

## **Halal Food to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030**

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### **Abstract**

Globally, the Muslim population is estimated to exceed 1.9 billion people (Bux et al., 2022), and their spending on food and beverages is projected to surge by 6.3% to reach a staggering \$2.0 trillion by 2024 (SGIEP, 2020). As a result, the demand for halal products, particularly in the food sector, is expected to experience rapid growth. In light of this burgeoning market, there arises an urgent need to enhance the reliability and traceability of halal products on a global scale. To address this issue, the current research endeavors to evaluate the sustainability of Halal foods through an online questionnaire targeting a sample of 100 Moroccan consumers. The findings divulge a striking level of interest among Moroccan consumers, with a substantial 95% expressing a strong preference for Halal-certified food products. Even more noteworthy is the fact that 75% of respondents were willing to make certain sacrifices to continue consuming Halal labeled products, even if it entails paying a premium for such items. At the end of this study, several suggestions emerge for enhancing the Halal market in Morocco, taking into account the specific needs and preferences of Moroccan consumers.

**Keywords:** Halal food label, Islamic Moroccan market, SDGs 2030.

## **Introduction**

Halal food, with its roots in Islamic dietary laws, holds great significance for both Muslims and non-Muslims around the world. It encompasses not only a specific set of permissible ingredients but also ethical practices and preparation methods. While halal food is primarily observed by Muslims as a religious obligation, its importance extends beyond religious boundaries, promoting inclusivity, cultural understanding, and ethical consumption. Halal, derived from the Arabic word meaning "permissible," refers to food and beverages that adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Quran, the holy book of Islam. Muslims consider consuming halal food as an essential aspect of their faith, reflecting their obedience to Allah's commands. The dietary laws in Islam prohibit the consumption of pork, alcohol, blood, and certain types of meat that have not been prepared through the prescribed methods of slaughter (Kodirov et al., 2020). Tepavčević et al. (2021) state that specific criteria must be satisfied for certain foods to bear the 'halal' label. Firstly, halal foods should not contain any components or additives derived from animals or ingredients that are prohibited, such as alcoholic beverages. Halal products commonly originate from animals designated as halal, including goats, sheep, cows, and seafood. Furthermore, the slaughtering process for these animals must strictly adhere to prescribed guidelines. Another crucial requirement is that the production, handling, and storage of halal products should be carried out using tools, equipment, and utensils that are cleansed in accordance with Islamic law. Thus, Halal food not only nourishes the body but also nourishes the soul, as Muslims believe that consuming halal sustenance purifies and strengthens their spiritual connection with Allah (Hanafiah and Hamdan, 2020).

Conforming to Sthapit et al (2021) many non-Muslim destinations have integrated halal food culture and cuisine into their tourism products in order to attract a wider market segment of tourists and differentiate themselves from their competitors, for example Thailand (thaifoodhalal<sup>1</sup>), Japan (halalgourmet<sup>2</sup>) and South Korea (havehalalwilltravel<sup>3</sup>). Furthermore, halal-themed events of local culinary traditions, lifestyles and heritage associated with Muslims attract Muslim and non-Muslim tourists. Some studies show that other religions such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians (non-Muslims) also consume halal food due to its high concerns on health,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://thaifoodhalal.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.halalgourmet.jp/?fbclid=IwAR2YEpC7LBB3U3hn-j2wL9MgwSz9CfM-Fp9nGkPJ5oIaNzaE4CbcMLPgZh0>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.havehalalwilltravel.com/halal-food-guide-seoul-south-korea>

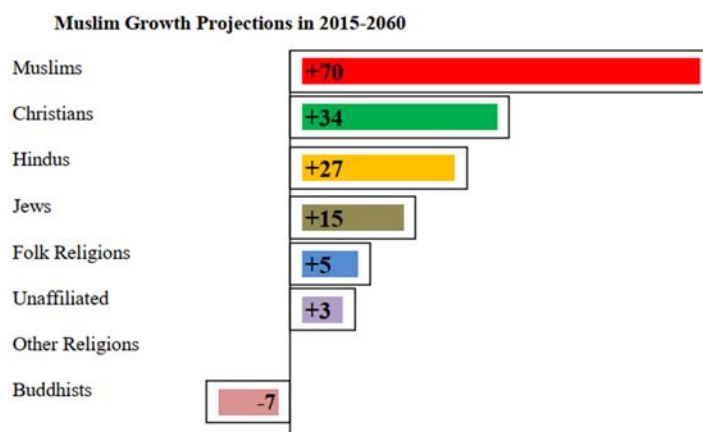
environmental and quality issues associated with human welfare, sustainability and social justice (Sthapit et al., 2021; Olya and Al-Ansi, 2018; Haque et al., 2015 and Abd-Latif et al., 2014). Thus, Non-Muslim tourists are increasingly drawn to halal food for a variety of reasons. They seek new culinary experiences and appreciate the diverse flavors and cooking techniques that halal cuisine offers. In fact, Halal food's focus on cleanliness, ethical sourcing, and animal welfare resonates with those who prioritize health and ethical consumption. Moreover, the rigorous guidelines and certification processes guarantee food safety and quality assurance (Yousaf and Xiucheng, 2018). In fact, the growing availability of halal food options enhances its attractiveness to non-Muslim tourists, providing them with a convenient and enjoyable choice while traveling (Rahman et al., 2021). Providing Halal certified products serves a dual purpose. For Muslims, it signifies that the product is permissible, acceptable, and adheres to Islamic laws, ensuring alignment with their cultural and religious beliefs. On the other hand, for non-Muslims, the Halal certification indicates adherence to ethical values of sustainability (Salaheldeen et al., 2021). Despite being perceived as a Muslim country where halal products are expected to be labeled as such by default, Morocco has yet to fully tap into the potential of the halal market, particularly in the food industry (Arifi, 2021). In this regard, Morocco should strive to embrace this trend and foster a sustainable and innovative market by utilizing the halal label. This will not only contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda but also position Morocco as a global advocate for sustainable and halal food products. Hence, the aim of this study is to address the gaps in the existing literature regarding Halal food certification in Morocco. The research question guiding our study is as follows: **"How can the labeling of Halal food contribute to the sustainable development objectives of the 2030 Agenda in Morocco?"** Our research is divided into three sections. Firstly, we will conduct a literature review to examine the key concepts related to the Islamic market, sustainable development goals, Halal food, and the current state of the Halal market in Morocco. This will provide a solid theoretical foundation for our study. Subsequently, we will outline our research methodology, which involves a quantitative survey of 100 Moroccan consumers to gain insights into their perceptions of sustainable and Halal-certified food products. Finally, we will conclude our study by presenting recommendations aimed at enhancing the sustainable Halal food market in Morocco.

**Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

**The Islamic Economy in The World**

Based on the data provided by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, it is projected that the global Muslim population will rise from 1.7 billion in 2014 to 2.2 billion by 2030, representing a growth rate of 29.4%. This growth is attributed to an annual increase of 1.5% among Muslims compared to 0.7% among non-Muslims. This trend is further supported by Rahman et al.'s (2021) findings, as illustrated in the figure below, demonstrating the population growth of individuals adhering to various religious beliefs. Specifically, Muslims are recognized as the fastest-growing population worldwide between 2015 and 2060.

**Figure 1:** Evolution of the number of believers in the world according to their religions (Rahman et al. 2021).



Indeed, the global growth of the Muslim population is underpinned by several significant factors. These include the robust expansion and prosperity of Muslim communities, a growing commitment to ethical values, sustained involvement of multinational corporations and global investors, and the implementation of national strategies focusing on halal products and associated opportunities. These efforts are observed not only in Muslim nations but also in non-Muslim countries, as illustrated in the table provided.

**Table1:** Countries best placed to respond to global Halal market trends (SGIEP,2020)

<b>Top 10 ISLAMIC FINANCE</b>	<b>Top 10 HALAL FOODS</b>	<b>Top 10 MUSLIM-FRIENDLY TRAVEL</b>
1. Malaysia 2. Bahrain 3. UAE 4. Saudi Arabia 5. Indonesia 6. Jordan 7. Oman 8. Kuwait 9. Pakistan 10. Qatar	1. UAE 2. Malaysia 3. Brazil 4. Australia 5. Sudan 6. Pakistan 7. Oman 8. Brunei 9. Turkey 10. Iran	1. Malaysia 2. UAE 3. Turkey 4. Indonesia 5. Maldives 6. Tunisia 7. Azerbaijan 8. Jordan 9. Albania 10. Thailand
<b>Top 10 MODEST FASHION</b>	<b>Top 10 MEDIA &amp; RECREATION</b>	<b>Top 10 PHARMA &amp; COSMETICS</b>
1. UAE 2. Turkey 3. Indonesia 4. Malaysia 5. Singapore 6. Italy 7. Bangladesh	1. UAE 2. Malaysia 3. Qatar 4. Lebanon 5. Bahrain 6. Brunei 7. Singapore	1. UAE 2. Malaysia 3. Jordan 4. Singapore 5. Egypt 6. Iran 7. Bahrain

8. Morocco	8. UK	8. Brunei
9. India	9. Kuwait	9. Turkey
10. Sri Lanka	10. Azerbaijan	10. Azerbaijan

The provided table highlights the prominent position of Malaysia as a global hub for halal products and services, leading the worldwide Islamic economic indicator. Following closely are the Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Indonesia and Turkey have witnessed notable advancements in their overall rankings, attributed to their strategic initiatives and efforts in the Islamic economy. It's worth noting that while consumers in the Islamic economy are predominantly Muslims, there is also participation from individuals outside the Islamic faith who share similar values. These consumers engage in various practices influenced by Islamic values, such as consuming halal (permissible) food, utilizing Islamic financing, adhering to modest clothing, participating in family tourism, and availing services with considerations for gender interactions and religious practices. The demand extends beyond consumer practices to include commercial activities seeking Islamic corporate finance, investment, and insurance services. Collectively, Islamic economics generates value for both consumers and economies involved while also holding significant potential to contribute to global welfare through its underlying socially conscious ethos(SGIEP ,2020) <sup>4</sup>.

### **The Islamic Economy and the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda**

In response to the pressing ecological and social challenges facing our world, the United Nations has formulated a comprehensive plan known as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This global initiative aims to promote peace, prosperity, and the well-being of nature and society, encompassing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that all countries are encouraged to achieve (refer to table2). Increasingly, sustainability has become a critical consideration in both business practices and consumer decision-making. Battour et al. (2022), in their study on Halal tourism, highlight how the United Nations and media have shed light on the negative environmental impacts of tourism, particularly in relation to climate change and cultural preservation. Plastic waste and carbon

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<sup>4</sup> State of the Global Islamic Economy Report (2020)

footprint have emerged as significant ecological concerns, alongside the need to prioritize the well-being of all stakeholders involved in the tourism value chain. Additionally, future travelers, particularly the younger generation, place value on destinations and businesses that offer high-quality services while demonstrating a commitment to environmental and cultural preservation. They are willing to invest more in travel experiences that prioritize the environment and respect local culture (Battour et al., 2022).

