# Relationship of Spirituality Leadership Practice among Food and Beverage SMEs Manufacturers in Halal Supply Chain

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Abstract - The influence of a company's leadership on the business, especially those involved in the halal food and beverage industry in Malaysia. Therefore, it is the intention of this study to examine the relationship of the spirituality leadership towards halal business in food industry which is growing rapidly among the SME manufacturers. To achieve the study's objective, a conceptual framework is proposed via in-depth literature review. This study uses quantitative methods utilising data collection through online questionnaires. A total of 187 respondents from top management answered the questions within a three months span. The data obtained were analyzed with SPSS software. This study presents a hypothesis with three elements and the results has shown that all hypothesis are supported. There is a significant relationship between the spirituality leadership adoption and the halal business with r value of 0.762. As a conclusion, the results of the study can be an informative model for future leaderships implementation of spirituality mainly for halal SMEs businesses in Malaysia.

Keywords - business, food, halal, leadership, spirituality

# 1. Introduction

The involvement of manufacturers in producing food and beverage, especially in the fast-growing halal industry is very challenging and competitive. Currently, they are also facing a food supply chain that is challenged by pressure of the global climate change in order to provide sustainable food source for more than 7.8 billion people including almost 2 billion Muslim consumers. Furthermore, food manufacturers whether small, medium or large are also trying to manage a world-wide balanced food supply chain issues due to the 30% rise in the number of waste food processing per year and also the increased number of undernourished people about 821 million worldwide [1]. In the meantime, the challenges of acquiring halal food products from manufacturers in the supply chains involved issues related to (human) integrity and ethics. According to [2], the implementation of the halal concept in the food industry must be *halalan toyyiban* (a next step of halal concept), or wholesome as the only approach of doing business among all participants in the halal supply chains. In addition, halal supply chain also refers to all activities such as procurement, preparation of halal ingredients for production and manufacturing, storage in warehouse and delivery of the final product via transportation to consumers [3].

To overcome this challenge, all parties in the halal supply chains need collaboration on all aspects of food production to certify that processes, policies and regulations, food safety practices, and affordability are aligned to ensure the sustainability for future food. However, food production from the halal industry is not exempted from negative issues such as absence of integrity and security [4]. At the same time, most of the current top management or leaders in the food industry have ignored one of most important elements in managing business that relates to halal which is the spirituality [5]-[6]. This is a vital element that derived from the leadership philosophy as an approach required to succeed in the halal supply chain of food [7]. Hence, an approach to inculcate the right talents in future leaders in the halal food and beverage industry to address these problems will be crucial [1].

As the global Muslim population rise significantly, the same goes for halal food demand. Currently, the potential for halal food market is growing rapidly around the world. As projected by Statista.com the value of halal product market is expected to rise from US\$1.4 trillion in 2017 to around US\$2.6 trillion by 2024 or 85.7% in 7 years (or 12.24% per year). African continents and Middle East countries (mainly OIC countries – Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt) are major leading importers of halal food in 2015 to 2017. Until recently in 2018 and 2019, Indonesia with the largest Muslim population in the world, took the lead as the biggest importer by spending billions of dollars on halal food and beverages [8].

Domestically, Malaysia has various world-class facilities to produce and market halal products, especially food and beverages and various other halal products such as cosmetics, pharmaceutical, and raw ingredients. According to Halal Development Corporation (HDC), there are 7,500 local companies involved in the halal industry and only less than 25% had exported their

products which is currently worth more than US\$10 billion per annum. The HDC also claimed that Malaysia has bigger potential to expand their market especially in the food sector which is expected to approximately increased to US\$3 trillion in 2025 [9].

The winning factor of Malaysian's halal products to achieved world's recognition is because all processes in the supply chain are certified halal by reputable government agencies such as Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), HDC, Ministry of Health (MOH), and Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services (MAQIS). For example, halal certificate issued by JAKIM have been authorized in more than 46 countries with 84 foreign halal certified bodies worldwide and considered seized a highest integrity level. Moreover, there are special certificates (policies) for halal products and services issued by Department of Standards Malaysia (MS) such as MS1500 (food and beverages), MS2400 (logistics and warehouse) and MS2200 (cosmetics). Importantly, these certificates serve to create the basis for continual improvement leading to increase customer satisfaction and ultimately to the success of the business organization [10].

