026*
Quality control staff vs. Production employees	0.14	[-0.06, 0.34]	0.214
Quality managers vs. Quality control staff	0.06	[-0.16, 0.28]	0.791

(\* $p < 0.05$  statistically significant); Source: Author’s calculation

The post hoc analysis revealed that the only **statistically significant difference** in perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management occurred between **quality managers** and **production employees** ( $p = 0.026$ ), with quality managers reporting **higher mean effectiveness scores** (mean difference = 0.20). No statistically significant differences were found between **quality managers and quality control staff**, nor between **quality control staff and production employees**.

Accordingly, **Hypothesis H3 is accepted**, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management across job positions, with the most pronounced differences observed between managerial and production positions.

### 5.6. Comparative Overview of Hypothesis Testing

The results of all three hypothesis tests are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. Summary of hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Test	Result	p-value	Effect size*	Status
H1	T-test	t(148) = 4.92	< 0.001	d = 0.51	Accepted
H2	T-test	t(148) = 2.01	0.046	d = 0.33	Accepted
H3	ANOVA	F(2,147) = 3.87	0.023	$\eta^2 = 0.05$	Accepted

\* Effect size calculated as Cohen’s d (Cohen, 1988); Source: Author’s calculation

As shown in Table 9, all three hypotheses were statistically supported. The strongest effect was observed for formal authorization (H1,  $d = 0.51$ ), indicating its key role in shaping

employees’ perceptions of system effectiveness. According to Cohen’s interpretation (1988), this value represents a medium-to-large effect size. Formal halal education (H2,  $d = 0.33$ )

demonstrated a small-to-medium effect, while job position ( $H3$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.05$ ) exhibited a small effect size ( $0.01 = \text{small}$ ,  $0.06 = \text{medium}$ ,  $0.14 = \text{large}$ ).

### 5.7. Discussion and Recommendations

This study encompassed a wide range of industrial sectors, as clearly reflected in the sample structure by production categories (*Table 1*). This heterogeneity is particularly important because the complexity of halal requirements varies across different sectors of the halal food industry. The results clearly demonstrate that formal authorization and formal halal education have a statistically significant positive effect on how employees evaluate the effectiveness of non-conformity management.

The effect of **formal authorization** on the perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management proved to be the most pronounced (mean difference = 0.29,  $d = 0.51$ ), suggesting that granting employees clear authority and responsibility is crucial for fostering a sense of competence and confidence in resolving non-conformities. This finding is further supported by the lower standard deviation within the authorized group (0.35 vs. 0.72), indicating greater consistency in employee evaluations.

The effect of **formal education** (mean difference = 0.22) also proved significant, though somewhat weaker, implying that knowledge of halal standards is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the effective management of non-conformities.

The effect of **job position** ( $\eta^2 = 0.05$ ) confirms that statistically significant differences exist in perceived effectiveness across functional roles. The post hoc analysis revealed that the most notable difference occurs between quality managers and production employees (mean difference = 0.20,  $p = 0.026$ ). This finding reflects structural asymmetries in access and authority within the organizational hierarchy, where managerial positions tend to have a better understanding of systemic aspects of quality management.

The identified impact of formal authorization underscores its importance in strengthening the dimension of employee participation and in

establishing a direct channel of communication with management. These findings are fully consistent with Self-Determination Theory, according to which autonomy is a key predictor of engagement and work effectiveness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

As previously emphasized in this paper, organizational effectiveness is influenced by the factors of participation and empowerment (Bahtijarević-Šiber, 1999; Razalli et al., 2016). While formal authorization reinforces the dimension of responsibility and decision-making autonomy, employee education enhances understanding of halal standards and procedures, leading to greater internal motivation and a stronger sense of influence over process outcomes.

The research results also indicate that operational staff (production employees) report a significantly lower perception of non-conformity management effectiveness (*Table 6*). This finding highlights a potentially critical “participation gap” within halal quality management systems, whereby front-line production workers play a key role in identifying non-conformities but remain insufficiently integrated into the system of formal authorization and decision-making. Hypothetically, an educated employee may recognize a non-conformity, yet without formal authorization is unable to independently initiate corrective action. Conversely, granting formal authorization and integrating these employees into the halal team as competent and empowered members enables organizations to respond more rapidly and effectively.

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Targeted education - Food companies should provide targeted training for employees, focusing on the identification, monitoring, and resolution of halal non-conformities.

Systematic approach to authorization - It is recommended to expand formal authorization to a larger number of production employees, as they are positioned on the front line of non-conformity detection.

Monitoring and evaluation - Organizations should introduce performance measurement systems that monitor the number of non-

conformities, response speed, effectiveness of corrective measures, and perceived system effectiveness among different employee groups. From the above considerations, it can be concluded that granting formal authorization is not merely an administrative formality but a strategic process that strengthens employees' confidence in their role as custodian of halal integrity. This, in turn, has a positive systemic impact on the overall effectiveness and credibility of the halal quality management system (HQMS).

### **5.8. Study Limitations**

This study is based on the evaluation of employees' perceptions and did not include the measurement of actual performance outcomes. Because it relies on subjective perceptions, the findings may be affected by response bias and social desirability tendencies. The research was cross-sectional, which does not allow for conclusions about causal relationships.

Furthermore, the study covered only the food industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other production or service sectors.

Future research could examine the correlation between perceived effectiveness and objective quality indicators, such as the number of non-conformities, number of customer complaints, corrective action response time, and recurrence rate. Such an approach would help overcome some of the limitations of the present study. In addition, it would be useful to investigate this issue in other contexts, including service industries and different regional settings, in order to confirm the broader applicability of the results.

Despite these limitations, the present study provides valuable insights into the importance of formal authorization within the context of halal quality management and paves the way for further research in this area.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to examine the impact of formal authorization and formal halal education

on the effectiveness of non-conformity management in halal-certified companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The empirical analysis was conducted on a sample of 150 respondents from 44 companies operating across 11 food industry sectors.

The results indicate a statistically significant relationship between employees' formal authorization and their perceptions of the effectiveness of non-conformity management within the examined sample. Formally authorized employees assessed the system as more effective, confirming that clearly delegated authority contributes to stronger confidence in procedural control and corrective action. Similarly, formal halal education was found to have a positive influence on how employees evaluate system performance, although the effect was less pronounced than that of authorization. Educated employees demonstrated greater awareness of the mechanisms for identifying and addressing non-conformities. Taken together, these findings reinforce the conclusion that both authorization and education are important determinants of perceived system efficiency, with authorization emerging as the more influential factor.

Despite its limitations, the findings of this study suggest a significant association between formal authorization and perceived effectiveness of non-conformity management. Given the cross-sectional design of the study, the identified relationships should be interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

Theoretically, this research contributes to a better understanding of human resource management practices in the halal context, by operationalizing the constructs of employee authorization and their role in non-conformity management and empirically testing their interrelationship. Methodologically, the study offers a useful framework for assessing perceived non-conformity management effectiveness, based on two core dimensions: speed of identification and effectiveness of corrective action.

From a practical perspective, the study provides clear recommendations for managers of halal-certified food companies, emphasizing that systematic implementation of formal authorization and targeted halal education for

all employees involved in the halal production chain can significantly enhance both process efficiency and system integrity. The findings presented in this study also highlight a potential area for improvement through the broader application of authorization mechanisms across all functional levels.

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## **Utjecaj formalnog ovlaštenja i halal edukacije na efikasno upravljanje neusklađenostima u halal prehrambenoj industriji**

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### **Sažetak**

U ovom radu predstavljeni su rezultati analize utjecaja formalnog ovlaštenja i halal edukacije zaposlenih na efikasnost upravljanja neusklađenostima u primjeni halal standarda u prehrambenoj industriji Bosne i Hercegovine. Istraživanje polazi od pretpostavke da formalno ovlaštenje halal kompetentnih zaposlenika, operacionalizirano kroz članstvo u halal timu, pozitivno utječe na sposobnost organizacije da pravovremeno identificira i efikasno rješava odstupanja od zahtjeva halal standarda. Metodološki okvir zasniva se na anketnom uzorku od 150 zaposlenih iz 44 halal certificirane prehrambene kompanije u Bosni i Hercegovini. Podaci su analizirani primjenom t-testa za nezavisne uzorke i analize varijanse (ANOVA). Rezultati pokazuju da postoji statistički značajna pozitivna razlika u prosječnoj ocjeni efikasnosti upravljanja neusklađenostima između zaposlenih koji posjeduju formalno ovlaštenje i onih koji ga nemaju. Dodatna analiza obuhvatila je utjecaj formalne halal edukacije, za koju je također utvrđen statistički značajan pozitivan efekat, iako manjeg intenziteta. Utvrđene su, također, značajne razlike percepcije efikasnosti u odnosu na radno mjesto, pri čemu su menadžeri kvaliteta davali veće ocjene efikasnosti od zaposlenih u proizvodnji. U cjelini, nalazi jasno pokazuju da formalno ovlaštenje predstavlja ključni faktor koji doprinosi većoj percipiranoj efikasnosti sistema upravljanja neusklađenostima. Rad nudi praktične preporuke za unapređenje postojećih praksi, uključujući proširenje formalnih ovlaštenja i ciljane edukacije na sve zaposlene uključene u lanac halal proizvodnje, s posebnim naglaskom na operativno osoblje.

