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Halalan Toyyiban Concept in Food Production and Consumption for Lifestyle: Thailand's Industry Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Halal is an Arabic term meaning 'permitted.' A Halal product is one that is permissible according to Islamic law. In the context of foods, halal refers to food and beverages that are permissible for consumption according to Islamic law. This involves avoiding prohibited ingredients such as pork and alcohol, slaughtering animals in a specific manner, and preventing cross-contamination to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Despite Thailand's Buddhist majority, the country's food industry is witnessing an increasing demand for Halal-certified products. This demand stems from the rising Muslim tourist market and the export potential to Muslim-majority nations. To support and foster the growth of the halal food industry, it is imperative to understand the behaviors of both Muslims and non-Muslims towards halal food. This study aims to explore the concept of halal from an Islamic perspective, observe Thai people's behavior in food production and consumption, evaluate the importance of halal certificates in reflecting public awareness, and assess the potential for developing the halal food industry in non-Muslim majority Thailand.

Keywords: Food; Lifestyle; Halal; Toyyib

1 Introduction

Halal food has gained global importance for improving food safety practices, meeting religious dietary requirements, and addressing specific consumer demands like Halal, Kosher, and Vegetarian diets [1]. The increasing market demand, particularly for Halal food, is driven by the growing Muslim population worldwide [2]. According to Coherent Market Insight, the global halal food market is projected to reach US\$ 2,043.20 billion by 2027, offering significant potential for food industries to meet this demand [3]. Despite being a Buddhist country, Thailand, with a Muslim minority of 4.3% (around 2.94 million), is actively exploring the production of halal food to cater not only to Thai Muslims but also for export to Muslim-majority countries [4]. This study reviews Thailand's perspective on the concept of Halalan toyyiban in food production and consumption for a balanced lifestyle.



2 Halalan toyyiban foods in Islamic law and their benefits for human health

Halal, rooted in the Islamic faith, is a central aspect of Muslim religious practice, promoting adherence to permissible and lawful principles in various areas of life. Primarily associated with food and drink, Halal extends to cosmetics, conduct, hygiene, and financial transactions, reflecting Islamic values [5][6]. This perspective involves avoiding prohibited ingredients like pork and alcohol, adhering to specific animal slaughter methods, preventing cross-contamination, and respecting ethical treatment of animals [7].

In Islamic rules, Halal is always paired with Tayyib, which signifies food that is clean, sourced lawfully, produced ethically, not excessive, disease-free, and health-beneficial [8]. Quranic guidance (2:168) emphasizes not only the Halal nature of food but also its Tayyib quality (goodness). Halalan toyyiban foods align with Islamic law's specific criteria for cleanliness, quality, and ethical sourcing. Certain foods are prohibited (haram) in Islamic terminology, including pork and its by-products, blood, unclean animals, creatures living on land and water, contaminated food and drinks, potentially intoxicating substances, and more, to ensure human health and well-being [9].

3 Thai People's Behavior in Halal Food Production and Consumption

In non-Muslim-majority countries like Thailand, interest in halal foods is growing. Despite Muslims making up only about 4.3% of Thailand's population, the country has become a major halal food producer in Southeast Asia [10]. Since 1949, Thailand has developed a robust Halal system, making it one of the top five producers in the region and a globally recognized halal hub [11][12]. The rising demand for halal products is influenced by economic benefits, including expanding business to neighboring Muslim-majority countries [13]. Although Thailand is predominantly Buddhist, the increase in Muslim tourists has led to a shift in attitudes towards halal food, prompting the Thai food market to adapt accordingly.

Thai consumers consider factors like quality, taste, and individual preferences when purchasing products [14]. However, Thai Muslims pay special attention to the halal logo on packaging, indicating that the product complies with Islamic dietary guidelines [15]. A previous study emphasizes the importance of the halal label in influencing the purchasing decisions of Muslim consumers [16]. This trend has motivated Thai producers to expand their halal product offerings to meet dynamic consumer demands [17]. To sustain the growth of the halal food market, understanding consumer behaviour in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries is crucial [18]. Awareness of the halal issue is critical for Muslim consumers in non-Muslim-majority countries when evaluating food products [19]. The halal logo is a reliable indicator of food quality approved by a halal authority [20].

4 Sustainability and Future Prospects of Thailand's Halal Food

Thailand's halal industry is thriving, with a particular focus on the food sector, which has significant potential to boost the economy. The country has become an attractive halal travel

destination for both Muslim and non-Muslim travellers [1][21]. As the demand for halal products grows, it is not limited to Muslim consumers and businesses but also attracts interest from non-Muslim producers. Currently, Thailand has 581 halal restaurants, with a majority located in the central region, followed by the south, north, northeast, and east [22]. Meeting the rising demand for halal cuisine presents a remarkable opportunity for the halal food industry to ensure sustainability.

The halal food supply chain in Thailand incorporates sustainable principles, ensuring food safety, hygiene, fair trade, and animal care from farm to fork. This involves employing good manufacturing and farming practices and conducting hazard analyses from social, environmental, and economic perspectives [23]. Reducing food waste is crucial for sustainability, as it depletes vital resources and poses environmental challenges [21][24].

Thailand has committed 8 billion Baht under its five-year plan (2017-2021) to strengthen the halal industry by improving manufacturing capacity, certification processes, research and development, and global marketing [21]. To achieve long-term growth, a holistic approach prioritizing social, environmental, and economic accountability is essential [25]. Researchers can play a crucial role in exploring innovative approaches to halal food production and consumption while addressing food waste properly.

5 Conclusions

In conclusion, the increasing global concern for halal food, driven by a focus on food safety, religious beliefs, and lifestyle preferences, presents significant growth opportunities for the Halal food industry. Thailand's strategic approach to tap into this market and prioritize sustainability initiatives bodes well for its prospects in meeting the diverse demands of consumers and establishing itself as a prominent player in the Halal food sector.

Author Contributions

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