

**JOURNAL OF TOURISM,
HOSPITALITY AND
ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT
(JTHEM)**

www.gaexcellence.com/jthem



HALAL GASTRONOMY TOURISM THROUGH LOCAL FOOD PROVIDER EDUCATION: A MAQASID SHARIAH PERSPECTIVE ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Wan Nazri Che Mat Safiee¹, Siti Syahirah Saffinee^{2*}

¹Faculty of Syariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

 3232452@raudah.usim.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-7312-7725>

²Faculty of Syariah and Law, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

 syahirah.saffinee@usim.edu.my

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2393-2671>

*Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 28.01.2026

Revised date: 15.02.2026

Accepted date: 26.03.2026

Published date: 31.03.2026

To cite this document:

Safiee, C. M. W. N., & Saffinee, S. S. (2026). Halal Gastronomy Tourism Through Local Food Provider Education: A Maqasid Shariah Perspective on Cultural Diversity. *Journal of Tourism Hospitality and Environment Management*, 11 (43), 764-782.

Abstract:

Local food plays a crucial role in enhancing the tourist experience by allowing travelers to explore regional cuisine and immerse themselves in local culture. With approximately one-third of travel budgets spent on food, gastronomy is a key attraction in tourism. However, if the experience is limited to food tasting without integrating cultural and traditional activities, its impact is diminished. To enrich this experience, local food providers (LFPs) can adopt creative, education-based approaches that not only promote their products but also provide meaningful cultural insights. Alignment with the Maqasid Shariah principle is evident in preserving intellect and promoting knowledge through engagement with local foods. Data were collected via structured thematic indexing of semi-structured interview responses with eight Malaysian LFPs specializing in traditional cuisine. Responses were coded inductively, and similar codes were grouped into themes based on frequency. The study reveals that integrating Maqasid Shariah and Halalan-Toyyiban principles enhances service quality, strengthens religious affiliation, and promotes cultural inclusivity. This approach increases customer trust, facilitates cultural exchange, and supports LFPs' growth in the global market. Offering a comprehensive model, the study enables LFPs to integrate Maqasid Shariah and Halalan-Toyyiban principles, enhancing halal edugastronomy and fostering spiritual fulfillment and cultural diversity in the Nusantara region.

DOI:10.35631/JTHEM.1143047

Keyword:

Cultural Diversity; Halalan-Toyyiban; Halal Edugastronomy; Local Food Providers; Maqasid Shariah



© The authors (2026). This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. For commercial re-use, please contact jthem@gaexcellence.com.

Introduction

A traveller tastes where spice and heritage meet,
Halal assures the lawful, yet meaning seeks insight.
When knowledge enriches food beyond taste,
Gastronomy preserves culture and nurtures the intellect.

Halal tourism is rapidly emerging as a significant growth driver in the global tourism sector, responding to the increasing demand for halal-compliant services and products. The halal tourism market was valued at approximately USD 266.3 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach USD 417.6 billion by 2034, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.6% from 2024 to 2034. Halal tourism generally refers to travel activities that comply with Islamic principles, encompassing destinations, services, and products that meet Shariah requirements. Core elements of halal tourism include adherence to Islamic law, suitability for Muslim travelers, and the alignment of destinations, purposes, and offerings with halal values. Within this context, local food plays an important role, as its ingredients and preparation processes must conform to Islamic dietary regulations to ensure religious compliance and trust among Muslim tourists.

Local food significantly enhances tourists' gastronomic experiences, especially when they savor authentic culinary offerings crafted by local providers. Vishwakarma, Jaiswal, & Verma (2025) define authentic cuisine as food that reflects a specific place's cultural heritage, encompassing traditional ingredients, recipes, and preparation methods passed down through generations. However, tourists who consume local food without understanding its cultural significance miss the opportunity for a deeper connection to the local community. Integrating educational elements into the gastronomic experience can bridge this gap, offering tourists insights into local culture and traditions.

Educational experiences related to local gastronomy can have a profound impact on tourists' learning and cultural immersion. Kokkranikal & Carabelli (2024) suggest that tourism experiences are ongoing processes that allow tourists to engage with and enjoy a destination fully. Incorporating educational components can increase the appeal of local food offerings and raise awareness of their cultural uniqueness. As gastronomy tourism continues to grow globally, understanding a culture's culinary practices provides tourists with meaningful connections and unforgettable memories.

The discussion on gastronomic experience and experience offerings is diverse. Past research have extensively explored gastronomic experiences, often emphasizing sensory perceptions, cultural identity and marketing (Seyitoğlu & Atsız, 2024), tourist satisfaction and the role of local food in enhancing tourism offerings (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). However, limited studies have delved into the educational value and cognitive knowledge insertion within gastronomic

experience from the perspective of the service provider, particularly within the context of halal gastronomy. The past research related to the cognitive appraisal of gastronomic experience mainly revolved around tourists' psychological stimulation from food consumption (Şahin & Kılıçlar, 2023). Understanding how the integration of educational elements in the gastronomic experience can provide unique insights into the effective way of cultural immersion to enhance tourists' engagement with local food traditions. Addressing this gap, the study examines existing educational elements of halal gastronomy in tourism and explores their contribution to a deeper understanding of Islamic dietary laws, cultural heritage, and culinary practices, ultimately enriching tourists' travel experiences.

Literature Review

Halal Gastronomy Tourism

The term “gastronomy” was created by combining the Greek terms “gaster” (stomach) and “nomas” (law) (Sormaz et al., 2016). It can be understood from the classic definition as the knowledge of all laws that provision the art of eating good food. While Rojas-Rivas et al. (2020) has stated that gastronomy encompasses not only the production of food, but also how, with whom, where, and when people consume it. Another definition related to gastronomy is it is a fine cuisine, a legacy left by generations of cooks, and the food of precise skills and methods (Gheorghe et al., 2014) . Thus, gastronomy is a complex concept that combines the art of eating, as well as reflecting the culture and traditions. It explores the cultural aspects through the local food and drink consumption in a certain region. Hence, gastronomy is about appreciating the relation between the host culture and their food. Nevertheless, despite this consensus, the forms of gastronomic interaction may change over time, depending on region and social status.