**Table 2:** The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations Agenda 2030)

<b>1. No Poverty</b>	<b>2. Zero Hunger</b>	<b>3. Good Health and well-being</b>	<b>4. Quality Education</b>
<b>5. Gender Equality</b>	<b>6. Clean Water and sanitation</b>	<b>7. Affordable and clean energy</b>	<b>8. Decent Work and Economic growth</b>
<b>9. Industry, Innovation, and infrastructure</b>	<b>10. Reduced Inequalities</b>	<b>11. Sustainable cities and communities</b>	<b>12. Responsible consumption and production</b>
<b>13. Climate action</b>	<b>14. Life below water</b>	<b>15. Life and Land</b>	<b>16. Peace, justice and strong institutions</b>
<b>17. Partnerships for the Goals</b>			

As highlighted by Dr. Umar Chapra, a prominent Islamic economist, socio-economic justice and the welfare of all beings are fundamental components of the maqasid al-Shariah, which are the objectives of Islamic law (Chapra, 1993). In this context, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a valuable framework for prioritizing the benefits endorsed by Islamic economics. The SDGs align with

various maqasid al-Shariah and reflect the essential needs of the global community (M. Abdullah, 2018). The table below illustrates the mapping of SDGs to the sectors of the Islamic/Halal economy (Reuters & Standard, 2018).

**Table 3:** Mapping of SDG and other Goals for Islamic Economy Categories (Reuters & Standard, 2018).

<b>Mapping of SDG and other Goals for Islamic Economy Categories</b>	
<p><b>Halal Products</b> (Halal food, pharmaceuticals, and cosmetics ingredients)</p>	<p><b>8 priority SDG Goals:</b> #2 No Hunger, # Good Health, #5 Gender Equality, #8 Good Jobs &amp; Economic Growth, #12 Responsible Consumption, #13 Climate Action, # 14 Life Below Water, #15 Life on Land.</p>
<p><b>Islamic Finance</b></p>	<p><b>11 priority SDG Goals:</b> #1 No Poverty (Microfinance), #2 No Hunger, #3 Good Health, #4 Quality Education, #5 Gender Equality, #7 Clean Energy, #8 Good Jobs &amp; Economic Growth, #9 Innovation &amp; Infrastructure, #10 Reduced Inequality, #12 Responsible Consumption, #13 Climate Action</p>
<p><b>Halal Lifestyle</b> (Travel, modest fashion, media/recreation)</p>	<p><b>7 SDG Goals:</b> #5 Gender Equality, #8 Good Jobs &amp; Economic Growth, #9 Innovation &amp; Infrastructure, #10 Reduce Inequalities, #11 Sustainable Cities, #12 Responsible Consumption, #13 Climate Action.</p>

Furthermore, the Islamic/Halal economy has witnessed growing interest from customers and entrepreneurs, particularly among business owners and individuals whose identities revolve around Islam. Their increasing participation in Islamic businesses serves as a source of religious and social empowerment (Boubekeur, 2016) and has given rise to a new entrepreneurial trend known as "Halal Entrepreneurship." As defined by Battour et al. (2022), Halal entrepreneurship involves an entrepreneurial process that seeks to exploit innovative opportunities, aiming to generate sustainable economic returns while fostering a fair and just society (Khalek, 2018). Scholars have referred to this concept as "halal entrepreneurship" (Ramadani et al., 2015) or "halal-minded entrepreneurship" (Soltanian et al., 2016). The table below highlights various opportunities that Halal entrepreneurs can target to effectively meet the demands of this emerging market.

**Table 4:** Opportunities for Halal entrepreneurs (Battour et al., 2022)

<b>Gen Alpha as a potential customer</b>	<b>Digital platform Era</b>	<b>Blockchain-based Cryptocurrency</b>	<b>Three-dimensional printing</b>
<p>*Provide personalized edutainment experiences at different stages of the journey.</p> <p>*Offer exclusive family discounts and tailored packages.</p> <p>*Create travel discovery books and adventure-packed travel packages specifically</p>	<p>*Create a novel digital platform or application that delivers customized products and services catering to the needs of Muslim travelers.</p> <p>*Maximize the potential of mobile messaging optimization to enhance user engagement.</p> <p>*Utilize the real-time interaction capabilities of social media to effectively</p>	<p>*Innovate cryptocurrency-powered payment solutions tailored to the needs of Muslim travelers.</p> <p>*Foster the advancement of financial technology (fintech) to facilitate secure and efficient</p>	<p>*Use 3D printing to manufacture artificial food (food models) and personalized souvenirs.</p>

<p>designed to appeal to Gen Alpha.</p>	<p>connect with young Muslims.</p> <p>*Develop captivating content that resonates with digital natives.</p> <p>*Establish a digital platform dedicated to Umrah and Hajj, offering personalized and interactive content that focuses on the customs, rituals, and significant locations of Umrah<sup>5</sup>.</p> <p>*Enable suppliers and pilgrims to share their Umrah experiences using high-speed internet connections.</p> <p>*Create a Halal booking platform that specifically caters to the needs of Muslim travelers.</p>	<p>digital transactions.</p> <p>*Introduce e-wallets and mobile payment services to enhance convenience and accessibility for users.</p>	
<p><b>Sustainable Products and services</b></p>	<p><b>Muslim female-friendly services</b></p>	<p><b>Culinary tourism</b></p>	
<p>* Exploit sustainable tourism as an innovative opportunity.</p>	<p>*Introduce new products and services to meet the</p>	<p>*Exploit innovative</p>	

<sup>5</sup> This can be achieved through features like 360-degree live videos and augmented tours accessible via smartphones.

