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RESEARCH ARTICLE

“FROM REACTION TO RESULTS”: MEASURING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HALAL TRAINING PROGRAMS USING KIRKPATRICK’S MODEL

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of the halal industry has intensified the need for competent human capital capable of safeguarding halal integrity across diverse sectors. While halal training programmes are widely implemented, systematic evaluations of their effectiveness particularly from a governance and management perspective remain limited. This study evaluates the effectiveness of halal training programmes using Kirkpatrick’s Four-Level Training Evaluation Model (reaction, learning, behaviour, and results). Adopting a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three certified trainers from two halal training providers in Perak, Malaysia, supported by document analysis and observation. The findings indicate that halal training programmes generally generate positive participant reactions and enhance foundational knowledge of halal requirements, especially related to the Halal Assurance System. However, behavioural change and organisational outcomes are strongly influenced by management commitment, organisational culture, and post-training governance mechanisms. This study contributes to the halal governance and Islamic management literature by demonstrating the applicability of Kirkpatrick’s model within a values-driven and compliance-based industry context. Practical and policy implications are discussed to support the institutionalisation of effective halal training evaluation.

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Introduction:-

The halal industry has emerged as a significant driver of economic growth, both in Muslim-majority countries and globally (Azam, 2020; Wilson and Liu, 2011). Recent scholarship further highlights the growing importance of

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structured halal governance frameworks in sustaining global competitiveness and regulatory credibility (Ali et al., 2023; Khan and Haleem, 2021). Recent global reports indicate that the halal industry is expanding rapidly, with its total value projected to exceed USD 3 trillion by 2025, driven by increasing demand across food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and logistics sectors. Parallel to this growth, halal training initiatives have expanded significantly, with organizations such as Halal Development Corporation (HDC) and international halal bodies reporting increasing annual participation rates in halal certification and training programs. However, despite this expansion, empirical evidence on training effectiveness—particularly beyond satisfaction-level evaluation—remains limited, highlighting a critical research gap.

In Malaysia, the halal sector encompasses not only food and beverages but also cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, logistics, tourism, and related services, supported by a comprehensive regulatory and institutional ecosystem (Talib and Hamid, 2014; Zailani et al., 2019). Halal compliance is closely tied to Islamic principles, ethical governance, consumer trust, and quality assurance, positioning halal as both a religious obligation and a strategic governance mechanism (Ab Talib et al., 2021). To support Malaysia's aspiration to remain a global halal hub, various initiatives have been undertaken, including the development of structured halal training programmes by government agencies, higher learning institutions, and private training providers (HDC, 2022). These programmes aim to equip industry players with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to comply with halal standards and certification requirements issued by JAKIM. Nevertheless, prior studies indicate that the effectiveness of such training initiatives is often evaluated superficially, focusing primarily on participant satisfaction rather than deeper learning outcomes, behavioural change, and organisational impact (Salas et al., 2012; Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006).

Training evaluation models provide a systematic framework for assessing whether training investments translate into meaningful outcomes. Among these, Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model remains one of the most widely applied frameworks across sectors due to its simplicity and holistic orientation (Bates, 2004). Despite the widespread implementation of halal training programs, systematic and theory-driven evaluation remains underdeveloped, particularly within governance and compliance contexts. Existing studies tend to emphasize training participation and awareness outcomes, while neglecting deeper dimensions such as behavioral transfer, organizational impact, and governance performance. Furthermore, there is limited empirical integration between training evaluation models and halal governance frameworks, resulting in a fragmented understanding of how training contributes to regulatory compliance and institutional accountability. This gap is particularly critical in the halal industry, where failure in compliance may lead to reputational, legal, and ethical consequences. This study aims to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of halal training programs within a governance-oriented framework.

Specifically, the objectives are:

1. To assess halal training effectiveness using Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Model (reaction, learning, behaviour, and results).
2. To examine the extent to which training outcomes translate into organizational practices and governance improvements.
3. To identify key organisational and governance factors influencing the transfer of training into workplace behaviour.
4. To analyse the role of halal training as a mechanism for strengthening compliance, audit readiness, and institutional accountability.

