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## **The potential job opportunities for Halal Science Graduates in education sector in Negara Brunei Darussalam**

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**Abstract.** A concern for graduates in Brunei Darussalam is the difficulty of finding a stable career after graduation. Although Brunei is considered one of the richest countries in the world with a relatively small population, the unemployment rate keeps increasing, which is a problem for future graduates from various universities in this country. Therefore, this research focuses on studying the potential employment opportunities for Halal Science Graduates specifically in the education sector as it is well known that education plays an important role in enabling people of all ages and religions to engage in quality learning throughout their lives. Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, values, skills, beliefs and moral habits. For this reason, it is absolutely important for people to learn Halal education in order to gain more knowledge about Halal and apply it in their daily lives. The issue here is Halal education is not emphasized enough in primary and secondary education. It should be addressed earlier to lay a foundation of the Halal theory among the potential workforce. As the demand for Halal qualified manpower is increasing, Halal education should be given more significant in general education. Hence, this study seeks opportunities for Halal Science Graduates, to make a career in the education sector by conducting a survey on people's opinion about Halal education. In this study, it is found that many people agree with studying halal education from an early age or starting it in primary education. Moreover, majority of the respondents preferred a teacher from Halal Science Graduates with Master of Teaching to teach them about Halal.

**Keywords.** Job Opportunities; Halal Education, Potential Job Opportunities, Halal Science, Education Sector

### **1. Introduction**

Halal industry has become the fastest growing business in the country and abroad due to the growing Muslim population in the world. This particular industry has attracted the attention and interest of all countries because the demand for Halal products would absolutely increase as the Muslim population is also increasing every year. Halal has the potential to create a wider market not only limited to Muslim consumers but also for non-Muslims. It is believed that Halal brings a healthy lifestyle, especially in terms of choosing products known as Halalan

Thayyiban products and the importance of clean and safe consumption as well as permissible according to Islamic law. That is why many experts expected that the future market potential for halal products is huge, as the Muslim population is growing, including in Europe and America, and observers estimate it will exceed 2.2 billion by 2030. While the global halal market reached \$1,294.5 million in 2020 and is expected to reach \$1,911.3 million by the end of 2026, reflecting a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 5.7 percent for the period 2021-2026, according to the Global 'Halal Market' 2020 Research Report released last August.[5, 7]

This study focuses on exploring the potential employment opportunities for Halal Science Graduates specifically in the education sector. Reason for this study is to ensure that graduates know that this sector may have a particular career for them and that graduates have the choice to choose a particular career after graduation.

### **1.2 Hypothesis**

It is assumed that unemployment rate in Brunei is high and halal science graduates might have low chance in obtaining career due to lack of work skills.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

- To study people's opinion on Halal Education and Employment Opportunities for Halal Science Graduates in the education sector.
- To seek whether Halal Science Graduates have the potential to work in the education sector.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Brunei Educational level**

Category of educational level according to the Brunei Darussalam Standard Classification of Education (BDSCED) 2011:

#### **2.1.1 Primary and below**

Attained education at primary level from year 1-6 or equivalent. Also includes pre-school, adult education or never attended a formal education.

#### **2.1.2. Secondary**

Attained education at secondary level from year 7 up to pre-university or equivalent.

#### **2.1.3. Technical and Vocational**

Attained education at technical level such as pre-diploma, national diploma or equivalent; or vocational education such as national vocational certificate or equivalent. The education level such as teachers' training, nursing and other similar training is also included here.

#### **2.1.4 Tertiary**

Attained education at tertiary level from higher national diploma or advance diploma and higher such as bachelor's degree, master's degree, Doctor of Philosophy, postgraduate specialist or professional qualification and others. Although there are four different educational level in Brunei Darussalam, Halal education is only emphasized in the tertiary level especially in Sultan Sharif Ali Islamic University Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre.

