

【Article】

Is Halāl Diversified?:  
The Situation of Japan’s Halāl Business and Tourism  
in the Post-COVID-19 Period

Akiko KOMURA<sup>†</sup>

1. Introduction

As of 2019, the Japanese government’s policy of attracting international visitors to Japan, which began in 2003, had produced tremendous results. The number of international visitors to Japan for business and leisure had been rising year after year, and since 2012, the figure had been surpassing the previous year’s figure every year. In response to this, Japanese local governments which abound in popular sightseeing spots were faced with the challenge of how to provide hospitality for foreign visitors. However, the COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020 closed off overseas traffic, and domestic consumption in Japan also declined. Needless to say, Japan’s halāl business and halāl tourism were forced to change in response to these restrictions on the movement of people and the lack of consumption of goods and products.

First, some of the Japanese production and processing companies that used to be halāl certified, such as food processors companies, have shifted to the export industry, and some of them have been considering halāl compliance but have been faced with the financial and ongoing challenges of not only spending a large initial cost to obtain halāl certification but also having to undergo periodic certification inspections. In addition, some shops have stopped halāl compliance when they changed their business type or business category in order to attract not only Muslim tourists, but also many foreign tourists and Japanese customers.

In the author’s fieldwork on halāl in Japan, she has learned that halāl tourism in Japan is only a form of “hospitality” for foreign Muslim tourists, and that businesses do not consider Muslims living in Japan as consumers. However, after the COVID-19 pandemic, a new trend has emerged in halāl certification as well as in halāl tourism. This is the change in certification activities by overseas halāl certification organizations and the accompanying new changes in certification ac-

---

<sup>†</sup>Lecturer, Japanese Studies, Department of East Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia 5559480@rikkyo.ac.jp

tivities by Japanese Muslims.

Is this change one of the manifestations of the diversification of Japan's halāl business, both inbound and for export, after the COVID-19 pandemic? Or is it a sign that Japan is moving toward unification for Japanese halāl business? This paper will discuss this question through an overview of the past and current situation, followed by the results of fieldwork on the current status of halāl certification activities.

## 2. About Prior Studies

Previous studies about halāl include those that discuss the current situation and issues of the halāl tourism industry and halāl certification in Japan and the results of anthropological surveys of Japanese Muslims' sentiments toward halāl business, e.g., (Komura, 2019), those that discuss it from the perspective of shari'a (Islamic law, hereafter referred to as "shari'a"), e.g., (Kosugi, 2021); (Shinohe, 2019) etc., and those that discuss it from the perspective of tourism studies. There are many papers both in Japanese and in English. However, both halāl tourism and halāl certification in Japan should not be discussed separately from each other. Therefore, halāl business in Japan needs to be looked at in a comprehensive manner. Nevertheless, many papers discuss halāl issues in Japan separately based on their own academic perspectives. In addition, there exist other problems in the papers in English. First, some of these papers use only foreign papers in English as primary references rather than papers written in Japanese,<sup>1)</sup> and it is questionable whether they adequately discuss the Japanese current situation. There are also some English papers written by Japanese researchers,<sup>2)</sup> which could be useful references for foreign researchers, but they mainly focus on the perspective of halāl tourism or halāl certification only. As far as the author knows, there has been little comprehensive overview of halāl issues in Japan from various perspectives. Consequently, even with all these studies, we are still unable to clearly explain the orientation of Japanese people's thinking about the religion of Islam, as well as the thinking of Japanese Muslims and non-Muslims about halāl business. Therefore, based on the results of interviews with people engaged in halāl business, this paper will discuss the history of halāl certification in Japan, its current situation and challenges, focusing on the perspectives of Japanese Muslims regarding halāl business in Japan. Based on the author's previous publications (Komura, 2015) and (Komura, 2019) and articles (Komura, 2023), etc., additional fieldwork was conducted to understand the current halāl situation in Japan. Specifically, the author interviewed Mr. Toshio Endo, Chairman of Japan Muslim Association (宗教法人日本ムスリム協会), and also interviewed Muslims engaged in Halāl certification at Japan Islamic Trust (宗教法人日本イスラーム文化センター), one of the Islamic religious organizations in Japan.<sup>3)</sup> The author also interviewed a person in charge at the time at the Tourism Section, Department of Culture, Industry and Tour-

ism of Taito City (台東区文化産業観光部観光課), in order to understand how local governments are dealing with the expansion of halāl tourism.<sup>4)</sup>