**Ključne riječi:** formalno ovlaštenje; halal edukacija; upravljanje neusklađenostima; halal kvalitet; Bosna i Hercegovina

### **Vanjski doprinos radu**

Ova studija donosi novi empirijski uvid zasnovan na podacima prikupljenim u okviru autorovog istraživanja za potrebe izrade magistarskog rada na Ekonomskom fakultetu Univerziteta u Tuzli (odbranjeno u oktobru 2025. godine). Analitički pristup u ovom radu nije korišten u magistarskom radu.



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**Awareness Of Halal Certified Products And Services In Europe**

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**Abstract**

Halal certification has been around in Europe for over 40 years, catering to the needs of Muslim consumers. With more Muslims living and working in Europe and an increase in tourists from OIC countries, halal food and services are now easier to find, especially in places like the UK, France, and Germany. Halal-certified items are available in supermarkets and restaurants, which helps Muslims meet their dietary needs. But with the rise of digital info and the ease of access to it, people can interpret halal standards however they want, even if they're not really knowledgeable. This can confuse consumers since there isn't one universal halal standard in Europe. Plus, the different halal certification bodies and their varying requirements make it even harder to know what's genuinely halal. This paper looks at how aware Muslims in Europe are about halal products and services. By using a survey, we want to gather insights on how much they know about halal certification and how much trust they place in it.

**Keywords:** *halal, awareness, certification, products, services*

**Introduction**

The halal products and services market in Europe has undergone a profound transformation over the last several decades. Initially viewed through the narrow lens of religious observance, halal has evolved into a broader marker of ethical consumption, hygiene, and quality assurance. This shift is driven in part by Europe's growing Muslim population and the rising number of visitors from Muslim-majority countries. Supermarkets, restaurants, and food service sectors in countries such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany have responded

by expanding their halal-certified offerings, increasingly integrating them into mainstream consumer channels (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). Despite this progress, the halal market in Europe remains fragmented. The absence of a unified certification authority has led to a proliferation of certification bodies, each with its own interpretation of halal standards. This lack of harmonization has sown confusion among consumers, complicating their purchasing decisions and reducing trust in the halal label (Knowles et al., 2014). The problem is further exacerbated by the digital landscape, where uncertified claims and misinformation

circulate freely, challenging consumers' ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources.

Recent findings highlight inconsistencies in certification practices and the absence of a pan-European regulatory framework that undermine consumer confidence and allow misuse of halal labeling (Dugonjić & Bećirović, 2023). Additional research supports that Muslim consumers perceive halal certification not only as a religious necessity but also as a cultural indicator of credibility, identity, and ethics (Alqudsi, 2014).

The objective of this study is to assess the level of awareness, trust, and behavior among European Muslim consumers toward halal-certified products and services. This includes evaluating attitudes toward certification labels, willingness to pay for certified options, and the influence of religious, ethical, and quality perceptions on purchasing decisions. The paper integrates findings from a targeted survey with insights from existing literature to provide a deeper understanding of consumer dynamics and expectations within the European halal market.

## Materials and Methods

We used a structured online survey to gather data from people living in different European countries. The survey was done through Google Forms and kept anonymous to encourage honest answers. It contained 15 closed-ended questions across five sections: demographic info (age, gender, education, employment), halal consumption habits, knowledge of halal certification, trust in certifying bodies, and willingness to pay for halal-certified goods and services.

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Overview

The sample included 53.6% males and 46.4% females. Most (53.6%) were aged 30–50, followed by 50–70 (35.7%) and 18–30 (10.7%). Education levels were high, with 71.5% having tertiary degrees, and 85.7% reported they were

employed. This means we have a group that can think critically about certification and labeling systems.

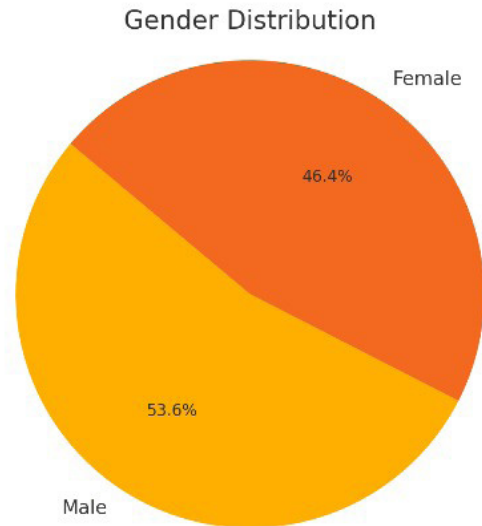


Fig. 1. Gender Distribution

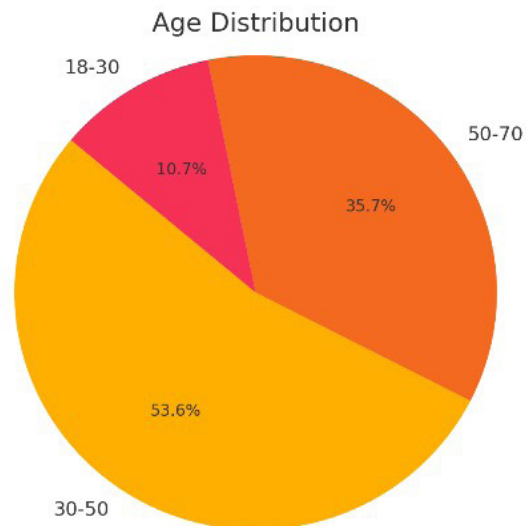


Fig. 2. Age Distribution

### Halal Consumption Behavior

About half of the respondents (48.3%) said they only consume halal-certified products, while 51.7% do not, often due to trusting their vendors or not being able to find halal options. This matches findings from other regions where community trust sometimes takes the place of formal certification. This aligns with Alqudsi (2014), who observed similar trends in Southeast Asian markets where trust in community vendors often replaces formal certification.

Halal Certified Consumption

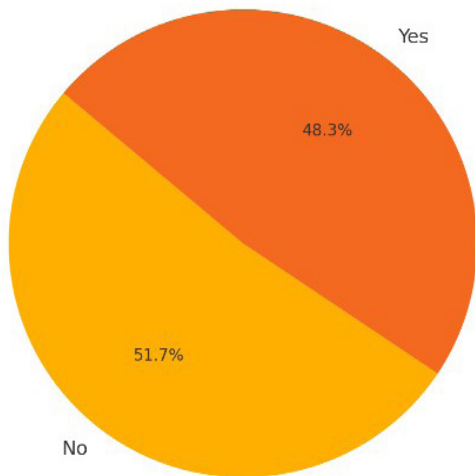


Fig. 3. Do You Consume Only Halal Certified Products?

