

Evaluating Syariah and Technical Knowledge Among Halal Supervisors in Brunei Darussalam

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ABSTRACT

In Brunei Darussalam, halal supervisors are crucial for upholding the integrity of halal-certified in the food establishments. Their role necessitates a comprehensive understanding of Syariah principles and technical knowledge. Although many supervisors have strong religious foundations, concerns have been raised regarding their technical proficiency in executing halal procedures, encompassing discrepancies in ingredient lists, monitoring, and adherence to established halal standards. This study seeks to assess the proficiency in Syariah and technical knowledge of halal supervisors in Brunei, concentrating on their readiness to guarantee the effectiveness of halal compliance. This study focused on halal-certified restaurants in Brunei Darussalam. Quantitative approach was used for data collection through structured questionnaires and a total of 236 respondents participated in the study. The study employed an Item-level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) and ranged between 0.79 and 0.93, indicating strong agreement among the experts regarding item relevance. Descriptive analysis uses Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for which involved frequency and mean value. The results have shown that the level of knowledge of halalan tayyiban is high in syariah with a mean score of 4.727 and technical aspects with 4.662. The findings revealed that supervisors possess strong Syariah and technical knowledge specifically regarding the comprehension of halal and implementation of halal standards established by Brunei regulatory bodies. Thus, by enhancing both dimensions are essential for maintaining the credibility and operational reliability of Brunei's halal certification system.

INTRODUCTION

The halal certification system in Brunei Darussalam is essential for preserving religious integrity and ensuring the quality of food products and services. Halal certification is issued and controlled by the Halal Certification Body which is Brunei Islamic Religious Council (BIRC) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). Brunei, as a nation with a pronounced Islamic identity, requires all halal-certified

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establishments to employ a minimum of two halal supervisor who are acknowledged by BIRC. To become qualified or be acknowledged by BIRC, the supervisors must go through oral and written tests that the supervisors must pass the test. Upon passing both tests, the Halal Certification and Halal Label Inspection Committee, consisting of the MoRA, the Ministry of Primary Resources and Tourism (MPRT), and the Ministry of Health (MoH), will undergo an adequacy audit conducted weekly. The Inspection Committee will evaluate the completed form, and if they find it satisfactory, they will request the Chief Inspector and the Auditor to conduct an on-site audit by examining the premises or producer (Sulaiman et al., 2021). This reflects the importance of ensuring competent halal food supervisors through a credible assessment process.

Effective halal supervision requires a balanced competency in two critical aspects which are: Syariah knowledge and technical knowledge. Supervisors must be equipped with a comprehensive understanding of the Islamic law, including the regulations regarding permissible ingredients, and the prevention of contamination with non-halal substances. However, supervisors may encounter difficulty in identifying or rectifying non-compliant practices that could potentially render a product haram in the absence of this foundation. Furthermore, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam shared his concern on thoroughly and systematically overseeing the halal and haram aspects of food during the Nuzul Al-Quran Celebration Ceremony National Level Year 1437 Hijrah: "I understand that our current efforts are focused on expediting the approval process for the Halal Certificate and Halal Permit applications. This step is indeed appropriate from an administrative point of view, especially in relation to matters of halal-haram law, where it is not appropriate to take shortcuts but must be neat and thorough, based on the syariah guidelines, not limited to issuing the halal certificate and permit. The law of halal-haram food is unique; it requires people who really know and understand what is halal and what is haram. If they do not know or understand all of this, how can it be guaranteed that the food sold is halal?" (Wan Ahmadi, 2016).

This highlights the critical significance of extensive knowledge and strict compliance with Syariah principles in the halal certification process, asserting that it must never be hastened at the expense of thoroughness and precision. This viewpoint underscores the necessity for halal food supervisors to possess comprehensive knowledge of halal and haram principles to guarantee the credibility of halal certification. According to Alba et al. (1987), halal knowledge is about how Muslims should understand and apply some Islamic teachings particularly on halal and haram. Halal knowledge is related to literacy, knowledge, mastering understanding, and being familiar with halal products. In addition, halal knowledge is how much a person can remember the halal and haram rules mentioned in the Quran and hadith. Knowledge of what is halal and haram should only come from the Quran and hadith (Khasanah et al., 2023).