### 3. Halāl Business in Japan before the COVID-19 Pandemic

#### 3.1. Changes in Halāl Certification Activities in Japan: A Brief History

In order to analyze the situation after the COVID-19 pandemic, a brief history of halāl certification in Japan should be mentioned first. Halāl certification organizations and companies or corporate groups that provide information on halāl were first established in the 2010s, when Japanese inbound tourism was booming, and they sprang up like mushrooms (Komura, 2019, pp. 192-196; pp. 201-202). How did this situation come about? According to owners of restaurants and stores wishing to accommodate Muslim tourists in inbound tourism, “Muslims living in Japan did not cooperate with non-Muslims’ businesses” (Komura, 2019, p. 199), while non-Muslim Japanese have focused on inbound halāl business as a niche market. As a result, many non-Muslim halāl certification organizations and halāl consulting companies were established.

In response to this situation, halāl certification organizations established by Muslims living in Japan were confronted with the issues of what they should do as certification organizations. Until then, halāl certification was only required for products consumed by Muslims, but this situation has changed drastically with the participation of non-Muslim Japanese in the inbound halāl business. When non-Muslim Japanese first began to pay attention to halāl business as a trend in the tourism economy, Japanese Muslims, who had been struggling to obtain halāl food, such as halāl meat legally slaughtered according to shari’a, considered the situation as a good turnaround. However, it only caused confusion among the Muslim community in Japan, and for example, some Muslims started to use their own methods of halāl certification.<sup>5)</sup>

In the first place, halāl certification in Japan should have been implemented by existing Islamic organizations in Japan, but that was not the case. Halāl certification is not something that can be done by any Muslim. Only Muslims who have studied shari’a, the Islamic law based on the Holy Qur’an and Ḥadiths, can judge and certify the halālness of food and other products.

Even if a Japanese company wanted to certify its products as halāl, it has not been easy to have their products certified as halāl by Muslim halāl certifications organizations. This is because Muslims who have studied shari’a demand strict halāl standards for everything from raw materials to production and delivery to consumers in a society where Islam is a foreign religion and culture. This is why non-Muslim Japanese have taken the initiative to learn about halāl certification.

As written in Komura (2019, p. 201), halāl certification has fallen into a state where certifica-

tion organizations have become so disorganized that it is difficult to know which organization is best for approving certification. On the other hand, there has been an attempt to provide guidelines for halāl production in Japan. For example, it has been necessary to clarify the meanings of halāl (permissible) and harām (forbidden), as these terms are often regarded as dichotomous, even though they are Islamic concepts which cannot be separated or regarded as complete opposites.

Muslims in Japan, especially Japanese Muslims, reacted sensitively to this situation. One of the reasons is that the small population of Muslims in Japan<sup>6)</sup> has led Japanese society to ignore the issue of halāl food in the past. However, there are other significant reasons. The interpretation of shari‘a differs slightly among different Islamic jurisprudential schools. In addition, Muslims think of the meals which their mothers made and they have eaten since their childhood as halāl. Therefore, we can say that each Muslim has his or her own halāl rule, and there is no complete unified halāl rule in the Islamic world. However, non-Muslim Japanese people who are engaged in halāl business provide their products as “Halāl” to Muslims. This can be confusing for Muslims as they have no way of telling which Islamic jurisprudential school or Islamic religious group has judged the products as halāl. Thus, it was necessary for Muslims to provide Islamic evidence that the meals and food products etc. were not harām. To put it briefly, the increase in the number of Muslim tourists to Japan has brought the issue to the attention of Japanese society (Komura, 2019, pp. 194-196). In addition, the emergence of certifying organizations in which non-Muslim Japanese are involved has raised feelings of distrust, especially among Japanese Muslims, as to what criteria are used for certification and whether the food is really halāl or not (Komura, 2019, pp. 197-198).