Gastronomy tourism has a similar concept with the definition of gastronomy that highlights culinary and culture. Gastronomy tourism is often connected to people's attraction by uncovering the stories behind food, including its historical significance, cultural connections, and the local society in a certain destination. The objective of gastronomy tourism is to enhance the gastronomic experience for tourists that taste heritage food as this factor will affect the revisit intention (Abdullah & Rahman, 2022) . The important components that can be included in gastronomy tourism are eating local food, having a visit at local places, and learning about local culture and traditions. According to Tontapanish (2004) , four developments can change an ordinary place into a gastronomy tourism destination as stated in Figure 1.

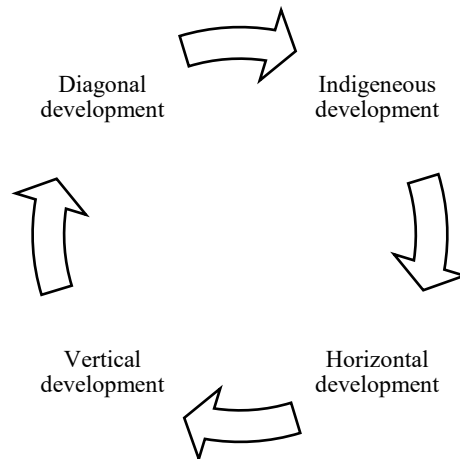


Figure 1: Four Developments to Change an Ordinary Place into a Gastronomy Tourism Destination

Source: Adapted from (Tontapanish, 2004.)

Starting from indigeneous development which is strengthening the root cause of the places by putting the main concern on already existing sources. For this, Malaysia can focus on promoting its halal gastronomy dishes from each state and emphasize the cleanliness of local premises. Horizontal development is collaborating with other suppliers constantly and adding more steps in the production process, not just the material part of the production chain. Malaysia can focus on its food security and build partnerships with local farmers to enhance the food supply chain from farm to fork. The authorities also need to encourage the local suppliers to have the halal certificate which makes it easier for food premises to obtain halal raw materials. Next, vertical development is expanding services and equipment related to food production, creating new linkages that integrate gastronomy into other sectors of the economy. Through vertical development, Malaysia can expand its food-related services and experiences, integrating gastronomy into tourism through food festivals, cooking classes, and culinary tours, while also boosting culinary education. The final step is diagonal development to improve the knowledge base about gastronomy experience and create smart gastronomy clusters in the economy. Malaysia can lead halal gastronomy tourism in the world by adding technology at all levels and enhancing the gastronomic experience for tourists.

To make a destination as a halal gastronomy tourism, it is not enough to include halal words in the context or use halal food. Halal gastronomy tourism involves touring destinations to taste authentic local cuisine prepared with halal ingredients, catering to Muslim tourists globally (Yousaf & Xiucheng, 2018). The notion of halal gastronomy tourism must contain the *halalan-toyyiban* concept, encompassing various food-related aspects. *Halal* refers to anything permissible by Shariah, giving individuals the freedom to choose whether to engage in it or avoid while *toyyib* is something that is good and clean. It is believed that halal is a decision made within Islamic law, whereas toyyib serves as proof provided by someone. Therefore, *halalan-toyyiban* comprehends the permissibility and the concept of wholesomeness, purity, and overall quality in food production and consumption. There are several things that local food providers need to be concerned about when implementing this concept on their premises as stated in Figure 2.

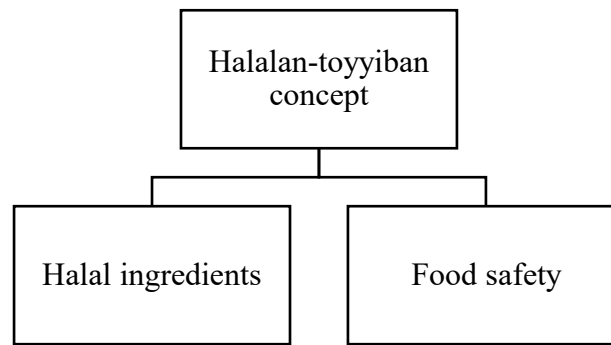


Figure 2: Halalan-toyyiban Concept

Source: Authors

Halal ingredients are an obligation that local food providers need to use when serving halal food as it is the first source to use. Halal food ingredients are the substances and components that are permitted to be used in producing food and must follow Islamic dietary laws. Local food providers must carefully inspect every ingredient they use to ensure it does not contain any forbidden substances, as shown by a case in Malaysia where rice wine was used to prepare a chicken rice clay pot (Solihin et al., 2023). Additionally, *halal* ingredients include the materials used in food processing, as issues with halal status may arise from these materials. There was a case involving a premise that used a brush made of pig hairs to apply oil to chicken, raising worries about halal compliance.

The second component of the *halalan-toyyiban* concept covers food safety includes cleanliness, hygiene, pest control, and food authenticity. Food safety aims to minimize the risk of contamination when the food is handled, processed, and stored (Meinert et al., 2023). It is crucial for local food providers to address, as numerous cases have occurred due to a lack of hygiene in their premises such as a total of 2,242 restaurants have been ordered to close by the Ministry of Health (MOH) for being dirty and dangerous to people's health in Kuala Lumpur. Local food providers must establish a daily cleaning routine for their premises, which should be carefully monitored and maintained to prevent any negligence that could expose to customer's health. They also need to attend food handler training because their knowledge and attitudes towards the practice are critical in ensuring that every food handler complies with the food safety rules and prevents any contamination.

Regular cleaning of the premises can help local food providers maintain hygiene and they can implement a pest control system to prevent pests from entering and contaminating. Local food providers can establish their pest control mechanisms or hire external contractors to ensure their premises remain pest-free. However, they need to know that only organic pesticides that can be used if they want to do it on their own and pesticides must be labeled and stored in a specific area. Besides, food authenticity is also related to *halalan-toyyiban* concept as it can control the ethical consideration of local food providers (Abdul Mokti et al., 2024; Saffinee & Jamaludin, 2023). Authentic food excludes food fraud or the purposeful exploitation of food for monetary gain. Local food providers should prepare and serve the food transparently and not overclaim it to preserve good manners when providing *halal* food. Thus, the implementation of *halalan-toyyiban* concept in food industries is essential not only to protect people's health but also to the enhancement of the quality of life. The *halalan-toyyiban* concept will help gastronomy tourism in better exposure and preservation mainly for Muslim tourists.

