

Understanding of the Halalan Tayyiban Concept among Muslim Workers in Small and Medium- Sized Enterprises

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Abstract

This study examined Muslim workers' understanding of the *halalan tayyiban* concept in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food sector. The *halalan tayyiban* concept encompasses not only aspects of production and product management but also spiritual values and workers' attitudes. Using a quantitative approach involving questionnaires and statistical analysis, the findings indicate that the workers' level of understanding is moderate. The main factors identified were limited exposure and insufficient emphasis on workers' personal aspects. Therefore, SMEs are encouraged to enhance their efforts to provide information and continuous training to strengthen workers' understanding of the *halalan tayyiban* concept.

Keywords: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Halalan Tayyiban Concept, Workers' Understanding

Introduction

The halal food and beverage market is the largest globally, valued at USD 1.08 trillion. Spending in the halal food and beverage market in China exceeded USD 848 billion, while spending in America and Japan reached USD 736 billion and USD 486 billion, respectively, in 2012 (Adamek, 2015). In 2012, countries in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) imported halal food products valued at USD 191 billion, while halal food exports reached USD 119 billion (Adamek, 2015). The halal market is now a rapidly growing economic sector (Adamek, 2015), particularly in Asia, the Middle East, the Americas (Hussein Elasrag, 2016), and Europe (Law, 2012).

According to Saad al-Harran and Low (2008), the global halal market was expected to be worth around US\$150 billion annually, with an estimated growth rate of 2.9 per cent. This growth is attributed to the high demand for halal products in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, among Muslim and non-Muslim consumers (Canadian Agri-Food Trade Service Report, 2008). This demand is also driven by positive perceptions of halal food as being healthier, safer, and more humane towards animals (Berry, 2008).

The Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA)¹ reported that the global halal market had increased from USD 600 billion to USD 2.1 trillion in 2006 (Abu Bakar Abdul Hamid, Mohamed Syazwan Abdul Talib & Nazliwati Mohamad, 2014). Furthermore, the halal industry is expected to reach USD 6.4 trillion by 2030. The global halal market is growing because the Muslim population worldwide has high demand for halal food and services (Adams, 2011).

This development has been driven by strong demand for halal food products in Europe, in particular (Bonne & Verbeke, 2006; Lever & Miele, 2012), and globally (Baguley, 2009). It is also driven by Muslim consumers' religious obligation to consume properly prepared halal food (Ali Batu & Regenstein, 2014). Another factor contributing to the increasing demand for halal products, particularly halal food and beverages, is the global Muslim population, which exceeds 1.8 billion people (Kambiz Heidarzadeh Hanzae & Mohammad Reza Ramezani, 2011). Given the rapid growth of the halal industry, the halal concept is increasingly regarded as a symbol of quality in food production (Abu Bakar Abdul Hamid et al., 2014).

The halal industry has expanded beyond the food sector to include the pharmaceutical and cosmetics sectors, as well as services such as logistics, banking, and tourism (Burgmann, 2007; Suddin Lada, Tanakijal, & Hanudin Amin, 2009; Yuhani Abdul Aziz & Chok, 2013; Abu Bakar Abdul Hamid et al., 2014; Adamek, 2015; Hussein Elarag, 2016).

Muslims use halal products and services, which are also widely accepted among non-Muslims. This is attributed to their association with hygiene and safety (Sharifah Zannierah Syed Marzuki, Hall & Ballantine, 2012; Yuhani Abdul Aziz & Chok, 2013; Gayatri & Chew, 2013), as well as perceptions that they are healthier and tastier (Burgmann, 2007). This is further evidenced by the presence of numerous halal authorities in both Muslim- and non-Muslim-majority countries, including Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, the United Kingdom, and Australia (Adams, 2011).

