# HALAL MARKET OF MUSLIMS AND HALAL BRANDING ISSUES IN VIETNAM

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Halal activities have been quite active in Vietnam recently, especially in areas with the Cham Muslim community. Halal activities are not simply Islamic religious activities but also related to science and technology, related to criteria and quality of consumer products, related to economic activities of trade, tourism and export. Up to now, there is still no solid basis for a Vietnamese Halal brand with enough prestige to integrate into the world Islam market. Therefore, in order to have practical studies on Halal activities in Vietnam both domestically and internationally, this article analyzes and evaluates the current situation of Halal activities, the causes and impacts of Halal activities in the past to soon have specific proposals not only for appropriate state management of Halal activities, but also for specific policies for the Halal technology industry to form and develop in accordance with the current development and integration of our country.

Keywords: Halal Market; Muslims; Halal Brand; Vietnam.

#### 1. Intrpduction

Islam in Vietnam is also known as Islam. Islam is the name of the religion written in Arabic and expressed in the Qur'an. Currently, Islam is the religious community with the largest number of followers in the world. According to estimates of researchs on Islam, this community has a population of 1.2 to 1.57 billion Muslims worldwide. Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population, accounting for 13%, in other Southeast Asian countries (4%), in South Asia there is 25%, in the Middle East (20%), Central Asia (2%), in Africa 15%. In China, Russia and many places in the Caribbean there are quite a lot of Muslims. Obviously, the large presence of Islam in almost every part of the world is a huge Halal market.

In Vietnam, currently there are about 100,000 Islams, which is not a large number. However, Islam has a long history of formation and cultural development, with its presence dating back to around the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Up to now, Islam is mainly in the Cham ethnic community, of which nearly half are Bani Islam (some people also call it old Islam to distinguish it from new Islam: Islam - Islam.

Vietnam is integrating more and more deeply into the world, at the same time, to be a friend of all countries and has had good diplomatic relations with most countries with Islamic communities around the world. The diplomatic network that bridges trade and cooperation between Vietnam and countries with Islam communities is increasingly being strengthened. With a large number of Islams, especially in neighboring countries in Southeast Asia and the Middle East, the world's Islam community is currently a large consumer market for Vietnam's export goods.

#### 2. Research overview

Recently, many authors have published research on the Islam Halal market and the issue of Halal branding in Vietnam, including some researchs such as: In Search of Islam (Abul Ala Maududi -Translator: Nhuong, 2011); The Islam World Past and Present (Charlie Nguyen, 2004); Religious theory and the religious situation in Vietnam (Van, 2005); Cham people in development and integration"(Han, 2021); Cultural intergration of Muslim Community in the Mekong Delta (Han, 2018); 10 major religions in the world (Xuyen, 2012); *History of world civilization* (Hoang, 2000); Religions in the world (Lewis M. Hopfe, Mark R. Woodward - Translator: Lien, 2011); Comparative Law (Michael Bogdan, 1994); Entering the Islam World (S. Naipaul, translated by Nguyen Van Lam, 2010),... In general, domestic and foreign researchs have provided scientific arguments related to the Islam Halal market and the issue of Halal branding

in Vietnam. In addition, domestic Halal researchs also address issues such as: Islam and the Halal market, the situation of Halal certification activities in Vietnam,... Therefore, the above research results are a valuable scientific basis for the authors to inherit and clarify the content of this research.

## 3. Research method

The article uses some main methods such as: Secondary data collection method, synthesis, analysis and evaluation method, thereby clarifying the research problem related to the Islam Halal market and the Halal brand issue in Vietnam.

#### 4. Research result

#### 4.1. Islam and the Halal Market

In recent years, Vietnam has also been a tourist destination attracting many international visitors, with partnerships and cooperation from many countries with Muslim communities. In Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and especially the Cham ethnic cultural tourism destinations in the South Central and Southern regions, there are currently many tourism organizations and restaurants specializing in serving Islam tourists. With the strength of attracting tourists to Vietnam because of many cultural characteristics, Halal cuisine has not really received attention or has been paid attention but not implemented properly. That is not to mention the strength in producing food for export, Vietnam can completely increase cooperation with other countries to open the door to access the global Halal market.

