

## ASSESSING THE SUPPLY AND DEMAND OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE HALAL PROFESSION IN MALAYSIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The rapid expansion of Malaysia's halal industry has led to a growing demand for professionals with specialised skills and industry-relevant knowledge. As of 2025, 33 higher education institutions (HEIs) offer halal studies programmes at the diploma and bachelor's degree levels. However, industry stakeholders emphasise the need for graduates who are well-equipped with both theoretical foundations and practical competencies to meet evolving job market expectations. This study examines the alignment between halal education and industry requirements, identifying the key skills and knowledge expected in the halal profession. A qualitative content analysis of 200 halal industry job postings and existing programme standards for halal studies was conducted to evaluate industry expectations. Skills and knowledge were extracted from both the job postings and programme standards, while additional information on qualifications and experience was collected from the job postings. The extracted skills and knowledge were manually coded using a codebook and grouped into themes to identify recurring patterns. The findings highlight specific technical, scientific, and managerial competencies such as industry-specific practices, business operations, international trade, laboratory testing, technological advances, and product innovation, along with managerial and coordination skills, practical skills, and digital and IT skills. These competencies present opportunities for curriculum enhancement, as they are not yet fully reflected in the current programme standard. The study also highlights the importance of ensuring that halal management education remains aligned with the evolving demands of the industry. This research provides insights into strengthening halal studies curricula by integrating practical training, industry collaborations, and competency-based learning. It recommends enhanced cooperation between HEIs and industry stakeholders to incorporate hands-on training in compliance management, technical proficiency, and digital tools. Ensuring graduates develop comprehensive competencies will support Malaysia's leadership in halal human capital development and contribute to the industry's continued growth.*

**Keywords:** Halal industry, halal profession, halal studies, knowledge, skills

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The halal industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors globally, with its market projected to reach USD 5.0 trillion by 2030 (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2023). As a global leader in this sector, Malaysia has positioned itself as a central hub for halal trade, certification, and innovation. To maintain this competitive edge, the country must ensure a steady supply of highly skilled professionals who possess technical expertise, *shariah* knowledge, and practical industry experience. The demand for such professionals has been growing in tandem with the expansion of halal-related businesses and regulatory frameworks, emphasising the need for a workforce that is both technically proficient and industry-ready.

In response to this increasing demand, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia have significantly expanded their halal studies programmes, offering diplomas to doctoral degrees across various specialisations. Presently, there are 33 HEIs providing programmes in halal studies at diploma and bachelor's degree levels (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2025a; 2025b). Some institutions, such as UNITI College, Polytechnic Sultan Idris Shah, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), and the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), offer structured halal industry management programmes that equip students with core knowledge in halal governance, product integrity, certification processes, and compliance with *shariah* principles. Recognising the need for a standardised approach to halal education, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) introduced a dedicated programme standard for halal studies in April 2021 to ensure that graduates meet the required competency benchmarks under the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF).

Despite these efforts, concerns remain about whether halal studies graduates possess the necessary competencies to meet industry expectations (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2024; Norhayati Rafida et al., 2020). Employers and industry leaders frequently highlight skills gaps among graduates, particularly in areas such as halal product and service management, compliance enforcement, quality assurance, digital technology applications, and crisis response in halal operations (Abdul Rahman & Ali, 2024; Ibrahim et al., 2022; Ibrahim et al., 2024; Muhammad et al., 2020; Nik Mohd Rosli et al., 2022; Tukiran et al., 2025). These gaps raise concerns about whether existing academic curricula adequately prepare students for the dynamic and evolving needs of the halal industry. While previous research has broadly examined

skills mismatches among Malaysian graduates, few studies have specifically investigated the precise skills and knowledge required in the halal profession.

To bridge this gap, this study aims to identify the specific skills and knowledge required in the halal profession by analysing industry expectations and academic programme standards. Using a qualitative content analysis of 200 halal industry job postings and existing halal studies programme standards, the research systematically evaluates employer expectations to provide insights for improving curricula, enhancing industry collaboration, and increasing graduate employability.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *Halal Profession*

According to Malaysian Standard MS 2691:2021 Halal Profession – General Requirements, a halal profession refers to any form of work related to the halal industry that requires specific skills and knowledge, as well as having a relevant competency certificate from a competent authority (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2021). From Table 1, it can be concluded that the halal profession is delineated into three levels: halal talent, halal expert, and halal professional (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2021). These professionals play a crucial role in maintaining the strength, expandability, and global competitiveness of the halal industry. For instance, a halal manager oversees compliance with halal standards, a halal auditor ensures proper certification processes, and a halal executive manages day-to-day operations in halal-certified businesses. Each of these roles comes with unique challenges and responsibilities, such as navigating complex regulatory environments and ensuring continuous adherence to halal principles in a rapidly evolving market. Despite these clear delineations, halal talent, halal experts, and halal professionals face specific skills gaps that are often not fully addressed in Higher Education Institution (HEI) programmes, particularly in regulatory compliance, quality assurance, and data management.

As for the level of halal profession, halal talent refers to an individual with limited practical experience in the halal industry or possessing a basic educational certification, along with a competency certificate from the relevant authority. Norhayati Rafida et al. (2020) also stated that halal talent should possess expertise in *shariah* and technical, and should regularly participate in halal courses to stay informed about the latest developments in technology and regulations. Furthermore, a halal expert is an individual who embodies managerial skills together with strong practical and theoretical exposure within the halal industry and has obtained relevant certificates of competency from

competent authorities, while a halal professional refers to an individual who fulfils the requirements of a halal expert and can be a reference person for the halal industry (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2021).

Understanding the requirements at each level of the halal profession provides a foundation for assessing whether current HEI programmes adequately prepare students to meet these diverse demands. To be in the halal profession, the basic requirement is to be Muslim, and the pre-requisite requirements are as in Table 1. Table 1 outlines the pre-requisite requirements for each level of the halal profession, emphasising the increasing competencies and experience needed as individuals progress from halal talent to halal professional. However, while these criteria establish clear qualification pathways, there remains a concern about whether existing academic curricula effectively bridge the competency gaps at each level. Many industry leaders and employers have noted that graduates often lack industry-specific expertise, requiring further professional training to meet market expectations. This highlights the importance of continuously refining HEI curricula to ensure alignment with industry standards and workforce demands.

**Table 1.** Pre-requisite requirements for each level of halal profession.

<b>Halal talent</b>	<b>Halal expert</b>	<b>Halal professional</b>
At least secondary education; or	At least tertiary education (diploma) and hold SKM level 3; or	At least tertiary education (diploma) and hold SKM level 5; or
Completed SKM level 1, 2 or 3; or	Completed SKM level 4 or 5; or	Completed SKM level 6 or 7; or
Three (3) years full time work experience.	Two (2) years full time work experience and hold SKM level 3; or Five (5) years full time work experience.	Two (2) years full time work experience and hold SKM level 5; or Ten (10) years full time work experience.

