

The Impact of Halal Regulations on Japan's Food Industry: A Case Study of Exports to Muslim Countries

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Abstract

This research analyzes the impact of halal regulations on Japan's food industry, especially in the context of exports to Muslim countries. Halal regulations are a key factor in global food trade, but Japan faces challenges in aligning its domestic policies with international halal standards. This research uses qualitative methods and a literature review to explore how halal regulations in Japan are implemented, the challenges faced by the food industry, and the impact of these regulations on export competitiveness. The research results show that the lack of uniformity in the halal certification system, producers' lack of understanding of halal standards, and differences in regulations between export destination countries are the main obstacles for the Japanese food industry. However, opportunities remain open through adaptation strategies, such as implementing halal production lines, leveraging technology to enhance supply chain transparency, and collaborating with international halal certification institutions. This research confirms that halal regulations are essential in increasing the Japanese food industry's competitiveness in the Muslim market. Policy harmonization, digitalization of the certification system, and regulatory support from the Japanese government are needed to strengthen halal food exports and increase Muslim consumers' confidence in Japanese products.

Keywords: law; halal regulations; Japanese food industry; food exports.



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INTRODUCTION

Halal regulations have become a strategic issue in global trade, especially for countries that have food industries with an export orientation to Muslim countries (Effendi et al., 2024). Japan, as one of the countries with a rapidly developing food industry, faces challenges in meeting global halal standards to increase the competitiveness of its products in the Muslim market. In the last few decades, the demand for halal products has increased significantly, which is in line with the global growth of the Muslim population and the increasing awareness of Muslim consumers regarding the consumption of halal products (Jalaluddin et al., 2024). This phenomenon demands stricter halal policies and regulations so that products in circulation can be accepted in export destination countries where most of the population is Muslim, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Middle East.

Japan has begun implementing a halal certification system through various institutions collaborating with international Islamic authorities. There are still gaps in the implementation of halal regulations that have the potential to hinder the expansion of the Japanese food industry into the Muslim market (Jamaludin & Sugawara, 2022). Most food producers in Japan still face obstacles in comprehensively understanding halal requirements, including raw materials, production processes, and logistics systems that comply with Sharia provisions (Santoso & Rachman, 2023). The absence of uniform national halal regulations in Japan creates challenges in building confidence in the Muslim market in products from Japan (Rahman et al., 2022).

Based on this phenomenon, this research aims to identify the impact of halal regulations on the food industry in Japan, especially in the context of exporting products to Muslim countries (Alhabshi, 2016). The main issues that will be examined in this research include how Japanese food companies implement halal regulations, the challenges they face in obtaining halal certification, and the impact of these regulations on the competitiveness of their products in the international market (Sakti & Ramadhani, 2023). This study will also review how halal policies in Japan compare with global halal standards implemented by Muslim countries to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the regulations that have been implemented (Ab. Wahab & Kamarubahrin, 2019).

This research uses an institutional theory approach to understand this phenomenon more deeply. This approach emphasizes how regulations and norms implemented in a country can influence business strategies and industrial practices (Yustianingsih et al., 2024). This theory is relevant for analyzing how food companies in Japan adapt to halal regulations from both internal and external policy perspectives. Apart from that, international trade theory is also used to understand the impact of halal regulations on the competitiveness of Japanese food products in the global market (Morais & Ishida, 2024). Institutional theory further explains that organizational adaptation is driven by coercive and normative pressures that shape business legitimacy. In Japan's halal food industry, coercive pressures arise from halal regulations, certification requirements, and import standards imposed by Muslim-majority trading partners, compelling firms to comply to maintain export access. Normative pressures emerge from international halal certification bodies, professional standards, and Muslim consumer expectations regarding religious compliance and product integrity. Together, these institutional forces encourage Japanese food companies to modify production systems, supply chains, and

certification practices, thereby strengthening legitimacy, international competitiveness, and long-term participation in the global halal market.

Several previous studies have discussed halal certification and its impact on the food industry in various countries. For example, a survey conducted by Yamaguchi (2019) shows that halal certification is vital for increasing Muslim consumers' confidence in a product, ultimately impacting export growth. Another study by Kubota et al., (2017) revealed that a country's success in penetrating the global halal market highly depends on clear regulations and a credible certification system. However, research on the implementation of halal rules in the Japanese food industry remains limited, so a more in-depth study is needed to understand the challenges and opportunities this industry faces.

This research is crucial because it provides insight into the impact of halal regulations in Japan on the food industry and exports to Muslim countries. The increasing demand for halal products is prompting the Japanese food industry to understand and comply with relevant regulations to enhance its competitiveness in international markets. In addition, this research can help policymakers in Japan design more effective strategies to support halal food exports (Safara, 2024).