Therefore, the potential for business development opportunities for Vietnam with the regional Islam market is open and favorable. However, Islam has barriers due to strict doctrinal regulations as well as in customs, eating, social interaction, advertising, strictness in activities and Halal certification.

From that reality, many organizations and individuals have emerged to certify Halal, including Islam representative organizations such as the Islam Community Representative Board of Ho Chi Minh City, An Giang, Tay Ninh, Ninh Thuan provinces and even Islam individuals from local religious activities such as in Hanoi and some localities with Muslims (Nguyen Van Giap - HCA; Abu Sama -VINAHIC, of Imam Mieu Abas, Basirul... and some Islam individuals in and outside the country) stand up to certify Halal for restaurants, travel agencies, serving Islam guests and for manufacturers of goods exported to the Islam market.

In the context of deep integration of the world economy today, along with the increasingly expanding global markets, the potential of the Halal food market in the world is not limited to countries with Muslim communities, changes in relationships and partnerships have made the requirements for using Halal become popular and are also opportunities for the Muslim community and for Vietnam.

Today, Halal products, goods and services are widely recognized, popular and consumed even by non-Muslim consumers. Halal in addition to meeting the Islamic religious criteria according to Sariah (Islamic law) as a trusted brand, to be also one of the standards that ensures consumers about product safety and quality, especially for the Islam market.

The benefits of Halal activities show that the value of global trade exchanges is huge. Halal food products alone are worth about 661 billion USD and if other non-food products and Halal services are included, this figure will reach 1.2 to 2 trillion USD a year (*World Halal Forum*).

The United States is considered an early adopter of Halal, being the world's third largest exporter of beef (over 80% of which is frozen Halal beef). Not inferior to the United States, New Zealand is the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest beef exporter (more than 40% of which is beef meeting Halal standards), Brazil and France are major exporters of frozen Halal chicken products. India and Southeast Asia such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore are all among the major exporters of Halal products. It is forecasted that by 2025, Halal food and products will account for 20% of the total market share of food consumed worldwide.

Vietnam is a country with many advantages in producing and processing food and foodstuffs for export. Countries in the Southeast Asian region such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and the Middle East are all interested in Vietnamese products. The trade partners and businesses in import-export business relations with Vietnam often require product quality according to Halal standards.

At a business meeting in Ho Chi Minh City on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Ms. Wong Chia Chiann, Consul General of Malaysia in Ho Chi Minh City shared: "Southeast Asia is home to the largest Muslim population in the world, with 277 million people, accounting for about 42% of the region's total population. Therefore, Southeast Asia is also a market with high demand for Halal products. In Southeast Asia, neighboring countries with large Muslim populations of Malaysia can import Halal products from Vietnam.

Angus Liew Bing Fooi, Senior Vice President of the Malaysian Business Association in Vietnam, told *VnExpress* about the potential for bilateral cooperation (on the occasion of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's visit to Vietnam on the afternoon of July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023), saying that Halal is a huge and very attractive market for Vietnam. Globally, the Halal market is worth 7,000 billion USD, estimated to reach 10,000 billion USD by 2028.

With its huge market size, Halal products are not limited to food only. In fact, the Halal industry now includes pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, medical products, toiletries and medical devices. In terms of services, the Halal industry has expanded to include logistics, marketing, printing and electronic media, packaging, branding and finance. However, the Halal food market is emerging as one of the most influential and attractive "arenas" in the global food business.

# 4.2. Current situation of Halal certification activities in Vietnam

## \* Understanding Halal

Halal is very familiar to Muslims in Vietnam. The opposite of Halal is Haram. Halal and Haram are common concepts for Muslims. Muslims strictly follow the Halal and Haram regulations of Islam in their daily eating and drinking life. Because Halal is a criterion prescribed in the doctrine, eating and drinking activities are always voluntarily followed by Muslims. Halal was created by Muslims themselves, to be a sacred and noble value specifically prescribed in the Sariah law of Islam, passed down, respected, honored and has become the culture of the Muslim community.

