

# HALAL TRAINING PRACTICES AMONG FOOD HANDLERS IN SIBU, SARAWAK: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AT YS CAKERY

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**Abstract:** *Halal food preparation and handling are important parts of the food service industry in Malaysia where most population are Muslims. This study explores the effectiveness of halal training among certified food handlers in Sibu, Sarawak. As a multicultural town with growing food businesses, Sibu faces challenges in ensuring halal compliance, particularly in premises managed by non-Muslims or those unfamiliar with halal principles. The main objective of this research is to evaluate the level of knowledge, attitude, and practice among food handlers after attending halal training and to identify challenges they face. This research used a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews with four informants holding various roles in YS bakery setting. The findings show that halal training significantly improves awareness, daily practices, and confidence in maintaining halal integrity. Most participants became more alert in checking ingredients, using halal-certified products, and ensuring cleanliness in food preparation. However, the study also highlights challenges issues such as unclear labeling, difficulty in verifying imported items, and a lack of certified suppliers. Based on the findings, this research recommends conducting halal training at least twice a year, incorporating real-life kitchen scenarios, label-reading exercises, and audit simulations. These improvements aim to strengthen food handlers' practical understanding of halal requirements and support Malaysia's broader goal of becoming a global leader in the halal industry.*

**Keywords:** *challenges, knowledge, food handlers, halal training*

## Introduction

The term *Halal*, derived from Arabic, denotes what is lawful or permissible according to Islamic law, while its antonym *Haram* refers to what is unlawful or prohibited. Both concepts are integral to Islamic teachings and extend beyond dietary regulations to encompass all aspects of a Muslim's daily life. The Quran contains numerous injunctions that emphasize the importance of consuming food that is pure, wholesome, and beneficial, thereby guiding Muslims in making ethical and health-conscious dietary choices (Fabian, 2004).

The concept of Halal is deeply rooted in the daily lives of Muslims in Malaysia. However, its significance is not limited to Muslim consumers alone; non-Muslim consumers and businesses are increasingly attentive to Halal standards due to the growing demand for quality, hygienic, and ethically produced goods. While traditionally associated with food, the concept of Halal has evolved and now encompasses a wide range of sectors including cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, food premises, consumer goods, logistics services, slaughterhouses, contract manufacturing (OEM), and even medical devices (Manual Prosedur Pensijilan Halal Malaysia [MPPHM], 2020).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ۗ ٨٧  
وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ۗ ٨٨

*O believers! Do not forbid the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors. Eat of the good, lawful things provided to you by Allah. And be mindful of Allah in Whom you believe.*

(Surah al-Maidah verse 87-88)

It is clear from these verses that the Quran places strong emphasis on the aspect of food and nutrition. This shows that Islam highly values food that is good, clean, pure, and Halal, as food is a basic daily need for human survival. Muslims are also required to pay attention to consuming Halal food to avoid getting involved in unlawful or prohibited matters (Puteri Faida & Afifah Azmi, 2022)

## Research Objectives

Research objectives tell us what the researcher is trying to learn or understand from the study. These goals come from research questions and help the researcher know what to focus on. They also help plan and organize each part of the research clearly (Creswell, 2014). This research has two main objectives. First objective is to evaluate the level of knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding Halal among food handlers in Sibul. Second, the objective to identify challenges faced by food handlers in implementing Halal practices post-training.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach, with interviews serving as the primary method of data collection, complemented by tools such as video recordings and mobile phones to ensure accuracy and reliability of responses. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with four purposively selected food handlers from YS Cakery who had previously attended Halal training. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate as it enabled the researcher to target individuals with direct exposure to the training program, thereby ensuring that participants possessed the necessary knowledge and experience to provide meaningful insights (Patton, 2015). The sample also represented different job scopes ranging from

production to cashiering allowing for a more holistic understanding of the impact of Halal training across various operational levels.

To ensure credibility and validity of the data collection process, a set of approximately 15 interview questions was carefully designed and pre-validated. Validation was carried out through expert consultation with supervisor specializing in Islamic studies and hala food safety management who reviewed the questions for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, a pilot interview was conducted with one non-participating food handler from a similar bakery to refine wording and sequencing of the questions, ensuring that they elicited clear and honest responses from the actual informants.

During the interview sessions, participants were encouraged to share their experiences and perceptions openly, with probing questions applied where necessary to explore issues in greater depth. All sessions were recorded using mobile phones and supplemented with field notes to facilitate accurate transcription and minimize the risk of data loss.