*Note:* Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM)

*Source:* Department of Standards Malaysia (2021)

## 2.2 Halal Education in Malaysia

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), in collaboration with Halal Development Corporation Berhad (HDC) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), introduced a new academic programme standard for halal studies (Malaysian Qualifications Agency & Halal Development Corporation, 2020). This programme standard caters to two main fields of halal studies: applied science and management. The primary objective of this programme standard is to ensure that students acquire the requisite skills, knowledge, and attributes aligned with their respective levels as outlined in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF). This initiative aims to prepare students to

meet the current and future needs of the industry, as well as to pursue career opportunities in the diverse fields of the halal industry. Hence, the HEIs need to first refer to this standard for the development and delivery of the Halal Studies programme in Malaysia, then proceed to design and develop the specific programme curriculum with their niches.

Currently, 33 HEIs are offering halal studies programmes at diploma and bachelor's degree levels, with 35 halal studies-related management programmes and one applied science programme accredited as of September 2025 (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2025a, 2025b). These programmes aim to equip students with essential skills and knowledge in halal industry management and compliance, to meet the job market demands. For example, the International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART) at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM) conducts cutting-edge research and provides specialised training to future halal professionals. However, challenges remain regarding alignment with current industry needs, where there is an ongoing debate about how well these programmes align with industry needs, with some graduates facing challenges in securing relevant employment.

### 2.3 *Human Capital Development in the Halal Industry*

Human capital is a key enabler of Malaysia's halal ecosystem and a central focus of the Halal Industry Master Plan 2030 (HIMP 2030), which outlines the need to develop skilled, competent, and industry-ready talent. As the halal industry continues to expand globally, encompassing sectors such as food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, logistics, medical devices, slaughterhouses, and consumer goods, the demand for qualified professionals capable of navigating both *shariah* and technical compliance requirements has intensified. Despite significant efforts to develop halal-related academic programmes and professional training schemes, several studies have identified persistent gaps in the readiness and capabilities of halal professionals. Mohd Mokhtar (2021), for instance, highlights that many individuals employed in halal roles, particularly in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), face challenges due to overlapping job responsibilities, limited technical exposure, and inadequate preparation for industry standards. These challenges impact their ability to fulfil their roles effectively, especially in operational environments that require strict adherence to halal integrity protocols.

Idris et al. (2025) observe that although halal education and training initiatives are being developed across countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, there are lingering concerns regarding the alignment of these programmes with the needs of the industry. Specifically, they note that many academic curricula

do not sufficiently prepare graduates for the practical realities of halal compliance and certification processes, raising questions about employability and on-the-job readiness. A skilled and knowledgeable workforce is widely recognised as essential for driving organisational excellence and long-term talent development. As proposed by Narula and Aithal (2018), employability traits and management competencies significantly contribute to workforce readiness, principles that are increasingly critical in halal industry contexts where regulatory compliance and operational integrity are paramount. Understanding the critical role of human capital in the halal industry highlights the need for educational programmes that closely align with industry-specific skills, ensuring that graduates are prepared to contribute effectively to Malaysia's halal sector.

- i. **Skills:** The amalgamation of hard and soft skills forms an individual's professional competence, enabling the achievement of work tasks in a goal-oriented and situational manner (Sharvari & Kulkarni, 2019). Examples of soft skills essential for cultivating high-quality halal professionals include effective communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, ethical and moral professionalism, leadership, continuous learning, and information management proficiency (Nawai, 2021). Hard skills, on the other hand, are more technical in nature. Among them, the ability to manage food premises is particularly important for halal executives in implementing the Internal Halal Assurance System (IHAS) (Hassan et al., 2015).
- ii. **Knowledge:** Facts and information acquired through education or experience, representing both theoretical and practical understanding (Narula & Aithal, 2018). In the halal context, knowledge refers to how individuals, especially Muslims, understand and implement Islamic teachings on what is *halal* (permissible) and *haram* (prohibited).

For halal executives, key knowledge areas include *shariah* principles, technical know-how, and a clear understanding of IHAS. This includes comprehension of its objectives, ethical considerations, and job responsibilities. Interview data from Hassan et al. (2015) further reveal that halal executives can only fully grasp and implement IHAS when they are equipped with both *shariah* and technical knowledge. These findings highlight the ongoing challenge of aligning halal industry demands with educational preparation. Hence, this study explores in detail by examining the specific skills and knowledge required for success in the halal sector.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 *Research Design*

This study utilised a qualitative-based research design, which is content analysis, to examine the alignment between skills and knowledge provided by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and those demanded by the halal industry. This approach is suitable for identifying themes and patterns within educational programme standards and job market requirements, offering in-depth insights into potential gaps.

#### 3.2 *Sampling Procedure*

Purposive sampling was selected for document such as the programme standard for halal studies to ensure that the most relevant sources were included. This standard caters to two main fields in halal studies, which are applied science and management, ranging from diploma to doctoral levels. According to the current number of halal programmes offered, this study is limited to the halal management programme at diploma and bachelor’s degree levels, to ensure that it has an impact on a larger segment of the halal education landscape. Meanwhile, convenience sampling was used for job postings to ensure coverage across multiple states and job levels, reflecting the current demands within the halal sector, which was essential for identifying specific skills required by employers. The selection of job postings was based on the availability at a given time (Etikan et al., 2016) and included postings containing ‘halal’ in the job title, spanning a range of levels within the profession, from entry-level roles to management positions, to capture a broad spectrum of skills and knowledge demands within the halal industry in Malaysia. However, this approach may not fully represent the entire Malaysian job market, as it depends on which postings were available and accessible during the data collection period. Table 2 justifies the relevance of the sources that were used in this study.

**Table 2.** Justification on the relevance of the sources.

Source/document	Justification
<b>Supply:</b> Programme standard for halal studies	This standard serves as a reference and guidance for HEIs regarding minimum acceptable practices in designing and offering programmes in Malaysia at the tertiary level. This document outlines the baseline competencies that HEIs aim to instil in halal studies graduates, serving as a benchmark for evaluating alignment with industry needs.
<b>Demand:</b> Job postings	The job postings represent the real-time demands of the halal job market, outlining specific skills, knowledge, and

qualifications that employers currently seek in candidates. By analysing job postings, this study identifies key competencies required for various roles within the halal sector, allowing for a direct comparison with the educational outcomes of HEI programmes.

