



# Halal Taiwan application: Facilitating access to products for minority Muslim communities

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Taiwan, as a non-Muslim-majority country, presents challenges in accessing halal products and services for both the local Muslim community and visiting tourists. This study aimed to explore the key challenges faced in the development of Halal.TW, a mobile application initiated by Indonesian students in Taiwan, to address this issue.

**Methodology** – A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, utilizing data collected through a literature review, in-depth interviews with the developers of the application, and document analysis related to the halal ecosystem in Taiwan.

**Findings** – The study identifies several critical challenges in the development and implementation of Halal TW, including the lack of standardized halal certification in Taiwan, limited technical expertise among the student development team, difficulties in integrating data from traditional halal businesses, low public awareness of halal needs, and competition from other digital platforms.

**Implications** – The findings underscore the need for cross-sectoral collaboration involving halal certification bodies, Taiwanese authorities, and local business stakeholders to improve the platform's data reliability and market adoption. Strategic partnerships and ongoing innovation are crucial for enhancing a platform's impact and sustainability.

**Originality** – This research provides new insights into diaspora-led digital innovation in a mainstream societal context, highlighting how community-based technological solutions can address inclusivity and accessibility challenges for minority groups.

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## Introduction

Taiwan is often referred to as Formosa, which means "beautiful island." The term Formosa originates from Portuguese, derived from *Ilha Formosa* or "beautiful island." This term emerged around the 16th to 20th centuries but has since faded. Therefore, it is not surprising that Taiwan shares similarities with Indonesia. Although Taiwan's total land area is less than 2% of Indonesia's, it has managed to establish a significant global presence both verbally and in terms of development and progress. Taiwan has a population of 23.57 million, equivalent to 9% of Indonesia's population (Adham et al. 2020).

According to the available data, the majority of Taiwan's population adheres to Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Meanwhile, the number of native Taiwanese Muslims is only approximately 60,000. These data confirm that Muslims in Taiwan constitute a minority, comprising less than 1% of the total population. Consequently, mosques are rare in many countries.

In most cities, there is only one mosque that is typically crowded only on Islamic holidays and during Friday prayers. Some cities do not have mosques. Fortunately, I reside in Kaohsiung, home to Taiwan's second-largest mosque after Taipei (Amalia et al., 2023).

As of 2018, approximately 256,000 Indonesians were living in Taiwan, the majority of whom were Muslim according to data from the Taiwanese government. However, migrants do not have authority to build mosques in their respective areas. Additionally, 97% of them are Indonesian migrant workers, commonly referred to as PMI. Living as a Muslim in Taiwan presents challenges for finding halal food. Taiwan offers several options. Given the dominant religious beliefs in the country, many locals practice vegetarianism. Therefore, if there is any doubt about the halal status of a particular food, choosing vegetarian meals is a safer choice. Additionally, as a minority, Muslims in Taiwan support one another through religious practices. If halal food is scarce, mosques often sell halal meat, including chicken, goat, and beef. Nearly every mosque in Taiwan has a tradition of selling halal meat to the Muslim community (Ardiyanto et al. 2024; Muhamad et al. 2020).

In recent decades, the international mobility of Indonesian students has increased, including in countries with minority Muslim populations such as Taiwan. According to the Indonesian Student Association (PPI) in Taiwan, the number of Indonesian students in the country is growing every year. As Muslims live in an environment with limited access to halal products, these students face challenges in maintaining Islamic principles in their daily lives, particularly regarding food consumption and access to places of worship (Setyaningsih & Fuady, 2025; Wang et al., 2019). The halal status of food is a primary concern for Muslim students in Taiwan because most available food products do not have halal certification. Moreover, halal restaurants remain scarce and scattered across different regions, making it difficult for students to find dining places that comply with Islamic dietary laws. These challenges have driven the development of technology-based solutions, including the *Halal Taiwan* application (Amalia et al., 2023; Anatasha & Malahayatie, 2024).

Taiwan has made efforts to improve the accessibility of halal products through initiatives such as the Taiwan Halal Integrity Development Association (THIDA) and the development of websites such as Taiwan Halal, which provide information about halal restaurants, mosques, and unk-friendly places. However, challenges, such as the lack of visibility of halal products on online platforms and supermarkets, remain. Studies show that compared to countries such as Japan and South Korea, Taiwan's halal products have lower visibility in international markets, including Malaysia. These applications have become an important solution for the Muslim community in Taiwan to live a lifestyle in accordance with Islamic law, especially in a country with a minority Muslim population.

This application, created by two Indonesians, Aris Kusumo Diantoro and Faisal Fahmi, had a significant impact on meeting the needs of the Muslim community in Taiwan. Launched on February 21, 2016, the app aimed to help users locate halal products and services across Taiwan. The Halal Taiwan application was developed as a digital platform that provides information on the locations of halal restaurants, mosques, and Muslim community centers in Taiwan. This app is expected to be a valuable tool for Indonesian students, making it easier to find halal food and other religious facilities. However, the extent to which this application effectively meets the needs of Muslim students has not yet been widely studied. Therefore, this research aims to explore the use of the Halal Taiwan app among Indonesian students in Taiwan, identify the benefits they experience, and examine the challenges they encounter while using the app. Additionally, this study seeks to analyze the level of adoption of the Halal Taiwan application among Indonesian students in Taiwan. The primary objective was to explore how the application helps Muslim students maintain a halal lifestyle in a non-Muslim environment.

## Literature Review

This literature review discusses the development and challenges of the halal industry in Taiwan, focusing on halal. TW application developed by Indonesian students. This application aims to facilitate access to information on halal products and services in Taiwan, a country with a minority Muslim population. One relevant study was conducted by Adham et al. (2022), which diagnosed the

halal industry in Taiwan using the Viable System Model (VSM). This study indicates that although Taiwan has several units supporting the growth of the halal industry, such as the Taiwan Halal Center, challenges remain in terms of the certification and public understanding of halal products. The study also notes that the presence of various certification bodies, both business-oriented and community-based, creates complexity in Taiwan's halal industry (Adham et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Rifa'i (2018) highlighted the promotion of halal food in Taipei. This study found that the government and relevant institutions are making efforts to certify halal food through official bodies such as THIDA and CMA. However, challenges persist in raising public awareness of the importance of halal products and improving accessibility to information about places that provide halal food (Rifa'i, 2018).