Although the religious aspect of halal supervision has been prioritized, there is an increasing acknowledgement that technical proficiency is also essential for the reliable and consistent application of halal practices, for instance supervisors must effectively interpret and apply procedural requirements, address non-compliance issues, and ensure proper documentation and monitoring of halal operational aspects. Therefore, the technical knowledge in which refers to a supervisor's ability to understand, implement, and monitor halal standards and procedures. According to the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order of 2005, halal supervisors are mandated to oversee food preparation, ingredient procurement, and adherence to halal standards (Hashim et al., 2022). In Brunei Darussalam, halal certification and the halal label are handled by the officers of the Halal Food Control Division (HFCD) commonly referred to as Bahagian Kawalan Makanan Halal (BKMH). HFCD was established due to the Brunei Darussalam government's significant concern regarding halal food issue, starting from application through site auditing to certification and follow-up audit (Kifli, 2019). Furthermore, a business owner who wishes to apply for a halal certificate or halal permit must first go through the HFCD which has the authority to handle the certification procedure, and then through BIRC at MoRA. The HFCD is responsible for the enforcement of Halal Meat Act, Chapter 183 and its regulations, and Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order (HCHLO) 2005. Their role is to control and oversee halal food products in the country (Azmi et al., 2021). This includes restaurants, the food and beverage industry, food stalls, and other similar establishments and

products intended for the local market, imports, and exports that want to use the official halal logo of the BIRC (Kifli, 2019).

In addition, the government of Brunei Darussalam has several initiatives to improve the halal industry such as introducing guidelines, standards, documents, seminars, and exhibitions. The structures and functions of the halal standards and guidelines in Brunei such as Brunei Darussalam Standard Halal Food (PBD24:2007), Guideline for Halal Certification (BCG Halal 1), Guideline for Halal Compliance Audit (BCG Halal 2), Guideline for Certification Halal Compliance Auditor (BCG Halal 3), and Guideline for Halal Surveillance Audit (BCG Halal 4). These guidelines cover food, drinks, processing and handling, and hygiene. They apply to the processors of food for the Muslim market, including restaurants. They must understand and meet the specific requirements to certify their products as halal.

Moreover, HFCD actively conducts talks or seminars on halal awareness in public spaces, organisations, schools, universities, and other institutions. The halal programmes that were offered by HFCD were Halal Awareness Programme for public, Halal Food Supervision Strengthening Programme Session for halal food supervisors, and Halal Compliance Workshop to educate owners, managers, and operators of food and non-food businesses on the requirements of the HCHLO, 2005. These programmes and workshop aim to increase awareness of the importance of maintaining the halal, cleanliness, and safety of products and this will enhance their understanding of halal practices and refine their food handling skills, thereby ensuring their continued proficiency and knowledge. Therefore, these supervisors are required to adhere to Syariah principles, ensuring that food and practices are religiously permissible, as well as possess technical knowledge related to halal certification procedures, including the management of raw materials, storage, sanitation, documentation, and record-keeping.

Despite the importance of this dual competency, there is limited study assessing the current level of syariah and technical knowledge among halal supervisors in Brunei. As mentioned by Sulaiman and Abdullah (2023) regarding the study specifically onto Brunei's halal certification should be more readily available hence others can learn about the related issues and fill the knowledge gap as no comprehensive study on such field has ever been done in the country. This making it difficult for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to fully understand the challenges and gaps within the current supervisory framework. As no comprehensive study has yet been conducted in this area within the national and international context, there is a pressing need for focused academic inquiry. In response to this gap, the present study aims to assess the level of Syariah and technical knowledge among halal supervisors in Brunei.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative study design to evaluate the level of Syariah and technical knowledge among halal supervisors in Brunei. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection, aiming to gather standardized responses for statistical analysis. A random probability technique was applied to select respondents, and it is commonly used for quantitative studies as it aims to generalise the results to a larger sample population (Gray, 2014). The instrument consisted of a close-ended questionnaire, and the instruments were divided into three sections: (i) demographic information, (ii) syariah knowledge, and (iii) technical knowledge. The instrument comprised 18 items, including nine items related to Syariah and technical knowledge. This research used both nominal and ordinal scale. A nominal scale is used to label variables that do not have a quantitative value. It is a description that identifies an object's unique label, such as gender. The ordinal scale used in this research is a Likert scale, which used 5-point Likert-scale evaluation method with choices of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree

The questionnaire was developed based on literature related to halal supervision, syariah requirements, and technical standards. To establish content validity, the items were reviewed by a panel of 14 subject-matter experts in the fields of halal, halal logistics, syariah, and finance. In addition, from industrial players, the experts were from for the food officers from HFCD and Brunei Darussalam Food Authority (BDFA).