Today, the concept of *halalan tayyiban* extends beyond the ingredients used in food products (Muhammad Hisyam Mohamad, 2013). It includes the sources of food ingredients, how raw materials are handled and processed into food products, and how the products are subsequently distributed to supermarkets. The concept of *halalan tayyiban* places greater emphasis on the production process and the production of halal food products by manufacturers than on consumers. This shows that understanding *halalan tayyiban* in relation to food extends beyond ingredients to include the handling, processing, packaging, transportation, and storage of food products.

Errors or negligence by workers throughout the food production process may raise doubts about the *halalan and tayyiban* status of food products. Therefore, workers' understanding

of the food production process is crucial for maintaining halal integrity and ensuring the halal status of food products.

Halal food should be clean, safe, wholesome, and conducive to physical and mental health (Syed Mohammad Hilmi Syed Abdul Rahman et al., 2008; Mohd Anuar Abdul Rahman & Alina Masri Md Yusoff, 2010). A high level of understanding among workers can contribute to producing clean and safe food products, thereby fulfilling the requirements of the *halalan tayyiban* concept. This raises the question of whether workers involved in food production processes understand the concept of *halalan tayyiban*. Furthermore, to what extent do they understand the concept of *halalan tayyiban* in the production of food products? Therefore, this study aims to examine the level of understanding of workers in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) regarding the concept of *halalan tayyiban*.

Literature Review

Understanding

Understanding refers to having knowledge and awareness of something, as well as knowing and comprehending it accurately (Kamus Dewan, 2005). According to Mohd Shahrul Imran Lim Abdullah (2009), understanding is the ability to comprehend something learned, read, or acquired through direct or indirect processes, whether verbal or non-verbal. Understanding can also refer to knowledge of a particular subject, situation, or occurrence. Marohaini Yusuf (2009) defines understanding as a process of constructing, interpreting, and evaluating information that involves mental processes such as recognising words and connecting ideas with existing knowledge and experiences.

Understanding can be developed through several processes, beginning with investigating a matter or examining relevant data, absorbing the information gathered, applying existing knowledge, interacting with new knowledge, and ultimately reflecting on that knowledge (Baldwin, 2014). Understanding also refers to the ability to comprehend various aspects of knowledge, including definitions, concepts, principles, classifications, experiences, and general perspectives (Baharuddin Sayin, Siti Khadijah Ab. Manan, Amsak Ali & S. Salahuddin, 2004).

The Concept of Halalan Tayyiban

The term halal originates from the Arabic words *halla*, *yahillu*, and *hallan*, which refer to that which is permitted, lawful, or permissible, as well as to release, dissolution, and allowance (Abdul Aziz Dahlan, 1997). According to Kamus Dewan (2005), halal refers to something legally permitted in Islam, not prohibited by Islamic law, and therefore allowed or permissible. According to Yusuf Al-Qardawiy (2016), halal refers to matters that are permitted or permissible, from which restrictions or prohibitions have been removed, and whose practice is permitted under Islamic law. Something permitted under Islamic law refers to matters allowed under Islamic legal principles established by the Qur'an, Hadith, *ijmak* (consensus), and *qiyas* (analogical reasoning) (Norazilawati Md Dahlal, 2015).

Muhammad Umar Chand (1995) further explained that halal refers to anything that Muslims are permitted to consume. Al-Ghazaliy (2000) and Yusuf Al-Qardawiy (2016) further explained that halal encompasses the various sources of food consumed by humans, including animals,

plants, natural materials, chemicals, and microorganisms, which are subject to principles that distinguish between halal and haram.

The term *halalan tayyiban* also conveys meanings such as goodness, wholesomeness, suitability, and pleasantness, including being delicious and tasty (Muhammad Umar Chand, 1995). Al-Ghazaliy (1998) stated that, in general, something that is halal is good, suitable, and pure, although the degree of goodness may vary, ranging from good to better. Wahbah az-Zuhayliy (2011) further explained that halal refers to food free from elements of doubt (syubhah), that does not involve violating others' rights, such as taking something without permission, and that does not involve sinful acts. Based on this interpretation, halal food involves not only lawful status but also safety and suitability considerations arising from the consumption and use of halal food and products (Syed Mohammad Hilmi Syed Abdul Rahman et al., 2008).

