

SUSTAINABLE HALAL FOOD IN PAKISTAN: A PROFOUND ANALYSIS OF HURDLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DR RAZIA SHABANA¹, DR. ZUHA QAISAR², DR. MUHAMAD ZAFFAR IQBAL SAEEDI³, MUHAMMAD TALAT MEHMUD ZAFFAR⁴, MUHAMMAD JUNAID SOHRANI⁵, CORRESPONDENT AUTHOR: DR. MUZAFFAR QADIR BHATTI⁶, ZEESHAN ALI²

¹ Associate Professor Department of Islamic Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan.

² Lecturer visiting faculty of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

³ Assistant Professor, Institute of Sufism and Mysticism, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. Pakistan.

⁴ M. Phil. Scholar, Institute of Sufism and Mysticism, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

⁵ M.phil Scholar, Institute of Sufisim and Mysticsim Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

⁶ lecture in English Bahauddin Zakarya University Multan

Abstract:

Pakistan share a major proportion of production of halal foods across the world. The discourse on sustainable production and consumption of ethical food is diverse and global as the food industry is deeply embedded in cultural and religious traditions. The concepts of halal food in Islam and the importance of environmental responsibility are interrelated. Eating and drinking is giving fuel to body for performing daily tasks that makes the food an important aspect of human life. Like all other vital aspects, this aspect is dealt in guidance with the Allah Almighty. Several instances mentioning the dealing and etiquettes of observing the vital task of eating and drinking. Allah Almighty mentions in Quran,

فَكُلْ مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَاشْرَبْ مِنْهُ إِذَا قَرَىٰ وَرَقَىٰ عِثَابُ

“So eat and drink, and put your heart at ease” (Al Maryam: 26)¹

Islamic society emphasizes concepts such as self-control, interconnectedness, mutual respect, and living in harmony with nature. These principles align closely with the goals and processes of sustainable food production and consumption. Sufism states of divine principles just like as mentioned in Quran

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا²

“Eat and drink, but be not excessive.” (Al Aara’af: 31)²

The current study looks at how Pakistan’s halal food-related company might face effects from the ongoing challenges. Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim population, harbors immense potential within the global halal food industry despite numerous challenges that hinder its full potential. The industry’s potential has been hampered by inconsistent regulations, non-standardized certification procedures, and restricted access to foreign markets. Furthermore, the target audience has certain reservations concerning ethical issues, authenticity, and food preservations about halal items, thus impacting their trusteeship and reliance on such goods. It is essential to put funds into the creation of infrastructure, fortify regulatory frameworks, and promote cooperation among pertinent stakeholders to guarantee adherence to global halal standards and enhance market accessibility. Initiatives that support consumer awareness, openness, and moral behavior can also pave the way to the development of halal product confidence. By putting these suggestions into practice, the halal food Industry of Pakistan can surpass past troubles, uncover novel potentials, and provide a great contribution towards Pakistan’s economic development as well as international fame as a chief halal food manufacturer.

Key Words: Safe food, Sufism, Halal Industry, Environment, Spiritual responsibility, Drinking, Concepts and Social development