The inclusion criteria for this study targeted individuals officially certified as Halal Supervisors that complied with the requirements established by the BIRC. These individuals were chosen from halal-certified food establishments registered in all four districts of Brunei Darussalam: Brunei-Muara, Tutong, Belait, and Temburong. The establishments comprised restaurants, cafes, canteens, food courts, and catering services. To qualify for inclusion, respondents were required to satisfy the following criteria such as formally appointed halal food supervisors by their BIRC, presently employed in restaurants that are halal-certified and engaged in overseeing halal practices within their establishments. Therefore, a total of 236 respondents participated in the survey. Halal supervisors in this study accurately represents the proportion of halal-certified food establishments in Brunei that had identifiable, accessible, and consenting halal supervisors during the survey period. This study does not encompass all food handlers but specifically pertains to those who satisfied designated inclusion criteria and were available, accessible, and willing to engage during the research period.

Furthermore, this study also employed I-CVI and ranged between 0.79 and 0.93, indicating strong agreement among the experts regarding item relevance. The overall Scale-level Content Validity Index (S-CVI) was calculated at 0.87, reflecting high content validity of the instrument. This value significantly exceeds the lower limit of acceptability for S-CVI, as identified by Polit (2006), which is 0.80. A pilot test was conducted involving a subset of respondents ($n = 30$) to assess the internal consistency of the instrument. The results yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.922, and according to Konting (2009), the reliability indicated is excellent and acceptable for further use in the full-scale study. Data was collected using both face-to-face methods. The questionnaire was distributed with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of responses. Finally, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean value, and standard deviation were used to summarize demographic data and responses.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the results and discussion of the study based on the analysis of data collected from halal supervisors in Brunei. The findings are organized according to the study objectives, focusing on respondents' demographic profiles, levels of syariah and technical knowledge, and the relationship between these two domains. The following section presents the results and discussion:

(i) Demographic

Table 1. Sociodemographic Profile of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	119	50.4%
Female	117	49.6%
Age range in years		
18-20 years old	14	5.9%
21-30 years old	97	41.1%
31-40 years old	62	26.3%
41-50 years old	41	17.4%
51-60 years old	10	4.2%
60 years old above	12	5.1%
Districts		
Brunei-Muara	126	53.4%

Belait	41	17.4%
Tutong	66	28.0%
Temburong	3	1.3%
Educational Level		
Primary School	13	5.5%
Secondary School	109	46.2%
Higher Post-Secondary Schools	52	22.0%
Vocational Education	25	10.6%
Higher National Diploma (HND)	15	6.4%
Bachelor's Degree	17	7.2%
Master's Degree	5	2.1%

The questionnaires were administered to both genders, who contributed nearly equally to the results presented in Table 1. The percentage of male respondents was 50.4% (119), whereas the percentage of female respondents was 49.6% (117). Additionally, both male and female participants were local and non-local halal food supervisors employed in halal-certified restaurants in Brunei Darussalam. According to Table 1, the highest number of respondents were aged between 21 and 30 years (41.1%) with 97 respondents. This is a pivotal period for career decisions, particularly in the halal food sector. In addition, the study found that Brunei-Muara had the highest number of halal food supervisors (53.4%), with 126 respondents. Tutong had the lowest (28%), followed by Belait (17.4%), and Temburong had the lowest number of halal-certified restaurants, accounting for only 1.3% (10 restaurants) of the total. In terms of educational background, Table 1 reveal that nearly half of respondents consider secondary school as their highest education, with 46.2% pursuing higher education. Vocational education is prevalent, with 7.2% holding bachelor's degrees. Only 2.1% have completed a master's degree, emphasizing problem-solving skills for career success.

(ii) Syariah Aspect

Table 2 displays the mean scores for these nine items derived from comprehensive analysis. The mean score was calculated based on the data collected through the questionnaire developed by the researcher and past literature. The nine items exhibited a “very high” mean score of 4.727 according to the rules of Tschannen-Moran et al., (2004).