This research departs from the statement that halal regulations have significant implications for the business strategy and sustainability of the food industry in Japan, especially in facing the Muslim market, which is increasingly selective in the products it consumes. Therefore, this research will analyze the impact of halal regulations on the Japanese food industry by focusing on how companies adapt to halal requirements and how these regulations affect their competitiveness in the global market. Thus, it is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to the Japanese food industry and provide insights for other countries seeking to develop halal regulations to support exports to Muslim countries.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs qualitative methods and a systematic literature review to analyze the impact of halal regulations on Japan's food industry, with a focus on exports to Muslim countries. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of halal rules, the Japanese food industry's challenges, and strategies for dealing with global halal standards.

This research obtained data from academic journals, books, industry reports, and regulations relevant to halal policies in Japan and export destination countries. The analysis reviewed legal documents, halal certification standards, and international trade policies regulating halal food exports. A comparative study was conducted on halal regulations in Japan and on international standards applied in Muslim countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Middle East.

This study followed the PRISMA 2020 framework to ensure a transparent and systematic literature selection process. Relevant studies were identified through searches of Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and official government databases using predefined keywords related to halal regulations, Japan, food industry, certification, and exports. After duplicate removal, titles and abstracts were screened against predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Full-text articles were then assessed for eligibility based on relevance, methodological quality, publication type, and publication year. Studies meeting all criteria were included for qualitative synthesis. The final dataset was analyzed through thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns, challenges, regulatory issues, and strategic implications for Japan's halal food industry.

Data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic synthesis to identify patterns, trends, and gaps in the implementation of halal regulations in Japan. This analysis groups data by central themes, including the halal certification system, compliance with global halal standards, and the impact of regulations on the competitiveness of Japanese export products.

To increase the validity of the research, source triangulation was carried out by comparing various perspectives from academic literature, government regulations, and reports from halal certification institutions (Ermel et al., 2021). This approach ensures that research results are highly accurate and objective in understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the Japanese food industry as it adapts to global halal regulations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Japan's Halal Regulatory Policy: Implications for the Food Industry

Halal regulations in Japan remain fragmented and lack uniform national standards. The Japanese government does not have sole authority in halal supervision, so halal certification is mainly carried out by independent institutions such as the Japan Halal Association (JHA) and the Japan Muslim Association (JMA). Even though several food companies have attempted to obtain halal certification, there are still obstacles in implementation caused by a lack of understanding of halal requirements and limited raw materials that comply with Sharia standards (Imama et al., 2020).

Japan shows some fundamental differences in comparison with international halal standards. Halal standards set by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) emphasize strict traceability of raw materials and continuous monitoring of the supply chain. Meanwhile, JAKIM (Malaysia) has more structured regulations involving government monitoring of halal certification. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GSO) sets stricter standards to ensure halal products, particularly in production and distribution. These differences make it difficult for the Japanese food industry to adapt its products to the requirements of various export destination countries (Nurfauzia et al., 2023).

The results of this research show that the main challenges the Japanese food industry faces in meeting global halal standards include a shortage of halal experts, high certification costs, and a lack of production facilities capable of fully implementing halal principles. Different regulations across export destinations complicate international efforts to standardize Japanese halal products. This underscores the need for synergy among industry, certification bodies, and the Japanese government to create a more structured and globally recognized halal system.

Halal regulations in Japan reflect institutional adaptation that is still in the developmental stage from an institutional-theory perspective. Zeng et al. (2024) explain that organizations adapt to normative and regulative pressures to gain legitimacy in the global market. In this context, the Japanese food industry has begun to respond to pressure from Muslim consumers and market needs by adopting stricter halal standards. However, without strong government regulatory support, this adaptation is occurring only partially and unevenly across all food industry sectors.

Halal regulations play an essential role in enhancing the competitiveness of Japanese food products in the Muslim market, according to international trade theory. Zu et al. (2020) emphasized that a country's competitive advantage depends on how the industry can meet the requirements of the global market. In this case, the Japanese food industry, which can adopt international halal standards, will have more significant opportunities to increase exports to Muslim countries. On the other hand, noncompliance with halal regulations can be a significant barrier to global market penetration.

Various previous studies support the findings of this research. Ahmad-Fauzi & Md Saad (2024) stated that a country's success in exporting halal products depends on clear regulations and a credible certification system. Kohilavani et al. (2021) emphasized the need to harmonize halal standards to increase product competitiveness in international markets. Thus, the results of this research reinforce the need to improve fragmented halal regulations in Japan to increase the food industry's competitiveness in the global market.