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. First, all audio recordings were transcribed verbatim to capture participants' exact expressions. Second, the researcher engaged in repeated readings of the transcripts to achieve data familiarization. Third, initial codes were generated systematically to highlight significant features of the data. These codes were then reviewed and grouped into potential themes that reflected recurring patterns and shared meanings across participants. Fourth, themes were refined by cross-checking them against the coded extracts and the overall dataset to ensure consistency and coherence. Fifth, themes were clearly defined and named to reflect their essence. Finally, the themes were synthesized and interpreted to provide deeper insights into the participants' experiences and viewpoints on the effectiveness of Halal training.

**Table 1: List of Informants**

<b>Informant</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Work's Scope</b>
Informant A	Head Baker	In charge of preparing all the ingredients and mixing them. Sometimes she does bake and any others operation related.
Informant B	Senior Baker	Help the head baker prepare ingredients, bake the kek lapis, cookies and make kompia including mixing, baking, packing and seal.
Informant C	Cashier	Responsible in checking suppliers, purchasing and key in halal status in MYeHalal system.
Informant D	Part Timer	Work part-time in the kitchen to clean equipment, bake kek lapis and cookies, and sometimes help pack kek lapis.

**Source: Interpreted by the researcher**

### **Halal Awareness**

Halal awareness plays a key role in shaping consumer behaviour, especially in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia. According to Shahniah et al. (2024), consumers who are more aware of Halal principles are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward Halal products, which then increases their intention to purchase them. The study, which focused on Japanese ramen restaurants in Indonesia, found that people who understand what Halal means and why it's important tend to prefer products that clearly meet Halal standards. This awareness also helps

build trust in food providers, especially when combined with Halal certification and a socially respectful dining environment. Overall, the research shows that raising Halal awareness can effectively influence consumer choices and encourage more businesses to follow Halal practices.

The study titled "*Halal Awareness among Muslim Undergraduates at a Malaysian University*" by Musa and Hashim (2022) investigates the level of Halal awareness among Muslim university students in Malaysia. Halal awareness encompasses understanding the concept of Halal, attitudes towards Halal consumption, and recognition of Halal certification. Findings indicated that the students possessed a high level of Halal awareness, demonstrated by their substantial knowledge of Halal principles, positive attitudes towards consuming Halal products, and strong recognition of the importance of Halal certification. The study underscores the effectiveness of current educational and informational efforts in promoting Halal awareness among Muslim undergraduates, while also pointing to areas where further clarification is needed to address specific misunderstandings.

A study by Hasan and Thurga (2025) on how non-Muslim consumers in Malaysia understand and perceive Halal products. It finds that many non-Muslims associate Halal with cleanliness, safety, and quality, leading to increased trust and willingness to purchase Halal items. Factors like Halal awareness, certification, marketing, and knowledge significantly influence their buying decisions. The study also notes that non-Muslims are increasingly accepting Halal products due to health and ethical reasons. However, some still lack full understanding of Halal practices, highlighting the need for better education and communication. Overall, promoting Halal awareness among non-Muslims can enhance cultural inclusivity and broaden the appeal of Halal products beyond religious boundaries.

### **Halal Training**

The study titled "*Effectiveness of Halal Courses and Training for Diploma in Halal Management Students UiTM Negeri Sembilan Branch*" by Atikah and Aishah (2022) looked at how well Halal courses and training help diploma students understand Halal practices. It found that these courses were very useful in improving students' knowledge about what Halal means, how Halal certification works, and why it's important to follow Halal rules in different industries. The research showed that learning about Halal in a structured and clear way helps students become more confident and prepared to work in the Halal field. This study highlights how important Halal education is for creating a skilled and informed workforce in Malaysia's growing Halal industry.

The study titled "*Ensuring Halal Integrity and Security in Warehouse Operations: An Investigation of Best Practices for Halal Food and Beverage Storage*" Juli and Hairul (2024) emphasizes the critical role of warehouse operations in maintaining the Halal status of food and beverage products. Providing good training for warehouse staff is very important to keep Halal food and drinks safe. Staff should learn how to handle, store, and move Halal products properly. This kind of training helps make sure the food stays Halal and builds trust with customers and others involved. To manage Halal storage well, companies also need to plan carefully, train their staff, use the right technology, and work closely with their suppliers. Working with Halal certification bodies shows that the company is serious about following Halal rules. Involving employees through training and reporting programs also helps create a workplace that cares about Halal safety. By following these steps, companies can meet Halal standards and gain

customer trust, while showing that they are responsible and respectful of Halal values in the food and drink industry.

