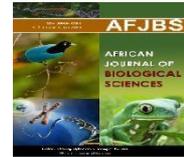


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Research Paper

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THE INFLUENCE AND IMPACT OF THE KOREAN WAVE (*HALLYU*) ON THE HALAL FOOD INDUSTRY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study explores the interaction between Hallyu and the Halal food industry, focusing on the unique opportunities and challenges that arise from their convergence.

Theoretical framework: The study employs a multidisciplinary theoretical framework that draws from cultural studies, international business, and consumer behavior. Soft power diplomacy, cultural adaptation, and market dynamics are the theoretical foundations that guide the analysis of how Hallyu and the Halal food industry intersect and influence each other on a global scale.

Design/methodology/approach: The study adopts a systematic approach, commencing with a comprehensive literature review that establishes the groundwork for understanding Hallyu, the Halal food industry, and their individual impacts on a global scale. Subsequently, it delves into the analysis of the convergence, challenges and opportunities faced by the Halal food industry are identified.

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Findings: Key findings include the cultural adaptation of Korean cuisine to align with Halal requirements, maintaining authenticity. The article also uncovers the significant influence of Hallyu on consumer preferences, particularly in creating an aspirational image of Korean cuisine. Challenges related to market access and opportunities for expansion are thoroughly examined, offering insights for businesses aiming to enter the global Halal market.

Research, Practical & Social implications: This study offers valuable perspectives for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners involved in the Halal industry.

Originality/value: The article's originality lies in its exploration of the unique intersection between Hallyu and the Halal food industry, providing practical insights for businesses entering this complex landscape. Emphasizing the need for nuanced cultural adaptation and market-specific strategies, it also recognizes the broader impact on cultural understanding and cooperation beyond economic considerations.

Keywords: Halal, Hallyu, Korean Wave, Halal Food Industry

INTRODUCTION

Hallyu, with its compelling narrative, vivid visualities and infectious energy associated with South Korea's entertainment, constitutes a cultural phenomenon transcending borders. The regional fascination with Korean dramas and music began to transform into an international craze that attracted different audiences, regardless of nationality, age or cultural background (Ekapti & Hakim, 2022; Masood & Rahim, 2020; Yook et al., 2014). The cultural exports not only show the creativity and talent of South Korea but also give a glimpse into the strength of cross-cultural connectivity in today's world (Yook et al., 2014). Apart from entertainment, the holistic nature of *Hallyu* also extends to fashion, beauty, culinary experiences and even travel destinations (Mustika et al., 2021; Widyaningrum et al., 2023a; Widyaningrum et al., 2023b). The impact is felt throughout the sector, helping South Korea's soft power diplomacy and strengthening its global presence.

On the other hand, the Halal food industry is a clear indication of the increasing demand for products that strictly adhere to religious regulations, particularly in Muslim-dominated nations and among communities practising Islam around the world (Albra et al., 2023; Mustika et al., 2021). Halal compliance involves not only meat and poultry, but also a wide range of food items, cosmetics, medicines, or services that make up a vast and thriving market. The surge in the Muslim population, coupled with a growing inclination towards ethical and transparent production methods, is evident in the rapid growth of the Halal market (Astuti & Asih, 2023; Chanifah et al., 2022). The industry's emphasis on honesty and adherence to specific standards has garnered tremendous interest worldwide, leading to the transformation of the Halal sector into a highly dynamic economy.

An intriguing intersection has been created between the global appeal of *Hallyu* and the Halal food industry, presenting an interesting juncture in discussion on cultural integration, adaptation and inclusion. Examining this convergence offers clues as to how culture exports such as Korean entertainment can be adapted for a broad range of audiences with diverse cultures and food preferences (Ganghariya & Kanozia, 2020).

In addition, this study is intended to uncover the challenges and opportunities that exist at such an intersection. This includes studying the complexities of how to adapt Korean cuisine in line with Halal requirements, understanding consumers' views and preferences, balancing societal sensitivity and evaluating the commercial viability of combining them. In the context of a changing global landscape, understanding and analysing this juncture is not only key for business but also an essential step in promoting cultural understanding, synergy and cooperation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hallyu

The global influence of *Hallyu* transcends linguistic and cultural barriers, attracting audiences around the world. The effect can be seen in many forms, primarily through the popularity of Korean dramas, music, films, fashion, beauty and cuisine (Alfarajat, 2022; Faradina & Ningsih, 2023; Masood & Rahim, 2020; Ramadhani et al., 2023a; Yook et al., 2014).

