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## Halal Certification Organizations in the United Kingdom

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## **Halal Certification Organizations in the United Kingdom: An exploration of Halal cosmetic certification**

### **Abstract**

**Purpose** - The aim of this paper is investigate the role that Halal certifying organizations (HCOs) play in the United Kingdom (UK) in assuring quality in Halal cosmetics.

**Design/methodology/approach** - The study evaluates whether Halal certification assures the quality of halal cosmetic products. This research evaluated the quality assurance systems of major UK HCOs, using a hypothetical product as a test vehicle. The investigation considered if these organizations differ in their definition of 'Halal' and 'Halal cosmetics' and also considered how effectively their certification signals quality assurance.

**Findings** - The study indicated that there is a failure to adopt holistic Halal terminology which implies that within the UK Halal cosmetics industry, manufacturers may not be working within agreed standards for Halal product integrity.

**Research limitations/implications** - This study focused on UK certification for Halal Cosmetics by HCOs and disregarded other forms of Halal businesses. The literature review is based solely on literature available in the English language. The study lacks generalisability as only one hypothetical product was tested, therefore it was not possible to reach an understanding of all the costs involved in UK HCO certification.

**Practical implications** - This study undertook a comprehensive literature review on Halal certification to produce a comparison of Halal sanctioning laws, certification processes and the level of supply chain verification by UK HCOs.

**Originality/value** – This study adds value to knowledge on UK Halal cosmetics certification.

**Keywords:** Halal concept, Halal Certifying Organization (HCO), Halal cosmetics, Halal quality

**Paper type:** Research paper.

### **Introduction**

Although the perception of 'Halal' is generally limited to food and food products (Shafie and Othman, 2006), the Halal concept covers non-food products (Ibrahim et al., 2012). The Halal brand incorporates a variety of products and services in hospitality, banking and finance, insurance, beverages and cosmetics (Talib and Johan, 2012; Borzooei and Asgari, 2014). A major driver of this growth is the growing Muslim population; 23.2% of the world's population is Muslim (Pew Research Center 2012) with an estimated growth increase of 73% by 2050 (Pew Research Center 2015).

Apart from the emergence of the Halal concept as a Muslim brand identifier, Halal is transcending from a religious issue confined to Muslims, to being a global symbol synonymous with quality in the mainstream market (Hanzaee and Ramezani, 2011). The demand for Halal produce is related to a belief that Halal food is healthier, safer and tastier, which is appealing to both Muslims and non-Muslim consumers alike (Burgmann, 2007; Annabi and Ahmed, 2015). In a report on Halal personal

care products and cosmetics, Hunter (2012) stated that due to increasing market internalization, more market product choices consisting of new ingredient formulation have become available to consumers. Some of these ingredients are rendered unsuitable for Muslim consumers based on Islamic Law due to their source and method of processing.

The emphasis on the importance of Halal compliant products demands more transparency in the Halal supply chain. Recently the UK media was inundated with reports that suppliers, particularly restaurants and fast food chains, were serving customers Halal meat without prior notification (Hughes, 2014; Daneshku and Pickard, 2014; Taylor, 2014). This caused consumer criticism and insistence on a demonstration of ethical responsibility by suppliers/producers to disclose Halal supply chain information. Conversely, the pressure is on producers to ensure that effective efforts are made towards Halal verification and quality disclosure of their products.

A 2012 UK House of Commons Standard Note revealed that there was no legislative requirement in the UK for products to be labelled as Halal. This meant that no effort had been made to collect data on Halal products, the extent to which Halal products are sold without being labelled as Halal and the quality of products labelled as Halal. Sroufe and Curkovic (2008) highlighted that the absence of UK legislative obligation required an alternative robust means to assure Halal integrity and quality.

Halal Certifying Organizations (HCOs) play a crucial role; as not only a link between the Halal producer and the Halal sensitive consumer but they also function as a supply chain partner in the Halal producer's (quality assurance) value chain. Shariff and Lah (2014) stated that the main purpose of a HCO is to determine if a product is Halal or not and to assure the quality of products represented as Halal.

## **Literature Review**

### *Halal Concepts*

Religion is an important value in an individual's cognitive structure capable of influencing consumer behaviour and attitudes (Jusmaliani and Nasution, 2009). Khraim (2010) concludes that religion plays a crucial role in understanding consumers because it significantly influences consumption due to linked taboos and rules. Halal is a religious concept that shapes feelings and attitudes in a Muslim's consumption (Hanzaee and Ramezani, 2011), whilst adding value to products and imbuing consumer intention (Borzooei and Asgari, 2014).

Wilson and Liu (2011) confirmed that the Halal concept is an area where cognitive decision making is affected by the conscious effort to minimize risk based on consumers' cultural lens and Islam. The word 'Halal' is derived from the verb 'halla' which means lawful, legal, licit, legitimate or permitted (for Muslims) and it is an important and spiritual need of Muslim consumers signaling them to purchase and consume permissible products (Borzooei and Asgari, 2013). The antonym of Halal is 'haram' which means forbidden and it includes anything prohibited under Islamic law (Husain et al., 2012).