In general, Japanese companies focus first on checking whether their products are legal or illegal in Islamic terms. This is because the aim of a company is to know if its products are halāl or not, not to understand Muslims’ ideas or the religion of Islam. Although being halāl compliant does not immediately lead to an understanding of Islam, when halāl business first began to be focused on in the Japanese business community, Japanese Muslims recognized it as something that would promote halāl compliance in Japan and ultimately lead to an understanding of Islam (Komura, 2019, p. 195). Thus, halāl business became a niche market in Japan. Furthermore, many halāl-related consultants and certification organizations have sprung up. In order to improve the situation, Islamic organizations in Japan have begun to actively engage in activities related to halāl certification in their own organizations. For example, in addition to halāl certification, a few organizations issue the “Muslim Friendly Mark” (e.g., Japan Muslim Association, Japan Islamic Trust) to restaurants that serve alcoholic beverages in order to accommodate non-Muslim customers while providing halāl meals. And an Islamic center opens a halāl food store (e.g., in To-

kyo Camii and Diyanet Turkish Culture Center). Many Japanese Muslims also believed that the situation would eventually improve (Komura, 2019, p. 209). However, the COVID-19 pandemic intervened.

### 3.2. Halāl Business Trends in Japan before the COVID-19 Pandemic

Halāl business in Japan was booming before the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, restaurants in tourist areas in Tokyo such as Akihabara and Asakusa were displaying Halāl Mark labels to let people know that they could serve halāl meals (Komura, 2015, p. 100). They also began to serve halāl-compliant Japanese cuisine. Also, some manufacturers began to export their products to Islamic countries. However, in such cases, halāl compliance differs depending on which Islamic countries the products are exported to. Each country has its own halāl regulations. Combined with this point, halāl business in Japan has changed little by little. In other words, changes are now required for businesses to keep up with global halāl business trends. As will be discussed later, halāl certification trends in Malaysia and Indonesia, which are particularly close to Japan, have had a strong influence on halāl certification trends for Japanese product exports to both countries. For example, Malaysia is strengthening its certification to global standards with the aim of creating an international halāl hub in the country. In addition, Indonesia has established BPJPH (Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal) as an implementing agency for shari'a that will come into effect in October 2019 requiring halāl certification for all products in Indonesia.

### 4. About the Halāl Business during the COVID-19 Pandemic

According to JNTO (Japan National Tourism Organization 日本政府観光局), the number of international visitors to Japan from January to December 2019 reached 31,882,049, a record in history. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic which broke out at the end of 2019, in 2020 the figure plummeted to 4,115,828, and then in 2021, to 245,862.<sup>7)</sup> As a result of it, restaurants and stores that used to serve halāl meals or sell halāl products were in serious trouble and many went out of business. The same was true of halāl products manufacturers and dealers. Those which managed to survive had to face another difficulty, periodic updates of halāl certification to ensure that halālness is maintained, which is expensive. It seems that the renewal of halāl certification became a real burden for restaurants, stores and companies as the number of Muslim tourists declined hopelessly due to the pandemic.<sup>8)</sup>

Some stores, which had been serving tourists as their main customers, closed their stores or changed the type of business due to the lack of tourists. Specifically, in June 2020, the author checked the situation in Asakusa, one of Tokyo's most popular tourist spots. Of course, most restaurants and stores were closed at that time because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in

2023, halāl Japanese restaurants in Asakusa, which had closed or had stopped serving halāl-compliant Japanese cuisine, began serving Japanese cuisine again, after the Japanese government started accepting foreign tourists again. In Asakusa, the halāl restaurants that used to sell halāl foods have also drastically reduced the number of halāl foods and started to sell non-halāl Japanese sweets. The “Tokyo Map (ASAKUSA/UENO/YANAKA) for Muslims (ムスリムおもてなしマップ)” issued in March 2020 by Taito City, which will be described later, listed 40 restaurants and stores before COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to the pandemic, more than 10 of them have gone out of business.

On the other hand, some food manufacturers, such as food processing companies, are shifting to halāl certification for exports to Islamic countries in response to the inability to sell halāl-compliant products in inbound markets. This trend is the result of a search for business models that would not rely solely on Japanese inbound sales in the event of a similar outbreak of infection.