Familiarity with Certification

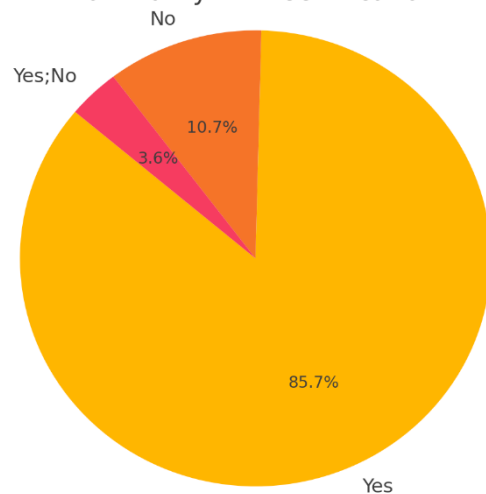


Fig. 5. Familiarity with Certification

Preferred Purchase Locations

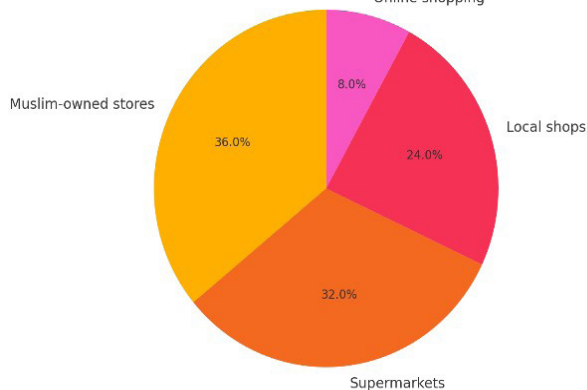


Fig. 4. Preferred Purchase Locations

Trust in Certification Bodies

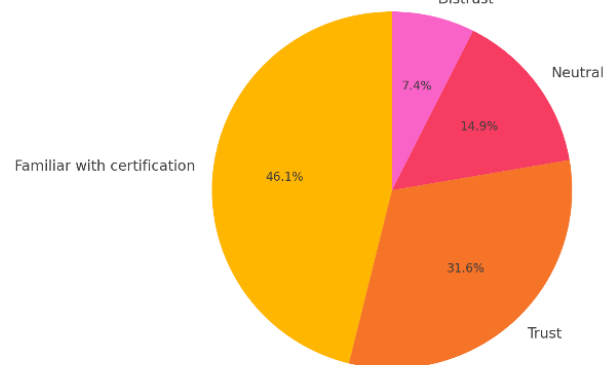


Fig. 6. Trust in Halal Certification Bodies

Muslim-owned stores (36%) were the preferred shopping spot, followed by supermarkets (32%) and local shops (24%). Only 8% liked online shopping, showing that trust and access are key.

### Certification Awareness and Trust

A big portion (85.7%) knew about halal certification processes, but only 58.6% trusted certification bodies, with 13.8% distrustful and 27.6% neutral. This shows that local trust varies and often hinges on specific certifiers.

These results are consistent with Dugonjić (2023), who emphasized that lack of harmonized standards leads to skepticism. Trust is often localized, dependent on specific certifiers or religious authorities.

### Dining Preferences and Certification Importance

Restaurant Certification Importance

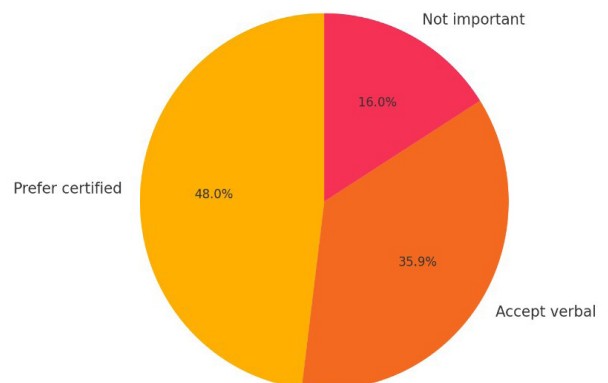


Fig. 7. Restaurant Certification Preferences

42.9% of respondents preferred halal-certified restaurants, while 32.1% accepted verbal confirmations. Only 14.3% thought certification

wasn't important. For hotels, 32.1% wanted halal-certified options, but 25% didn't care about it. This indicates room for growth in certified hospitality offerings.

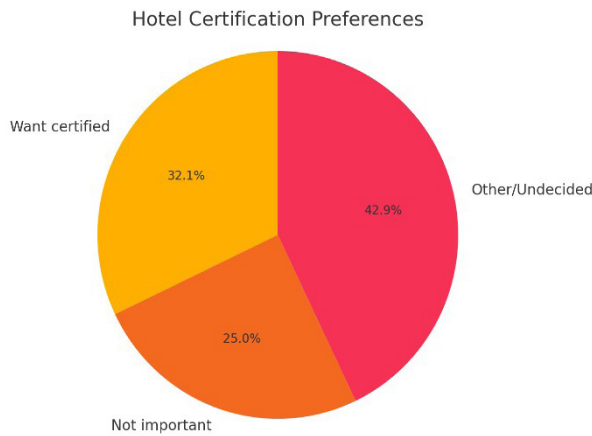


Fig. 8. Hotel Preferences

### 3.5 Type of Halal Meat

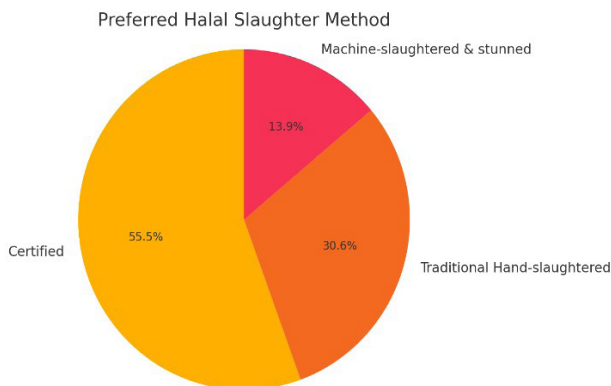


Fig. 9. Halal Meat Preferences

While 55.6% prioritized certification, 30.6% preferred hand-slaughtered methods without stunning. Only 13.9% accepted machine-slaughtered products. This variety shows different expectations among consumers.

### Willingness to Pay for Certification

75% of participants said they would pay more for certified halal products, showing that authenticity holds value for them. Similarly, 67.9% were willing to pay more for halal-certified hotels and restaurants.

A study by Bonne and Verbeke (2008) identified a similar trend, characterizing halal as a signal of higher quality and safety, particularly in

the context of meat production and ethical assurance.

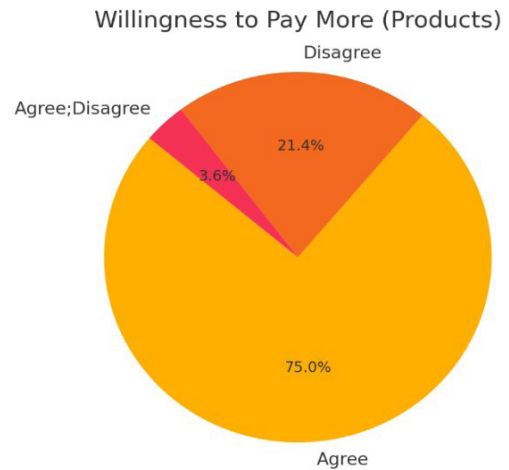


Fig. 10. Willingness to Pay for Certified Products

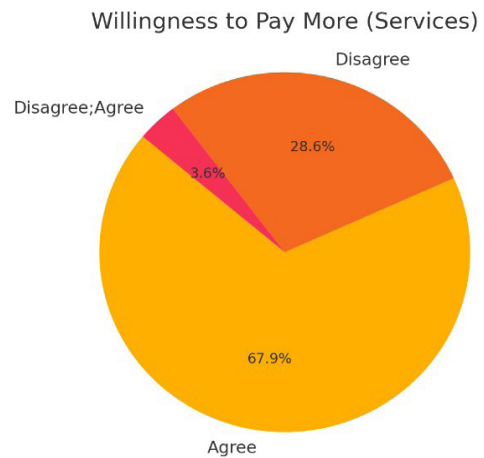


Fig. 11. Willingness to Pay for Services

### Awareness of Halal Meaning

85.7% viewed halal as a religious obligation, while 14.2% linked it to added value or quality.

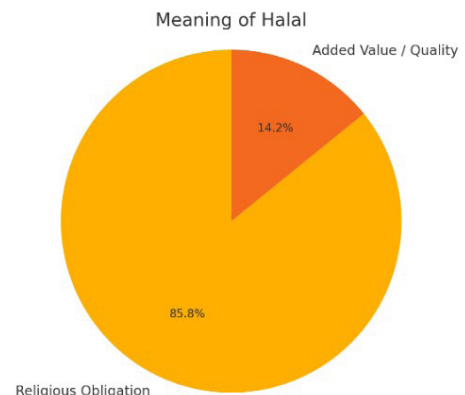


Fig. 12. Meaning of Halal

### Satisfaction with Availability

57.1% reported being dissatisfied with the availability of halal products, indicating that there's a need for better distribution, especially in areas outside of the city or in niche markets like cosmetics or medications

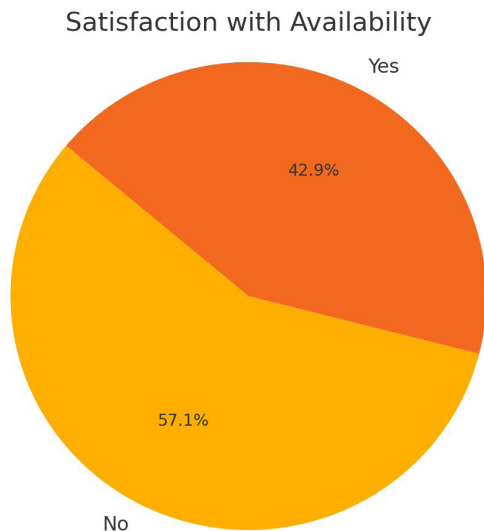


Fig. 13. Satisfaction with Availability

### Conclusion

This study shows that Muslim consumers in Europe are becoming more informed and selective about halal-certified products and services. While there's a good understanding of certification practices, trust issues arise from the lack of consistency and transparency.