The Role of Local Food Providers in EduGastronomy

The word edugastronomy is derived from the words education and gastronomy (Saffinee et al., 2025). Education is the process of gaining knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes through various forms of learning for personal growth and development. Three categories of education are formal, informal, and non-formal learning (Elice et al., 2023) as shown in Table 1. In this study, the approach of informal education is suitable to be paired with gastronomy as the local food providers can provide the approaches to transfer information about local food to tourists.

Table 1: The Forms of Education

Formal learning	Informal learning	Non-formal learning
A structured pathway comprising basic education, secondary education, and higher education such as the school system education.	It happens outside the institutional curriculum and contains activities that involve the pursuit of skills or knowledge such as family education that teaches about faith, morals, and social interaction.	Any activity organized outside the formal system intended to provide services to certain target students in achieving learning objectives such as learning to read al-Quran at a non-formal institution.

Source: Adapted from (Elice et al., 2023).

Local food providers can play a crucial role as they are the front liners in serving local food to tourists. The activities that can be under the scope of gastronomy tourism are eating at local festivals and restaurants, visiting local food producers, observing the process and preparation of local food, or even eating the local food from famous local chefs. Cooking classes can serve as one of the approaches from local food providers to educate about the cultural and culinary aspects of local food (Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2024). These classes offer tourists the opportunity to observe the cooking process, understand the ingredients, and know the right methods to cook. Tourists who take part in these activities gain a deep understanding of local food, creating a memorable gastronomic experience that creates a strong connection to the local culture.

Preservation of Intellect in Halal EduGastronomy Tourism

Maqasid means things that are wanted or intended while Shariah means the path to the water source and can be interpreted as walking toward the source of life. Maqasid Shariah are the meanings or objectives that Shariah seeks to achieve in every rule or most of its laws, where the essence of the purpose of Shariah is to realize benefits and eliminate harm to humans. Imam al-Ghazali defined Maqasid Shariah by emphasizing its focus on the preservation of five essential objectives: religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth as stated in Figure 3 (Fisol et al., 2019). Therefore, halal edugastronomy tourism will focus on the preservation of intellect as it focuses on eating halal food and educating local food providers.

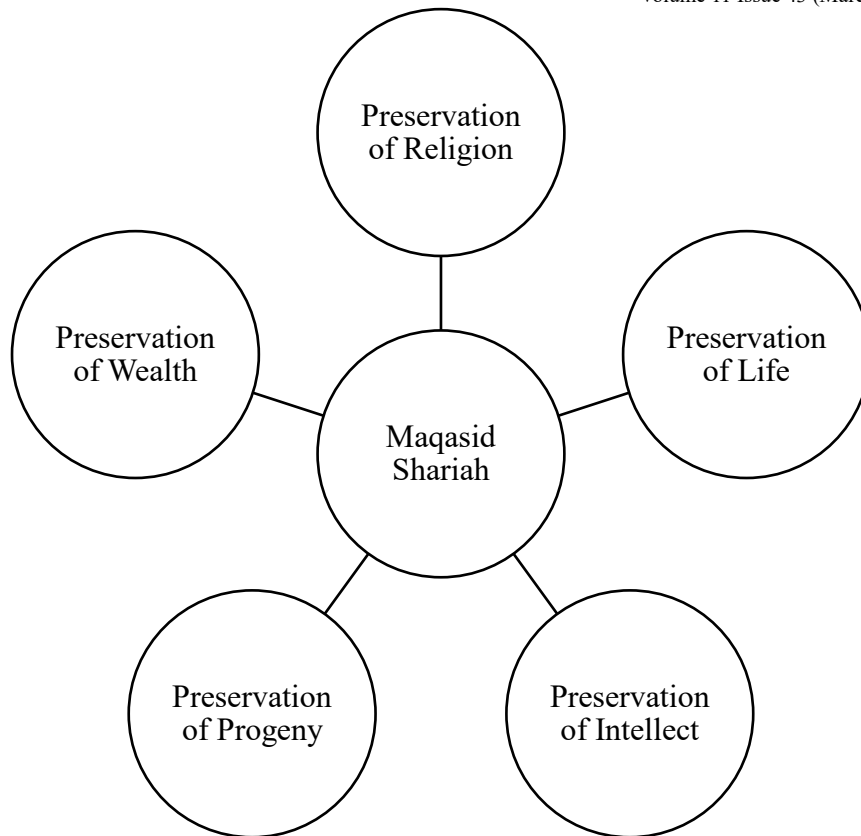


Figure 3: Five Essentials of Maqasid Shariah

Source: (Fisol et al., 2019).

Zakaria et al. (2020) refers to the preservation of intellect in the Maqasid Shariah as nourishing it with knowledge and keeping it from anything harmful. In the context of halal edugastronomy tourism (Figure 4), the preservation of intellect is reflected in tourists gaining new knowledge about local food through educational approaches. Tourists gain a better understanding of various culinary traditions by learning about local food origins, preparation, and cultural significance. An educational approach such as cooking classes can stimulate intellectual curiosity and promote awareness of the *halalan-toyyiban* principles. Enhancing knowledge, the process also encourages thoughtful appreciation of the relationship between food, culture, and Islamic values.

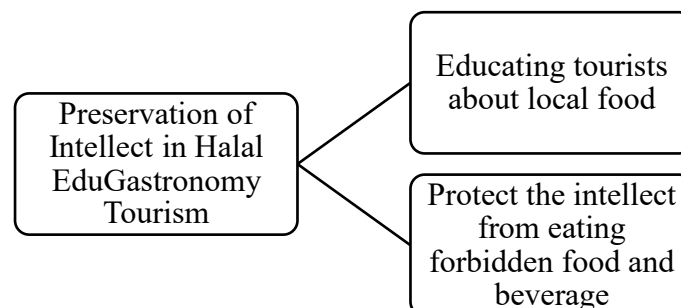


Figure 4: Preservation of Intellect in Halal EduGastronomy Tourism

Source: Authors

Plus, they also protect their mental health by consuming only halal food and avoiding prohibited beverages, which aligns with the principles of Maqasid Shariah. Consuming substances that cause loss of consciousness, such as alcohol, wine, and drugs, is strictly prohibited in Islam (Zakaria et al., 2020). The preservation of intellect is vital for the development of halal gastronomy tourism appearances that conform with the Shariah principles. Therefore, the intellect must be preserved and anyone who neglects this responsibility has abandoned the command of Allah.