¹ Al Quran, Surah Al Maryam, Ayat no. 26

² Al Quran, Surah Aaraf, Ayat no. 31



INTRODUCTION

The global demand for halal food products has surged in recent years, propelled by a growing Muslim population and increased awareness about dietary preferences. In Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim country, the production and consumption of halal food hold significant cultural, religious, and economic importance. However, ensuring the sustainability of halal food production presents a complex array of challenges and responsibilities that require careful examination. Sustainable Halal food in Pakistan has emerged as a critical area of research due to the growing demand for Halal food products and the need for sustainable practices in the food industry. The Halal food supply chain (HFSC) plays a crucial role in ensuring that the final product is genuinely Halal and meets the Islamic dietary laws². The HFSC should ensure that all materials used in the production of food are Halal, and all machinery, utensils, tools, and packaging should not be contaminated by non-Halal elements². The Halal food industry is a large revenue market, with the global Muslim population projected to increase by 73% to an estimated 2.8 billion by 2050². The Halal food market has amounted to USD 1.292 trillion, almost triple the size of Japan's food and beverage market². The increase in demand for Halal food is due to population growth, economic prosperity, globalization of the Halal food chain, social and religious obligations to consume only Halal, and the perception that Halal foods are safe². Sustainability remains a growing concern in the food industry, and the fast-evolving Halal food industry will face growing pressure responding to consumers' concerns². A systemic approach to address sustainability issues in the HFSC is imperative to optimize the value chain and support food preparation, processing, storage, and logistics². Challenges related to sustainable HFSC practices, nutrition, food safety, food authenticity, and corporate social responsibility should be a high priority on the agenda of Halal food suppliers and retailers². The literature on Halal food and sustainability remains fragmented, poorly conceptualized, and a patchwork of non-coherent insights². A systematic literature review and a bibliometric analysis can identify the sustainable practices that are implementable within HFSCs². The transition toward sustainable HFSCs gives rise to necessary changes in the governance of how Halal foods are prepared, produced, handled, and delivered to consumers². The embodiment of Muslim intention elements in buying Halal food is critical for the successful operations of Halal food businesses³. The investigation of key factors for successful implementation of sustainable Halal food supply chain management is essential for the Halal food industry³. The application of Halal in supply chain management through in-depth interviews can provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of implementing Halal in the supply chain³. Consumers' sustainable purchase behavior is influenced by psychological factors, and modeling the impact of these factors can help develop sustainable HFSCs³. The production, composition, and application of coffee and its industrial residues can provide valuable insights into sustainable food production practices³. Consumers' attitudes and typology towards the goals of sustainable development can help develop sustainable food supply chains³. The Halal certification process should be "green" to ensure that the Halal food industry is sustainable⁴. Food safety in Halal assurance is critical for the success of the Halal food industry⁴. Personal values underlying Halal food consumption can provide valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences⁴. Consumers' preferences toward attributes of manufactured Halal food products can help develop sustainable Halal food products⁴. The consumer decision-making process in shopping for Halal food in Malaysia can provide valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences in other Muslim-majority countries⁴. Predicting intention to choose Halal products using the Theory of Reasoned Action can help develop sustainable Halal food supply chains⁴. Purchasing decisions among Muslim consumers of processed Halal food products can provide valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences⁴. In conclusion, sustainable Halal food in Pakistan is a critical area of research due to the growing demand for Halal food products and the need for sustainable practices in the food industry. The HFSC plays a crucial role in ensuring that the final product is genuinely Halal and meets the Islamic dietary laws. A systemic approach to address sustainability issues in the HFSC is imperative to optimize the value chain and support food preparation, processing, storage, and logistics. Challenges related to sustainable HFSC practices, nutrition, food safety, food



authenticity, and corporate social responsibility should be a high priority on the agenda of Halal food suppliers and retailers. The embodiment of Muslim intention elements in buying Halal food, the investigation of key factors for successful implementation of sustainable Halal food supply chain management, the application of Halal in supply chain management, and consumers' sustainable purchase behavior are critical areas of research for developing sustainable Halal food supply chains. This paper aims to delve into the intricate landscape of sustainable halal food in Pakistan, shedding light on the hurdles faced by stakeholders along the supply chain and delineating the associated responsibilities. By undertaking a comprehensive analysis, this study endeavors to offer insights into potential strategies and interventions for fostering sustainability in the halal food industry.

The term "halal" refers to what is permissible or lawful in Islamic law, encompassing not only the method of slaughter but also the entire production process, including sourcing of ingredients, manufacturing practices, and distribution. Ensuring that halal food is produced in a sustainable manner entails addressing various interconnected factors, including environmental impact, animal welfare, social equity, and economic viability.

Pakistan, with its rich agricultural heritage and a significant Muslim population, possesses immense potential to emerge as a hub for sustainable halal food production. However, several hurdles hinder the realization of this potential. These obstacles range from inadequate infrastructure and technological limitations to regulatory challenges and lack of consumer awareness.

Moreover, the responsibilities associated with ensuring sustainability in the halal food industry are multifaceted. Producers bear the responsibility of adopting environmentally friendly practices, implementing ethical standards in animal husbandry, and promoting transparency in labeling and certification. Government bodies are tasked with formulating and enforcing robust regulatory frameworks to safeguard the integrity of halal certification and mitigate environmental impacts. Consumers, on the other hand, play a crucial role in driving demand for sustainably produced halal products through informed purchasing decisions and advocacy for ethical practices.

Through a systematic analysis of these hurdles and responsibilities, this paper seeks to contribute to the discourse on sustainable halal food in Pakistan and provide a foundation for future research and policy development. By addressing the challenges and embracing the associated responsibilities, stakeholders can work towards building a more resilient and equitable halal food system that meets the needs of present and future generations.

In the subsequent sections, we will delve deeper into the specific challenges facing sustainable halal food production in Pakistan, examine the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, and propose recommendations for advancing sustainability in this critical sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable Halal food production and consumption in Pakistan represent a nexus of religious, environmental, and socio-economic considerations. Understanding the challenges and responsibilities involved requires an exploration of existing research and scholarly discourse.

Certification and compliance issues are central to the sustainability of Halal food systems. Ahmad and Arshad (2018) highlight the importance of robust regulatory frameworks to ensure adherence to Halal standards, noting the prevalence of fraudulent practices in the absence of stringent oversight. Similarly, Khan and Ahmad (2020) emphasize the need for effective monitoring mechanisms to maintain the integrity of the Halal supply chain, citing instances of contamination and adulteration as significant threats to sustainability.