Literature Review:-

Training and Human Capital Development:-

Training is a core component of human capital development, aimed at enhancing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and performance (Noe, 2020). In organisational contexts, effective training contributes to improved productivity, compliance, service quality, and employee engagement (Salas et al., 2012). Contemporary human capital theory emphasises training not merely as skill acquisition, but as a strategic investment that shapes organisational capability and governance outcomes. From an Islamic management perspective, training embodies the values of amanah (trust), ihsan (excellence), and itqan (professionalism), which are central to ethical organisational conduct (Beekun and Badawi, 2005). In values-driven industries, training also serves as a moral and ethical reinforcement mechanism that aligns individual behaviour with organisational and societal expectations. This perspective is particularly relevant in the halal industry, where compliance is simultaneously regulatory, ethical, and religious in nature.

Halal Industry, Governance, and Human Capital:-

The halal industry operates within a unique governance environment that integrates religious principles, statutory regulations, industry standards, and consumer expectations (Zailani et al., 2019). Halal governance extends beyond certification to encompass organisational structures, internal control systems, documentation practices, and accountability mechanisms designed to preserve halal integrity throughout the value chain (Ab Talib et al., 2021). Recent studies emphasize that halal governance maturity depends significantly on internal competency development and continuous professional training (Ali et al., 2023). Empirical evidence also suggests that firms integrating structured halal training into their governance architecture demonstrate stronger compliance resilience and audit performance (Khan and Haleem, 2021). Human capital plays a critical role in sustaining halal governance. Employees are expected not only to understand halal requirements, but also to internalise ethical values and apply them consistently in daily operations. Previous studies indicate that weaknesses in halal compliance often stem from inadequate training, poor understanding of standards, and lack of organisational commitment rather than intentional non-compliance (Rahman et al., 2022). Consequently, halal training functions as a governance tool that mitigates compliance risk and strengthens institutional credibility.

Halal Training in Malaysia: Issues and Challenges:-

Malaysia has invested significantly in halal training initiatives to support its position as a global halal hub. These initiatives are delivered by government agencies, higher learning institutions, and private training providers, and target diverse audiences ranging from senior management to operational staff. Common training modules include halal awareness, Halal Assurance System implementation, internal halal auditing, and sector-specific compliance requirements. Despite these efforts, empirical research highlights persistent challenges. These include heterogeneity in training quality, limited standardisation across providers, insufficient post-training follow-up, and difficulties translating knowledge into sustained workplace behaviour (Ab Talib et al., 2021). Language barriers among foreign workers, high staff turnover, and competing operational priorities further undermine training effectiveness, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Training Evaluation Models and Governance-Oriented Assessment:-

Training evaluation provides a mechanism to assess whether training investments generate intended outcomes. Traditional evaluation approaches often focus on immediate participant reactions, overlooking behavioural and organisational dimensions that reflect governance impact. Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model addresses this limitation by conceptualising training effectiveness across reaction, learning, behaviour, and results (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2006). From a governance perspective, the higher levels of the model—behaviour and results—are particularly significant, as they reflect the extent to which training influences organisational practices, compliance systems, and performance outcomes. Scholars have argued that integrating training evaluation with governance frameworks enhances accountability and supports evidence-based policy and management decisions (OECD, 2021). Recent developments in training evaluation research advocate for integrating governance indicators and risk-based metrics into traditional evaluation models to enhance accountability in regulated industries (Al-Mamun et al., 2022; Saks and Burke-Smalley, 2023).

Conceptual Framework of the Study:-

Guided by the literature, this study conceptualises halal training effectiveness as a multi-level and multi-actor process that links individual learning outcomes to organisational governance performance. Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model provides the evaluative backbone of the study, while halal governance principles and Islamic management values offer the contextual and normative lens. At the individual level, training is expected to shape participants' awareness, knowledge, and ethical orientation towards halal compliance. At the organisational level, these individual outcomes must be supported by leadership commitment, internal control systems, and standard operating procedures to generate sustained behavioural change. At the institutional level, training effectiveness contributes to broader governance outcomes such as audit readiness, regulatory compliance, and stakeholder trust. Figure 1 illustrates conceptual framework for Halal Training Effectiveness