<p>*Establish new ventures that offer sustainable Halal tourism.</p>	<p>unique needs of Muslim women travelers.</p>	<p>opportunities in the food and beverage sector by developing halal culinary products and services.</p>	
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**Halal Food as A Sub-Sector of the Islamic Economy**

In Islam, the origin of things (rule) is permissibility (Puspa and Hyangsewu, 2021). This means that as long as there is no evidence or any criterion that specifies it to be haram, then it is allowed. Allah says in the Quran, *“O believers! Eat from the good things We have provided for you.”* (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:172). In this verse, Allah s.w.t. did not specify the foods that are halal, as there are simply too many. There are other similar verses that command us to eat only the halal and the good, without specifying the food itself. On the other hand, what is haram is clearly stated and the commandment to avoid it is clear as well. For instance, pork is haram and cannot be consumed by Muslims, as stated in the Quran, *“He has only forbidden you (to eat) dead animals, blood, pig’s meat, and what is slaughtered in the name of any other than Allah. But if someone is compelled by necessity—neither driven by desire nor exceeding immediate need—they will not be sinful. Verily, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”* (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:173). It is also interesting to note that the second half of the verse above mentions, *“But if someone is compelled by necessity—neither driven by desire nor exceeding immediate need—they will not be sinful. Verily, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”* Generally, what this means is that if a Muslim finds himself in a dire situation and needs food to avoid death, and the only food that is immediately available to him is pork, he is allowed to consume it, without being excessive and only in the amount needed to save himself from death. Thus, one of the objectives of the Syariah or Islamic law is preservation of life, and this is yet another example of the practicality and adaptability of Islam: that it allows for exceptions from the original ruling in special or extreme cases. In general, within the Shariah, Muslims have the freedom to consume any food and beverage of their choice, as long as it

does not fall into the category of illicit or prohibited items. Dzakfar (2009) explained that there are two aspects to consider regarding halal substances: the substance itself and the permissible methods of obtaining it. These aspects encompass the explanation of what constitutes a halal substance, how it should be obtained through lawful means, and the appropriate processing methods. In this context, Halal certification serves as an official declaration by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) regarding a product's compliance with Islamic law. The certification is a requirement to obtain official Halal labeling on product packaging from governmental authorities (Ningsih and Nuraeni, 2019). According to Rahman et al. (2021), offering Halal certified products provides Muslim consumers with confidence that the products they consume fulfill the requirements of their religion. A Halal-certified product indicates its acceptability according to Islamic law, which necessitates three conditions to be met: cleanliness, safety, and purity (Qaradhawi, 2014). Safety, in fact, is a component of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) assessment. Furthermore, Halal certification mandates that organizations have systems in place to ensure product safety for human consumption. Both Halal and HACCP certifications also require adherence to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Good Hygiene Practices (GHP). The process of obtaining Halal certification involves three comprehensive steps with the consulting team: assessment, on-site inspection, and ultimately, Halal certification.

### **Halal Food and Sustainable Development Goals**

Kodirov et al (2020) explain, based on the Qur'an, the relationship between halal food and sustainable development, particularly in terms of food waste and human well-being, (Sustainable Development Goals 2 and 3): *The Qur'an, in the 31st verse of the 7th Sura Al-Araf, says: "Eat and drink, but do not waste, for He (Allah) does not like waste (excess)" (Qur'an, Sura Al-Araf, 7:31). This ayah has been interpreted by the great poet and thinker Saadi who states that Allah commands people to eat and drink what is a permissible, pure blessing, with which He has endowed His creations. Allah does not like people who are wasteful, for wastefulness provokes His anger and causes damage to the body and well-being.* This has also been stated by Our Prophet Muhammad ((peace and blessings of the Lord be upon him) who said: *"The worst vessel that can be filled by man is his stomach. It is enough to eat as much as is necessary to maintain strength. If this is too little, then: one third (of the stomach) - for food, one third - for drink and one third - for breathing"* (Musnad, Hadith No. 81, P.88.89). In addition, it is essential to exercise moderation and avoid excess when it comes to eating. Even halal food can

become detrimental if consumed excessively or disproportionately. For example, meat obtained from cows or sheep slaughtered according to Islamic law is permissible and serves as an important source of protein for the human body. However, it is widely recognized by medical professionals and nutritionists that consuming excessive amounts of red meat can have negative health implications, including an increased risk of various diseases such as high cholesterol and heart problems. Hence, it is not sufficient to merely consume halal food; it is equally crucial to adopt appropriate consumption practices. Muslims should also consider their social behavior and conduct. The Prophet exemplified respect for other religions and never imposed conversion to Islam on anyone. His actions were characterized by kindness and non-aggression, even extending to visiting and consuming food prepared by non-Muslims. Indeed, Muslims regularly interact with non-Muslims in various environments, including workplaces, stores, and community spaces. While Islam emphasizes adherence to a halal diet, it does not advocate for Muslims to be strict or uncompromising in enforcing their dietary restrictions. For instance, in shared areas at work, there are no restrictions against sharing a table or space with non-Muslim colleagues during meals. It is also permissible to utilize communal spaces like refrigerators without any issues. As a result, if Muslims seek respect for their own choices, it is essential to demonstrate a respectful and kind attitude. It is important to recognize that individuals from different faiths also adhere to their own dietary restrictions, whether based on religious teachings or personal preferences such as vegetarianism. Islam highlights not only devotion and practicality but also the values of respect and harmony. To put it simply, the attitude of Muslims should be as "halal" as their food (Nurfarahin,2022).