“You who believe, intoxicants and gambling, idolatrous practices, and (divining with) arrows are repugnant acts, Satan’s doing shun them so that you may prosper.” (The Quran, 5:90)

Methodology

Employing a multi-case qualitative approach, the study focused on informants’ discourse during interactions on halal edugastronomy tourism. A multiple case study design was adopted to enable pattern identification and cross-case comparison among selected cases. This approach supports in-depth understanding based on a relatively small number of participants (Khoa, Hung, & Hejsalem-Brahmi, 2023).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight informants who are local food providers offering traditional dishes as their signature. The informants were based in three Malaysian states: Kelantan, Kedah, and Negeri Sembilan, and were labelled as Food Premises A to H to maintain anonymity. Responses were analyzed inductively to identify recurring themes. The analysis focused on three key areas: Gastronomy Understanding, Halalan-Toyyiban Compliance, and Educational Outreach, enabling systematic comparison across cases. Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection, and informed consent was secured from all informants. Measures were implemented to ensure anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study.

Results

Theme 1: Understanding Gastronomy Tourism

The primary theme emerging from the interviews with eight Informants (N=8) (Figure 5) revolves around the conceptualization of gastronomy and traditional food. The Informants’ understanding can be categorized into four distinct dimensions: identity and ethnicity, regional/geographical association, authenticity through heritage, and the tourist experience.

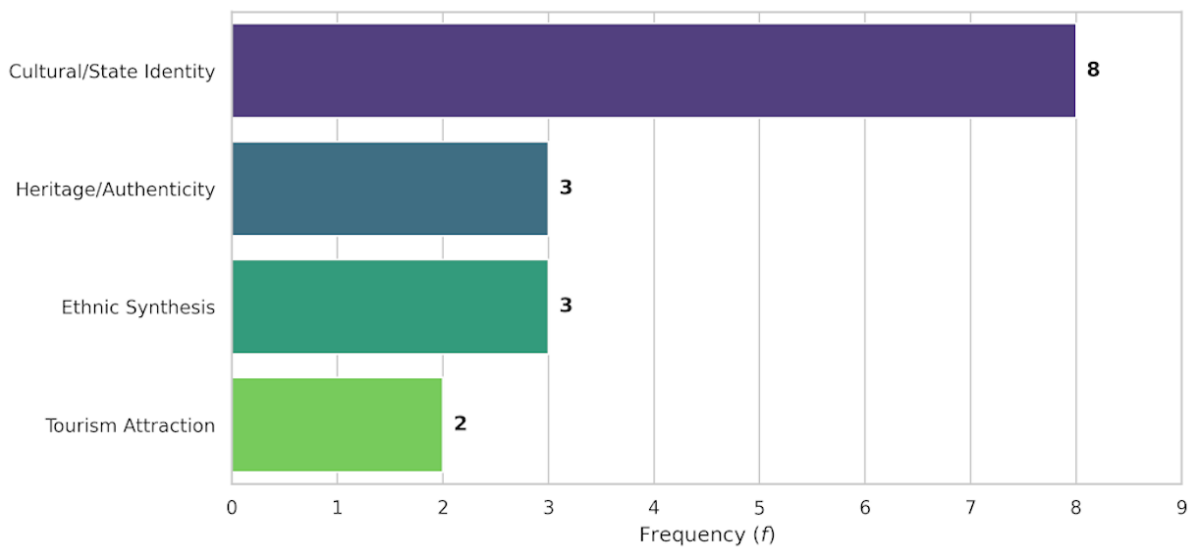


Figure 5: Dimensions of Gastronomy Understanding (N=8)

Source: Authors

Identity and Ethnicity

A significant portion of the Informants views gastronomy as a vessel for ethnic and cultural identity. Informant A highlights that local gastronomy is a “symbol of identity” for an ethnicity, specifically citing how Kelantanese identity is reflected not just in the food, but in the physical environment (traditional houses and decorations). Similarly, Informant E notes that traditional food represents the customs of specific communities, including Malay, Chinese, and Indian groups, describing it as a hallmark of “Nusantara cuisine”.

Regional and Geographical Association

There is a strong consensus that gastronomy is defined by geography. Informants consistently linked specific dishes to states:

Table 2: The Dishes by States

State	Transcription	Dishes
Kelantan	“In Kelantan, <i>budu</i> is a staple, and their way of life revolves around agriculture, such as rearing chickens, which leads to dishes like <i>gulai ayam kampung</i> and <i>gulai serati</i> . There’s also influence from foreign settlers like the <i>tok sheikh</i> (Arabs/Yemenis/Pakistanis) who brought elements of <i>kerutuk</i> (a rich, spiced stew), spices, and various curries.....For Kelantan, you can mention dishes like <i>gulai darat</i> , <i>gulai ikan kering</i> , <i>gulai ikan ayam</i> ,	<i>Nasi Kerabu</i> , <i>Gulai Darat</i> , and <i>Budu</i>

	<i>kerutuk serati, kerutuk daging, and many more..” (Informant A)</i>	
	<i>“Kelantan is synonymous with nasi kerabu” (Informant B)</i>	
	<i>“Kelantan is known for nasi kerabu...” (Informant D)</i>	
Negeri Sembilan	<i>“Every state has its signature dishes, like Kedah with its air asam... Here, we bring together a variety of Malay Nusantara cuisines” (Informant E)</i>	<i>Daging Salai and Rendang Ayam Maman</i>
Kedah	<i>“In Negeri Sembilan, a traditional dish like rendang ayam maman requires using ayam kampung or ayam pencen” (Informant H)</i>	
	<i>Kedah with its air asam (Informant E)</i>	<i>Air Asam</i>

Source: Authors

Informant A further distinguishes regional identity through sourcing, noting that Kelantanese gastronomy is defined by ingredients unique to the local landscape, such as *siput sedut*, other states might use *siput Belitung* (a type of snail) sourced from river and paddy fields.

Authenticity and Generational Heritage

Authenticity is viewed as a combination of traditional preparation methods and historical lineage. Informant F and G define traditional food as dishes “passed down through generations”.