This source thus reflects the industry's expectations and reveals the practical skills and technical knowledge necessary for graduates to secure employment and thrive in the halal industry.

**Supplementary source:**  
Halal industry's occupational framework (HIOF)

This document provides an overarching structure of the roles and occupational descriptions within the halal industry, delineating the expected competencies at different professional levels.

It serves as a supplementary source to identify the broader set of skills and knowledge necessary for success in halal professions, particularly for roles involving regulatory compliance, quality assurance, and industry-specific standards. By referencing this framework, the study can better assess the comprehensiveness of HEI programmes in preparing graduates for the range of positions available in the halal sector.

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Source: Author's owns work

### 3.3 Data Collection

This phase consists of conducting data collection for the supply and demand of skills and knowledge for the halal profession in Malaysia. For the supply part, data were gathered from the programme standard for halal studies, focusing on the section related to the halal management programme at diploma and bachelor's degree levels. To understand the demand, data were collected from 200 halal-related job postings across Malaysia through various job portals, such as Indeed, JobStreet, LinkedIn, Maukerja, MyJora, Jooble, Hiredly, Glassdoor, MYFuture Jobs, Facebook, and Joblum, from March to June 2024. These postings covered most states in Malaysia, including Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Penang, Perak, Putrajaya, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, and Labuan.

In addition, the platforms were selected as they are commonly used by employers in Malaysia, providing a representative sample of current job openings and skill requirements in the halal industry. The time frame from March to June 2024 was chosen to align with peak hiring periods in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2025), when employers seek to fill roles in preparation for the second half of the year, capturing a broader range of job openings in the halal sector.

From these sources, relevant data on skills and knowledge were extracted from both the 200 job postings and the programme standard, while additional information on qualifications and experience levels was collected specifically from the job postings. Furthermore, the halal industry’s occupational framework was used as a supplementary source to identify a broader set of skills and knowledge necessary for success in the halal professions.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The data were coded manually, with recurring themes categorised based on the frequency and relevance of skills and knowledge requirements. Key themes such as skills and knowledge were then compared against HEI programme standards to assess alignment with industry needs. To ensure intra-coder reliability, the researcher acted as the primary coder and maintained consistent coding procedures throughout the qualitative document analysis (O’Connor & Joffe, 2020). The coded data and codebook were further reviewed by the research team to confirm the consistency and appropriateness of the codes, enhancing the overall credibility of the findings.

The data were then manually sorted and analysed using Microsoft Excel, as it offers an accessible and efficient tool for organising and coding qualitative data, while ensuring transparency (Ndungo et al., 2025). Content analysis was subsequently performed to ensure accuracy (Dasgupta, 1975). Similar job requirements were grouped, and duplicated entries were removed through a cross-referencing process with multiple job portals. The coded data encompassed elements of *shariah* knowledge, technical knowledge, science and technology knowledge, soft skills, and hard skills for the halal profession. This thorough analysis aimed to provide a clear picture of the current educational and industry alignment in the halal sector. Building upon these identified categories, the expected stages of skill and knowledge acquisition were further analysed. An indicator table was developed to determine at which stage each type of skill and knowledge should be introduced, familiarised, or mastered by halal professionals (Table 3). This classification is based on the data sources from which the respective skills and knowledge were identified.

**Table 3.** Indicator of Expected Stage for Each Skill and Knowledge.

Source	Expected stage	Description
**	Introduced	Skills or knowledge identified solely from job postings, indicating emerging competencies that should be introduced to provide initial awareness and understanding.
**√	Familiarised	Skills or knowledge identified from job postings and HIOF, suggesting practical relevance that should be

	familiarised through applied learning or exposure to professional contexts.
*** or ***√	Mastered Skills or knowledge identified from the Programme Standard together with job postings (and HIOF, if applicable), reflecting core competencies that should be mastered by halal professionals to ensure industry readiness.

## 4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Job Market Trends

An analysis of the Malaysian job market using the keyword "halal" in job-hunting portals from March to June 2024 revealed a significant demand for halal-related career opportunities. 200 halal-related job listings were identified through standard internet searches and job-hunting portals, highlighting the growing demand for professionals with qualifications in the technical and managerial aspects of halal-related industries (Table 4). Many of these roles integrate technical, administrative, and operational responsibilities, as seen in positions such as "Halal Executive cum Front desk" and "Quality Assurance (QA) & Quality Control (QC) cum Halal Executive." Employers emphasise multidisciplinary expertise, seeking candidates with backgrounds in food technology, food science, food safety, quality management systems, and regulatory compliance. Positions like "Regulatory Affairs cum Halal Executive" and "Food Safety, Halal and HACCP Executive" reflect the industry's preference for candidates with practical, science-based knowledge alongside managerial capabilities.

This finding aligns with Ibrahim et al. (2024), who note that despite the increasing demand for halal-related professionals, structural challenges persist in matching halal studies graduates with industry needs. Their study suggests that this misalignment stems from the industry's preference for professionals with broader technical and managerial competencies, rather than those trained solely in halal governance and compliance. Similarly, Abdul Rahim et al. (2020) highlights the lack of an integrated competency framework, which can hinder graduates' ability to transition into the workforce. They emphasise that employers seek professionals with strong problem-solving abilities, technical expertise, and industry-oriented skills, areas where some halal studies programmes may require enhancement.

The analysis of educational level requirements further underscores this trend, revealing a strong emphasis on higher qualifications for most halal-related roles. Most job postings specify bachelor's degrees or diplomas in areas such as

Food Science, Food Technology, Quality Assurance, Halal Management or any related fields. Common positions, such as "Halal Executive," often require a bachelor's degree in Halal Management, Food Technology, or other science-related disciplines. Combined roles, including "QA & QC cum Halal Executive," demand expertise in both technical and managerial domains, requiring qualifications in fields like Food Science, Business Administration or Supply Chain Management. Technical and managerial focus roles, such as "Regulatory Affairs cum Halal Executive," typically necessitate degrees in scientific fields, such as Science or Food Technology, highlighting the industry's reliance on technically proficient candidates.

This trend supports the findings of Ibrahim et al. (2022), who argue that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should integrate technical and managerial training into halal studies programmes. Their study highlights the importance of industry collaboration, suggesting that graduates would benefit from cross-disciplinary exposure to fields such as food safety, supply chain management, and quality assurance systems to align more closely with job market demands.