Environmental sustainability is a pressing concern within the context of Halal food production. Qureshi et al. (2019) argue that Pakistan's agricultural sector faces challenges such as water scarcity and chemical pollution, which undermine the eco-friendly principles of Halal farming. Their findings underscore the urgency of promoting sustainable agricultural practices to mitigate environmental degradation and ensure the long-term viability of Halal food systems.

Addressing socio-economic factors is essential for achieving equity and inclusivity in Halal food production. Siddique et al. (2021) highlight the role of the Halal industry in creating employment opportunities and fostering economic development, but also caution against the exploitation of



labor rights and income disparities within the sector. Their research emphasizes the importance of social responsibility and ethical business practices in promoting sustainable livelihoods for all stakeholders involved.

Government intervention is crucial in shaping the regulatory landscape and promoting sustainable Halal food systems. Malik and Rehman (2019) stress the need for policy initiatives that strengthen Halal certification processes and enhance consumer trust in Halal products. Their study underscores the role of government agencies in enforcing standards and combating fraudulent practices to ensure the integrity of the Halal market.

Consumer awareness and empowerment play a pivotal role in driving demand for sustainable Halal products. Khan and Asghar (2020) emphasize the influence of consumer preferences and ethical considerations on purchasing decisions, highlighting the importance of transparent labeling and information dissemination in promoting informed choices. Their research underscores the potential for consumer activism to drive positive change and foster a culture of sustainability within the Halal food industry.

METHODOLOGY

The research will adopt a qualitative approach to explore the complexities of sustainable Halal food production and consumption in Pakistan. Qualitative methods allow for an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of stakeholders involved in Halal food systems.

2. Research Setting:

The study will be conducted in Pakistan, focusing on key urban and rural areas where Halal food production, processing, and consumption are prevalent. Fieldwork will involve direct engagement with participants in their natural environment, such as farms, markets, and households.

3. Sampling Strategy:

Purposive sampling will be employed to select participants who have relevant expertise and experience in Halal food production, regulation, consumption, and advocacy. Key stakeholders may include Halal food producers, retailers, consumers, government officials, religious scholars, and NGO representatives.

4. Data Collection Methods:

a. In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with participants to explore their perspectives, beliefs, and practices related to sustainable Halal food. Interviews will be audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

b. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): FGDs will be conducted to facilitate group interactions and generate collective insights into key themes and issues surrounding sustainable Halal food. FGDs will be organized with diverse groups of stakeholders to capture a range of perspectives and experiences.

c. Participant Observation: Researchers will engage in participant observation to gain firsthand insights into the daily practices and dynamics of Halal food production and consumption. Observational data will supplement interview and FGD findings, providing context and depth to the analysis.

5. Data Analysis:

Thematic analysis will be employed to identify patterns, themes, and categories within the qualitative data. Data analysis will involve coding transcripts, identifying recurring themes, and exploring relationships between different codes and themes. Rigorous analysis will ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings.

6. Ethical Considerations:

The research will adhere to ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' autonomy and dignity. Ethical approval will be obtained from relevant institutional review boards, and participants will be fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and potential risks of the study.

7. Trustworthiness and Rigor:



To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, methods such as member checking, peer debriefing, and reflexivity will be employed. Member checking involves verifying findings with participants to ensure accuracy and validity. Peer debriefing involves seeking feedback from colleagues to critically evaluate the research process and findings. Reflexivity involves acknowledging and addressing the researcher's biases, assumptions, and preconceptions throughout the research process.

8. Reporting:

The findings of the study will be reported in a comprehensive and transparent manner, adhering to the standards of qualitative research reporting. The research report will include a detailed description of the methodology, findings, interpretations, limitations, and recommendations for future research and practice. Dissemination of findings may occur through academic publications, presentations, and engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Analysis

Analysis of Sustainable Halal Food in Pakistan:

The qualitative research methodology outlined above provides a structured framework for investigating the complexities of sustainable Halal food production and consumption in Pakistan. By adopting a qualitative approach, the study aims to uncover nuanced insights into the challenges, practices, and perceptions surrounding Halal food systems in the country.

1. Research Design:

The choice of a qualitative approach aligns with the research objective of exploring the lived experiences and perspectives of stakeholders involved in Halal food production and consumption. Qualitative methods offer flexibility and depth, allowing researchers to capture the multifaceted nature of sustainability issues within the context of Halal food systems.

2. Research Setting:

Conducting the study in diverse urban and rural areas of Pakistan ensures a comprehensive understanding of Halal food practices across different contexts. By engaging with participants in their natural environment, the research can capture the intricacies of local food systems and cultural dynamics influencing sustainable Halal food practices.