## 5. The Current Halāl Business in Japan

### 5.1. The Current Halāl Certification Organizations in Japan

As mentioned earlier, Indonesia changed the law requiring halāl certification for all domestic products in October 2019. In the current post-pandemic period, halāl certification organizations in Japan are now recognized by Malaysian and Indonesian certification organizations to provide halāl certification for Japanese exported products. Thus, even if a product was certified by a Japanese halāl certification organization which does not have the “endorsement” by an Indonesian or Malaysian certification organization, the product will be disqualified because it does not have a reliable halāl certification for export to both countries. As of July 2023, only four Japanese groups have been recognized as halāl certification organizations in Japan by BPJPH: Japan Muslim Association, Japan Islamic Trust, Muslim Professional Japan Association, and NPO Japan Halal Association.

Currently, a new trend has emerged among Japanese certification organizations in line with the movement toward halāl certification in Islamic countries. On the other hand, the lack of unified standards in Japan for Japanese inbound halāl certification has left each certification organization free to do as they please. In this context, Muslim Friendly Mark, a mark suitable for the inbound market, has been created.

### 5.2. About Muslim Friendly Mark

As the number of Muslim tourists visiting Japan increases,<sup>9)</sup> some restaurants and stores are offering halāl meals as a way to accommodate them. In order to promote sales, these establishments have begun to display the “Halāl Mark” in their restaurants or on their storefronts to

indicate that they can serve halāl meals. Recently, the Muslim Friendly Mark has emerged as an alternative to the Halāl Mark.

The difference between the Halāl Mark and the Muslim Friendly Mark is as follows: The Halāl Mark is granted to products that are produced under conditions or at locations where alcohol and pork-derived ingredients are not used, not only as raw materials but also in everything from transportation to the consumer, and are recognized as halāl by the certifying organization. Also, the Arabic word “حلال” (halāl) is shown on the Halāl mark. However, restaurants in a worldwide well-known and popular sightseeing area, such as Asakusa, have to serve alcoholic beverages for non-Muslim customers. Therefore, it is often the case that restaurants cannot be certified as a halāl restaurant because they serve alcoholic beverages, even if they can provide halāl meals. The Muslim Friendly Mark is a response to this problem. This mark is a response to the fact that a restaurant offers halāl meals, but it lacks halālness in areas other than the food being served, such as the fact that alcohol can be consumed inside the restaurant. The Muslim Friendly Mark is controversial among Muslims in terms of halāl food products, since the raw materials and the kitchen in the restaurant are clean and purified as halāl, but the materials transportation processes (logistics and warehousing) or serving alcoholic beverages are not halāl. However, the Muslim Friendly Mark is a method that is suited to the demands of a society in which restaurants and shops can provide halāl products that are safe for Muslims, even though halāl certification is difficult to obtain. It should be noted that the Arabic word “حلال” (halāl) is NOT shown on the Muslim Friendly Mark.

Even if the COVID-19 pandemic had not occurred, Muslims in Japan would still have had to find a way out of the chaotic situation of the halāl business in Japan. How do Muslims in Japan try to cope with it? What are their efforts like? To find out, the author conducted interviews at various Islamic organizations engaged in halāl certification.

## 6. Interviews with Halāl Certification Organizations

### 6.1. Interview with the Chairman of the Japan Muslim Association

This association is the first Japanese Islamic organization that began as a voluntary association in 1952. The Japan Muslim Association is responsible for inbound halāl certification.<sup>10)</sup> Halāl certification for inbound tourism has been difficult to achieve because halālness has not been maintained in all aspects of domestic logistics and warehousing, especially in the restaurant industry, which has no choice but to serve alcoholic beverages because its customers are not only Muslim but also non-Muslim. However, as more and more inquiries came in from companies who wanted to be certified, the members of this association were forced to respond to inbound requests. Considering responsible behavior as a Muslim, halāl certification cannot be granted to

companies easily. Therefore, instead of acquiring the Halāl Mark through halāl certification, the association has created the Muslim Friendly Mark, which denotes the same level of inspection for the inbound market as the regular halāl certification. However, Japanese companies are required to display the mark with “حلال” (halāl) written in Arabic. The reality is that business persons and companies who want to obtain certification do not think that displaying the words “Muslim Friendly” in English on their storefronts is effective in attracting Muslim tourists.

