

**APPLICATION OF HALAL CULINARY OPERATIONS FOR HOTEL:  
A CASE STUDY IN DE PALMA HOTEL, SHAH ALAM**

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<b>Abstract</b>	<p><i>With a growing Muslim population and an increasing understanding of Islamic dietary habits, the global demand for halal culinary operations has expanded dramatically in recent years. As a result of this change, the hospitality industry, particularly hotels, has been obliged to adapt its products to satisfy the needs of Muslim guests seeking halal-certified food and beverages. The goal of this research is to examine how hotels apply the halal culinary operation at the De Palma Hotel in Shah Alam. The research adopted a qualitative methodology, interviewing relevant respondents in the related department of the De Palma Hotel. The research's findings emphasise the significance of halal practice awareness among food service employees to guarantee that all food, from raw ingredients to the food provided to the customer's plate, complies with the halal criteria established by the government and Shariah. The research's practical implications for the hotel industry, the halal sector, and practitioners make it important. By offering insights and recommendations, the findings can assist hotels and hospitality businesses in improving their food service division to adhere to halal standards when serving food to customers and to increase staff awareness of the significance of halal food practices. By offering useful insights and suggestions, the research can assist practitioners in maintaining halal compliance in their culinary operations management techniques.</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Halal, Culinary, Food, Islamic Tourism, Muslim Friendly Hospitality.</i></p>
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**INTRODUCTION**

Hotels strive to cater to the diverse preferences of their guests by providing a variety of dining options. Among these, fine dining stands out as the epitome of culinary luxury, offering remarkable and engaging experiences. In contrast, casual dining options are frequently available in hotel restaurants, providing reasonably priced cuisine in a relaxed setting. Buffets, on the other hand, offer self-service meals where customers can choose from a wide selection of dishes presented in a centralized serving area. These buffets often feature appetizers, main courses, side dishes, desserts, and beverages, allowing diners to customize their dining experience.

Hotels also commonly feature specialized cuisine, tailoring their food offerings to cater to specific tastes, dietary needs, or cultural backgrounds. In addition to restaurants, hotels often have cafes or coffee shops where guests can enjoy a variety of coffee and tea beverages, as well as light meals, snacks, and desserts. These venues serve as inviting gathering spots, providing a relaxed atmosphere for guests to unwind, socialize, or even enjoy live entertainment (Wahab, 2017).

Furthermore, hotels frequently offer banquet services for conferences, weddings, and special occasions. These services encompass cocktail receptions, buffet or plated meals, and customized menus. Banquets are typically held in designated areas on the hotel property and can accommodate gatherings of various sizes. Hotels with excellent banquet facilities provide event management services, taking care of cuisine selection, decor setup, audiovisual preparations, and logistical support. Banquets not only showcase the hotel's culinary expertise but also create a welcoming environment for networking and socializing, facilitating connections among participants (Sinha, 2022).

Therefore, Islam provides clear guidelines for food and drink consumption, distinguishing between permissible (*halal*) and forbidden (*haram*) options. Halal food follows the principles of cleanliness, purity, safety, harmlessness, and high quality. These rules ensure that the food served in the hotel industry, catering to diverse culinary preferences, is clean and safe for all individuals, regardless of their religious beliefs.

For the purpose of this research, a case study based on De Palma Hotel Shah Alam is referred, a renowned establishment in Malaysia, exemplifies this commitment by offering halal food and drink alternatives, catering to a wide range of customers, including Muslims. The hotel makes sure that all its culinary management operations follow a set of guidelines to keep its reputation as a halal institution. The De Palma Hotel Shah Alam is aware of the importance of halal but like many other lodging facilities has difficulties maintaining halal quality in their meal service. These difficulties are a result of several factors including the need to source Halal ingredients, the need to avoid cross-contamination, staff training, menu design, communication, compliance, and financial concerns. Therefore, the scope of the research on the application of Halal culinary operations in De Palma Hotel, Shah Alam, specifically investigated the implementation and maintenance of Halal practices in De Palma Hotel, located in Shah Alam, Malaysia

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Halal

In terms of Islamic viewpoints, the concept of halal emphasized the permissibility of goods, cleanliness, and purity in human consumption. Allah SWT says in Al Quran:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُوا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ﴾

Which means, O humanity! Eat from what is lawful and good on the earth and do not follow Satan's footsteps. He is truly your sworn enemy (al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 168).

