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HALAL EXECUTIVE TRAINING FOR B40 MALAYSIANS: THE BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

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Abstract:

Halal executive training is a specialised programme customised to meet the requirements of professionals and entrepreneurs in the halal industry. However, various obstacles may hinder the participation of individuals in the B40 Malaysian group in halal executive training. The objective of this study is to review the barriers and solutions to halal executive training for B40 Malaysians. This study entails the collection and analysis of pertinent data, including as papers, articles, and other publications, to uncover recurring themes or patterns of barriers that hinder B40 Malaysians from accessing halal executive training programmes. This study has identified the following barriers that B40 Malaysians face to participating in halal executive training programs, namely: (a) financial constraints; (b) time constraints; (c) language and cultural challenges; (d) perception of elitism; (e) lack of readiness for digital learning; and (f) lack of awareness. Therefore, several strategies are suggested to enhance the accessibility and relevance of this training programme for B40 Malaysians include: (a) affordability in training participation; (b) flexibility in training practice; (c) language support in training communication; and (d) outreach training programme. In conclusion, this study suggests that there are various identifiable barriers and solutions regarding accessibility to halal executive training for professional development among B40 Malaysians. Besides the identified gaps, this study suggests several subsequent investigations on halal executive training for B40 Malaysians.

Keywords:

Halal, Executive Training, B40, Malaysians

Introduction

Halal executive training is a specialised programme customised to meet the requirements of professionals and entrepreneurs in the halal industry. This resource offers a thorough comprehension of the halal principles, criteria, and procedures for certification. The training programme is designed to provide executives with the essential knowledge and skills required to attain success in the halal market. The programme encompasses all facets of halal business, encompassing marketing, finance, operations, and legal adherence. After finishing this training, executives will possess the necessary knowledge and competence to succeed in the current global halal industry. Halal executive training facilitates understanding and adherence to halal standards for professionals and enterprises. This enables them to access an expanding worldwide Muslim consumer market and make a positive impact on an ethical and sustainable economy.

However, various obstacles may hinder the participation of individuals in the B40 Malaysian group in halal executive training. A primary barrier is financial limits, as the expense of these training programmes can be substantial and may be beyond the means of individuals with few financial resources. Moreover, they may have temporal limitations as a result of employment or familial responsibilities, rendering it arduous for them to dedicate themselves to participating in training sessions. Insufficient access to information and networks can hinder people in this group, as they may lack awareness of available resources or the ability to connect with professional networks that offer knowledge and training opportunities. Moreover, they may be impeded by language barriers (Arifin & Abuisaac, 2018), as several training programmes are often delivered in English or other languages that individuals in this group may lack proficiency in.

The objective of this study is to review the barriers and solutions to halal executive training for B40 Malaysians. This study is expected to have an identifiable potential route to enhance the professional growth of B40 Malaysians through halal executive training, which offers numerous advantages. It would provide significant understanding of the barriers encountered by persons in the B40 group, enabling the development of more efficient and customised programmes that foster inclusivity and fairness within the halal industry. The research can serve to illustrate the significance of such programmes to both individuals and the industry, thereby enhancing awareness and engagement. Additionally, it can emphasise the wider societal and economic advantages of investing in the enhancement of skills and knowledge of individuals in the B40 group, hence aiding in the reduction of inequality, enhancement of social mobility, and fortification of the economy.

Literature Review

The popularity of halal executive training is increasing in Malaysia since it is seen as benefiting businesses in terms of Islamic view, social contribution, financial capital, and human capital, boosting sales and influencing customer purchasing decisions. The popularity of halal executive training is increasing in Malaysia since it is seen as benefiting businesses in terms of Islamic view, social contribution, financial capital, and human capital, boosting sales and influencing customer purchasing decisions (Yusuf et al., 2020). This training programme is specifically tailored to provide executives with the necessary information and ability to proficiently navigate and succeed in the halal market (Siska et al., 2020). The training programme provides extensive instruction on halal methods, standards, and certification procedures, as well as on business operations including finance, marketing, and legal

adherence, which have positive implications for marginalised Muslim populations (Tayob, 2021).