A significant study by Anatasha and Malahayatie (2024) compared the halal assurance processes in Indonesia, Taiwan, and Singapore. This study adopts a comparative case study approach to analyze regulations, certification requirements, and industry reports from each country. These findings indicate that Taiwan, through the Taiwan Halal Integrity Development Association (THIDA), focuses on halal food and cosmetic products. Despite advancements in the halal certification system in Taiwan, challenges remain in harmonizing international standards and building consumer trust in halal products. This study emphasizes the importance of collaboration between government and industry players in enhancing the halal assurance system and expanding the global halal market (Anatasha & Malahayatie, 2024).

The primary gap lies in institutional and social contexts. Unlike Indonesia and Malaysia, which have well-established halal systems and broad public support, Taiwan continues to struggle with the issues of legitimacy and fragmented certification bodies. This aspect has not been thoroughly analyzed in the paper, particularly in comparing Taiwan's context with countries such as Malaysia and South Korea, which have made more progress in integrating government support and technological innovation in halal development. Contradictory findings have also emerged regarding system effectiveness. Singapore has successfully streamlined the certification process through a centralized body (MUIS), whereas Taiwan has faced coordination challenges among its various institutions. Therefore, this review benefits from expanding cross-country comparisons to enhance both the relevance and depth of the analysis. Overall, the literature shows that although progress has been made in the development of siwan the halal industry, many challenges still need to be addressed. The Halal TW application is a positive step in providing access to information for the Muslim community. However, its success depends on collaboration among developers, the government, and society to create an environment that supports the sustainable growth of the halal industry.

## Research Methods

This study investigated the potential of halal tourism in Taiwan to increase the number of Muslim tourists. A descriptive approach was adopted to facilitate this study. This descriptive approach focuses on explaining various aspects of a specific issue or object in a comprehensive and detailed manner. By gathering information, the researcher aimed to depict a phenomenon that has occurred or is currently occurring. This study used a qualitative research technique. This approach allows research to provide a realistic explanation of social phenomena and process data in an engaging manner based on the findings. This research collects and analyzes relevant data from accurate sources to support ideas that illustrate the potential of halal tourism in Taiwan to attract more Muslim tourists.

Document analysis was used as the primary technique to collect the data. The documents analyzed included academic journals, government reports, policy documents, publications from tourism agencies, and related media content. These sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to understanding the development and challenges of halal tourism in Taiwan. The data analysis process is carried out in three main stages: *First*, Data Reduction involves identifying, grouping, and filtering important information to focus on themes related to halal tourism, such as facilities, certification systems, government initiatives, and tourist perceptions. *Second*, Data Presentation organizes and presents the categorized data in thematic narratives to illustrate patterns, trends, and gaps in the current development of halal tourism.

*Third*, Conclusion Drawing and Verification involve interpreting the findings to understand the implications of the research results. This interpretation was reviewed continuously to ensure consistency and relevance to the research objectives. This structured analysis allows the researcher to critically assess the readiness and potential of the halal tourism sector in Taiwan, highlighting not only its strengths but also the challenges that need to be addressed to attract more Muslim tourists.

## Results and Discussion

### The Development of halal tourism and halal food in Taiwan

Taiwan views Indonesia as one of its primary markets for the tourism industry. With a population of over 270 million, including approximately 30 million people of Chinese descent, and its status as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has become a strategic target for Taiwan to develop its tourism sector. To strengthen its tourism image and appeal, the Taiwan Tourism Bureau established the Taiwan Tourism Service Office in Jakarta in 2024, and actively conducted various promotional programs. These efforts have yielded positive results, with the number of Indonesian tourists visiting Taiwan between January and November 2024 reaching over 200,000, marking an 11.92% increase compared to the same period in the previous year. (Setyaningsih, 2021; Setyaningsih & Fuady, 2025).

However, finding halal-certified foods in Taiwan remains a challenge for Muslim tourists. This is due to the government's policy of strictly separating religious affairs from government sectors. To address this issue, the Taiwanese government initiated a conference involving various stakeholders to formulate recommendations for halal tourism development. One of the key outcomes of this conference was the introduction of the Muslim Tourist Welcome Policy in 2012, aimed at creating a more Muslim-friendly tourism environment (Diah, 2021; Dewanti, 2021). With the increasing number of international students from Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, the Muslim community in Taiwan has grown significantly. Indonesian students represent one of the largest groups of foreign students in Indonesia. However, their need for halal food and prayer facilities is yet to be fully met. Many Muslim students struggle to find halal restaurants or places of worship near their homes. Information about halal food locations and prayer facilities is generally obtained through word-of-mouth or recommendations from peers, making it difficult for the entire Muslim community in Taiwan to access such resources (Shiddiqy, 2019; Siregar, 2024).

However, the Taiwanese public still has limited awareness of the concept of halal in Islam. Some restaurants may serve food that meets halal standards, but they lack official certification because of a lack of understanding of the certification process. As a result, the Muslim community is hesitant to ensure that the food they consume fully complies with Islamic law. The absence of halal certification also poses a challenge for developers of applications that aim to provide information about halal locations in Taiwan (Rahmawati et al., 2024; Setiawan et al., 2024).

Between 2012 and 2014, the New Southbound Policy became Taiwan's primary framework for halal tourism development. This policy supported the private sector, particularly tourism business operators, by providing financial assistance to those transitioning from conventional tourism to a more-friendly environment. The Secretary of TETO Surabaya, Ms. Lin Ichi, stated in an interview with the author that, from 2006 to 2016, Taiwan had been working on developing the halal tourism sector through various policies and conferences (Yeoh et al., 2018). Since President Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, the welcomed Muslim tourist policy has been further strengthened. However, these regulations are not specifically tailored to Muslim communities. Instead, the Taiwanese government focuses more on providing financial support and general policies, while the implementation of halal tourism services such as hotels, restaurants, and prayer facilities remains the responsibility of the private sector (Chen, 2020; Dewanti, 2021; Glaser, 2018).