However, SMEs' acceptance of the certificates mentioned above is not very encouraging [11]. There are still many SMEs who have not taken the initiative to obtain the certificates. In reality, Malaysia's halal certification is a main driver of the success and rapid development of the Malaysian halal industry. This achievement proves that the proactive efforts of the Malaysian government to realize the hope of making this country as Global Halal Hub can be a reality [12]-[13].

This study focuses on the involvement of SMEs as manufacturers producing halal products in Malaysia. It has clearly become an issue that their serious involvement in producing halal products is essential not only Muslim consumers but a new economic resource for the country. For example, last year alone, the halal export revenue amounted to US\$10.1 billion which is an increased from the previous year. As such, HDC targets more than 200,000 SMEs to participate in Halal Integrated Platform program to export halal products to the international market [9]. Therefore, improving SMEs business practice will be a factor that can boost the production of halal products to the maximum level. Among the common impetus for that purpose comes from the involvement of top management through leadership practices. According to some evidence in journals, saying that spirituality leadership has a positive relationship with halal business practice [14]-[15]-[16]-[17].

There is evidence that SMEs' halal business practice is a vital factor to the owner, directors, policy makers and society. Nevertheless, there is a lack of information towards leadership styles that have significant relationship to business organizations involved in Malaysia food industry [5]-[18]. Therefore, this study is to examine the relationship of spirituality leadership in the halal business mainly under SMEs category. As suggested by [1]-[17], food problem that regards to "halalness" must be approached with an open-mind and cross-discipline as a

way to accomplish better results for overall busines growth, population well-being, food production, halal supply chain integrity and people sustainability [19]-[20]-[21].

# 2. Literature Review

Spirituality is one of the leadership styles applied by managers or leaders in an organization. According to [22] spirituality is something that comes from within an individual's perceptions, thoughts, and characters. Spirituality is also reaching beyond and having a sense that could be better with a holistic point of view which can be interconnected with everything (internal and external) [23]. On the other hand, from business' perspective spirituality refers to some elements such as self-knowledge, selflessness, loving, caring, personal growth (mind), morality, acceptance, positive thinking, and forgiveness [24]. From Islamic perspective, spirituality styles of leadership are towards the elements of kindness, honesty, trust, sincerity, tolerance, love, responsibility, and seeking for pleasure from Allah S.W.T [25]-[26].

In managing halal business mainly in food production, the owner, managers, or leaders of the organizations must possess a resilient and diversify characteristics of Islamic ways of doing business [26]-[27]. In this study, the spirituality leadership is referring to the practice and indepth engagement of Islamic teachings that be applicable into management of business including the relationship with co-workers and employees as well as suppliers and customers. The fundamental of doing business in halal ways must be followed the Shariah Laws [26]. Several studies have shown that spirituality leadership practiced by business owners is an important factor to improve the halal practice [28]. According to [29] more than 140 articles have endorsed that spirituality leadership practised in business organizations have improved employee's health, emotion, quality of life, and satisfaction of work instead of business practice.

Spirituality has three main elements which can suggest improvements in halal business practice when applied by owners or top management which is aligned with Islamic teachings [26]-[30]. Based on literature reviews this study propose those three elements: hope, vision, and altruistic love with some adaptation from Islamic perspective of spirituality [31] into a theoretical framework. Doing business in Islamic point of view Business owners must adhere to the Shariah Laws and Al-Sunnah. These business owners or some known as entrepreneurs must be able to create and deliver products (tayyibat) or services needed and valued by the consumers, to provide best opportunity for workers to operate and fulfil some obligations and contributions to societies for a better life [32]-[33]. At the same time, they must have an influence of spirituality within a context of 'Taqwa' and a blessing from God (as the owner of all resources) [34].

Figure 1 shows the relationship of the independent variable (spirituality leadership) and dependent variable (halal business) among SMEs food and beverage manufacturers in Malaysia.

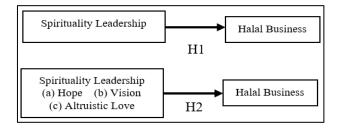


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Based on the theoretical frameworks, the study proposes two hypotheses: (a) H1 – Spirituality leadership has a significant relationship with the halal business, (b) H2 – Hope, Vision and Altruistic Love have a significant relationship with the halal business.