Malaysia provides a range of institutions that offer halal executive training, which includes both short individual courses and extensive professional certification programmes. The Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) regulates halal executive training programmes. (Ahmad & Salleh, 2019). Whereas, the primary providers of the training are the Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC) (Kadir et al., 2016), and public universities (Hashim & Shariff, 2016) such as: (a) the Institute of Fatwa and Halal (IFFAH) of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM); (b) the International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART) of the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM); (c) the Halal Research and Training (HaRT) of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM); (d) the Halal Products Research Institute (HPRI) of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM); (e) Unipeq Sdn. Bhd. by the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM); (f) HOLISTICS Lab Sdn. Bhd. of Universiti Teklonogi Malaysia (UTM); and (g) the University of Malaya Halal Research Centre (UMHRC) at the University of Malaya (UM). These programmes include a combination of theoretical and practical instruction, with participants receiving guidance on the application of acquired information and skills to their professional endeavours.

This programme offers a favourable prospect for B40 Malaysians to enhance their skills and achieve excellence in the halal business (Ramakrishnan & Yasin, 2021). Nevertheless, the expense associated with halal executive training can be a difficulty, rendering it unattainable for individuals from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds. However, the government and several organisations provide scholarships and financial aid to incentivize participation by B40 Malaysians in the training programmes. Malaysia, being a country with a substantial Muslim population, is dedicated to advancing its halal business and fostering the progress and advancement of its participants through initiatives such as halal executive training.

Materials and Method

This study entails the collection and analysis of pertinent data, including as papers, articles, and other publications, to uncover recurring themes or patterns of barriers that hinder B40 Malaysians from accessing halal executive training programmes. The data collecting procedure will entail employing a thorough search strategy that encompasses both electronic and manual searches, utilising specific keywords such as “Halal,” “executive training,” and “B40 Malaysians” to identify pertinent literature. Once similar themes and patterns have been identified, the data will be examined to determine viable solutions for addressing the barriers encountered by B40 Malaysians in attending halal executive training programmes, while taking into account their economic, cultural, and social conditions. The results of this study may offer valuable information for creating policies and interventions aimed at enhancing the reach and availability of halal executive training programmes for B40 Malaysians.

Results and Discussion

This section recognises and discusses the barriers and solutions to halal executive training for B40 Malaysians.

The Barriers of Halal Executive Training for B40 Malaysians

This study has identified the following barriers that B40 Malaysians face to participating in halal executive training programs, namely: (a) financial constraints; (b) time constraints; (c)

language and cultural challenges; (d) perception of elitism; (e) lack of readiness for digital learning; and (f) lack of awareness.

Financial Constraints

Financial constraints pose substantial obstacles for B40 Malaysians in their participation in halal executive training. Individuals classified as B40 in Malaysia generally have limited income and may lack the necessary financial means to afford training programmes. Furthermore, the expense associated with halal executive training programmes may be perceived as a barrier for individuals who desire to take part. Consequently, individuals belonging to the B40 group in Malaysia may encounter difficulties in obtaining the necessary training to progress in their professional development within the halal industry. Furthermore, scholarships, financial help, or grants are frequently not readily obtainable, exacerbating the financial strain. Potential future investigations may delve into methods for offering training programmes at a lower cost or with financial assistance, as well as identifying alternate sources of finance, such as the incorporation of corporate social responsibility projects.

Several studies have identified the difficulties and potential advantages of the halal sector in Malaysia. Both Muhammad et al. (2020) and Mohd Fauzi et al. (2022) acknowledge certain obstacles, including an insufficient workforce, inadequate expertise, and limited understanding, along with unclear directives and the absence of global accreditation. The aforementioned problems may exacerbate the budgetary limitations experienced by B40 Malaysians when it comes to engaging in halal executive training. Conversely, Abdul Rahim et al. (2022) and Nik Mohd Rosli et al. (2022) highlight the significance of knowledge and skills in Islamic finance and halal management, which can be tackled through specialised training programmes. Nevertheless, the financial limitations experienced by B40 Malaysians may impede their capacity to obtain such training. Johan & Hussain (2019) and Poon et al. (2021) emphasise the significance of Islamic financial institutions and executives in advocating and adhering to zakat, which might be utilised to assist B40 Malaysians in obtaining halal executive training.