According to Puspa and Hyangsewu (2021), the Halal concept goes beyond religious obligations and observances, as it emphasizes food safety, hygiene, and overall wholesomeness. It has become the preferred standard for both Muslims and non-Muslims worldwide. Rahman et al. (2020) highlight that individuals from various faiths, such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians, also consume halal food due to its positive impact on dietary health and its focus on environmental and quality concerns. Olya and Al-Ansi (2018) further note that halal food adheres to high standards related to human welfare, sustainability, and social justice. This broader perspective highlights the significance of halal as a platform for healthy eating and its wider implications beyond religious boundaries. Hence, as noted by Bux et al. (2022), the concept of green halal production presents an opportunity to enhance the efficient use of energy, water, land, and natural resources while minimizing global environmental emissions.

Furthermore, according to Statista (2021), meat and meat derivatives were the most widely consumed food category worldwide in 2019, accounting for 52% of consumption. Milk and milk products followed at 16%, while cereals, fruits, and vegetables comprised 14% of consumption. Similar trends are expected to persist in the coming decade. In relation to this matter, Alzeer et al. (2020) assert that sustainable practices are integral to the halal food supply chain, encompassing food safety, hygiene, equality, fair trade, and animal welfare considerations from farm to fork. Furthermore, Randeree (2019) elucidates that this supply chain, from social, environmental, and economic perspectives, incorporates good manufacturing and farming practices, as well as risk analysis. Additionally, Ali et al. (2021) highlight that one of the key strengths of halal sustainability lies in the adoption of processing methods that eliminate toxic, intoxicating, and hazardous elements from halal food. Thus, Chanin (2016) proposes that implementing these practices can enhance competitive advantage through the formulation of sustainable strategies and environmental protection. Moreover, it has the potential to foster trust, enrich cultural diversity, and foster connections between countries, religions, and traditions.

### **Global Halal Food Market**

According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report (2020), the global expenditure of Muslims on food reached approximately \$1.37 trillion in 2018, experiencing a 5.1% growth from the previous year. It is projected that this spending will continue to rise at an annual rate of 6.3%, reaching \$2.0 trillion by 2024. This significant growth signifies the growing interest of investors, governments, and businesses in the Halal food sector. Responding to the evolving market demands, Halal food companies have taken various initiatives such as *enhancing Halal certification processes*. Examples include the International Halal Accreditation Forum (IHAF) based in Dubai and the International Halal Accreditation Board (IHAB) of Malaysia. Moreover, *technology and digitalization* have played a crucial role, with platforms like "Whats Halal" based in Singapore, which aims to connect the entire Halal supply chain, and Halal restaurant booking apps like Salam Planet and Halal Dining Club. Furthermore, *dedicated Halal centers* have been established to foster development in this sector, such as the \$1 billion food manufacturing and processing plant in Dubai resulting from the UAE-China partnership, the planned \$18 million Halal lifestyle district in Indonesia, and the strategic partnership between Singapore's Elite Partners Capital and the Singapore Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and

Industry (SMCCI) to develop an advanced halal production facility with an investment range of \$57-72 million. From another standpoint, the rise of Halal tourism has contributed to the expansion of the Halal food market. Muslim travelers, who constitute a significant segment of the global tourism industry, seek destinations that cater to their religious and dietary requirements. Halal food tourism has led to the development of Halal-friendly accommodations, restaurants, and food services in popular tourist destinations worldwide. Moreover, governments and businesses have recognized the potential of the Halal food market and tourism sector. Many countries have implemented initiatives to attract Muslim tourists and promote Halal-friendly services, including Halal food options. This includes the establishment of Halal certification bodies, the development of Halal industrial parks, and the promotion of Halal tourism campaigns. Overall, the Global Halal food market and tourism sector are dynamic and evolving, driven by the increasing demand for Halal products and services from both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. The industry presents opportunities for businesses to tap into a growing market, and for destinations to attract Muslim travelers seeking authentic Halal experiences.

### **Halal Market in Morocco**

Morocco is ranked 45th in terms of halal product exports, with a total export value of \$810 million to OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) countries. Among these exports, \$747 million worth of products are food items, \$48 million worth are pharmaceutical products, and \$15 million worth are cosmetic products. Despite these figures, Morocco has not fully tapped into its export potential, as noted by the Director General of the Moroccan Institute of Standardization. Currently, only 150 Moroccan companies have been certified halal by Imanor<sup>6</sup>, with a total of 500 references. These companies have focused on the halal niche, producing and marketing products such as meat, seafood, canned sardines, dairy products, spices, oils, as well as cosmetics and personal hygiene items. They see this sector as an opportunity to not only become producers but also expand their reach as marketing companies. In recognition of the growing importance of the halal sector, Morocco has shown commitment since 2012 by establishing the Moroccan Halal Label (LHM) under the supervision of the standards institute IMANOR. The LHM aims to provide necessary guarantees to Moroccan companies, ensuring consumer protection, trust, and long-term engagement with products carrying the

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<sup>6</sup> Moroccan Institute of Standardization (Institut marocain de normalization)

label (Arifi, 2021). As one of the Muslim countries showing interest in the halal sector, Morocco seeks to capitalize on this growing market and secure its place as a reliable source of halal products for consumers worldwide.