### **2.2 Graduates employability**

In general, employability is the possession of the necessary skills and attributes to be employed, to get ahead, and to persist in it [3, 8] (Weligamage, 2006). Bassou El Mansour)

conceptualized employability as "a set of accomplishments (skills, understanding, and personal attributes) that make individuals more likely to find employment and succeed in their chosen occupations, benefiting themselves, the work force, the community, and the economy." [6] (Uddin, 2021)

According to the Labour Force Survey (2019), the total number of unemployed was 16,200, down from 19,200 in 2018. These were made up of 8,500 men (52.6 percent) and 7,700 women (47.4 percent). Of the total 16,200 unemployed persons, about 16,000 were natives. Among the unemployed, about 39.8 percent or 6,500 were young people aged 15 to 24, more than half (60.2 percent or 9,800 persons) were registered as aged 25 to 64 and no unemployed person was registered as aged 65 and over. By educational attainment, the highest proportion of unemployed was among those with secondary education, at 54.1 per cent (8,800 persons). This was followed by tertiary education with 21.7 per cent (3,500 persons), technical and vocational (17.1 per cent or 2,800 persons) and primary education (7.1 per cent 1,100 persons).[9].

Graduates generally finished their studies between the ages of 24 and 26. Using the above statistics, it has been shown that people aged 25 to 64 have the highest proportion of unemployed. This means that the probability of graduates to have a career after graduation is low based on the previous statistics.

During the visit to Jobcentre Brunei, Ms Sufina presented the nine identified factors that may contribute to labour and unemployment problems, namely:

1. Data sources are excessive and scattered.
2. The readiness of supply, i.e. how ready are our locals.  
The Potential Job Opportunities for Halal Science Graduates in Education Sector
3. The importance of regulatory agencies (localization).
4. The possibility of limited training capacity.
5. Economic growth.
6. Mind-set.
7. Wages.
8. Transportation.
9. Vulnerable groups.

From the above challenges, halal science graduates might be at a disadvantage because they might lack skills in the professional world. For example, in the Halal industry there are various sectors such as food, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, finance and banking, education and tourism. These sectors require certain skills and Halal is just an addition to the skills. For example, the human resources of a financial company have two options between Halal Science Graduate and Finance Graduate. As a recruiter, he might choose the person who is Finance Graduate because this graduate has the skills to do his job in the financial sector which the Halal Science Graduate is likely to lack. The only other way to obtain the skills is to apply I-Ready through Jobcentre from certain companies which could improve the graduates' working skills and make them marketable to a stable career. [4] (Burden, P, McAvinia C, 1998)

### **2.3 Potential Job Opportunities for Halal Science Graduates in the Education Sector**

According to Nurdeng Deuraseh (2020), the potential job opportunities for graduates in education sector are as follow:

- Teacher in Halal Science

It was mentioned in Nurdeng Deuraseh’s study that one of the professions in halal career is to become a teacher of halal science in secondary school. Halal Industry is still new in this era and so many local schools need to educate students to know and be aware about Halal product in accordance with Shariah. He also mentioned how noble and respectful teaching is as education is the best way to help the nation to develop their skills and succeed in the future.

- Religious preacher

According to Nurdeng Deuraseh, da'wah (preacher) in Arabic literally means "issuing a summons," "invitation," or "call," and refers to the proclamation of Islam and the exhortation to submit to Allah as the main purpose of Da'wah is basically to call people to do what is right and to refrain from committing evils. For this purpose, Nurdeng Deuraseh suggested that the student who has undergone halal education must be one of the right people to perform this task.

- Academician

An academician is a full member of educational institution who is responsible for teaching, learning, research, publication and professional services or community engagement.