Comparative literature supports these findings. Research has consistently shown that certification credibility, product traceability, and transparency are essential to building consumer trust (Alqudsi, 2014; Knowles et al., 2014). The continued fragmentation of the halal market in Europe contributes to confusion and skepticism, particularly among younger and more educated consumer groups, as evidenced by recent findings on certification diversity and consumer trust.

Nevertheless, the results reveal positive signals for producers and policymakers. A clear willingness to pay for certified options and growing demand for transparency present strong incentives for establishing unified certification

frameworks. Furthermore, the emerging interest in hospitality services points to a broadening of halal concerns beyond food, calling for more inclusive certification scopes.

It is also worth noting that the concept of halal is evolving. The growing association between halal and quality, animal welfare, and ethical production reflects a shift in consumer values. This development mirrors what other consumer behavior studies have identified as a trend toward ethical and lifestyle-driven purchasing, rather than purely religious obligation. This insight opens opportunities for cross-sector collaboration, including tourism, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals, where halal certification may become a marker of integrity and care.

In sum, halal consumption in Europe is shaped by a blend of religious commitment and ethical consumerism. Businesses and institutions that recognize this duality—and respond with consistent, trustworthy certification practices—will be better positioned to meet market expectations and foster lasting consumer trust.

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## **Svijest o halal certificiranim proizvodima i uslugama u Evropi**

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### **Sažetak**

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Halal certifikacija postoji u Evropi već više od 40 godina, prilagođavajući se potrebama muslimanskih potrošača. S obzirom na to da sve više muslimana živi i radi u Evropi, kao i na porast broja turista iz zemalja članica OIC-a, halal hrana i usluge sada su lakše dostupni, posebno u mjestima poput Velike Britanije, Francuske i Njemačke. Proizvodi s halal certifikatom dostupni su u supermarketima i restoranima, što pomaže muslimanima da zadovolje svoje prehrambene potrebe. Međutim, s porastom digitalnih informacija i lakim pristupom njima, ljudi mogu tumačiti halal standarde kako god žele, čak i ako zapravo nemaju dovoljno znanja. To može zbuniti potrošače, budući da u Evropi ne postoji jedinstveni halal standard. Osim toga, različita halal certifikacijska tijela i njihove različite zahtjeve dodatno otežavaju prepoznavanje onoga što je zaista halal. Ovaj rad istražuje koliko su muslimani u Evropi svjesni halal proizvoda i usluga. Korištenjem ankete, želimo prikupiti uvide o tome koliko znaju o halal certifikaciji i koliko povjerenja imaju u nju.

**Ključne riječi:** halal, svijest, certifikacija, proizvodi, usluge

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## JOURNAL OF HALAL QUALITY AND CERTIFICATION

### Halal Tourism Services from the standardization point of view

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*Professional paper*

#### ABSTRACT

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations which has membership of 57 countries spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world ensuring to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world. The Standard and Metrology Institute for Islamic countries also seeks for achieving uniformity in metrology, laboratory testing and standardization activities among member states and ensuring education and training and providing technical assistance to the OIC members in the domain of standardization and metrology. OIC/SMIIC Standards are prepared by the Institute's Technical Committees that are composed of its member states. The experts assigned by the member states participate in the standardization technical work and establish the common OIC/SMIIC Standards aimed to be used by member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the relevant stakeholders in the world. Technical Committee 5 is entitled as "Tourism and Related Issues". At first, the committee prepared the draft standard on Halal tourism services. Following submission of the document for the review and approval of the member states, the draft has been approved and published as the standard with reference no "OIC/SMIIC 9: 2019 – Halal Tourism Services General Requirements" by 22 December 2019.

**Keywords:** *OIC, SMIIC, Standardization, Halal Tourism Services*

#### Introduction

The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), operating under the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), is mandated to harmonize standardization, metrology, and conformity assessment activities among its member states. In addition to establishing uniform standards, SMIIC also provides technical assistance and capacity-

building programs to its members. The establishment of common OIC/SMIIC standards for the Halal industry is achieved by the SMIIC Technical Committees through the convergence of technical requirements and Islamic rules. Halal tourism services are also seen as a subject within the working area of SMIIC Technical Committees. In this study, the technical studies on Halal tourism in SMIIC are mentioned from the perspective of standardization.

## **Organization of Islamic Cooperation**

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second-largest international organization after the United Nations, with 57 member states located across four continents. Committed to promoting harmony and international peace among diverse societies, the OIC aims to protect and safeguard the interests of the Islamic world. The organization includes various sub-bodies, such as the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) and the Islamic Trade Development Center (ICDT), as well as standing committees like the Standing Committee on Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC). Furthermore, it encompasses specialized organizations, including the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), and affiliated organizations such as SMIIIC and the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), each focusing on specific areas of work. The OIC has formally designated the SMIIIC as the authorised body for standardisation, with a particular focus on the development of standards pertaining to the Halal industry.

## **Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries**

SMIIIC, as an institute that develops necessary mechanisms for OIC countries, has the objective of establishing new standards in OIC member states and eliminating technical barriers to trade, with a view to increasing trade among them. The Institute's objectives also include the establishment of conformity assessment schemes, with a view to facilitating the exchange of materials, manufactured goods and products among member states.

The main tasks of SMIIIC can be summarized as follows:

- To create common OIC/SMIIIC standards and ensure that OIC member states benefit from them, thereby assisting in removing technical barriers to trade between countries
- To ensure uniformity/homogeneity among member states in standardization, metrology, laboratories, testing, and accreditation activities.
- Providing technical support to OIC member

countries that do not have standardization institutions in the short term and assisting them in establishing their own institutions and reaching a competitive level in the long term.

- Raising awareness in the fields of standardization and related areas by organizing training, conferences, congresses,...etc.

SMIIIC is headquartered in Istanbul and is an intergovernmental organization with diplomatic, independent, and technical functions, managed by its member countries through relevant national institutions working in the field of standardization, metrology or accreditation. The member states are represented in the General Assembly, the Board of Directors, Councils and Committees and contribute to SMIIIC technical work through their designated national institutions.

## **Standardization**

A standard is a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use: rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.

Standardization is the process of establishing standards through collaborative efforts with stakeholders, including producers, users, consumers, governmental and non-governmental organisations, institutions, and other relevant parties. This process plays a crucial role in many areas, such as improving product quality in industrial settings, building consumer confidence, optimizing production processes, facilitating international trade, and promoting health, safety, environmental protection, and information technology.

## **SMIIIC Standardization activities and Halal Industry**

As the Halal industry continues to grow, the need for standardization in related areas has become increasingly important. To address this need, the SMIIIC Technical Committees were established. The primary role of these Technical

Committees is to prepare, develop, and systematically review OIC/SMIIC Standards based on activities within their specific fields. The Committees are responsible for revising these standards as necessary. The committees are required to operate in accordance with SMIIC Directives (Directives 1 and 2), which delineate the procedures for the preparation of standards and the overall structure of those standards. Each Technical Committee consists of a secretary, a chairperson, national delegates who are appointed by SMIIC member states and if any, liaison organizations. Each committee functions as an autonomous organisation comprising members from relevant organisations across member states. It is recommended that SMIIC member countries establish national committee structures with a view to the effective monitoring of the activities of the SMIIC Technical Committees. This enables them to advocate for their national perspectives within the context of standardisation initiatives, thereby ensuring the effective implementation of these standards. All stakeholders have the capacity to contribute to standards, either directly or indirectly. All committees are required to conduct their work through the SMIIC Information System, an online platform comprising various sections, including the Project Portal, Email, Electronic Voting Portal and Committee Pages.

SMIIC is responsible for the oversight of standardisation activities across a range of sectors through the medium of its specialised Technical Committees. The areas of focus of these committees include, but are not limited to, the following: Halal food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, tourism and related services, Halal supply chain, Halal management systems, and so forth. The SMIIC has published standards on a range of topics relevant to the Halal industry, including Halal food, certification, accreditation, cosmetics, food additives, pharmaceuticals, leather products and tourism services. The aforementioned standards have been developed for the purpose of ensuring consistency, compliance, and quality within the Halal market.

## **OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 – Halal Tourism Services – General Requirements**

The rise in income and improvements in transportation have led to a diversification of tourism, resulting in a significant increase in the number of travellers. Muslim tourists visiting countries with different cultures and belief systems have a need for Halal products and services. Standardising Halal tourism services is essential to address this demand.

