

## Unveiling the Halal Food Internationalization Literature: Trends and Prospects for Future Study Direction

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### Abstract

The halal industry is a large and rapidly growing market that encompasses various sectors. This review of literature is motivated by the growing demand for halal products, the importance of trade among Muslim-majority nations, and the need for a deeper understanding of how companies deal with competitive barriers when venturing into new markets. Bibliometric analysis used to identify key publications, authors, and keywords, as well as to track trends and patterns over time. The findings of this study can inform businesses, policymakers, and industry stakeholders about effective approaches to internationalizing halal food businesses and contribute to the sustainable growth of the halal food industry. Moreover, identifying several key research trends and gaps can provide insights for future researchers, especially in unexplored areas within the study of the internationalization of halal food.

**Keywords:** *Internationalization, Halal Food, Bibliometric*

### Introduction

The significant growth of the global halal market has been expanding rapidly for the past decade and shows no signs of slowing down. This growth can be attributed to two main factors; first, the number of Muslims around the world has been growing, which means there is a larger consumer base for halal products. Second, along with the rise in the number of Muslims, their purchasing power has also increased, indicating that Muslim have more money to spend on halal products and services. The estimated value of global halal market is USD2.2 trillion by 2019, encompasses a wide range of products and services, not limited to just food. It includes sectors related to lifestyle and pharmaceuticals. As a significant sector in the halal industry, the assets related to Islamic finance are valued at an additional USD 2.5 trillion, excluding the USD 2.2 trillion mentioned earlier (DinarStandard, 2020).

However, based on a report by (Y. H. Khan, 2014), over 80 percent of the global halal trade is conducted by countries with non-Muslim-majority populations, these non-Muslim nations are actively participating in and profiting from the halal market. The surprising statistic raises questions about why Muslim-majority countries might not be as successful in capitalizing on this market as expected. This fact should prompt Muslim countries considering they have potential advantage, such as a cultural and religious tendency with the concept of halal.

Hence, it is crucial to conduct an investigation on how halal business expand their operations internationally. Numerous studies and academic works have shown that the process of internationalizing business is challenging and comes with risks and uncertainties (Conconi et al., 2016). Previous studies have mentioned the internationalization obstacles, such as difficulties in securing suitable financial resources for exporting, a lack of understanding about the targeted market, and the challenges of meeting the administrative and bureaucratic demands tied to exporting. There is general agreement among scholars and researchers that government agencies or trade organizations can play role in alleviating some of these barriers (Lima & de Carvalho, 2011; Rocha et al., 2007) by providing support, resources, and guidance to help business navigate the challenges of global expansion.

In this research, the current situation within the scope of halal food internationalization will be revealed through a bibliometric analysis of studies on halal food in the global context. Bibliometrics encompass various laws and methodologies, and are referred to as the study of academic publications using statistical analysis (McBurney and Novak, 2002). Bibliometrics provide insights into books, articles, publications, and their citations, generally recorded information independently of disciplinary boundaries with significant statistical significance (Bellis, 2009, p. 3). In bibliometric research, various findings related to a specific topic is presented by analyzing specific characteristics of documents or publications (Al and Coştur, 2007). In this context, the number of researchers interested in this field continues to increase, and academic publications and publishing in this field have become crucial for interpreting and summarizing converging information. This indicates the urgency of bibliometric research in the context of halal food internationalization.

This research aims to address the identified shortcomings in this area. Thus, we will determine the publication landscape in the relevant domain and provide guidance for future researchers considering this field. Hence, this study addresses the following three broad research questions; 1. What is the current state of research on halal food internationalization? 2. Within the current research, which research contexts and topics have been examined in this field? 3. What are potential directions or subjects can be the next investigation of the future studies?

## Literature Review

Halal food industry is experiencing significant growth in various countries, driven by both domestic and international demand, and supported by government initiatives to promote and standardize Halal products. The market for Halal food products in Europe is expanding and becoming more significant. The growth of this industry suggests that more consumers in Europe are seeking and purchasing Halal-certified products (Aniqoh & Hanastiana, 2020a). Over 400 European food companies have received halal certification from Halal Food Council of Europe (HFCE), which evaluates and approves food companies, indicating the widespread interest and participation of European food producers in the Halal market.