The concept of halal, cleanliness, and health safety practices have been implemented in the halal industry to ensure that the production of halal food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and other products is in accordance with Shariah. This alignment extends from the raw materials to the finished products, which also increases demand for halal products. According to Malaysian Standard 1500: 2019 halal defined as matters that are lawful and permitted in Islam based on the Shariah law and fatwa (MS 1500, 2019). Halal also means things that are allowed in Islam based on shariah and fatwa (MPPHM, 2020). Halal extends beyond just food and drink and encompasses actions, speech, attitudes, behavior, clothing, cosmetics, and other items as well. Halal is what is sanctioned by Sharia and is what is allowed by Islamic beliefs to be practiced, employed, or tried. It is also stresses the significance of getting and using halal items, as it is one of the fundamental rights of the

populace that the government must support because halal consumption and use is an integral element of Muslim worship (Nafis, 2019).

Moreover, hygiene is a part of the halal concept in Islam. The halal concept closely guards the cleanliness and sanitation of the food we consume every day, which is seen in our consumption of halal and healthy foods. So, hygiene is one of the halal concept's facets. The halal philosophy emphasizes hygiene, especially when it comes to food preparation. The intention is to make sure that the food produced is healthy for people and is not contaminated. To be free of filth, grime, items that are forbidden by Islam, and to not be clean in accordance with Islamic Laws is to be in good hygiene (Abdul Lateb et al., 2020). As consequently, the concept of *halal tayyiban* (good) of food and drink considers both the halal definitions as prescribed by the Shariah and the *tayyib* definitions linked to the physical advantages of food and drink for human bodies as well as the spiritual benefits of food and drink for human minds and souls. The application of the *halalan tayyiban* principle from the al-Quran to identify halal food and beverages at hotels is done to make sure that every step of the chain supply, including manufacturing, storing, processing, and preparation, must adhere to shariah law (Hamjah et al., 2018).

### **Muslim Friendly Hotel in Malaysia**

Muslim Friendly hotel can be described as a hotel that provides products or services according to Islamic teachings and beliefs. It offers facilities such as prayer facilities for Muslims, segregated facilities for men and women, Halal food, appropriate television channels and entertainment, a copy of the Quran in the hotel room, artwork that does not depict animal and human forms, and Shariah-compliant toilets. These hotels cater to the needs of Muslim guests to ease and promote convenience for them to perform their religious duties while traveling. The components of a Muslim-friendly hotel are divided into two categories: traditional attributes (i.e., service quality, brand image, and price) and Islamic attributes (i.e., physical, and non-physical). All these components must be incorporated and integrated with Shariah principles and values (Hussain et al., 2021).

In Malaysia the Muslim-friendly Accommodation Recognition (MFAR), developed by the Islamic Tourist Centre (ITC) to cater to Muslim travelers, has been approved by more than 40 hotels around Malaysia as per update from Islamic tourism Centre of Malaysia in 2021. There are 26 Muslim-friendly Silver Hotels, seven Muslim-friendly Gold Hotels, and seven Muslim-friendly Platinum Hotels among the 40 hotels (Islamic Tourism Centre of Malaysia, 2021).

Muslim-friendly Accommodation Recognition (MFAR) created by the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) to accommodate Muslim tourists. The document mentions that Malaysia is the most active country in developing and discovering prospects for Islamic tourism. In terms of customer acceptance, the degree to which the service provider takes the effort to integrate existing hospitality concepts with Shariah norms and regulations as permitted by Islam determine how well Muslim guests accept the concept of an Islamic hotel. The study found that halal food quality is an important criterion for Muslim-friendly hotels and serving halal food is common among MFH. However, the study also found that guests are not interested in MFH policies that may apply for specific events and ceremonies. There is a demand for Muslim-friendly hotels in Malaysia, and the development and operation of such hotels are guided by Shariah principles and regulations. However, the level of acceptance among Malaysian customers may depend on various factors, including the degree of integration of Shariah norms and regulations, the quality of halal food, and the policies related to alcohol and events (Tarmazi et al., 2018).

The Malaysian Department of Standards established a requirement for hospitality services that are accommodating to Muslims in Muslim friendly hospitality services-requirements (MS 2610). This criterion complies with Shariah regulations in order to ensure that the goods and services provided to Muslim travelers are in line with Shariah principles while also attempting to maximize customer satisfaction (MS 2610, 2015). The application of this standard, however, is fully optional. The business should ensure that the

accommodations follow the requirements of Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services (MFHS). Muslim travelers' acceptance of the idea of an Islamic hotel would therefore depend on how much the service provider makes an attempt to incorporate existing hospitality principles with Shariah standards and restrictions as approved by Islam.