Time Constraints

Time constraints pose significant obstacles for B40 Malaysians when it comes to engaging in halal executive training. Many B40 Malaysians frequently face the challenge of balancing their career, family, and other obligations, resulting in a scarcity of time to participate in training programmes. The absence of opportunities to engage in flexible learning arrangements can worsen the problem. Potential avenues for further investigation include the advancement of adaptable training programmes, such as the provision of online courses, the implementation of modular-based learning, or the automation of training schedules to cater to the individual requirements of learners. This can effectively reduce time limitations while delivering essential training to B40 Malaysians for their success in the halal industry.

Several studies have emphasised the significance of ongoing training for halal executives in Malaysia, namely in the domains of internal halal assurance systems (Hassan et al., 2015), supply chain management (Hashim & Shariff, 2016), and logistics (Pahim et al., 2012). The necessity of this training is underscored by the executives' deficiency in knowledge and abilities. Nevertheless, the literature has not directly tackled the issue of time limitations faced by B40 Malaysians when it comes to participation in such training. The existing study gap indicates a necessity for conducting additional investigation on the particular difficulties and potential solutions for this group.

Language and Cultural Challenges

The language and cultural challenges pose substantial hindrances for B40 Malaysians in their engagement with halal executive training (Shahar et al., 2019). English is commonly the predominant language used for teaching in numerous halal executive training programmes (Fischer, 2015). This may provide difficulties for B40 Malaysians who lack proficiency in the English language, hence hindering their ability to acquire and grasp course topics. Furthermore, several training programmes may not be tailored to meet the cultural requirements of B40 Malaysians. Consequently, there can be restricted participation, which hampers the training's efficacy. In order to address these problems, it is recommended that future study prioritise the development of training programmes that specifically address the cultural and linguistic requirements of B40 Malaysians. In addition, offering language assistance services or translating the course materials into local languages helps guarantee that learners are able to access and understand the training more efficiently.

The involvement of B40 Malaysians in halal executive training is impacted by a range of language and cultural obstacles. The challenges in the halal business encompass insufficient personnel and expertise in halal certification agencies (Muhammad et al., 2020), unclear guidelines and the absence of global certification (Mohd Fauzi et al., 2022), and the requirement for culturally appropriate human capabilities in halal supply chains (Voak & Fairman, 2020). The involvement of halal executives in food production enterprises is of utmost importance, necessitating well-defined competencies (Nik Mohd Rosli et al., 2022). The intention of non-Muslim consumers to purchase halal food products is affected by their attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. This influence is moderated by the acculturation effect, as stated by Lim et al. (2020). The adherence of Muslim entrepreneurs to halal certification is influenced by their attitude, social impact, and awareness (Basarud-din et al., 2022). According to Hasan et al. (2020), SMEs in Sabah have a strong understanding and recognition of halal certification. However, they perceive the certification procedure to be costly and intricate.

Perception of Elitism

The perception of elitism may pose a big barrier for B40 Malaysians when it comes to participation in halal executive training. They may view halal executive training as an exclusive opportunity that is often accessible only to individuals who are affluent and influential in society, resulting in low rates of engagement. Subsequent studies could investigate how to clarify the notion of elitism by offering increased transparency and easily accessible information regarding the training programmes. This may involve implementing focused marketing initiatives to promote the accessibility of the training programmes as well as actively engaging with local communities to establish trust and rapport. Furthermore, offering role models that represent the varied range of B40 Malaysians could potentially boost the learners' self-assurance in engaging with these programmes (Ramakrishnan & Yasin, 2021).