Table 1. Comparison of halal regulations in Japan with international standards

Regulatory Aspects	Japan	MUI (Indonesia)	JAKIM (Malaysia)	GSO (Gulf Cooperation Council)
Certification Authority	Independent institution	Government and MUI	Government and JAKIM	Government and GSO
Production Supervision	Limited	Tight and Sustainable	Strict	Very tight
Raw Material Traceability	Limited	Very tight	Strict	Very tight
Certification Fee	Tall	Relatively Affordable	Currently	Tall

Source: content analyzis results, 2026.

Based on the analyzis above, it can be concluded that halal regulations in Japan still need to be harmonized with international standards to gain greater acceptance in the Muslim market. The Japanese government needs to play a more active role in establishing a more uniform halal policy and supporting the food industry in meeting global requirements. In addition, investment in halal infrastructure and education for industry players is needed to ensure that halal regulations in Japan are implemented effectively and to help increase exports of Japanese halal products to Muslim markets.

Japanese Corporate Strategies for Meeting Halal Export Standards

Several Japanese food companies have secured halal certification for exports to Muslim countries. This success cannot be separated from the adaptation strategy implemented in various aspects, from production and processing to distribution. These companies have invested in improving halal control systems and workforce training and have collaborated with internationally recognized halal certification institutions. Several large companies, such as Ajinomoto and Marudai Food, have built dedicated production lines for halal products to ensure that no non-halal ingredients are present (Fajrianto & Mulawarman, 2020).

Japanese food companies apply a strict approach to selecting raw materials in the production process. They work with suppliers that have obtained halal certification or adjust raw material sources to meet international halal standards. Food processing has also undergone significant changes, including the introduction of equipment specifically for halal products and the implementation of strict hygiene procedures to comply with Sharia regulations. This process is in line with the findings of Tatsuya Fujiwara (2017), who emphasize that the sustainability of the halal industry depends heavily on the integrity of the supply chain and compliance with halal procedures.

Distribution strategies are also undergoing adjustments to ensure that halal products continue to meet standards in consumers' hands. The company implements a separate logistics system to prevent contamination between halal and non-halal products. In addition, the product packaging is clearly labeled as halal and has received approval from the relevant certification authority in the export destination country. This step is necessary to build the trust of Muslim consumers and ensure compliance with halal regulations that apply in export destination countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Middle Eastern countries (Masron et al., 2014).

Food company supply chains in Japan are also undergoing significant changes to meet global halal standards. The halal control system is integrated into the supply chain by building close relationships with certified raw materials suppliers and increasing transparency at every production stage. The company implements a strict internal audit system to ensure the supply chain complies with halal regulations. This is in line with the institutional theory by Bang-Jensen (2024), which states that organizations tend to adapt to the dominant rules and norms of their industry to gain market legitimacy.

Japanese companies’ adaptation strategies for meeting halal standards have positively impacted their competitiveness in Muslim markets from an international trade theory perspective. Prado (2024) explains that a country’s competitive advantage in international trade depends on the industry’s ability to respond to changes in global demand. In this context, Japanese food companies that successfully obtain halal certification gain wider access to export markets, increase the added value of their products, and build a reputation as producers of high-quality halal food. This step also increases Japan’s competitiveness in the halal industrial sector, which continues to grow globally.

Previous studies conducted by Saidah & Lestari (2021) show that companies that proactively adapt their business strategies to halal regulations have a greater chance of success in the Muslim market. This is reinforced by research by Öztürk (2024) highlighting the importance of halal certification in building consumer trust and increasing market preference for products verified as halal. Thus, the results of this study align with previous findings, which confirm that compliance with halal standards is not only a regulatory requirement but also a significant factor in the successful export of food products to Muslim countries.

Table 2. Comparison of adaptation strategies carried out by Japanese food companies

Adaptation Aspect	Japanese Food Company	Global Halal Standard
Selection of Raw Materials	Working with halal-certified suppliers	Must be sourced from certified halal raw materials
Product Processing	Use of memorable halal production lines	Production must be separate from non-halal products
Distribution System	Implementation of separate logistics for halal and non-halal products	Must have a distribution system that guarantees the product is halal
Halal Certification	Follow the standards of halal certification bodies in the destination country.	Must obtain certification from an internationally recognized halal authority

Source: content analyzis results, 2026.

Based on the analysis above, it can be concluded that the strategies and adaptations of Japanese food companies in meeting halal standards have contributed to increased exports to Muslim countries. However, challenges remain, including differences in halal certification standards across countries and high operational costs associated with implementing halal production and distribution systems. Therefore, further support from the Japanese government is needed, in the form of more structured regulations and incentives, for companies investing in the halal industry. With these steps, the Japanese food industry can further develop to meet the growing demand of the global halal market.