Tieman (2013) explained that although the popular meaning of Halal, particularly in non-Arabic speaking countries is related to the narrow context of Muslim dietary laws, Halal is a Quranic concept that means 'allowed' opposite to haram which means 'illegal'. It also relates to whether processes are undertaken according to the Shariah Islamic law, which expands beyond food issues (Hunter, 2012). The perception of Halal products, even for non-Muslim consumers, is that Halal signifies hygiene and quality (Ambali and Bakar, 2014) and Halal products are wholesome and safe (Ahamad et al., 2015). This may be because in every aspect of Halal, 'toyibban' is included. 'Toyyiban' means good quality, safety, cleanliness, nutritious and authentic (Hunter, 2012; Salleh et al., 2013). Salleh and Hussin (2013) were emphatic that Halal and Toyibban are tantamount to high quality.

### *Quality Cues*

There is no universally accepted definition of quality as it can be defined in accordance with the intangible nature of related components such as conformance to specifications, fitness for purpose or meeting consumer's expectations (Reeves and Bednar, 1994; Wicks and Roethlein, 2009). Northen (2000) analysed quality from the subjective viewpoint of a consumer who has specific needs and goals, based on his/her perception of what constitutes quality. Quantaniah et al. (2013) and Akdeniz et al. (2014) stated that perceived quality is the subjective evaluation of a consumer regarding a product's overall superiority of excellence.

Wognum et. al., (2011) emphasised that modern-day consumers have become more critical when making purchasing decisions. Prior to purchase, a quality evaluation process occurs where customers compare products based on perceived attributes and their expectations, to form opinions on suitability and satisfaction (Golder et al., 2012). Where there is unobservable, perceived or expected quality, quality cues are important to communicate quality information to the consumer seeking to make a purchase (Northen, 2000; Rao, 2005; Daughety and Reinganum, 2008; Tsui, 2012) and this influences a consumer's quality perception (Iyer and Kuksov, 2010). Fandos and Flavián (2006) cited Becker (2000), who defined quality as the moment where a consumer receives information or cues about the quality of a product at the point of purchase or consumption. Quality indicators are able to reduce the propensity for objective selection by customers if the information is not correct (Moussa and Touzani, 2008). However quality disclosure is distinct from quality signaling through cues such as price, warranties or advertising (Daughety and Reinganum 2008; Janssen and Roy 2010). Despite the pervasiveness of research on high quality signaling through price, its effectiveness is limited (Baye and Harbaugh, 2013) because consumers' perception is often not calibrated to reality (Boyle and Lathrop, 2009).

### *Quality Disclosure through Certification*

Caswell (2006) noted that quality disclosure through voluntary certification schemes are chosen where only a small part of the market is interested in knowing certain information attributes. Consumers may find confidence in quality disclosure to make vital purchases and this disclosure can take the form of voluntary reporting by producers, industry regulated but voluntary certification by agencies for a prescribed fee, obligatory disclosure enforced by the regulator and also private third party certifiers that carry out disclosure regimes. Quality disclosure is defined as *'an effort by a certification agency to systematically measure and report product quality for a non-trivial percentage of products in a market'* (Dranove and Jin, 2010, p.936).

Integration of quality certificates to verify quality in the supply chain is not popular (Talib et al., 2011) and is usually in reference to International Standards Organisation (ISO) certification (Sroufe and Curkovic 2000; Dowlatsahi and Hooshangi 2010; Dowlatsahi 2011). However in general certification is recognised as a form of quality management and assurance system which communicates product attributes confidently to consumers (Bredahl et al., 2001). Auriol and Schilizzi (2003, p.3) define certification as *'the process whereby an unobservable quality level of some product is made known to the consumer through some labelling system, usually issued by a third independent party'*. Moussa and Touzani (2008, p.527) suggested that certification labels are *'marks used upon or in connection with the products and services of one or more persons to certify mode of manufacture, quality, accuracy or characteristic of such good or service'*.

Jahn et al. (2005) noted that certification was a voluntary accreditation by a qualified party to an endorsed standard and reduces information asymmetry. Trienekens et al. (2011) recommended that products should be labelled to inform consumers about intrinsic integrity attributes. Walker and Johnson (2009) highlighted that certification provides the consumer with both a quality assurance and independent accreditation of inherent qualities because it serves to underpin intrinsic quality. According

to Makopoulos and Clemons (2013) buyer uncertainty on quality is reduced by certification intermediaries that act as trusted third parties.

Wicks and Roethlein (2009) hypothesized that the concept of quality has altered in accordance with cultural perception. Noll (2004) also stated that cultural influences determine the application and importance of quality signals. Verbeke et al. (2013) believed that Halal is a socio-culturally constructed quality criterion which incorporates both the physical attributes of a product and the conditions under which the products were produced. Ruževičius (2012) attributed the growth of the global Halal market to the change in consumer's quality perception, whilst Hanzaee and Ramezani (2011) cited Ariff (2009), and stated that the Halal concept itself is now accepted as a quality system. Halal is no longer just a purely religious issue but is becoming a global symbol for quality assurance (Ibrahim et al., 2012) and a standard of choice for all consumers including non-Muslims (Golnaz et al., 2010; Quantaniah et al., 2013).

The role of information, knowledge and Shariah approval as relating to consumer's Halal choice is crucial and Halal confidence rests in bona fide information that provides affirmation on how the product was manufactured (Golnaz et al., 2012).