Various studies have investigated the perception of halal products and services among diverse demographics in Malaysia. Hasan et al. (2020) and Azlan et al. (2022) both emphasise the recognition and favourable view of halal certification among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and university students, respectively. The high degree of religious tolerance noticed in halal eating experiences is a clear manifestation of this positive perspective (Abdul Khalek & Mohd Mokhtar, 2022). Nevertheless, these studies do not explicitly tackle the issue of elitism associated with B40 Malaysians engaging in halal executive training. Additional investigation is required to comprehend this particular facet of halal involvement.

Lack of Readiness for Digital Learning

Insufficient preparedness for digital learning poses a notable barrier for B40 Malaysians engaging in halal executive training. Proficiency in using technological gadgets and access to a reliable internet connection are prerequisites for engaging in digital learning. However, B40 Malaysians face difficulties in meeting these requirements due to budgetary limitations and the restricted availability of digital devices in rural regions (Wahi et al., 2019). Furthermore, certain learners may have inadequate digital literacy and may struggle to adapt to an online learning environment. Potential future investigations could delve into strategies for overcoming obstacles by offering assistance to learners in obtaining access to digital gadgets and reliable internet connectivity. Moreover, a training programme that prioritises the development of digital skills and proficiency in online learning can enhance learners' preparedness for digital education. This can offer a more comprehensive and easily accessible opportunity for B40 Malaysians to engage in halal executive training (Darmalinggam et al., 2022).

The insufficient preparedness for digital learning among B40 Malaysians engaging in halal executive training is a complex problem. Educators are facing challenges in maximising the utilisation of digital technology in their instructional practises (Zeehan et al., 2020), and there is a requirement to establish the fundamental skills and abilities of halal executives (Nik Mohd Rosli et al., 2022). Consumers support the integration of the halal industry and Islamic financing (Mohd Noor et al., 2020), whereas Muslim entrepreneurs encounter difficulties in meeting halal certification requirements (Basarud-din et al., 2022). A study conducted by Daud Awang et al. (2020) found that there is a direct correlation between understanding and acceptance of Islamic finance and the implementation of Islamic financial management among halal entrepreneurs. The level of consciousness, understanding, and disposition towards halal employment has an impact on one's inclination to act (Hashim et al., 2020), and undergoing training for halal certification can enhance consumer contentment (Mardlotillah et al., 2022). Nevertheless, instructors of Islamic education encounter obstacles when it comes to online instruction and learning (Rashed & Mohd. Hanipah, 2022). These findings indicate the necessity of implementing extensive digital training programmes that are customised to cater to the specific requirements of B40 Malaysians who are engaged in halal executive training.

Lack of Awareness

Lack of awareness is a notable barrier that may hinder the involvement of B40 Malaysians in halal executive training regarding the existence and importance of training programmes for career progression in the halal business. In addition, the restricted scope and insufficient resources of training providers may result in certain learners being unaware of training programmes that specifically address their needs. Subsequent investigations should prioritise the development of consciousness by means of focused awareness efforts tailored to B40 Malaysians. This may involve implementing programmes such as training and awareness workshops in underserved community centres located in remote regions with limited access to training providers. Additionally, it entails partnering with government and non-profit organisations to advocate for the significance of halal certification and enhance the affordability and accessibility of training opportunities. In addition, establishing a centralised platform that enables learners to access information about the training programmes that are accessible could enhance awareness and raise participation rates among B40 Malaysians.

The lack of awareness among B40 Malaysians about participating in halal executive training is a significant issue, as highlighted in several studies. Oemar et al. (2020) and Hasan et al.

(2020) both emphasise the need for training and socialisation to improve awareness of halal food and certification, particularly among street vendors and SMEs. However, the cost and complexity of the certification process are identified as key barriers (Hasan et al., 2020; Muhammad et al., 2020). Despite good awareness levels, misconceptions about the certification process persist (Oemar et al., 2020). These findings underscore the need for targeted and accessible training programmes to address these barriers and improve participation in halal executive training among B40 Malaysians.