Impact of Halal Regulations on Japanese Food Competitiveness in Muslim Markets

Halal regulations significantly influence the competitiveness and expansion of Japanese food products in Muslim markets. Increasingly stringent halal rules in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia are prompting Japanese companies to adjust their production and marketing strategies. Some companies have successfully obtained halal certification and increased their exports, while others still face challenges in meeting international halal standards. (Supriyono et al., 2024).

The impact of halal regulations on Japanese food exports is evident in the increasing number of companies obtaining halal certification to enter Muslim markets. Products that have been certified halal gain wider access and have higher appeal among Muslim consumers. Data from the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) shows an increase in exports of halal-certified food products from Japan to Indonesia and Malaysia in the last five years. This increase reflects the importance of halal regulations in opening new market opportunities for the Japanese food industry (Miyamoto, 2019).

Halal regulations have affected the image of Japanese products in the global halal market. Muslim consumers tend to trust products that have received halal certification from credible institutions. Halal certification is considered a guarantee of compliance with Islamic law and an indicator of product quality and cleanliness. Research by Amin et al. (2024) shows that Muslim consumers prefer products with a halal label to those without halal certification. Therefore, Japanese companies that successfully obtain halal certification tend to gain better market acceptance and can build Muslim consumer loyalty.

The adoption of halal regulations also presents economic challenges for Japanese companies. The halal certification process entails high additional costs, including investments in raw materials that comply with halal standards, changes to production processes, and periodic audits by halal certification bodies (Asmawi & Lutfiadi, 2026). In addition, varying halal standards across export destinations add complexity to the compliance strategies Japanese companies must implement. The study conducted by Haryanti & Miru (2024) shows that companies operating across Muslim countries often face difficulties harmonizing halal regulations.

The benefits of implementing halal regulations are more significant in the long term. Halal-certified products can penetrate the rapidly growing Muslim market and appeal to non-Muslim consumers who view halal standards as a guarantee of product quality. Research by Melga Sari et al. (2024) emphasized that companies that invest in halal certification tend to have more substantial competitive advantages and are more readily accepted in international markets.

Table 3. Comparison of the impact of Halal regulations on exports for Japanese food companies

Aspect	Impact of Halal Regulations
Export of Food Products	Increased exports to Muslim countries, especially Indonesia, Malaysia, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia
Image and Market Acceptance	Increasing the trust and loyalty of Muslim consumers
Economic Challenges	High certification costs, changes in production processes, and differences in regulations between countries
Economic Benefits	Access to global halal markets, increased competitiveness, and expansion opportunities

Source: content analyzis results, 2026.

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that halal regulations play an essential role in increasing the competitiveness and expansion of Japanese food products in the Muslim market. While there are economic challenges in the certification process and regulatory compliance, the long-term benefits are far more significant. Therefore, Japanese food companies must continue to adapt to global halal regulations and develop more effective strategies to ensure compliance with halal standards in various export destinations. In this way, they can capitalize on opportunities in the growing halal market and enhance their competitiveness internationally.

Global Prospects and Challenges for Japan's Halal Food Sector

The halal food industry in Japan has promising growth prospects amid globalization. Increasing Muslim consumer awareness of the importance of halal certification and the growth of the global Muslim population are driving demand for halal products. As a country with a developed food industry, Japan can capitalize on this trend by increasing exports of halal products to Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. A report from the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) shows that demand for halal food in Japan has increased over the last five years, reflecting the potential for further expansion in the global halal market.

Despite the Japanese halal food industry’s promising growth prospects, several challenges must be overcome to maintain competitiveness. One of the main challenges is increasingly strict regulations regarding halal standards in various export destination countries. Differences in halal certification standards between Muslim countries often make it difficult for Japanese companies to obtain certification under various international regulations. Ahmad et al. (2023) show that harmonizing halal standards is crucial in facilitating halal food trade between countries.

The high cost of halal certification is an obstacle for many companies, especially small and medium-sized businesses. The certification process includes verifying raw materials and production methods, as well as periodic audits, all of which incur additional costs. Japanese companies wishing to export halal products must invest in separate production lines to ensure no contamination with non-halal ingredients, increasing operational costs. Pane & Yohana (2024) revealed that certification costs are often the main inhibiting factor for companies wishing to enter the halal market.

Global competition is also a challenge for the Japanese halal food industry. Countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Türkiye have long been recognized as major players in the halal sector and have well-established certification systems. Their experience and more structured regulations make their products more readily accepted in the global halal market. Japan needs to develop strategies to increase competitiveness through product innovation and efficiency in the halal supply chain (Hasnan & Kohda, 2023).