In addition, halal encompasses goods and services. Halal goods and services comply with the requirements of Islamic law. Cleanliness and purity are also emphasised in relation to halal goods and services. Halal goods are obtained from and produced using permissible sources and do not contain prohibited substances. Similarly, halal services involve transactions, management practices, and activities that are good, clean, and compliant with Islamic law. In Malaysia, *halalan tayyiban* is associated with halal certification, as indicated by the halal logo issued by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), as well as compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygiene Practices (GHP).

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

According to SME Corporation Malaysia (2026), SMEs can be defined by two criteria: a business's annual sales turnover (revenue) and the number of full-time employees. The SME sector is divided into two categories, namely the manufacturing sector and the services and other sectors. Based on annual sales turnover, medium-sized enterprises have annual sales of RM15 million to RM50 million; small enterprises have annual sales of RM300,000 to RM15 million. In contrast, micro enterprises have annual sales of less than RM300,000 (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2026). By employee count, medium-sized enterprises have 75 to 200 employees, small enterprises have 5 to 75 employees, and micro enterprises have fewer than 5 employees (SME Corporation Malaysia, 2026). SMEs can also be defined as industries with assets not exceeding RM2.5 million or employing no more than 200 full-time workers (Mohd Asri Abdullah, 1997).

SMEs can be defined by two main criteria: the number of full-time employees and annual sales turnover. In the manufacturing and services sectors, small enterprises have between 5 and 50 employees, while medium-sized enterprises have between 51 and 150 full-time employees (Mohd Asri Abdullah, 1997). In terms of annual sales turnover, small enterprises have between RM0.25 million and RM10 million, while medium-sized enterprises have between RM10 million and RM25 million. The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM)² defines SMEs as manufacturing enterprises with paid-up capital of less than RM2.5 million and fewer than 75 full-time employees.

Ahcmad Anwari (1980) stated that SME criteria include a relatively small number of employees, a low level of production, and relatively low sales and profits. The Committee for

Economic Development (CED) proposed different criteria. First, the enterprise's management is independent, with the head or manager typically also being the owner. Second, the owner provides all the enterprise's capital. Third, the market for the enterprise's products is generally limited to a particular district or state. Fourth, the enterprise is relatively small within its industry. Figure 1 shows the research framework of this study.