# 3. Methodology

This study utilizes quantitative method with online survey questionnaire (the instrument). The instrument is directed for respondents - owners, top management or decision makers who has knowledge and information in managing the halal business in Malaysia. The data of businesses are obtained via JAKIM's online portal (www. halal.gov.my). A simple random approach was used to select the respondents. All the respondents must apply four specific elements: food or beverage manufacturers, SMEs (Malaysia's Definition), and retain JAKIM's halal certificate.

The instrument consists of four sections: (a) respondent's profile, (b) company profile, (c) spirituality leadership, and (d) halal business. Items in section (a) and (b) were adapted from [32]-[33], while section (c) items were adapted from [26]-[30]-[31] and finally section (d) items were modified from [34]. The instrument was been tested via pilot test by 18 top management individuals from two Malays business associations. Some modifications have been made based on the feedbacks and then be validated by a few experts from local universities. The instrument apply seven-point Likert scale as suggested by [35]. The distribution of the instrument was made by email address via online form. For this study, email and online form are among the best available methods to distribute and collect the data which cost, time and location becomes difficulty.

From the simple random selection, the instrument was posted to 890 potential respondents in early February 2020. The returned form was collected within six weeks and a total of 194 were usable for data analysis and it gives a return rate of 21.79%. The results are analyzed using internal consistency, correlations, and multiple regression.

# 4. Data Analysis

The data (Table 1) shows majority of SMEs halal business owners are males (59.79%) and only (40.21%) were females. Most of them are between 31 to 40 years old or 47.42%. In term of education background, 82 respondents graduated from higher institutions that holds bachelor's degree (42.27%) from various disciplines. Meantime, 55 of them hold diplomas or advance diplomas from local universities and polytechnics. In addition, 27 of the respondents hold master's degree and 6 of them possess PhD degrees with business management background.

The study also discovered that majority of halal business owners that categorized in SMEs were led by 91 individuals with less than 10 years of experiences. While 73 of them or 37.63% have working experience from 11 to 20 years. And 30 respondents have a long involvement in the halal business industry in Malaysia.

Items	Category	Rate	(%)
Gender	Male	116	59.79
	Female	78	40.21
Age	Less than 30	20	10.31
	31 – 40	92	47.42
	41 – 50	64	32.99
	Above 51	18	9.28
Education	SPM/STPM/Cert	24	12.37
	Diploma/Advance	55	28.35
	Bachelor	82	42.27
	Master/PhD	33	17.01
Experience	Less than 10	91	46.91
	11 – 20	73	37.63
	Above 21	30	15.46
Market	Market Domestic		43.81
	International	52	26.80
	Both Markets	57	29.38

Table 1. Respondent Profile

All the items in the instrument were tested and measured via Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) to ensure each of them meet the level of high internal consistency. Based on [36] the value of CA must above than 0.7 which is considered acceptable. The results of the study were presented in Table 2 and overall items have more than achieved the recommended level. The highest score for spirituality leadership elements is 0.942 (altruistic love) along with vision and hope are 0.914 and 0.806 respectively while the dependent variable or halal business practice have a value of 0.839.

Constructs/Items	No. of Items	Value of CA
Spirituality Leadership		
(a) Hope	7	0.806
(b) Vision	8	0.914
(c) Altruistic Love	6	0.942
Halal Business Performance	11	0.839

**Table 2**. Internal Consistency

Table 3 presents the results of the study that shown that the spirituality leadership has a moderate relationship with halal business practice. The results indicated a positive correlation between them, and it shown by r value of 0.742 and the p-value less than 0.05. Therefore, the spirituality leadership elements have influenced to the improvement of the halal business practice.

Correlation of Spirituality Leadership and Halal Business			
		Halal Business	
Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	0.742	
Leadership	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.010	
	N	194	
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)			

**Table 3**. Correlation Analysis

Table 4 presents in-depth about the three elements in the spiritual leadership which consist of hope, vision, and altruistic love. From the results, all three elements have

Correlation of Spirituality Leadership Analysis					
		Spirituality	Hope	Vision	Altruistic
		Leadership			Love
Spirituality	Pearson	-	0.698665	0.617861	0.797244
Leadership	Correlation				
	Sig. (1-tailed)	-	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hope	Pearson	0.698665	-	0.182517	0.333247
	Correlation				
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.0000	-	0.0810	0.0946
Vision	Pearson	0.617861	0.182517	-	0.237548
	Correlation				
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.0000	0.0810	-	0.0823
Altruistic Love	Pearson	0.797244	0.333247	0.237548	-
	Correlation				
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.0000	0.0946	0.0823	-
	N	194	194	194	194
*Correlation is si	*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)				

significant positive correlation with spirituality leadership shown by positive r value and all p-value less than 0.05.

