

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**EUDAIMONIC WELL-BEING OF  
HALAL EXECUTIVES IN THE  
HALAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE  
INDUSTRY**

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## ABSTRACT

Malaysia has earmarked the Halal industry as its new income generator. Though an Islamic legal concept, Halal has emerged as one of the most lucrative and influential brands globally; a globalized symbol of quality assurance and lifestyle choice with large stakes in the annual volume of USD3 trillion in the hands of non-Muslims. In its Quranic usage, Halal is synonymous with *tayyib*, that which is clean and lawful. Most production of these commodities however, is profit driven, exploiting the rise of a new Islamic paradigm, and not necessarily created with the objective of honouring religious practice and sentiment. A HE's endeavors are therefore realities of complex demands and uncertainties in an evolving and dynamic environment that require superior personal competence and professionalism wrapped in virtues found in EWB. Positive psychology provides the foundation for the conceptual framework that seeks to identify the synergies between the different domains of HE's professional positive functioning and EWB. The appropriation of EWB in organizational behavior means that EWB can function as a personal competence in which virtue, knowledge and authority remain with the HE. Understanding EWB by examining its origins within the phenomenological tradition as a mode of intersubjective understanding, offers a novel and enriching approach to knowledge discovery in EWB research as it validates the existence, importance and impact of EWB, and provides a more integrated and less factorial account of its subtle and multidimensional qualities that are momentary, dynamic, and responsive. It is therefore the objective of this study to discover the nature and the constituents that make up the invariant structure in the lived experience of EWB of HEs in the Malaysian Halal F&B sector; and the constituents that make up their post-EWB experience. Three Halal executives from the Halal food and beverage industry were interviewed and each gave a descriptive account of their EWB experience. Subsequently, it was found that HEs experience complex decision-making challenges requiring rapid interpretations and understandings of the situation as the activities of EWB. The constituents found in the general structure are listed under descriptive titles as follows: (1) Alerted to an urgent need for change, (2) Role identification in the situation, (3) Information gathering and conceptualizing the events, (4) Clearly defined goals, (5) Sense support and valuing by authoritative other(s), (6) Planning and deliberations in anticipation of events, (7) Heightened awareness of limiting beliefs, (8) Anticipation/Observations of challenging actions by significant other(s), (9) Sense saliency of the Divine, (10) Embracing a giving and receiving mind-set, (11) Intense involvement in inner potencies, (12) Sense support and valuing from significant others, (13) Striving for excellence, (14) Sense of relief when limiting beliefs were gone, (15) Ecstasy in the freedom to be, (16) Feeling of healthy pride, (17) Finding meaning in the experience, (18) Felt sense of self-transcendence, (19) Expansion of personal worldview, (20) Desire to relive the experience, (21) Post-EWB personal enrichment. Even though some constituents e.g (11), (13), (18) and (21) are apriori, the descriptive invariant psychological structure of the experience for the HE consists of distinct psychological parts that assemble interdependently, though not perfect, but sufficiently like a Criblock retaining wall. It is the psychologically rich and deeply personal experience that has been explored for a better understanding of the HE's experience. Principles from the dynamic systems theory provided useful insights for intervention strategies and policies for sustainable EWB transformation of HEs.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>AUTHOR’S DECLARATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF NOMENCLATURE</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Research Background	1
1.2 Motivation	6
1.2.1 The Halal Food and Beverage Industry and the HEs	7
1.2.2 Positive psychology (PP) and Well-being	12
1.2.3 Eudaimonic Well-being and Theoretical Gaps	23
1.3 Problem Statement	25
1.4 Research Questions	28
1.5 Objectives	28
1.6 Significance of Study	29
1.7 Scope and Limitation	30
1.8 Definition of Terms	31
1.9 Summary	35
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>36</b>
2.1 Introduction	36
2.2 Halal policy Control – Halal Food Laws	37
2.2.1 Halal Related Laws in Malaysia	37
2.3 The Halal Executive	42

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

The question of well-being (or the good life) is one of the classical questions in philosophy says Brülde (2015, p. 162), as it constituted those states of affairs which are desirable as ends rather than as means, for “the question of well-being is really a question of what is good for us as ends, i.e. what has final value for us” that relates to two Greek injunctions : “Know thyself” and “Become what you are”.

Eudaimonic well-being (herein referred to as EWB) in particular, has a long philosophical history that dates back to ancient Greek. Over the last fifty years, developments on the studies of psychological well-being along the same vein has become an important agenda (Ryff, 2016) for the modern society driven by the need to return to an ethical and “soulful” life where pleasure is not the main aim of a life well lived. The essence of eudaimonistic psychology says Waterman (1995), is, “the self is full and fulfilled internally.” Eudaimonia is “activity expressing virtue” (Waterman, 1995, p. 260) or well-being with soul (Ryff, 2018) or “activity of the soul in accordance with virtue” (Ryff and Boylan, 2016b, p. 55). To develop competitive advantage in the industry, Malaysia will have to go beyond bureaucratic solutions and law enforcements.

There is a dearth need for innovative personal competencies that extends beyond systems and processes – the well-being of the HE, and not just any well-being, but EWB, the well-being with soul (Ryff, 2018) that promotes the development of a full-functioning virtuous person (Straume & Vittersø, 2017). By understanding the structure of EWB among HEs, personally expressive activities can be used to advance HE’s aptitudes and talents towards the establishment of professionalism critically required (Riaz and Chaudry, 2018), and a synergistic society (Waterman, 1984).

### **1.1 Research Background**

This section provides the stage for the study; Halal Executives (HE) in the Halal F&B industry. The point of this research is to bring attention to the fact that HEs are Muslims, and as Muslims they ought to believe that in this vast ocean of wills and choices, individuals need directions to make informed decisions that are in line with the shariah borders set by Allah. HEs’ psychological well-being therefore, must invariably