In order to obtain the Muslim Friendly Mark, a certification inspection by Muslim inspectors is required, using the same inspection method as for halāl certification. Also, lectures about Islam must be taken. According to an interview with the chairman of the Japan Muslim Association, it was thought that many companies would use this Muslim Friendly Mark because the annual fee is not so high. The hurdles are not as high as those for halāl certification. However, he mentioned that there are not many Muslim Friendly certified businesses because the mark does not include the Arabic word “حلال”. This indicates that there is a gap in the concept of halāl certification between companies and Muslims.

## 6.2. Interview with the Japan Islamic Trust

Based on the Hokkaido Islamic Culture Center established in 1978, this organization has been established at the Ōtsuka Masjid (Mosque) which has been located in Toshima city, Tokyo since 1994, and has also been involved in soup kitchens for the homeless and humanitarian aid activities overseas. In 2003, it was registered as a religious organization with the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and has opened an international school, a kindergarten in 2004 and an elementary school in 2017. This Islamic group can be said to be an organization with a wide range of activities both for Muslims and for non-Muslims.

In an interview about halāl certification, the author spoke with a Muslim inspector who is involved in the certification process. The organization established a halāl department in 1997 and started its certification business. It then exported Halāl-certified Wagyu (和牛) beef to Dubai in 2008, and in 2016, the Japan Islamic Trust received certification from EIAC (Emirates International Accreditation Center), the halāl certification organization in the UAE, and SMIIC (Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries)<sup>11)</sup>, an affiliate of OIC (the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), which consists of 13 Islamic countries and regions. The following year, in 2017, the Japan Islamic Trust also received mutual halāl certification from JAKIM (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia) and Thailand. And in 2021, they started activities to obtain mutual certification with Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. Currently, the Japan Islamic Trust is recognized by Malaysia, Indonesia, and the UAE as a Japanese halāl certification organization for halāl certification. The inspectors in charge of certification are Muslims who have studied shari‘a at higher education-



al institutions in Islamic countries, such as Azhar University in Egypt, and are capable of halāl certification. In the interview, the author learned that even if a Muslim is well-educated and can recite the Holy Qur’ān, he or she may not be able to carry out a certification inspection for that reason alone. In addition, the halāl audits are conducted by auditors who have been evaluated for appropriateness and are in compliance with ISO standards. It can be said that the certification organization appears to be working towards an effective system of consistent halāl certification.

## 7. Interview with Taito City Office

There are several municipalities throughout Japan that implement tourism policies for Muslim tourists. Needless to say, however, due to the principle of separation of politics and religion, the hospitality measures for Muslim tourists implemented by local governments, public organizations, are aimed at attracting tourism. In other words, the purpose is not to provide hospitality to a specific religion or ethnic group, but to welcome all tourists equally. However, Muslim hospitality policies adopted by local governments tend to be perceived by citizens as the government’s active involvement in the religion of Islam (Komura, 2023, p. 297). Then, how is halāl certification actually recommended in hospitality measures for Muslim tourists? The author interviewed a staff member of Taito City office, because when halāl business became more widespread in Japanese society, Taito City began to map halāl restaurants and stores that handle halāl food products on the “Tokyo (ASAKUSA/UENO/YANAKA) Map for Muslims (ムスリムおもてなしマップ)”, and has established a subsidy system for halāl certification in Taito City.<sup>12)</sup>

Taito City includes Ueno and Asakusa, two of Tokyo’s most popular tourist destinations, and has held hospitality lectures for foreign visitors since 2005 as part of its efforts to make the city more welcoming for foreign tourists. In addition, when hospitality for Muslims was discussed in a lecture organized by Taito City in 2014, the participants showed a high level of interest in the topic. Moreover, the Taito City mayor at the time was proactive in accepting Muslim tourists, so the project to promote the acceptance of Muslim tourists was initiated. Currently, in order to accommodate the diversity of food for tourists from all over the world, a system is in place to consult with companies not only on halāl cuisine, but also on vegan food and kosher that deals with ingredients for Jewish people. It should be noted that this does not mean that the staff members of the Tourism Section of Taito City have specialized knowledge of halāl, kosher and vegan matters, but rather that they serve as a consultation service for the citizens. In other words, information on certification organizations, etc. is provided to inbound businesses that are considering obtaining halāl certification.