Korean dramas, with compelling stories, complex characters, and diverse genres, are at the heart of *Hallyu's* expansion. According to Ganghariya and Kanozia (2020), the popularity of these stories, as well as the universality of human emotions and experiences that they illustrate, has made dramas such as "What is love" and "Winter Sonata" extremely popular around the world. A significant contribution to the globalisation of *Hallyu* is made by Korean cinema, which stands out for its innovation, originality and storytelling skills. Films such as "Parasite," which made history at the Oscars and "Train to Busan" have not only garnered critical acclaim but have also introduced global audiences to the depth and diversity of Korean cinema (Ganghariya & Kanozia, 2020; Reza, 2022; Santos & Marques, 2022).

Korea's pop music has become the forefront of global music thanks to infectious beats and compelling performances by K-pop bands such as BTS, BLACKPINK or EXO (Reza, 2022). With an ardent fanbase spanning continents, K-pop's catchy tunes, synchronised choreography, and charismatic idols have transcended language barriers, fostering a global community of dedicated fans (Santos & Marques, 2022)

Beyond entertainment, the influence of *Hallyu* extends to fashion trends, beauty standards, and food preferences. According to Reza (2022), the beauty products of Korea, famous for their innovativeness and efficiency, are becoming increasingly popular all over the world. Moreover, Korean fashion's fusion of traditional elements with contemporary trends has been attracting attention on international runways which has affected the global trend in fashion (Elaskary, 2018; Mujani et al., 2022). Astuti and Asih (2021) stated that in the global market, Korea's cuisine has also increased in popularity with its bold flavours and variety of dishes. From kimchi to bibimbap, Korean culinary delights have found enthusiasts worldwide, contributing to the integration of Korean gastronomy into mainstream dining choices (Mujani et al., 2022).

Halal Food Industry Market

The global Halal sector is predicted to be valued roughly USD2.3 trillion each year, with the potential to reach USD7 trillion in the near future. Southeast Asian countries such as

Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines have seen significant growth in the Halal industry and are actively contributing to its expansion. Not only the Muslims, non-Muslims' are also having a growing awareness of the benefits of Halal food, driven by perceptions of safety, hygiene and quality, which has resulted in increased market demand that has significantly impacted the Halal sector economy (Azam & Abdullah, 2020; Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016; Khalid & Wok, 2020; Nurrachmi, 2018).

Hallyu culture is becoming increasingly popular in numerous countries, particularly in Asia and Southeast Asia (Deniar & Effendi, 2019). As the Muslim population expands, so will the need for Halal products and services (Imdarningsih & Siregar, 2023). By meeting this need, South Korea may be able to enter a new market for growth and establish itself as a major player in the world economy. South Korea might potentially broaden its fan base to include nations with a majority of Muslims and increase the acceptance of its goods among Muslims worldwide by leveraging the popularity of *Hallyu* culture (Lee & Lee, 2020; Masood & Rahim, 2020).

The convergence between *Hallyu* and the Halal food industry has the potential to yield significant economic impacts, particularly in the growth of Korean food exports to predominantly Muslim countries and the revenue generated by Halal-certified Korean food products. Muslim customers' increased interest in Korean food points to a potential market for Korean food exports to nations with a large Muslim population. This provides an opportunity for Korean food manufacturers to grow their export market and sales (Nasution et al., 2023)

METHODOLOGY

This review adopted a systematic approach to identify and analyze the relevant literature on *Hallyu* adaptation on the Halal industry. A comprehensive search was conducted in reputable and accredited journals published within the last decade using targeted keywords to identify relevant articles. Through a rigorous screening process, 80 articles were initially identified and narrowed down to a final selection of 50 articles deemed to provide the most relevant and insightful references on *Hallyu*-Halal adaptation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Influence of *Hallyu* on the Halal Food Industry

The introduction and adaptation of Korean cuisine to meet strict Halal requirements has been observed between *Hallyu* and the Halal food industry. Korea's cuisine, known for its rich flavour diversity of ingredients and unique cooking techniques, has started to gain traction in the world Halal market (Hakeem & Lee, 2018; Indarningsih & Siregar, 2023). By modifying traditional recipes and techniques of preparation, restaurants, and food businesses are responding to the demand for Halal Korean cuisine. Without compromising the essence and authenticity of Korean flavours, this adaptation involves the substitution of non-Halal ingredients, such as pork and certain types of alcohol, with permissible alternatives (Goni, 2022; Nadhifah et al., 2019).