### Food Culinary Services

Operating a halal culinary business is a lucrative opportunity due to the demand and growth of food lovers in Malaysia. It is not only for the locals but also closely connected with the outsiders i.e., the tourist (Sapian et al (2021). Accordingly, Yousaf and Xiucheng (2018) mentioned that undeniably food is one of the significant aspects that influence visitors' satisfaction with a destination, as it allows for a more fulfilling sensory experience by utilizing all of a tourist's senses.

Food culinary service quality is a significant success factor of restaurants (Sumaedi & Yarmen, 2015). All the businesses which are cuisines related have to guarantee the food service quality because this will affect the level of their customers' satisfaction. The main factors which play a significant role in satisfying restaurants are employees' behavior, atmosphere, food quality, and service quality (Medeiros & Salay, 2013).

As customers become more sophisticated, the owner of the food services needs to be more focused on the quality of their products, which requires emphasis on the service, food and drinks of halal products. Saaidin et al., (2016) wrote that the preparation and handling of Halal food is based on quality, sanitary and safety considerations and these are the fundamental requirement for food products and trade in Malaysia. This means that the products and services used for front of the house and back of the house must be strictly in accordance with the Syariah requirements. This is significantly prompting consumers' buying intention.

### METHODOLOGY

The qualitative method is used to develop this research. The qualitative approach was the case study which was to understand opinions, experiences, and thoughts by gathering and analyzing non-numerical data. This strategy could also be used to generate fresh research ideas or to acquire in-depth viewpoints. To achieve the research questions and objectives, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews with informants selected via expert sampling.

The chosen informant interviewed about the research on the current practices present methods that have been used for halal culinary operations preparation from start to finish point at the De Palma Hotel in Shah Alam. The selected sample was an employee from De Palma Hotel Shah Alam who is experienced and knowledgeable in Halal Raw Material Control. The following people were interviewed are:

Table 1: List of Informant and their position at De Palma Hotel, Shah Alam

No	Informant	Position
1	A	Executive Sous Chef Cum Halal Executives in De Palma Hotel Shah Alam
2	B	Asistant Manager of Food and Beverages De Palma Hotel Shah Alam

Source: Authors, (2023)

Thematic analysis is used to determine whether qualitative data contains particular words, topics, or concepts. Researchers measure and evaluate the presence, significance, and relationships among particular keywords, topics, or concepts using thematic analysis. To gather information on the difficulties the halal culinary operations firm has encountered managing halal and their solutions to overcome them, an semi-structured interview has been used as primary data to address the research questions. Additionally, the data examined using primary data first, followed by secondary sources including books, journals,

and previous studies. All information that the researcher uses to back up, bolster, and expand their understanding to further their discoveries.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings based on the information gathered from informants as are divided into five (5) themes as stated in table 2 below:

Table 2: Thematic Categories for Halal Culinary Applications

No	Themes
1	Raw material management
2	Preparation Process
3	Halal Food Serving
4	Internal Audit
5	Cross-contamination Prevention.

Source: Authors, (2023)

### Raw Material management

The process of effectively gathering, organizing, and utilizing the vital inputs or materials required to produce goods or services in a firm is referred to as raw material management. Since the availability and correct treatment of raw materials have a direct impact on a company's productivity, cost, and overall performance, it is a critical component of supply chain management and production planning. According to informant A and B,

*"...for each of these three divisions of the kitchen, I will make sure that people order raw materials that are halal because we all know that halal food must be of good quality. But I, as a halal executive, am also involved in purchasing, right, so everything is under my control, I just want the staff to know the importance of halal starting from the selection of raw materials..."* (Informant A)

*"...Our hotel does not provide illegal things, for example, is there a bar that serves wine? Our hotel does not have that, but in our raw material storage, we still have divisions for meat, chicken, fish, vegetables, we also separate freezers, chillers, and all that..."* (Informant B)

### Preparation Process

A hotel's halal culinary operations are prepared by following a set of rules and procedures that adhere to Islamic dietary requirements. Halal refers to food that is acceptable for Muslims to eat, and the preparation must adhere to specific standards to be classified as halal. According to informant A and B,

*"...Then during the cooking or the preparation process, I will make sure that the three kitchens are always clean, if it's not clean, the staff won't want to eat right? When it comes to food preparation, I stress a lot on my banquet staff, I mean banquet chef, I always tell them to make sure that the food that is to be sent is well sealed because yes, we have a hall that is not in one building, right?"* (Informant A)