Some of the reasons behind the growth of the Halal food industry are shifts in demographics, preferences, and lifestyles, are impacting what Halal consumers are looking for in their food. Additionally, people from diverse backgrounds are becoming more interested in Halal products because they perceive them as meeting higher

standards of safety and quality. Several European countries, including the United Kingdom, Japan, and Australia, are witnessing a significant demand for Halal products. This demand isn't solely driven by Muslim consumers but also by people from other religious backgrounds or cultural groups who believe that Halal foods meet certain quality or ethical standards (Mohd Ismail, 2015). These countries are becoming important markets for Halal food producers.

Japan has been showing recognition of the significant potential of the Muslim tourism market by setting a specific goal to attract one million Muslim tourists to the country each year. Hosting events such as the 2020 Olympic Games provides an excellent opportunity to draw Muslim visitors during major international events. To achieve its goal, Japan's government has taken concrete steps to make the country more appealing to Muslim travelers by offering free visas to citizens from Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. This policy eliminates a significant financial barrier for potential Muslim tourists, making it easier and more attractive for them to visit Japan (Yusof & Shutto, 2014). Furthermore, Japan is actively working to accommodate the dietary and cultural preferences of Muslim tourists. This effort involves ensuring that Halal food options are readily available in various settings, such as university canteens, airports, and restaurants.

Australia is a significant contributor to the global production of Halal meat with as much as AUD 1,420 million of export value in 2013-2014. Australia's Halal meat production is in high demand, and its largest customers for Halal meat products are three countries: Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Additionally, their targeted market such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries, which consists of Muslim-majority nations, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) nations are crucial export markets for Halal food, particularly meat products.

Meanwhile, both Indonesia and Malaysia have substantial Muslim populations, which exceed 210 million in the case of Indonesia. This demographic factor makes them among the world's top consumers of Halal food. The Halal food market in these countries is substantial because the majority of their populations adhere to Islamic dietary laws, and they seek products that comply with these religious requirements. Indonesia's large Muslim population presents a lucrative market for foreign companies looking to enter the Halal industry, as it is also the biggest country for Muslim food consumption as much as US\$ 135 billion of halal food spending in 2020 (DinarStandard, 2021). This vast consumer base offers significant opportunities for foreign firms to tap into the demand for Halal products, ranging from food to cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. Entering the Indonesian market can be a strategic move for foreign companies aiming to expand their global Halal footprint.

Malaysia has not only focused on its Islamic banking and finance sector but has also diversified into other areas, including Halal food and tourism. This diversification indicates that Malaysia is strategically leveraging its expertise in Islamic finance to branch out into complementary industries. It recognizes the potential for growth in Halal-related sectors and aims to capitalize on it. MIHAS is an essential event that Malaysia hosts to promote its Halal industry on a global scale. This showcase brings together Halal businesses, both local and international, to exhibit their products and services. It serves as a platform for networking, trade, and knowledge-sharing,

ultimately boosting the visibility and competitiveness of Malaysia's Halal industry on the global stage.

Thailand's achievement as the fifth-largest global Halal food exporter is noteworthy because it comes despite having a relatively small Muslim population. The Thai government has played a proactive role in promoting and facilitating the growth of its Halal food industry resulted in a 20% increase of halal food demand annually (Wacharajirasophon, 2016). This support can take various forms, such as providing incentives, creating regulations, and investing in infrastructure and resources to encourage the development of Halal products. To ensure that Halal products meet recognized standards and are certified appropriately, Thailand has set up specialized institutions like the Halal Standard Institute and the Halal Science Center. These institutions are responsible for defining and enforcing Halal standards, conducting research, and certifying Halal products. This infrastructure helps build trust among consumers and facilitates international trade (Mohd Nawawi et al., 2020). It has also become a sought-after destination for Muslim tourists. By being Muslim-friendly, Thailand has attracted a growing number of visitors from the Muslim world, such as providing Halal food options, prayer facilities, and accommodations that align with Islamic principles. Thailand has a strategic plan to become a central hub for the production of Halal products. This involves identifying specific regions, such as Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, Satun, Songkhla, and Phuket, where the production and processing of Halal products can be concentrated. By focusing on these areas, Thailand aims to streamline and expand its Halal production capabilities and strengthen its position as a key player in the global Halal market.

