

## A Study Of Halal Food From Islamic Principles To Contemporary Food Culture

Dr. Nuzhat Naz (Corresponding Author)<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Humaira Khalil<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Sajida M Jamil Qureshi<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Safia Bi Bi<sup>5</sup>, Dr. Khair Muhammad Asif Memon<sup>6</sup>, Dr. Tanveer Huma Ansari<sup>7</sup>

### Abstract

*Halal food practices are deeply intertwined with social and cultural dynamics. These practices extend beyond religious confines, shaping diverse global contexts. Embedded in Islamic principles, halal food serves as more than just dietary restrictions. It stands as a cornerstone of social and cultural identity for communities worldwide. This study<sup>1</sup> explores these multifaceted aspects through research, using sociological lenses, and conducting cultural analysis. It aims to unveil how halal food practices contribute to cultural preservation, identity construction, and community cohesion. This exploration focuses on both Muslim-majority and minority populations. It thoroughly explores the intricate relationship between religious beliefs, longstanding traditions, and the influences of modernity. Together, these elements complexly shape both consumer preferences and broader societal attitudes towards halal food products. Through this analysis, the study illuminates the underlying cultural, social, and economic dynamics that drive the observed consumption patterns within diverse communities globally. By delving deeply into these complex interactions, the research offers valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of halal food practices and their profound impact on contemporary societies. Moreover, the research delves into the evolving landscape of halal certification. It examines global trade networks and regulatory frameworks, probing their consequences. These consequences extend to cultural authenticity and consumer trust. By illuminating complexities within diverse social contexts, this inquiry sheds light on shades. It delves into halal food production, distribution, and consumption practices in today's interconnected world. The study enriches discussions on food culture, religious diversity, and cultural heritage preservation. Its insights are appropriate to scholars, experts, policymakers, industry stakeholders, and consumers alike. Ultimately, this exploration seeks to deepen understanding and appreciation of the intricate social and cultural stuff merged into halal food practices worldwide.*

**Keywords:** Halal food, Religious observance, Tradition, Modernity, Globalization

### Introduction

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<sup>1</sup>Post Doctorate Research Fellowships, IIU Islamabad Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University ,(IIUI) FaisalMasjid Campus, Islamabad

<sup>2</sup>Assistant professor, The university of Faisalabad

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor Department Aqeedah & Philosophy Faculty: Usuluddin -Islamic Studies-IIU, Islamabad.

<sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor, Govt. degree college Pir Jo Goth MA, M Phil Islamic studies Islamic culture

<sup>5</sup>Lecturer, The Islamia university of Bahawlpur Rahim Yar Khan campus.

<sup>6</sup>Lecturer at Department of Linguistics & Social Sciences, The Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University Sukkur.

<sup>7</sup>Visiting Teachers From Sindh University Jamshoro Hyderabad.

In today's health-conscious era, people prioritize healthful nutrition. It plays a crucial role in improving physical well-being. Its significance cannot be overstated. People worldwide are increasingly mindful of their dietary choices, reflecting a growing concern about what they eat and drink. Notably, research indicates a significant upsurge in the global market for Halal products. It projects suggesting a value of USD 1872260 million by the end of 2027. Globalization has brought humanity into a new era, bringing in new trends, methods, and technologies in the food industry and trade. This has led to increased confusion about dietary preferences. Amid today's complex food processing methods, which involve many ingredients and detailed steps, Halal food stands out for being simple and pure. It doesn't contain any impurities that could go against dietary laws. Consequently, "Opting for Halal food signifies more than just sustenance; it embodies a commitment to purity, quality, and permissibility in dietary practices." (1)

To effectively champion the significance of Halal food on a global scale, it is imperative to shed light on its underlying necessity and cultural relevance within diverse societal contexts.

In various interpretations, the term "Halal" can be translated as legal, valid, allowed, or pure. According to Qardhawi, the Arabic term "Halal" encompasses all foods and products that are lawful or permissible. (2) Halal food is characterized by purity, quality, and hygiene. It indicates that halal food should be prepared and processed hygienically. Yusuf al-Qaradawi further defines Halal food as permissible and lawful according to Allah Almighty's decree, devoid of any restricted elements (3). On the contrary, "haram" refers to anything forbidden in the Qur'an and Sunnah. It includes certain foods like pork, alcohol, and intoxicants. In Islam, all foods are considered Halal except those specifically designated as haram. Anything impure or prepared using non-pure ingredients is not considered Halal in Islamic law. (4) In today's interconnected world, the demand for Halal food is growing rapidly. This food, which follows Islamic dietary laws, is becoming more popular due to increased cultural diversity and ethical consumption practices. Understanding the evolution of Halal practices, the various regulatory approaches, and the impact of certification on the broader food industry is essential. It provides valuable insights for stakeholders navigating this complex landscape.