**Table 5:** Moroccan companies certified Halal (Challenge magazine, 2016)

<b>Appellation</b>	<b>Products</b>	<b>Experience /strategy</b>
<b>Agro-Food Industry</b>	Halal baby food: cereals, vegetable snacks, meat and fish, fruit compotes, fruit drinks and milk powder	- The world's leading manufacturer of Halal baby food. -Awarded at several trade fairs. -Exports to more than 25 countries (Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia).
<b>Cartier Saada</b>	Canned fruit and vegetables	-Halal certification enables the company to export to 26 countries
<b>BANCHEREAU Morocco (Dindy)</b>	Charcuterie “Dindy”	-The first national brand in the sector to obtain the Halal label in order to support its export strategy
<b>SICOPA (Alia brands)</b>	Olives, capers and vegetables	-Its agricultural products certified Halal supply the US market, which absorbs 70% of its foreign sales. 10.7% go to France, 11% to Europe, 4.7% to Australia and 3.6% to the rest of the world.
<b>Frulact</b>	Fruits processing to serve the dairy customers	-Halal certification is the key to target and export to Middle East and Africa -Achieved a turnover of 17 million euros in 2013, 20 million euros (+17%) in 2014 and forecasts some 26 million euros (+30%) in 2015.

<p><b>Nestlé Morocco</b></p>	<p>Dietary and Children's Foods: milk and dairy products; milk powders; medical milk and baby milk; Frozen, vacuum-packed and dehydrated foods</p>	<p>- Among the first operators to be labelled according to the Moroccan Halal standard.</p> <p>-100% of its products labeled Halal, Nestlé aims to conquer both Muslim markets in North African and Europe (France).</p>
<p><b>Lesieur Cristal</b></p>	<p>Olive and vegetable oils</p>	<p>-Labeled of Moroccan standard NM 08.0.800: "Halal food - Requirements." The company aims to win new export markets (Muslims and non-Muslim)</p> <p>-Exports to Europe, North America, Africa, and the Middle East.</p>
<p><b>Cosumar</b></p>	<p>Sugar extraction from beet and raw sugar refining</p>	<p>-Labeled of Moroccan Halal standard</p> <p>- Singaporean Wilmar, has announced its intention to turn the Moroccan company into an export platform, serving Morocco, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southern Europe</p>
<p><b>Citruma</b></p>	<p>Fruit juice producer</p>	<p>-Adopts the NL 08.0.800 standard to consolidate its status as a leader on the local and extern market</p> <p>-Actually, presents in twenty African countries, as well as on the Russian market</p>
<p><b>Foodipex</b></p>	<p>Supplier of sauces to McDonald's restaurants in Morocco</p>	<p>-Obtained the confidence of the Moroccan Institute of Standardization (IMANOR)<sup>7</sup></p> <p>-Is the 5th company to obtain the Moroccan Halal Label.</p>

<sup>7</sup> For a total respect of the criteria of quality, hygiene, and the required Islamic standards.

<p><b>Unilever Maghreb</b> <b>(Unilever Morocco)</b></p>	<p>Bouillons, seasoning cubes and Harira soup</p>	<p>-Certified as Halal, Unilever Morocco comprises Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania,</p>
<p><b>OIL AROMS</b></p>	<p>Cosmetics, cosmetics oils</p>	<p>-Adopts Moroccan Halal standard, the company conquers the market by respecting the hygiene and sanitary standards of manufacture and adding the Halal criterion.  -Exports to all five continents (14 countries including France, the USA, Japan and Qatar) and has over 12 years of experience in export logistics.</p>
<p><b>Jerraflore</b></p>	<p>Distributor of cosmetic products</p>	<p>-Based on Moroccan Halal standard and on the Standardization and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC), the company opens to several markets in Middle East and Asia.</p>
<p><b>TISSIR PORT / Copelit / Damsa</b></p>	<p>Frozen fish, fish meal and fish oil</p>	<p>-Certified with Halal label for frozen fish as a commercial and hygienic guarantee.</p>
<p><b>JBS Amparo</b></p>	<p>Poultry slaughtering and cutting in Brazil, and providing it to MacDonal d s restaurants in Morocco</p>	<p>-Certified by Moroccan Institute of Standardization as Halal because slaughtering process complies Islam rituals</p>
<p><b>Meat delicacies KOUTOUBIA HOLDING</b></p>	<p>Halal meat</p>	<p>- Pioneer and Moroccan leader in the processing of halal meat.  -Certified by Moroccan Institute of Standardization (IMANOR), NM 08.0.800 standard and by JAKIM (Malaysia)</p>

		-Conquers the countries of the Middle East, Turkey and certain African countries, and will soon begin its conquest of Europe
<b>The Foie Gras House</b>	The leading producer and distributor of goose liver Arab world	- Decided to conform its production to the Moroccan standard NM 08.0.800, relating to the Islamic rules on Halal food due to the strong demand from Muslim countries
<b>Morocco Buns Industries</b>	Bread (bakery)	-Awarded by Moroccan Institute of Standardization -First industrial bakery to obtain Halal Label in Morocco which positively meets the expectations of McDonalds in Morocco. - Obtaining HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) certification.
<b>HERBEX MOROCCO</b>	Green teas assortment as well as medicinal and aromatic infusions.	-Certified organic product by the ONSSA <sup>8</sup> . - Its objective is to conquer the national and international market through the Moroccan Halal standard.