Based on these statements, it can be concluded that the development of halal tourism in Taiwan is a tangible step toward supporting a more inclusive tourism industry. This process requires time and collaboration between various parties. Therefore, every effort made by stakeholders, both the government and private sectors, will benefit Taiwan while also meeting the needs of Muslim tourists, especially from Indonesia, allowing them to enjoy travel experiences that



align with their religious principles. Taiwan continues to strive to increase its number of Muslim visitors, particularly in Indonesia. In 2025, Taiwan introduced the tourism promotion theme "Ways of Wonders," highlighting four main aspects of Taiwanese tourism: food, shopping, nature exploration, and romantic travel. As part of its efforts to make Taiwan a more Muslim-friendly destination, the Taiwan Tourism Bureau actively promotes the Muslim-friendly destination concept by launching a halal certification program for restaurants, hotels, and other public facilities (Mahendra, 2021; Muhamad et al., 2020).

These efforts have led to positive developments, especially in major cities such as Taipei, Kaohsiung, and Taichung, which now have more halal-certified restaurants and prayer facilities including mosques and musallas. However, challenges remain, particularly in providing accurate and easily accessible information about the places that offer halal services. Many Muslim tourists still face difficulties finding halal food, prayer facilities, and hotels that meet halal standards. To address these challenges, digital application-based technology can serve as an effective solution to provide broader and more accurate access to information for Muslim travelers. The development of halal tourism in Taiwan has undergone a long process involving various stakeholders, as well as the government. Taiwan's primary focus in expanding its tourism market is the Southeast Asian region, particularly Malaysia and Indonesia, which have the largest Muslim populations. Taiwan aims to increase the number of Muslim tourists from these two countries through various promotional strategies and the provision of more Muslim-friendly facilities (Muhamad et al. 2020; Setiawan et al. 2024).

According to Chia Chi Kang, the development of halal tourism in Taiwan is influenced not only by economic factors, but also by ongoing social phenomena. He stated that the rising number of Indonesian Muslim tourists seeking travel facilities that align with Islamic principles has been a key factor in shifting Taiwan's tourism policy. This statement is reinforced by Ms. Cindy Chen, a representative of the Taiwan Tourism Bureau in Kuala Lumpur, who emphasized that Taiwan's tourism market focus has now shifted more toward Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia and Indonesia. These two countries have large Muslim populations, encouraging Taiwan to develop halal tourism that can accommodate the needs of Muslim travelers.

The development of halal tourism in Taiwan is also being conducted through a two-way communication approach with Indonesia. To attract Indonesian Muslim tourists, the Taiwanese government established the Taiwan Tourism Bureau representative office in Jakarta. This office played a role in developing and promoting Taiwan's halal tourism abroad, particularly in Indonesia. Although the domestic Muslim population in Taiwan is relatively small, the government continues its efforts to create a more-friendly tourism environment. Since 2009, Taiwan has organized seminars and conferences related to the development of halal tourism. Through the Taiwan Tourism Bureau representative office in Jakarta, Taiwan actively promotes halal tourism by holding seminars and conferences in Indonesia (Kirana, 2025).

Additionally, the Taiwan Tourism Bureau established partnerships with the Association of Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA) and the Indonesian Travel Agent Association. This collaboration includes various tourism exhibitions such as the ASTINDO Travel Fair, which has been held since 2014, and the International Taipei Travel Fair, which has been running since 2018. The conferences organized by Taiwan are part of a halal tourism development strategy that is not only implemented in Taiwan but also actively promoted in Indonesia. Mr. Chia Chi Kang, Director of the Information Division at the Taipei Economic and Trade Office (TETO) Jakarta, explained that this approach aims to strengthen Taiwan's appeal as a Muslim-friendly destination. With various initiatives and collaborations between Taiwan and Indonesia, it is expected that more Indonesian Muslim tourists will be encouraged to choose Taiwan as their primary travel destination (Sudianto, 2025).

### **Indonesian student innovation: "Halal Taiwan" application**

In linguistic terms, the word "halal" refers to something that is permitted or allowed. Meanwhile, food is something consumed by being taken into the mouth. In Arabic, food is called "al-tho'am." Terminologically, halal food refers to food that is permissible for consumption according to Islamic teachings based on the Qur'an and hadith. Essentially, halal food is a good food that can be

consumed according to Islamic law, as explained in the Qur'an and hadith. One of the main principles of muamalah (Islamic transactions) is that everything is fundamentally permissible for consumption unless there is evidence prohibiting it. Based on this principle, halal foods are far more abundant than haram foods. This is emphasized in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 29, which states that Allah SWT created everything on Earth for the benefit of mankind (Said et al., 2022; Sholehuddin et al., 2021).

In the Qur'an, significant attention is paid to the consumption of food and drinks. The term "food" is mentioned 48 times, the verb "to eat" appears 109 times, the command to eat is mentioned 27 times, and the activity of drinking is referenced 39 times. In Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 88, the Allah SWT commands humans to consume food that is halal and good (*thayyib*). The word "thayyib" following "halal" indicates that humans must not only consume food that is permissible according to Islamic law, but also food that is good and does not harm health. According to Nurdin, the term "thayyib" means goodness, virtue, or blessing. Yusuf Qardhawi defines "*thayyib*" as food that is proportionate, appetizing, and not harmful to the body or mind. In the Qur'an, only four types of food are prohibited, as mentioned in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 173, namely, carrion, blood, pork, and food not slaughtered in the name of Allah. The hadith also mentions several prohibited foods such as predatory animals with fangs, birds with claws, and domesticated donkeys (Nashirudin, 2017; Rachman, 2020; Rohmah et al., 2020).

In 2024, the Head of KDEI Taipei, Arif Sulistiyo, delivered a presentation on the strategic role in the placement and protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in Taiwan. Currently, the number of PMI in Taiwan has reached over 313,000, making Indonesia the country with the highest number of foreign migrant workers in Taiwan for three consecutive years. According to data from the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI), in 2023, there were more than 70,000 PMI in Taiwan (Nuryananda et al., 2022).

The halal tourism industry has experienced rapid growth over the past few decades in line with the increasing number of Muslim tourists globally. According to the 2023 Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), the number of Muslim tourists is projected to exceed 230 million by 2028, with stable annual growth. Muslim travelers not only seek enjoyable travel experiences, but also those that align with Islamic teachings, including access to halal food, prayer facilities, and accommodations that support a halal lifestyle.