### *Halal Certification*

Muslim consumers seeking Halal integrity of an increasing number of products have their concerns answered by competent personnel and Halal certification (Hunter, 2012; Salleh and Hussin, 2013) and the authenticity of Halal in some cases, is based purely on the product assurance provided by a label (Golnaz et al., 2012; Tieman et al., 2013; Zulfakar et al., 2014; Jabar et al., 2014; Mohamad et al., 2015). Razalli et al. (2012, p.35) defined the Halal certification process as '*a complex assessment on food and beverages, consumer goods, food premises and slaughter houses*'. Noordin et al. (2014, p.80) termed Halal certification as '*the process of certifying products or services as pronounced by Shariah law.*'

The Halal certificate is a document issued by an Islamic organisation (Hanzaee and Ramezani, 2011) as a symbol of quality that assures that the products it covers meet Islamic guidelines (Ruževičius, 2012). In their research on consumer's willingness to pay for certified Halal meat, Verbeke et al. (2013) reported that a Halal label can serve as the outcome of a quality assurance scheme and a reassurance information tool for consumers. Ambali and Bakar (2014) added that it is crucial that Halal certification and the accompanying logo be used to reassure and inform consumers faced with uncertainty as a result of a large product selection in the market. The importance of this is attributed to the speed of trade globalization, alongside science and technology advancement; which in itself supports initiatives that simplify the manufacturing process and also stimulates more scientifically based products with continuous change in product formulation (Shafie and Othman, 2006). From a slightly different perspective, Wilson et al. (2013) believed that in the Indonesian context, the Council of Indonesian religious scholars would drive Halal certification there down to a micro level to incorporate small and medium sized enterprises and street vendors: thereby providing a way for consumers to identify with the 'Halalness' of a product irrespective of the market segment.

Halal certificates fall into two types; a site registration certificate which signifies that a production facility is Halal certified but which cannot be used to guarantee goods produced; and the Halal product certificate covering the ingredients and the manufacturing process used (Waarden and Dalen, 2010; Hanzaee and Ramezani 2011). The Halal product certificate can also be limited to a specific product or specific quantity of product.

Waarden and Dalen (2010) raised the importance of the religious norms which are operationalized throughout Halal standards. These standards work alongside certification and the Halal logo as a benchmark for Halal compliance (Hashim and Hashim, 2013). Halal quality is informed by religious perceptions and also legislative requirements (Spiegel et al. 2012; Verbeke et al. 2013).

Ruževičius (2012) said that a Halal assurance system (HAS) should also include the Haram Analysis Critical Control Points (HrACCP) standards as management points of Halal quality.

However after a qualitative study of Malaysian companies, Talib et al. (2013) suggested that Halal certification is a major problem faced by the Halal industry as there are no universal standardized guidelines and this lack of uniformity complicates global Halal integrity. Standardization was stated as key to combating the fragmentation faced in the Halal industry but is hindered by the lack of proper legislation even in Muslim majority countries (Wilson, 2012, p.292). There are multiple Halal standards resulting in conflicting certification (Zulfakar et al., 2014), leading to certification becoming a token formality rather than an accurate quality evaluation (Albersmeier et al., 2009; Husain et al., 2012). Wilson and Grant (2013 p.16) questioned whether Halal should apply to all of the items labelled Halal and further wondered whether “brand halal” and such branding approaches were appropriate for all of them. Moreover Wilson (2014, p. 4) noted that HCOs needed to expend greater effort into formulating the content required and applied from religious text in order to create an aligned and credible modus operandi. Furthermore he suggested that, perhaps, it is necessary to formulate different levels of Halal certification: Accordingly consumer value of products may then lead to Halal certification being a marker of Halal products that are fit for the intended purpose.

Shariff and Lah (2014) stated that the main aim of a HCO was to determine if a product is Halal or not. HCOs have been established on a global platform to manage the assurance of Halal status of products (Aniret al., 2008; Spiegel et al., 2012). Indeed the survey results by Hajipour et al. (2015, p.344-346) showed that consumers expect Islamic associations to be responsible for Halal promotion to consumers, as most retailers are non-Muslim and have little or no relevant knowledge.

The reliability of Halal certification labels and the impact on the consumer’s purchase decision depends strongly on the type and method of implementation of external audits (Jahn et al. 2005; Tieman 2013). Fischer (2009) observed that a certification label infers inspection of not only the technical process, but also the management methods. Zulfakar et al. (2014) observed that whilst a strict Halal certification process frustrates producers and negates the possibility of reapplying for renewal of their certificates, a lenient process is accompanied by the risk of abuse and also raises doubts about the integrity of the process. Certification on its own does not necessarily guarantee Halal integrity and assurance (Zulfakar et al. 2014; Noordin et al. 2014). Talib et al., (2015 p.58) noted that *“even though Halal certification is crucial in the success of a total Halal supply chain, the issues of fake, fraudulent, outdated or unauthorized certification are barriers that need to be addressed.”*

Fischer (2009) and Harvey (2010) both concluded that the authenticity of Halal in the UK is doubtful, particularly as a result of a lack of a proper understanding and disharmony amongst the Halal organisations on what constitutes Halal. Fischer (ibid) added that because the UK Government lacks authority to carry out inspections, the unregulated market is potentially susceptible to misrepresentation.

Research on the Halal industry is limited in the UK with current available research (Pointing and Teinaz 2004; Ahmed 2008; Harvey 2010; Lever and Miele 2012; Velarde et al. 2014), having specific focus upon Halal meat. Consequently Halal certification is primarily focused on Halal meat and meat products. Regardless, these organizations can provide certification for non-food products (Sharia Watch, 2014).