**Moroccans' Perception of Sustainable Halal Food: A Quantitative Study.**

**Methods**

Our research involved collecting quantitative data from Moroccan Muslims residing in different cities throughout Morocco. To ensure a wide and diverse sample, we employed an online survey administered through Google Forms. We strategically shared the survey link in various Facebook and LinkedIn groups that focused on discussions related to food and labeled products in Morocco. We also reached out to young Moroccan students and professionals through platforms like WhatsApp and

<sup>8</sup> (National Food Safety Office) ((Office national de sécurité sanitaire des produits alimentaires)

Facebook, targeting groups where they were likely to engage in conversations related to our research topic. Implementing an online survey proved to be highly advantageous. Firstly, it allowed us to efficiently collect responses from a larger pool of participants, saving time and effort compared to traditional methods such as face-to-face interviews or paper surveys. Additionally, the use of online platforms significantly reduced financial costs, as there was no need for printing or postage expenses. Furthermore, the online approach aligned with the current health protocols, as it enabled us to maintain social distancing measures and prioritize the well-being of both the researchers and the respondents. By leveraging digital tools, we ensured the safety and convenience of everyone involved in the study. Throughout the data collection process, we received a total of 100 responses. This sample size provided us with sufficient data to conduct a comprehensive analysis and draw meaningful conclusions. In the subsequent sections of our study, we will delve into a detailed description of the respondents' characteristics and provide a thorough discussion of the obtained results, shedding light on the insights and implications derived from the survey data.

**Results**

**Table 6:** Profile of the respondents

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Modalities</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	• Male	37%
	• Female	63%
<i>Age</i>	• Under 20 years	5%
	• Between 20 and 30 years old	71%
	• Between 30 and 40 years old	13%
	• Between 40 and 50 years old	8%
	• Between 50 and 60	2%
	• Over 60 years old	1%
<i>Level of study</i>	• Primary school	2%
	• Secondary school	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High school</li> <li>• University</li> <li>• Postgraduate</li> </ul>	10%	20%	38%	12%
<b>Marital status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single</li> <li>• Married</li> <li>• Divorced</li> <li>• Widowed</li> </ul>	17%	81%	1%	1%
<b>Socio-professional category</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student</li> <li>• Employee/civil servant</li> <li>• Liberal professions</li> <li>• Retired</li> <li>• Unemployed</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	43%	32%	8%	11%
		5 %	1%		
<b>Region/city of residence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agadir</li> <li>• Marrakech</li> <li>• Essaouira</li> <li>• Casablanca</li> <li>• Rabat</li> <li>• Tangier</li> </ul>	40%	19%	8%	15%
		10%	8%		
<b>Environmental practices</b>	Membership of an environmental organization	Yes	8.2%		
		No	91.8%		
		Yes	97%		

	Preservation of the environment and nature	No	3%
	Consumption of ecological and green products	Yes	33%
		No	67%

**Perception of Halal-Labelled Food Products**

***Knowledge of Moroccan Halal label***

Based on the findings of our study, a significant majority of respondents (80%) indicated that they possess a high level of knowledge and awareness regarding the Moroccan Halal label. This suggests that a large portion of the Moroccan Muslim population is well-informed about the concept and its implications. Conversely, a smaller percentage of participants (15%) reported having some familiarity with Halal labeling, but expressed a lack of sufficient information about its specifics. This group acknowledges the existence of Halal labeling but feels the need for further clarification and understanding. Interestingly, a minority of respondents (5%) stated that they had never come across the Moroccan Halal label before and were completely unaware of its meaning and significance. This subgroup revealed a complete lack of knowledge about the concept and its implementation in the Moroccan context. These detailed results provide valuable insights into the varying levels of awareness and understanding among the Moroccan Muslim population regarding the Moroccan Halal label. The majority of respondents display a strong awareness, a significant portion recognizes the label but lacks in-depth knowledge, and a small percentage remains entirely unfamiliar with the concept.

***Confidence in Halal-labelled products***

For Among the respondents who possess knowledge about Halal products, an overwhelming majority (95%) express a high level of trust in products labeled as Halal. This indicates that the Halal certification holds significant credibility and influence among this segment of the Moroccan Muslim population. On the other hand, a small minority (5%) exhibit a lack of interest in the Halal certificate,

viewing it as a mere marketing strategy employed by companies to promote their products. They argue that, in a predominantly Muslim country like Morocco, it should be obligatory for companies to adhere to religious criteria without the need for a separate certification. This perspective reflects a skepticism towards the value and necessity of the Halal label among this specific group of respondents.

Conversely, those who place their trust in Halal certified products provide compelling reasons for their confidence. They emphasize that the Halal label instills a sense of safety and security, serving as a guarantee of the quality and adherence to religious requirements in the products they consume. Moreover, they emphasize that a product cannot bear the Halal mark unless it meets strict standards of hygiene, religious compliance, and durability. This perspective reflects a deep trust in the Moroccan standardization institutes responsible for ensuring the integrity of the Halal certification process. These detailed findings shed light on the varying attitudes and beliefs among respondents regarding Halal certified products. While the majority views the certification as a trustworthy indication of quality and religious compliance, a minority holds a more skeptical view, questioning the necessity and authenticity of the Halal label. These insights highlight the importance of continued education and awareness to address misconceptions and reinforce the value and significance of the Halal certification in promoting consumer confidence and satisfaction

### ***Consumption of Halal labelled products***

Among the respondents who express interest in Halal labels and have previously tried Halal-certified products, a significant majority emphasize the utmost importance of a product being Halal-labeled before they consume it. To them, the Halal label represents a sense of belonging that they take pride in, and they hold companies with Halal certification in high regard. As a result, they exhibit strong brand loyalty towards these companies and their products. In addition to the sense of belonging associated with the Halal label, respondents also highlight the peace of mind they experience when purchasing and consuming products with a Halal certificate. They perceive such products as safe and beneficial for their health. This perception further solidifies their trust in the Halal certification process and the quality standards it represents. In our survey, we also sought to determine whether our sample would be willing to pay a higher price for Halal-certified products. The majority of respondents (75%) expressed their willingness to make certain sacrifices, including paying a premium, in order to continue using Halal-labelled products. This demonstrates their commitment to maintaining their consumption

of Halal products. The remaining 25% also expressed their agreement with paying more for Halal products, but they emphasized the importance of the additional cost being reasonable and justifiable. These detailed findings reveal the deep-rooted significance of Halal labels for many respondents. They not only consider Halal certification as a symbol of belonging and take pride in supporting certified companies, but they also prioritize the safety and health benefits associated with consuming Halal products. The majority's willingness to pay a premium highlights their dedication to upholding their Halal lifestyle and the value they place on the quality assurance provided by Halal certification.