Currently, various non-Muslim countries are beginning to recognize the economic potential of the halal tourism sector. Countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan have taken various strategic steps to attract Muslim tourists by providing Muslim-friendly facilities, including halal certifications for restaurants, halal travel guides, and prayer spaces. Taiwan, with its natural beauty and rich culture, is also working to develop a halal tourism sector to attract Muslim tourists, particularly from Indonesia and Malaysia (Wardhani et al., 2021). Taiwan has a relatively large Muslim community, with the number of foreign Muslim workers and students reaching around 300,000, in addition to the 200,000 Southeast Asian tourists who visited Taiwan last year. Therefore, developing an application that facilitates access to information about halal restaurants and other supporting facilities is necessary (Network, 2025).

As part of the implementation of the New Southbound Policy, more Muslim students from Southeast Asia are studying in Taiwan. To help them find halal food, Indonesian students from the National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (NTUST) developed an application called "Halal Taiwan," which identifies places that provide halal food across Taiwan. In Islamic teachings, Muslims are not allowed to consume pork, and other meat products must undergo a slaughtering process that complies with Islamic laws. Additionally, the use of pork fat or alcohol is not permitted in cooking processes. A doctoral student from the NTUST Department of Computer Engineering, along with other Muslim students, successfully collected data from more than 300 locations, including halal restaurants, shops, hotels, and prayer spaces in Taiwan. Currently, the "Halal Taiwan" application has been downloaded more than 6,000 times (Dewanti, 2021; Glaser, 2018).

However, based on the experiences of Muslim students in Taiwan, there is still no easily accessible information platform to find halal restaurants. When they first arrived in Taiwan, they struggled to find dining places that adhered to the halal principles. After realizing that many other

Muslims faced the same challenge, they used their expertise to develop this application. It is hoped that the application will help Muslims in Taiwan find halal restaurants more easily and conveniently.

To address this challenge, two Indonesian students currently studying in Taiwan, Aris Kusumo Diantoro and Faisal Fahmi, created an Android-based application to assist in the search for halal products and services in Taiwan. Both are currently pursuing a Master's degree at the National Chiao Tung University (NCTU), Taiwan. Awareness of the concept of halal in Taiwan remains relatively low, causing concern among Muslims visiting the country about food and their surroundings. Through the application developed by Aris and Faisal, named "Taiwan Halal," it is hoped that this issue can be resolved, making it easier for workers, students, and Muslim tourists in Taiwan to find halal products and services in a country home to two global computer giants, ACER and ASUS (Fadhilah, 2025).

Seeing the challenges of finding halal products and services in Taiwan, two Indonesian students, Aris Kusumo Diantoro and Faisal Fahmi, created an Android-based application called "Taiwan Halal." Both are pursuing a Master's program at the National Chiao Tung University (NCTU), Taiwan. Awareness of the halal concept in Taiwan is still low, causing many Muslims to worry about food and their environment. With this application, Muslim workers, students, and tourists are expected to find halal services in Taiwan easier. A student who is also active in Nahdlatul Ulama Special Branch Management (PCINU) Taiwan emphasized the importance of adhering to halal and haram regulations in every product or service. Aris added that many Muslims in Taiwan struggle to find products and services that comply with Islamic laws. This application provides information on halal restaurants, halal-based hotels, mosques, and Muslim communities in Taiwan. With access via mobile phones and computers, this application serves as a useful guide for Muslims there (Go Muslim, 2025).

Currently, the "Taiwan Halal" application is still in the beta stage. Faisal, as the lead developer, continues to gather user feedback to improve the quality of the application. To date, this application has been downloaded more than 10,000 times and covers more than 300 halal locations including restaurants, stores, hotels, and places of worship. This application is available in Mandarin, English, and Indonesian languages. Based on information from the official Halal.TW website, this application was developed to provide the best experience in exploring halal services in Taiwan. Originating from the need for Muslim tourists to find halal food, this application won an innovation competition organized by the Department of Technology, Ministry of Economic Affairs of Taiwan, in December 2016. Among the 45 participating teams from various universities, four NCTU students—Aris Kusumo Diantoro, Faisal Fahmi, Himmatur Rijal, and Jiwa Malem Seraya—secured third place and received a prize of NT\$50,000, or approximately IDR 20 million (Ramadhan, 2025).

The development of the "Taiwan Halal" Application stemmed from the increasing need for Muslims to access information related to halal food, services, and facilities in Taiwan. Although Taiwan is becoming increasingly popular among Muslim tourists from Indonesia and Malaysia, there are still limitations to providing information on halal places. Despite being known as a country open to diversity, many Muslim students, migrant workers, and tourists still struggle to find services that align with Islamic teachings (Agustina 2025).

The Taiwanese government regularly holds innovation competitions to enhance industrial competitiveness and to encourage technology and entrepreneurship development. In the system integration implementation category, the "Taiwan Halal" application has emerged as one of the top three winners. This application was initially developed as part of a thesis project at the NCTU. Their success in the competition was a source of pride, considering that they were the only participating foreign student team. Aris explained that the understanding of the concept of halal among the Taiwanese community is still low. Muslims visiting Taiwan often worry about food and the environment. With this application, it is hoped that the need for halal products and services can be met. Additionally, Aris hopes that the "Taiwan Halal" application can inspire more people to contribute to the introduction of halal food and Islam in Taiwan (Agustina, 2025).