Therefore, the demand for Halal products extends beyond the Muslim population. People from diverse cultural backgrounds and religious affiliations perceive Halal food as meeting higher standards of safety, quality, and ethical considerations. Several countries, such as Japan, Australia, and Thailand, have implemented specific policies and initiatives to attract Muslim tourists and promote Halal products. Understanding these government-led initiatives is crucial for businesses looking to cater to these emerging markets. Furthermore, countries like Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand are significant players in the global Halal market, either as producers or consumers. Exploring their strategies, market dynamics, and export trends can provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to enter or expand within these markets. In summary, a literature review on Halal food internationalization is essential to grasp the multifaceted aspects of this industry. It provides insights into market trends, consumer behavior, government policies, industry developments, and strategic initiatives, which are vital for businesses aiming to succeed in the global Halal market.

## Methodology

This research employs bibliometric methods aimed at obtaining a deeper understanding of the research landscape related to halal food internationalization by identifying trends within this domain, such as how the number of publications has evolved over recent years. This analysis helps us identify the most active disciplines and the journals most frequently used as primary publication outlets in this field. According to Pritchard (Pritchard, 1969), bibliometric analysis is the application of mathematical and statistical techniques to publications. It enables researchers to

examine how publications and documents are distributed and connected based on specific characteristics. Moreover, bibliometric analysis can provide insights into the publication structure within a particular academic discipline (Yalçın & Esen, 2016). This means researchers can gain a comprehensive understanding of the field's development, primary contributors, and publication patterns.

"Publish or Perish" (PoP) serves as a powerful tool or software aiding in the identification and collection of bibliographic data, serving as an initial step for data collection in this research (Abbas, D. S. et al., 2021). However, the limitations within the bibliography utilized in this research are noteworthy. The bibliography primarily comprises journal articles and conference papers. The specific search term employed is "Halal Food Internationalization" being the keyword used. The research's scope is set between 2018 and 2023, narrowing down the selection of journals for analysis purposes.

The data obtained for analysis specifically pertain to journal articles sourced from Google Scholar. Initially, the PoP application yielded a total of 995 bibliographies. However, documents or articles that do not use the English language and have incomplete data, such as lacking information on publication year and publisher, are eliminated from the dataset to filter relevant information. This step resulted in a total of 488 filtered research documents. Subsequently, out of these 488 documents, we further filtered out books, leaving us with a total of 446 documents. Lastly, by scrutinizing the titles and abstracts, we excluded research unrelated to the internationalization of halal food and also excluded duplicated documents, thus resulting in a total of 250 documents for analysis. Following the compilation of comprehensive metadata, the research proceeds with bibliometric analysis. This analysis focuses on a specific criterion—formulation of the problem as predetermined by the study. To facilitate this analysis, VOS-viewer is utilized, known for its ability to conduct bibliometric analysis and visualize the results effectively. VOS-viewer stands out due to its safety, efficiency in handling large databases of information, and its capacity to generate various visual representations suitable for presentations, research investigations, and other analytical purposes (Abbas, D. S. et al., 2021).