### **Evolution of Halal Food from time to time:**

The history of Halal food is deeply tangled with Islamic culture and religion. It bounces across centuries and various regions. Halal, meaning permissible, originates from the Quran. Its counterpart, Haram, denotes what is forbidden. Regarding the concepts of Halal and Haram in food, it's important to note a fundamental principle that only Allah Almighty has the authority to declare what is permissible (Halal) and what is forbidden (Haram). This principle is mentioned in the Quran:

{ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادَةٍ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ } ٥٥

"Who has the authority to prohibit the beauty and goodness that God has provided for His creatures among the means of sustenance?"

This verse underscores the idea that only Allah holds the authority to designate what is permissible (Halal) and what is forbidden (Haram), particularly concerning food. It suggests that humans lack the right to dictate which foods are lawful or unlawful, as this right belongs exclusively to Allah. In the context of Halal food, this verse emphasizes the necessity of observing divine guidance and respecting Islamic dietary laws. It recognizes that humans must accept Allah's wisdom in determining what is acceptable for consumption. In discussions surrounding the principles of Halal food, an essential verse from the Quran resonates deeply:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحْرَمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ﴾<sup>6</sup>

"Believers, avoid forbidding the lawful blessings that Allah has provided for you."

This verse serves as a foundational reminder of the Islamic faith. It highlights the belief that only Allah possesses the authority to determine what is permissible (Halal) and what is forbidden (Haram) in matters of food. It emphasizes the profound significance of adhering to divine guidance and respecting Islamic dietary laws. It identifies that these regulations are derived from Allah's wisdom and are meant to guide believers in their consumption choices.

Linguistically, Halal is rooted in the concept of lawfulness, while Haram signifies prohibition. Over time, Islamic scholars elaborated on these principles. They considered factors like animal welfare and food preparation methods. As Islam spread, local cultural practices influenced Halal food traditions. This resulted in diverse practices across regions. With globalization, the Halal food industry expanded. It met the needs of both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. This led to efforts to standardize authorization and regulation. Despite modern challenges, Halal food remains a significant aspect of Islamic identity and food heritage. The foundation of Halal dietary laws can be traced back to the Quran in the 7th century. It provides specific guidelines on what is permissible (Halal) and what is prohibited (Haram).

﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَمِ ذَلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ﴾<sup>7</sup>

"You are not allowed to eat dead animals, blood, or pigs. Also, don't eat animals that are killed in the name of someone other than Allah. It's also wrong to eat animals that die from strangling, beating, falling, or being attacked by other animals unless they are properly slaughtered. Sacrificing animals on altars or making decisions by drawing lots is also forbidden. All of these actions are considered evil."

This verse from the Quran outlines specific guidelines regarding what is considered permissible (Halal) and what is forbidden (Haram) in terms of food consumption in Islam. It prohibits certain items such as carrion (dead animals), blood, and the flesh of swine, which are considered Haram. Additionally, the verse forbids consuming animals slaughtered in the name of anyone other than Allah. This emphasizes the necessity of proper ritual slaughter for meat to be considered Halal. It underscores the importance of praying the name of Allah during the slaughter process. The verse also prohibits consuming animals that die from strangling, beating, falling, or being attacked by other animals unless they are properly slaughtered. This highlights the importance of kind treatment and proper slaughter methods in determining the Halal status of meat. It emphasizes the significance of ensuring animals are slaughtered in a caring and respectful manner. Finally, the verse prohibits sacrificing animals on altars or making decisions by drawing heaps. These practices, associated with idolatry or superstition, are considered Haram. It suggests that such actions are incompatible with Islamic beliefs and should be avoided. Overall, this verse provides clear guidance on what is permissible and forbidden in terms of food consumption, emphasizing the importance of adhering to Halal principles in Islamic dietary laws. These principles are also influenced by the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. It aims to ensure that Muslims adhere to ethical and religious standards in their consumption practices. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) also teaches us about halal or haram food.