“Tourism often revolves around experiencing local cuisines, and traditional food is more about authentic dishes passed down through generations.” (Informant F)

“Traditional food refers to dishes that have been passed down through generations within a community in a specific district or state.” (Informant G)

Informant H emphasizes that authenticity is tied to “specific skills” and the use of exact ingredients (e.g., using *ayam kampung* for specific recipes), suggesting that gastronomy is a craft that requires specialized knowledge.

“Additionally, not everyone can prepare traditional dishes because it requires specific skills that need to be learned.” (Informant H)

Gastronomy as a Tourism “Pull Factor”

Finally, informants connect food directly to the tourism experience. Informant G distinguishes “gastronomic tourism” as the act of “food hunting” or exploration (“...gastronomic tourism is more about exploring and discovering food, often referred to as “food hunting.”). Informant D notes that food acts as a primary motivator for travel, where the reputation of a state’s signature dish serves as the main attraction for visitors (“...tourism is like when people visit a state, they want to try the local food there. Traditional food is something that, when people mention a state, they immediately associate it with a specific dish...”)

Theme 2: Halalan-Toyyiban Compliance

The findings regarding Halalan-Toyyiban compliance (Figure 6) reveal a multi-dimensional approach to food safety and religious adherence, focusing on sourcing and shariah integrity, hygiene (thaharah) protocols, and waste/pest management.

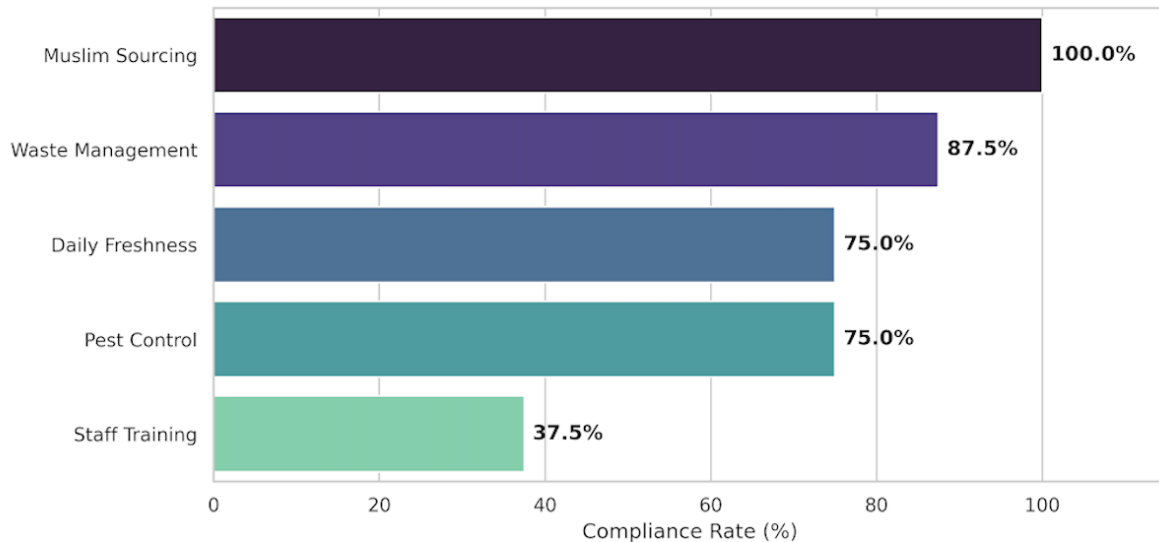


Figure 6: Halalan-Toyyiban Operational Compliance (%)

Source: Authors

Sourcing and Shariah Integrity

Compliance begins with the selection of raw materials. Most informants ensure “Halal” status through Muslim-source supply chains rather than formal certification alone.

- **Trust-Based Sourcing:** Informants A, B, E, and H rely on Muslim vendors from local markets (e.g., Pasar Siti Khadijah) to guarantee religious compliance.

“Raw ingredients are bought from the morning market, supplied by Muslim vendors from Kelantan. (Informants A)

“The chicken and meat are bought at Pasar Siti Khadijah, and the suppliers deliver them daily.” (Informants B)

“We buy our ingredients from local Malay villagers here and from the market. We buy the items ourselves and bring them directly to the restaurant.” (Informants E)

“We get our chicken from the market, and the supplier is Muslim.” (Informants H)

- **Formal Certification:** Conversely, Informant D emphasizes the use of strictly Halal-certified poultry, and Informant C ensures that processing facilities maintain specific quality and slaughter standards.

“Our raw materials, such as chicken and duck, are both halal certified”. (Informants D)

“I buy raw ingredients from suppliers who slaughter the poultry themselves, ensuring that the processing facility maintains the quality we require. All sauces are purchased with halal certification. For dried ingredients, we buy them ourselves from supermarkets and wholesalers.” (Informants C)

Hygiene (Thaharah) and Quality Control

The “Toyyiban” (wholesome & good) aspect is reflected in rigorous daily routines. Informants demonstrate a proactive stance toward food safety:

- **Freshness:** A common practice is daily purchasing and inspection to avoid spoilage (Informants B, C, G, H).

“We buy fresh ingredients every morning and marinate them for the next day.” (Informants B)

“We buy fresh chicken every day, cut, and clean it for use the next day. This is because, if we bought and cut chicken on a daily basis, we wouldn’t be able to keep up, so we prefer fresh poultry.” (Informants C)

“We buy our raw ingredients from local suppliers. The aspects we focus on are quality, freshness, adherence to specified standards, and the supplier’s ability to ensure a continuous supply. (Informants G)

“Every time we buy, it gets used up, so we purchase dishes daily.” (Informants H)

- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Informant D exhibits the highest level of technical compliance, monitoring freezer temperatures and conducting deep cleaning of machinery three times monthly.

“We also check the temperature of each freezer and chiller every time we open and close the outlet. Additionally, we perform deep cleaning on all machines and freezers three times a month. For general cleanliness, such as mopping, we do this after every closing. We learned these SOPs at Lotus when we were renting there. The Ministry of Health (KKM) also conducts regular checks on our outlet and central kitchen to ensure cleanliness.” (Informants D)

- **Staff Training:** Informant B notes that all staff undergo formal food handler training, supplemented by regular spot checks from the Health Inspectorate.