- Researcher or Assistant Researcher

A research assistant, or RA, is a researcher employed, often on a temporary contract, by a university, research institute, or private organization to assist with academic or private research. Research assistants are not independent and report to a supervisor or principal investigator and are usually not directly responsible for the outcome of the research.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, many recent graduates in Brunei and else where are considering continuing their studies and enrolling for a Master's or PhD degree as this is one of the best options for them, especially for those who want to become an academic in a higher education institution. These research assistants are often postgraduate students who are looking to get credit for assisting a professor in their research and will perform experiments under their supervision. However, some research assistants might work for novel writers, newspaper reporters and other professions that might need someone to track down information. Research assistants usually work under the supervision of principle investigator who led research projects. They're responsible for assisting the main researcher in several tasks that support the research activities. Those tasks vary depending on the type of research that's being done and the field that they're in. [5] (Nurdeng Deuraseh, 2020).

### 3. Methodology

This research was conducted using a quantitative method in which a survey was distributed to general people aged 15 to 65 years and the total number of respondents is 50 people. The survey was formed using Google Form and distributed online through Whatsapp and Instagram. Below is the background of the 50 respondents:

Table 1: Respondents’ Background

Participants		n	%
Gender	Male	5	10%

	Female	45	90%
Age	15-25	25	50%
	26-35	12	24%
	36-45	9	18%
	46-55	4	46%
	65 above	0	0%
Employment status	Government	14	28%

As we can see from the above table, most of the respondents are female students aged around 15-25 years and Muslims. There are three sections for this survey:

- 1) The first section consists of the background of the respondents.
- 2) The second section is about the respondents' opinion about understanding the term Halal and halal education.
- 3) The last section contains questions about unemployment and job opportunities for Halal Science Graduates in the education sector.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

##### **4.1 Understanding the term “Halal”**

When it comes to Halal, only 98% of the respondents are familiar with Halal as majority of the respondents relate Halal with foods and acknowledge that Halal related to various sectors or industries. Below is one of their responses when asked about their Halal understanding:

*“From my understanding from what I've learned until now, halal is the terms that means we Muslims are allowed to consume (eat or drink) certain of food and beverages. If there is no halal labels on food and drinks means that Muslims should never ever try to consume it as we are prohibited. The same goes to the restaurant, if the restaurant has no halal certificates we Muslim shouldn't eat and drink there.”*

The survey also asked their views on Halal education as their responses were like following:

*“It is very important to raise awareness among community because usually people tend to think that halal only specifically for food, and also halal education is important to prevent us from consuming or committing what is unlawful for us”*

*“Implementing Halal Education is very important especially to our younger generation and from my insights, I firmly believe, education that emphasizing Halal is not only just from spiritual based (memorising short surah and so on) but also important in daily life aspects such*

*as educating people that we have resourceful ingredients that can be eat, slaughtering process, learning the basic necessities such as cleaning your hands before and after eating and so on. To simplify, we can implement the Halal element into our education system (formally and informally) as long as it is Thayyib and beneficial for all of the generation.”*

*“Halal Education is a must subject to learn especially to Muslim. Maybe try to learn it step by step according to our age, more halal knowledge for the adults and teenager than children. Children can just learn basic knowledge about what is halal and haram as to make them not too confused with the halal concept since children was just starting to boost their knowledge, so take it slow.”*

The above shows that halal education is important and necessary in our daily life as it can provide knowledge and increase the awareness among Muslims. Findings also showed that 78% of respondents agreed that lack of knowledge causes us to be less aware in Halal.

The results also show that people often associate halal with food, which also indicates that they have little knowledge about Halal. This result was expected as most of the respondents were random people aged 15 to 65 years, half of whom were aged between 15 and 25 years. Somehow, most of the respondents also agreed that lack of Halal knowledge can make us less aware about Halal considering that most of the respondents are Muslims. As mentioned in the objective which is to study people's opinion about Halal Education, the results have shown that most of the respondents are aware that Halal education is important and necessary as it can provide broader knowledge about halal and increase their awareness. In my opinion, without knowledge people will become less aware about Halal and wouldn't have the basic knowledge how to confirm that the products are Halal. This shows that maybe in the future Halal education could be taught everywhere to increase the Halal Awareness. Awareness is the ability to perceive, to feel, and to be conscious of events and objects. It is a concept about implying the understanding and perception toward the events or subjects. Awareness has been hypothesized as an important role in determining the intention to choose. (Yuhanis, 2013). To conclude, Halal awareness is positively related to intention to purchase.

