
Digital Transformation in South Korea's Halal Market Development

Moh. Musafak¹, Choirul Nikmah²

¹Faculty of Economic and Business of Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

²National Pingtung University of Science and Technology, Neipu, Pingtung, 91201, Taiwan

e-mail: mhsafa28@gmail.com, p10922006@mail.npust.edu.tw

*Corresponding Author

Abstract: *The rapidly growing global halal industry presents both opportunities and challenges. Many countries, including those with non-Muslim majority populations, have recognized the substantial potential and benefits of participating in this market. However, the swift expansion of the halal industry does not always align with the services expected by Muslim consumers. For instance, Muslim populations in non-Muslim-majority countries, such as South Korea, often face significant challenges. The most prominent obstacles include the scarcity of mosques and the difficulty in finding halal food and determining whether market or convenience store products meet halal standards. This study examines the development of the Korean halal market through digital transformation, focusing on the experiences of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora. It employs a phenomenological approach, utilizing observations and interviews as data sources. The study also incorporates the Maqashid al-Syariah methodology to explore the issues from an Islamic legal perspective. The findings indicate that the efforts of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora to enhance the South Korean halal market through digital transformation have had a positive impact on the local Muslim community. This impact is evident in three key areas of digital development: increasing halal literacy, fostering an e-commerce-based halal market, and creating application-based halal innovations. These aspects aim to address the challenges of developing the halal market in a non-Muslim majority country while aligning with the Maqashid al-Syariah's goal of ensuring human welfare both in this world and the hereafter.*

Keywords: *digital transformation, halal industry, korea halal market, MSMEs, information technology.*

1. Introduction

The development of the global Islamic economy is currently experiencing rapid growth, characterized by the interest of countries worldwide in actively participating in global trade activities within the halal industry. The impact of the development of the halal industry is significant, with Muslim minority countries actively participating and even dominating the global market as producers and exporters of halal products. Muslim minority countries that export halal products include Brazil, Russia, Thailand, India, Argentina, Australia, the USA, and others. These countries are responding more quickly to the opportunities of the halal market than Muslim-majority countries. According to The Halal Times, almost no Muslim-majority country is among the top 10 exporters of halal products globally (Hafiz M. Ahmed, 2022). This presents a significant challenge and homework for Muslim-majority countries to develop their Shariah-compliant industries, not only in terms of consumption but also in terms of being productive participants in the global halal market.

Market research firm Dinar Standard reports that, according to the SGIE report, Muslims around the world are expected to spend USD 2.8 trillion on food, medicine, cosmetics, fashion, travel and media needs in 2025, with a cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.5 percent (Shafaki, 2022). Based on the current developments in the global halal market and the research findings of global economic institutions, the halal industry is a promising opportunity with strong appeal to the global market. According to the Global Islamic Economic Indicators report, which covers 81 countries, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the United

Arab Emirates, and Indonesia are in the top five and lead the ranking. Meanwhile, countries such as England and Kazakhstan are new entrants in the top 15.

The halal industry has undergone a transformation over time. This aligns with the increasing demand for halal products from various sectors worldwide, including food and beverages, fashion, cosmetics, tourism, and others. This shift, representing a broader change in consumer behavior towards ethical consumption patterns, is due to the rising demand for halal-certified products and services (Abdallah, 2021). This change in perception is driven by the evolution of halal certification from a marker of religious identity to a reliable indicator of food safety and hygiene (Adlin Masood & Alina Abdul Rahim, 2019). The fact that the halal market is gaining popularity not only among Muslims but also among non-Muslim consumers demonstrates that halal goods and services are produced within ethical standards and that quality is guaranteed (Try Astuti & Ruqiah, 2019). There is a consensus among Muslim and non-Muslim populations worldwide that halal certification has become the norm (Mathew et al., 2014).