The document “Roadmap for the Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Countries,” approved at the 10th OIC Tourism Ministers’ Meeting, is unequivocal in its assertion that establishing OIC/SMIIC Standards is vital for ensuring uniformity in Halal tourism services and products.

Technical Committee 5 – Tourism and Related Services is responsible for standardising Halal tourism. In line with relevant OIC decisions, the Technical Committee 5 has created a Draft Standard for Halal tourism services. The following documents were used as the basis of the initial draft:

MS 2610:2015 – Muslim friendly hospitality services-requirements.

OIC/COMCEC/33-17/D (18) – COMCEC MFT Guideline for regulating accommodation establishments, COMCEC Coordination Office, February 2017

Guide for halal certification for tourist and catering services issued December 2010, Agency for halal quality certification, Bosnia and Herzegovina

This Draft Standard was submitted to member states for review and approval and was published on December 22, 2019, under the title “OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 – Halal Tourism Services – General Requirements.” The committee is currently working on projects related to Halal Medical Tourism and Halal Tourism – Classification for Wellness Spa.

Halal tourism services encompass a broad range of sectors, including but not limited to Halal food, cosmetics and personal care products, accommodations, tour packages, guides,

restaurants, recreational facilities, business operations, and personnel qualifications. The OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 standard is a document that serves as a point of reference for service providers, consumers, and certification bodies. Its purpose is to ensure that services are delivered in a manner that is Halal-compliant, in accordance with Islamic rules, and that meets consumer expectations.

Muslim travellers prioritise access to Halal food. Furthermore, it is evident that personal care products offered at accommodations must also meet Halal requirements. Accordingly, the document makes reference to OIC/SMIIC 1:2019 – General Requirements for Halal Food and OIC/SMIIC 4:2018 – Halal Cosmetics – General Requirements.

To facilitate consistent application, the standard also defines key terms relevant to Halal tourism, such as “Accommodation Facilities,” “Halal Restaurant,” “Halal Tourism Services,” and “Prayer Rug.”...etc.

One of the fundamental conditions delineated in the standard is that all organisations providing Halal tourism services are obligated to comply with the applicable national laws and regulations. Moreover, the standard is organised in accordance with the following primary categories:

- **Facilities for accommodation and associated services** – The aforementioned facilities encompass a wide range of amenities, including but not limited to: accommodation, dining options, personal care products, restroom facilities, recreational areas, culinary facilities, swimming pools, sports and recreational areas, and designated spaces for prayer.
- **Tour Services** – The development of tour packages encompassing accommodation, meals, and activities in accordance with Islamic Rules.
- **Tourist Guide Services** – The employment of licensed guides who act in accordance with Islamic Rules
- **The management responsibilities in Halal Tourism Services** – The demonstration of leadership and commitment by the top

management with respect to Halal tourism services

- **Personnel Requirements in Halal Tourism Services** – Requirements to ensure skilled personnel that are aware of Halal Tourism Services.

The distinguishing feature of this standard is that the accommodation facilities to which it is applied are categorised according to the Halal tourism services they provide. The categorisation is outlined as follows:

- Category A: Accommodation Premises with Halal Tourism Advanced Scale Services
- Category B: Accommodation Premises with Halal Tourism Medium Scale Services
- Category C: Accommodation Premises with Halal Tourism Basic Scale Services

According to the aforementioned categorisation, accommodation facilities that fulfil all the requirements of the standard and provide all the services specified for Halal tourism are evaluated according to Category A. By contrast, Category B is applied to facilities that do not meet all the requirements of Category A but provide the services specified for medium-scale facilities, and Category C is applied to facilities that provide only basic services. Information pertaining to the categories is provided in the annexes of the standard. The categorisation of services in this manner is explicable by the fact that Muslim tourists can access Halal tourism services, even at the most basic level. For example, when traveling to a country outside the OIC region, one might only find accommodation facilities that meet the minimum requirements designated as Category C, which offer basic services tailored to the needs of Muslim tourists. In contrast, in countries within the OIC region, it is more likely to find accommodation facilities classified under Category A or B, which provide more comprehensive Halal-compliant services. In light of the prevailing circumstances within the tourism sector, it is evident that the comprehensive transformation of the sector at the Category A level is not a viable proposition. Muslim tourists are thus presented with a range of accommodation options, enabling them to access Halal tourism services.

## **Conclusion**

The evolution of the concept of ‘Halal’ has been shaped by the advent of industrial development and globalisation, which have led to its transformation into a significant industry. In the context of contemporary Halal product and service provisions, the necessity of common standards that are recognised by the relevant parties is evident. Consequently, the OIC/SMIIC Standards, which SMIIC has established under the OIC for the specific purpose of the Halal industry, have been developed with the contributions of relevant stakeholders and in accordance with international standardization practices. These standards are intended for utilisation by all OIC member countries and other relevant parties on a global scale. The ‘OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 - Halal Tourism Services - General Requirements’ standard, which emerged in the field of Halal tourism services, has been a very important standard that stands out in the development of Halal tourism and the categorisation of Halal tourism services offered in accommodation facilities brought by the standard, in order for Muslim tourists to have more access to these services.

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SMIIC TC 5, OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 – Halal Tourism Services – General Requirements

SMIIC General Secretariat, 2017, SMIIC Statute

## **Halal Tourism Services from the standardization point of view**

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### **Abstract**

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Organizacija islamske saradnje (OIC) je druga najveća međuvladina organizacija na svijetu, odmah nakon Ujedinjenih nacija, sa članstvom od 57 zemalja raspoređenih na četiri kontinenta. Ova organizacija predstavlja kolektivni glas muslimanskog svijeta i djeluje s ciljem zaštite i očuvanja interesa muslimanskog svijeta, u duhu promoviranja međunarodnog mira i harmonije među različitim narodima svijeta. Institut za standarde i mjeriteljstvo islamskih zemalja (SMIIC) nastoji postići ujednačenost u oblasti mjeriteljstva, laboratorijskih ispitivanja i aktivnosti standardizacije među državama članicama, te osigurati edukaciju i obuku, kao i pružanje tehničke pomoći članicama OIC-a u oblasti standardizacije i mjeriteljstva. OIC/SMIIC standarde pripremaju tehnički komiteti Instituta, koje čine predstavnici država članica. Stručnjaci koje imenuju države članice učestvuju u tehničkom radu na standardizaciji i uspostavljaju zajedničke OIC/SMIIC standarde namijenjene primjeni u državama članicama Organizacije islamske saradnje, kao i drugih zainteresiranih strana širom svijeta. Tehnički komitet 5 nosi naziv „Turizam i srodna pitanja“. Kao jedan od svojih prvih zadataka, Komitet je pripremio nacrt standarda za halal turističke usluge. Nakon što je dokument dostavljen državama članicama na razmatranje i odobrenje, nacrt je usvojen i objavljen kao standard pod oznakom „OIC/SMIIC 9:2019 – Halal turističke usluge – Opći zahtjevi“, dana 22. decembra 2019. godine.

**Ključne riječi:** OIC, SMIIC, standardizacija, halal turističke usluge

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**JOURNAL  
OF HALAL QUALITY AND CERTIFICATION**

**Applicability of the “Risks and Opportunities” chapter of the ISO 9001 standard  
in the Halal system**

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*Professional paper*

**Abstract**

An organization implementing a Halal system must manage risks that may affect the Halal status of the product, the trust of customers and consumers of the Islamic faith, compliance with Islamic regulations, legal requirements and the reputation of the organization. The “Risks and Opportunities” chapter of the ISO 9001:2015 standard in the halal management system helps the organization to act preventively to preserve the Halal integrity of the product, ensure compliance with religious and legal requirements, and take advantage of market opportunities. The integration of ISO 9001 requirements on risks and opportunities into the Halal system allows for a systematic approach to ensuring the correctness of the product with Islamic regulations. This not only meets the formal requirements of certification, but also builds consumer trust, strengthens the market position, and improves internal organization and quality management.

**Key words:** Halal, risks, opportunities, processes.

**Introduction**

The implementation of halal standards in the food and logistics industries is gaining increasing importance due to the growing consumer demand for products that comply with Islamic principles. (Fischer, 2011; Riaz & Chaudry, 2004). Halal is not only a religious concept, but also a comprehensive management system that includes quality, food safety and traceability (Tieman et al., 2012; Zailani et al., 2010). However, the process of implementing halal requirements brings with it numerous challenges, including the risk of contamination, non-compliant suppliers, as well as low

employee awareness of the procedures (Salleh, 2014; Khan, 2016).