“All staff have undergone food handler training, and occasionally, the Health Inspectorate conducts spot checks.” (Informants B)

Environmental Responsibility and Pest Control

Compliance extends to the premise environment. While most informants rely on public waste management, Informant A suggests a move toward sustainability via waste segregation and composting. Pest control is managed through a mix of professional services (external contractors used by A, B, C, D, G) and natural detergents, such as lemongrass spray (Informants B and H).

“Cleaning is typically carried out by other workers who come three times a day: in the morning, midday, and evening. Waste is disposed of in the public waste management bin. I suggest that the local council (PBT) provide separate bins for categories such as paper, glass, and organic materials, which could be repurposed into compost or other useful products. For pest control, I hire external specialists as needed, depending on the season.” (Informants A)

“For pest control, we spray lemongrass daily, and an external contractor conducts treatments twice a year.” (Informants B)

“We also have pest control services from an external contractor twice a year.” (Informants C)

“For pest control, we hire an external service twice a month.” (Informants D)

“We also conduct regular pest control twice a year.” (Informants G)

Theme 3: Educational Approaches for Local Food Providers

The Figure 7 illustrates the methods local food providers intend to use to educate others or improve their operations. The data reveals a preference for non-formal, sensory-based learning over direct instruction.

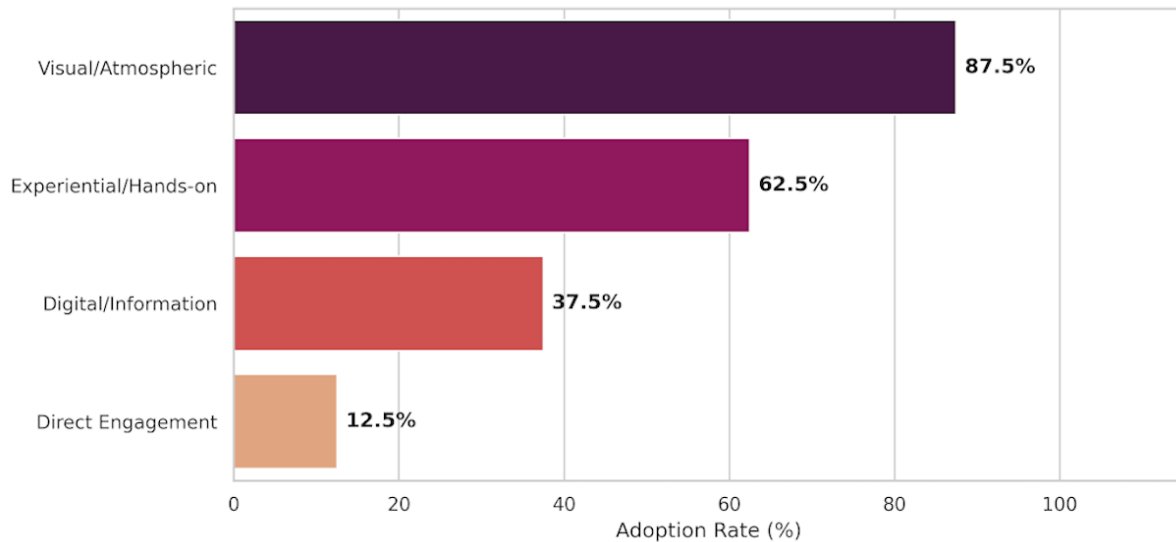


Figure 7: Prevalence of Edugastronomy Approaches (%)

Source: Authors

Visual and Atmospheric Dominance (87.5%)

- The most adopted approach is visual/atmospheric. Consistency is observed with Informant A's statement regarding the use of traditional decorations and architecture to "symbolize identity". Providers believe that the physical environment is the most effective way to communicate cultural values to tourists.

"In terms of decoration, we've developed a small *wakaf* (sheltered structure) to show outsiders that the design of the Malay community is unique, emphasizing practical use and the traditional values behind it." (Informant A)

Experiential and Hands-on Learning (62.5%)

- Over half of the providers favor experiential methods. Support is provided for the view that gastronomy is a skill-based craft; as Informant H noted, traditional cooking "requires specific skills that need to be learned" through practice rather than observation alone.

"We focus on introducing the culture of Kelantan through experience, not just words, because when outsiders visit, they are looking to see. We aim to go beyond just observing by offering experiences that evoke memories and a sense of togetherness. When guests arrive, we teach them to wear the *semutar* (headscarf) and *kain sarung* (sarong), as these actions create a deeper connection and lasting impression. At the same time, we seek recognition from locals to ensure the authenticity of the food we serve, so I have some chef friends taste my dishes before the foods are sold to the public." (Informant A)

Digital and Direct Engagement

- Digital/Information (37.5%): There is a moderate adoption of digital tools, suggesting a slow but growing transition toward using technology for gastronomic education.

“Currently, we educate people through social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Google Reviews. (Informant G)

- Direct Engagement (12.5%): Interestingly, formal direct engagement is the least utilized method. Indications suggest that food providers prefer to let the “food and atmosphere speak for themselves” rather than engaging in structured verbal instruction or formal tours.

Analysis and Discussion

Cultural Sustainability and the Preservation of Intellect (Hifz al-‘Aql)

The findings view that Malaysia’s rich diversity of traditional foods is not merely a culinary attraction, but a living repository of civilizational knowledge deeply embedded within local societies. Traditional foods are intrinsically linked to place, ethnicity, and collective memory, transmitted intergenerationally through lived practices rather than formal documentation (Jaafar et al., 2022). The difference culinary identities of Kelantan, Kedah, and Negeri Sembilan illustrate how geography, historical interaction, and local taste preferences shape gastronomic expressions. While Kelantanese cuisine reflects Thai culinary influences and the prominent use of sugar, Kedah’s dishes emphasize herbal and tamarind profiles, and Negeri Sembilan is known for coconut milk-based preparations such as *Masak Lemak Cili Api*. At the same time, certain dishes, including *Gulai Ikan Aya*, remain authentically Kelantan Malay, demonstrating selective cultural preservation rather than total assimilation.