Innovation in the halal industry is evident in its development across various countries with a strong interest in the halal market. The increasing cooperation between countries through Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) on halal certification showcases this innovation. These agreements ensure that each participating country, whether producing or consuming, is responsible for maintaining the quality and halal integrity of marketed products. Such cooperative agreements are pivotal in enhancing consumer confidence and satisfaction globally. Additionally, halal innovations extend to the adoption of advanced technologies, including modern appliances, machinery, and digital solutions like mobile apps. These advancements aim to simplify access to halal products, integrating them seamlessly into daily life. For instance, the development of applications that allow consumers to track the halal status of products, provide comprehensive information, and ensure adherence to halal principles is a significant leap forward (Ernayani & Firman, 2024). These efforts collectively strive to make the halal lifestyle more accessible and reliable for consumers worldwide (Ernayani & Firman, 2024).

Long before halal innovation advanced further, the rise of the global Islamic economy caught the attention of South Korea, a Muslim minority country in East Asia. South Korea's interest in the global halal market was highlighted by the signing of a cooperation agreement (MoU) with the United Arab Emirates by President Park Geun Hye in 2015, marking a significant step in halal trade cooperation. Despite being a Muslim minority country, South Korea cannot ignore import requests from several countries for its food products, which have gained popularity globally due to the influence of the Hallyu (K-pop and K-drama) wave triggered by its entertainment industry. Although the South Korean government faces internal debates over the pros and cons of promoting halal, it remains committed to developing the halal industry to boost national economic growth. Lee Yong Jik, head of the food department at South Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, told Al Jazeera that the halal food market is a blue ocean with great potential for growth (Rashid, 2024).

The real challenge the South Korean government faces in developing the halal industry is the misconception and opposition among some citizens, who view the halal industry as part of Islamization. Recent events, such as terrorist attacks carried out in the name of Islam, have significantly influenced public perception in South Korea and globally, painting Islam as a radical religion. These negative sentiments are not only expressed through demonstrations but also through opposition to various Islamic initiatives. Examples include protests against the government's plan to build a halal center in Iksan in 2015, plans to create a prayer room at the Winter Olympics in 2018, and the construction of a mosque by the Islamic student community of Kyungpook National University in Daegu in 2020 (Rashid, 2024). Moreover, opposition extends into the political arena, where many members of opposition parties have voiced their disagreement with the government's plans to develop the halal industry in South Korea.

Despite the South Korean government's ongoing efforts to engage with the global halal market, the contributions of Muslim communities, including the Indonesian Muslim diaspora, are significant in developing the halal industry in South Korea. Although South Korea is a Muslim minority country, Muslim migrant groups are beginning to recognize the country's progress towards becoming "Muslim-friendly," as evidenced by the growing number of mosques, halal restaurants, and online halal commerce. However, this progress is not very visible to foreign Muslim tourists, who may be unaware of the existence of halal centers. Muslims constitute only about 0.4% of South Korea's total population, yet this minority plays a crucial role in driving the halal market. The Muslim migrant community actively forms groups and seeks out sources of halal food and other products to meet their daily needs.

The trend of Islamic lifestyles continues to evolve globally, significantly impacting various sectors, including the halal industry. The strong growth of the Muslim population, particularly among the younger generation, has led to increased consumption of halal products (Fauzan et al., 2023). This rising demand for halal products is also evident among Muslim minorities in South Korea. The desire for a halal lifestyle among Muslim workers and students in South Korea is fostering innovation and creativity through digital information technology. This research highlights the appeal of digital transformation, as various platforms are making the South Korean halal market more accessible to the general public. Increased literacy and market development are leveraging digital tools such as Zoom, Instagram, and Facebook. Additionally, the creation of websites and applications is contributing to the growth of the halal market. Each of these digital platforms plays a distinct role in advancing the halal market in South Korea.

Several similar studies have been conducted by previous researchers. One study highlights the importance of sustainable development and innovation as key factors driving the transformation of the Islamic economy (Ernayani & Firman, 2024). Another study emphasizes that application-based solutions facilitate transactions by providing sophisticated systems equipped with digital payment, ordering, and delivery functionalities (Irene & Abdullathif, 2023). A third study finds that product innovation and technological sophistication are essential for building a two-way relationship in halal tourism (Azizuddin & 'Ainulyaqin, 2022). Additionally, a fourth study underscores Indonesia's potential to become a central hub for the global halal industry, leveraging its large Muslim population and extensive consumer base, supported by digital technology (Fauzan et al., 2023). Finally, a fifth study concludes that digital transformation is a crucial tool for MSMEs to adapt their business models to modern market demands (Suginam, 2022).