#### *JAKIM*

Noordin et al. (2014) reported that JAKIM’s Halal certification logo is a worldwide recognized and respected symbol of Halal compliance. This is because Malaysia is one of the pioneering countries initiating and leading in Halal products with the early inception of Halal as far back as 1974 (Shariff and Lah, 2014). A combination of stringent criteria, solid trade relationships with major nations, strong industrial and commercial infrastructure and government support consequently make JAKIM’s Halal certification internationally recognised (Badruldin et al., 2012). JAKIM operates directly from the

religious division of the Prime Minister's office in Malaysia (Shafie and Othman, 2006; Talib et al., 2013; Noordin et al., 2014; Shariff and Lah, 2014). This is unlike other countries whose Halal certification is issued by their respective Islamic associations (Noordin et al., 2014).

However Spiegel et al., (2012) argued that the World Halal Council (WHC) established in Thailand, is more of a global Halal authority, whilst JAKIM has merely 'a good reputation' for their Halal standards and its reach and effect is still limited to the Asian region.

Not only does JAKIM administer the Halal certification operations in Malaysia, it also formally recognizes and appoints foreign HCOs (Shariff and Lah, 2014; JAKIM, 2014, 2015). Conditions set by JAKIM for recognition and appointment of foreign HCOs are:

1. Legal recognition and registration in the originating country;
2. Permanent membership particularly Shariah expertise;
3. Engagement of a technical expert/food scientist;
4. Agreeing to comply with Halal certification and other requirements issued by JAKIM; and
5. Allowing, anytime, audits conducted by JAKIM officials (JAKIM, 2014).

#### *UK Halal Certification Organizations*

Harvey (2010) raised doubts on ownership, control, prevalent practices and even authenticity of the majority of the Halal (meat) industry in the UK; which led to the emergence of a number of voluntary HCOs. Harvey (ibid) noted that the development of these certification organizations is an understandable response to the lack of relevant UK law and the existing structural factors. Barnabas fund (2011) and Zabihah (2014) list the UK HCOs as (in no particular order):

1. Institute of Islamic Jurisprudence
2. Halal Food Authority
3. Islamic Foundation of Ireland
4. The Muslim Food Board
5. National Halal Food Group
6. Halal Monitoring Committee
7. World Islamic Foundation

Harvey (2010) contended that the two largest UK Halal organisations are Halal Food Authority and Halal Monitoring Committee. However only the Halal Food Authority and The Muslim Food Board are officially registered and recognised by JAKIM (JAKIM, 2015), which means only one of the largest HCOs within the UK is recognised by JAKIM.

#### *Halal Cosmetics*

Wilson (2012; 2014) stated that the Halal market is rapidly evolving and the term 'Halal' is increasingly attributed to varied products and services across a number of industry sectors, such as the field of personal care. Any internally or externally consumable product by Muslims fall under the purview of Halal (Hanzaee and Ramezani, 2011), including cosmetics and personal care products (Talib and Johan, 2012; Borzooei and Asgari, 2014). Market growth for Halal cosmetics is on the rise (Rajagopal et al., 2011) with future growth projected (Hashim and Musa, 2014), particularly amongst more affluent Muslim consumers (Rajagopal et al., ibid).

A survey of Muslim consumers in Malaysia, determined that since the demand for Halal cosmetics globally has grown significantly, with further annualized growth of 10% in 2014, this raises concerns for Muslim consumers (Ahmad et al., 2015). Most cosmetic products are made by and come from non-Muslim producers and countries respectively. Furthermore due to increasing market

internalization, more market cosmetic choices are available to consumers (Hunter, 2012). Advances in biotechnology have resulted in new ingredients which may seem natural, but they may be Halal or haram depending on their source and method of processing (Hunter, 2012). In addition, accompanying products such as brushes, bottles and mirrors must also be Halal compliant (Hashim and Hashim, 2013). Even the packaging of the final product is of concern because packaging can be made from haram substances (Talib et al., 2013). A tabular representation of Halal and haram ingredients is presented in Table 1.

Tieman (2013) stated that tracking and tracing to determine the source of Halal ingredients can be done manually without complex or advanced forms of mapping mechanisms and need only cover tier 1 suppliers. However in contrast, Hunter (2012) states that all products and materials that are used in Halal cosmetics products must be traceable from the origin; implying that all tiers of supply in the upstream chain must be verified. Furthermore safety assessments, including microbiological and toxicity tests must be carried out on materials and products to confirm fitness for use (Hashim and Hashim, 2013).

Research on factors influencing the purchase of cosmetics by the female Muslim consumer in Malaysia noted that the ingredients therein were the most influencing factor (Hashim and Musa, 2014). Similarly after a survey conducted during the 2015 Dubai World Beauty Middle East Exhibition, majority of respondents indicated that the ingredients and seller feedback were the major purchasing influencers (Hajipour et al., 2015, p. 344). Indeed the majority of available literature on Halal cosmetics emphasizes only acceptable ingredients, which are a small part of the Halal supply chain. As Talib et al., (2013) commented, Halal concerns arise from the start of the supply chain and encompass the whole network till final consumption.

The scope of Halal cosmetics covers all aspects of the supply chain; including sourcing and production using Halal ingredients, manufacturing procedure, storage, packaging and logistics (Jaafar et al., 2011; Husain et al., 2012; Salleh and Hussin 2013). Therefore Halal cosmetic manufacturers are faced with the crucial issue of controlling the Halal supply chain to ensure that the chain is fully aligned with the promise of Halal to the end customer (Salleh and Hussin, 2013).