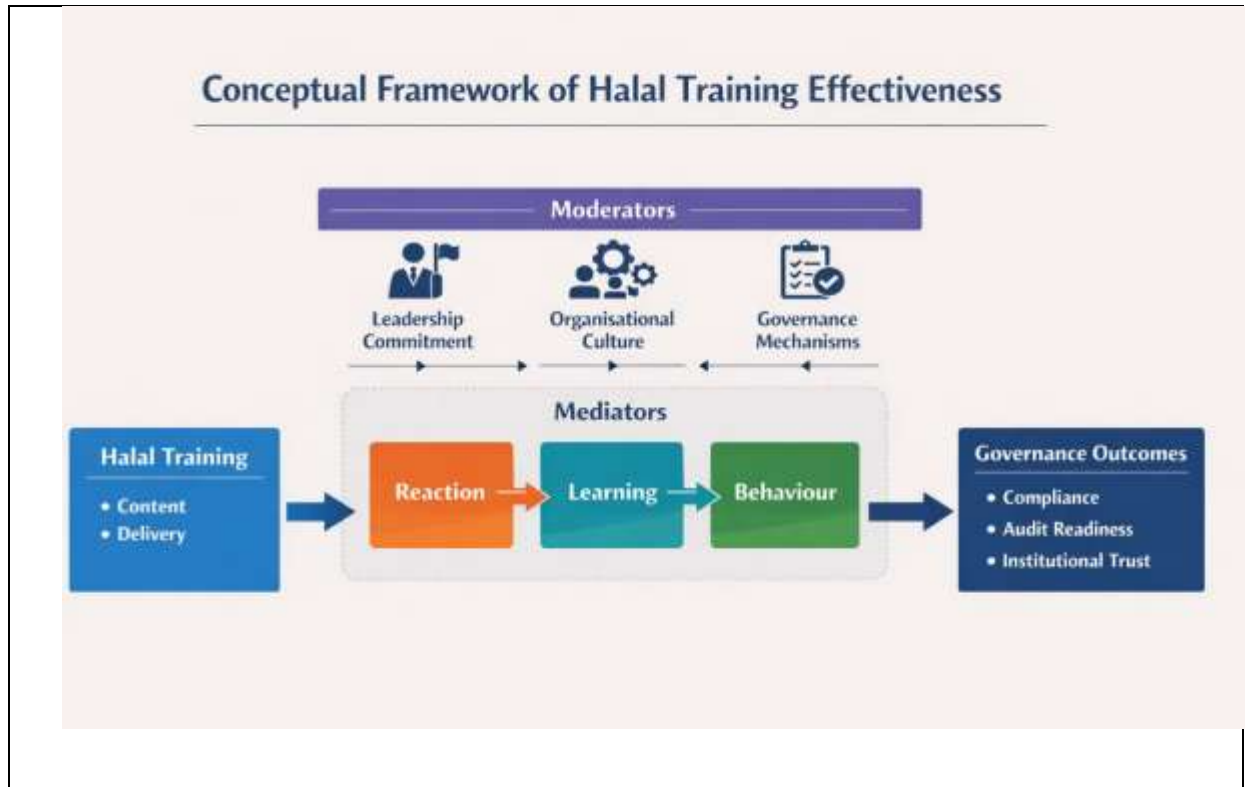


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Halal Training Effectiveness

This integrated framework positions halal training as a governance mechanism that connects human capital development with institutional accountability. It recognises that training outcomes are contingent upon interaction between individual capability, organisational structures, and policy environments.

Comparative Review of Training Evaluation Studies:-

While prior studies widely apply Kirkpatrick's model across sectors, their effectiveness in capturing higher-level outcomes (behaviour and results) remains contested. For instance, corporate training studies often report strong reaction and learning outcomes but weak behavioural transfer due to organizational constraints. In contrast, governance-oriented training literature emphasizes that training effectiveness is contingent upon structural reinforcement mechanisms, such as leadership support and policy alignment. Previous studies on training evaluation have largely focused on corporate performance, professional development, and public-sector capacity building. In non-halal contexts, Kirkpatrick's model has been widely applied to evaluate leadership training, healthcare education, and compliance programmes, with mixed findings regarding its effectiveness at higher evaluation levels (Bates, 2004; Salas et al., 2012). Comparatively, studies within halal and Islamic contexts remain limited and fragmented. Existing research tends to emphasise halal awareness, certification challenges, and consumer trust, rather than systematic evaluation of training outcomes. Where training is examined, evaluation is often restricted to participant satisfaction or self-reported learning gains, with minimal attention to behavioural change or organisational impact. Within halal studies, the gap is more pronounced. Existing research is largely descriptive and compliance-focused, lacking rigorous evaluation frameworks. Unlike mainstream training literature, halal-related studies rarely assess organizational-level outcomes, resulting in a limited understanding of how training contributes to governance systems. This study addresses this gap by integrating training evaluation theory with halal governance perspectives, offering a more holistic and critical assessment. By comparing findings with broader training evaluation literature, the study highlights both the applicability and limitations of Kirkpatrick's model in a values-driven and compliance-oriented industry.