Policy recommendations are needed to support the development of Japan’s halal food industry and help it address these challenges. The Japanese government can take a more active role in building a stronger halal ecosystem by incentivizing companies seeking halal certification. In addition, closer cooperation between the Japanese government and international halal authorities is needed to align halal regulations with global standards. Bahara et al. (2024) state that widely recognized halal certification will increase product competitiveness in international markets and strengthen Muslim consumers’ trust in these products.

Japan’s halal food industry also needs to adopt technology in production and distribution processes to ensure more efficient compliance with halal regulations (Maulana et al., 2026). Digitalization in supply chain certification and tracking systems can help increase transparency and reduce operational costs. Blockchain technology, for example, allows for the high accuracy of tracking raw materials from their source to the final product, as proposed in the research of Adinugraha et al. (2024).

Table 4. Japan’s Halal Food Industry: Opportunities, Challenges, and Policies

Aspect	Prospect	Challenge	Recommendation
Global Halal Market	Increased demand from Muslim countries	Regulations are increasingly strict in various countries	Harmonization of rules with global halal standards
Certification Fee	Expansion opportunities for large companies	High certification and operational costs	Providing government incentives for small companies
Global Competition	Japanese products have the potential to appeal to Muslim consumers	Tight competition with major halal-producing countries	Development of product innovation and supply chain efficiency
Halal Technology	Digitalization of certification systems and supply chains	Lack of application of halal technology in the Japanese food industry	Blockchain implementation to increase transparency

Source: content analyzis results, 2026

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that the Japanese halal food industry has strong potential for global market development. However, to take advantage of

these opportunities, Japan must overcome various challenges through appropriate policies and innovation in the halal industry. Japan can strengthen its position as one of the world's leading halal food producers by harmonizing regulations and incentives for companies and using technology in halal certification. Success in the halal industry provides economic benefits for Japan and expands its influence in the growing global market.

The 2026 findings move beyond descriptive reporting by demonstrating that Japan's certification barriers stem from its institutional configuration rather than isolated operational weaknesses. Fragmented governance, reliance on independent certifiers instead of a centralized authority, limited government oversight, inconsistent traceability, and varying export-country standards collectively increase certification costs and compliance complexity for Japanese firms. Compared with Yamaguchi (2019), which primarily identified fragmented certification as an emerging challenge, the 2026 evidence indicates only incremental progress. Although firms have adopted halal production lines, digital traceability, and international collaboration, the absence of regulatory harmonization suggests structural stagnation rather than substantial advancement in Japan's halal infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that halal regulations significantly affect Japan's food industry, particularly for exports to Muslim countries. Japanese food companies face challenges in understanding and meeting global halal standards due to different regulations between export destination countries. The lack of uniformity in halal standards in Japan, along with government involvement in halal supervision, adds complexity for the food industry seeking to enter the global halal market. Halal regulations also provide a significant opportunity for the Japanese food industry to increase its competitiveness in the Muslim market. Japanese companies that can adapt to international halal standards have greater expansion potential amid the growing global demand for halal products. Several large companies have obtained halal certification and expanded their market access through adaptation strategies, such as selecting raw materials that comply with Sharia standards, implementing halal production lines, and collaborating with international halal certification institutions. The implementation of halal regulations in Japan remains in its developmental stage and requires further government support. More explicit policies and the harmonization of halal standards with those of export destination countries can facilitate global trade in Japanese halal products. In addition, using technology in the halal certification system, such as blockchain and supply chain digitization, can increase efficiency and transparency, helping companies ensure compliance with halal regulations.

This study concludes that fragmented halal regulations constrain Japan's food export competitiveness by creating certification inconsistencies, increasing compliance costs, and limiting alignment with international halal requirements. The novel contribution of this research is identifying regulatory harmonization, digital halal certification, and blockchain-enabled supply chain transparency as an integrated governance framework rather than isolated industry initiatives, demonstrating that institutional coordination is the primary determinant of export competitiveness. Accordingly, the Japanese government should establish a nationally coordinated halal authority, pursue mutual recognition agreements with major Muslim markets, standardize certification procedures, provide incentives for SMEs, and harmonize domestic regulations with globally recognized halal standards.

This research contributes to the literature on halal regulations and international trade by highlighting the challenges and opportunities in implementing halal standards in Japan. It is hoped that the results of this research can serve as a reference for the Japanese food industry, government, and halal certification authorities in designing more effective strategies to support

the growth of the halal industry in Japan and to increase the competitiveness of halal products in the Muslim market.

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