Table 2: The Mean Score of Each Likert-Scale Study Item B1 through B9

No. of Items	Statements	Means	Standard Deviations
B1	Syariah law means anything that Allah and His Messenger command and prohibit based on the teaching of the Quran and Sunnah.	4.74	.478
B2	The term/word “halal” means lawful and permissible according to hukum syara’.	4.73	.480
B3	The term/word “tayyiban” means good, healthy, high quality, and pure from filth.	4.61	.613
B4	The term/word “syubhah” means the halal and haram status of food and drinks are unknown and unclear.	4.37	.892
B5	Halal food means food that is permissible for human consumption and permitted by hukum syara’.	4.77	.431

B6	Halal food should be safe and not harmful to human health.	4.81	.397
B7	Halal food should not contain any prohibited (haram) ingredients such as filth, alcohol, and pork.	4.86	.348
B8	Islam has emphasis on the importance of living healthily, and eating nutritious halal food.	4.83	.387
B9	Islam has emphasis on the importance of hygiene.	4.83	.372
Total Mean Scores		4.727	.342

The survey indicated that respondents possess a significant awareness of halalan tayyiban knowledge in accordance with syariah principles. The results in Table 2 indicate a favorable outcome in the syariah knowledge, with a total mean score of 4.727. It emphasizes that respondents recognize the implications of halal, tayyiban, and syubhah, the significance of consuming nutritious food, and notably that eating halal food is integral to syariah law. Item B7, whereby “Halal food should not contain any prohibited (haram) ingredients such as filth, alcohol, and pork”, which scored the highest mean of 4.86 (SD = 0.348), Therefore, it can be concluded that respondents have a good knowledge on halalan tayyiban according to syariah aspects that comply with halal, haram, and tayyiban. Meanwhile, Item B4, “The term or word “syubhah” means the halal and haram status of food and drinks are unknown and unclear”, scored the lowest mean with 4.37 (SD = 0.892). This shows discrepancy underscores a vital area for enhancement in education and exposure concerning halal food practices. Comprehending syubhah is crucial, as it relates to issues that are ambiguous or dubious regarding halal adherence. The respondents’ limited awareness of syubhah may pose risks in food oversight and consumption, highlighting the necessity for focused awareness initiatives that elucidate the nuances of halal and the significance of avoiding syubhah. Considering the varying degrees of agreement among respondents and the item regarding syubhah, which has the lowest mean score of 4.37 in this study, there is room for improvement.

(iii) Technical Aspect

The mean score for these nine items is presented in Table 3 based on the overall analysis. The nine items indicate a “very high” mean score with a total of 4.662.

Table 3: The Mean Score of Each Likert-Scale Study Item C1 through C9

No. of Items	Statements	Means	Standard Deviations
C1	It is the responsibility of the halal food supervisor to ensure that the requirements of the Brunei Darussalam Standards on Halal Food (PBD 24:2007) and the Guideline for Halal Certification (BCG Halal 1) are met.	4.66	.573
C2	The halal food supervisor should always supervise the preparation and processing of halal food in the restaurant.	4.68	.495
C3	Every restaurant applying for the halal certificate and halal label must ensure that all raw ingredients used are halal.	4.81	.425
C4	Every restaurant applying for the halal certificate and halal label must ensure that suppliers or sub-contractors (third party) only supply halal materials or have a halal certificate are selected.	4.69	.530
C5	The halal food supervisor is responsible for ensuring documents, such as the list of ingredients and materials used, from the supplier are listed clearly, in detail, and comprehensively.	4.61	.640
C6	Every product and ingredient used in the restaurant must be listed and submitted to HFCD	4.62	.671

C7	The halal food supervisor is responsible for ensuring the food menu is listed clearly and comprehensively.	4.67	.570
C8	The halal food supervisor is responsible for reporting any changes in food ingredients to HFCD.	4.54	.728
C9	The halal food supervisor is responsible for guiding employees to avoid cross contamination from occurring.	4.69	.500
Total Mean Scores		4.66	.573

The mean score value for technical section, as indicated in Table 3, is 4.662. This study demonstrates that respondents have an extensive understanding of the technical specifications and legal criteria by Brunei halal standards. As shown in Table 3, Item C3 “Every restaurant applying for the halal certificate and halal label must ensure that all raw ingredients used are halal” scored the highest mean of 4.81 (SD = 0.425), This shows that respondents are fully aware of the importance of halal food and halal standards and regulations of Brunei Darussalam by strongly focus on selecting raw ingredients, this indicating the supervisors prioritizing the sourcing of compliant ingredients.