#### **4.2 Preference in which educational level Halal education should be taught**

Based on the survey of respondent's preference in which educational level Halal education should be taught, it is found that 90% of respondents preferred that Halal Education should be taught during the primary school while 43% of respondents preferred that it should start in the secondary school and 38% of respondents preferred it should taught during lower or upper form six or universities. Below is their perception on which educational level we need to learn about Halal:

*“Everyone should be educated from the start. By that at a young age so that it becomes a habit to practice Halal lifestyle in our daily life. As we can see today, the understanding of Halal is still lacking even amongst the adult and Muslims itself so I think that it should be taught a very young age.”*

*“Every students from every level should learn the importance of having Halal lifestyle as it is also to keep enhancing our minds that, it is our part as a Muslim to keep obey Allah's ruling. The best start to start is from primary especially kindergarten because kids tend to observe and eager to learn during this age. Along with secondary school and sixth form will just a basic recap and as for universities, learning Halal further is wise and more elements in learning various of Halal industries and are needed to be elaborate more since graduates are the core to boost the country's economy by being employed.”*

*“I think it is important to continuously educate the community on this matter, not*

something that could just be done with at the certain level of education in order to get to the next level, its something that everyone should always revisit as well as broaden their knowledge on, example: math.”

“In secondary school is a good initial stage for students to learn about halal . further more, with the introduction of halal from secondary school, the students can start consider to pursue halal education as their career. Interesting facts, they can take subjects in A’ level that are directly link with halal. For example: economics, food studies chemistry, biology, business studies, etc.”

This finding was expected as it is obligatory for a Muslim to consume things that are permissible and avoid everything that is prohibited. This has been mentioned in the Quran, “O people! Eat of what is lawful and clean on the earth and do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan, surely he is your open enemy” (Al-Baqarah, 168). Due to that, respondents preferred it to be taught during primary school. Furthermore, exposing about Halal during the early age is good as it will raise awareness among the consumers and companies to ensure that all products consumed or produced are Halal in accordance with the Shari’ah Law.

Though Halal education is currently emphasized in UNISSA Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre, however, in my opinion, Halal education should be taught in secondary school because at this age students are more open to accepting knowledge and applying it in their lives. This is in line with the study of Prof Dr Nurdeng in the Potential Occupation in Halal Industry for Reinforcement Sharia Economic Law, where he mentions a career of teaching halal science in secondary school. As a recommendation, it is to add Halal Science as a subject in O’Level and A’Level in secondary school and students then can further their study in the university. Another opinion is that Halal education is to be practiced in the religious school so that people are more practical and aware about Halal.

#### 4.3 Preference in who should teach Halal:



Chart 1: Preference who should teach Halal education

As we can see from the chart above, majority of the respondents with 44% preferred that Halal education should be taught by Halal Science Graduates with Master of Teaching and 28% of the respondents preferred Halal Science Graduates only. Furthermore, 18% of the respondents preferred that it should be taught by graduates from other faculties such as Shari’ah and Usuluddin instead of graduates from faculty of Halal Science.

The result of this study shows that majority of the respondents prefer Halal Science Graduates with Master of Teaching to teach them about Halal. Since the given analysis was

conducted only from randomly selected respondents aged 15 to 65 years, the results may not represent HR managers. Due to time constraint, this study focused only on the survey and the recommendation for further study is to conduct an interview with the managers of the Ministry of Education Human Resource.