This investigation differs from previous studies in several ways. Firstly, it focuses on South Korea, which presents a unique context for halal industry development. Secondly, the nature of innovation and the associated challenges in this study are distinct from those examined in earlier research. This study has three main objectives. First, it aims to explore the digital transformation platforms used to enhance halal literacy in South Korea. Second, it seeks to assess how social media-based digital transformation improves halal marketing in South Korea. Third, it investigates the types of digital platforms utilized as halal guides in South Korea. The author hopes that this research will contribute to the advancement of the Shariah economy, particularly the halal industry in South Korea, and offer valuable insights for Muslim tourists visiting the country.

2. Materials and Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach with phenomenological methods. According to Polkinghorne, phenomenological studies describe the meaning of a lived experience of several individuals regarding a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 1998). The study was conducted in South Korea, focusing on the digital marketing platform for the halal industry. The research data includes primary sources (leaders from three different platforms) and secondary sources (Al-Qur'an, Sunnah, websites, e-commerce, and halal applications). Data

collection involved observation and in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted with selected informants: MRS (40), the secretary of the Shariah economic community; SBD (48), the owner of the store "Bakso Bejo"; and NS (29), the creator of the Mufko halal guide application. The Maqasid Al-Shari'ah approach underpins this research by examining issues from the perspective of Islamic law.

3. Results and Discussion

The total population of South Korea is 51.7 million people, divided into religious groups: 51% with no religion, 20% Protestant, 17% Buddhist, 11% Catholic, and the remaining 2% adhering to traditional religions, including Islam (L. Yoon, 2024). The Muslim population constitutes 0.4% of South Korea's total population. According to the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF), the majority of South Korea's Muslim population are immigrant Muslims, accounting for about 86% (200,000 people), with the remaining 14% being indigenous Korean Muslims (approximately 35,000 people). The small percentage of Muslims, only 0.4% of the total population, is a key driver for the halal market in South Korea. These immigrant Muslims have established various missionary and business communities to enhance halal knowledge and to offer and market halal products. Each year, the number of halal restaurants is increasing in various cities across South Korea, particularly in major cities such as Seoul, Busan, Daegu, and Ansan.

The halal market, which continues to gain prominence in the global industry, exerts significant appeal to economic players worldwide. While this industry is well-established in Muslim-majority countries, it is at the nascent stage of development and is currently dominated by Muslim-minority countries in terms of productivity. Countries such as Brazil, Thailand, Russia, and Australia are emerging as leading global exporters of halal products. According to *The Halal Times*, Brazil is the largest exporter of halal meat, and Thailand is the largest exporter of halal food globally (Hafiz M. Ahmed, 2022). The broad acceptance of halal products by various consumer groups, not limited to Muslims, has driven the trend of growth in the global market, making it one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide.

The halal market presents both opportunities and challenges. This industry offers significant opportunities for anyone looking to engage with and capitalize on it. At the macro level, it contributes to national economic growth in countries actively participating in global halal trade. Domestic production of halal products can strengthen the balance of payments, particularly by meeting global demand (Fauzi et al., 2017). Consequently, countries worldwide are leveraging this by refining their production and marketing strategies for halal products. With an ever-expanding consumer base and increasing growth in many regions, the halal industry has become a competitive force in international trade (Elasrag, 2016).

The strength of the halal industry lies in its promotion of a lifestyle rooted in good values (sharia), encompassing not only product hygiene but also equitable wealth distribution, social responsibility, and environmental friendliness. This integration of ethical and religious values broadens the appeal of halal products to 2.8 billion Muslim and non-Muslim consumers globally (Azam & Abdullah, 2020). However, the halal industry also encounters several challenges, including regulatory and policy hurdles, human resource issues, institutional support, literacy, services, and information technology. Information technology, which combines computer technology for data processing and storage with communication technology for information transmission, plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges (Muhammad Suyanto, 2005).