The Solutions of Halal Executive Training for B40 Malaysians

To ensure that halal executive training is accessible to B40 Malaysians, it is necessary to tackle the current barriers that this demographic encounters. Therefore, several strategies are suggested to enhance the accessibility and relevance of this training programme for B40 Malaysians include: (a) affordability in training participation; (b) flexibility in training practice; (c) language support in training communication; and (d) outreach training programme.

Affordability in Training Participation

Various alternative funding strategies can enhance the affordability of halal executive training programmes for B40 Malaysians. An effective strategy is to create a scholarship or training sponsorship initiative specifically aimed at persons residing in disadvantaged communities (Adzis et al., 2019). Possible sources of funding for this programme include training providers, government agencies, non-profit organisations, or commercial enterprises with a vested interest in promoting talent development among B40 Malaysians. The scholarship or sponsorship grant has the potential to fully or partially subsidise the training fees, hence increasing the participation rate among B40 Malaysians.

Another viable financing option entails the provision of subsidised training packages. In order to accomplish this, government agencies could engage in collaboration with training providers to create cost-effective training programmes that align with the specific requirements of B40 Malaysians. The government has the ability to provide financial assistance to training providers by subsidising a portion of the training expenses. It is crucial for the effectiveness of B40 youth training in poverty eradication to have strategic government intervention, which includes providing subsidies for a portion of their training expenses (Darmalinggam et al., 2022). This will allow training providers to decrease the rates imposed on specifically targeted B40 Malaysians. This strategy guarantees that B40 Malaysians have access to high-quality training programmes that are tailored to their distinctive requirements.

Training providers have the potential to create a customised finance framework specifically designed for B40 Malaysians (Hashim & Shariff, 2016). This strategy may incorporate adaptable repayment options or discounted training prices for individuals experiencing financial hardships. This possibility could be facilitated through a partnership with financial institutions, such as microfinance institutions or non-governmental organisations that provide loans with low interest rates (Zakaria et al., 2019). This strategy guarantees that individuals from the B40 socioeconomic group in Malaysia have the chance to access training programmes and enhance their career opportunities without being limited by financial restrictions.

Flexibility in Training Practice

Several different training approaches can enhance the flexibility of halal executive training programmes for B40 Malaysians. An effective strategy is to provide the choice of online or blended learning alternatives. Online learning enables learners to conveniently access courses

and educational resources from any location with an internet connection (Johnson et al., 2021). This strategy is especially beneficial for B40 Malaysians, a significant number of whom may face restricted opportunities to access training providers due to geographical or mobility constraints. Blended learning alternatives, which integrate online and in-person instruction, provide increased flexibility while retaining the advantages of guided teaching (Li et al., 2020). Besides, an additional option for training is to create concise and rigorous programmes that are customised to cater to the specific requirements of B40 Malaysians. The courses can be designed to have a shorter duration, ranging from a few days to a few weeks, in order to accommodate learners with job or family obligations, thereby enhancing accessibility. This strategy would be especially beneficial for individuals who are unable to dedicate themselves to extended training programmes owing to time or budgetary limitations (Lestari et al., 2020).

Furthermore, training providers could also implement a modular training methodology, enabling learners to choose the modules that align with their individual interests or professional objectives (Abramova et al., 2019). This strategy guarantees that learners can concentrate on cultivating skills and information in areas that are most advantageous to them, rather than being compelled to engage in a comprehensive training course that may not align with their individual requirements. Additionally, training providers should contemplate the provision of evening or weekend programmes to fit the work schedules of B40 Malaysians. This would enable learners to participate in lessons outside of their typical working hours or over weekends, without compromising their earnings or personal obligations.

Language Support in Training Communication

Enhancing the supportiveness of halal executive training programmes for B40 Malaysians can be achieved by implementing alternative language communication models. To address language barriers and enhance accessibility of training programmes, it is crucial to offer training materials and communication, as such in critical care communication (Arnold et al., 2015), in the languages that B40 Malaysians are most proficient in. An effective strategy involves providing language training programmes in languages other than English, specifically Bahasa Malaysia (and also Mandarin or Tamil if applicable), as these languages are commonly spoken in Malaysia (Winskel, 2020). This strategy can assist B40 Malaysians, who may lack proficiency in English, in comprehending the training materials more effectively. In addition, training providers should offer multilingual training materials that present the subject in both English and local languages, in order to accommodate learners from varied cultural backgrounds.

