

An Analytical Study on the Attitude of Abattoir Personnel in Ensuring Animal Welfare: Halalan Thayyiban Perspective

Nur Jeslina Hasnal, Zeiad Amjad Aghwan*

Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Negara Brunei Darussalam

*Corresponding author: Zeiad Amjad Aghwan, ¹Halalan Thayyiban Research Centre, Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Negara Brunei Darussalam; zeiadamjad@yahoo.com

Abstract: The concept of *halalan thayyiban* was introduced in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) more than 1400 years ago. Naturally, these divine and holistic terms apply to all life aspects including the attitude of the abattoir personnel who handle the living animals as forgoing these may contradict the Islamic values. Therefore, this study aims to ascertain whether the attitude of slaughterhouse workers aligns with the *halalan thayyiban* principles. Along the same line, this research also intends to outline the existing and potential strategies for improving as well as maintaining the attitude of the personnel in upholding animal welfare. To achieve these objectives, a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews was conducted at selected local slaughterhouses in Brunei Darussalam. The results of the study showed that all the personnel involved displayed exemplary attitudes towards animal welfare according to *halalan thayyiban* perspectives. Moreover, it was found that the current approaches used in the slaughterhouses had a significant impact on the attitude of the workers. Additionally, the study was also able to acquire their recommendations and viewpoints in enhancing and sustaining their attitude towards animal welfare. Hence, the study concluded that applying *halalan thayyiban* values and introducing relevant procedures are undoubtedly vital in shaping the personnel's attitude to secure animal welfare as per Shariah directives. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this study will assist future works in further analysing the attitude of abattoir workers in a wider scope.

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1. Introduction

The Islamic perspective of animals depicts them as creatures dependent on God (Allah), rather than just being resources (Aghwan, 2021). In contrast to any material worth they may have for people, animals are said to have their own lives and purposes, making them precious to both humankind and Allah the Almighty (Rahman, 2017). The humane slaughter of an animal slaughtered for meat production is done by keeping the animal's suffering to a minimum and respecting the intrinsic value of the animals (Aghwan, 2019). In Islam, the term *halal* refers to permissible things while *thayyib* literally means good, wholesome and safe in all aspects. Together, the word *halalan thayyiban* is perceived as all things and conducts that are permitted and good according to Islamic law (Aghwan, 2021). In relation, Rahman (2017) further argued that in its concentration on treating living creatures with compassion, Islamic law is the most prescriptive. It is required to slaughter animals for their flesh and hides using *halal* methods (i.e., that are acceptable in accordance with a set of moral and religious principles), with meat being non-*thayyib* if the animal has undergone any form of cruel treatment. Nowadays, environmentalists and scientists from all over the globe are beginning to recognize the usefulness of animals in an ecological context as public concern for animal welfare has grown. Moreover, the obligatory methods to conserve, benefit from, and treat animals, however, have been incorporated in the Holy Quran, as well as the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH), since more than 1400 years ago (Tasgheer & Anwar, 2021). Therefore, the concept of *halalan thayyiban* abattoir; slaughterhouses is undeniable, considering that the significance of *halal* and *thayyib* products continues to increase in global perspectives (Alina, *et al.*, 2013).

Implementing *halalan thayyiban* into day-to-day abattoir practices would undoubtedly assist in preserving the halal integrity of the products, as well as ensuring that every slaughterhouse personnel is abiding by The Almighty's Commands and the guidance of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), in both physical and spiritual aspects. Although the importance of *halalan thayyiban* concepts and practices is frequently emphasized in most abattoirs nowadays, existing studies found that incidences of cruelty toward animals persist in countries where Islam constitutes as the main religion (Rahman, 2017). As a result, such occurrences implied a contradiction towards Islamic values and principles, which were undoubtedly in opposition to *halalan thayyiban* perspective. Furthermore, limited to no studies were made to analyze how the attitude of the abattoir personnel would affect their productivity, competency, and credibility in achieving animal welfare, regardless of their Muslim status. Therefore, this study aims to ascertain whether the attitude of slaughterhouse

workers aligns with the *halalan thayyiban* principles. Along the same line, this research also intends to outline the existing and potential strategies for improving as well as maintaining the attitude of the personnel in upholding animal welfare.