After the company has obtained certification, the consultation services for the company’s businesses are transferred to an organization which has been commissioned to advise businesses.

And the company is featured on the “Tokyo Dietary Diversity” map,<sup>13)</sup> which includes stores that sell vegan food. The company is also tasked with introducing the business to the public. Taito City provides this service as a way to provide information to its citizens. While Taito City can provide information on halāl certification, it cannot recommend certification itself.

## 8. Discussion

Can these differences in response and changes in halāl certification be regarded as a unification of halāl business in Japan, or can we see this situation as a diversification?

First, with regard to the response to halāl certification and the Muslim Friendly Mark authorized by Islamic organizations, as mentioned above, it can be acknowledged that there is a gap in thinking between Muslims who created the Muslim Friendly Mark and the business persons who want to obtain halāl certification. In essence, halāl certification cannot be considered to be halālness unless halāl characteristics are found at all stages of the production process from the raw materials to delivery to the Muslim consumers. Therefore, if a product cannot be certified as halāl, it cannot be granted the Halāl Mark. Muslims involved in certification inspections demand that all products must be halāl if they are to be granted the Halāl Mark. This is a natural attitude for an inspector. On the other hand, the Muslim Friendly Mark can be said to be a sign of Muslims’ struggle to find a way to act in accordance with Islam in Japanese society where Islam is a different religious culture.

In addition, due to the principle of separation of politics and religion, the government only provides information on halāl certification and establishes and implements systems associated with tourism policies. In other words, the government’s provision of halāl information is not targeted to promote the spread of Islam in Japanese society, nor does it actively support halāl certification as an inbound measure. Therefore, halāl certification as an inbound measure for Muslim tourists visiting Japan should be considered and implemented by each business based on the information available. Some major Japanese companies with global operations do not use halāl certification organizations in Japan, but rather obtain halāl certification directly from certification organizations in Malaysia or Indonesia.<sup>14)</sup>

These developments in various organizations and businesses for the inbound market can be seen as a diversification of halāl certification in Japan. However, some Japanese Muslims hold the strict opinion that halāl certification should be conducted by Japanese Islamic organizations with religious legal personality (Komura, 2023, p. 296). At first glance, this could be seen as an attempt at unification of halāl certification. However, this attitude is not intended to narrow the door to halāl certification (Komura, 2023, p. 296). The reason why Muslims are certifying food products as halāl is because they need to ensure that they themselves can eat and drink safely

and securely in the face of the globalization of human mobility and food. Therefore, the intent of halāl certification is to provide humanitarian considerations for those who wish to follow the tenets of Islam. It can also be interpreted as support for the idea that it is better to have some kind of unified standard because there are now various standards. On the other hand, the author suspects that the real reason why this idea has emerged among Muslims in Japan may be that there is still an idea among them that anyone can certify halālness as long as he/she is a Muslim.

While halāl certification is seen as a humanitarian consideration, halāl business as tourism consumption is expected to continue to develop in various ways. Inbound businesses are working on halāl food as a part of their hospitality toward foreign Muslim visitors to Japan. This is not so much a matter of being considerate of Islam because he/she is a Muslim, but rather a methodological approach to how one should respond to and ensure the pleasant consumption of food products by Muslims when they come to Japan for tourism. In other words, for business persons, halāl is perceived as one of the inbound policies for Muslim tourists.

On the other hand, the Japanese national and local governments are not passive in providing information as a service to their citizens. This attitude is consistent. As halāl is an Islamic religious concept, the government is not directly involved in it, in accordance with the principle of separation of politics and religion. Therefore, Muslims living in Japan are expected to discuss and establish standards for halāl in Japan, but they will have to follow the standards of the country of origin of each Muslim, i.e., the regulations of the organizations which manage halāl certification in each Muslim's country of origin, which will make it extremely difficult to establish unified standards. It is possible to say that it will be very difficult to establish a unified standard for the inbound halāl certification.