3. Sampling Strategy:

The purposive sampling strategy enables researchers to select participants with diverse backgrounds and expertise relevant to the study's focus. Involving key stakeholders such as producers, consumers, and regulators ensures a holistic perspective on sustainability challenges and opportunities within the Halal food industry.

4. Data Collection Methods:

Employing a combination of in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation enriches the data collection process. These methods enable researchers to gather rich, context-specific data while facilitating interaction and dialogue among participants. By triangulating multiple sources of data, the study enhances the validity and reliability of its findings.

5. Data Analysis:

Thematic analysis offers a systematic approach to organizing and interpreting qualitative data, allowing researchers to identify patterns, themes, and relationships. Through rigorous coding and interpretation, the study can uncover underlying factors shaping sustainable Halal food practices and inform evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice.

6. Ethical Considerations:

Adhering to ethical principles ensures the protection of participants' rights and well-being throughout the research process. Obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and addressing potential risks and biases are essential for upholding ethical standards and ensuring the integrity of the study.

7. Trustworthiness and Rigor:

By implementing strategies such as member checking, peer debriefing, and reflexivity, the study enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of its findings. Engaging with participants to validate



findings, seeking feedback from peers, and critically reflecting on the researcher's role and biases contribute to the rigor and validity of the research.

8. Reporting:

Transparent reporting of research findings is essential for communicating insights, interpretations, and recommendations to stakeholders and the broader community. The research report will provide a detailed account of the methodology, findings, and implications, facilitating knowledge dissemination and informing future research and practice in sustainable Halal food systems.

Discussion

The proposed qualitative research methodology for examining sustainable Halal food in Pakistan offers a robust and comprehensive approach to understanding the intricate dynamics of this critical aspect of Pakistani society. By delving into the complexities of Halal food production and consumption through qualitative lenses, this methodology allows for a nuanced exploration of the challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities involved.

One of the strengths of this methodology lies in its emphasis on capturing the lived experiences and perspectives of diverse stakeholders, including producers, consumers, regulators, and industry experts. By engaging with these key actors through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, researchers can gain valuable insights into the socio-cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable Halal food practices.

Moreover, the purposive sampling strategy ensures the representation of various voices and perspectives, thus enriching the depth and breadth of the study's findings. This approach enables researchers to explore the unique contexts and challenges faced by different stakeholders across urban and rural settings, contributing to a more holistic understanding of sustainable Halal food systems in Pakistan.

The thematic analysis of qualitative data allows for the identification of patterns, themes, and relationships, facilitating the generation of evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice. By rigorously analyzing and interpreting qualitative data, researchers can uncover underlying factors shaping sustainable Halal food practices and develop targeted interventions to address key challenges.

Ethical considerations are paramount in ensuring the integrity and validity of the research process. By adhering to ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' autonomy, researchers can uphold the trust and confidence of participants and stakeholders alike.

Overall, the proposed qualitative research methodology offers a robust framework for investigating sustainable Halal food in Pakistan, with the potential to inform policy, practice, and future research initiatives in this vital area. By shedding light on the complexities and nuances of Halal food systems, this research has the power to catalyze positive change and promote the sustainability and integrity of Halal food production and consumption in Pakistan and beyond.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed qualitative research methodology provides a comprehensive and insightful framework for exploring the multifaceted landscape of sustainable Halal food production and consumption in Pakistan. Through its emphasis on engaging diverse stakeholders, employing rigorous data collection and analysis techniques, and upholding ethical standards, this methodology offers valuable opportunities for generating in-depth understanding and actionable insights.

By delving into the lived experiences, perspectives, and practices of producers, consumers, regulators, and industry experts, this research has the potential to uncover the underlying challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities inherent in sustainable Halal food systems. Through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, researchers can capture the intricacies of Halal food practices across different contexts, contributing to a more holistic understanding of sustainability issues within the industry.

The thematic analysis of qualitative data enables researchers to identify patterns, themes, and relationships, facilitating the development of evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice. By addressing key challenges such as certification and compliance, environmental



sustainability, socio-economic factors, and consumer awareness, this research can inform targeted interventions aimed at promoting the integrity and sustainability of Halal food production and consumption in Pakistan.

Moreover, by upholding ethical principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for participants' autonomy, researchers can ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the study's findings. Through transparent reporting and dissemination of research findings, this research has the potential to inform and inspire positive change within the Halal food industry, contributing to the advancement of sustainable practices and the well-being of communities in Pakistan and beyond.

In essence, the proposed qualitative research methodology offers a valuable avenue for deepening our understanding of sustainable Halal food in Pakistan, with the potential to catalyze positive impacts on both local and global scales. By fostering collaboration, generating knowledge, and promoting informed decision-making, this research has the power to shape a more sustainable and equitable future for Halal food systems in Pakistan and beyond.

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