While some positions focus primarily on administrative aspects of halal compliance, such as "Halal Compliance Executive," these roles may accept diploma holders but often prefer candidates with additional halal executive certifications or extensive industry experience. According to the Manual Procedure for Malaysia Halal Certification (Domestic) 2020 (MPPHM 2020), halal executives are required to hold a diploma in halal management or equivalent qualifications, possess at least five years of halal management experience if a diploma is not held, and obtain certification from a registered halal training provider under Halal Professional Board (HPB) of Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). These requirements reflect the increasing need for formal qualifications that combine technical expertise with halal governance knowledge.

Overall, the findings indicate that halal professionals are increasingly expected to possess a broad range of competencies that extend beyond *shariah* governance, including regulatory compliance, quality assurance, and supply chain management. The job market trends suggest that while halal studies graduates have a strong foundation in *shariah* knowledge, there may be opportunities for them to further develop multidisciplinary skills to better align with industry needs. As many roles incorporate technical aspects alongside halal governance, graduates may benefit from gaining additional expertise in technical fields to enhance their employability and career growth.

Additionally, the analysis identifies specialised roles, such as "Manager Halal Training Institute", "Halal Consultant", and "Halal Project Executive", which

require advanced qualifications in Business Administration, Food Technology, Halal Management, or technical fields. These roles underscore the growing need for professionals who can provide consultancy, advisory, and training services in the halal industry. Graduates with additional managerial and leadership training could capitalise on these emerging opportunities.

#### 4.2 *The Growing Role of the Halal Executive*

A significant proportion of halal-related job postings focus on the role of 'Halal Executive' or its variations, such as "QA cum Halal Executive" and "Regulatory Affairs cum Halal Executive." The prevalence of these roles aligns with their formal recognition as a critical requirement for halal certification by JAKIM, as specified in the MPPHM 2020. According to MPPHM 2020, the presence of a qualified Halal Executive is mandatory for large and medium-sized industries applying for the halal logo (JAKIM, 2020). This requirement underscores the pivotal role of Halal Executives in managing halal compliance across various operational stages, including procurement, production, quality assurance, and supply chain management.

Despite the increasing emphasis on technical competencies, a strong foundation in *shariah* knowledge remains crucial for halal executives to effectively fulfil their responsibilities, as outlined in the MPPHM 2020 and the Malaysian Halal Management System (MHMS) Manual 2020. These regulatory frameworks require halal executives to possess qualifications in halal management or equivalent fields and certification from an approved training provider under JAKIM's HPB. Such educational credentials equip halal executives with a thorough understanding of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), essential for ensuring compliance with halal standards across sourcing, production, and supply chain management.

Halal executives are responsible for managing documentation and records related to halal certification, updating the Halal Assurance System (HAS) manual, and verifying compliance with MHMS 2020 requirements. Their *shariah* expertise allows them to assess and verify changes in raw materials, suppliers, products, and processes to ensure adherence to halal principles. This knowledge is particularly vital in their leadership roles within the Internal Halal Committee (IHC), where they oversee compliance initiatives and coordinate efforts to meet regulatory requirements. The ability to interpret and apply *shariah* guidelines ensures that halal executives guide organisations in maintaining ethical and religious compliance, which is crucial in sustaining consumer trust and market confidence in halal-certified products.

### 4.3 Alignment with the Halal Industry Occupational Framework (HIOF)

The comparison between job titles identified in the job market analysis and those outlined in the Halal Industry Occupational Framework (HIOF) reveals a key observation that the industry perceives the scope of halal-related work as relatively narrow, leading to the integration of halal compliance responsibilities with other operational functions. This perception has resulted in job roles that combine halal governance with quality assurance, regulatory affairs, supply chain management, and administrative tasks. For example, job titles such as "QA & QC cum Halal Executive" and "Halal Executive cum Front desk" indicate that employers expect professionals to handle halal compliance alongside other critical business operations.

In contrast, the HIOF presents a more specialised and structured approach, with dedicated roles such as "Halal Compliance Officer" and "Halal Quality Assurance Officer," which focus solely on halal-related responsibilities without overlapping with broader operational functions. However, the job market analysis suggests that many employers prefer a more integrated approach, seeking candidates who can multitask and contribute to multiple areas within their organisations. This trend reflects the industry's emphasis on operational efficiency, where halal compliance is viewed as one component of a larger operational framework rather than a standalone function.

The industry's approach to merging halal roles with other responsibilities may stem from the assumption that halal compliance processes, such as certification, documentation, and auditing, do not require full-time dedicated personnel. Instead, companies aim to optimise their workforce by assigning halal responsibilities to professionals with broader technical and managerial skills. This is evident in positions like "Regulatory Affairs cum Halal Executive" and "Halal Executive & Kitchen Inventory Admin," where halal-related tasks are incorporated into broader compliance and operational functions. Abdul Rahim et al. (2020) further argues that the lack of clear career pathways for halal studies graduates is a major deterrent to attracting top talent into the field.

This integration of roles presents challenges for graduates of halal studies programmes, which primarily focus on *shariah* knowledge and halal governance. As employers increasingly seek candidates with qualifications in food technology, regulatory compliance, and quality management systems, there is a growing need for graduates to develop multidisciplinary skills to remain competitive in the job market. The current landscape suggests a potential mismatch between the skills taught in halal studies programmes and the diverse competencies required by employers.

**Table 4.** Key Findings from Malaysian Job Market Analysis.

Category	Key Insights	Example Job Titles	Educational Level Requirements
Integration of Roles	Halal-related roles often combine technical, administrative, and operational responsibilities, requiring candidates to handle dual roles effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QA &amp; QC cum Halal Executive</li> <li>• Halal Executive cum Front desk</li> <li>• Supply Chain &amp; Halal Executive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Degree in Halal Management, Food or related fields.</li> <li>• Diploma / Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Supply Chain Management, Food Science, Food Technology, Halal Management, or equivalent.</li> </ul>
Technical and Managerial Focus	Employers prefer candidates with qualifications in food technology, food science, quality systems, regulatory compliance, or business management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Safety, Halal and HACCP Executive</li> <li>• Regulatory Affairs cum Halal Executive</li> <li>• Halal Executive &amp; Kitchen Inventory Admin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry, Applied Science, Food Science, Food Technology, Nutrition, Dietetics or equivalent.</li> </ul>
Demand for Multidisciplinary Expertise	Many job postings indicate the need for technical and operational skills in addition to halal compliance expertise, highlighting the industry's emphasis on multidisciplinary competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halal Executive cum ISO Coordinator</li> <li>• Factory/Warehouse Assistant Executive cum Halal Officer</li> <li>• Production Admin cum Halal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Degree in Food Technology, Food Science, Halal Management or equivalent.</li> <li>• Diploma in Food Technology, Food Science, Business Administration,</li> </ul>