To effectively implement IR 4.0 in Halal supply chain management, strong support from research institutes and universities is essential. Collaborations between academia and industry promote knowledge development, training, and human capital transfer. These partnerships facilitate joint research projects and the commercialization of university-developed innovations, like patents. They also foster networking through conferences and meetings. Overall, this support enables better knowledge transfer across all levels of the supply chain, reducing risks and enhancing the success of IR 4.0 adoption (Nurshafaaida et al., 2020).

### **Challenges in Halal Training**

As highlighted in the study by Hafizah et al. (2021), trainers face several challenges in delivering effective Halal training. These challenges can be broadly categorized into three areas: language barriers, misunderstandings about certification outcomes, and the diversity of participants' educational backgrounds. One major issue is language barriers, as participants often come from different countries and speak different languages, making it hard to explain things clearly and quickly. Another problem is that some participants misunderstand what the Halal Executive Certificate means, thinking it qualifies them to be auditors or consultants, when it prepares them for roles like Halal Executives or Internal Halal Auditors. Also, participants come from different educational backgrounds, those with experience in food or related fields learn faster, while others struggle to keep up. These challenges make it harder for trainers to teach effectively, so Halal training programs need to be more flexible, clear, and tailored to meet different needs.

### **Impact of Education and Training on Halal Industry**

From Muhammad Hafeez et al. (2022), education and training provided by government agencies and private organizations help stakeholders in the Halal industry such as companies, regulatory bodies, and consumers improve knowledge, performance, and product quality. These efforts support Halal industry development and contribute to more efficient management of Halal product and service production. Government agencies such as JAKIM's Halal Hub Division and HDC play a significant role in providing education and training to Halal industry players. JAKIM offers training for officers in areas such as Shariah compliance and technical knowledge, including Halal certification procedures, slaughtering processes, and courses like Good Hygiene Practices (GHP), Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). HDC also provides advisory services to companies in the Halal industry to improve product marketing, increase creativity, and enhance product quality to remain competitive in the market.

From Aizat et al (2015), Halal training programmes are very useful, especially for supporting the Halal food industry. These programmes help make sure the Halal food supply chain follows proper guidelines and stays in good condition. Many different organizations offer Halal training, including government agencies, private companies, and educational institutions such as universities, colleges, and training centers. In Malaysia, there are many Halal education providers, and the programmes they offer may differ in course length and target groups depending on the modules. Halal Executives (HEs) are trained through these programmes, and their performance in the industry is closely related to the quality of the training they receive. The study provides strong evidence that well-structured Halal training programmes designed with practical and religious relevance are effective in building a competent Halal workforce.

These programmes not only fulfill a critical industry need but also offer socio-economic benefits by empowering undereducated and unemployed youth with valuable, career-ready skills. Future training efforts should address logistical challenges and expand content to cover a broader range of religious and technical competencies (Norhayati & Alina, 2013).

## Finding and Discussions

### The Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Regarding Halal Among Food Handlers In YS Cakery

The findings of the study revealed that all informants had a good understanding of Halal-related matters among food handlers. This finding was obtained through the researcher's question: "Can you explain what makes food Halal or non-Halal?" The researcher found that all informants understood the concept of Halal, as explained by Informant A:

*"Halal means the ingredients are clean, free from impurities umm such as not derived from pigs. Since we use gelatine in our products, we have to make sure that gelatine is really from Halal animals. Now the gelatine that we use is from Halal and it have Halal logo and Halal certificate. Halal food also aa must not mixed with anything forbidden and handled in a clean way."*

Based on interview, researcher found that informant B and informant D stated that Halal food must not be mixed with forbidden items and should be prepared cleanly. Informant B also explained that Halal food must come only from Halal ingredients and sure (*yaqin*) about the Halal status. She also mentioned that to determine whether food is Halal or not, we must look at the Halal logo, as it is common for a Muslim to check the Halal logo on product packaging. The following is the statement from Informant B:

*"For me, food is Halal if it's made from Halal ingredients. Halal food also means that food prepared with good hygiene. We just need to be sure that what we use or eat is really Halal. If we're not sure, then it's better not to eat it. One way to check if the food is Halal or not is by looking at the Halal logo on the packaging. Since we were kids, we've always looked for the Halal logo first before buying or eating anything right?"*