To maintain Halal integrity along the cosmetics supply chain, Hashim and Hashim (2013) recommended that Halal cosmetics should be produced under strict hygienic conditions, good manufacturing practices and public health regulations. Furthermore, Halal production ethos requires that production facilities must be confined to Halal processing to avoid the necessity of obligatory ritual cleansing. Likewise the equipment and work premises for the processing and manufacturing of the product have to be Halal (Ambali and Bakar, 2014).

Husain et al., (2012) stressed that Halal cosmetics quality assurance is exemplified by consumers and organisations requiring suppliers to obtain Halal certification. It is therefore necessary that the nature of Halal product certification must encompass both certification of product quality and also the operational activities of the organisation (Ruževičius, 2012).

Table 1: Halal and Haram Cosmetic Ingredients

Halal Ingredients	Source	Haram Ingredients	Source
Carmines/carmine dye, ethyl-p-hydroxybenzoate sodium salt, propyl-p-hydroxybenzoate, boric acid, thiodipropionic acid and locust bean gum	Halal Minds (2014)	By-products of blood, intoxicants, aquatic animals, poisonous plants unless the poison is removed beforehand	Jaafar et al., (2011, p.847)

Industrial alcohol/ethanol (this is clearly stated as prohibited in the works of Jaafar et al., (2011) and Hunter (2012)	Hashim and Hashim (2013)	Human parts, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), contaminated ingredients/products from haram ingredients/products	Husain et al. (2012)
		Albumen, cholesterol, ethanol, tallow, glycerine, lanolin, lecithin, keratin, vitamin A, lactic acid	Hunter (2012)
		Cysteine, lard or porcine by products	Hashim and Hashim (2013)

### Methodology

This research aligned with the inductive qualitative and evaluative because it was concerned with how well the Halal cosmetics quality management systems of the UK HCOs work and also because of the flexible methods of investigation adopted. Ritchie et al., (2013) proposed that qualitative research methods are best for exploring the dynamics of an operation and various organisational aspects accompanying the performance of a programme or service. This embodied the essence of the research. The research was conducted through the qualitative comparative research strategy, because it was the most appropriate method to methodologically evaluate the subjects of the study (Mills et al., 2006).

Barbour (2013) stated that the goal of qualitative sampling is not to produce an exact representative sampling, rather it is to reflect diversity and provide adequate comparative potential. Hence, a non-probability qualitative sampling was used to make a deliberate selection of participant UK HCOs. The participant organisations were selected based upon them having relevant characteristics (i.e. voluntary organisations based in the UK focused on Halal activities), and also based on them possessing criteria which closely matched the objects of the study (i.e. whether or not these organisations provide Halal certification). The latter served as an inclusionary/exclusionary criterion which characterises criterion sampling (Rudestam and Newton, 2007).

Primary and secondary data were utilised in this research. Secondary data was used in the literature review and as a second step; archival data from contact forms, membership forms, product application forms, approval guidelines, Halal cosmetic certification flow charts and modus operandi, obtained from the websites of the UK HCOs were also utilized. Archival data is data previously gathered and available from other sources prior to the start of research (Rudestam and Newton, 2007). It is particularly relevant when the data available is critical to research (Rudestam and Newton, *ibid*). Data sourced from archives have the potential to be more objective than primary data, because it is free from the researcher's influence (Calantone and Vickery, 2009). Moreover a key characteristic of a primary data source is that the data is collected solely for the purpose of investigating the research problem (Clark, 2013).

The questionnaire was constructed with an introductory statement outlining the purpose of the email and characteristics of the product (body lotion) requiring certification. This was followed by simple

warm-up questions to put respondents at ease such as, 'How long will the process of certification take', before more complex questions such as, 'Is there any particular advantage in choosing your organization over the other UK Halal organizations?', were introduced at the end. Both closed questions such as, 'Can I pay the cost in instalments?' and open questions such as, 'What documents will be required for the certification process?', were used in the questionnaire to achieve a balance between questions requiring direct responses, which are easy to analyze and questions that require more detailed answers, which elicits natural and spontaneous responses. Another key design element taken into consideration was the need to ensure that the content of the questionnaire was clear, practical and relevant to respondents to give maximum opportunity to respond (Parfitt, 2013).

The choice of qualitative comparative research as a research strategy makes imperative the use of equivalent instruments to measure constructs (Mills et al., 2006). Therefore two methods of data analysis was utilized; content analysis and qualitative comparative analysis. Comparison in qualitative research is often used as a research tool rather than a holistic research strategy. For instance, the work of Boeije (2002), considered the use of a constant comparative analysis method to analyze data from qualitative interviews.

Whilst the product is hypothetical, the research was bona fide in that one of the researchers had family based in the UK genuinely interested in pursuing Halal cosmetic certification for a comparable product. In addition the questionnaire sent to the HCOs carried advice that the results would be tallied against other HCO answers for wider research purposes.

#### *Limitations*

It must be noted that the research was based on a non-food Halal product, which presently possesses a low level of relevant research. However there is an increasing awareness of the importance of these products. Hence, knowledge on Halal requirements is still being expanded upon by the UK HCOs. In addition, the research is based on the subjective evaluations of the researchers in making comparisons and forming conclusions according to the information provided by the organizations.