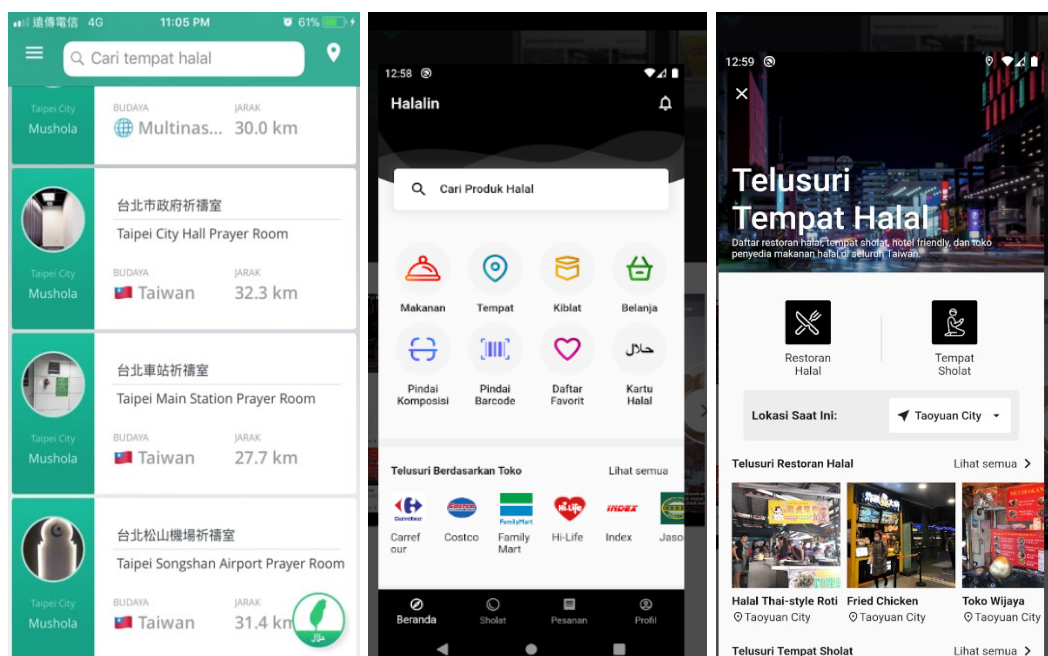
Faisal Fahmi added that this application would help Muslims find halal restaurants, halal-based hotels, mosques, and Muslim communities in Taiwan. The application continues to be

developed based on user feedback to enhance its services and provide information on halal matters in the country. Since its launch in February 2016, the application has been downloaded more than 10,000 times. In the near future, "Taiwan Halal" is expected to be integrated with a halal food e-commerce service. Besides benefiting the Muslim community, this application is also useful for the Taiwanese population looking for cuisine from Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia (Ramadhan, 2025).

This application serves as a solution for finding halal foods and services in Taiwan. With more than 300 registered halal locations, users can obtain information related to their addresses, contacts, and available services. A multilingual feature (Mandarin, English, and Indonesian) was provided to facilitate access to various users. This simple and intuitive design makes it easy to use for both students and tourists. However, the development of this application has several challenges. One of the main obstacles is the lack of official data on halal locations in Taiwan. Some small restaurants that serve halal food do not have official certification, making them difficult to identify. Therefore, development teams must conduct in-depth research to ensure information accuracy. Additionally, maintaining the application and regularly updating data is a major challenge in its development (Ramadhan, 2025).

### Key features of the "Halal Taiwan" application

The "Halal Taiwan" application is an innovation developed by Indonesian students in Taiwan, aimed at helping Muslims find halal food and places of worship in the country. With the increasing number of Muslim students from Southeast Asia studying in Taiwan, the need for information on halal products and locations has become crucial. This application was designed to address the challenges that Muslims often face when searching for food that complies with Islamic law. The "Halal Taiwan" application offers several key features designed to enhance the experience of Muslim travelers (see Figure 1)



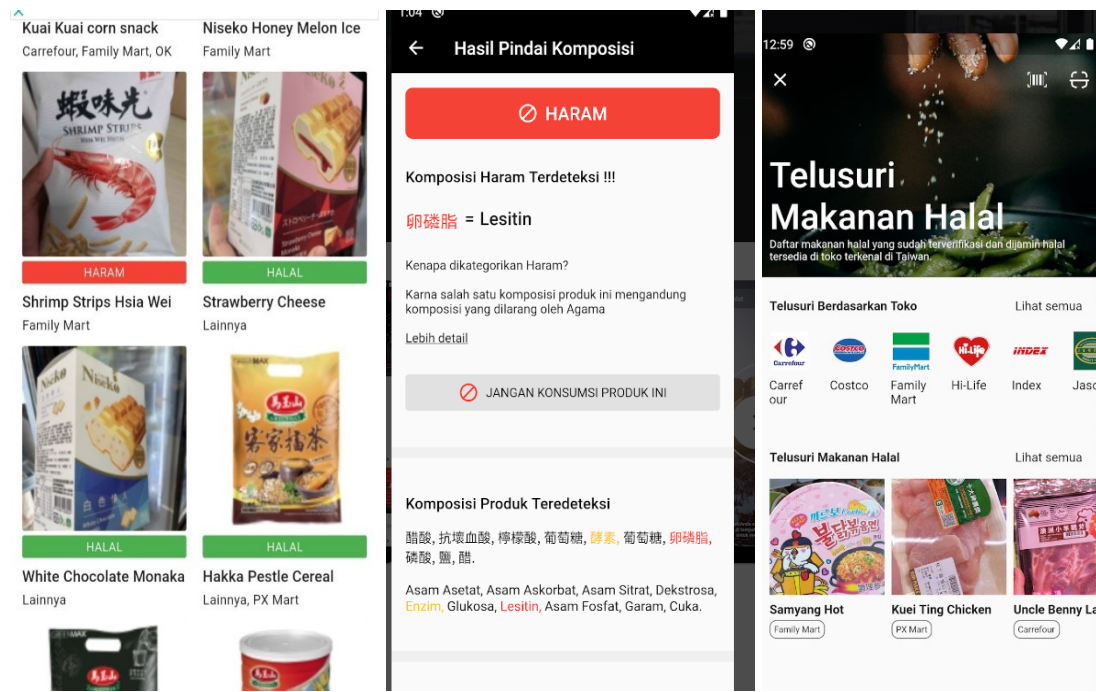
**Figure 1.** Aplikasi “Halal Taiwan” and halal location map

Source: "Halal Taiwan" application

This feature displays verified halal restaurants, mosques, hotels, and other facilities using GPS-based navigation. The application includes a map feature that allows users to view the locations of nearby halal restaurants and prayer sites. By utilizing the GPS technology, users can easily navigate to these locations. This feature is particularly useful for Muslim travelers who wish to explore Taiwan without worrying about halal food or places of worship.



Users can filter information based on categories, such as food type, price, and location. One of the main features of the "Halal Taiwan" application is its halal restaurant directory. The app provides information on more than 300 locations that offer halal food, including restaurants, stores, and hotels. Users can easily search for dining places that meet halal standards, without relying on verbal recommendations from others. This search feature is particularly helpful for newcomers who are not yet familiar with their surroundings.