On the other hand, organizations that successfully implement the halal standard have the opportunity to expand their business to global markets, gain consumer trust, and develop brands based on ethical values (Alserhan, 2010; Wilson & Liu, 2010). ISO 9001:2015, through its requirement on the identification of risks and opportunities (Clause 6.1), provides a framework for the systematic management of these challenges and opportunities (ISO, 2015; Fathi et al., 2016). Halal logistics standardization and supply chain transparency further strengthen integrity and competitive

advantage (Ab Talib & Chin, 2018; Talib et al., 2015).

This paper aims to identify the key risks and opportunities that arise during the implementation of the halal standard, analyze them in the light of ISO 9001 requirements, and propose measures for their effective management in practice.

Among the main risks are the non-compliance of suppliers with halal requirements, contamination of products with haram (forbidden) substances, and insufficient education of employees. Also, unclear regulations or multiple certification schemes can cause confusion and reduce consumer confidence. The risk of non-compliance with Shariah principles can lead to loss of market and reputation.

On the other hand, organizations that consistently apply halal standards have the opportunity to access the rapidly growing global halal market. Opportunities include new product development, brand differentiation and strengthening relationships with Muslim consumers. By introducing clear procedures and monitoring halal integrity throughout the entire supply chain, companies can increase the overall quality and safety of their products. Standardization and digital traceability

further increase transparency and competitive advantage. By properly managing risks and taking advantage of opportunities, halal certification becomes a tool for sustainable growth and international expansion.

The successful application of halal standards requires the integration of religious, technical and regulatory aspects into all business processes. One of the risks is insufficient standardization in inspection and certification bodies, which can lead to different interpretations and uneven practices. Companies that do not ensure complete separation of halal and non-halal products in production and logistics flows can face serious consequences for credibility. The implementation of halal requirements can increase operational costs, but at the same time it contributes to greater systematicity and discipline in the processes.

### **Materials and methods**

According to the requirements to ISO 9001:2015 and halal standard, some possible risks and opportunities have been chose in tables and corrective measures have been also presented. In the following table, a process structure is presented showing possible risks that may arise during the implementation of the halal standard in an organization.

Table 1. Possible risks that may arise during the implementation of the halal standard in an organization

<b>Process</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Control Measures</b>
Production	Risk: Contamination with haram ingredients	Accidental use or presence of pork, alcohol, or non-halal additives	Separation of production lines, cleaning validation, inspection of ingredients
Suppliers	Risk: Supplier without halal certification	Procurement of raw materials from unverified sources	Contracts with halal requirements, supplier audits, mandatory halal certificates
Employee training	Risk: Lack of employee awareness	Errors in handling or labeling halal products	Regular training, knowledge testing, visible work instructions
Documentation and labeling	Risk: Incorrect product labeling	Labels do not correctly indicate halal status	Review and verification of all declarations, standardized labeling templates
Infrastructure	Risk: Shared equipment for halal and non-halal products	Potential for cross-contamination	Physical separation, production scheduling, cleaning validation
Marketing and sales	Risk: Negative perception due to incorrect communication	Misleading advertising may damage company reputation	Advertising control, halal communication strategy
Handling and storage	Risk: Mixing halal and haram products in storage	Poor identification and segregation of products	Zoning and labeling, physical barriers, controls during receipt and dispatch

In the following table, a process structure is presented showing possible opportunities that

may arise during the implementation of the halal standard in an organization.

Table 2. Possible opportunities that may arise during the implementation of the halal standard in an organization

Process	Opportunity	Description	Management Measures
Process management	Opportunity: Automation of halal requirement controls	Technology reduces human error	Investment in software for batch tracking and traceability
Market	Opportunity: Expansion into halal markets (e.g. EU and others)	High demand for certified halal products	Certification according to recognized standards, adaptation of packaging and language
Community relations	Opportunity: Cooperation with Islamic communities and certification bodies	Increased trust and promotion of shared values	Establishment of partnerships, participation in halal fairs and training
Incident management	Opportunity: Reporting deviations from halal requirements	Concealment of issues may lead to scandals and loss of certification	Nonconformity reporting system, root cause analysis, transparent reporting
Human resources	Opportunity: Employment of staff familiar with Sharia principles	Easier maintenance of halal practices and training of others	Preferential recruitment of personnel competent in halal matters

**Dicussion**

The lack of clear guidelines on halal logistics in international frameworks represents another challenge for exporters. Investments in employee training and digital tracking systems can help manage the complex requirements of halal certification. Companies that implement the halal system often develop a culture of compliance and ethical business, which contributes to overall organizational responsibility. Opportunities are also found in the development of halal tourism, pharmaceutical and cosmetic products. Partnership with recognized certification bodies and transparent communication with the market further increase the value of the brand. Ultimately, the halal standard should not be seen only as an obligation, but as a strategic advantage that improves the overall quality management system.

Applying the requirements of the “Risks and opportunities” chapter from the ISO 9001:2015 standard in halal management systems helps the organization to act preventively in preserving the halal integrity of products, ensure compliance with religious and legal requirements, and take advantage of market opportunities.

***Focus on prevention, not just correction***

Risks such as contamination with haram

substances, unreliable suppliers, inadequate labeling and low level of employee awareness show where an organization can experience failure in preserving the halal status of a product. ISO 9001 requires that such risks are identified in advance, analyzed and controlled through systemic measures (eg cleaning validation, supplier monitoring, staff training).

***Strengthening the market position through the recognition of opportunities***

On the other hand, the concept of “opportunity” allows the organization to develop. In the halal context, this means, for example, expansion into new halal markets, introduction of technological innovations, and cooperation with Islamic communities and certification bodies. Taking advantage of these opportunities can increase your competitive advantage and open up new markets.

***Integration with other processes***

Risks and opportunities in the halal system are not isolated phenomena - they are directly related to:

- production processes,
- human resources,
- infrastructure,
- external communications and

- incident management.

For example, the risk of non-reporting of deviations has direct reputational consequences, but can be managed through building a culture of transparency and accountability, which is part of both the ISO and halal philosophies.

### ***Documentation and monitoring of measures***

ISO 9001 requires not only the identification of risks and opportunities, but also the planning of measures, their implementation and evaluation of effectiveness. In the halal context, this means keeping records of inspections, trainings, cleanliness checks, supplier validation, etc. These activities must be documented and regularly reviewed to maintain the integrity of the system.

The identification of risks and opportunities during the implementation of the halal standard plays a crucial role in ensuring system effectiveness and sustainability. The risks presented, such as contamination with haram substances, inadequate supplier control, insufficient employee awareness, and improper labeling, directly threaten halal integrity and consumer trust. If not properly managed, these risks may lead to non-compliance, loss of certification, and reputational damage. On the other hand, the identified opportunities demonstrate that halal implementation can provide significant strategic benefits beyond compliance. Process automation, market expansion, strengthened relationships with certification bodies and Islamic communities, and the development of competent human resources contribute to improved operational control and competitive advantage. Effective management of risks and proactive exploitation of opportunities support continuous improvement and align well with the risk-based thinking approach required by ISO 9001. Overall, the results indicate that a structured, process-oriented approach to halal implementation enables organizations not only to protect halal integrity but also to enhance organizational performance, transparency, and market positioning.

### **Conclusion**

By applying the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 requirements related to the management of risks and opportunities within halal standard represents a powerful tool for preserving the halal integrity of products and strengthening an organization's competitive advantage. Through a systematic approach, organizations can enhance the safety of halal products, ensure compliance with Islamic rules and legal requirements, and build long-term consumer trust.

The paper demonstrates that halal certification should not be perceived solely as a regulatory obligation, but rather as a strategic component of the quality management system that contributes to sustainable growth and the international recognition of the organization.

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## **Applicability of the “Risks and Opportunities” chapter of the ISO 9001 standard in the Halal system**

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### **Sažetak**

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Organizacija koja implementira halal sistem mora upravljati rizicima koji mogu uticati na halal status proizvoda, povjerenje kupaca i potrošača islamske vjeroispovijesti, usklađenost sa islamskim propisima, zakonskim zahtjevima i reputaciju organizacije. Poglavlje „Rizici i prilike“ iz standarda ISO 9001:2015 u halal sistem upravljanja pomaže organizaciji da preventivno djeluje u očuvanju halal integriteta proizvoda, osigura usklađenost s vjerskim i zakonskim zahtjevima, te iskoristi tržišne šanse. Integracija ISO 9001 zahtjeva o rizicima i prilikama u halal sistem omogućava sistemski pristup osiguranju ispravnosti proizvoda sa islamskim propisima. Time se ne samo ispunjavaju formalni zahtjevi certifikacije, već se i gradi povjerenje potrošača, jača tržišna pozicija, te unapređuje interna organizacija i upravljanje kvalitetom.