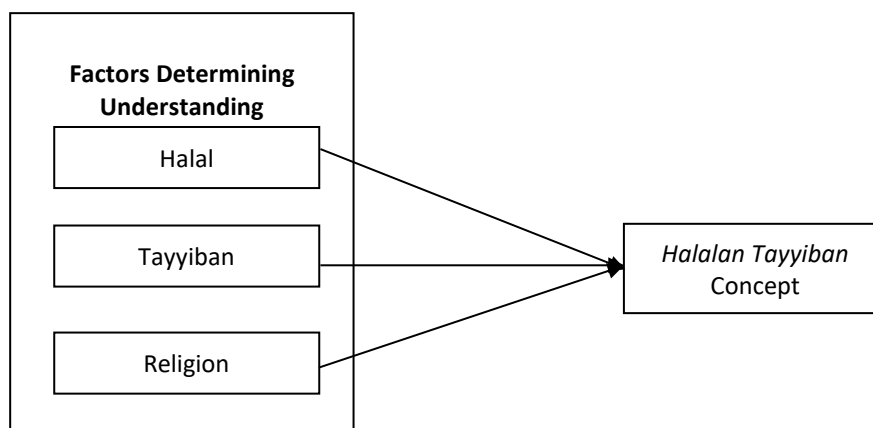


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's Findings

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach to data collection to achieve the research objectives. Data were collected using a questionnaire distributed to 196 Muslim workers employed in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Questionnaires are appropriate, particularly for obtaining information from large groups of respondents about their understanding, beliefs, opinions, characteristics, and behaviours (Neuman, 2012). This study used a questionnaire adapted and developed from questionnaires used by previous researchers. Relevant findings from previous studies and previously developed questionnaires that were deemed appropriate to the objectives and research questions of this study were used as references in developing the questionnaire. Accordingly, the questionnaire consisted of four sections: Section A (Respondent Demographics), Section B (Level of Understanding of Halal), Section C (Level of Understanding of *Tayyiban*), and Section D (Understanding of the *Halalan Tayyiban* Concept). The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 23. SPSS was selected because it is widely used for quantitative research and provides systematic, reliable statistical analyses.

Results And Discussion

Demographic Profile

Table 1 shows 141 female respondents (71.9%) and 55 male respondents (28.1%). The largest age group comprised respondents aged 20–29 years, with 79 respondents (40.3%), followed by those aged 30–39 years, with 55 respondents (28.1%), those aged below 19 years, with 47 respondents (24.0%), and those aged 40–49 years, with 15 respondents (7.7%). In terms of education level, SPM graduates accounted for the largest group, with 94 respondents (48.0%), followed by diploma or certificate holders, with 84 respondents (42.9%), and respondents with a bachelor's degree, with 18 respondents (9.2%). In terms of marital status, 121 respondents (61.7%) were single, while 75 respondents (38.3%) were married. Most

respondents were employed in small-sized SMEs, with 123 respondents (62.8%), followed by micro-sized SMEs (52 respondents, 26.5%) and medium-sized SMEs (21 respondents, 10.7%).

In terms of length of employment, 81 respondents (41.3%) had worked at their respective SMEs for less than six months, followed by 47 respondents (24.0%) who had worked for less than one year, one respondent (0.5%) who had worked for two years, 47 respondents (24.0%) who had worked for three years, and 20 respondents (10.2%) who had worked for five years or more. Most respondents had never attended a halal-related course. This is evident from the findings: 121 respondents (61.7%) had never attended a halal course, while 75 respondents (38.3%) had attended a halal-related course once or twice. However, a relatively high proportion of respondents worked in SMEs with halal certification: 124 respondents (63.3%) worked in businesses with a halal certificate. In comparison, 67 respondents (34.2%) worked in businesses without a halal certificate. Another five respondents (2.6%) reported that their businesses were still applying for halal certification. Although the proportion of respondents working in businesses without halal certification was relatively small, the findings suggest that awareness among food-sector SME owners and entrepreneurs regarding the importance of obtaining halal certification and displaying the halal logo remains an area that requires further attention.

Table 1

Respondents' Demographic Profile

Respondent Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	55	28.1
Female	141	71.9
Age		
Below 19 years	47	24.0
20-29 years	79	40.3
30-39 years	55	28.1
40-49 years	15	7.7
Education Level		
PhD/Master's degree	0	0
Bachelor's degree	18	9.2
Diploma/Certificate	84	42.9
SPM	94	48.0
PMR or below	0	0
Marital Status		
Single	121	61.7
Married	75	38.3
Enterprise Size		
Medium-sized	21	10.7
Small-sized	123	62.8
Micro-sized	52	26.5

Length of Employment

Less than 6 months	81	41.3
Less than 1 year	47	24.0
2 years	1	0.5
3 years	47	24.0
5 years	20	10.2

Attendance at Halal Courses

Never	121	61.7
1-2 times	75	38.3
3-4 times	0	0
More than 5 times	0	0

Position

Worker	179	91.3
Production Staff	5	2.6
Supervisor	12	6.4
Employer		

Halal Certification Status

		63.3
Yes	124	34.2
No	67	2.6
In the process of applying	5	28.1

Objective 1: To Identify the Level of Understanding of Muslim Workers in SMEs Regarding the Halalan Tayyiban Concept

Table 2 shows the overall level of understanding of the *halalan tayyiban* concept among Muslim workers in SMEs. The religion dimension recorded the highest mean ($M = 4.37$), followed by the *tayyiban* dimension ($M = 4.14$). Meanwhile, the halal dimension recorded the lowest mean ($M = 3.77$).