However, some respondents are less perceptive, or only a few are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, especially in halal documentation. For example, Item C8 “The halal food supervisor is responsible for reporting any changes in food ingredients to HFCD” scored the lowest mean with 4.54 (SD = 0.728). This indicates potential deficiencies in the implementation in halal documentation practices, which could affect overall adherence to halal standards. Halal food supervisors must prioritize halal documentation procedures to ensure that all ingredient changes are accurately recorded.

DISCUSSIONS

Initially, a study by Riaz and Ghayyas (2023) stated that Islamic law is a comprehensive code of conduct that guides followers of Islam in all facets of life and provides complete and clear concepts regarding lawful and unlawful things. Syariah refers to a set of laws established by Allah SWT to guide individuals in fulfilling their obligations as His servants. These obligations include the responsibility to safeguard nature, the environment, and all forms of life. As mentioned in Surah An’am, verse 145; “I do not find within that which was revealed to me [anything] forbidden to one who would eat it unless it be a dead animal or blood spilled out or the flesh of swine – for indeed, it is impure – or it be [that slaughtered in] disobedience, dedicated to other than Allah But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], then indeed, your Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.” This Quranic verse on halalan tayyiban encompasses a wide interpretation of what defines good food. It broadens the notion of permissibility and wholesome within Islam.

In addition, Al-Sharbini (n.d) clarified that the word tayyiban in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 168; O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. It has four main components, firstly, the food is from the source that is halal, not haram; it must be clean and does not have any kind of impurities; the food does not cause any pain or misery to the people who consume it; and the foods are nutritious and beneficial for human consumption. Furthermore al-Maraghiy (2001) stated that halalan tayyiban refers to food permitted by Allah SWT which is of good quality and will not harm the mind, spirit, and body. Islam guides us towards what is good and beneficial for human beings and prohibits what is dangerous or harmful. Eating halal and tayyib food benefits the human body.

Extending this discussion, the halal supervisors also understand that halal food is permissible and should not contain any prohibited ingredients according to hukum syarak, and halal food encompasses healthy, safe, and pure ingredients. Ibn Hajr (1978) clarified that the word *al-tayyibat*, the plural of *tayyibah*, means something that is beneficial, not harmful, pure, and halal (permissible). Then, impure or unclean

things should therefore not be eaten. Therefore, al-tayyibat things are not only good, pleasant, delightful, delicious, or sweet but also need to be healthy and beneficial to our bodies. Generally, what is good for our bodies is also good for our minds and spirits.

Moreover, the term *syubhah*, or doubtful according to al-Qunawi (2004), is something that is not clear on whether it is lawful and unlawful and it is a situation where the rules on a matter are not clear or cannot be identified. As stated previously, *syubhah* occurs when an individual is not able to determine whether the status of a specific food or drink is halal or haram, and thus it should not be consumed. According to a hadith narrated by Muslim (Hadith No.3882), the Prophet SAW said: “What is lawful is evident and what is unlawful is evident, and in between them are the things doubtful which many people do not know. So, he who guards against doubtful things keeps his religion and honour blameless, and he who indulges in doubtful things indulges in fact in unlawful things, just as a shepherd who pastures his animals round a preserve will soon pasture them in it. Beware, every king has a preserve, and the things God has declared unlawful are His preserves. Beware, in the body there is a piece of flesh; if it is sound, the whole body is sound and if it is corrupt the whole body is corrupt, and hearken it is the heart.”

Considering the varying degrees of agreement among respondents and the item regarding *syubhah*, which has the lowest mean score of 4.37 in this research, there is room for improvement. From the result, it shows a lack of clarity or misunderstanding in this area can result in errors in food production, handling, or certification. This study supports studies by Zuhudi (2020) and Damit et al., (2017) reveal that labelling issues closely related to *syubhah* in Muslim communities lack necessary information on ingredients and additives, contain questionable food origin and purity, and have unclear terms and scientific ingredient names. Conduct workshops for halal food supervisors and industry stakeholders aimed at addressing *syubhah* concerns.