In addition, as mentioned in Komura (2019), it is ultimately up to each Muslim to decide whether products are halāl or not and can be consumed (Komura, 2019, pp. 210-212). Furthermore, some restaurants are beginning to serve halāl meals without halāl certification (Komura, 2019, p. 213). In other words, even if halāl meals or food products are prepared based on the halāl standards, it is up to each Muslim to decide whether he/she will consume them or not.

## 9. Conclusion

Then, what will the current situation described so far bring about in the future? Halāl certification for overseas exports is shifting in the direction of having to meet the standards of the countries to which the products are exported. In fact, as mentioned earlier, concerning exports to Malaysia and Indonesia, products which are certified by organizations in Japan except those recognized by Malaysian and Indonesian certification organizations as Japanese certification organizations, will no longer be allowed to be exported to both countries. In other words, a dis-

inction will be made from other halāl certified organizations in Japan. Meanwhile, Turkey and the UAE are also trying to establish globalized international halāl standards. Furthermore, some Muslims living in Japan have expressed the opinion that halāl certification should be granted by an Islamic organization with religious legal personality. From these perspectives, it is expected that Japanese halāl certification organizations will be gradually eliminated in the export market.

However, since there are no Japanese standards for inbound markets, there is a possibility that more companies will consider entering the Japanese inbound market as halāl certification organizations. Considering the various perspectives of these businesses and Muslim consumers, it is clear that Muslims have the right to choose halāl products as consumers, and that halāl certification organizations in Japan have already been endorsed as certification organizations, as seen in the trends of the halāl certification in Southeast Asia, the UAE, and other Islamic countries. The possibility that certification organizations in other Islamic countries will be involved in halāl certification in Japan in the future cannot be dismissed. In other words, the standards for export will depend on the standards of the export destination country, and halāl certification organizations in Japan will be excluded gradually. However, since there should also be consideration for the individual Muslim's attitude to halāl, halāl business in Japan will probably see diversification rather than unification.

In general, Islam is said to be a religion that respects diversity. Therefore, even if halāl certification in Japan is subject to various standards and diversity is observed, this is acceptable from an Islamic point of view. Also, even if Muslims do not respect the diversity of Islam in a society where Islam is a different religious culture, including inbound tourism in Japan and the trend of halāl certification abroad, it is still possible for non-Muslim Japanese to continue to participate in halāl certification by working with Muslims in Japan for economic activities. In other words, halāl business in Japan is likely to continue to grow and see a variety of business models in the future. It is necessary to continue to monitor the trends of Muslims in Japan as well as non-Muslim Japanese engaged in halāl business as a current and future issue for Japanese society.

## Notes

1) e.g., (Hariani, 2016), etc.

2) e.g., (Yasuda, 2017), etc.

3) The interview with Mr. Endo was conducted over several sessions via e-mail and online. The interview with Muslims of Japan Islamic Trust was conducted at the office of Japan Islamic Trust in Toshima City, Tokyo on June 10, 2022.

4) The interview was conducted on July 11, 2022 in the Taito city government office.

5) e.g., “Local Halal (ローカルハラール)”.

- 6) In terms of the percentage of Japanese population, this number would be less than 0.1%.
- 7) JNTO “Trends in the Visitor Arrivals to Japan by Year” <https://statistics.jnto.go.jp/en/graph/#category—133> (viewed on October 23, 2023)
- 8) Japan Islamic Trust did not take renewal fees from restaurants and stores because they were forced to close during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 9) (Komura, 2019, p. 193).
- 10) With the cooperation of the Institute of Islamic Studies in Takushoku University, Japan Muslim Association has performed halāl certification on overseas halāl markets.
- 11) The headquarters is located in Istanbul, Turkey.
- 12) The subsidy amount at the time of the interview was a maximum of 100,000 yen.
- 13) “Tokyo Dietary Diversity: Tokyo (ASAKUSA/UENO/YANAKA) Map for Muslims, Vegans, Vegetarians (食の多様性マップ in 台東区)” [https://www.city.taito.lg.jp/bunka\\_kanko/anzentaisaku/yukyaku/tourist/1.files/Taito\\_MusVegMap-final.pdf](https://www.city.taito.lg.jp/bunka_kanko/anzentaisaku/yukyaku/tourist/1.files/Taito_MusVegMap-final.pdf) (viewed on October 31, 2023).
- 14) For example, a Japanese confectionery company in Hokkaido (<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/files/100332464.pdf>) and a major Japanese logistics company (<https://www.nittsu.co.jp/v-site/15.html>) have obtained certification directly from JAKIM, a halāl certification organization under the jurisdiction of the Malaysian government (viewed on October 22, 2023).