Table 2

Descriptive Mean of the Overall Level of Understanding among Muslim SME Employees

Variable	Mean (M)
Halal	3.77
Tayyiban	4.14
Religion	4.37

Level of Understanding of Halal in Relation to the Halalan Tayyiban Concept

Table 3 shows the mean scores of the items within the halal dimension, specifically those related to the definition of halal. The halal definition dimension consists of 10 items. The highest mean scores were recorded for the items “knowing the term halal” ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.476$) and “understanding that the mixing of halal and non-halal ingredients affects the halal status of a product” ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.476$). The item “understanding that the term halal originates from Arabic and means permitted or allowed under Islamic law” recorded a mean of 3.44 ($SD = 0.694$). This was followed by the item “understanding that sources of gelatin,

extracts, and fats used in products must be obtained from animals slaughtered according to Islamic requirements" ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.563$). Other items included "understanding the concept of halal in Islam" ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.405$), "understanding the proper practices of slaughter according to Islam" ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.703$), and "knowing the requirements for valid slaughter according to Islamic law" ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.794$). The item "mixing non-halal and halal ingredients in a product renders the product non-halal and doubtful" recorded a mean of 2.69 ($SD = 1.754$). The lowest mean score was recorded for the item "the concept of halal applies only to food and beverages" ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.128$). In contrast, the second-lowest mean score was recorded for the item "knowing the textual evidence or sources concerning halal from the Qur'an and Hadith" ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.655$).

Table 3

Descriptive Findings on the Level of Understanding of Halal

No.	Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I know the term halal.	4.34	0.476
2	I understand the concept of halal in Islam.	3.67	0.706
3	I know the evidence/sources concerning halal (the Qur'an and Hadith).	3.34	0.655
4	The word halal originates from Arabic and means permitted and allowed under Islamic law.	3.58	0.671
5	I understand that halal means that there is no mixing with non-halal, doubtful (<i>syubhah</i>), filthy, or impure substances.	4.01	0.405
6	I know the requirements for valid slaughter according to Islamic law.	3.71	0.703
7	I understand the proper practices of slaughter according to Islamic law.	3.48	0.794
8	The concept of halal applies only to food and beverages.	3.19	1.128
9	Mixing non-halal and halal raw materials in a product renders the product non-halal or doubtful.	4.34	0.476
10	Sources of gelatin, extracts, and fats used in food products must be obtained from halal animals in accordance with Islamic requirements.	4.02	0.563

Level of Understanding of Tayyiban in Relation to the Halalan Tayyiban Concept

Table 4 shows the mean scores for items measuring understanding of tayyiban, divided into five aspects: *sertu* (Islamic purification procedure), premises and raw material cleanliness, equipment and utensils, logistics, and packaging and labelling. The findings show that the highest mean score was recorded for premises and raw material cleanliness. Most respondents agreed that they always ensure packaged products are kept clean and handled in clean premises, with a mean score of $M = 4.58$ ($SD = 0.495$). The lowest mean score was recorded for the equipment and utensils aspect, with $M = 2.89$ ($SD = 1.477$).