An alternative strategy involves providing translation services for instructional materials and communication. Training providers have the option to offer professional translation services or establish partnerships with local organisations or volunteers to provide translation assistance. In addition, offering subtitles or transcriptions for videos or online resources can benefit learners with hearing problems (Talaván, 2019) or those who prefer learning through visual and written materials (Kumar, 2021). Offering linguistic assistance during training sessions might also prove advantageous. Training providers have the option to involve bilingual facilitators or interpreters to offer linguistic assistance during training sessions. This will enhance learners' comprehension of the training material and foster a conducive environment for them to freely inquire and articulate their viewpoints.

Outreach Training Programme

Conducting outreach programs to rural areas, where many B40 Malaysians live, could raise awareness of the opportunities and benefits of halal executive training. This could also help dispel any myths or misconceptions that people may have about halal practices or training programs, encouraging more individuals to participate. Different training course models might be implemented that prioritise accessibility, cost, and flexibility (Huynh et al., 2019). Mobile training units approach, for instance, can entail delivering training programmes through mobile units that move to various locations (Lockhart & Paulman, 2020), offering training opportunities to B40 Malaysians who are unable to commute to training centres. These mobile training units can be outfitted with all the requisite resources to facilitate the course, so enabling learners to conveniently access training in remote or rural regions.

The micro-credentialing approach offers B40 Malaysians concise, industry-focused modules, or micro-credentials, that are more cost-effective and easily attainable compared to comprehensive training courses. Micro-credentials enable learners to progressively develop their skills and knowledge at their own pace and in a cost-effective manner (Oliver, 2021). Furthermore, these modules can be delivered via both online and offline methods, enhancing their flexibility and availability. A hybrid training approach can combine online and in-person training programmes to offer flexibility and accessibility (Wan & Niu, 2020). In addition, hybrid training approaches enable B40 Malaysians to engage in online training modules and also attend in-person workshops and training sessions, guaranteeing they can benefit from both options. Besides, collaborative training models entail establishing partnerships between training providers and local businesses or organisations (Bunger & Lengnick-Hall, 2018). These collaborations aim to offer employment possibilities and on-the-job training to B40 Malaysians. These cooperative training models can offer B40 Malaysians practical experience and supplementary financial aid, facilitating their access to training possibilities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study suggests that there are various identifiable barriers and solutions regarding accessibility to halal executive training for professional development among B40 Malaysians. The respective organisations are advised to enhance the accessibility and relevance of halal executive training for B40 Malaysians by applying these techniques and tackling the obstacles they confront. By undertaking this action, it is possible to enhance inclusiveness and fairness within the halal business, thereby promoting increased economic growth and development for the nation. This study also found some research gaps, including the lack of recent literature on B40 Malaysians' time constraints for training. The study gap suggests further research on this group's challenges and solutions. Moreover, elitism perceptions related to B40 Malaysians regarding halal executive training are also not widely addressed in current research. Hence, more research is needed to understand this aspect.

Besides the identified gaps, this study suggests several subsequent investigations on halal executive training for B40 Malaysians. The subsequent investigations should prioritise the improvement of the accessibility, efficacy, and perception of the training programmes. It is proposed to conduct investigations to assess the efficacy of various teaching approaches, to comprehend and alleviate the specific obstacles encountered by B40 Malaysians, and to explore the significance of career counselling services. Furthermore, doing research from the employer's perspective helps assess the significance of halal executive training in their hiring choices and the prospective avenues for growth for B40 Malaysians. Exploring the availability of halal executive training in other nations might provide valuable insights for adopting

effective methods from different regions. The research findings have the potential to enhance the inclusion and expansion of the halal industry while also creating avenues for B40 Malaysians to advance in this sector.

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