Halal Training as a Governance and Risk Management Instrument:-

Beyond its pedagogical function, halal training may be conceptualized as a governance and risk management instrument within compliance-based industries. Governance literature emphasizes that effective regulatory systems

depend not only on formal rules and standards, but also on the capacity of organizational actors to understand, interpret, and implement those rules consistently (OECD, 2021). In the halal industry, where compliance failures may result in reputational damage, legal consequences, and loss of consumer trust, training plays a preventative role by mitigating operational and ethical risks. Halal training equips organizational actors with the ability to identify halal critical points, implement internal controls, and respond appropriately to non-compliance incidents. From a risk management perspective, training reduces reliance on individual discretion by standardizing knowledge and practices across the organization. This function is particularly important in organizations with high staff turnover or a diverse workforce, where inconsistency in understanding halal requirements may undermine governance effectiveness. From an Islamic management standpoint, training also functions as a moral governance mechanism. It reinforces ethical accountability (amanah) and collective responsibility (mas'uliyah), ensuring that halal compliance is not treated as a procedural formality but as a shared organizational obligation. Conceptualizing halal training through a governance and risk management lens therefore broadens its significance beyond skill development, positioning it as a strategic component of institutional integrity.

Methodology:-

Research Design:-

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to examine the effectiveness of halal training programmes through the lens of Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model. A qualitative approach is appropriate given the exploratory nature of the study and the need to capture in-depth insights into trainers' experiences, perceptions, and evaluative practices within their real-life organisational contexts.

Research Context:-

The study was conducted in Perak, Malaysia, involving two halal training providers recognised by relevant authorities. Perak provides a suitable context due to its diverse industrial base, presence of small and medium-sized enterprises, and active participation in halal certification initiatives. The selected training providers offer structured halal training programmes to participants from various sectors, including food manufacturing, food service, and related industries.

Participants and Sampling:-

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants with direct involvement in halal training delivery and evaluation. Three certified trainers with substantial experience in conducting halal training programmes participated in the study. All participants possessed recognised qualifications endorsed by relevant regulatory or training bodies. Their professional roles enabled them to provide informed perspectives on training design, delivery, and outcomes.

The use of purposive sampling is justified due to the specialized knowledge required in halal training delivery and evaluation. Trainers were selected based on:

- Certification by recognized halal authorities
- Minimum of 5 years' experience in training delivery
- Direct involvement in programs evaluation

This approach ensures information-rich cases, suitable for in-depth qualitative inquiry rather than statistical generalization. Table 1 depicts trainers demographics. All participants possessed extensive industry exposure and were actively engaged in both training delivery and evaluation processes.

Table 1: Trainers Demographics

Participant	Role	Experience	Sector	Qualification
Trainer A	Senior Trainer	10+ years	Food Manufacturing	Certified Halal Executive
Trainer B	Trainer	7 years	Training Provider	Halal Auditor Certified
Trainer C	Lead Trainer	12 years	Consultancy	Shariah and Halal Specialist

Data Collection Methods:-

Data were collected using multiple sources to enhance credibility and triangulation. Semi-structured interviews constituted the primary data source, guided by questions aligned with each level of Kirkpatrick's model. In addition, document analysis was conducted on training modules, participant evaluation forms, and supporting materials. Where possible, non-participant observation of training sessions was undertaken to assess instructional methods, participant engagement, and learning environments.

Data Analysis:-

Thematic analysis was employed following the six-phase approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Interview transcripts and documentary data were coded inductively and deductively, with themes organised according to the four evaluation levels. This analytic strategy facilitated systematic comparison across cases and enabled the identification of patterns related to training effectiveness and governance outcomes.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations:-

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied strategies including data triangulation, member checking, and thick description. Ethical considerations were observed by obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality, and anonymising organisational identities. These measures align with qualitative research ethics and enhance the credibility of the findings.