## **Result and Discussion**

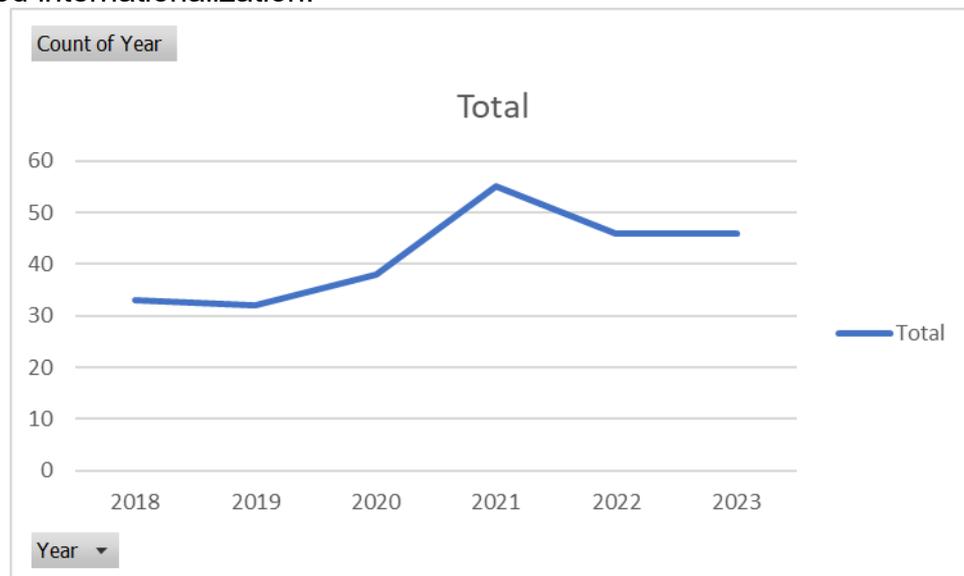
### **Trend of publication of halal food internationalization**

Measuring researchers' productivity involves quantifying the volume of research generated by individual researchers within specific time frames and across scientific journals. It enables an assessment of how prolific and active writers are within their field. Rahayu and Saleh (2017) highlight this process as a means to gauge the output of researchers and writers, providing insights into their scholarly contributions within the academic community. Such measurements offer a quantitative understanding of researchers' impact and involvement in scientific discourse during a specified timeframe.

The trend in publications on the internationalization of halal food from 2018 to 2023 shows an overall increase with slight fluctuations in the number of publications each year. In 2018, there were 33 publications, followed by a minor decrease to 32 in 2019. However, from 2020 onwards, there was a consistent rise in publications,

reaching a peak of 55 in 2021, before stabilizing at 46 in both 2022 and 2023. The initial increase from 2018 to 2021 (33 to 55 publications) indicates a significant interest and growing attention towards the internationalization of halal food within academic and research circles. This surge might reflect increased globalization, market demands, and cultural awareness of halal products worldwide during this period.

The stability in the number of publications from 2022 to 2023 (46 publications each year) suggests a potential plateau or a consolidation phase in research output. This stabilization could indicate a saturation point in current research themes or methodologies related to the internationalization of halal food. Alternatively, it might signify a sustained level of interest and consistent scholarly activity in this field. Factors contributing to this trend might include the growing consumer demand for halal-certified products globally, the expansion of halal food markets beyond traditional regions, governmental initiatives supporting halal industries, and scholarly interest in understanding the socio-cultural, economic, and marketing aspects of halal food internationalization.



**Figure 1. Distribution of Publications**

Source: Author

Analyzing the distribution of publications on halal food internationalization across various well-known publishers provides insights into the academic landscape and the prominence of this topic within different publishing platforms. Emerald.com stands out as a leading publisher in this domain, contributing 37 publications. Their significant contribution suggests a robust interest and commitment to disseminating research on the internationalization of halal food. Elsevier follows with 16 publications, indicating a notable but comparatively lower contribution compared to Emerald.com. MDPI.com and Taylor & Francis both have notable contributions with 14 and 12 publications, respectively. These numbers indicate a moderate but meaningful presence in publishing research on halal food internationalization. Springer, journals.sagepub.com, and Wiley Online Library exhibit lower numbers of publications (9, 6, and 5 respectively) compared to the previously mentioned publishers. While their contribution is relatively fewer in terms of quantity, these