2. Materials and Methods

In this study, the researchers conducted a qualitative data approach as the research method to conclude the research questions and objectives. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to gain extensive insight and information regarding this study. Consequently, this study was inclusive of the abattoir personnel working from the farm to the slaughter point (i.e., managers of the local abattoirs, the personnel who are in charge of the feeding and lairage areas, the drivers and the personnel who assisted in the transportation processes, and the slaughterers). To analyse the data, thematic analysis was employed based on the interview transcription (primary data) and the secondary data, namely existing works of literature and other relevant counterparts.

As the target audience of this study was the workers of the local slaughterhouses, this research required permission from the local abattoirs to perform interview sessions with their personnel, namely the personnel from the farm to the slaughter point. It was estimated that the researchers would commence the sampling of this study on five local abattoirs with two personnel in each area if the chosen local abattoirs permitted so. Furthermore, the researchers wished to conduct in-depth interviews on these particular sections and personnel because these groups have the highest exposure in dealing with the animals prior to their demise; hence, living animals, which provided further insight into each of their attitudes based on their expertise as well as personal perspectives to preserve animal welfare.

Before conducting the interview, the authors elaborated briefly on the research to ensure that the personnel fully understood the objectives of this research. Following this, the participants were enlightened that their voluntary participation was a foremost priority, where the acquired outcome from the interview would remain confidential and would not risk their current position or career. Following the interview sessions, the researchers transcribed the recorded interviews to further ascertain the acquired data and preserved the personnel's privacy. As a result, the transcribed information was analysed according to Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2012) thematic analysis technique.

3. Results

By using the thematic analysis technique, the authors were able to categorise and outline the following relevant themes and their sub-parts:

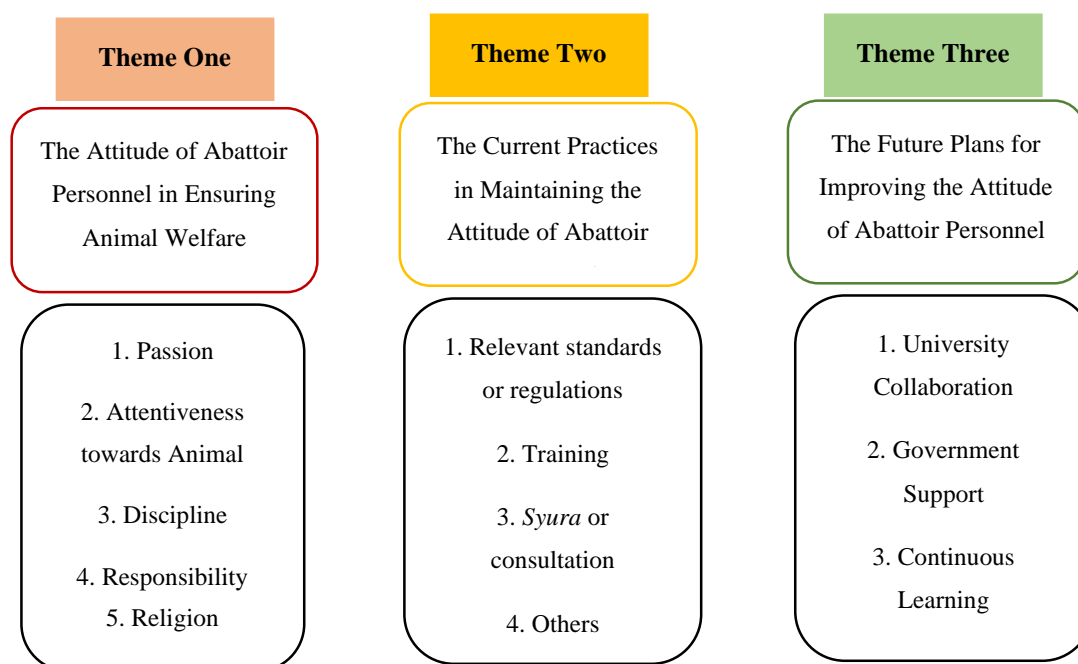


Figure 1. The findings of the study according to their respective themes.