Of the six HCOs listed by Barnabasfund (2011) and Zabihah (2014), not all provided Halal certification services to the wider populous, of the remainder, not all provided Halal certification for cosmetic products, yet another redirected enquiries to an ancillary Halal organization whose website and contact details were defunct at the time of research. This left only three viable sources to investigate.

#### **Results and Findings**

The investigation considered if these organisations differ in their definition of 'Halal' and 'Halal cosmetics' and also considered how effectively they signal quality assurance. The results and findings are presented under the following themes:

1. UK HCOs operationalized definition of the Halal concept
2. UK HCOs operationalize integrity pathway for Halal cosmetic products
3. UK HCO signaling of quality assurance

The specific organizations have not been identified.

#### *UK HCOs Operationalized Definition of the Halal Concept*

All the UK HCOs maintained that Halal means 'permissible' or 'lawful in Islam. In their 'definition of Halal' website document, HCO 1 based their Halal rules on the Quran and Hadith.. HCO 2 considered their Halal sanctioning laws to include the Quran, Hadith, Ijma Sahaba, Qiyas and Fatwa. It appeared that the other HCOs also follow the Quran, Hadith, Sunnah and religious Fatwa.

Just as the literature identified that academic writers differed in defining Halal sanctioning laws (Shariff and Lah, 2014; Ambali and Bakar, 2014), in practice this held true, as each organisation was

guided by different sources of Islamic law. Although all had the Quran and Hadith in common, HCO 2 adhered to the processes advocated by Ijma Sahaba and Qiyas sources, which were not revealed in the literature review. This underscored the accounts from Fischer (2009) and Harvey (2010) where they raised the issue of the discord within HCOs on their individualized definitions of Halal.

Table 2 depicts the Halal sanctioning laws observed by each of the organizations that responded to the questionnaire.

Table 2: Tabular Comparison of the Halal Sanctioning Laws

	Quran	Hadith	Fatwa	Ijma Sahaba	Qiyas	Sunnah
R1	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
R2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
R3	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

*UK HCOs operationalized integrity pathway for Halal cosmetic products*

In their ‘product application forms’ the onus was on applicants to signify whether certain haram ingredients were present in the product or processed on site. HCO 2 specifically asked ‘is pork (or its derivatives) handled processed or stored on site?’ and ‘Are intoxicants used as an ingredient in any of the above product/s? If yes please specify segregation details.’

HCO 1 offered guidance that Halal ingredients included ‘...cysteine made even in which no alcohol is produced’, ‘genetically modified organisms (GMOs)’ and ‘alcohol which is chemically reacted to become a new product.’

HCO 3 emphasized in their ‘definition of Halal’ and ‘Guide to Certification’ documents that blood, cysteine, intoxicants, all alcohol and pork were regarded as haram ingredients. In direct response to the questionnaire asking, ‘What are the important requirements to assure that my lotion is Halal?’ HCO 3 stated, ‘The 2 main items that we will audit against will be alcohol and any meat derivatives that may exist within the ingredients used to manufacture your products.’

HCO 2 noted within their ‘modus operandi for Halal cosmetics certification’ document that ‘the raw materials/ingredients and their constituents for traceability and Halal suitability and product and raw material specifications would also be required’ Furthermore in their ‘approval guidelines’ document, HCO 2 added that ‘The supplier must prove that the manufacturers of products have the correct ingredients, admissible methods of manufacture and labelling systems....’

HCO 3 noted in their ‘Guide to Certification’ document that ‘rules also apply to products bought from other companies and which are used in the manufacture of your product.’

All HCOs maintained the basic steps in their certification processes as provided by Noordin et al. (2014) and some similar certification requirements, such as formal documentation of Halal compliance as provided by Tieman (2013). The latter was evidenced in their request for supporting documents for processing certification applications. However there existed key differences and process gaps. Halal cosmetic ingredients were subject to different interpretations across the organizations. For instance alcohol, the most compelling ingredient of concern to Muslims apart from pork, was approved by HCO 1 as long as it had been chemically reacted to form a new product. Although this stance was supported by Hashim and Hashim (2013), HCOs 2 and 3 emphasized that all kinds of alcohol were banned and even specified that this was a major ingredient that must be verified before certification. In general only HCO 3 was found to be closest to the literature as regards the breadth of cosmetic ingredients considered to be haram, despite the fact that acceptable ingredients are the major concern of the Halal cosmetics consumer (Hashim and Musa, 2014). It was expected that more expansive restrictions on ingredients would be present.

HCO 1 appeared to be aligned with the position of Hunter (2012) that ingredient verification should be traceable throughout the supply network to its origins contrary to Tieman (2013) that provided for verification only as far as first tier suppliers. Interestingly, HCOs 2 and 3 placed the burden on producers to ensure that suppliers maintained Halal integrity of their ingredients/products. Although, Salleh and Hussin (2013) stated that Halal cosmetic manufacturers have to ensure that their value chain is fully aligned with the promise of Halal to the end customer, Masliyana et al. (2008) also stated that the main aim of a HCO is to control and assure the Halal status of products. By delegating this key responsibility to the producer, the role of their certification as an independent accreditation of inherent qualities of a product as stated by Walker and Johnson (2009), was weakened.

Furthermore only HCO 1 extended ingredient verification to accompanying materials and packaging, which according to Hashim and Hashim (2013), is crucial in ensuring Halal integrity. Additionally, only HCOs 2 and 3 provided for laboratory testing of products to determine safety and hygiene as further directed by Hashim and Hashim (2013).