Another significant finding confirms that respondents adhere to standard halal procedures, including PBD 24:2007 and BCG Halal 1. The respondents' knowledge and understanding of halal standards and regulations are crucial for ensuring a smooth operation and adherence to halal compliancy within a food premise or restaurant. To ensure that Muslim food remains free from haram contamination, BIRC has pioneered the process of obtaining halal certification. It provides practical guidelines for the food industry on the preparation and handling of halal food, as legislated in PBD24:2007. The manual of PBD24:2007 defines “halal food as food that is fit for human consumption and permitted by hukum syara' and all processed food is halal if it meets the following requirements:”

- a. The product and its ingredients contain no non-halal animal components by Hukum Syara' or products of animals that are not slaughtered according to Hukum Syara';
- b. The product does not contain anything in any quantity that is decreed as najis by Hukum Syara';
- c. The product or its ingredients are safe and not harmful.
- d. The product is prepared, processed, or manufactured using equipment and facilities that are free from contamination with najis as decreed by Hukum Syara';
- e. The food or its ingredients do not contain any human parts or its derivatives that are not permitted by Hukum Syara'; and
- f. During its preparation, processing, packaging, storage, and transportation, it must be physically separated from any other food that does not meet the requirements specified in items (a), (b), (c), (d), and/or (e) or any things deemed decreed as najis by Hukum Syara; (PBD24:2007, P.7).

Halal documentation is a crucial technical component that reinforces the principles of *tayyiban*, emphasising assurance, quality, and safety in halal practices. The technical procedures, including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), guarantee that all phases of sourcing, handling, and preparation adhere to halal standards. The technical process pertains to the essential element of halal documentation to guarantee

adherence to halal standards. This study indicates that participants comprehend the halal food supervisor's responsibility to list out all food products, submit them to HFCD, clearly list the menu, and prepare the documentation. These results are consistent with findings by Rosli (2022), whereby halal executives collaborate with government authorities, handle halal documentation, and maintain product halal status by liaising with JAKIM, the MOH, and other relevant authorities.

In addition, according to the guideline of halal food supervisor, the duties of halal food supervisors are responsible for informing any changes in food ingredients to BIRC. According to PBD 24:2007, "anybody who intends to obtain the Halal Certificate for place of business. The applicant form must be completed and accompanied with relevant documents." such as:

- a. Name and information of product/menu for verification.
- b. Ingredients used.
- c. Name and address of producer / ingredient supplier.
- d. Halal status of ingredients and their halal certifications or product specifications for critical ingredients (as appropriate). (PBD 24:2007)

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the proficiency in Syariah and technical knowledge among halal supervisors in Brunei. The findings indicated that many supervisors exhibit strong syariah knowledge, especially regarding halal principles and Islamic rulings, however their understanding on syubhah were less uniform. Furthermore, majority of supervisors have higher knowledge on their technical comprehension, including compliance with halal certification protocols and oversight practices. However, this study enhances the sparse literature on halal supervisory functions in Brunei and underscores the necessity of amalgamating both areas of expertise in halal assurance. This signifies the necessity for a more equitable strategy in competency development, as proficient halal supervision demands both religious comprehension and procedural expertise.

The implications for halal practitioners in Brunei are substantial. The research indicates that halal supervisors necessitate more organized and practical training programs that extend beyond theoretical understanding. This encompasses routine workshops, practical evaluations, and cooperation with food safety organizations. Furthermore, training programs must be improved to integrate both Syariah and technical components through structured, competency-based modules. Relevant agencies are urged to establish more explicit benchmarks for supervisory competency and to collaborate with academic institutions to ensure training aligns with contemporary industry requirements. Moreover, heightened awareness among food industry stakeholders regarding the dual function of halal supervisors may further enhance the halal ecosystem in Brunei.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors agree that this study was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Farhanah Hamdan carried out the study, conducted the data analysis, and prepared the initial draft of the article. Norkhairiah Hashim supervised the study process, provided conceptualised the central study idea, and guided the development of the study. Both authors contributed to the review, revisions, and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

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