However, the understanding of Halal can be different. Some people think that *"Halal means pork-free"* when referring to Halal. Others say "Muslim-friendly" is Halal. Halal must also mean no "alcohol" or the logo must be written in Arabic -Halal means "permitted" or "lawful".

Halal requires that "a product's process ensures compliance with Islam principles and integrity throughout the supply chain. This must be understood that the food source, preparation process, packaging must be Halal in accordance with Shariah law of Islam".

We can also understand that a product called Halal, certified Halal must have enough information and knowledge about which products are allowed and which are not allowed according to Islam law. In addition, Halal and non-Halal products cannot be produced in the same production line... In particular, the source of meat or poultry must also come from animals that are allowed for consumption (chicken, cattle, sheep) and must be slaughtered according to Islam rules to make them Halal.

Halal is an Arabic word meaning permissible according to the Qur'an. Halal is a general term

that applies to all aspects of Muslim life. Halal is used here in relation to food and beverage products, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and personal care products and dietary supplements. Halal products are certified to ensure "purity" according to Islamic regulations during the production process to ensure that there are no Haram (i.e. prohibited - opposite of Halal) ingredients.

Halal means absolute guarantee of food regulations or certification of exported foods for Muslim consumption. Halal is understood as a term containing the content prescribed in the teachings (Shariah) originating from the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (saw):

- "Eat the lawful and good things that Allah has provided for you. Fear Allah in Whom you believe" (Suroh Al-Ma idah: 88).

- "O mankind! Eat of the permitted and clean foods and do not follow in the footsteps of Shaytan; indeed he is your enemy" (Suroh Al-Baqarah: 168).

- "O you who believe! Eat of the good things I (Allah) have provided for you; and be grateful to Allah if it is Him alone that you worship" (Suroh Al-Baqarah: 172).

- "(Allah) forbids you the flesh of dead bodies, blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is dedicated to other than Allah; and the flesh of animals whose necks have been twisted to death; those which have been beaten to death; and those which have fallen to death from a height; and those which have been sucked to death by their horns; those which are partly eaten by wild beasts unless you have purified them (by ritually cutting their throats); and that which is offered on an altar or on a stone" (Suroh Al-Ma idah: 3).

Halal is accepted in Islam as a guarantee that the responsible person for Halal is a Muslim (Islam); Halal slaughtering process must be in accordance with Islamic religious practices; Halal product ingredients do not contain Haram substances. The ritual of slaughtering animals (Dhabīhah (قحيبذ), it does not apply to aquatic animals (aquatic). The animals must be slaughtered by Muslims while killing must recite the verse mentioning the supreme God of Islam, Allah. According to some Fatwas, the animal is killed according to Islam regulations: (5:05 in the Qur'an) that is, in order to kill the animal quickly with a sharp blade, so that the animal is "slaughtered" without pain (before death), blood is removed, the blade is not seen and the smell of blood from a previous slaughterhouse is not heard.

Animals for Halal food must not be killed by boiling, strangulation, or electrocution. The meat

after slaughter should be hung upside down to drain the blood. All aquatic animals are considered Halal "lawful for you is from the sea.." (Qur'an 5:96) (although Hanafi madhhab differ on this). However, this is also subject to examination as to whether the growth of the animal is affected by haram factors?

Halal foods are products that Muslims use for eating, drinking, beauty, skin care or ingesting into the human body. Halal requires the exclusion of things considered unclean such as pork and all products prepared from pork (Haram). Halal also does not accept blood and meat from animals that are sick, or have died (strangled, from falling from a height, from being gored by another animal, killed for worship to a god other than Allah, slaughtered not according to Halal regulations and all foods containing any of the prohibited substances as stated (in Haram).

Halal products are absolutely not pork or porkrelated products; Halal food must comply with the Islam Sariah law in slaughtering; slaughtered properly; not meat from wild animals with one fang and birds with claws, meat from animals (using two front limbs to bring food to the mouth), animals that live in two environments (both on land and in water)... In particular, alcohol and alcoholic beverages or those prepared together, mixed together with substances (haram) are not recognized as Halal.