**Figure 2.** Scan to find out halal food  
Source: "Halal Taiwan" application

Users can leave reviews and ratings for the places they visit, helping other travelers choose the best option. The application provides information on restaurants that hold official halal certifications from the local authorities. This additional feature helps Muslim travelers perform their prayers while traveling. In addition, "Halal Taiwan" includes information about the nearest prayer space. This feature enables users to quickly find mosques or prayer areas, allowing them to easily perform their religious duties. This is especially important for Muslims who wish to maintain their religious obligations while traveling abroad.

The application not only serves as a guide for halal food and places of worship but also includes a product scanning feature (see Figure 2). Users can scan product barcodes to check their halal status instantly. This adds value to consumers, who want to ensure that all food and ingredients they consume comply with Islamic law. One of the main advantages of this application is its focus on Taiwan's halal tourism ecosystem, ensuring that the data provided are more accurate and relevant for Muslim travelers visiting the country. To enhance accessibility, "Halal Taiwan" is available in multiple languages including Mandarin, English, and Indonesian. The developers' plan to add Arabic in the future demonstrates their commitment to serving the broader Muslim community. With a user-friendly interface, the application is designed to be easy to use for everyone, including those who are not technology-savvy.

Since its launch, "Halal Taiwan" has received positive feedback from its users. Many people have found the application helpful as they struggled to find halal food in Taiwan. This app also has the potential to attract more Muslim tourists to Taiwan given the increasing global awareness of the importance of halal products. With the rapid advancement of digitalization, applications like "Halal Taiwan" play a vital role in supporting a healthy and Sharia-compliant lifestyle for Muslims living abroad. In addition to assisting individuals in finding halal food, this application contributes

to the development of Taiwan's halal tourism industry. This demonstrates that technology can be leveraged to meet the specific needs of certain communities.

Overall, "Halal Taiwan" is more than just a halal food search app; it is a comprehensive solution for Muslims in Taiwan to live their daily lives more comfortably and in accordance with their beliefs. With advanced features and easy access to information, this application serves as a real example of how technological innovation can positively affect society.

### **Impact of the "Halal Taiwan" application on the halal tourism sector**

In the digitalization era, technology plays a crucial role in enhancing travelers' experiences, including those of Muslim tourists. Location-based digital applications, artificial intelligence, and user reviews enable travelers to find halal services more easily. Several global applications, such as HalalTrip, Muslim Pro, and Zabihah, have been developed to assist Muslim travelers in finding halal dining places, mosques, and Muslim-friendly destinations. However, not all these applications provide specific information for each country or city. The data available in these applications are often limited or inaccurate. Therefore, it is essential to develop local applications that are more specific and relevant to the needs of travelers in a particular destination (Sasongko, 2025).

In response to the challenges faced by Muslim tourists in Taiwan, a group of Indonesian students studying there developed the "Halal Taiwan" application (see Figure 3 and Table 1). This app is designed as a digital solution to help Muslim travelers find halal restaurants, mosques, Sharia-compliant hotels, and other services that align with the halal principles in Taiwan. The "Halal Taiwan" application, developed by Indonesian students in Taiwan, has had a significant impact in facilitating the needs of Muslims, particularly in finding halal food and places of worship. With over 300 registered locations, this app not only helps students and Muslim workers but also attracts the attention of Muslim tourists visiting Taiwan.

Moreover, to make it easier for Muslim travelers to find the necessary information while in Taiwan, there is also the "Halal Taiwan" (Halal.TW) application. This app can be downloaded from electronic stores, such as Playstore and Appstore. It compiles all information related to facilities that meet the needs of Indonesian Muslim travelers in Taiwan. The "Halal Taiwan" app was created by Indonesian students in collaboration with stakeholders in Taiwan, such as the China Muslim Association, the Taiwan Tourism Bureau, and the Taiwan Visitors Association. The development undertaken by these stakeholders is part of Taiwan's efforts to expand its halal tourism sector using technological tools. It is hoped that this technology will provide convenience for Indonesian Muslim travelers who need valid and reliable information (Fadhilah, 2025).

One of the main impacts of this application is improved accessibility to information regarding halal restaurants. Before this app existed, many Muslims had struggled to find dining places that adhered to Islamic law. With a halal restaurant directory, users can easily search for and locate safe places to fulfill their culinary needs without relying on word-of-mouth recommendations or unverified information. This app also acts as a communication bridge between the Muslim community in Taiwan and the local restaurant operators. Many restaurants in Taiwan offer halal food, but do not have official certification. The "Halal Taiwan" app helps raise awareness of the existence of these places, allowing more people to enjoy halal meals. This has the potential to increase the number of visitors to these restaurants, which in turn can contribute to local economic growth.

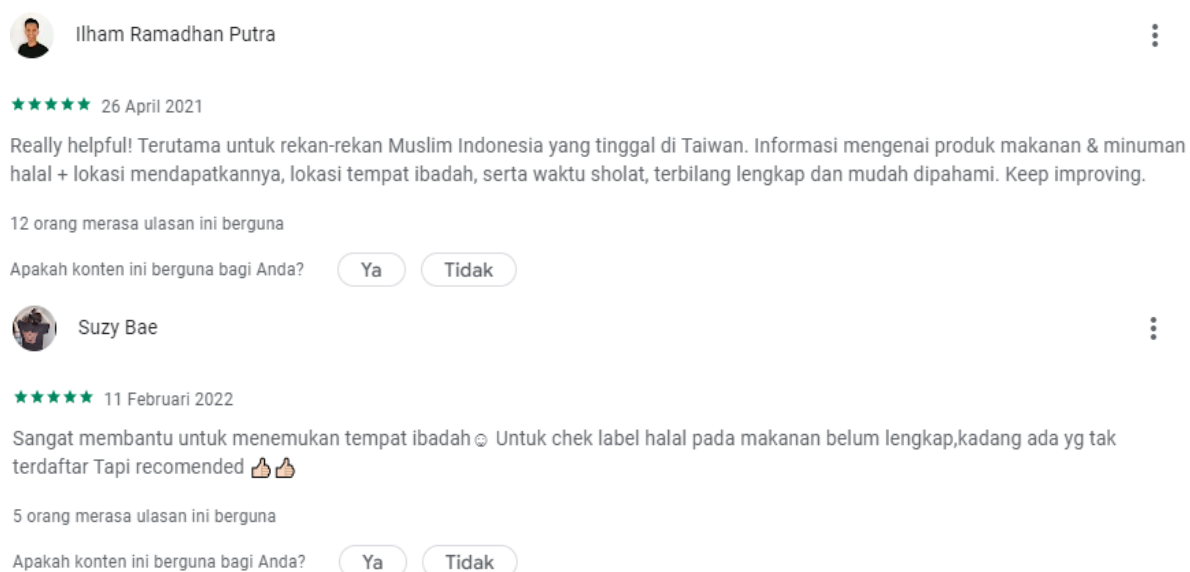
From a tourism perspective, this application is expected to attract more Muslim tourists to Taiwan. With the increasing number of Muslim travelers, the Taiwanese government is making efforts to improve services and facilities for these visitors, including the provision of prayer rooms and certified halal restaurants. This aligns with Taiwan's government policy to boost tourism through halal tourism promotion, especially after the decline in tourists from China. Additionally, the "Halal Taiwan" app positively contributes to the social integration of Muslims in Taiwan. With access to information about places of worship, users can easily fulfill their religious obligations without feeling alienated in a foreign country. This creates a more inclusive environment for Muslim communities in Taiwan.