**Ključne riječi,** Halal, rizici, prilike, procesi.

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**Touristic Valorization Of Specific Ramadan Traditions And The Development  
Of Halal Tourism Through The Project „Visit Sarajevo: Feel The Spirit Of  
Ramadan“**

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*Professional paper*

**Abstract**

The project „Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan“, which emerged as a result of cooperation between the Tourism Association of Sarajevo Canton and the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aims to enhance the tourism potential of Sarajevo by focusing on specific Ramadan traditions and religious tourism. This initiative highlights the cultural richness and significance of Ramadan in Bosnia and Herzegovina, offering tourists an immersive experience of the city’s spiritual atmosphere during this holy month. Through a series of religious and cultural events and programs, the festival promotes the beauty of Ramadan and the tourism offerings of Sarajevo Canton, contributing to the development of specific forms of tourism and the promotion of Sarajevo as a halal-friendly tourist destination. Special emphasis is placed on specific Ramadan traditions in Sarajevo, such as Ramadan evenings, recitations of the Quran (mukabela), Tarawih prayers, Iftar gatherings, musical programs, and the unique post-Iftar atmosphere in the streets of the city. This ambiance attracts both Muslims and tourists of other religious backgrounds to experience the true spirit of Sarajevo. The Ottoman heritage and multi-religious history provide a rich environment for the tourism valorisation of Ramadan traditions, making Sarajevo a fascinating destination for all those interested in authentic Islamic culture that has been blended with other religions and influences for centuries. By promoting halal-friendly tourism, this project meets the needs of Muslim travellers seeking destinations that respect Islamic principles. Sarajevo’s rich Islamic heritage, with its mosques, cultural centres, and halal-certified establishments, creates an ideal environment for the development of this type of tourism. However, this project aims not only to promote religious tourism but also to preserve and present intangible cultural heritage, positioning Sarajevo as a key destination for Muslim travellers and other tourists interested in a deeper understanding of Ramadan and its significance in the heart of the Balkans.

**Keywords:** *halal-friendly tourism, valorisation, Ramadan, tradition, Muslim traveller*

## **Introduction**

The concept of halal tourism encompasses travel experiences that comply with Islamic principles, including the provision of halal food, prayer facilities, family-oriented accommodations, and respect for cultural and religious sensitivities. As the number of Muslim travelers continues to grow and estimated to reach 230 million by 2028 (CrescentRating, 2023), destinations worldwide are increasingly adapting their services to meet the expectations of this market segment. This rise is fueled not only by demographic shifts but also by growing disposable incomes in Muslim-majority countries, a stronger emphasis on religious values, and increased connectivity and mobility. Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) Report recognises Bosnia and Herzegovina as a top non-OIC destination with prayer facilities. Sarajevo, with its Ottoman-era architecture, vibrant Islamic traditions, and diverse culinary heritage, is ideally positioned to offer authentic halal travel experiences. What sets Sarajevo apart is the seamless integration of Islamic lifestyle and European hospitality, creating a welcoming environment for Muslim travelers seeking spiritual enrichment, cultural engagement and comfort.

## **Sarajevo as a Halal-Friendly Tourism Destination**

Sarajevo's identity is rooted in its multicultural and multireligious history, shaped by centuries of coexistence between Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs, Jews, and others. The city hosts numerous mosques, Islamic schools (madrasas), and cultural institutions. Particularly notable is the Gazi Husrev-bey Mosque, one of the most prominent Ottoman complexes in the Balkans and a central spiritual hub during Ramadan. The city also boasts architectural landmarks like the Emperor's Mosque and Ferhadija Mosque, all of which contribute to the Islamic visual identity of Sarajevo's Old Town.

In the Global Muslim Travel Index, Sarajevo was ranked among the top 10 emerging halal destinations in Europe, recognized for its religious facilities, cultural relevance, safety and ease of access. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also one of the few European countries where

halal certification is well regulated by domestic institutions, including the Agency for Halal Quality Certification, which has been operational since 2006. The country's halal standards are recognized by many Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries, providing an additional layer of trust for travelers.

## **Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan**

Launched by the Tourism Association of Sarajevo Canton (Sarajevo Canton Tourist Board), the „Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan“ project aims to promote Sarajevo as a destination that embraces spiritual reflection, community values, and traditional hospitality. The project includes a range of curated experiences aligned with Ramadan practices:

*Public Iftars:* Held at iconic locations such as Baščaršija Square and in front of the Gazi Husrev-bey Mosque, these communal meals are attended by hundreds of residents and tourists. The experience fosters a sense of unity and is often accompanied by traditional Bosnian music, such as sevdalinka or ilahije performances. These events serve not only as religious gatherings but also as community-building opportunities.

*Cannon Firing Tradition:* Special mention should be made of the nightly performance of the cannon shot from Yellow Fortress (Žuta tabija) an old Austro-Hungarian fort above the city, marking the time for iftar. This auditory tradition has become a photogenic tourist attraction in its own right.

*Mukabela (Qur'anic recitations):* Daily recitations of the Qur'an (mukabela) are conducted in major mosques throughout Sarajevo, especially at the Gazi Husrev-bey Mosque. These gatherings offer spiritual enrichment and a rare cultural insight for visitors. The recitations, performed by trained hafizes, preserve an oral tradition that dates back centuries, often drawing tourists who are interested in Islamic theology or sacred music. Mukabela recitations represent a deeply rooted tradition in Bosnian Islamic practice. Conducted by respected hafizes, these sessions attract not only the faithful but also tourists intrigued by the ambiance of collective Qur'anic recitation.

The Mukabela recitations held in the historic Gazi Husrev-beg Mosque are globally unique, representing a centuries-old spiritual tradition that continues to thrive in the heart of Sarajevo. These recitations offer visitors a deeply authentic and culturally enriching experience, providing insight into the profound religious heritage and communal spirit that characterize the month of Ramadan in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

*Tarawih Prayers and Community Activities:* Additionally, evening prayers (tarawih) and other community activities, such as Quran competitions for youth, charity drives, suhoor gatherings, and Ramadan lectures, are frequently organized in collaboration with the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These events are often publicized through mosque networks and online platforms, encouraging tourist participation.

The Gazi Husrev-bey Mosque, in particular, becomes a focal point during Ramadan evenings, with visitors often observing or quietly participating in the spiritual rhythm of the city.

*Ramadan Evenings:* A series of cultural and artistic events, including performances of ilahije (religious songs), exhibitions of Islamic calligraphy, and lectures, organized in partnership with local cultural institutions such as the Gazi Husrev-bey Library and the Bosniak Institute. These evenings aim to present the spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of Islamic culture in Bosnia.

*Halal Food Experiences:* Guided tours highlight Sarajevo's rich halal gastronomy, from traditional dishes like ćevapi, pite (pies) and dolmas to sweets such as baklava, hurmašica and tufahija. Local chefs offer cooking demonstrations, and visitors have opportunities to sample halal-certified products from local producers.

### **Significance and Impact**

This strategic approach to halal tourism leverages Sarajevo's intangible cultural heritage to attract Muslim travelers seeking authenticity, spirituality, and safety. The „Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan“ project successfully

balances religious sensitivity with touristic curiosity, offering inclusive experiences for diverse visitor profiles. During Ramadan 2025, the Tourism Association of Sarajevo Canton reported a 16% increase in visitors from predominantly Muslim countries compared to the previous year, signaling the growing appeal of Sarajevo as a halal destination.

In addition to its economic benefits, the project contributes to intercultural dialogue, as non-Muslim visitors are often welcomed to observe and participate in various events. This openness strengthens Sarajevo's image as a tolerant and diverse city, building on its post-war efforts of reconciliation and cultural diplomacy.

### **Challenges in Halal Tourism Development in Sarajevo Canton**

Despite its potential, Sarajevo faces several challenges in developing a comprehensive halal tourism infrastructure. While the foundations are strong, Sarajevo must address several issues to fully realize its potential as a year-round halal tourism hub:

*Limited Certified Infrastructure:* While many hotels and restaurants offer halal food, few have official certification, creating uncertainty for observant travelers. Many other objects claim to offer halal options, but few undergo formal certification. This lack of standardization may deter strict observers of Islamic dietary laws.

*Visibility in Key Markets:* Although Sarajevo enjoys popularity among travelers from Turkey and the Balkans, it is less visible in the UK, GCC and Southeast Asia, three regions that account for a significant portion of global halal travel spending.

*Language and Cultural Gaps:* While many locals speak English, there are tourists that face communication challenges. Arabic-speaking tourists, in particular, face limited signage and interpretation services, which can affect satisfaction and repeat visitation.