Employment Considerations	Graduates with a halal studies background may need to expand their skills to align with industry requirements, as many roles value scientific, technical, or managerial expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halal Executive (Food Technology/Science required)</li> <li>• Halal Administrator cum QA</li> <li>• Procurement &amp; Halal Compliance Manager</li> </ul>	<p>Assistant Halal Management or equivalent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Degree in Food Technology, Nutrition, Dietetics, Supply Chain Management, Purchasing Management, Logistics, Business Administration or equivalent.</li> <li>• Diploma or equivalent qualifications in related fields.</li> </ul>
Specialised Roles	A subset of positions focuses on leadership, consultancy, and training in the halal sector, indicating an increasing need for advanced expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halal Manager</li> <li>• Halal Training Institute</li> <li>• Halal Compliance Manager</li> <li>• Halal Consultant</li> <li>• Halal Project Executive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's Degree in Halal Management, or Food Technology.</li> <li>• Bachelor's / Master's Degree in Business Administration.</li> </ul>

Source: Author's own work

#### 4.4 Knowledge Alignment Between HEI Supply and Industry Demand

The halal industry requires professionals to possess a balanced combination of *shariah* and technical knowledge to ensure compliance with halal standards and regulations (Jailani, 2024; Tan et al., 2023). The study identified three domains of knowledge critical for the halal profession, which include six *shariah*-related areas (Table 5), 24 technical areas (Table 6), and five science and technology areas (Table 7). *Shariah* knowledge focuses on Islamic theological principles and jurisprudential guidelines that govern halal practices, ensuring alignment with Islamic law, ethical values, and religious obligations. It encompasses essential concepts such as halal and haram rulings, *fatwa* interpretations, and the objectives of Islamic law (*Maqasid al-Shariah*). A strong foundation in *shariah* knowledge is crucial for roles related to policy-

making, regulatory interpretation, and consumer trust, where an in-depth understanding of Islamic jurisprudence is required to guide halal operations within a religious framework. However, while *shariah* knowledge provides the ethical foundation, technical knowledge is equally important for the effective implementation of halal principles within business operations.

Technical knowledge pertains to the operational and industry-specific knowledge required to implement halal standards effectively in modern industries. It covers areas such as quality control, regulatory compliance, understanding of halal governance, and business management. This knowledge is particularly vital in their leadership roles within the Internal Halal Committee (IHC), where they oversee compliance initiatives and coordinate efforts to meet regulatory requirements. Professionals in the halal industry need expertise in halal certification processes, food safety management, and supply chain logistics to ensure halal products meet both religious and industry standards such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) (Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resources & Halal Development Corporation, 2021).

Science and technology knowledge refers to the knowledge that applies scientific validation and technological efficiency to support innovation and ensure integrity in the halal industry. Strengthening this knowledge within halal curricula would enable graduates to better interpret laboratory data, apply food safety protocols, and manage halal-compliant production processes, thus enhancing their employability and the overall integrity of the halal industry. A lack of integration between *shariah* principles, technical competencies, and science and technology areas has been identified as a key challenge for industry professionals, as halal compliance requires not only an understanding of Islamic jurisprudence but also scientific knowledge on food processing, safety, and modern supply chains (Harun et al., 2023). Without adequate exposure to these three domains, graduates may struggle to address industry-specific halal certification requirements and regulatory expectations (Nuratifah et al., 2019).

#### 4.4.1 *Shariah Knowledge*

Table 5 identifies six key *shariah* knowledge areas for the halal profession. While HEIs provide a solid foundation in *shariah*-related areas such as Halal Knowledge and Awareness, Islamic Theology (*Aqidah Islamiah*), Islamic Jurisprudence (*Usul Fiqh*), Islamic Legal Maxim (*Qawaid Fiqhiyyah*), Islamic Law of Consumerism (*Fiqh al-Istihlak al-Islami*), and Objectives of Islamic Law (*Maqasid al-Shariah*), industry stakeholders emphasise the

importance of applied competencies. Key areas such as 'halal and haram principles,' 'halal awareness,' and 'non-compliance management' are increasingly relevant in halal operations. These areas have been covered by HEIs through Islamic Legal Maxim (*Qawaid Fiqhiyyah*) and Islamic Law of Consumerism (*Fiqh al-Istihlak al-Islami*). However, existing HEI curricula tend to focus more on theoretical foundations with less emphasis on practical applications. While *fiqh* is inherently practical in nature, its application within the curriculum tends to focus more on theoretical understanding rather than industry-based. This results in graduates who may have strong theoretical knowledge but lack the ability to apply *shariah* principles effectively in industry settings (Alina et al., 2013; Mohd Shuhaimi et al., 2025), such as interpreting and implementing *fatwa* decisions in business operations.

Nevertheless, it is believed that the five *shariah*-related areas provided in HEI programmes can mould students to develop a strong foundation in *shariah* knowledge. These areas not only equip students with essential theological and jurisprudential principles but also aim to instil good attributes that will benefit them in their professional careers. A strong grounding in *shariah* can enhance ethical decision-making, integrity, and a commitment to upholding halal principles in various industry roles. This aligns with the findings of Md Nawi et al. (2022), who highlight that attitude plays a crucial role in ensuring firms' commitment to halal standard practices, reinforcing the need for HEIs to foster positive values alongside technical and *shariah* knowledge.

#### 4.4.2 Technical Knowledge

Table 6 identifies 24 key technical knowledge areas, each playing a critical role in the effective implementation of halal standards. The identified knowledge was categorised into four (4) sub-domains, which are halal regulatory compliance, halal quality and assurance, halal governance, and business and management. Among these, Halal Regulatory and Governance includes licensing, certification, auditing, and compliance with halal standards, alongside a comprehensive understanding of regulatory frameworks and enforcement bodies. This area ensures that halal professionals can navigate complex regulatory requirements and maintain compliance across various operational stages. Halal Products and Services competencies focus on specialised sectors such as halal pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, food, and hospitality services, underscoring the importance of industry-specific expertise. Similarly, these knowledges emphasise the management of halal supply chains, logistics, and critical control points to maintain integrity and transparency throughout the production and distribution process.

Nik Mohd Rosli et al. (2022) highlights that halal executives must possess a comprehensive understanding of halal certification, auditing, and food safety regulations to perform effectively in halal-related industries. However, their study found that many graduates in the workforce lack expertise in halal regulatory frameworks and practical implementation of halal standards, making it challenging to align theoretical knowledge with industry needs. Additionally, technical knowledge extends to Business and Management, which involves business operations, developing a business that complies with halal principles, ethical marketing, business risk management, and international trade. This area equips professionals with the ability to address operational disruptions and maintain consumer trust during challenging situations. These findings suggest that while HEIs provide a broad foundation in technical knowledge, greater emphasis on practical skills, particularly in halal assurance and governance, is required to align with industry expectations (Jaapar & Mohd Najib, 2025).