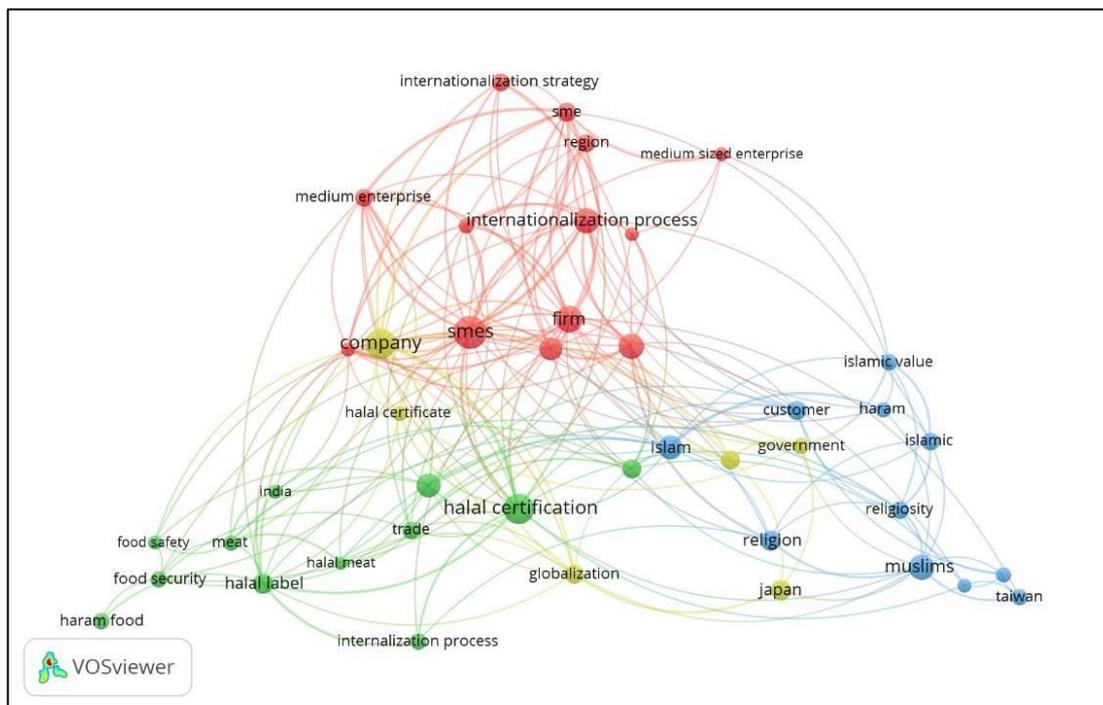
publishers still play a part in disseminating research on this subject, albeit to a lesser extent within their publishing scope.

**Table 1. Halal Food Internationalization Topic Publishers**

| Publisher            | Total publication |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| emerald.com          | 37                |
| Elsevier             | 16                |
| mdpi.com             | 14                |
| Taylor & Francis     | 12                |
| Springer             | 9                 |
| journals.sagepub.com | 6                 |
| Wiley Online Library | 5                 |

Source: Author

### Cluster Analysis



**Figure 2. Halal Food Internationalization Cluster**

Source: Author

***Cluster 1: Halal certification, trade, internalization process, halal meat, halal label, meat, food safety, food security, haram food, india***

Halal certification holds significant importance within the halal food industry, as it guarantees adherence to Islamic law. This issue becomes particularly critical during the internationalization of the halal food sector, as it is essential to provide Muslim consumers worldwide with the assurance that the products they are consuming are indeed halal. Across the globe, there exist multiple halal certification bodies, each with its distinct standards and procedures. This variance can pose a significant challenge for companies aiming to market halal food products in different countries. Such companies must take the necessary steps to ensure that their products have received halal certification from reputable institutions in the respective destination countries (Abdul et al., 2013; Asnawi et al., 2018; Othman et al., 2016; Rios et al., 2014; Shirin Asa, 2019).