4. Discussion

It was apparent how Islam incredibly highlighted on projecting *ihsan* towards Allah's creatures, hence the rights of the animals for humane treatment. Therefore, before proceeding to the main discussion, the authors found it significant to elaborate on the concept of '*ihsan*' considering this study relates deeply to the personnel's attitudes or feelings towards animal welfare. Firstly, *ihsan* is an Arabic term that translates to the act of goodness or 'benevolence'. Extensively, *ihsan* may be denoted as firstly; inner perfection towards one's action while maintaining sincerity and honesty, and secondly; maximizing *Sunnah* practices that allow an individual to be closer towards Allah, provided that the action is considered as noble and recommended by Him (Anugrah, *et al.*, 2019). Thus, from this definition, *ihsan* could also be perceived as one's inner state; particularly benevolent feelings or attitude.

Furthermore, Islamic scholars mainly categorised this notion into four categories; namely, *ihsan* towards Allah The Almighty, *ihsan* towards oneself, *ihsan* towards human beings and lastly, *ihsan* towards other creatures (Anugrah, *et al.*, 2019). In the Holy Quran, the phrase *ihsan* has been mentioned repeatedly for more than 60 times. According to Soedarto and

Hendrarini (2017), *ihsan* is not limited solely on worship aspects, as it should be applied in the working environment as well. As *ihsan* is practically the inner feelings which influence one's behaviour, previous studies found several main criteria that could cause this behavioural change which are being generous, patient, persistent, ambitious, confident, bravery, and grateful in their working area. While other factors such as education, experience, family, and society may also incur significant improvement towards one's *ihsan* (Wahab & Ismail, 2019). In summary, any benevolent attitude exhibited by the personnel could be considered as *ihsan* as per Islamic values. Hence, *ihsan* harbours a similar meaning and objectives to *halalan thayyiban* in all aspects especially regarding one's attitude or behaviour, as these terms mainly refer to good (*thayyib* and *ihsan*) actions that are accepted (halal) by the Islamic law.

In this notion, it is evident that *ihsan* differs from the conventional definition of benevolence, as individuals equipped with *ihsan* will perform their works to the utmost capability according to the commandments of Allah and Prophetic traditions as they are aware that all of their attitudes and deeds would be constantly observed by The Almighty Himself. As referenced by the Hadith narrated by 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab who mentions that (an angel) Jibreel came to the Prophet (PBUH) and asked:

"What is *ihsan*?" The Prophet said, "That you worship Allah as if you see Him; for if you see Him not, surely He sees you."

Another Hadith which was vital for this study's scope, narrated by Abu Ya'la Shaddad ibn 'Aus (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet (PBUH) was reported to have said the following:

"Verily, Allah has enjoined excellence (*ihsan*) with regard to everything. So, when you kill, kill in a good way; when you slaughter, slaughter in a good way; so every one of you should sharpen his knife, and let the slaughtered animal die comfortably"

Imam An-Nawawi explained that the word *ihsan* in this Hadith refers to mastery or proficiency (Imam An-Nawawi, 1976). The Hadith emphasizes excellence in all actions, as seen by the term "*killing well*" which refers to performing it effectively. The phrase "*with regard to everything*" in the Hadith refers to *ihsan*, which is a high level of perfection that is suitable for any circumstance whether in terms of attitude or behaviour, or both (Wahab & Ismail, 2019). Therefore, *ihsan* is not necessarily measured based on one's excellence in their actions as the concept of *ihsan* is first and foremost derived from the individual's heart that harbours their attitude, which eventually reflects their behaviour.

Hence, based on the principle of *ihsan* and the results obtained, the researcher aims to answer and elaborate on how the attitude of abattoir personnel aligns with *halalan thayyiban* values. Additionally, the author also aims to highlight the present and upcoming strategies for both improving and maintaining the attitude of abattoir workers to embody animal welfare. By using the thematic analysis technique, the authors firstly categorised any responses that contained similarities and utilised a theme that applied to these responses. The process was then repeated for the other themes.