Table 4

Descriptive Findings on the Level of Understanding of Tayyiban

No.	Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I know the term <i>sertu</i> according to Islamic requirements	3.49	0.931
2	I understand the concept of <i>sertu</i> according to Islamic requirements.	3.55	1.039
3	I know the difference between <i>samak</i> and <i>sertu</i> .	3.61	1.035
4	I know how to perform <i>sertu</i> and the equipment required.	3.73	0.941
5	I have performed <i>sertu</i> either at my workplace/premises or at home.	3.44	0.901
6	I know which types of impurities require <i>sertu</i> according to Islamic requirements.	4.20	0.417
7	I know that all equipment and utensils must undergo <i>sertu</i> if they come into contact with such impurities.	4.29	0.648
8	Food products (raw materials, mixed ingredients, and food additives) must be clean and pure according to Islamic requirements.	4.24	0.547
9	Food hygiene must be maintained at every stage of processing, production, packaging, and storage.	4.44	0.498
10	Food poisoning can result from workers who fail to maintain proper hygiene.	4.26	0.629
11	Food poisoning can also result from raw materials that are not clean and pure.	4.49	0.501
12	Maintaining workers' hand and body hygiene is an important aspect of food handling.	4.43	0.496
13	I always ensure that solid and liquid waste is disposed of in accordance with the prescribed standards.	4.23	0.726
14	Raw materials and food exposed to or contaminated by foreign substances must be separated immediately.	4.20	0.808
15	I always ensure that processed products are kept clean and are handled in clean premises.	4.47	0.501
16	I always ensure that packaged products are kept clean and are handled in clean premises.	4.58	0.495
17	I always ensure that distributed products are kept clean and are handled in clean premises.	4.45	0.499
18	I ensure that product-processing equipment that comes into contact with non-halal materials is cleaned according to halal standards.	2.89	1.477
19	I ensure that the equipment used is kept clean in accordance with halal standards.	3.76	1.136
20	Equipment and utensils must not be made from materials that are non-halal according to Islamic requirements.	4.00	0.778

21	Equipment and utensils must always be cleaned after the food production process.	4.36	1.210
22	Equipment and utensils used to process halal food must not be used together with equipment and utensils used to process non-halal food.	4.52	0.501
23	I know that equipment or brushes made from animal hair are not permitted for use on the premises.	4.04	0.919
24	I ensure that stored products are kept clean, separated, and labelled at each stage of the process to prevent them from being mixed with non-halal products.	4.33	0.524
25	I ensure that delivered products are kept clean, separated, and labelled at each stage of the process to prevent mixing with non-halal products.	4.44	0.498

Level of Religious Understanding in Relation to the Halalan Tayyiban Concept

Table 5 shows the mean scores for the religious dimension of understanding the *Halalan Tayyiban* concept. Muslim SME employees recorded the lowest level of agreement for the item stating that obedience to the commandments of Allah SWT motivates them to choose products with a halal logo over products without a halal logo ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.905$). Meanwhile, the highest mean score was recorded for the item stating that respondents choose halal because it is a command and requirement of Islam ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 0.555$). This was followed by the item stating that understanding the aspects of halal and haram is important in a Muslim's life ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.660$). The item stating that faith in Allah SWT influences respondents' understanding of halal and their consumption of halal food recorded a mean score of $M = 4.24$ ($SD = 0.701$). In contrast, the item stating that respondents want their family members and people around them to consume halal, pure, and clean food products recorded a mean score of $M = 4.56$ ($SD = 0.650$).

Table 5

Descriptive Findings on the Level of Religious Understanding

No.	Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	I choose halal because it is a command and requirement of Islam.	4.71	0.555
2	I understand that the aspects of halal and haram are important in the life of a Muslim.	4.47	0.660
3	My faith in Allah SWT influences my understanding of halal and my consumption of halal food.	4.24	0.701
4	My obedience to the commandments of Allah SWT motivates me to choose products with a halal logo over those without.	3.87	0.905
5	I also want my family members and people around me to consume halal, pure, and clean food products.	4.56	0.650

Objective 2: To Analyse the Level of Understanding of the Halalan Tayyiban Concept among Muslim SME Employees