HCO 1 provided a 'Halal certification process flow chart' which indicated that processing of applications required sending '*...inquiry to content manufacturers....*' and that '*...manufacturer's replies are vetted by technical and Islamic Shariah departments.*' This was supported by a request for details on all materials, function of materials, source of the materials and manufacturer/supplier name and address of each substance used in the product/s and packaging in their 'product details form'. Step 5 also provided for, '*laboratory test product if necessary.*'

HCO 3 provided a guide to certification that encouraged producers to verify with their own suppliers '*the suitability of their product*', although step 7 of their 'Halal certification process flow chart' provided for laboratory analysis of sample products.

In response to the question asking, '*What are the important requirements to assure that my lotion is Halal?*', HCO 1 replied that '*Products and premises must comply with Islamic Shariah*', without detailing what the compliance process in itself entailed.

HCO 2 prescribed that '*strict segregation between Halal and non-Halal production will be required.*'

HCO 3 answered that, '*All ingredients and all aspects of manufacturing/processing of the product must not be derived from or come in contact with any non-Halal substance.*' HCO 3 further explained that '*preparation, processing and the manufacturing equipment must be free from all of the above*', and that '*all aspects of manufacturing/processing of the product are vetted to ensure the product does not come in contact with any non-Halal substance.*'

Tieman (2013) emphasized that for non-Muslim countries, emphasis must be on avoiding direct contact and risk of cross contamination with haram goods. Therefore, as established by Hashim and Hashim (2013) and Ambali and Bakar (2014), strict segregation of Halal products from haram items during production was provided by HCOs 2 and 3. HCO 2 referred to their 'endorsement of Halal ingredients' document where it was stated that '*The manufacturer/distributor undertakes to ...ensure that these Halal products are not displayed with non-Halal items.*'

However, only HCO 3 extended this requirement to production equipment as further recommended by Ambali and Bakar (2014). None of the respondents seemed to extend their Halal verification to the downstream activities of handling, transportation and distribution as stressed by Talib et al. (2013) and Tieman (2013). Although HCO 3 stated briefly that producers must ensure that Halal products were not displayed with haram products; this was assumed to mean at the point of sale to the final consumer, which in practice is usually controlled by the retailer. This confirmed the observation made by Noordin et al. (2014) that Halal integrity requires the combined effort of the applicant, certifier and other agencies.

It can be surmised therefore, that the organizations are lax in verifying that Halal integrity is maintained during distribution and delivery although Talib et al. (2013) cautions, that these are the most

critical portions of the supply chain where Halal integrity is easily broken. Nevertheless post certification monitoring was mentioned by all 3 organisations. HCO 3 reserved the right to conduct unannounced audits, enhancing real time monitoring efforts with a technological application.

When asked *'What documents will be required for the certification process?'*, HCO 1 replied that *'Product details (sizes, concentration and flavors), number and location of sites where product (s) is/are manufactured, the number of raw materials (including packaging), the number of suppliers (including packaging).'*

In ancillary information they also noted that they required the plant cleaning procedure they attached to be followed and the HrACCP of the applicant. Similarly, HCO 3 wanted to have *'Product names, list of all manufacturing locations and floor plans, process flow (s) for product (s), all specifications of ingredients and all other substances used in manufacturing, all cleaning product.'* Some of these documentary requirements were also listed in their 'membership form for non-meat products' document.

#### *UK HCO Signaling of Quality Assurance*

The relevant questions here included, *'What is the entire cost of certification?; 'Can I pay the cost in instalments?'; and 'What is the process of renewal with its cost?'*

HCO 1 gave the following costs: *'Annual license fee £200 (for 1 product), Site audit fee £500 (per audit and inclusive of travel expenses), Application fee £100 (refundable on issue of Halal certificate).'*

HCO 2 referred to their 'modus operandi for Halal cosmetic certification' document where a fee band covered charges based on the number of products; initial/renewal audits fees; travel, accommodation and sundry expenses including taxi fare; but no specific fees were allotted as all amounts were 'to be considered'. Although it was stated that there were no costs for processing a certification application, in their 'procedures for approval' document they stated that *'Upon receipt of an application...an initial inspection and audit of the plant and ingredients is carried out at the expense of the manufacturer ... to ascertain the possibilities and facilities which are pre-requisite to authentication of Halal.'*

HCO 3 answered: *'It depends on number of products, manufacturing sites and company turnover.'* Their 'membership form for non-meat products' showed that application processing fees are based on business turnover, with a minimum *'manufacturer's application fee of £180'* prescribed. It was also specified in their 'costs and fees' document that *'...processing plants are charged the full cost of full time or part time inspectors...plus a contribution to central administrative costs...'*

In response to the question asking, *'Will I benefit from certifying the products since it is a cosmetic product?'*, there was unanimous agreement with HCO 1 also mentioning that their Halal certificate *'...is an assurance that a particular product has been thoroughly investigated and found to conform to the Islamic Shariah Laws and therefore is suitable for use by Halal consumers.'* Another mentioned that their certification *'is widely accepted around the globe and there is no known region where their Halal certificate is not valid, with the exception of Indonesia'*. Benefits from another were given to include that *'certified products are accepted by all Muslim communities...gives Muslim customers the peace of mind that they seek...owners see increase footfall and sales as a result of certification...also provides export opportunities to the global market...'*

However, with only two HCOs being recognized by JAKIM the response to the question that asked *'Is your certification recognized by JAKIM or the other UK Halal organizations?'* allowed them to highlight their various affiliations with, for example, The Muslim Law (Shariah) Council UK, The International Halal Integrity Alliance and further mention that the Halal standards complied to *'relevant statutory requirements, which ensure the product is safe and not harmful, as stipulated by Department of Trade and Industry and European Directives.'*

All of the HCOs who responded to the questionnaire requested product information and site audits, although this fell variously between needing product information/ingredient specification to the opportunity of meeting and interacting with the HCOs analysts.