((نهى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ان يضحى بمقابله، او مدابرة، او شرقاء، او خرقاء، او جدعاء))<sup>8</sup>

"The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade sacrificing the Muqabalah, the Mudabarah, the Sharqa', the Kharqa' and the Jad'a'"

This Hadith underscores that sacrificing animals with specific physical defects renders the sacrifice of Haram (forbidden). These defects include animals with their ears or tails cut off, injured bodies, cuts in their ears, or any missing body parts from the nose, ears, or lips. Sacrificing animals with such defects is prohibited as it violates the requirement for offerings to be free from imperfections. It highlights the necessity of offering sacrifices of healthy and intact animals by Islamic principles to ensure that the meat consumed is lawful (Halal) and permissible. Also Allah Almighty stated in Quran:

﴿ أَجَلٌ لَّكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَ لِلسَّيَّارَةِ وَ حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرَمًا ۝۹﴾

“You are permitted to hunt and consume fish from the sea, providing sustenance for both you and seafarers. However, hunting on land is prohibited during the pilgrimage journey.”

This verse permits the hunting and eating of fish from the sea. It indicates that seafood is considered acceptable (Halal) for eating in Islam. It submits that fish can provide sustenance for both individuals and seafarers. This implies its widespread acceptance as a food source. However, it also prohibits hunting on land during the pilgrimage journey, indicating a temporary restriction on land-based hunting during this sacred time. In terms of Halal and Haram food, this verse highlights the permissibility of consuming seafood as a lawful source of sustenance. It also emphasizes the need to follow specific regulations during religious pilgrimages. In exploring Halal dietary principles, Islamic teachings provide clear guidelines on permissible food choices. These teachings emphasize adherence to specific guidelines when selecting what to eat. A significant Hadith underscores this guidance, particularly regarding the consumption of seafood and the purity of its water.

﴿ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي مَاءِ الْبَحْرِ هُوَ الطَّهْرُ مَاؤُهُ الْحَالِلُ مَيْتَتُهُ ۝۱۰﴾

“It was narrated from Abu Hurairah, that the Prophet (said), concerning the water of the sea: "Its water is pure (and Purification) and its 'dead meat' is permissible (to eat)”

In the context of Halal food, this Hadith confirms two important points. Firstly, it affirms the permissibility of consuming seafood as part of a Halal diet. The Prophet Muhammad explicitly states that the 'dead meat' from the sea is lawful to eat. It confirms seafood as a Halal food option for Muslims. Secondly, the Hadith emphasizes the purity of seawater, highlighting that it is suitable for purification purposes. This underscores the cleanliness and suitability of seafood and seawater within the framework of Halal dietary principles. It ensures that Muslims can consume seafood with confidence in its Halal status and use seawater for purification rituals. It is clear from the above Quranic verses and Hadiths that Muslims can distinguish between permissible (Halal) and forbidden (Haram) foods by referring to the Quran and Hadith. These sources offer clear guidance on dietary laws, allowing Muslims to distinguish what is lawful and what is prohibited in their food choices. By following these teachings, Muslims ensure that their dietary practices obey Islamic principles and guidelines. During the expansion of the Islamic empire from the 7th to the 13th centuries, Halal dietary practices became widespread in regions under Muslim governance. These practices became integrated into culinary traditions, influencing food production, distribution, and consumption methods. During the period from the 13th to the 18th centuries, Islamic caliphates played a key role. They facilitated the adjustment of various cultural influences into Halal food practices. They developed Islamic culinary traditions through exchanges with regions like Persia, India, and the Levant. Despite facing colonial pressures from the 18th to the 20th centuries, communities persisted. They maintained and adapted Halal food practices as a means of cultural resistance. This determination helped keep Halal food traditions alive despite changes in society and politics. In the 20th century, widespread global migration led to Muslim communities settling in diverse regions. This, along with rising ethical consumption awareness, increased the

demand for Halal products globally. In response, international standards and certification for Halal food were established, facilitating the globalization of Halal markets. (11) Halal food has a rich history in Islamic culture. It has spread across centuries and regions, adapting to new circumstances. Its popularity extends beyond Muslim communities, reflecting a global demand for ethical food choices. Despite evolving with time, Halal food retains its connection to Islamic tradition. It serves as a symbol of identity and heritage for believers.