Overall, the impact of the "Halal Taiwan" application is extensive, ranging from improving access to halal food information to contributing to halal tourism growth in Taiwan. This innovation demonstrates the importance of technology in meeting the specific needs of certain communities and creating new opportunities in tourism and culinary industries in non-Muslim-majority countries such as Taiwan. The app "Halal Taiwan," developed by Indonesian students, has been downloaded 10,000 times. While there are no specific data on how many users rely on the app every day, its popularity suggests that many users, especially Muslim students and tourists, rely on it to find halal food and other amenities in Taiwan. However, information about how many users gave positive ratings to this application was not available in the search results.

The Taipei Economic and Trade Office (TETO) and Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (PBNU) have expressed their appreciation for this Android-based application that provides halal products and services in Taiwan, developed by Indonesian students. Ismael Ma, Director of Media and Press at TETO Indonesia and an imam at Zhongli Mosque in Taiwan, believes that this application greatly supports Taiwan's government's efforts to promote Sharia-compliant tourism. According to him, the app not only facilitates Indonesian workers and students in Taiwan, but also benefits tourists. In the past two years, several tourism accommodation owners in Taiwan have actively offered halal food, beverages, and services (Go Muslim, 2025).

Some five-star hotels in Taiwan, including the Shangri-La Hotel in Luodong, Yilan County, have obtained halal certification from the China Muslim Association for food, beverages, and services to attract tourists from Malaysia, Indonesia, and several Middle Eastern countries. Ismael took pride in the innovation developed by Indonesian students in Taiwan. Similarly, the Chairman of PBNU, Said Aqil Siroj, has expressed his appreciation for this initiative, recognizing that it provides significant convenience for Muslims in Taiwan (Agustina, 2025).

Nur Najman Ade Putra, a member of the Indonesian development team, shared his experience when he first arrived in Taiwan. He moved to Taiwan with his parents during junior high school and faced difficulties in finding halal restaurants and prayer spaces for Muslims. The app is designed for Muslim communities in Taiwan and beyond, with the hope that it will help many people. He added that with the Halal.TW application, more Muslims worldwide can learn that Taiwan has many stores and environments that provide halal services and are very welcoming to Muslims. This app contributes to increasing local awareness of the importance of halal services by providing information on the halal status of products and services. Taiwanese society, including restaurant owners and other service providers, is becoming more aware of Muslim needs and is striving to meet halal standards. This fosters a more inclusive environment for all groups (Ramadhan 2025).



**Figure 3.** Responses from users of the “Halal Taiwan” application  
Source: "Halal Taiwan" application

**Table 1.** Response of response

No	Username	User response
1	Fitria Sawardi	Because we live in a country with a Muslim minority, we need to be more careful in choosing food. Fortunately, there is a Halal Taiwan application called "Halalin," which greatly helps Muslims in Taiwan in determining the halal status of food. Simply by scanning the barcode or the list of ingredients, this application will provide information on whether the food is halal or not.
2	Anik Suharto	Masha'Allah ... This time, I want to share about the "HALAL TAIWAN" application. What happened last week while I was on vacation became a valuable experience. Qadarallah (God's will), the place I visited turned out to be non-halal, which caused me worry. However, Alhamdulillah (praise be to God), today I found a very useful application, both for myself and for all my friends, which is the HALAL TAIWAN APP. This application is very helpful in finding halal food and the locations of places of worship in Taiwan. Whether traveling (safar) or in daily life according to the city where we work, this application makes it easier to find facilities that meet the needs of Muslims.
3	Imah Kendal	Very helpful, thank you.
4	Stevanie Alliyah Putri	This application is very helpful.
5	Lagufus Dewi	Thank you, with this halal application, I now know which is halal and which is not.
6	Nurul Ashariyah	It's very helpful for those of us who are in Taiwan... thank you.
7	Annie Masyriefah	Thank you very much, it's very helpful for us (Muslims) in choosing halal food.

Source: The comments column of the "Halal Taiwan" application

The app's success in innovation competitions demonstrates that this initiative is widely recognized as an innovative solution to the challenges faced by the Muslim community in Taiwan. The "Halal Taiwan" application won third place in an innovation competition organized by the Taiwan Ministry of Economic Affairs in 2016. This recognition not only enhanced the developers' reputation, but also encouraged further development of the application. The app's development also creates opportunities for collaboration between Indonesian students, local governments, and halal certification institutions in Taiwan. Through this collaboration, it is hoped that more restaurants will obtain halal certification, thereby making the information provided in the app more accurate and reliable.

The developers plan to add e-commerce features and Arabic language support to expand the app's user base. With e-commerce, users can purchase halal products online, making it easier for them to meet their daily needs. Overall, the "Halal Taiwan" application had a positive impact on the Muslim community in Taiwan by increasing accessibility to halal information, supporting halal tourism, strengthening social networks, and raising local awareness of halal compliance. Despite these challenges, this initiative demonstrates the great potential of digital technology to support cultural diversity and meet the specific needs of certain communities. Moving forward, by continuously improving information quality and collaborating with relevant stakeholders, the "Halal Taiwan" app can continue to maximize its benefits for both the Muslim community and wider society in Taiwan.