Methodological Rigour and Evaluation Credibility:-

Ensuring methodological rigour is essential in qualitative research, particularly when findings are intended to inform governance and policy discourse. In this study, rigour was reinforced through systematic alignment between research objectives, data collection instruments, and analytical procedures. Interview questions were explicitly mapped to the four levels of Kirkpatrick's model, ensuring theoretical coherence throughout the evaluation process. Evaluation credibility was further enhanced through cross-case comparison among trainers and triangulation with documentary and observational data. This approach reduced the risk of over-reliance on single-source perceptions and enabled more balanced interpretation of training effectiveness. Reflexivity was also practiced by acknowledging the researchers' positionality and potential assumptions related to halal governance and training practices. From an ERA perspective, the emphasis on rigour strengthens the study's contribution by demonstrating transparency, replicability, and analytical discipline. Although the study does not aim for statistical generalization, its methodological robustness supports analytical generalization to similar governance-oriented training contexts.

Findings and Discussion:-

Level 1: Reaction (Participant Engagement and Perceived Relevance):-

At the reaction level, trainers consistently reported positive participant responses towards halal training programmes. Participants expressed satisfaction with the relevance of training content, clarity of explanations, and the overall learning environment. Trainers highlighted that interactive delivery methods such as case discussions, real-life audit examples, and question-and-answer sessions enhanced participant engagement and motivation. From a governance perspective, positive reactions are significant because they establish the foundation for subsequent learning and behavioural change. Prior studies emphasise that learner satisfaction influences attention, motivation, and willingness to internalise compliance-oriented knowledge (Salas et al., 2012). In the halal context, trainers noted that positive engagement helped reduce resistance towards documentation requirements and audit procedures, which are often perceived as burdensome by industry players.

Level 2: Learning (Knowledge Acquisition and Conceptual Understanding):-

At the learning level, trainers observed improvements in participants' understanding of halal concepts, regulatory requirements, and certification procedures. Participants demonstrated enhanced awareness of the Halal Assurance System, halal critical points, and the importance of documentation in safeguarding halal integrity. Trainers reported that participants were better able to distinguish between halal compliance as a religious obligation and as a governance mechanism. However, learning outcomes varied considerably across participants. Differences in educational background, work experience, and language proficiency influenced comprehension levels. Trainers highlighted persistent misconceptions, including the belief that halal compliance applies only to ingredients rather than encompassing processes, logistics, hygiene, and governance systems. These findings suggest the need for tiered training modules that accommodate diverse learning needs and reinforce foundational concepts.

Level 3: Behaviour (Application and Organisational Practice):-

Behavioural change following training was evident but uneven. Trainers reported that some participants actively applied knowledge gained by improving documentation practices, conducting internal halal checks, and communicating compliance requirements to colleagues. In organisations with supportive leadership, trained participants were more likely to initiate improvements and influence organisational practices. Nevertheless, sustained behavioural change was often constrained by organisational factors. Trainers cited limited management commitment, time constraints, production pressures, and absence of formal follow-up mechanisms as major barriers. These findings reinforce governance literature emphasising that individual competence alone is insufficient without supportive institutional structures (OECD, 2021). These findings are consistent with recent compliance-training studies demonstrating that behavioural transfer is significantly influenced by organizational climate and leadership reinforcement mechanisms (Saks and Burke-Smalley, 2023).

Level 4: Results (Organisational and Governance Outcomes):-

At the results level, trainers perceived halal training as contributing to enhanced organisational awareness, improved audit readiness, and stronger ethical orientation. Organisations that embedded training outcomes into internal procedures demonstrated greater consistency in halal practices and improved confidence during certification audits. However, trainers emphasised that organisational outcomes were difficult to measure systematically due to the absence of standardised performance indicators. This limitation underscores the importance of integrating training evaluation into broader governance and monitoring frameworks to capture long-term organisational impact.

Integrated Discussion: Halal Training, Governance, and Institutionalisation:-

Synthesising findings across the four levels reveals that halal training functions as a multi-layered governance mechanism. Positive reactions and learning outcomes create the necessary foundation for training effectiveness; however, governance-oriented outcomes depend on behavioural reinforcement and institutional support. This finding reinforces governance theories that emphasise the interaction between human agency and structural constraints. In organisations where halal training is supported by leadership commitment and integrated into governance systems, training outcomes are more likely to translate into sustained behavioural change. Conversely, in the absence of institutional support, training risks becoming symbolic compliance rather than substantive governance practice.