In addition to halal certification, the halal food industry encounters another challenge when expanding its market, which is the presence of cultural differences and regulations unique to each country. This can pose a significant barrier when it comes to promoting halal food products in non-Muslim countries. A prime illustration of the challenges faced by the halal food industry lies in the varying definitions of halal across different nations. In certain countries, products containing pork gelatin are deemed halal, whereas in others, they are labeled as haram. Such discrepancies can lead to confusion among Muslim consumers and serve as a hindrance in the marketing of halal food products (Cahyawati et al., 2021; Khasanah et al., 2021; Mashuri, 2020; Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018).

Another challenge confronting the halal food industry is the disparity in food regulations among various countries. In certain nations, there exist regulations that dictate the permissible use of specific ingredients in food products. This poses a formidable obstacle for companies looking to introduce halal food products into these regions. (Ab Rashid & Bojei, 2019; Prabowo et al., 2015; Suci et al., 2020).

The challenge of distinguishing between halal and haram products in India is another crucial factor to consider when expanding the market. India is a diverse country with various religions and belief systems, including Islam. However, discrepancies exist in the definition of halal among these different religions and belief systems. This can lead to confusion among Muslim consumers and serve as an obstacle in the marketing of halal food products in India. (Iranmanesh et al., 2019; A. Khan et al., 2020; M. I. Khan et al., 2018; S. Khan et al., 2019, 2020; Prayag, 2020).

***Cluster 2: Internationalization process, SMES, Firm, Medium sized enterprise, Region, Internationalization strategy, Medium enterprise***

The halal food industry stands as one of the world's fastest-growing sectors, primarily driven by the rising global Muslim consumer population. Within this thriving industry, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a pivotal role as significant producers of halal food products. Nonetheless, SMEs face distinct challenges when it comes to internationalization. These challenges encompass

resource constraints, limited experience, and disparities in both cultural practices and regulatory frameworks (Giyanti et al., 2021; Katuk et al., 2020).

Hence, SMEs must adopt an appropriate internationalization strategy to remain competitive in the global market. Several internationalization strategies are employed by SMEs in the halal food industry, including direct export, indirect export, direct investment, joint ventures, and franchising (Adekunle & Filson, 2020; M. Y. Ali et al., 2020; Aniqoh & Hanastiana, 2020b; Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018).

Direct export stands as the most prevalent internationalization strategy employed by SMEs. This approach involves exporting products directly to international markets without intermediaries. In contrast, indirect export is an internationalization strategy executed with the assistance of intermediaries, such as distributors or agents. This strategy can be beneficial for SMEs in terms of cost and time savings when expanding their market presence (Dubé et al., 2016; Henderson, 2016a; Nirwandar, 2020; Randeree, 2019).

Direct investment represents an internationalization strategy accomplished through the establishment of subsidiaries or branches in the target country. This approach grants SMEs enhanced control over their international market operations. On the other hand, a joint venture is an internationalization strategy conducted in partnership with local companies in the destination country. This strategy allows SMEs to harness the knowledge and expertise of their partner firms. Franchising, as an internationalization strategy, involves granting rights to other companies in the destination country to utilize SME brands and products.

This strategy facilitates rapid and efficient market expansion for SMEs. (M. H. Ali et al., 2017; M. H. Ali & Suleiman, 2018; Samori & Rahman, 2013). Bibliometric analysis also demonstrates that the internationalization strategies adopted by SMEs can impact their regional-level growth. SMEs that implement appropriate internationalization strategies have the potential to flourish and prosper in the global market.

### ***Cluster 3: Company, Halal certificate, Government, Globalization, Japan***

Governments play a crucial role in fostering the growth of the halal food industry, both domestically and internationally. A noteworthy instance is the Japanese government, which has extended substantial support to the halal food industry. This support encompasses granting halal certification to Japanese companies, advocating for Japanese halal food products in the international arena, and facilitating halal education and training for Japanese firms (Hanafiah & Hamdan, 2020; Mehrshad & Hosseini, 2019; Mostafa, 2020; Muflih & Juliana, 2020).