4.1 The Attitude of Abattoir Personnel in Ensuring Animal Welfare

Table 1. The analysis of the personnel(s)' attitude based on their responses

Attitude	Interview Transcription(s)
Passion	“So this is indeed our passion, which we got from studying first. We implement it in our work. Actually, the most important thing is to feel adoration and happy with our work so that the responsibility can be established naturally.”
Attentiveness towards animals	For example, if you look at the grass here, it is not finished by them so possibly the feed is not tasty for them. Meanwhile, they are usually lethargic in the morning, but in the afternoon, they will have more energy. That is a part of their genetics.”
Discipline	“Concerning halal, animal welfare must be taken care of. We have our set of standards and guidelines we need to follow, so there is a procedure.”
Responsibility	“In slaughterhouses, for example, our responsibility is to ensure that the slaughtering process is carried out flawlessly. To make sure it is also safe, clean, and complies with Islamic law. That’s the most important part. In terms of cleanliness, we make sure to use full PPE before entering our workplace, and sanitise fully before and after.”
Religion Consciousness	“The fact that they obey the Islamic law is <i>thayyib</i> itself, hence this indicates that their animal welfare should also be good. When the slaughterer embodies this concept, then the end product that would reach the consumers will also be good. This is because technically, Islam mandated the cutting of the obligatory veins for the meat to be halal. As a result, the <i>halalan thayyiban</i> values are applied from the start to the end, and the customers will be free from any doubt.”

All of the preceding attitudes listed in Figure 1 and Table 1 align with the concept of *ihsan* and *halalan thayyiban* values which are necessary for employees who deal with living things,

henceforth; abattoir workers with the farm animals. For instance, the feeling of passion may surely facilitate the occurrence of ‘*ikhlas*’ or sincerity in every worker’s daily routine. Sincerity is the result of *iman*; a genuine person will truly believe in Allah and His Messenger, and all of his activities and deeds will be motivated by his joy and that of Allah and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Bennet *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, solicitude towards animals helps to minimise or completely hinder the animals from acquiring any injuries or diseases which may be detrimental to their lives, ensuring every one of their rights is fulfilled thus preserving *halalan thayyiban* principles. Meanwhile, referring to Islamic rules themselves as a set of discipline would remind the abattoir personnel that every one of their actions should be guided by wisdom and understanding, and their effects should be acknowledged particularly in matters of *halalan thayyiban*.

Farahani, *et al.* (2019) further emphasised that given the diversity of complicated behaviours shown by humans, several forms of discipline should be used following their social and personal conditions. Subsequently, Muslims must carry out their tasks with *amanah*, which means they must act honourably, reliably, and responsibly. Put simply, a Muslim does everything with sincerity and for the benefit of Allah both here on Earth and in the Hereafter (Zahrah *et al.*, 2016). This is because all Muslims, and all people for that matter, bear responsibility for their acts in this world, which will shortly be measured and questioned. Finally, it was found that they displayed a high understanding of their roles as abattoir personnel in the view of *halalan thayyiban* or Islam in general. In line with this, Morshidi and Jamaludin (2015) highlighted that the expression of the *tawhidic* worldview in day-to-day activities, or *Akhlaq Islamiyyah*, is a means of existence that necessitates both *al-akhirat* (continuous and ongoing consciousness of the hereafter), and *al-dunya* (constant and ongoing mindfulness of the present). According to Annalakshmi and Abeer (2011), these personalities may then have some impact on the views and behaviours of Muslims. As shown in Table 1, the personnel displayed sufficient knowledge when they applied the aspect of *halalan thayyiban* onto their job scope.

4.2 The Current Practices in Maintaining the Attitude of Abattoir Personnel

Table 2. The list of every abattoir’s effort in sustaining the attitude.

		Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Company E
1	Relevant Standard or Regulation Compliance	1. Halal Certified by MUIB and BKM	1. Halal Certified by MUIB and BKM	1. Halal Certified by MUIB and BKM	1. Halal Certified by MUIB and BKM	1. Halal Certified by MUIB and BKM
				2. HACCP	2. HACCP	

	Company A	Company B	Company C	Company D	Company E
	2. ISO 20200		3. GMP	3. Certified by the Department of Agriculture and Agrifood	3. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
2 Training	- Every year - From company's HR and Quality Assurance Division	- Once a year - Auditor from Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand	- 3–4 times a year - On the basis of Food Safety and HACCP - Local training from BDFA	1. Briefing from BKMh, Mufti	1. Quality Control
3 'Syura' or Consultation		Daily meeting with supervisors/workers	Both verbal and written advices		Verbal advices
4 Others		1. Self-maintenance and/or renovation of abattoir facilities every year 2. Use of machine (e.g. Knocking Box)		1. Use of technology and machine (slaughter boxes; head restraint; ID tracing)	

The study found that all the abattoirs were able to firstly meet the requirements set by the religious council in Brunei Darussalam, namely Brunei Islamic Religious Council (MUIB). This is following the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order 2005 which necessitates every business food premise in Brunei should apply for the halal certificate (Raffi, 2019). Supporting these halal regulations with other assurance systems such as ISO, HACCP, GMP, and SOP would assist the abattoir premise in managing its entire operations properly. In other words, they act as both direct and indirect guidelines for the abattoir personnel to exhibit an exemplary attitude that would not jeopardize the welfare of the animals and eventually, the *halalan thayyiban* authenticity of their end products. Furthermore, training the workers is essential as it does not only impart humanizing work knowledge and competence and increases production and service performance, but it also serves as motivation for changing employees' attitudes and behaviours to fulfil commissions. Additionally, an organizational culture that upholds Islamic principles would encourage Islamic religiosity and the work ethics required of staff members to carry out their jobs well (Rokhman, 2010).

Another method to sustain the attitude of slaughterhouse workers is through *syura* or consultation. *Shura* is one of the Prophetic traditions that have been transmitted from the companions and *tabi'in* to *tabit tabi'in*, and eventually to modern Muslims (Massi, 2020). The goal of the consultation is to unite hearts that recognize Allah's pardon. Colleagues can open their minds and hearts and facilitate a discourse that leads to the greatest possible conclusion when they all share and communicate their recommendations. Massi (2020) further stated that this practice is used by all successful top companies, and managers should consider all points of view before making decisions. Aside from the efforts previously mentioned, some of the abattoirs also used certified machines and technologies relating to abattoirs to secure animal welfare and ease the personnel's affairs such as knocking boxes and head restraints. To ensure a good slaughtering process, animals must be appropriately restrained before being slaughtered. This confirms Lambooij *et al.* (2012) findings that which less stressful restraint methods result in better product quality, increased safety for slaughterhouse workers, and better animal welfare. Hence, most halal slaughterhouses prefer to confine cattle in the lateral recumbency posture, which involves resting on their sides at a 90-degree angle and is the most ideal way in terms of conformity with halal standards (Fuseini, *et al.*, 2016).

4.3 The Future Plans for Improving the Attitude of Abattoir Personnel

Table 3. The potential efforts in enhancing the attitude.

Future Efforts	Interview Transcription(s)
University collaboration	“Animal welfare is usually job specific, so I will recommend the feedlot department, which in my opinion, will improve animal welfare as the graduates could share their inputs regarding our current practices, for instance making use of technology or producing supplements for the animals to gain a healthy weight, resulting the quality of the meat to increase.”
Government Action	“If you refer to the current Halal standard, the only thing that could be obtained is the halal slaughterer, the terms of slaughtering, the veins, if you want to refer to the deeper details, there is none. That's a deficiency from the government here. So future

Future Efforts	Interview Transcription(s)
Continuous learning process	graduates should try to make these kinds of standards, e.g. Halal Critical Control Point etc.”
	“Indeed, the first thing that should be improved is the workers, because they are the ones who work in the premise. We have to provide good training by managing or supervising. Following that, they need to be monitored constantly because this is the issue sometimes where they already know the science, or their knowledge is okay, but because they are tired so they hold the chicken harshly until it injures them, thus this is not animal welfare. So, there are many aspects, and the most important thing is through training, repeated education from the supervisor/manager where they always have to give advice. Because maybe the workers forget, or too tired.”