For attitude, researcher found that all four informants show good attitude and do Halal practices before and after Halal training. However, researcher also found that there are some practices that they did previously did not match the Halal practices especially on cleanliness and hygiene. Informants also mentioned that they learnt a lot of new things from the training that they attended. From informant A, she mentioned that she becomes a food handler that more aware on Halal after she attended Halal training. If she finds that her colleagues do not comply with the attitude that she learnt, she will teach them and take corrective action. From the Halal training also, informant A said that now she choose ingredients that only have verification from the authority's body. From informant A, she said:

*"The training gave me better awareness. I changed how I choose ingredients and taught the staff about the importance of Halal. When I see them making mistakes, I go teach them and ask them to make corrective action. By that way, we can avoid the same mistakes happened again in our premise."*

From informant B, she said since the training, she has become more careful in choosing and storing ingredients. Informant B always be the one who receives raw materials when suppliers send to the premise. Once, they receive the wrong type and brand of flour from supplier, but she does not know about it. When the manager saw it, informant B got blamed and felt sorry about it. Since that incident, she becomes more careful when she receives raw materials and before she stores it. and noticed fewer mistakes, such as using unclean towels to clean utensils and using the same towel to clean table or workplace. An answer from informant B:

*“Before the training, I didn’t pay much attention when receiving raw materials because I thought everything was fine as long as it arrived. But one day, the supplier sent the wrong type and brand of flour, and I didn’t realize it. I got blamed for it, and I felt really bad because it was my responsibility. Since then, I’ve become much more careful. The training opened my eyes, and that incident reminded me that even a small mistake can affect the whole operation. Now, I make sure to check everything properly before storing it.”*

Same goes too informant C that he manages to reject suppliers that are not on their list. Since he is responsible in purchasing ingredients, he plays an important role in maintaining Halal in the first place. He only purchases from registered suppliers and asks for valid Halal certificates before purchase if there are new suppliers. After the training, he became more careful in choosing suppliers. He also mentioned that because most of the ingredients that they use are repacked, they have to make sure the original product has Halal certificates. If the supplier cannot do so, he will purchase from another supplier. Quoted from informant C:

*“As someone in charge of purchasing, I know that maintaining Halal starts with me. After the training, I became more cautious, especially when dealing with new suppliers. I only buy from those who are registered and can provide valid Halal certificates. If they can’t, I won’t take the risk. I’ll look for another supplier. This is even more important now because many of our ingredients are repacked, so we can’t just rely on the packaging. We have to trace the original source. The training made me realise that Halal is not just about the food itself, but also about the process and who we get it from.”*

For informant D, she said the training helped her become more careful, especially in checking whether ingredients are listed in the MYeHalal system or have proper Halal certification. This is because sometimes she helped other workers to buy ingredients from grocers nearby. To avoid herself buying ingredients that are not registered in MYeHalal or feels unsure about it, she asks her manager often. After the training, she feels more confident and has made fewer mistakes.

*“Before the training, I didn’t really check whether the ingredients I bought were listed in the MYeHalal system or had proper halal certification. Sometimes, I helped other staff buy things from nearby grocers, but I wasn’t always sure what was allowed. After attending the Halal training, I became more careful and more aware of what to look for. Now, I make sure to check every product properly, and if I’m unsure, I’ll ask my manager first. The training gave me more confidence to do my job the right way, and since then, I’ve made fewer mistakes.”*

The findings of this study revealed that all informants had a clear understanding of what constitutes Halal and non-Halal food. When asked to explain the concept of Halal, all participants were able to describe it accurately, showing that they possessed good knowledge even before attending the Halal training. For example, Informant A explained that Halal food must be clean, free from impurities such as those derived from pigs, and handled in a hygienic manner. This understanding is in line with the definition of Halal by JAKIM (2022), which includes cleanliness, safety, and the absence of any haram elements. She also highlighted the importance of using certified ingredients like Halagel gelatin, which has a Halal logo and certificate.

One of the most effective ways to strengthen Halal understanding and improve food handling behaviour is through Halal training. Halal training gives food handlers the correct knowledge about what is considered Halal and what is not. It also helps them learn the proper procedures when handling food, cleaning equipment, choosing suppliers, and checking product certificates. When food handlers attend these training sessions, they are more likely to be aware of their responsibilities and can take the right action to avoid mistakes that could affect the Halal status of the food.