### ***Recommendation of Halal-labelled products***

The majority of respondents who demonstrate an interest in Halal products express a deep passion for discussing and advocating for them. They take great pleasure in engaging in conversations about Halal products and enthusiastically defending their merits. In fact, they are more than willing to recommend these products to their acquaintances and peers, employing various means to spread the word. Whether through face-to-face interactions or the power of social media, these respondents actively promote Halal products. They eagerly share their personal experiences, endorsing the benefits and positive aspects of Halal-certified products. Their recommendations carry weight as they highlight the value of companies that choose to obtain the Halal certificate. These proactive individuals embrace their role as ambassadors of the Halal movement. They take pride in their ability to educate others about the significance and advantages of Halal products, and they actively contribute to building a positive reputation for companies that prioritize the Halal certification. Through their discussions, recommendations, and supportive comments on social platforms, they strive to create awareness and foster a sense of trust and confidence in Halal products among their social circles and online communities.

### **Discussion**

The survey results indicate a growing awareness among Moroccans regarding sustainable development. It is evident from their responses that they have a strong interest in environmental conservation and a preference for organic and ecological products. This trend is particularly prominent among the younger generations, namely Y and Z, who are increasingly concerned about global climate

change and have developed a heightened sensitivity towards environmental issues. Surprisingly, our study also revealed a small yet significant proportion of respondents who are actively involved in environmental organizations, especially among the youth. This suggests that Morocco is experiencing a rising consciousness towards sustainable development.

Shifting our focus to the realm of Halal food, it is clear that Moroccans' purchasing behavior is influenced by their understanding, attitude, and trust in the concepts of Halal and Haram. Consequently, a significant portion of Moroccans prefer to purchase Halal-certified products, as it provides them with the confidence that their choices align with their cultural and religious beliefs. The study further indicates that the Moroccan market has the potential to explore additional opportunities in the Halal sector, encouraging more companies to adopt the Halal label. This not only enables them to attract customers at the national level but also opens doors to international markets, as the appeal of Halal products extends beyond the Muslim population.

To effectively develop the Halal market in Morocco, several key elements should be considered, as highlighted by SGIEP (2020) and Bux et al. (2022). Collaborating with industry specialists to enhance product quality is crucial. Additionally, the development of a national strategy focused on Halal food, as well as involving investors and multinational companies, can further attract consumers. Conducting a feasibility study to identify market opportunities and creating a technical roadmap for Halal product development are essential steps. Expanding the Halal proposition to encompass broader ethical considerations and implementing safety plans based on good agricultural practices are recommended. Leveraging technologies like blockchain can aid in reducing chemical inputs, fertilizers, and hazardous elements in the production process. Improving environmental performance by utilizing food waste for value-added compounds is another avenue for sustainable development. Implementing blockchain-based digital food supply networks can ensure transparency, optimize shelf life, foster partnerships, and enhance recall response efficiency. Finally, enhancing certification systems and integrating new technologies at each stage of the supply chain will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Halal food.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the survey findings underscore a significant shift in the mindset of Moroccan consumers, particularly when it comes to sustainable development and Halal products. The growing awareness of environmental issues among the population, especially the younger generations, indicates a positive trend towards more responsible and eco-conscious consumer behavior. This presents an opportunity for businesses to align their offerings with these evolving preferences, thus contributing to the nation's sustainable development goals.

Furthermore, the study reveals a substantial interest in Halal products among Moroccan Muslims, with a majority expressing a strong preference for Halal-certified items. This preference is not only driven by religious considerations but also by a sense of belonging and trust in the quality and safety of such products. As the Halal market continues to expand globally, companies in Morocco have an opportunity to leverage this growing demand, not only domestically but also in international markets. One promising avenue for Morocco's economic growth and sustainable development is Halal tourism. With an increasing number of Muslim travelers seeking destinations that cater to their religious and cultural needs, Halal tourism represents a significant opportunity for the country. By offering Halal-certified accommodations, Halal food options, and prayer facilities, Morocco can position itself as an attractive Halal-friendly destination. This approach will not only attract Muslim tourists but also resonate with non-Muslim travelers who are increasingly conscious of ethical and sustainable travel practices.

To capitalize on the potential of Halal tourism, collaborations between the government, private sector, and certification bodies are essential. Implementing clear guidelines and standards for Halal-friendly tourism services and facilities will enhance Morocco's reputation as a preferred destination for Muslim travelers. Moreover, investing in marketing initiatives targeted at the Halal tourism market and fostering partnerships with travel agencies specializing in Halal travel can further boost the country's position in this growing sector. In conclusion, Morocco's journey towards sustainable development and Halal products demonstrates a positive trajectory driven by evolving consumer preferences and market dynamics. By embracing sustainable practices, promoting Halal products, and venturing into Halal tourism, Morocco can position itself as a forward-thinking nation, appealing to both domestic and international audiences while contributing to the global pursuit of sustainability.

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