#### **4.4 Thoughts on Employment**

The results show that most of the respondents indeed consider the unemployment rate in Brunei Darussalam to be high and this is a matter of concern for any graduate. Below are two of the selected opinions of the 50 respondents as both highlight the opinion of the others:

##### *The Potential Job Opportunities for Halal Science Graduates in Education Sector*

*“Youth is among the highest unemployment rate by age group. More study needs to be done to tackle the problem. Collaborative and continuous efforts by the government and private sectors are critical in reducing the unemployment rate. Among these efforts include the introduction of i-Ready schemes to unemployed graduates.”*

*“Fairly high; there are many manual labour jobs but since they are low salaried and have long working hours - disproportionate to graduates' expectancy of what a "job" entails to - it is more about lack of degree-salary-level job openings.”*

Unemployment Rate in Brunei is expected to reach 9.70 percent by the end of 2021, according to Trading Economics global macro models and analysts expectations. In the long-term, the Brunei Unemployment Rate is projected to trend around 9.40 percent in 2022 and 8.90 percent in 2023, according to the econometric models. This rate is an indication that it is difficult for college graduates, especially Halal Science Graduates, to find jobs after graduation. In addition, Halal Science Graduates may lack some skills required by job requirements or have to compete with graduates from other faculties. For example, finance students are taught Islamic finance. Unfortunately, Halal Science Graduates does not have a module that enhances their knowledge and practical experience in finance. This will result in finance students being hired instead of Halal Science Graduates. Therefore as a recommendation, the Centre of Halalan Thayyiban should revise their modules to enhance the work skills of future graduates.

#### **4.5 The Lack of Halal Science Graduates**

Majority of the respondents responded that Halal Science Graduates lack in mostly experiences in teaching and knowledge. Below is some of the responses received from the respondents:

*“Their lack of teaching experiences and knowledge. Since Halal Science is more global, they need to know what's happening inside and outside our country and always do research and keep updated with today's news as well. It is indeed very challenging to become a teacher especially in this Halal Education field since the students may ask tons of questions regarding Halal. If they were to be a teacher that is not related to Halal Science, then it's even more challenging since it's not what they're major in but could be overcome as well if they work really hard for it.”*

This show that Halal Science Graduates lack these two in particular: Pedagogy and experience to be employed in the education sector.

Pedagogy is most commonly understood as the approach to teaching, is the theory and practice of learning, and how this process influences, and is influenced by, the social, political and psychological development of learners. Pedagogy, taken as an academic discipline, is the study of how knowledge and skills are imparted in an educational context, and it considers the interactions that take place during learning. Both the theory and practice of pedagogy vary

greatly, as they reflect different social, political, and cultural contexts. Pedagogy is often described as the act of teaching. The pedagogy adopted by teachers shapes their actions, judgments, and other teaching strategies by taking into consideration theories of learning, understandings of students and their needs, and the backgrounds and interests of individual students.<sup>5</sup>

Compared to another study, it was not mentioned that graduates need experience for employ-ability, but actually graduates need skills that was mentioned before. So, this may indicate that experience should not be a prerequisite for hiring graduates. Alternatively, Halal Science Graduates could increase their experiences by teaching in a private tuition or choose to do an attachment in schools so that they can experience in being a teacher.

## **5. Recommendation and conclusion**

### **5.1 Recommendation**

The followings are among the recommendation:

First: Halal Science to have courses that specialize in selected work skills. E.g.: Finance, Health, Auditor, Teaching and etc. So that they can market themselves as a suitable person for their chosen career.

Second: Private tuition to have Halal subjects to teach anyone who is interested. Hence Halal Science Graduates could apply for the part time job for the time being with teaching permit.

Third: The government should provide Halal teaching in other levels of education like secondary school. So Halal Science Graduates has the opportunity to work as a teacher in any school in Brunei.

### **5.2 Conclusion**

This study concludes that there is possibilities for Halal Science Graduates to secure a career in the education sector. The only thing that they need to improve is their skills in teaching. Furthermore, Halal Science Graduates have a broader job opportunities for them as Halal consists of different sectors and industries. In conclusion, if there is a possibility that halal education is a compulsory subject everywhere in school, the possibilities for Halal Science Graduates, to be hired as an educator could be high because of the knowledge and information they have.

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