Firstly, the respondents agreed that university collaboration would have a positive impact on the attitude of abattoir workers to secure animal welfare. Existing studies found that the perception of animal welfare was strongly shaped by the degree of comprehension and knowledge within an individual. According to Langford's (2006) research, postsecondary education programs have the potential to create an atmosphere that is favourable for influencing students' attitude and preparing them for adult duties as consumers, citizens, and family or community members. Other findings emphasised how crucial it was to teach the animal welfare concept as a thorough teaching tool in universities and educational programs since it could serve as a springboard for a more sustainable society and better animal living conditions (Farm Animal Welfare Committee, 2011; Mackay, 2020; Unti & DeRosa, 2003). Therefore, in order to assist the youth to develop exemplary attitude towards animals in abattoir environment, it is important to educate them about animal welfare concerns and concepts. In this regard, knowing the relative value of animal welfare in educational institutions in terms of altering behaviour and knowledge, may assist policymakers in creating more effective animal welfare training programs and effectively concentrating on the knowledge gap at colleges and universities (Farm Animal Welfare Committee, 2011; Mackay, 2020; Unti & DeRosa, 2003).

Secondly, although Brunei has executed commendable efforts in preserving the overall *halalan thayyiban* integrity of a premise in particular, some of the interviewees believed that different or additional strategies could be taken to further improve the existing halal standards or regulations in Brunei. In Brunei Darussalam Standard for Halal Food, PBD 24:2007 itself, the standard only highlights the consumption aspect such as the apparent division between lawful and unlawful animals, the pillars of a slaughterer, the procedure of labelling and packaging, and so on (Deuraseh, 2019). Personally, the author agreed that improvements or new standards could be established relating to the intrinsic perspective of an abattoir personnel as well as the significance of animal welfare, rather than solely focusing on the practical aspect of an abattoir worker, particularly the slaughterer.

Lastly, it is vital for the personnel to be reminded constantly of a good attitude and optimum animal welfare, whether in a formal (e.g. training, consultation or written policy) or informal manner (e.g. personal and spontaneous communication). This is because in working environment, to know a skill is a different issue and to apply it in a practical way is another. A worker may have the knowledge from their previous education or experience, but this does not necessarily mean that they have the opportunity to utilise or apply the knowledge in their daily life whether deliberately or in an unintentional manner, or they may be affected by stressful and exhausting situations to the point they disregard the act of virtue towards the animals. In a simpler context, such action is similar to the act of reading and writing where reading is the act of attaining knowledge while writing is to embody the previously gathered knowledge (Sofa, 2022). In Surah Al-Alaq verse 1 to 5, for instance, portray the significance of reading and writing to contain the knowledge given. Therefore, this indicates that the knowledge given should be properly absorbed and utilised into one's understanding and action, which would be beneficial for an individual's standpoint with Allah.

5. Conclusions

In a nutshell, the attitude of abattoir personnel plays a crucial role in ensuring animal welfare as well as upholding the *halalan thayyiban* integrity from farm to fork. Due to Brunei's position as a Muslim country along with its stringent procedure relating to *halal* matters, the results of this research found that there were rare to no occurrences of animal welfare concerns resulting from the attitude of the abattoir employee. On the contrary, all the abattoir workers involved in this study conveyed sufficient knowledge, experience, and perceptions regarding animal welfare and the *halalan thayyiban* concept, or even Islam as a whole. Although the majority of the respondents involved do not necessarily deal with the abattoir environment daily, the knowledge they showed regarding their co-workers indicated that they

were aware of every detail happening within the abattoir, regardless of their job position. Therefore, the research's findings have succeeded in accomplishing its objective, which was to ascertain whether the present attitude of abattoir workers (from farm to slaughter point) confirms with *halalan thayyiban* views, the ways to improve their attitude toward protecting animal welfare as well as determining the current and potential measures in sustaining their attitude (from farm to slaughter area) to preserve the well-being of the animals. In light of the outcomes, future research may analyse further the impact of the attitude towards one's behaviour, determining whether the attitude plays an apparent role in shaping an individual's behaviour towards animals as well as their co-workers.

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