Up to now, many businesses want to grant Halal certification for their products, but there are still many limitations because the methods we have implemented in the past have not really met the requirements of international Halal standards (Jakim - International Halal Organization of Malaysia). This is a major obstacle to increasing consumption capacity, improving and expanding markets of Vietnamese export enterprises.

## \* Halal Certification Activities

Halal certification has appeared very early in the United States and European countries. The increase in the number of Muslims as well as the demand for Halal products in the world has led to the emergence of organizations certifying food products and ingredients that meet Halal standards in the United States and many European countries. Halal certification is achieved by using the H-MCG (Halal) symbol label, which makes it easier for Muslims to choose between Halal and Haram products.

When it comes to Halal food, many people think that it is purely related to meat products. Muslims must ensure that all types of food, especially processed foods, pharmaceuticals and items such as cosmetics also need Halal certification. Often these products contain animal products or other ingredients (such as yeast, alcohol) that are not permitted for consumption in the Muslim community.

Since 1991, manufacturers of soups, cereals, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, processed foods, and other industries, as well as hotels, restaurants, airlines, hospitals and other service providers have pursued the Halal market. Halal certification for Muslims where the ingredients and production methods of a product have been tested and approved by a Halal certification body. It also allows companies to export products to the Middle East and most Southeast Asian countries. The long-standing and reputable Halal certification is known as the American Islamic Service.

In Europe, several organizations have been created over the past twenty years to certify Halal products. A recent survey by a French Islam Consumer Protection Association (ASIDCOM) showed that the market for Halal products has been developing in a chaotic manner in Europe (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic\_ dietary\_laws&usg=ALkJrhgOkDSvGCl31rw\_ GJ5DmNpAIgBuFg#cite\_note-3). European certification organizations do not have a common definition of "Halal" nor do they agree on Halal control and traceability procedures.

In Vietnam, more and more products appear on the market with Halal labels and unknown certified origins. Many Halal-labeled products with certified Vietnamese origins are appearing on the market of the growing Muslim community worldwide. Muslims in Vietnam are increasingly concerned about Halal safety as more and more Halal-labeled products contain Haram substances. There have been recommendations abroad about the reliability of Halal certification from Vietnam. Currently, it is not difficult for the Vietnamese market to find products with Halal certification but containing Haram substances from pigs, fat from animals that have not been slaughtered according to Halal procedures, or containing substances from alcohol or products processed in spaces and environments that do not meet Halal criteria. This situation has been warned by foreign Muslims, causing anxiety in the Vietnamese Muslim community and Muslims doing business and cooperating with Vietnam. This greatly affects dining activities in tourism and causes concern for Muslim tourists.

Recently, the Halal Certification Office of the Vietnamese Muslim community, together with a number of external Halal offices such as the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia - JAKIM, has helped a number of Vietnamese individuals and organizations to be granted Halal certification to continue participating in export activities to the markets of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, UAE, Arab Seut...

Although there have been many efforts from individuals in the Islamic community and Muslim community representative boards in provinces and cities in Vietnam, the penetration of Vietnam's Halal food market in recent times has not had a specific itinerary. Halal-certified Vietnamese goods entering the Islamic market are still facing many obstacles due to lack of quality assurance and full understanding of Halal. The situation of everyone doing Halal and everyone certifying Halal is common and there is no management mechanism. The tourism and religious industries do not have specific advice to guide Halal certification activities. Local Islamic representative organizations set themselves an overwhelming task (due to insufficient resources and specific expertise of the Halal technology industry) when having to carry out Halal certification for the market. The bustling situation in Halal certification has not yet had a positive way out to put Halal into operation to ensure market consumption requirements, promote Vietnam"s trade and tourism in the Islam and international markets.

# 5. Discussion

Halal activities have been quite active in Vietnam recently, especially in areas with the Cham Muslim community.

Halal activities are not simply Islamic religious activities but also related to science and technology, related to criteria and quality of consumer products, related to economic activities of trade, tourism and export.