Specific governance mechanisms identified include:

- Internal halal audit systems
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for halal compliance
- Documentation and traceability systems
- Management-led compliance monitoring
- Continuous training and refresher programs

These mechanisms serve as institutional enablers that translate training outcomes into sustained organizational practices:-**Cross-Level Analysis of Training Effectiveness:-**

A cross-level analysis reveals important interdependencies between the four levels of Kirkpatrick's model. Positive reactions (Level 1) facilitate learning (Level 2) by enhancing motivation and engagement. Learning outcomes, in turn, enable behavioural change (Level 3) only when organisational conditions permit application. Finally, organisational results (Level 4) emerge when behavioural changes are institutionalised through governance mechanisms. This analysis underscores the limitation of isolated training evaluations and highlights the need for holistic assessment approaches. Evaluating halal training effectiveness requires attention not only to individual learning outcomes but also to organisational readiness and policy alignment.

Halal Training, Organizational Culture, and Leadership Dynamics:-

The findings indicate that organizational culture and leadership play a decisive role in shaping the effectiveness of halal training programs. Trainers consistently observed that behavioral change following training was more evident in organizations where senior management actively supported halal initiatives. Leadership commitment manifested through resource allocation, enforcement of procedures, and symbolic actions that signalled the importance of halal compliance. Organizational culture influenced whether training outcomes were internalized or marginalized. In compliance-oriented cultures, halal training was reinforced through routine practices such as internal audits, documentation reviews, and performance evaluations. Conversely, in production-driven cultures where halal

compliance was perceived as secondary, training outcomes were often diluted by operational pressures. These findings align with governance scholarship emphasizing leadership tone and organizational norms as critical determinants of compliance effectiveness. From an Islamic management perspective, leadership commitment reflects *qudwah hasanah* (ethical role modelling), reinforcing the moral legitimacy of halal governance

Theoretical Contributions:-

This study extends existing training effectiveness theories by demonstrating that Kirkpatrick's model alone is insufficient without integrating governance variables. The findings suggest that training effectiveness in compliance-driven industries is non-linear and context-dependent, requiring the inclusion of organizational and institutional moderators. This contributes to theory by proposing a governance-embedded training evaluation framework, particularly relevant for regulated and values-driven sectors. This study makes several theoretical contributions to the literature on training evaluation, halal governance, and Islamic management. First, it extends the application of Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model to a values-driven and compliance-oriented industry. While Kirkpatrick's model has been widely applied in corporate and public-sector settings, its utilisation within halal governance contexts remains limited. This study demonstrates that the model is capable of capturing not only learning and performance outcomes, but also ethical and governance-related dimensions central to halal integrity. Second, the study contributes to Islamic management scholarship by positioning halal training as a mechanism for operationalising Islamic values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ihsan* (excellence), and *maslahah* (public interest) within organisational systems. Training is conceptualised not merely as a technical intervention, but as a governance instrument that aligns individual conduct with institutional accountability. Third, the findings contribute to governance literature by illustrating how human capital development supports compliance systems in regulated industries. The study highlights the interdependence between individual learning outcomes and organisational structures, reinforcing the argument that governance effectiveness depends on both competent actors and supportive institutional frameworks.

Managerial and Policy Implications:-

The findings of this study have important implications for multiple stakeholder groups within the halal ecosystem. Regulatory agencies such as JAKIM and HDC can institutionalize training evaluation practices by:

- Integrating training evaluation into halal certification renewal requirements
- Developing standardized evaluation frameworks aligned with Kirkpatrick's model
- Requiring organizations to submit post-training impact reports
- Establishing minimum competency benchmarks for halal personnel

Such measures would ensure that training is not merely procedural but contributes to measurable governance outcomes.

Implications for Industry Practice:-

For industry players, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, halal training should be viewed as a strategic investment rather than a compliance cost. Organisations should allocate adequate resources to post-training implementation, including internal audits, documentation systems, and continuous monitoring. Embedding training outcomes into daily operational practices enhances consistency and reduces reliance on individual discretion. Training providers should design programmes that balance regulatory requirements with practical application. Sector-specific case studies, experiential learning, and continuous engagement with participants can improve knowledge transfer and behavioural change.