In addition, Halal training improves decision-making among food handlers, especially when dealing with suppliers or choosing ingredients. Food handlers who are involved in purchasing or receiving materials must be able to identify Halal-certified products and ensure that everything used in the kitchen is safe and verified. Some participants in this study mentioned that after attending Halal training, they became more careful when checking ingredients, especially when receiving deliveries or buying products from shops. They also started to ask for valid Halal certificates and only deal with trusted suppliers. These changes in behaviour show that Halal training is not only helpful in giving knowledge, but also in building confidence and responsibility. Before training, some food handlers may not be aware of the impact of small mistakes, such as not checking product labels or using the same towel for different cleaning tasks. But after training, they start to realise how important it is to be consistent and careful in their daily routines. Even small actions, when done correctly, can help protect the Halal status of food.

Based on the findings above, food handlers suggested that training must also be practical and include real-life examples from the kitchen or workplace so that staff can easily relate and apply what they learn. As shown in past research by Aziz and Chok (2013), Halal training has been found to increase compliance and strengthen commitment among food industry workers. When staff are well-trained, the chances of Halal violations become much lower, and the trust of Muslim consumers can be maintained.

Indeed, Halal training plays a key role in helping food handlers carry out their duties correctly. It improves their knowledge, shapes their attitude, and guides their practices. Although some may already have basic knowledge of Halal, continuous training helps them stay updated, aware, and confident in handling food the right way. In the end, it not only benefits the business but also ensures that food served to the public meets the standards expected by Muslim consumers.



### Challenges faced by food handlers in implementing Halal practices post-training.

In this research findings, there are three main challenges that food handlers face after receiving Halal training. Although the training is meant to increase their knowledge and understanding of Halal guidelines, applying these practices in daily work can still be difficult. Some of the challenges they may face include lack of guidance from supervisors, limited availability of Halal-certified ingredients, time constraints during food preparation, and confusion about certain Halal rules. Understanding these challenges is important for employers, trainers, and policy makers so they can improve the training process and help ensure that Halal practices are followed consistently in the food industry.

One of the key challenges faced by the food handler after attending Halal training is the difficulty in identifying imported food items that do not have clear Halal labels or certification marks. Informant A and informant C said it becomes difficult when dealing with imported goods, especially those with packaging in foreign languages or without any recognizable Halal logo. In some cases, these products may not be listed in the MYeHalal system, which creates confusion and uncertainty. She finds it hard to confirm whether the ingredients used in these products are Halal or not, especially when the packaging does not provide enough information or when the origin of the product is from a non-Muslim country. As a result, she often has to depend on her manager for guidance or avoid using the product altogether to prevent making mistakes.

*“After attending the Halal training, I became more aware of the importance of checking every product, especially imported ones. But honestly, it’s still very challenging. Some of these items don’t have a clear Halal logo or the logo is unfamiliar, and sometimes they’re not even listed in the MYeHalal system. When that happens, I feel unsure and worried because I can’t confirm if the product is truly Halal or not. It’s even harder when the product comes from a non-Muslim country, and the label doesn’t explain much. I don’t want to make the wrong decision, so most of the time I either ask my manager or avoid using the product altogether. I’ve learned that being careful is better than taking risks, but it’s not always easy when the information is lacking.” – Informant A*

*“One of the biggest challenges for me is making sure imported ingredients are truly Halal. Sometimes, the supplier can’t provide any Halal certificate, so I have to try and find it on my own. It’s not easy to contact foreign companies, and most of the time I just have to wait for the supplier to get the certification from the brand themselves. For example, we’ve been trying to get the Halal certificate for the Aldia strawberry fruit filling since 2019. Alhamdulillah, we finally managed to get it this year. But the process took years, and that’s the reality when dealing with imported products.” — Informant C*

Next, the food handler also finds it difficult to avoid buying from suppliers who repack ingredients that do not have clear label and status because there are only a few bakery suppliers in Sibuluan. Due to the limited number of bakery suppliers in the area, Informant B who works in bakery often have no choice but to continue purchasing from these sources despite the lack of transparency. These repacked items usually come without original packaging, Halal logos, or even expiry dates, As a result, food handlers are placed in a difficult position where they must balance Halal compliance with the practical need to keep the bakery operating smoothly. She

said that if her company ordered from a bakery supplier outside Sibul, I will take time and cost too. Other than that, the possibility of the ingredients receiving in good condition also low.

