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# TURKISH NATIONAL WRESTLERS AND HALAL FOOD-RELATED PROBLEMS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL SPORT

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## ABSTRACT

The study was carried out in order to determine the halal food problems that the members of the Turkish national wrestling team have experienced at the international sports organizations held abroad. National wrestlers are affected psychologically and motivationally in sports performances due to the absence of halal food. This study aims to draw attention to halal food in international the organization of sports. **Materials and Methods:** a questionnaire form was prepared by the researchers and used in the study. There are 12 questions in the questionnaire including 8 halal food questions and 4 socio-demographic questions. The questions in the questionnaire were prepared in consultation with academicians working at different universities. The study of the different age groups (n = 40) were applied to the old and the new Turkish national wrestling team members. As a result of the questionnaire survey, the data were entered into the SPSS program and statistical percentages were obtained. **Results:** in the study 100% of the national wrestlers participating in the study were male athletes and 45% of the athletes participating in the study were ages between 21-25 years old. In the study, 85% of the participants were university graduates. In the survey, 70% of the national wrestlers who participated to the study were stated that they participated in international sport organizations between 1-5 times and 22.5% between 6-10 times. In the study, 95% of the national wrestlers who participated in the survey responded "No" to the Question: Can you easily consume the food at the accommodation place in the sports competitions held abroad?". In the study, 100% of the athletes participating in the study answered "yes" to the question: Are you paying attention to the halal food when going on in sports competitions abroad?". In the study, 80% of the athletes responded "yes" to the question: Does it affect your sport performance because there is no halal food abroad?". In the study 92.5% of the athletes answered "yes" to the question "Are you bringing halal food with you in sports competitions made abroad?". In the study, participant's food consumption was declared by the athletes, 90% vegetable, 87.5% fruit, 85% pilaf (rice), 65% chicken, 60% fish, 32.5% pasta and nuts, and only 2.5% red meat. **Conclusion;** we see that athlete's sports performance, psychological and motivational is effected among national wrestlers abroad due to the absence of halal food or lack of halal food preparation process. It is recommended that international sports federations conduct studies on halal food in sport organizations held abroad. Competition on equal terms for all athletes will contribute to better levels of world sport.

**Key Words:** Turkish National Wrestlers, International Sports Organizations and Halal Food

## INTRODUCTION

Because of globalization millions of people travel and visit many countries. Especially, in Muslim countries economic growth will affect the travel sector. Currently, we can see many Muslim people around the world. These activities also bring more attention to food sectors. In the Muslim majority, the concept of halal is an absolute key to diet. Muslim consumers nowadays are faced with a broad selection of products and services.

Institutional religion formalizes these into a system which can be taught to each generation. 'Islam is more than a religion as it controls the ways of society and factors associated with family, dress, cleanliness and ethics' (Fam, 2004). Islamic lives bring to many regulations to our life. Muslim have to follow thee regulations and follow Prophet Muhammed (S.A.V) examples.

A religion may influence consumer behavior and behavior in general (Delener, 1994, Pettinger, 2004), especially in decisions to buy meals and in establishing food habits (Bonne, 2007). Muslim consumers are trying to very careful with the food products and many times look for the alternate food. Burgmann, (2007) mentioned in article that halal food market is the fastest growing in the world. First, it can be linked to religious fervor and beliefs that it is cleaner, healthier, and tastier, and second, for the tremendous acceptance of halal within the global population through the process of assimilation.

The degree to which an individual is religious, that is, their religiosity, is part of their self-identity as a Muslim, and to that extent they will have Muslim attitudes, determines their intention to consume halal foods. However, the extent to which an individual consumes halal food will also depend on other related factors, such as availability of halal food, chance, knowledge, and sources including money (Soesilowati, 2010).

The Muslim population in and around us is large and Islam is the fastest growing religion on earth. With Muslims now making up one quarter of the world's population, the market opportunities are outstanding and the global halal marketplace is too lucrative a market for food manufacturers to ignore. There are altogether more than

two billion Muslim populations in the world spreading over 112 countries, across diverse regions such as Organization of Islamic Conference Nations (1.4 billion), Asia (805 million), Africa (300 million), Middle East (210 million), Europe (18 million), and Malaysia (16 million) (www.mida.gov.my). With the global halal market estimated to be worth US\$580 billion a year and the halal food industry pegged to grow at a rate of 7 percent annually (Saad and Patrick, 2008).

Currently, many sports organization made it around the World. International sport organizations non-profit or professionals make it around the globe. Thousands of athletes, coach, team staff and organization committee members participate and many of the participants are from Muslim countries. At Olympic Games in Brazil 2016, 207 nations and 11,238 athletes participated. It is estimated that 25 to 35 % of participants are from Muslim countries, or are Muslims living in non-Muslim countries.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is the leading organization in the world of sport. Currently, the IOC has organized around the worlds 41 summer sports and 15 winter sport and 206 countries member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC, 2018).