Information technology is a crucial element in the development of the halal industry, helping to reach a larger market and achieve planned goals. Its importance is particularly pronounced in Muslim-minority countries, where it can be used as a tool to advance the halal industry. The lack of literacy and limited halal facilities in these countries can be partially mitigated by the use of technology, and digital transformation plays a key role in overcoming these barriers. In this discussion, the author divides the role of digital transformation and its

impact on the development of the halal market in South Korea into three parts. First, the focus is on how digital transformation enhances halal literacy in South Korea. Second, it examines how digital transformation boosts the marketing of halal products in the country. Third, it explores the use of digital transformation as a supportive tool for guiding the halal market in South Korea.

3.1. Digital Transformation to Enhance Halal Literacy

Halal knowledge is the biggest obstacle for the Muslim community in establishing and developing the halal market in South Korea. The average South Korean perceives halal as merely being free of pork and alcohol, assuming that a restaurant serving food other than pork and drinks other than alcohol is permissible for Muslims. However, according to Islamic rules, something is classified as halal if it fulfills five conditions: (1) The basic substance or ingredient must be halal, coming from something not forbidden by Allah SWT and not contaminated with something haram; (2) The method of obtaining it must be lawful, as something halal can become haram if acquired through theft, extramarital sex, usury, corruption, or other forbidden means; (3) The process must be halal, since halal ingredients processed with haram substances result in a haram product; (4) The storage must be appropriate, with halal goods not stored together with haram goods; and (5) The presentation must be clean and free from impurity and dirt (Murjani, 2015).

Understanding and expanding knowledge of halal practices are crucial in this context. Conveying the concept of halal to local people can be challenging if they lack a basic understanding of Islam, especially given the language barriers. However, halal knowledge among Islamic communities in mosques, organizations, and individuals can be enhanced through both face-to-face and online studies and discussions. Topics such as halal standards, Shariah economics and finance, and other Islamic laws are frequently covered in studies conducted in mosques by the local imam or specific preachers. Additionally, many discussions on halal and Islamic economics take place online via video conferencing platforms like Zoom, in the form of webinars. These webinars are often organized by various Islamic communities in South Korea, such as the Sharia Economic Community (MES), featuring experts in Islamic law and economics, and are supported by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia.



Figure 1. One of the webinar events on the development of the halal industry in South Korea

According to MRS, an administrator of MES Korea, the organization is collaborating with other Indonesian Muslim communities to develop the halal industry in South Korea and is coordinating with the Indonesian Embassy in Seoul for support. In addition to conducting online webinars, MES Korea held discussions with the Indonesian Ambassador in Seoul and the Governor of Bank Indonesia to promote cooperation between the halal

authorities of Indonesia and South Korea, which occurred in June 2023 at the Indonesian Embassy in Seoul. MRS explained that such discussions and literacy initiatives aim to increase public awareness of halal standards and ensure proper monitoring to address any violations. A recent report from a Muslim community in South Korea highlighted a restaurant in the Daegu area that had mistakenly put a halal seal on its establishment despite serving pork. Through joint supervision, the Muslim community engaged in dialogue with the restaurant owner to explain the meaning of halal and its associated restrictions. This issue was eventually resolved, and the restaurant owner removed the halal label. The South Korean Muslim community understands that such incidents are common in a Muslim minority context, where restaurant owners may see a commercial opportunity but lack understanding of the necessary standards.

3.2. Digital Transformation to Enhance Halal Product Marketing

The growth of the halal market in South Korea is evident from the increasing number of halal restaurants and online halal stores (e-commerce). Halal restaurants can now be found in various regions of South Korea, with establishments from several Muslim-majority countries, such as Pakistan, India, Indonesia, and Turkey, dominating in terms of numbers. This growth is partly due to the increasing number of international Muslim students studying in Korea. In response, several universities, including Hanyang University, Ewha Women's University, and Sunmoon University, have established halal restaurants on their campuses. According to Professor Oh Myung-Seok from the Department of Anthropology at Seoul National University (SNU), the university aims to enhance its international presence by increasing the number of international faculty and students. Although it is still in the brainstorming phase, SNU plans to open a halal restaurant on its Gwanak campus to cater to the needs of its international Muslim students (Jin, 2024).