### Challenges in application development

The development of the Halal.TW application by Indonesian students in Taiwan is an innovative step toward supporting the Muslim community in a country with a Muslim minority population. However, the development and operation of this application are not easy. The developers face various complex challenges, ranging from technical aspects to socio-cultural factors. The biggest challenges encountered include regulations, human resources, technology, public awareness, and market competition.



One of the main challenges is regulations and policies related to halal products in Taiwan. Since Taiwan is not a Muslim-majority country, its halal product regulations are not as strict as those in countries with large Muslim populations. Developers must navigate a halal certification system that is not yet fully standardized or widely recognized in Taiwan. They must collaborate with international or local halal certification bodies to ensure that the information provided in the application is accurate and compliant with halal standards. This process often requires significant time and costs, especially because not all business owners in Taiwan understand the importance of halal certification for the Muslim community.

In addition, the limited availability of human resources presents a major challenge. The developers of Halal TW are Indonesian students with diverse educational backgrounds and experiences. While they have a strong passion to support the Muslim community, they may face difficulties in technical knowledge related to application development, data management, and a deep understanding of halal principles. To ensure that the application provides accurate and relevant information, it must conduct in-depth research on user needs and collaborate with halal experts and business owners in Taiwan. Time constraints also pose a challenge, as most developers are students who must balance their studies with application development projects (Sudianto, 2025).

From a technological perspective, challenges arise regarding accessibility and data integration. Although information technology is rapidly advancing, not all halal business operators in Taiwan fully utilize it. Many halal restaurants and stores still use traditional methods to promote their businesses, making it difficult for developers to integrate their data into a digital platform. Furthermore, the application must be designed to be user friendly for various groups, including Muslim tourists who may not be familiar with Mandarin or local technology. The developers must ensure that the application features an intuitive user interface and multilingual support to reach an international audience.

Public awareness of the importance of halal products is also a significant challenge for Halal TW developers. As a country with a Muslim minority, many people in Taiwan do not fully understand Muslims' specific needs regarding halal products and services. This lack of awareness can affect acceptance of the application by local business owners and the general public. Developers need to educate society on the benefits of halal products and the importance of providing inclusive services for the Muslim community. This educational effort requires effective communication strategies through marketing campaigns, social media, and partnerships with local organizations.

Market competition is another challenge that Halal.TW developers must address. In the current era of digitalization, many similar platforms are emerging to meet the needs of Muslim tourists worldwide. Developers must offer unique features and added value to ensure their application can compete with other platforms that may already exist in the global or Taiwanese market. Continuous innovation is needed to provide the best solutions for users, such as GPS-based location searches, user reviews, or personalized recommendations based on individual preferences.

These challenges demonstrate that the development of Halal TW is not just about creating a new technology but also about building an ecosystem that supports the halal industry in Taiwan as a whole. To overcome these obstacles, developers need to collaborate with various stakeholders, including the Taiwanese government, international halal certification bodies, local businesses, and the Muslim community. Cross-sector collaboration is crucial to ensure that the application is not only beneficial for the Muslim community but also widely accepted by Taiwanese society. Despite these challenges, developers' enthusiasm for supporting the Muslim community remains high. They believe that technology can be an effective tool for bridging information gaps and creating a more inclusive environment for all members of society. By continuously innovating and adapting to changing user needs and market conditions, Halal TW has great potential to become the primary solution for Muslim tourists and local residents in finding halal products and services in Taiwan (Fadhilah, 2025).

Overall, these challenges reflect the complexity of developing a technology-based application in a country with a Muslim minority population such as Taiwan. However, the success of Halal TW in overcoming these obstacles will serve as inspiration for other innovators to create

similar solutions in other countries with similar conditions. With the appropriate approach and support from various stakeholders, this application can become a successful model for promoting inclusivity through digital technology.

## **Conclusion**

The development of the "Halal Taiwan" application is an innovative step in supporting halal tourism in Taiwan. With increasing demand for halal services, this application holds great potential to assist Muslim travelers in finding services that meet their needs. However, several challenges must be addressed to ensure that the application functions optimally and provides maximum benefits to the users. The development of the "Halal Taiwan" app also reflects the significant potential of digital technology to support cultural diversity and the specific needs of certain communities. This initiative demonstrates that technology can serve as an effective tool to bridge the information gap between local and international Muslim communities. As digital technology continues to evolve and the demand for Muslim-friendly services grows worldwide, applications like "Halal Taiwan" have great potential to expand their reach to other countries.

Overall, the background of the "Halal Taiwan" application development highlights the urgent need to provide access to halal information for the Muslim community in Taiwan. This application has emerged as an innovative solution for addressing these challenges while supporting the growth of halal tourism in the country. However, the success of this application depends on the ability of the development team to continuously enhance the quality of information and establish collaborations with relevant institutions, such as halal certification bodies and local governments. Through these strategic steps, "Halal Taiwan" can continue to provide maximum benefits to the Muslim community and broader society in Taiwan.

Despite facing various challenges, the "Halal Taiwan" application has had a positive impact on the Muslim community in Taiwan. Many users report that this application significantly helps them find halal locations quickly and easily. Muslim travelers feel more comfortable visiting Taiwan as they can better plan their trips using the app's guidance. Additionally, this application contributes to raising awareness among the local population regarding the importance of halal services for Muslims. Beyond serving as a guide, the "Halal Taiwan" app also acts as a tool for strengthening social networks among Muslim students and visitors. Users can share experiences and recommendations regarding halal places, fostering a sense of community and support among members. This is crucial for enhancing the comfort and security of Muslims living in or visiting Taiwan.

## **Acknowledgements**

For halal app developers in Taiwan, it is recommended that the app design be intuitive, with simple navigation, efficient search features, and clear categories. User engagement strategies can include user reviews, ratings for halal places, and community forums to strengthen interactions. From a policy perspective, the Taiwanese government can support app development by providing data on halal-certified restaurants and products, to ensure accurate information. Incentives for restaurants and producers to obtain halal certification could also expand consumer choice and support the growth of the halal industry. Collaboration among app developers, the government, and certification bodies will strengthen the halal ecosystem in Taiwan.

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