## Acknowledgement

The author would like to express her gratitude to the interviewees who cooperated with her research.

## References

- Hariani, Dina. 2016. “Halal Japanese Culinary as Attraction for Muslim Travellers to Visit Japan” *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, Vol.28, 1st International Conference on Tourism Gastronomy and Tourist Destination (ICTGTD 2016), <https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/ictgtd-16/25868938> (viewed on October 31, 2023).
- JNTO. “Trends in Visitor Arrivals to Japan by Year”, <https://statistics.jnto.go.jp/en/graph/#graph--inbound--travelers--transition> (viewed on October 23, 2023).
- Komura, Akiko. 2015. *When Japan Meets Islam: Its History and Possibility [Nihon to Isurāmu ga deau toki: sono rekishi to kanōsei]*, Tokyo: Gendaishokan.
- Komura, Akiko. 2019. *Islam in Japan : Analyzing and Understanding its History, Religion and Culture [Nihon no Isurāmu: Rekishi · Shūkyō · Bunka wo Yomitoku]*, Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Publication.
- Komura, Akiko. 2023. “The Current Situation and Issues on Halāl Business in Japan [Nihon ni okeru Harāru

Bijinesu no Genjyō to Kadai], Pp. 281-298 in *Islam in France/Islam in Japan [Furansu no Isurāmu / Nihon no Isurāmu]*, edited by Kiyonobu Date. Tokyo: Suiseisha.

Kosugi, Yasushi. 2021. “Sharī’a as a System of Responsibilities: Historical Formulation of Islamic Rules (Aḥkām) and its Five Categories to Encompass All Human Acts in Islamic Jurisprudence (‘Ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh) [ <Ronkō> Sekinin no Taikai toshiteno Sharī’a: Isurāmu Hōgengaku niyoru Hōkitei no Teishikika to 5 Hanchū heno Shūren no Kōzō]”, *Islamic World Studies [Isurāmu Sekai Kenkyū]* 14 179–208.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Production and sales of Japanese confectionery that brings “big blessings” to Malaysia [Marēsia ni “Ōkina Fuku” wo Motarasu Wagashi no Seizō · Hanbai]”, *Series ODA NOW Vol.10 Hokkaido*,

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/files/100332464.pdf> (viewed on October 22, 2023).

Nippon Express. “Halāl Logistics Services Providing Reliable Transportation to Muslims [Harāru Butsuryū Sābisu de Musurimu he Anshin no Yusō wo Teikyō]”, <https://www.nittsu.co.jp/v-site/15.html> (viewed on October 22, 2023).

Shinohe, Jyunya. 2019. “Halāl and Harām on the Islamic Jurisprudence [Isurāmu Hōrigaku ni okeru Harāru to Harāmu]”, *Sharī’a Study [Syari-a Kenkyū]* 15 1-38.

Taito City. *Tokyo Dietary Diversity Map “Tokyo (ASAKUSA/UENO/YANAKA) Map for Muslims, Vegans, Vegetarians”*

[https://www.city.taito.lg.jp/bunka\\_kanko/anzentaisaku/yukyaku/tourist/1.files/Taito\\_MusVegMap-final.pdf](https://www.city.taito.lg.jp/bunka_kanko/anzentaisaku/yukyaku/tourist/1.files/Taito_MusVegMap-final.pdf) (viewed on October 31, 2023).

Yasuda, Shin. 2017. “Managing Halal Knowledge in Japan: Developing Knowledge Platforms for Halal Tourism in Japan”, *Asian Journal of Tourism Research* 2(2) 65-83.