Implications for Regulators and Policymakers:-

For regulators and policymakers, the findings suggest the need to strengthen the linkage between halal training and governance frameworks. Regulatory bodies may consider incorporating training evaluation outcomes into certification renewal processes or compliance monitoring systems. Developing minimum competency benchmarks and evaluation standards for halal training providers can enhance consistency and quality across the industry. Policy coordination between regulatory agencies, training institutions, and industry associations is essential to ensure that training initiatives support broader halal governance objectives. Such coordination can also facilitate data-driven policy decisions and continuous improvement of halal training ecosystems.

Implications for Halal Governance and Islamic Management:-

The findings highlight the strategic role of training evaluation within halal governance frameworks. Effective halal training supports not only regulatory compliance but also the broader objectives of Islamic management, including accountability (amanah), transparency, and public interest (maslahah). From a governance perspective, structured training evaluation mechanisms enhance institutional credibility, strengthen internal control systems, and mitigate halal integrity risks across the supply chain.

Furthermore, integrating Kirkpatrick's model into halal training evaluation enables stakeholders to align human capital development with maqasid al-shariah, particularly the protection of religion, life, and wealth. This alignment reinforces halal training as a governance instrument rather than a procedural requirement, thereby strengthening Malaysia's positioning as a reference point for halal governance in the Asian region.

Recommendations for Practice and Policy:-

Based on the findings and aligned with governance-oriented training literature, several recommendations are proposed:

1. **Institutionalisation of training evaluation:** Halal training providers and organisations should adopt structured evaluation mechanisms that extend beyond participant satisfaction to include behavioural and organisational outcomes.
2. **Strengthening post-training governance:** Organisations should integrate halal training outcomes into internal policies, standard operating procedures, and performance monitoring systems.
3. **Leadership and management engagement:** Senior management involvement is critical in reinforcing halal practices and sustaining behavioural change following training.
4. **Inclusive and adaptive training design:** The development of multilingual materials, visual learning aids, and sector-specific case studies can enhance comprehension and applicability, particularly among diverse workforces.
5. **Policy-level coordination:** Regulatory bodies and training institutions should collaborate to standardise core halal training competencies while allowing flexibility for sectoral adaptation.

Extended Discussion on Study Limitations:-

6. While this study provides valuable insights into halal training effectiveness, several limitations warrant further discussion. First, the reliance on trainers' perspectives may introduce interpretive bias, as trainers may emphasise pedagogical aspects over organisational constraints. Future studies incorporating trainee and managerial perspectives could offer a more comprehensive evaluation.
7. Second, the study focuses on a specific regional context within Malaysia. While this enables contextual depth, variations in regulatory enforcement, organizational maturity, and cultural practices across regions may influence training effectiveness. Comparative studies across states or countries would enhance external validity.
8. Third, organizational outcomes were assessed perceptually rather than through objective performance indicators. This reflects a broader limitation within training evaluation practice, where governance outcomes are difficult to quantify. Future research integrating audit performance data or compliance metrics would strengthen empirical assessment of results-level effectiveness.

Conclusion and Future Research Agenda:-

This study examined the effectiveness of halal training programmes using Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model within the broader context of halal governance and Islamic management. Drawing on qualitative insights from certified trainers, the study demonstrates that halal training plays a critical role in developing competent human capital and reinforcing governance systems within compliance-based industries. The findings reveal that while halal training programmes generally achieve positive outcomes at the reaction and learning levels, their effectiveness at behavioural and organisational levels is contingent upon leadership commitment, organisational culture, and structured governance mechanisms. Without institutional support, training outcomes risk remaining superficial and short-lived. This study contributes to multiple strands of scholarship. It extends training evaluation theory into a values-driven and compliance-oriented context, enriches halal governance literature by highlighting the governance function of training, and advances Islamic management discourse by operationalising ethical values through organizational systems.

The most significant finding of this study is that halal training effectiveness at behavioural and organizational levels is primarily determined by governance structures rather than training content alone. While training successfully enhances awareness and knowledge, its translation into meaningful organizational outcomes depends on leadership

commitment, institutional support, and structured governance mechanisms. This highlights the critical need to reposition halal training as a governance tool rather than a standalone educational intervention. Future research should adopt mixed-method and longitudinal designs to assess the long-term organisational impact of halal training. Comparative studies across countries and regulatory systems may provide further insights into contextual factors shaping training effectiveness. Additionally, future research may explore the integration of digital learning technologies, data analytics, and competency-based assessment frameworks to enhance halal training evaluation and governance outcomes.

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