Up to now, there is still no solid basis for a Vietnamese Halal brand with enough prestige to integrate into the world Islam market.

Accordingly, there should be early practical researchs on Halal activities in Vietnam in recent times both domestically and internationally, scientific analysis and assessment of the current situation of Halal activities, causes and impacts of Halal activities in recent times to soon have specific proposals not only for appropriate state management of Halal activities, but also specific policies for the Halal technology industry to form and develop in accordance with the current development and integration of our country, we need to pay attention to the following issues:

*Firstly*, Vietnamese enterprises need to take advantage of opportunities and effectively exploit the potential of this Halal market, because this market is still quite new to enterprises, and not

many Vietnamese people and enterprises have knowledge about Halal.

*Secondly*, in the tourism sector, which is considered to have great potential, in order to attract Muslim tourists in the Middle East, services in Vietnam must meet the criteria of the people and countries of these countries.

*Thirdly*, the Halal market potential is huge with a projected population of 2.18 billion by 2030, accounting for about 30% of the world's population. Accordingly, the market size is forecast to reach a maximum of 3.2 trillion USD by 2025 and an annual growth rate of about 6.2%.

*Fourthly*, with a large area of more than 80 countries, there is still a lot of room for research activities, especially on cultural, historical, educational, political and economic issues of countries in the region.

*Fifthly*, Halal refers to purity of conduct and conscience, requiring good moral values and ethical choices in everyday life.

*Sixthly,* Halal is closely related to issues of organic agriculture, fair trade, product safety, ethical business practices, human behavior towards animals and ecological economics.

Seventhly, Halal specifically addresses the issues of sustainability, humane farming, respect for the environment, food safety and corporate social responsibility. Halal is a process of compliance "from farm to table" at all stages of the production supply chain: input supply, farming, slaughtering, processing, warehousing, transportation, logistics, distribution, consumption...

*Eighthly,* in terms of market opportunity potential, Halal is a large market with many potential opportunities for Vietnamese enterprises to exploit, penetrate and further expand in the context of the need to diversify the market. However, to penetrate this market, Vietnamese products from food, beverages, and fashion must be produced according to processes, meet Halal criteria and standards, and must be certified to meet Halal standards.

## 6. Conclusion

In order to soon build a Halal brand that meets the requirements of international standards requires investment from state policies, full scientific advice from experts, active cooperation from businesses and participation from the Muslim community. This is both an urgent and strategic task, a practical response for the Vietnamese Halal technology industry to be built and developed in line with international development and integration in the current context.

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# THỊ TRƯỜNG HALAL CỦA NGƯỜI ISLAM VÀ VÂN ĐỀ THƯƠNG HIỆU HALAL Ở VIỆT NAM

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Hoạt động Halal thời gian qua diễn ra khá sôi nổi ở Việt Nam, nhất là đối với vùng có cộng đồng người Chăm Hồi giáo. Hoạt động Halal không chỉ đơn thuần là hoạt động tôn giáo Islam mà còn liên quan đến khoa học kỹ thuật, liên quan đến tiêu chí và chất lượng sản phẩm tiêu dùng, liên quan đến hoạt động kinh tế kinh doanh thương mại, du lịch và xuất khẩu. Đến nay, vẫn chưa có cơ sở chắc chắn nào cho một thương hiệu Halal Việt Nam đủ tiếng nói uy tín hội nhập vào thị trường Islam thế giới. Vì vậy, để có những nghiên cứu thực tiễn hoạt động Halal của Việt Nam cả trong và ngoài nước, bài viết phân tích đánh giá khoa học về hiện trạng hoạt động Halal, nguyên nhân và tác động của hoạt động Halal trong thời gian qua để sóm có những đề xuất cụ thế không chỉ dừng lại đối với quản lý nhà nước, phù hợp đối với hoạt động Halal, đồng thời, có chính sách cụ thể để ngành công nghệ Halal hình thành và phát triển phù hợp với phát triển và hội nhập của nước ta hiện nay.

Từ khóa: Thị trường Halal; Người Islam; Thương hiệu Halal; Việt Nam.