To further enhance industry readiness, efforts can be made to strengthen the practical aspects of academic offerings. HEIs should consider enhancing their curriculum by incorporating practical modules that focus on regulatory compliance, supply chain management, and risk management relevant to the halal industry. Collaborations with industry stakeholders can also facilitate internships and hands-on training opportunities that provide students with real-world exposure to halal operations (Malaysian Qualifications Agency & Halal Development Corporation, 2020). Furthermore, the inclusion of industry certifications knowledge, such as HACCP and ISO standards, within academic programmes can enhance graduates' competitiveness and preparedness for industry roles (Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resources & Halal Development Corporation, 2021). By adopting these measures, HEIs can better align their educational offerings with the evolving requirements of the halal industry.

#### 4.4.3 Science and Technology Knowledge

Table 7 identifies five key science and technology knowledge areas that are crucial for the halal profession. These knowledges include laboratory testing, technological advances, industrial processes and operations, logistic and supply chain technology, and product and service innovation. Analysis of the curriculum documents revealed a significant underrepresentation of these knowledges from the supply side. This indicates that while most of these knowledges are demanded by the halal industry, HEIs only cover one science and technology knowledge, which is regarding logistics and supply chain technology. This shortfall may occur because halal management programmes remain heavily theoretical and focus more on the aspects of *shariah*,

management, and halal compliance, with insufficient integration of applied science and technological innovation necessary for modern halal assurance processes.

Besides, Harun et al. (2023) also highlighted that this concern may pose a challenge for industry professionals, as halal compliance requires not only an understanding of Islamic jurisprudence but also scientific knowledge on food processing, safety, and modern supply chains to be industry-ready. For instance, positions like "Regulatory Affairs cum Halal Executive" and "Food Safety, Halal and HACCP Executive" reflect the industry's preference for candidates with practical, science-based knowledge alongside managerial capabilities. This finding further supports the argument that graduates need stronger exposure to scientific and technological aspects to be industry-ready (Harun et al., 2023). Without an adequate exposure to this knowledge, graduates may struggle to address industry-specific halal assurance requirements and regulatory expectations (Nuratifah et al., 2019). Overall, this finding calls for an urgent need for HEIs to enhance science and technology knowledge to better align with industry demands. Strengthening skill-based training can help bridge this gap and better equip graduates for roles in the halal sector.

**Table 5.** List of *shariah* knowledge identified for halal profession.

No.	Knowledge	Description	Source
1.	Halal knowledge and awareness	Halal concepts and consumer awareness. Shariah requirement for the services. Non-compliance to the <i>shariah</i> requirement.	***√ **√
2.	Islamic Theology ( <i>Aqidah Islamiah</i> )	Core beliefs in Islam and the development of different schools of thought ( <i>mazhab</i> ).	*
3.	Islamic Jurisprudence ( <i>Fiqh</i> )	Contemporary Islamic rulings on halal issues, and their application in modern halal industry contexts. <i>Hukm Taklifi</i> and <i>Hukm Wadh'ie</i> . Knowledge of <i>fatwa</i> .	* √
4.	Islamic Legal Maxim ( <i>Qawaid Fiqhiyyah</i> )	General legal principles used to interpret Islamic laws, five main maxims.	*
5.	Islamic Law of Consumerism ( <i>Fiqh al-Istihlak al-Islami</i> )	Guidelines on ethical consumption, and <i>halal</i> and <i>haram</i> principles of halal food, transaction, and purification practices. Consumer participation.	*** *
6.	Objectives of Islamic Law ( <i>Maqasid al-Shariah</i> )	5 main principles; protection of life, faith, property, intellect, and lineage. Categories of necessities ( <i>dharuriyyat</i> , <i>hajiyyat</i> , <i>tahsiniyyat</i> ).	*

Note: \*Programme Standard (PS) \*\*Job postings \*\*\*Both PS and job postings  
 √HIOF \*√PS & HIOF \*\*√ Job postings & HIOF \*\*\*√ PS, job postings & HIOF  
 Source: Author's owns work

**Table 6.** List of technical knowledge identified for halal profession.

No.	Knowledge	Description	Source
<b>Halal Regulatory and Governance - Compliance</b>			
1.	Licensing	e.g., Food premises license (by PBT).	***
2.	Certification (other than halal certification)	e.g., Makanan Selamat Tanggungjawab Industri (MeSTI).	***
3.	Halal certification	e.g., Malaysian Halal Certification Procedure Manual (MPPHM).	***√
4.	Halal audit	Coordinate pre-audit, opening and closing meeting.	***√
5.	Halal risk management	Corrective and preventive action, Halal Control Point (HCP).	***√
6.	Halal supply chain management	e.g., halal logistic, halal transportation, halal warehouse, etc.	***√
7.	International halal supply chain standards	e.g., OIC SMIIC standards.	**
8.	Halal Products and Services	Halal hospitality services management system, halal hazard, halal pharmaceutical and cosmetic, halal food.	***
<b>Halal Regulatory and Governance - Quality and Assurance</b>			
9.	Malaysian halal standards	e.g., MS 1500:2019, etc.	***√
10.	Halal assurance management system	Develop company's Malaysian Halal Management System (MHMS), Halal Assurance System (HAS), Internal Halal Control System (IHCS), and corrective and preventive actions.	***√
11.	Quality management system	e.g., Food Safety Management System (FSMS), ISO MS 1900:2014 <i>Shariah</i> Audit, ISO 9001:2015, ISO 13485 medical device.	**
12.	Industry-specific practices	Specialised methods or guidelines used in a particular industry. e.g., Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), Malaysian Good Agricultural Practices (MyGAP), Veterinary Health Mark (VHM), Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), etc.	***√
		e.g., Good Laboratory Practice (GLP), Vocational Training Management / Manual (VTM), Good Hygiene Practice (GHP), etc.	√