**Table 4**. Multiple Correlation Analysis

# 4.1 Hypothesis

To test the study's hypothesis, two regression analysis of simple and multiple linear regression have been conducted. For the first hypothesis (H1), the result in the table 5 shows the p-value is 0.00013 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between spirituality leadership and halal business with  $R^2 = 0.5806$ .

ANOVA	df	SS	MS	F	p-value
Regression	1	14.2894	14.2894	15.267	0.00013
Residual	192	179.706	0.93597		
Total	193	193.997			

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression Analysis

On the other hand, three elements of spirituality leadership that consist of hope, vision and altruistic love have a significant relationship with halal business. The results are presented in table 6 where the value of *p*-value is 0.001 and it less than 0.05. As a conclusion from the data analysis, the study has confirmed that both hypotheses have a

significant relationship with halal business. Moreover, the result from table 4 has confirmed that those three elements in spirituality leadership have a moderately significant positive correlation.

ANOVA	df	SS	MS	F	p-value
Regression	3	15.665	5.222	5.563	0.001
Residual	190	178.330	0.939		
Total	193	193.995			

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

# 5. Conclusion and Implication

Due to high demand of halal products (domestic and overseas), government with it agencies has encouraged SMEs business owners mainly from food and beverage industry to adopt halal certificate from JAKIM, exercise the MS guidelines and participate in HDC's programs which will lead to be a new potential source economy. Besides that, previous studies have shown that the leadership styles employed by top management of the business organizations also can improve the halal business practices [37]-[38]-[39]-[40]. As an example, the implementation of spirituality elements among the employees in the workplace has improved the commitment on job to purse organization's objectives [41]. A study done by [42] shows that elements such as vision, hope/faith, positive thinking, and humility influence the leaders has significantly improve the increase subordinate performance and therefore produce more profit for an organization.

Therefore, this study has similarly found by employing the three elements of spirituality leadership which combined and derived from Islamic teachings and Shariah Law shown a significant and positive relationship towards the practise of halal business among SMEs in food industry. This result is consistent with other studies in past where they indicated that spirituality adoption among employees and managerial level have impacted to organization's improvement in many aspects including communication, reputation/image, and performance [43]-[44].

Therefore, the study's findings perhaps can be a part of new industrial motivation guideline for responsible government agencies to attract more business owners to implement the spirituality elements into their human resource ecosystem. Currently, halal food and beverages continued to retain its position as a major contributor to the domestic halal economy at US\$5.52 billion. Importantly, it can be a sort of inspiration activity that exercise on human based tolerance, ethics and interpersonal via internal and external to pursue organization's goals (profits and friendly/fair competition, and *fard al-kifayah*) [44]-[45].

In addition to that, any related program of spirituality implementation among the business owners in halal industry will serve the nation's goals in future to be a global halal hub (under Halal Industry Master Plan 2019-2030) [46]. Possibly, this can be one of many methods to support Malaysia in achieving benefits; trading partners,

market shares, new customers, GDP and others in halal market especially when it is expected to grow by 28% from 2016 to 2022 [47]. Also, this concept may apply to other halal industry in Malaysia such as medicines, cosmetics, personal care products, tourism, pharmaceuticals, finance, and fashion. Along with this is a huge opportunity for halal industry to prosper due to the estimated increase of the Muslim population. According to the Pew Research Centre, the number of Muslims worldwide is expected to increase by 75% from 1.6 billion in 2010 to 2.8 billion in 2050.

In near future, this study will continue by taking into account the extension role that can be played by spirituality leadership and its impact on the halal food SMEs manufacturers especially on the performance in terms of organization's financial and non-financial aspects. At the same time, this study will explore the role of moderator variable of Islamic entrepreneurial orientation and its impact towards the relationship between spirituality leadership and organization performance.

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