Table 6 shows the findings on respondents' level of understanding of the *halalan tayyiban* concept. Based on the table, the religious item recorded the highest mean score, $M = 4.71$. This finding indicates that respondents agreed that they choose halal because it is a command and requirement of Islam, reflecting compliance with Islamic law. The findings show that items related to the religious dimension recorded some of the highest mean scores. However, the importance of cleanliness as an element of *tayyiban* should not be overlooked, as cleanliness is an important element in the manufacturing and production of food products. Meanwhile, the equipment and utensils dimension recorded the lowest mean score, specifically the item concerning cleaning product-processing equipment that comes into contact with non-halal materials, with a mean score of $M = 2.89$ ($SD = 1.477$). One possible reason for this low mean score is that many employees have not received formal training in halal-related knowledge and practices. This finding is consistent with the study's demographic findings, which showed that almost 60% of Muslim SME employees had never attended a halal-related course.

Table 6

Respondents' Level of Understanding of the Halalan Tayyiban Concept

No.	Item	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1.	I choose halal because it is a command and requirement of Islam.	4.71	0.555
2.	I always ensure that packaged products are kept clean and are handled in clean premises.	4.58	0.495
3.	I also want my family members and people around me to consume halal, pure, and clean food products.	4.56	0.65
4.	Equipment and utensils used to process halal food must not be mixed with equipment and utensils used to process non-halal food.	4.52	0.501
5.	Food poisoning can also result from raw materials that are not clean and pure.	4.49	0.501
6.	I understand that the aspects of halal and haram are important in the life of a Muslim.	4.47	0.66
7.	I always ensure that processed products are kept clean and are handled in clean premises.	4.47	0.501
8.	I always ensure that distributed products are kept clean and are handled in clean premises.	4.45	0.499
9.	I ensure delivered products are kept clean, separated, and labelled at each stage of the process to prevent mixing with non-halal products.	4.44	0.498
10.	Food hygiene must be maintained at every stage of processing, production, packaging, and storage.	4.44	0.498
11.	I ensure that each package bears a halal logo recognised by JAKIM.	4.43	0.546
12.	Maintaining workers' hand and body hygiene is an important aspect of food handling.	4.43	0.496

13.	Equipment and utensils must always be cleaned after the food production process.	4.36	1.21
14.	Mixing haram and halal raw materials in halal food and beverages renders the food haram.	4.34	0.476
15.	I know the term halal.	4.34	0.476
16.	I ensure each product label is clear, not easily detached, and includes product information such as the product name, ingredients, halal logo, and the manufacturer's name and address.	4.33	0.522
17.	I ensure that stored products are kept clean, separated, and labelled at each stage of the process to prevent them from being mixed with non-halal products.	4.33	0.524
18.	I ensure that the packaging shape, symbols, logos, names, and images do not contradict Islamic law.	4.31	0.475
19.	I know that all equipment and utensils must undergo <i>sertu</i> if they come into contact with such impurities.	4.29	0.648
20.	I ensure that the transportation used to deliver products is dedicated exclusively to halal products.	4.28	0.45
21.	I ensure that the storage area for halal products is separated from non-halal products.	4.27	0.445
22.	Food poisoning can result from workers who fail to maintain proper hygiene.	4.26	0.629
23.	My faith in Allah SWT influences my understanding of halal and my consumption of halal food.	4.24	0.701
24.	Food products (raw materials, mixed ingredients, and food additives) must be clean and pure according to Islamic requirements.	4.24	0.547
25.	I always ensure that solid and liquid waste is disposed of in accordance with the prescribed standards.	4.23	0.726
26.	I ensure that the materials (plastic/cardboard) used to package products are not made from non-halal materials.	4.22	0.662
27.	Raw materials and food exposed to or contaminated by foreign substances must be separated immediately.	4.20	0.808
28.	I know which types of <i>najis</i> (impurities) require <i>sertu</i> according to Islamic requirements.	4.20	0.417
29.	I ensure that product advertising does not contradict Islamic law.	4.15	0.622
30.	I know that equipment or brushes made from animal hair are not permitted for use on the premises.	4.04	0.919
31.	Sources of gelatin, extracts, and fats in food products must be obtained from halal animals in accordance with Islamic requirements.	4.02	0.563
32.	I understand that halal means there is no mixing with haram, <i>syubhah</i> , filthy, or impure substances.	4.01	0.405
33.	Equipment and utensils must not be made from non-halal materials according to Islamic requirements.	4.00	0.778