13.	Traceability	Traceability of product for safety and Halal requirement (e.g., Barcode, blockchain for halal supply chain).	**
14.	Halal hygiene, sanitation and safety	Coordinate <i>sertu</i> activities (Islamic cleansing), halal pest control.	**
15.	Ethics and <i>toyyiban</i> concept	Ensure products and services are ethical, safe, effective, and sustainable.	*√
<b>Halal Regulatory and Governance - Governance</b>			
16.	Certification bodies	e.g., Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM).	***√
17.	Industry regulatory and enforcement bodies	e.g., Ministry of Health Malaysia (MOH), Ministry of Investment, Trade, and Industry Malaysia (MITI), Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services (MAQIS), National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA).	***
18.	Halal-related acts and regulations	e.g., Consumer Protection Act 1999. e.g., Food Act 1983.	* **
19.	Halal trade laws and requirements	e.g., Trade Description Acts 2011.	*√
20.	International import regulations and guidelines	e.g., GACC (China), US FDA (United States).	**
<b>Business and management</b>			
21.	Business management	Business operations, retail sales, customer service and basic accounting.	**√
22.	Halal marketing	Marketing halal products/services in compliance with Islamic ethics. Manage and update activities and products on company's social media.	*** **
23.	Business risk management	Identify and manage risks that could affect business operations.	***√
24.	International trade	Manage the shipment and distribution of goods across borders.	**

Note: \*Programme Standard (PS) \*\*Job postings \*\*\*Both PS and job postings  
√HIOF \*√PS & HIOF \*\*√ Job postings & HIOF \*\*\*√ PS, job postings & HIOF

Source: Author's owns work

**Table 7.** List of science and technology knowledge identified for halal profession.

No.	Knowledge	Description	Source
1.	Laboratory testing	Basic quality control lab testing (e.g., pH, brix, colour, salinity and moisture analysis) and interpretation of laboratory results (e.g., heavy metal and microbiological test, NIP and stability study).	**
2.	Technological	Keeping abreast on latest halal related	**

	advances	technology applications (e.g., green technology compliance, biotechnology and halal verification technology).	
3.	Industrial process and operations	Machine for manufacturing, production, and operational activities in halal industries. Products/services regulations, processes and operations.	**√
4.	Logistic and supply chain technology	e.g., blockchain, halal tracker, Global Positioning System (GPS).	***√
5.	Product and service innovation	Conduct research, development, and innovation (R&D&I) to identify and enhance product ingredients in line with halal requirements. Develop new and existing product to improve product quality, taste, and nutritional value.	**√

Note: \*Programme Standard (PS) \*\*Job postings \*\*\*Both PS and job postings  
 √HIOF \*√PS & HIOF \*\*√ Job postings & HIOF \*\*\*√ PS, job postings & HIOF

Source: Author's owns work

#### 4.5 Skills Alignment Between HEI Supply and Industry Demand

In addition to the knowledge gap, the study also identified a significant skills mismatch between what is taught in academic institutions and the competencies required by employers in the halal industry. The study identified two main domains of skills critical for the halal profession, which include 13 soft skills (Table 8) and 9 hard skills (Table 9). Soft skills refer to personal and social abilities that support effective interaction, communication, and teamwork. Meanwhile, hard skills are measurable and teachable abilities gained through training or education to perform specific tasks. Both soft skills and hard skills are essential for graduates to effectively navigate the complexities of the halal industry. However, the number of skills supplied to graduates appears to be limited, as identified through the analysis of the programme standard.

This highlights the need for curriculum enhancement to ensure broader coverage of both soft and hard skills that are relevant to industry needs. Strengthening these components within the curriculum would help produce graduates who are not only competent in technical aspects but also equipped with essential skills such as problem solving, communication, organisational, and leadership skills required in the halal industry (Tukiran et al., 2025). As a result, graduates are also able to increase competitiveness and perform tasks more effectively, thus maintaining the continuity of their careers in the halal industry.

#### 4.5.1 *Soft Skills*

The study identified 13 key soft skills that employers frequently seek, including cognitive, interpersonal, communication, leadership, personal, entrepreneurial, teamwork, problem solving, adaptability, critical and analytical thinking, creative thinking, negotiation, and managerial and coordination skills. This indicates that the industry expects a wide range of competencies from halal professionals. For example, roles such as 'QA & QC cum Halal Executive' and 'Regulatory Affairs cum Halal Executive' require candidates to possess a combination of technical and managerial skills, including regulatory reporting, supplier engagement, and operational efficiency. However, graduates often face challenges in these areas, which can impact their employability and career growth. Nik Mohd Rosli et al. (2022) propose a conceptual core competency model for halal executives, identifying four key competency domains: knowledge, personal competencies, managerial competencies, and technical skills. Their findings emphasise that, aside from regulatory and technical expertise, halal professionals must develop critical leadership, critical and analytical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills to successfully manage halal operations. However, many graduates struggle to transition from academic learning to industry application, as they lack hands-on industry experience and practical exposure to managerial roles.

Furthermore, soft skills such as communication, collaboration, and leadership are consistently highlighted as critical for success in halal-related roles. Employers emphasise the need for graduates who can engage effectively with stakeholders, manage cross-functional teams, and navigate regulatory complexities. While HEI programmes traditionally focus on building technical knowledge, a more holistic approach that includes soft skills development would better prepare graduates for the diverse challenges of the halal industry. Therefore, these findings highlight the need for enhancement of the programme standard, ensuring that it incorporates a broader range of skills aligned with current industry expectations.

#### 4.5.2 *Hard Skills*

The study identified 9 key hard skills that are crucial for the halal profession. The skills involved were numeracy, practical, digital, and Information Technology (IT), report and writing, organisational, multitasking, research, laboratory, and data management skills. Similar to soft skills, the finding shows that all hard skills listed are in demand by employers, demonstrating that a broad range of competencies are expected of halal professionals by the industry. The growing reliance on technology in halal operations has further widened the skills gap. The industry increasingly

demands professionals who are proficient in digital tools such as Structured Query Language (SQL), inventory management systems, traceability platforms, and quality control software (Riani et al., 2025), to ensure product quality and traceability. However, many HEI curricula do not yet place sufficient emphasis on these technological competencies, leaving graduates less prepared to utilise industry-standard digital solutions. Integrating training in essential software tools and data-driven decision-making processes would provide students with a competitive edge in the job market.

Nik Mohd Rosli et al. (2022) indicates that graduates in the workforce lack expertise in the practical implementation of halal standards, making it challenging to align theoretical knowledge with industry needs. For example, graduates may have a theoretical understanding of halal procedures such as Halal Assurance System (HAS) or Halal Control Point (HCP), but struggle when it comes to conducting halal internal audits, preparing actual documentation, or dealing with compliance issues in the field. This suggests that HEIs need to emphasise hands-on practical training to ensure graduates have real-world experience and are prepared to perform tasks in real job situations in the halal industry. To address these challenges, HEIs can implement a dual approach that integrates both theoretical and practical learning experiences. By bridging the skills and knowledge gap, HEIs can equip graduates with the capabilities needed to navigate the halal industry landscape effectively and contribute to its growth.