Across all 3 organisations reviewed, the costs of certification was a dependent variable based on a number of factors such as the number of products, location of manufacturing sites, amongst others. Other unique variables were provided such as business turnover (HCO 3) and suitability for Halal authentication audit (HCO 2). HCO 1 presented the clearest fee structure by assigning a ‘proposed’ cost.

Another risk of opportunistic behaviour was identified for HCO 3, as they provided the opportunity for producers to meet with their Halal analyst, thereby increasing the possibility of side contracts. A producer seeking the value-added by Halal certification at all costs would be easily encouraged to negatively change his/her behaviour in response to any opportunistic behaviour as Dranove and Jin (2010) emphasised.

Furthermore only HCOs 2 and 3 operated with defined Halal standards, but the extent to which these standards are valid legal documents of the organisations was not discovered. Waarden and Dalen (2010) emphasised that the authentication of Halal must be by religious and legislative requirements as they both act as a benchmark of Halal compliance.

Table 3 depicts the scope of activities within the Halal cosmetics certification process observed by each of the organisations.

Table3: Tabular Comparison of Halal Cosmetics Certification Process

	Standards	Ingredient Check	Upstream Check	Production Check	Downstream Check	Costs
HCO1	No	Poor	Good	Fair	Poor	Clear
HCO2	Yes	Poor	Fair	Fair	Poor	Vague
HCO3	Yes	Fair	Fair	Fair	Poor	Vague

On a comparison of the processes and activities of the selected UK HCOs, it was established that key differences existed amongst them and with the stated positions in the literature.

### Discussion

The combined effect of different Halal sanctioning laws, standards (where they existed), understanding of what constituted Halal cosmetic ingredients and identified process gaps, makes it almost certain that the same set of certification data would result in a measurement contrast amongst all 3 HCOs as noted by Dranove and Jin (2010). As Albersmeier et al., (2009) and Husain et al. (2012) suggested, this could lead to the assumption that their Halal certificate is merely a token formality. This raises concern particularly as it has been established in literature that most Halal cosmetic consumers place their reliance on the Halal label (Jabar et al., 2014; Mohamad et al., 2015), although equal reliance may also be placed on the Halal ingredients and seller feed-back (Hajipour et al., 2015, p.344).

Nevertheless, the extent to which the organizations comply with their specified checks and verification in their processes is a detail that would only be revealed with an actual initiation of the certification process.

In addition all the organizations had at least 1 grey area; their pricing structure. Albersmeier et al. (2009) noted that where certification prices are open to negotiation/consideration, this may spur producers and certifiers to sacrifice high inspection standards for low cost or engage in low balling to secure business respectively. External monitoring was also identified by Dranove and Jin (2010) as a possible mitigating factor for this kind of opportunism. However, only 2 of the HCOs in the UK at the time of this research were recognized by JAKIM, the certifier of certifiers.

The implication for a Halal sensitive cosmetics consumer in the UK is that quality disclosure by a producer through a Halal label issued by any of these organizations may not be enough to ensure that the cosmetic product fulfils Halal requirements. A lenient Halal cosmetics certification process coupled with negotiable costs does not guarantee that only producers with the right quality will disclose as posited by Dranove and Jin (2010). As stated by Zulfakar et al. (2014), it is doubtful that certifiers on their own can guarantee Halal integrity. Both Halal cosmetics manufacturers as well as retailers have to be updated with knowledge on Halal standards to assure Halal integrity, as emphasized by Jabar et al. (2014).

In addition the strong positive link a producer seeking certification may make between the certification costs and certification quality was negated considerably. The availability of other extrinsic information of the services and processes of the organizations was found to limit reliance on the distorted prices of certification. This blanket analysis overlooks any prestige communicated by JAKIM's recognition of some HCOs.

The certification process for Halal cosmetics products by the UK HCOs may not be adequate in practice to provide the benefits of Halal certification, such as improving consumer confidence about their purchases, providing competitive advantage for a producer and ensuring quality status of the product (Husain et al., 2012).

## **Conclusion**

HCOs differed in their operationalized definition of Halal, their understanding of Halal cosmetics and their individual Halal certification procedure. Their certification process gaps and areas of divergence from the literature were discussed and analyzed in the context of quality disclosure/certification and price as quality cues.

HCOs are guided by different Halal sanctioning laws. In practice this may not be of much concern; however the implication is as far as religious requirements go, the same cosmetic product requiring Halal certification may be measured differently by each organization.

Each organization outlined their respective certification processes to include the necessary steps as prescribed in the literature. Each organization showed some similarities such as the formal documentation of Halal compliance required from applicants and making their cost structure dependent on the number of products. Major differences were also identified such as the ingredients considered Halal/haram and the standards used. However, none of the organizations was seen to show a holistic supply chain approach to quality assurance of the Halal cosmetic product.

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