Sport based entrepreneurship is any kind of sport activity that is innovative, opportunity driven and vision orientated. Entrepreneurship in sport can exist in a number of different international contexts including the individual, organization or team (Ratten and Ratten, 2011).

The purpose of this research brings more attention to public and international sport federations, that Muslim athletes and technical staff, delegation perceive difficulty from a of lack of halal food products when they travel abroad. This problem can affect an athlete's sports performance, motivation and moral issues.

**Halal Food.** What is halal food? Halal (, hala<sup>l</sup>, and halaal) is a Quranic word meaning lawful or permitted, which is the dietary standard prescribed in the Quran. In the Quran, it is mentioned that all foods are halal except those that are specifically mentioned as Haram, which is prohibited or unlawful. In the English language, it most frequently refers to food that is permissible according to Islamic law. In the Arabic language, it refers to anything that is permissible under Islam (Alam and Sayuti, 2011).

Religious control of food consumption patterns in terms of restrictions on particular foods are seen in several religions: Jews, for example, are prohibited from eating pork; and beef is prohibited for Hindus. Muslims are prohibited from eating pork, blood, and animals that have not been killed in the way prescribed by syari'ah law, and they may not drink alcoholic beverages. Muslims have a religious obligation to consume halal food (Bonne et al., 2007). Meanwhile, religiosity is the extent of a person's commitment to his or her religion (2001, Mokhlis (2006). Religiosity is very important because it determines individual cognition and behavior (Sitasari, 2008). It is highly likely that religiosity will govern an individual's behavior, including behavior as a halal food consumer.

**Sports and Nutrition.** Athletes always need good nutrition, and if athletes cannot get enough and proper nutrition, will affect their performance directly. Healthy and suitable nutrition plays an important role in the athletic performance providing the long-term needs of training and the short-term needs of competition (Hassapidou, 2001). The science of nutrition in relation to sports performance has progressed and we now have a better understanding of the relationship between diet and physical performance (Hassapidou, 2001). Many sport science researchers are trying to improve athlete's performance through better nutrition.

A review of the most recent studies (Lemon, 1991; Tarnopolsky et al., 1988) suggests that the protein needs of strength athletes are about 1.2g to 1.7g/kg /day. The mean protein intakes of athletes of all sports, in this study, were above these recommendations. Proteins are very rich in the meat product, for example beef, chicken, fish and other animal product. Studies have revealed athletes in negative energy balance (Short and Short, 1983), with low carbohydrate intakes (Steele, 1970), or athletes with low vitamin and mineral intake (Nieman et al., 1989; Newhouse and Clement, 1988). Athletes have to balance the intake of many nutrients.

Some sports have different weight classes which requires that these athletes monitor their weight. Eating problems, as it has been reported, cluster in sports, where low weight is thought to improve performance (e.g. distance running), where rating may be influenced by appearance (figure skating, gymnastics) or where athletes must compete in specific weight categories (Sykora et al., 1993).

Existing studies generally find that athletes have problems more frequently than the general population and that sports characterized by specific weight requirements or appearance expectations (wrestling, gymnastics) have more problems than sports in which weight is less important (Burke and Deakin, 1994). Most people have heard the general recommendation that adults eat about 2,000 calories per day. For athletes, however, that may not be enough; athletes need extra calories to fuel their activities and to encourage muscles and bones to continue strengthening. Athletes typically need a minimum of 2,000 calories per day, with specific upper-range

recommendations varying based on the person's age, sex, weight, sport, activity level, goals and overall health (Manore, 2015). Some sport athletes need more calories daily. For example, a very active six-foot-tall male who is 25 years old and weighs 175 pounds needs about 3,750 calories per day, according to the USDA's recommendations (Manore, 2015).

An athlete's caloric needs also vary based on the sport. According to Nanna Meyer, a senior sport dietitian for Olympic athletes, elite endurance athletes need the most calories because their activities and training last for the longest periods of time. She suggests a range of 3,000 to 8,000 calories per day for high-level endurance athletes. Those playing team sports need about 3,000 to 4,500 calories per day, and athletes participating in sports that need only short bursts of strength or performance, such as powerlifters and gymnasts, need somewhere in the range of 2,000 to 6,000 calories per day (Manore, 2015).

It is the position of the American Dietetic Association, Dietitians of Canada, and the American College of Sports Medicine that physical activity, athletic performance, and recovery from exercise are enhanced by optimal nutrition. These organizations recommend appropriate selection of foods and fluids, timing of intake, and supplement choices for optimal health and exercise performance (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

Energy and macronutrient needs, especially carbohydrate and protein, must be met during times of high physical activity to maintain body weight, replenish glycogen stores, and provide adequate protein to build and repair tissue (Rodriguez et al., 2009). Athletes need to consume enough energy to maintain appropriate weight and body composition while training for a sport (Thompson et al., 1995). Although athletes expend high amounts of energy in exercise, they may still need to monitor diet and lifestyle to maintain a competitive body weight (Manore, 2015). In general, the protein needs of athletes are higher (1.4–1.7 g/kg/bodyweight) (Rodriguez et al., 2009) than that recommended by the RDA (0.8 g/kg/bodyweight) for non-active individuals (Institute of Medicine 2005). The amount of additional protein needed will depend on the volume and type of exercise and the level of energy restriction (Carbone et al., 2012).