*Lack of Technology Integration:* There is a need for mobile apps and online platforms that provide real-time halal service information. Applications such as „Muslim Pro“ and „HalalTrip“ guide need to be developed in order to meet the needs

of Muslim travelers. However, Sarajevo lacks a centralized ecosystem to streamline halal travel information.

*Seasonal Concentration:* Ramadan tourism is highly seasonal, and efforts must be made to diversify halal offers throughout the year. Ramadan and Eid draw the most visitors, but halal tourism potential remains underutilized outside religious periods. There is a need to develop offers that appeal year-round.

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

The „Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan“ project is steadily building a tradition and continues to improve in all aspects, from content development to promotional efforts. However, there remains significant room for further enhancement. To enhance its position as a leading halal destination, Sarajevo as destination, with the Tourism Association of Sarajevo Canton as the main implementing body, should consider the following:

*Halal Certification and Training:* Expand certification programs and provide hospitality training focused on halal standards. Workshops could be developed in partnership with the Agency for Halal Quality Certification and local universities.

*Digital Tools:* Create a dedicated halal tourism app featuring prayer times, mosque locations, halal restaurants, and event calendars. Integration with GPS, user reviews, and QR code access to local events would enhance usability. Build an interactive, multilingual halal travel app that offers prayer times, GPS navigation to mosques, halal food maps, event listings, and even audio guides for Islamic heritage sites.

*Muslim Travel Show:* Leverage the potential of the Muslim Travel Show. This event is held as part of the London Muslim Shopping Festival (which represents the largest event for Muslim travelers in Europe), where the Sarajevo Canton Tourist Board (Tourism Association of Sarajevo Canton) serves as a key partner.

*Strategic Partnerships:* Collaborate with airlines, travel agencies, and influencers in Muslim-majority countries. Sarajevo could also participate in international halal expos

and tourism fairs in Dubai, Jakarta, and Kuala Lumpur. Establish a dedicated presence at the Muslim Travel Show in London, Halal Expo Indonesia, and Arabian Travel Market. These platforms are ideal for building strategic partnerships and showcasing Sarajevo’s halal offerings.

*Multilingual Promotion:* Develop promotional materials in Arabic, Turkish, and Malay to attract travelers from key source markets. These should include video testimonials, social media campaigns, and influencer collaborations. Develop visual campaigns and video content, focusing on real experiences – iftars, mosque visits, cultural events and distribute via social media channels, embassies, and diaspora networks.

*Cultural Sensitivity Education:* Offer workshops for tourism staff to improve understanding of Muslim cultural and religious practices. Hotels and restaurants should be encouraged to provide qibla directions, prayer mats, and modest entertainment options. Partner with the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina to offer crash courses on Islamic etiquette, holiday significance, and service expectations for the Muslim market.

*Spiritual Heritage Tours:* Integrate visits to religious and historical landmarks, offering context about the Islamic history of the city, including stops at madrasas, waqf properties, Islamic cemeteries, but also at Orthodox church, Catholic cathedral and the Sarajevo Haggadah exhibit to illustrate interfaith harmony. Highlight Sarajevo’s inclusive identity.

*Year-Round Offer Development:* Introduce year-round halal tourism offers, such as wellness retreats, Islamic art tours, halal adventure sports, and Islamic finance conferences. Include packages for Islamic art workshops, halal spa retreats, sustainable ecotourism, and Muslim marriage or honeymoon packages in natural locations like the mountains of Bjelašnica or Igman.

### **Conclusion**

While halal-friendly destinations are primarily designed with Muslim travelers in mind,

religious tourism and the exploration of diverse beliefs and cultural practices also appeal to tourists of all religious backgrounds. The growth of halal tourism plays a pivotal role in diversifying a destination's overall tourism portfolio, which is key to mitigating seasonality and reducing reliance on limited source markets. This niche sector stimulates investment in tourism infrastructure, fostering broader economic development and contributing to a more attractive and competitive business environment. In essence, halal tourism delivers substantial social and economic advantages by promoting inclusive travel experiences that honor cultural, religious, and lifestyle diversity, thereby supporting sustainable tourism development.

Sarajevo has the cultural depth, religious authenticity, and historical context to become a flagship halal tourism destination in Europe. Projects such as „Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan“ demonstrate the potential for integrating traditional religious practices with innovative tourism experiences. By addressing infrastructural and promotional challenges, Sarajevo can position itself at the forefront of the European halal tourism market, offering visitors not just a destination, but a meaningful spiritual journey.

This study affirms that halal tourism presents a significant opportunity for Sarajevo Canton to enhance its competitive standing as a tourist destination. By prioritizing the needs of Muslim travelers while simultaneously appealing to a wider audience interested in cultural and religious tourism, Sarajevo can diversify its offerings, minimize seasonal fluctuations, and attract meaningful investment in its tourism infrastructure. The findings underscore that Sarajevo's rich cultural and religious heritage – paired with its already existing halal-friendly services – positions the region strongly within the growing global halal tourism market.

To fully harness this potential, it is essential to raise awareness of the value and role of halal certification while developing a comprehensive and targeted promotional strategy. This strategy should clearly communicate the scope and quality of halal tourism options available

in Sarajevo Canton, offering practical and accessible information to prospective travelers. In an increasingly competitive tourism landscape, Sarajevo's unique selling point lies in its ability to combine Islamic spirituality with European accessibility. The next phase of development should focus on strategic investments, international cooperation, and sustainable practices to ensure long-term impact.

Moving forward, strategic efforts should concentrate on closing existing gaps in halal certification and elevating the overall visitor experience to meet the specific expectations of halal-conscious travelers. In conclusion, embracing the full potential of halal tourism can transform Sarajevo Canton into a year-round destination, driving economic progress, deepening intercultural understanding, and reinforcing the city's image as a European emblem of multiculturalism and religious coexistence.

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## **Turistička valorizacija specifičnih ramazanskih tradicija i razvoj halal turizma kroz projekat „Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan“**

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### **Sažetak**

Projekat „Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan“, koji je nastao kao produkt saradnje između Turističke zajednice Kantona Sarajevo i Medžlisa Islamske zajednice Sarajevo, ima za cilj unapređenje turističkog potencijala Sarajeva kroz fokusiranje na specifične ramazanske tradicije i vjerski turizam. Ova inicijativa ističe kulturno bogatstvo i značaj ramazana u Bosni i Hercegovini, nudeći turistima imerzivno iskustvo duhovne atmosfere grada tokom ovog svetog mjeseca. Kroz niz vjersko-kulturnih sadržaja i programa, festival promoviše ramazanske ljepote i turističku ponudu Kantona Sarajevo, te doprinosi razvoju specifičnih oblika turizma i promociji Sarajeva kao halal-friendly turističke destinacije. Poseban akcenat stavljen je na specifične ramazanske tradicije u Sarajevu, ramazanske večeri, mukabele, teravih-namaze, pripremu tradicionalnih jela, zajedničke iftare i druženja, diskusije, muzičke programe, ali i na jedinstvenu atmosferu na ulicama grada, koja vlada nakon iftara i koja privlači podjednako turiste muslimane i turiste drugih religijskih opredjeljenja da osjete istinski duh Sarajeva. Otomanska baština grada i njegova multietnička i multireligijska historija pružaju bogat ambijent za turističku valorizaciju ramazanskih tradicija, čineći Sarajevo fascinantnom destinacijom za sve one koji su zainteresovani za autentičnu islamsku kulturu, koja se ovdje stoljećima spaja i isprepliće s drugim religijama i uticajima. Promovišući halal-friendly turizam, manifestacija „Visit Sarajevo: Feel the Spirit of Ramadan“ zadovoljava potrebe putnika muslimana koji tragaju za destinacijama koje poštuju islamske principe. Halal-friendly turizam uključuje dostupnost halal hrane, prostora za molitvu i različitih usluga koje su u skladu s vrijednostima i principima posjetilaca muslimana. Bogato islamsko naslijeđe Sarajeva, s njegovim džamijama, kulturnim centrima i halal-certifikovanim ustanovama i privrednim subjektima, stvara idealnu sredinu za razvoj ovog oblika turizma. Međutim, važno je naglasiti da ovaj projekat ima za cilj ne samo promociju vjerskog turizma, već i očuvanje i predstavljanje nematerijalne kulturne baštine i pozicioniranje Sarajeva kao ključne destinacije za putnike muslimane, ali i sve ostale turiste koji žele istinski razumjeti ramazana i njegovog značaj u srcu Balkana.

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***Ključne riječi:*** *halal-friendly turizam, valorizacija, ramazan, tradicija, putnici muslimani*

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