From a Maqasid Shariah perspective, these practices align closely with the objective of Preservation of Intellect (Hifz al-‘Aql), as traditional food knowledge constitutes an intellectual heritage that must be safeguarded from erosion. Local food providers play a critical epistemic role as custodians of culinary wisdom, ensuring that recipes, techniques, and cultural meanings are transmitted accurately across generations. Informants emphasized that dishes such as *Rendang Maman* require mastery of specific skills and inherited knowledge, without which authenticity would be compromised. Reinforcement is given to the argument that gastronomy tourism should not be reduced to sensory consumption alone but reframed as an educational and cognitive experience.

Through edugastronomy initiatives, including cooking classes, open-kitchen concepts, and cultural storytelling, LFPs transform dining spaces into informal learning environments. These initiatives allow tourists to acquire contextual understanding of local civilization, social values, and cultural diversity, resonating with the Quranic principle of *li-ta‘arafu* (mutual knowing). In this sense, halal gastronomy tourism becomes a platform for intellectual enrichment, where cultural diversity is not only displayed but meaningfully interpreted and preserved.

Spiritual Integrity and the Halalan-Toyyiban Awareness Gap (Hifz al-Din)

While all informants demonstrated a clear understanding of halal-labelled ingredients, particularly processed items such as sauces and spices, a critical gap persists in the sourcing of primary proteins. The majority of LFPs rely on the perceived Muslim identity of slaughtermen

rather than verified halal-certified slaughterhouses, with only two out of eight informants consistently sourcing certified halal chicken. Reflection of a partial and surface-level interpretation of halal is evident, centered on permissibility rather than the holistic Halalan-Toyyiban framework.

Within Maqasid Shariah, the Preservation of Religion (Hifz al-Din) demands strict compliance with Shariah principles throughout the entire food supply chain. Halal is not confined to ingredients alone but encompasses animal welfare, ethical slaughter, hygiene, traceability, and post-slaughter handling (Zainalabidin et al., 2019). Reliance on doubtful (*syubhah*) sources contradicts the Quranic prohibition against consuming carrion and improperly slaughtered animals, as explicitly stated in Surah al-Ma'idah (5:3).

An existing awareness gap indicates an urgent need for structured education for LFPs, particularly regarding the “farm-to-fork” halal ecosystem. Strengthening LFP knowledge on certification, traceability, and ethical sourcing is essential not only for protecting Muslim consumers but also for positioning Malaysia as a credible global halal gastronomy destination. Spiritual integrity in halal tourism can only be sustained when religious compliance is practiced comprehensively, transparently, and consistently across all operational stages.

Preservation of Life (Hifz al-Nafs), Toyyiban Practices, and Holistic Well-being

The findings also show a clear link between how food providers operate and the Maqasid goal of Preserving Life (Hifz al-Nafs). All food premises demonstrated consistent hygiene routines including cleaning daily, doing deep cleans once a month, keeping storage organized, and carefully checking raw ingredients. These aren't just chores; they are the real-world application of toyyiban principles, ensuring food is safe and healthy, not just “permissible”. This is crucial because keeping a kitchen clean and managing pests is the first line of defense in protecting customer health (Meinert et al., 2023; Chik et al., 2023).

However, well-being here goes beyond just physical health. Many food providers are now focusing on the environment by managing and sorting their waste. They see reducing food waste as both a way to save money and a moral duty. Evolution of Maqasid is demonstrated through the inclusion of environmental care, forming a “Green Maqasid” within the halal tourism industry.

Finally, the “vibe” of the restaurant matters too. By using traditional decor and seating styles like sitting cross-legged providers help tourists feel more relaxed and connected to the culture. Emphasis on the atmosphere extends beyond aesthetics, contributing to improved emotional well-being among guests. As Çetinsöz (2019) points out, a well-designed space makes visitors happier and more likely to come back, proving that the experience is just as important as the food itself.

Edugastronomy as a Strategic Model for Halal Tourism Excellence

Educational innovation is the common thread connecting all areas of the Maqasid (Saffinee et al., 2025). Instead of just watching, tourists get involved through cooking classes, hands-on food prep, open kitchens, and traditional clothing. This fits perfectly with today's “experiential tourism,” where travelers want to actually participate rather than just observe (Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2024). By creating these real connections between visitors and locals, LFPs turn

halal gastronomy into something more than just a meal, it becomes a creative and educational experience rooted in shared values.

Simply put, when local food providers follow Maqasid Shariah principles, they turn Malaysian halal tourism into a model that respects culture, religion, and people's well-being. Enhancement of the travel experience is achieved while simultaneously establishing a global benchmark. Consequently, the steps outlined in Figure 8 serve as a practical guide for local food providers seeking to improve guest experience.



Decoration



Cooking class



Open kitchen



Providing cultural
attire



Infographic

Figure 8: The Approaches of Education about Local Gastronomy and Culture.

Source: Authors

Conclusion

Halal edugastronomy tourism is a new improvement in the tourism sector that is related to promoting local dishes for tourists. There are four approaches found in this study which are decoration of premise, cooking class, open kitchen, providing cultural attire, and providing the infographic that highlights local gastronomy and culture. All of these approaches align with the maqasid shariah, particularly the preservation of intellect, as they enable tourists to acquire knowledge about local gastronomy and gain a deeper understanding of the local society. Contribution to the development of new concepts is evident for local food providers offering traditional food as their signature, enhancing the gastronomic experience for visiting tourists. However, this study focuses on the operational side of food premise, such as how local food providers can enhance their offerings. Future research should address the tourist experience and satisfaction by exploring how these services influence visitors' perceptions and engagement with local gastronomy. Understanding tourists' responses will provide a more holistic view of how these approaches impact the overall tourism experience and help refine strategies to make halal edugastronomy tourism more effective in attracting and retaining tourists. Continued growth of halal edugastronomy tourism depends on expanded exploration,

enabling the industry to better meet evolving tourist expectations for culturally engaging experiences.