The increase in the number of halal stores in various cities does not mean that they are easily recognizable. The number of halal businesses is still not proportional to the large population of South Korea. Therefore, it is necessary to find ways to make these halal businesses more accessible to the Muslim community in Korea and Muslim tourists. Utilizing information technology is one of the fastest ways to disseminate information and connect people in different locations. Advances in information technology enable the rapid spread of information and provide various tools and methods to support marketing efforts, including analytics, product development, pricing information, targeting, and promotions (Irnawati, 2015).

The majority of halal businesses in South Korea are micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and start-ups. Given their limited resources, digital technology can be a vital solution for product marketing. Information technology serves as a powerful tool for Shariah-compliant businesses to launch products with broader market reach (Khasanah, 2020). The Muslim minority, reliant on halal products for their daily needs, faces the challenge that not all restaurants in South Korea can meet their halal requirements. Quick access to information about where to find halal products would greatly benefit these customers. Additionally, business owners gain from digital transformation, using technology not only to increase operational efficiency but also to explore new potentials through digital innovation (Azy Athoillah Yazid et al., 2022).

In this study, the author examines an Indonesian halal SME that has successfully marketed its products in the South Korean market. The founder of Bakso Bejo Korea, SBD (48), recounted the difficulties he faced when starting his business in 2015. Using a cart he built himself from discarded wood, SBD initially sold his meatballs to Indonesian migrant workers in South Korea through word of mouth. His breakthrough came when he participated in a bazaar and received a positive response, with his meatballs selling out quickly. Recognizing the potential for growth, SBD decided to expand his business by opening branches in different regions of South Korea. However, he realized that relying solely on

physical kiosks and in-person sales would not sustain his business in the long run. Therefore, in 2017, he adopted an e-commerce strategy, expanding his product offerings and selling online through the bejokorea.com platform.

Bejokorea.com is a platform that provides marketing support by utilizing digital transformation technology. Digital transformation involves integrating digital technology into business processes, fundamentally changing how organizations deliver value to customers (Noer, 2023). Bakso Bejo has adopted innovative digital technology to make cultural and operational changes, adapting to evolving customer demands. Through this digital transformation, bejokorea.com offers "one-stop services" to its customers, enabling purchasing, payment, and delivery transactions through a single digital application. Digital transformation is implemented at all stages, from the research and development department to the delivery of goods to consumers (Aldi et al., 2020). SBD (48) noted that the most significant change in customer transactions occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic when everyone relied on online transactions for mutual comfort and security. Since the launch of the online shopping platform bejokorea.com, more than 60% of customer transactions have been conducted through this digital application.

According to SBD (48), Bejokorea's market segment primarily consists of migrant workers and Indonesian students in South Korea. To simplify the shopping experience for its customers, Bejokorea offers a unique end-of-month (EOM) net payment system. This allows customers to pay for their products at the end of the month or after receiving their salary, providing flexibility in payment timing. Bejokorea.com has three key advantages in the eyes of its customers and competitors: First, its main product, beef meatballs, is a popular Indonesian specialty among the Indonesian diaspora. Second, the success of Bejokorea.com in promoting halal food in South Korea aligns with SBD's goal of enhancing access to halal options for Muslims in this predominantly non-Muslim country. Third, the company's use of digital transformation through e-commerce platforms expands its market reach, making its products accessible to anyone, anywhere. In summary, Bejokorea effectively markets its products and drives innovation through digital transformation, aiming for efficient automation and fostering new creativity (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008).