Halal certification holds significant importance within the halal food industry, as it guarantees compliance with Islamic law. Governments should collaborate with halal certification bodies in different countries to ensure that halal food products adhere to international standards. Additionally, governments can actively promote their nation's halal food products in the global market through a range of activities, including food exhibitions, seminars, and online marketing promotions (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Henderson, 2016b; Samori et al., 2016; Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018).

Furthermore, state governments can take initiatives, such as offering education and training programs on halal practices for companies. These educational efforts are intended to enhance the comprehension of halal standards among the country's businesses and assist them in meeting these requirements when operating in the

international market. Government support plays a pivotal role in fostering the expansion of a nation's halal food industry on the global stage. The worldwide halal food industry has experienced rapid growth in recent years and is anticipated to sustain this growth in the future (M. H. Ali et al., 2021; Azmi et al., 2019; Macau et al., 2016; Wibowo et al., 2020).

#### **Cluster 4: Islam, Customer, Haram, Islamic value, Islamic, Religiosity, Religion, Muslims, Taiwan**

Taiwan is home to a relatively sizable Muslim community, comprising approximately 500,000 people. This positions Taiwan as a promising market for the halal food industry. The demand for halal products in Taiwan is notably influenced by Islamic values and the religious commitment of consumers. In Taiwan, Muslim customers tend to prefer halal products, viewing them as safer and healthier choices (Han et al., 2019; Jeaheng et al., 2019, 2020; Michopoulou & Jauniškis, 2020; Tieman, 2015).

The rising awareness regarding the significance of halal food stands as a prominent factor propelling the demand for halal products. Muslim consumers across diverse countries are progressively recognizing the importance of consuming halal food in accordance with Islamic principles. Furthermore, the growing population of Muslim consumers is another significant driver behind the demand for halal products. This trend is anticipated to persist and even increase in the upcoming years. (Billah et al., 2020; Hassan & Pandey, 2020; S. Khan et al., 2019; Prabowo et al., 2015; Siah et al., 2017; Town, 2020).

The expanding availability of halal products is yet another driving force behind the increased demand for these items. Presently, there is a growing abundance of halal products accessible in numerous countries, encompassing both domestic and imported offerings. Moreover, bibliometric analysis indicates that the influence of Islamic values and the level of religiosity among consumers varies when it comes to the demand for halal products. More devout Muslim consumers tend to adhere more rigorously to halal requirements when selecting food products (Abidin & Perdana, 2020; Asnawi et al., 2018; Rejeb et al., 2021; Shirin Asa, 2019).

## **Conclusion and Implication**

The analysis of the trend in publications regarding the internationalization of halal food from 2018 to 2023 unveils a dynamic landscape of scholarly engagement and interest in this niche field. Further exploration into the specific themes, geographic concentrations, and qualitative impact of these publications would enrich our comprehension of this evolving research domain. Overall, the consistent rise and subsequent stabilization in the number of publications on the internationalization of halal food from 2018 to 2023 highlight the sustained scholarly interest and ongoing relevance of this topic within academia and potentially the broader industry.

Supporting the previous result, the examination of publication distribution across prominent publishers in the realm of halal food internationalization offers valuable insights into the academic landscape and the significance of this subject across various publishing platforms. The result showed diverse distribution of publications across various publishers illustrating the multifaceted interest and engagement of different publishing platforms in advancing scholarly discourse on the

internationalization of halal food. Further exploration into the quality, impact, and geographic reach of publications within these platforms could offer deeper insights into the influence and reach of research on this subject matter.

Lastly, the visualization of networking clusters in halal food internationalization literature through VOSviewer identifies distinct thematic clusters that underpin the complexities and dynamics of this field. Cluster 1 highlights the critical role of halal certification in ensuring adherence to Islamic law in food products. Cluster 2 focuses on the significant role of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the halal food industry and their challenges in internationalization. Cluster 3 emphasizes the pivotal role of governments in supporting the halal food industry. Cluster 4 delves into the influence of Islamic values, religiosity, and consumer preferences in markets such as Taiwan. It showcases the growing demand for halal products driven by rising consumer awareness, the expanding availability of halal items, and the adherence to Islamic principles among consumers.

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