*"Here in Sibul, we don't have many bakery suppliers to choose from. So sometimes, even though I know the ingredients are repacked and don't have proper labels or Halal logos, I still have to accept them. The packaging usually comes plain with no expiry date, no brand, nothing. As someone who's been through Halal training, I feel uneasy because I can't be sure if the ingredient is really Halal. But what can we do? If we order from suppliers outside Sibul, it'll take time and cost more. Plus, there's no guarantee the item will arrive in good condition. So at the end of the day, we have to balance between following Halal practices and making sure the bakery runs smoothly." — Informant B*

Informant D also stated that the key challenges faced by food handlers in Sibul after attending Halal training is the difficulty in identifying whether certain food items are genuinely Halal, especially when product labels are unclear, incomplete, or entirely missing. She said that it is common with imported or repacked products. She said that when they buy from suppliers, the suppliers will paste their company sticker that only states the company's name, address, product name, barcode number and expiry date only. This is challenging for her since in the training, they don't get exposed to this situation.

*"After the Halal training, I became more aware, but it's still hard to know if some items are truly Halal—especially imported or repacked ones. The labels from suppliers usually just have their company name, product name, and expiry date, without any Halal logo. In training, we weren't really exposed to this kind of situation, so it's still confusing for me."- Informant D*

While Halal training plays an important role in increasing awareness and knowledge among food handlers, putting what they learn into practice is not always easy. In many workplaces, especially in smaller towns or areas with fewer resources, food handlers face real-life challenges that make it difficult to fully follow Halal guidelines. Understanding these challenges is important so that employers, trainers, and policy makers can find better ways to support food handlers after the training ends.

One major issue is the gap between what is taught in training and what actually happens at the workplace. In training, food handlers are often taught the ideal practices such as checking Halal logos, verifying ingredients, and handling food the right way. But in the real world, especially when dealing with imported or repacked products, information is not always complete or clear. Labels might be missing, written in a foreign language, or not have any Halal mark at all. When this happens, food handlers are left unsure, and they have to decide whether to accept the product, ask for help, or avoid using it. This creates stress and uncertainty, especially when there is pressure to keep food production running smoothly.

Another challenge is the lack of support or guidance after the training. Some food handlers may feel unsure about certain ingredients or processes, but they do not always have someone to turn to for answers. Without regular reminders or clear instructions from their supervisors, they may struggle to follow the Halal practices correctly. This can lead to mistakes or habits that do not match what they learned in training. In such cases, the role of supervisors and managers

becomes very important in guiding and reminding staff about Halal procedures in everyday tasks.

There are also practical challenges, like limited supplier options, especially in smaller towns. For example, when there are only a few local suppliers, and some of them repack products without original labels or Halal certificates, food handlers may not have much choice. Even if they are unsure about the Halal status of an item, they might feel forced to accept it due to time limits, cost, or the need to keep operations going. It is also important for companies and business owners to invest in proper systems that help ensure Halal compliance such as choosing reliable suppliers, asking for updated Halal certificates, and keeping records. *slam* gives strong importance not only to where food comes from and what it's made of, but also to how clean and safe it is at every stage *from farm to fork*. This includes the cleanliness and behavior of the people handling the food.

Based on this, it's clear that following proper food handling practices is a big responsibility for food workers. They should not see it as just following rules and laws, but more importantly, as part of their religious duty. In Islam, taking care of food cleanliness is a form of worship (*ibadah*) and supports the goals of Islamic teachings, which include protecting life and family. So, the rules about personal hygiene and cleanliness match the values of Islam and the concept of Halal. (F. Abd Rahman et al., 2014)

In short, Halal training is helpful, but it is not enough on its own. Food handlers need ongoing support, better resources, and practical solutions to help them follow Halal guidelines in real situations. Addressing these challenges will not only make it easier for food handlers to do their jobs properly but also help protect the trust of Muslim consumers and strengthen the overall Halal system in the food industry.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings from the research on Halal food handling practices among food handlers in Sibu, Sarawak, several key conclusions and recommendations can be made. The researcher also can conclude that the researcher achieved the objectives of this study. The study shows that Halal training plays a vital role in improving the knowledge, attitude, and practices of food handlers, even among those who previously had little understanding of Halal requirements. After attending training, participants became more aware of the importance of cleanliness, cross-contamination prevention, and the need to use ingredients that are clearly certified as Halal. They also began JAKIM Halal Portal and MYeHalal system to check the status of ingredients and suppliers, which helped strengthen Halal compliance in their workplaces. Positive attitudes were observed, such as sharing knowledge with coworkers, asking more questions, and showing greater care in food handling and purchasing. However, the study also revealed some challenges. These include limited Halal-certified suppliers in small towns, difficulty verifying foreign Halal certificates, and the need for more supervision and guidance for workers. Some informants also pointed out that the training was too short and lacked real-life examples, which made it harder to apply the knowledge in practical settings.

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