### **Rising Global Demand for Halal Food in the 21st Century:**

In the 21st century, Halal food has experienced significant transformations and challenges. Firstly, there has been increased demand for Halal food. This demand is not only evident in traditional Muslim-majority regions but also non-Muslim-majority countries. It is driven by the growing global Muslim population and awareness of ethical dietary practices. Halal food has become part of international supply chains, with major producers and sellers identifying its economic significance. Efforts towards standardization of Halal certification have gained momentum, ensuring consistency and transparency in production and labeling. Certification processes have become strong, assuring consumers of Halal product authenticity. Technology has enhanced traceability and transparency in the Halal food supply chain, with blockchain and digital platforms empowering consumers to make informed choices. In the culinary empire, there's been a modification of Halal offerings, from traditional to fusion food, meeting diverse consumer preferences. Halal food has also become integral to gastronomic tourism, with travelers seeking authentic experiences across different regions.

### **The Role and Impact of the World Halal Council (WHC) in Global Certification:**

The World Halal Council (WHC) is a global federation of halal certifying bodies. It is recognized internationally for its authorization processes. It was established in Jakarta in 1999. This organization's mission is to standardize halal certification procedures. Member organizations representing various countries worldwide are part of WHC. Certifiers from Indonesia, the United States, Australia, and Holland initially founded it. In today's world, WHC is responsible for halal food logos on culinary products. (12) The "halal" logo is important because it tells people that food follows these rules and can be trusted. The WHC aims to ensure reliability in halal certification across borders. It satisfies the needs of both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers.

### **OIC:**

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) comprises 57 member states, representing a significant portion of the global Muslim population. Established in 1969, it serves as a platform for collaboration, cooperation, and harmony among member countries. The OIC addresses a wide range of issues, including economic, social, political, and cultural matters. It particularly focuses on Halal practices, aiming to standardize rules and regulations across member states. Through its minor bodies and committees, the OIC contributes to the organization of Halal practices. (13) It ensures that Halal practices are considered within broader ethical, social, and economic contexts, reflecting the multifaceted nature of the global Halal industry. Many countries around the world have their own rules for making, certifying, and labeling Halal food. These rules are to make sure the food follows Islamic dietary laws. Some countries, especially those with many Muslims, follow guidelines from groups like the World Halal Council (WHC) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to make sure Halal food is the same everywhere. While not all countries follow these rules exactly, many are working to make their Halal practices match the standards set by the WHC and the OIC.

### **Challenges and Controversies in the Globalization of Halal Markets:**

The globalization of Halal markets brings forth a mass of challenges and controversies impacting businesses, regulators, and consumers worldwide. One major challenge is getting everyone to agree on the same rules for certifying Halal food. It requires a lot of careful effort to make sure everyone is on the same page. Furthermore, dealing with different cultural views can be tricky, requiring businesses to be sensitive to cultural differences and be able to adjust accordingly. Integrating Halal principles into mainstream supply chains poses logistical hurdles. It demands significant investments to meet diverse Halal requirements. (14) Controversies surrounding Halal labeling underscore the importance of transparent and standardized practices to fight misrepresentation. Also, it's crucial to maintain trust with consumers and ensure ethical practices, as any mishandling or fraud in certification can shake their confidence. This highlights the importance of strong oversight measures.

### **Shaping the Future of Halal Food:**

The future of Halal food has big potential for growth and new ideas. Working together is important to tackle problems and make the most of chances. The rationalization of certification processes will enhance efficiency and global competitiveness. This requires joint efforts from businesses and policymakers. Embracing inclusivity and understanding diverse cultural interpretations is crucial for the development of a successful global Halal market. Furthermore, investing in research and development to expand the range of Halal products is essential. Promoting sustainability practices in Halal food production is also crucial. Leveraging technology for transparent supply chains is another important aspect. By proactively shaping this future, stakeholders can ensure that Halal food remains authentic, relevant, and accessible to diverse communities worldwide.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the journey of Halal food from its origins rooted in Islamic principles to its current global importance exemplifies a deep shift in dietary preferences. This shift is driven by cultural, economic, and ethical reflections. Halal food has evolved beyond being a mere dietary choice. It has become synonymous with purity, quality, and ethical consumption practices. This evolution reflects a growing awareness of the significance of food in maintaining both physical and spiritual well-being. Despite facing challenges such as standardization and certification issues, efforts led by organizations like the World Halal Council (WHC) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have facilitated the globalization of Halal markets. Moving forward, collaborative endeavors among stakeholders will be crucial. These efforts will play a significant role in addressing challenges and shaping a sustainable and comprehensive future for the Halal food industry. By improving approval processes, promoting transparency, and fostering cultural understanding, Halal food can continue to serve as a symbol of religious adherence and cultural identity. In doing so, it can effectively meet the evolving demands of consumers worldwide.

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