**Table 8.** List of soft skills identified for halal profession.

No.	Skills	Description	Source
1.	Cognitive skills	Think, learn, and process information effectively.	***
2.	Interpersonal skills	Interact and build positive relationships with others. Manage customer complaints and entertain them with appropriate etiquette.	***√ **√
3.	Communication skills	Expressing ideas clearly, both verbally and in writing. Communicate halal matters to all relevant stakeholders. Represent the company and industry at national/global level on Halal matters. Participate in exhibition in promotional purpose.	***√ **√
4.	Leadership skills	Leading, making decisions, and taking ownership of tasks. Mentor internal Halal coaching. Lead halal management committee and halal matters, develop advocacy strategy of related Halal	***√ **√

		matters, and strategise company direction in ensuring Halal compliance.	
5.	Personal skills	Self-awareness, confidence, and emotional intelligence in daily tasks.	***
6.	Entrepreneurial skills	Identify opportunities, take initiative, and manage risks.	***
		Plan customer service management and marketing & sales.	**
7.	Teamwork skills	Working well with others to achieve common goals. Collaborate with other parties in public affairs engagement.	**√
8.	Problem solving skills	Identifying issues and finding effective solutions (e.g., execute halal crisis management procedure/action plan). Address customer complaints, and issues related to Halal compliance.	**√
9.	Adaptability skills	Adjusting to changes and handling new challenges effectively.	**
10.	Critical and analytical thinking skills	Evaluating situations logically to make sound decisions. Strategise responses to threats that will impact company's positioning and reputation. Proposing improvements to the production process to improve quality and efficiency.	**√
11.	Creative thinking skills	Generating innovative ideas and unique solutions for improvements.	**
12.	Negotiation skills	Reaching agreements and resolving conflicts effectively. Negotiation in bringing others together and trying to reconcile differences.	**
13.	Managerial and coordination skills	Planning, organising, and managing people and tasks efficiently. Develop comprehensive project plans, outlining timelines, and regularly update plans. Ensure implementation of Halal code of ethics and assist to optimise all available resources without impacting quality of analysis.	**

Note: \*Programme Standard (PS) \*\*Job postings \*\*\*Both PS and job postings  
√HIOF \*√PS & HIOF \*\*√ Job postings & HIOF \*\*\*√ PS, job postings & HIOF

Source: Author's owns work

**Table 9.** List of hard skills identified for halal profession.

No.	Hard Skills	Description	Source
1.	Numeracy skills	Ability to work with numbers, calculations, and data analysis.	***
		Manage project budgets effectively, track expenditures, and ensure financial goals are	**

		met.	
2.	Practical skills	Hands-on ability to perform tasks effectively in real-world situations.	***√
		Execute field work from beginning to the end process. Procurement activities, administrative kitchen function, exhibit industry expertise in halal standards and talent development, technology initiatives, and suitable value systems.	**
3.	Digital and IT skills	Proficiency in using Microsoft Office and Google applications, and prepare halal training materials (slide, video & quiz).	***√
		Auto count system, Structured Query Language (SQL) System, Multilingual User Interface (MUI) Application, Prerequisite Programme (PRP) for food industry, RYMNET software, Point of Sale (POS) and inventory software for report viewing.	**
4.	Report and writing skills	Ability to write clear, structured, and detailed reports of all work-related activity. Validate all the related halal matters and report to top management	**√
5.	Organisational skills	Effectively plans, prioritises, and manages tasks efficiently. Handle documentation filing, prepare letter/memos, and handle incoming and outgoing.	**
6.	Multitasking skills	Handles multiple tasks simultaneously while maintaining quality.	**
7.	Research skills	Ability to gather, analyse, and interpret information systematically. Conduct research on competitors and the market for product development strategies.	**
8.	Laboratory skills	Competence in performing lab tests, handling equipment, and analysing results.	**
9.	Data management skills	Organising, storing, and interpreting data accurately and securely. Manage, update records and database.	**√
		Manage Batch Manufacturing Record (BMR).	**

Note: \*Programme Standard (PS) \*\*Job postings \*\*\*Both PS and job postings  
 √HIOF \*√PS & HIOF \*\*√ Job postings & HIOF \*\*\*√ PS, job postings & HIOF

Source: Author's own work

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the evolving landscape of the halal industry and the increasing need for professionals who possess knowledge of *shariah*,

technical and science and technology, together with soft skills and hard skills. As the industry expands globally, job roles are becoming more diverse, integrating aspects of regulatory compliance, quality assurance, supply chain management, and digital traceability. The findings suggest that graduates with a multidisciplinary skill set, including technical expertise, managerial abilities, and problem-solving skills, are in high demand. While halal-related job opportunities are growing, ensuring that professionals are equipped with practical experience and industry-relevant competencies will further enhance their employability and career progression. The halal sector is also experiencing shifts due to technological advancements, global market integration, and increasing regulatory requirements, which call for a workforce that is adaptable, innovative, and well-versed in modern compliance processes.

Strengthening industry-academia collaborations through internships, hands-on training, and exposure to real-world halal operations can provide graduates with practical insights and applied learning opportunities. The introduction of competency-based training, digital learning tools, and structured career pathways can also contribute to better workforce readiness and talent sustainability within the halal sector. By aligning educational programmes with industry needs and fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development, halal professionals can be better prepared for evolving job roles. Encouraging cross-disciplinary exposure, international market awareness, and technology adoption will support the growth of a well-rounded workforce capable of driving innovation and ensuring halal integrity across various sectors. With ongoing efforts to enhance industry preparedness, halal professionals will continue to play a key role in supporting Malaysia's leadership in the global halal economy.

While it is essential to address the skills and knowledge in demand by the halal industry, it is also important to recognise that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have limitations in fully equipping students with workplace-ready competencies. Future studies may consider categorising the required skills and knowledge based on their stage of acquisition, whether they should be developed during university education or through Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This distinction acknowledges that HEIs primarily provide foundational and theoretical training, while advanced, role-specific competencies are typically acquired through professional experience and CPD initiatives such as those supported by Human Resource Development (HRD) Corporation.

Building on this need to distinguish between foundational and advanced competencies, the present study also has its own scope-related limitations. It focuses primarily on the management aspect of halal studies, excluding applied

sciences, which are equally crucial to the industry. Furthermore, relying solely on job postings may not fully capture industry expectations, as employers might not specify all required competencies. Future research should therefore adopt a holistic approach that integrates both management and applied science perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of industry needs. Incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups with industry players could offer deeper insights into essential skills, emerging trends, and regulatory expectations. Such efforts would help strengthen the alignment between HEI programmes and industry demands, ensuring graduates are better prepared for the halal profession in Malaysia.

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