Figure 2. View of the e-commerce application bejokorea.com

3.3. Transformasi Digital Pada Peningkatan Panduan Halal

The halal industries in South Korea have seen significant growth, particularly in tourism, cosmetics, and food. In the tourism sector, the number of Muslim tourists visiting South Korea has been increasing steadily, from 870,000 in 2017 to 970,000 in 2018. According to the Korea Tourism Organization (KTO), 511,017 Muslim tourists visited the country in the first half of 2019, marking a 9.8 percent increase compared to the previous year (Eun-jung, 2019). The upward trend was expected to continue, with projections indicating that more than 1 million Muslim tourists would visit South Korea. However, this growth was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, nearly all work, study, and shopping activities moved online to mitigate the impact of the virus. This shift led to significant

changes in consumer behavior, with a notable increase in online shopping across various countries, including South Korea. Digital technology has proven to be an effective solution for both manufacturers and consumers in adapting to these changes.

According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2023–24, the halal cosmetics industry is experiencing significant growth. Muslim consumer spending on cosmetics reached \$84 billion in 2022, marking a 14.3% increase from \$74 billion in 2021, with India and Indonesia being the largest markets (Staff Writer, 2024). Korean cosmetics are among the most popular globally, and Muslim consumers have three main perceptions of Korean beauty products: Koreans are known for their clear skin—an image influenced by the K-pop and K-drama industries—Korean cosmetics are made with high-quality natural ingredients, and Korean companies are known for their innovative technologies (in-cosmetics, 2021) This enthusiasm is evident, as many Muslim travelers flock to cosmetics stores in the Myeong-dong shopping district. However, many Korean cosmetic products on the market still lack halal certification. According to the “in-cosmetics” report, Korean cosmetic companies are increasingly engaging in the OEM market. For example, Cosmax has established a subsidiary in Indonesia, and Kolmar Korea supplies halal-certified products to Malaysian customers, demonstrating a commitment to halal production lines in Korea.

In the halal food sector, South Korea currently lacks specific government regulations. At present, there are at least four halal certification bodies, which fall under the supervision of South Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs. In the absence of specific regulations in this predominantly non-Muslim country, South Korean halal certification bodies collaborate with foreign halal institutions from countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia to gain recognition and halal assessment. An example of such collaboration is the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) signed by two South Korean halal certification bodies—the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) and the Korea Halal Authority (KHA)—with the Indonesian Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) during the H-20 (Halal World) event in November 2023 (bpjph, 2023). This cooperation between South Korean halal bodies and countries with Muslim majorities is an indication of South Korea's serious commitment to developing the halal market within its own borders.

The rise in demand for halal foods in Korea can be attributed to the creation of communities and the influx of migrant workers from Asia and Africa (Park & Lee, 2017). Since the majority of these migrant workers are Muslim, they require halal cuisine for their daily consumption. Itaewon, a well-known halal market in South Korea, features numerous halal shops and restaurants near the Seoul Central Mosque. The halal food industry in Korea has expanded to other cities, with restaurants opening in areas such as Hannam-dong, Bokwang-dong, Ansan, and Busan, which serve as hubs for Muslim migrant workers. Additionally, Asia Mart and World Mart offer a variety of halal ingredients, spices, and snacks. The growth of online stores and halal e-commerce platforms is also contributing to the expansion of the halal market in South Korea.

The development of the Korean halal sector presents both benefits and challenges for South Korean Muslim consumers. On the one hand, the halal market in Korea provides Muslim consumers with access to halal products and opportunities to start halal businesses. However, challenges persist, including insufficient regulations to ensure that all halal products meet the required standards and the reluctance of some Korean food producers to label their products as halal. These issues contribute to a degree of hesitancy among Muslim consumers in South Korea regarding products from local Korean producers. This discomfort and lack of confidence in purchasing halal food are not limited to the Muslim community in Korea; Muslim travelers from abroad experience similar concerns.

Driven by her frustration as a Muslim struggling to find safe food products that are free from pork and alcohol, NS (29), an Indonesian Muslim student studying in South Korea, conceived the idea of a food scanning application. With a background in computer engineering, NS sought funding from the CEO of a Korean start-up company. As a result of

their collaboration, the halal application "Mufko: Korean Snack Scan Halal" was launched in 2020. The Mufko app is currently available in five languages—English, Indonesian, Korean, Uzbek, and Arabic—and can be downloaded from the Google Play Store. It offers a range of features, including the ability to scan snack barcodes, locate prayer places and mosques, access prayer schedules, find halal restaurants, and connect with e-commerce platforms that offer halal products in South Korea. NS (29) aims for the Mufko Halal application to serve as a valuable resource for Muslim consumers in Korea, both residents and travelers, seeking halal food and facilities.