-
- Acknowledgements:** The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to local food providers for providing the necessary resources and support throughout the course of this research. Special appreciation is extended to colleagues and peers who contributed valuable insights and constructive feedback, which greatly enhanced the quality of this paper. The authors would also like to acknowledge the use of the generative AI tool, ChatGPT 5.1, for assisting in paraphrasing, refining the style, and enhancing the readability of the manuscript. Improvement of clarity and coherence was achieved through the use of this tool. However, all content, theological analysis, and conclusions presented in this manuscript remain the sole responsibility of the author.
- Funding Statement:** This research was funded by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) of Malaysia under the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS/1/2023/SSI06/ USIM/02/1).
- Conflict of Interest Statement:** The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All authors have contributed to this work and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to the Journal of Tourism, Hospitality, and Environment Management (JTHERM)
- Ethics Statement:** Adherence to established ethical research standards was maintained throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all Informants prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes.
- Author Contribution Statement:** All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. Wan Nazri Che Mat Safiee was responsible for the literature review, drafting, handled data collection and analysis. Siti Syahirah Saffinee handled the conceptualization, methodology, interpretation of results and overall supervision of the study. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission.
-

References

- Abdul Mokti, H., Kamri, N. A., & Mohd Balwi, M. A. W. F. (2024). Tayyiban in halal food production: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 15(2), 397–417. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-03-2022-0098>
- Abdullah, N. S. C., & Rahman, N. H. A. (2022). Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention towards the Local Food Heritage in Kelantan. *Asian Journal of Arts, Culture and Tourism*. <https://doi.org/10.55057/ajact.2022.4.3.2>
- Çetinsöz, B. C. (2019). Influence of Physical Environment on Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty in Upscale Restaurants. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 7(2), 700–716. <https://doi.org/10.21325/jotags.2019.387>
- Che Mat Safiee, W. N., Saffinee, S. S., Jamaludin, M. A., Mohd Salleh, M., Mohd Noor, K., & Mohd, N. S. (2025). Developing Halal Edugastronomy Tourism Framework Based On Maqasid Shariah Among Muslim Local Food Providers In Malaysia : A Conceptual Paper. *Food Research*, 9(December 2025), 142–151.
- Chik, C. T., Shima, N., Shahed, M., Bachok, S., Shahril, A. M., & Shamsuddin, N. (2023). Food Handlers' Food Safety Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices in Taman Negara, Kuala Tahan. In *ESTEEM Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* (Vol. 7, Issue 1). <https://ejssh.uitm.edu.my>
- Elice, D., Maselena, A., & Pahrudin, A. (2023). Formal, Informal and Non Formal Education Systems. *Journal of Learning and Educational Policy*, 41, 30–35. <https://doi.org/10.55529/jlep.41.30.35>
- Fisol, W. N. M., Suid, I. S., Mohd Saufi, M. S., & Bahari, A. (2019). Islamic tourism development based on the scientific of the maqasid shari'ah framework. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business & Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v9-i5/6007>
- Gheorghe, G., Tudorache, P., & Nistoreanu, P. (2014). Gastronomic Tourism, A New Trend For Contemporary Tourism?? *Cactus Tourism Journal*, 9, 12–21.
- Jaafar, W. P. N., Perry, M. S., Nor, N. F. M., Vengadasamy, R., & Pooi Yin Leong, P. (2022). Malaysian Food Culture as a Communal Identity Marker in Shih-Li Kow's The Sum of Our Follies. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 22(4).
- Khoa, B. T., Hung, B. P., & Hejsalem-Brahmi, M. (2023). Qualitative research in social sciences: data collection, data analysis and report writing. *International Journal of Public Sector Performance Management*, 12(1-2), 187-209.
- Kokkranikal, J., & Carabelli, E. (2024). Gastronomy tourism experiences: the cooking classes of Cinque Terre. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 49(1), 161–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2021.1975213>
- Meinert, C., Bertoli, S. L., Rebezov, M., Zhakupbekova, S., Maizhanova, A., Spanova, A., Bakhtybekkyzy, S., Nurlanova, S., Shariati, M. A., Hoffmann, T. G., & de Souza, C. K. (2023). Food safety and food security through predictive microbiology tools: a short review. *Potravinarstvo Slovak Journal of Food Sciences*, 17, 324–342. <https://doi.org/10.5219/1854>
- Moral-Cuadra, S., Martín, J. C., Román, C., & López-Guzmán, T. (2023). Influence of gastronomic motivations, satisfaction and experiences on loyalty towards a destination. *British Food Journal*, 125(10). <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-02-2023-0121>
- Saffinee, S. S., & Jamaludin, M. A. (2023). Sustainable and Ethical Vicegerency in Halal Tourism practices. 11(2), 91–106.

- Saffinee, S. S., Che Mat Safiee, W. N., Mohd Salleh, M., & Mohd Noor, K. (2025). Stories in Every Bite: Can Traditional Dishes Drive Halal EduGastronomy. *Environment Behavior Proceeding Journal*, 10(S124), 241–246.
- Şahin, A., & Kılıçlar, A. (2023). The effect of tourists' gastronomic experience on emotional and cognitive evaluation: an application of S-O-R paradigm. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-09-2021-0253>
- Seyitoğlu, F., & Atsız, O. (2024). Distant Gastronomic Experiences through Online Cooking Classes in the Covid-19 Era. *Journal of Culinary Science and Technology*, 22(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/15428052.2022.2040681>
- Sormaz, U., Akmese, H., Gunes, E., & Aras, S. (2016). Gastronomy in Tourism. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 39, 725–730. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671\(16\)30286-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671(16)30286-6)
- Solihin, A. A. M., Muhammad, N. H., Azizul, A. Z., Muhadzir, A. I., & Azmi, A. N. M. (2023). Halal food: A study on claypot chicken rice issue. *Journal of Islamic Philanthropy & Social Finance*, 5(2). https://doi.org/10.24191/JIPSF/v5n22023_163
- Tontapanish, J. (2004). A Study into the Viability of Chiang Mai as a Gastronomic Tourism Destination. Adelaide University.
- Vishwakarma, N., Jaiswal, A., & Verma, M. (2025). Introduction to Culinary Heritage. In *Quality Assurance of Ethno-Herbals: Cultivating Confidence in Alternative Medicine*(pp. 1-15). Bentham Science Publishers.
- Zainalabidin, F. A., Hassan, F. M., Zin, N. S. M., Azmi, W. N. W., & Ismail, M. I. (2019). Halal System in Meat Industries. *Malaysian Journal of Halal Research*, 2(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mjhr-2019-0001>
- Zakaria, N. S., Othman, A., & Mohd Nor, N. A. (2020). Maqasid Shariah Applications as a Parameter for Muslim Tourism Package in Malaysia. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/3543>