*"...Then during the preparation, we will make sure that our kitchen is clean, here we have a head chef who will control the cleanliness of the kitchen if he sees that it is dirty, he will take the appropriate action and then make sure that the utensils used for cooking are used others, it means one item, one spoon, what's the scoop, for example curry sauce has a spoon we don't use for when the sauce is cooking fat, for example. Even our chopping board has various colors..."* (Informant B)

### Halal Food Serving

The practice of supplying food and drinks that adhere to Islamic dietary regulations, making them acceptable for consumption by Muslims visitors, is known as "halal food serving" at hotels. Hotels that provide halal culinary operations are required to adhere to stringent rules and procedures, which include using halal-certified products, making sure that halal and non-halal meals are prepared in different areas, and avoiding cross-contamination. Additionally, in order to guarantee visitors that the cuisine complies with Islamic norms, halal food serving in hotels frequently includes getting halal certification from a recognized body. Hotels may accommodate Muslim visitors' dietary choices by providing halal options, making the space pleasant and inclusive for everyone. According to informant A and B,

*"...Then while serving the food, I am sure that you are close to the procedure that you use to maintain the quality and halal status of the food. In terms of cleanliness of the buffet area, utensils and personal hygiene as a waiter..."* (Informant A)

*"...to deliver the food, we are the banquet that plays a role in ensuring the quality level of the food. Then to serve say the event that uses all the domes, so we have to serve right? So, we have to take care of cleanliness, make sure all the utensils we use have been wiped and washed and are not dirty, personal hygiene as a waiter has to be taken care of, all play a role..."* (Informant B)

### Internal Audit

An objective and methodical assessment of the hotel's managerial, operational, and financial procedures and controls is known as internal audit. To ensure objectivity and impartiality, this evaluation is carried out by an internal audit team or department that is unrelated to the topics being examined. Internal audits in hotels are primarily performed to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and compliance of various operations and activities, identify areas for improvement, and suggest corrective actions to strengthen internal controls and reduce risks. Hotels can increase performance and visitor happiness by regularly performing internal audits to preserve transparency, accountability, and integrity in their operations. Informants A and B explain how internal auditing took place in the hotel to assure the quality and hygienic practices of halal foods,

*"...we, as the superior party responsible for monitoring this, simply tell us what should and should not be done, just like do & don'ts, my audits do internal audits for cleanliness 3 to 4 times a month..."* (Informant A)

*"...every procedure that we use in our hotel has entered little by little according to halal practices so that later when the hotel actually has a halal certificate, that thing has become a habit. As an f&b assistant manager, I monitor by doing random spot checks, I always ask for an update from the king on how the staff work at a banquet, if near the kitchen I ask for an update from the head chef..."* (Informant B)

### Cross Contamination Prevention

Preventing cross-contamination in hotel halal culinary operations involves implementing strict measures to ensure that halal food remains pure and free from any contact or mixing with non-halal substances. This includes designating separate storage, preparation, and cooking areas for halal and non-halal ingredients to avoid accidental mixing. Additionally, using dedicated utensils, cutting boards, and equipment solely for halal food preparation minimizes the risk of cross-contamination. Rigorous cleaning and sanitization practices are essential to maintain the integrity of halal dishes and prevent any traces of non-halal substances from contaminating the food. Proper staff training and awareness play a vital

role in enforcing these procedures, creating a safe and trusted environment for Muslim guests seeking halal food options in the hotel. According to informant A and B,

*"...in the kitchen section, we provide separate equipment such as cutting boards, knives, then, we also separate storage for raw materials such as raw meat, poultry is separated from seafood, we store separately..."* (Informant A)

*"...we make a classification, from beginning to end, which means that if we separate the raw materials, if we separate the utensils, we separate them by item, so they don't mix. If it's serving time near the buffet, we make food labels so that if a guest has an allergy, he is aware of the food..."* (Informant B)

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, halal integrity throughout the entire food service supply chain is crucial to ensure that the products reaching customers are unaffected and safe for consumption. It is the responsibility of industry players to implement and uphold halal practices in order to maintain halal integrity. Managing halal in the food service industry presents numerous challenges that need to be addressed with utmost awareness. Overall, the research on the application of Halal culinary operations in De Palma Hotel, Shah Alam is significant as it contributes to knowledge, has practical implications for the hotel industry, is socially and culturally relevant, and has academic value. The findings of the research can potentially benefit the hotel industry, policymakers, consumers, and researchers interested in the field of Halal culinary operations.

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