Muslim consumers can use the Mufko application to scan snack products by pressing the scan button and pointing their cellphone camera at the product's barcode. Within seconds, the app generates a report indicating whether the product contains any ingredients that are prohibited for Muslims. The application also facilitates finding mosque addresses for Muslims traveling in South Korea, with addresses linked to Google Maps and Kakao Maps. Similarly, it helps users locate halal restaurants. NS (29) noted that while the Mufko application is not perfect and requires regular updates to reflect changes in the South Korean market, it represents a significant initial step in supporting the halal industry and addressing the needs of the Muslim community in South Korea.

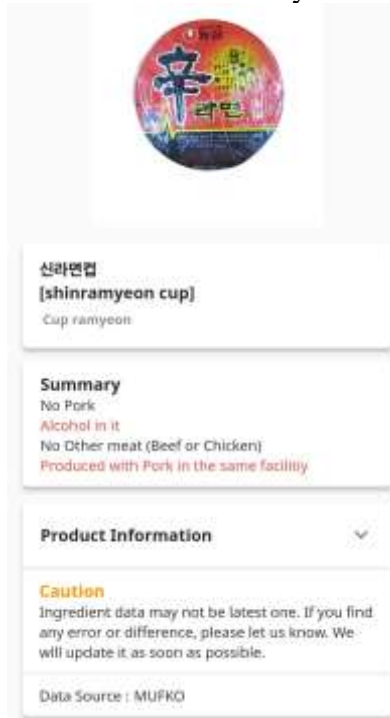


Figure 3a.

Mufko scanning result_01

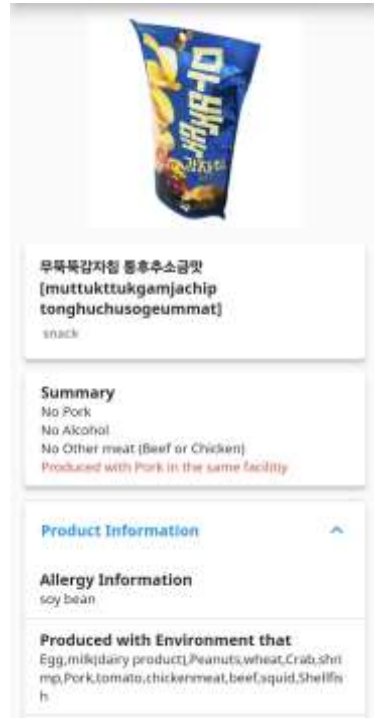


Figure 3b.

Mufko scanning result_02

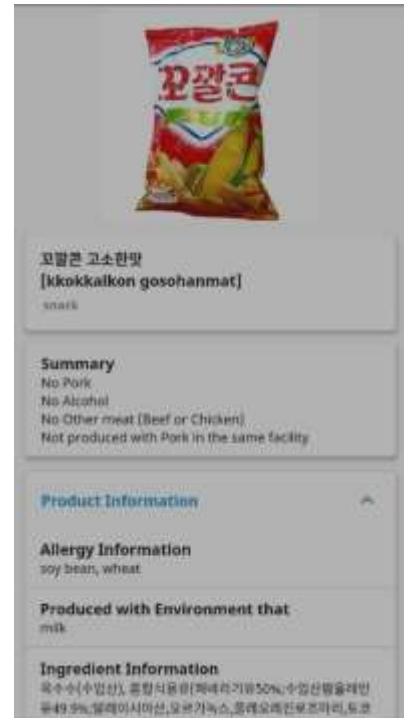


Figure 3c.