In addition, the availability of Korean-certified Halal food products has increased in response to increasing demand from Muslim consumers. This covers a variety of products that have been specially created and approved to meet Halal requirements, such as sauces, instant noodles, and snacks in addition to ready-to-eat meals (Zahra et al., 2023). Beyond just its culinary offerings, *Hallyu* has a significant influence on the Halal food sector. Korean dramas and Korean pop music videos are particularly important in influencing Muslim consumer

preferences and consumption habits. In Korean dramas, visual scenes with characters enjoying traditional Korean meals are often used to illustrate the beauty and cultural significance of this cuisine. Similarly, vibrant images of Korean cuisine are frequently incorporated into K-pop music videos, presenting an attractive image of Korean cuisine (Kim, 2015; Syam & Ichwan, 2023; Yook et al., 2014). In contributing to the development of an aspirational and desirable image of Korean cuisine, these representations create an immersive experience for viewers (Yang et al., 2021).

In response to the growing demand for Halal products, manufacturers have introduced Halal-certified Korean instant noodles, ensuring that Muslim consumers can enjoy a wide range of flavours offered by *Hallyu*-inspired convenience foods (Aditya & Sabarguna, 2023). A key factor in influencing consumer perceptions is the packaging and labelling of Korean instant noodles, often with K-pop idols or famous K-drama characters on them. The fact that these entertainment elements are linked to instant noodle products increases the attractiveness of these products and encourages Muslim consumers to seek out Halal-certified products that are compatible with their dietary requirements (Aditya & Sabarguna, 2023; Osman & Ismail, 2022)

Challenges Faced by the Halal Food Industry in Adopting Korean Products

Synergies between *Hallyu* and the Halal food industry are promising, but there are many challenges to overcome. There are several obstacles to the introduction of Korean products into the Halal market, such as cultural sensitivity or logistical considerations (Amin et al., 2020; Harika et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2022; Pramadya & Oktaviani, 2016). A significant challenge for Korea's food producers is to comply with a variety of Halal certification standards (Bux et al., 2022; Nadhifah et al., 2019). Different countries may have varying Halal certification processes and requirements, leading to complexities in ensuring uniform compliance (Amin et al., 2020). The lack of a common international certification framework implies that Korean producers have to comply with various standards. This makes the certification process more complex and adds layers of complexity to export journeys, by requiring adaptability to individual target markets' requirements (Bashir et al., 2018).

One of the major challenges when it comes to the intersection of *Hallyu* and Halal food is to ensure the authentic representation of Korean cuisine while also adhering to Halal standards. The adaptation of traditional Korean recipes to meet Halal requirements requires striking a fine balance between preserving authenticity and accommodating religious dietary restrictions (Lee & Hati, 2020). To avoid any misunderstandings and to maintain the integrity for Muslim consumers, it is crucial to achieve this balance. Across regions, there are cultural differences in the way food is served, presented, and tasted, making it necessary to adopt a nuanced approach when adapting Korean products to cater to diverse tastes and preferences while still respecting cultural distinctiveness (Nadhifah et al., 2019). Sensitive consideration of local customs ensures that Korean Halal products are well-received in different markets (Albra et al., 2023; Astuti & Asih, 2021; Mujani et al., 2022).

The Halal food industry prides itself on transparency in the supply chain, particularly regarding the origin and processing of ingredients (Choi & Min, 2019; Hakeem & Lee, 2018; Masood & Rahim, 2020). However, Korean food producers who aim to appeal to Halal-conscious consumers face hurdles in meeting their expectations for ethical and Halal consumption. Providing detailed and comprehensive information about the supply chain,

including ingredients and production processes, is challenging for Korean food producers (Amin et al., 2020; Hakem & Lee, 2018; Zahra et al., 2023). Additionally, meeting evolving consumer expectations for ethical sourcing, sustainability, and fair-trade practices beyond mere compliance with Halal standards is critical (Kim et al., 2022). In today's conscientious market, Korean food producers must not only comply with Halal standards but also exceed consumer demands (Yang et al., 2021).

Overcoming challenges related to market access and distribution is essential for Korean food products to enter the Halal market successfully. One of the major obstacles is navigating the diverse legal regimes for Halal products in different countries, which often have different certification requirements, import regulations, and labelling standards (Albra et al., 2023; Astuti & Asih, 2021; Kim et al., 2019; Nadhifah et al., 2019; Zahra et al., 2023). Korean food producers face the difficult task of understanding and complying with these varied regulations to ensure uninterrupted access to the market. In addition, cultural, regional, and individual factors can influence the tastes and culinary preferences of the Halal consumer, necessitating adaptation of Korean food products to appeal to local consumers with Halal requirements (Albra et al., 2023; Lee & Hati, 2020; Nadhifah et al., 2019). Failure to adapt to domestic tastes may hamper market penetration and acceptance. However, some Korean food firms have found success in the Halal market by adopting creative distribution approaches such as working with regional chefs, influencers, or celebrities who support Korean food and culture to raise brand awareness (Chanifah et al., 2022). Participation in international food exhibits and trade events dedicated to Halal items is also a beneficial way for Korean food manufacturers to showcase their products and make valuable contacts in the business (Bashir et al., 2018; Masood & Rahim, 2020).