My obedience to the commandments of Allah SWT		
34.	motivates me to choose products with a halal logo over products without a halal logo.	3.87 0.905
35.	I ensure that the equipment used is kept clean in accordance with halal standards.	3.76 1.136
36.	I know how to perform <i>sertu</i> and the equipment required.	3.73 0.941
37.	I know the requirements for valid slaughter according to Islamic requirements.	3.71 0.703
38.	I understand the concept of halal in Islam.	3.67 0.706
39.	I know the difference between <i>samak</i> and <i>sertu</i> .	3.61 1.035
40.	The word <i>halal</i> originates from Arabic and means permitted and allowed under Islamic law.	3.58 0.671
41.	I understand the concept of <i>sertu</i> according to Islamic requirements.	3.55 1.039
42.	I know the term <i>sertu</i> according to Islamic requirements.	3.49 0.931
43.	I understand the proper practices of slaughter according to Islamic requirements.	3.48 0.794
44.	I have performed <i>sertu</i> either at my workplace/premises or at home.	3.44 0.901
45.	I have knowledge of the evidence/sources concerning halal (the Qur'an and Hadith).	3.34 0.655
46.	The concept of halal applies only to food and beverages.	3.19 1.128
47.	I ensure that product-processing equipment that comes into contact with non-halal materials is cleaned according to halal standards.	2.89 1.477
Overall Mean		4.08

Overall, this study shows that Muslim SME employees have a high level of understanding of the halal, tayyiban, and religious aspects of the *halalan tayyiban* concept. This understanding serves as an important foundation for ensuring that food production is carried out in accordance with Islamic principles. Religious understanding was identified as the primary factor shaping Muslim employees' attitudes and responsibilities toward preparing halal, clean, and safe food. In contrast, the halal and tayyiban elements further support food production activities in SMEs.

Therefore, several approaches can be adopted to ensure Muslim employees have a strong understanding of the *halalan tayyiban* concept, including organising relevant training courses. Halal-related activities and courses should use approaches that Muslim employees can easily understand. This is particularly important because the majority of Muslim SME employees do not have a high level of educational attainment. Most of the Muslim SME employees in this study had educational qualifications at the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) or diploma level.

For SME operators, employees should be required to attend courses related to halal or *halalan tayyiban*. If operators or employers fail to fulfil this requirement, appropriate actions, such as withdrawing halal certification, could be considered. This policy recommendation

provides an alternative approach for the relevant authorities to improve and develop SMEs by making the *halalan tayyiban* concept a priority in food production.

The proposed strategy for policymakers is to provide adequate facilities and infrastructure for training and courses, particularly for Muslim employees and, more generally, for non-Muslim employees. Furthermore, policymakers should regularly review and audit existing halal training modules and course content to ensure that they effectively enhance halal understanding and awareness among employees. Similarly, procedures and standards governing the application and maintenance of halal certification and the use of the halal logo should be reviewed regularly.

The procedures and standards for obtaining halal certification should also be continuously audited and evaluated to ensure that they remain relevant to technological developments in the contemporary food and beverage industry. For consumers, appropriate strategies should include attractive marketing and advertising of products and services that incorporate the *halalan tayyiban* concept. In addition, education and awareness programmes on the *halalan tayyiban* concept should be further strengthened among the Malaysian public.

Conclusion

Workers are an important element in food production, and a product's halal status and integrity may be compromised by workers' negligence or lack of diligence in handling the production process. Nevertheless, considerable scope remains for further research to explore ways to enhance understanding and awareness of the *halalan tayyiban* concept among workers and other relevant stakeholders in the halal industry.

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