Mufko scanning result_03

According to Islamic law, a product is considered completely prohibited for Muslims if it contains any basic material or ingredient derived from items that are forbidden by Allah, such as pork, alcohol, or carrion (Figure 3a). This principle is underscored by the following Quranic verse:

“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars, and [prohibited is] that you seek decision through divining arrows. That is grave disobedience. This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me. This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion. But whoever is forced by severe hunger with no inclination to sin - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful (Al-Qur’an 5: 3).

If a halal product is processed using the same facilities as those used for haram items, resulting in contamination, the product's halal status is compromised, and it becomes impermissible for Muslims to consume (Figure 3b). Conversely, if a product has a halal base or ingredients, originates from permissible sources, and remains uncontaminated by haram substances, it meets the criteria for being halal and is considered suitable for consumption (Figure 3c).

O humanity! Eat from what is lawful and good on the earth and do not follow Satan’s footsteps. He is truly your sworn enemy (Al-Quran 2: 168).

Islamic scholars emphasize that Islamic law was created to realize human welfare in this world and the hereafter. In line with this, the efforts of halal market developers in South Korea, as mentioned above, align with the Maqashid al-Shariah principles formulated by Imam Asy-Syatibi. These principles, known as ad-dharuriyah al-khamsa, include maintaining religion (hifdz ad-din), maintaining life (hifdz an-nafs), maintaining reason (hifdz al-‘aql), maintaining descendants (hifdz an-nasl), and maintaining property (hifdz al-maal). Providing and developing halal products and facilities in a predominantly non-Muslim country, despite numerous challenges, is part of maintaining religion (hifdz ad-din) by ensuring that Islamic sharia law continues to be upheld for the benefit of the Muslim community. Halal products must undergo various assessment processes to ensure they meet quality standards and are safe for consumption. Such fulfillment of standards also protects human life (hifdz an-nafs). In Islam, what humans eat and how they obtain it can significantly affect the condition of their brain and heart.

In this context, halal items fulfill the Maqashid al-Syariah requirement to preserve reason (*hifdz al-‘aql*). Islam also teaches that what we eat and how we obtain it influence the quality of our progeny. Consuming halal products is part of raising children (*hifdz an-nasl*). The necessity of sustaining wealth in Islam can be defined as keeping wealth pure by sharing some of it with the needy to achieve prosperity. Maintaining wealth also implies keeping our money away from what Allah has forbidden, in terms of substance, fundamental resources, and methods of acquisition. In Maqashid al-Syariah, this is referred to as wealth maintenance (*hifdz al-maal*). The halal business can be seen as an endeavor to enhance people's welfare, both in processing raw materials and developing other features that become economic products permitted by Islamic law, rather than resulting from prohibited transactions (*muamalah*) (Sulistiani, 2018).

4. Conclusion

The halal industrial market is a global magnet, attracting interest not just in Muslim-majority countries. Since 2015, South Korea, a non-Muslim-majority country, has shown a strong desire to participate actively in this market. The Korean wave, "Hallyu," and its global entertainment industry (K-Pop and K-Drama) have also contributed to an increase in Muslim tourists visiting Korea, driving up demand for Korean cosmetics and food products in Muslim-majority nations. However, the development of the Korean halal market has not been matched by the facilities that Muslim consumers expect. This is particularly felt by South Korea's 0.4% Muslim population, the vast majority of whom are Muslim migrants. One of the

most challenging issues for the Muslim community and Muslim tourists in South Korea is obtaining halal food and selecting products that meet halal criteria while shopping. In response to these challenges, the Indonesian Muslim diaspora has developed halal innovations through digital transformation. There are at least three types of digital transformation that have been developed: promoting halal literacy, developing the halal market through e-commerce, and establishing application-based halal innovations. From an Islamic perspective, the efforts of the Indonesian Muslim diaspora, in particular, and the Muslim community in South Korea, in general, to develop the halal market in Korea align with the Maqashid al-Syariah principle of achieving human happiness in this world and the hereafter. Based on the study's findings, the author recommends further development of digital technology, particularly digital transformation based on halal guidance apps. These applications require automatic information updates and must be capable of addressing various queries, especially as the number of new mosques, halal restaurants, and halal scanning objects increases. This strategy aims to address the growing challenges facing the halal market in non-Muslim-majority countries.

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