Opportunities for the Halal Food Industry in Embracing *Hallyu*

Hallyu has a tremendous influence on the consumption habits of younger generations. *Hallyu* has influenced all parts of the younger generation's lives, including their food and beverage preferences. The younger generation tends to replicate the Korean lifestyle, which has resulted in an upsurge in demand for Korean products (Syam & Ichwan, 2023; Oktavianingtias & Muslichah, 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2023). The Halal food sector can ensure that Korean food products are Halal-certified, making them more acceptable to Muslim consumers. This would help increase the market share of Halal Korean food products. Korean food companies must adhere to Halal standards, including proper handling of Halal certification, inclusion of Halal labels, and transparent information on raw materials and processing procedures on product packaging (Syam & Ichwan, 2023; Kim, 2021; Ramadhani et al., 2023b).

Korean food is perceived to be healthier by consumers, and they love its distinctive components. Highlighting the health benefits and unique elements of Korean cuisine can attract customers looking for various nutritious Halal food options (Nasution et al., 2023). Food components also play a favourable effect on food purchasing. As a result, food contents and ingredients must be clearly labelled on the outside, which is projected to boost sales for Muslim consumers by positively influencing their consumption and purchase behaviour (Lee & Hati, 2020). Creating an Islamic brand identity that reflects Muslim consumers' values and interests can help to improve the perception of Korean food products. This may involve integrating aspects such as Islamic symbolism, ethical messaging, and cultural relevance in the branding

and marketing of Korean food products (Hakeem & Lee, 2018). Promoting Halal awareness and knowledge among Muslim customers, particularly in relation to popular Korean food products, can be greatly aided by stakeholders such as the government and Halal-food influencers (Fauzihana & Ayob, 2020; Ramadhani et al., 2023b).

Different age groups may have varying interests and consumption habits. Younger customers, notably millennials and Gen Z, are more willing to explore new and unique cuisines. They may be more experimental with their food choices and willing to try Korean cuisine. Industry players should target this group by providing innovative and visually appealing Halal Korean cuisine options, such as Korean street food or fusion dishes that combine Korean flavours with recognisable components (Anwar & Nor, 2020). The younger demographic has an extensive preference for Korean cuisine. Industry players can target this group by producing a range of Halal Korean cuisine products that appeal to the tastes and preferences of these youths (Widyaningrum et al., 2023a)

Gender can also affect food preferences. Certain Korean cuisines or flavours may appeal to one gender more than the other. For example, industry players may discover that female consumers choose lighter, healthier options, whilst male consumers prefer hearty, savoury options. Menu options and marketing methods can be tailored to meet various preferences, attracting a wide range of customers (Khalid & Wok, 2020)

The widespread popularity of *Hallyu* culture presents an opportunity to introduce Korean food products to consumers in Muslim majority countries who are already familiar with and interested in Korean culture. Partnering with local distributors and retailers in Muslim majority countries can facilitate the distribution and availability of Korean Halal food products, making them more accessible to consumers in these regions. Additionally, the influence of brand ambassadors for Korean products, especially K-pop idols or Korean artists, has a significant impact on purchasing decisions. By capitalising on these opportunities, the Halal food industry can expand its market share and reach a wider audience, contributing to the growth of the global Halal food market (Ekapti & Hakim, 2022; Masood & Rahim, 2020; Yook et al., 2014).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the intersection between *Hallyu* and the Halal food industry presents a fascinating juncture where cultural dynamics, adaptation, and economic potential converge. The study has shed light on the impact of *Hallyu* on the Halal food market, showcasing how Korean cuisine is adapting to meet Halal requirements and exploring the challenges and opportunities associated with this integration. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study. First, the research predominantly focused on the last decade's literature, potentially overlooking historical developments that could provide valuable context. Additionally, the study may not capture real-time market fluctuations and emerging trends, as the field is dynamic and subject to rapid changes. To address these limitations and advance our understanding of the *Hallyu*-Halal intersection, future studies could consider a more extended temporal analysis, incorporating primary data collection methods such as surveys and interviews to capture up-to-date perspectives. Expanding the scope globally and comparing dynamics across diverse regions would enhance the understanding of the *Hallyu*-Halal convergence.

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