**Sport and Motivations.** In sport performance, there are many internal and external factors that will affect the athletes' performances. Especially, in the elite athletes the motivational factor is different than the amateur athletes. Motivation is the foundation of all athletic effort and accomplishment. Without a desire and determination to improve your sports performances, all of the other mental factors, confidence, intensity, focus, and emotions, are meaningless. To become the best athlete, you can be, you must be motivated to do what it takes to maximize your ability and achieve your goals (Taylor, 2018).

Motivation will impact everything that influences your sports performance: physical conditioning, technical and tactical training, mental preparation, and general lifestyle include sleep, diet, school or work, and relationships (Taylor, 2018). However, the majority of this research has examined imagery effects on performance and learning at the expense of motivational and self-confidence effects (Murphy, 1994). Elite performers have reported on the motivational effects of imagery (Orlick and Partington, 1988). Motivation represents "an internal factor that arouses, directs, and integrates a person's behavior" (Iso-Ahola, 1982, p. 230). Sport motivation can also be affected by perceptions of the host destination, travel issues and individual factors of gender and cultural background (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Crofts and Litvin, 2003; Hanquin and Lam, 1999; McGehee et al., 2003).

Motivation can be defined as "the investigation of the energization and direction of behavior" (Roberts and Treasure, 2001, p. 6). Thus, it comprises the reasons or forces that influence behavior. Motivation is a complex construct (or latent variable), rather than an observable entity, which contributes to the difficulty in accurately conceptualizing and measuring it (Lavallee et al, 2003).

## METHODS

A 12 item social demographic questionnaire concerning halal food was given to Turkish National Wrestling team members. In the study, a total of 40 old and new Turkish National Wrestling Team members participated to study. All survey descriptive data used the SPSS statistical program. The survey was administered with a phone interview and all members of the team voluntarily answered the survey questions.

## RESULTS

In this section participation gender, age, education and some questions of the halal food asked to both the old and new member of the Turkish National Wrestling Team. All information is shown in the following tables.

**Table 1.** Distributions of Gender, Age and Education Status of the participants

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	40	100
Female	-	-
Total	40	100
<b>Age</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
15-20	3	7.5
21-25	18	45.0
26-30	5	12.5
31-35	6	15.0
36 and above	8	20.0
Total	40	100.0
<b>Education</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>%</b>
High school	3	7.5
University	34	85.0
Graduate school	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

In table 1, all national wrestlers who participated in the study consisted of male athletes. The athletes participating in the study; 45% of them are between the ages of 21-25 years old and 85% of them are university graduates.

**Table 2.** Response to question 1.

<b>Question 1: How many international sports events have you participated as a national athlete abroad?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
1-5 times	28	70.0
6-10 times	9	22.5
11-15 times	3	7.5
20 times and above	-	-
Total	40	100.0

In table 2, the national wrestlers participating in the research; 70% of them stated that they participated in international sports organizations between 1-5 times and 22.5% stated that they participated between 6-10 times total.

**Table 3.** Responses to questions 2, 3 and 4.

<b>Question 2: Can you easily consume the food at the site of sports competitions abroad?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	2	5.0
No	38	95.0
Total	40	100.0
<b>Question 3: Do you pay attention to halal food in sports competitions abroad?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	40	100.0
No	-	-
Total	40	100.0
<b>Question 4: Do you know about halal food?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	40	100.0
No	-	-
Total	40	100.0

95% of the wrestler's Question 2: "Can you easily consume the food at the site during sports events abroad?", they were answered "No" to their question. This shows that athletes cannot easily consume foods found in abroad.

100% of the wrestler's responded "Yes" to Question 3: "Do you pay attention to halal food in sports competitions abroad?". With this result, we can conclude that national wrestlers pay attention to halal food consumption.

100% of the wrestler's responded "Yes" to Question 4: "Do you have any information about halal food?". According to this result, it shows that national wrestlers have knowledge about halal food.

**Table 4.** Responses to questions 5, 6, 7 and 8 with frequency and percentage

<b>Question 5: Does the lack of halal food affect sports performance abroad?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	32	80.0
No	7	17.5
Partially	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0
<b>Question 6: Does the presence of halal certified products in sports competitions abroad affect your performance?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	33	82.5
No	-	-
Partially	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0
<b>Question 7: Do you take halal food with you to sports competitions abroad?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	37	92.5
No	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0
<b>Question 8: Do you believe that you cannot get the desired results due to the lack of halal food abroad?</b>		
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	18	45.0
No	8	20.0
Partially	14	35.0
Total	40	100.0

80% of the athletes answered "Yes" to Question 5: "Does the lack of halal food affect sports performance in sports competitions abroad?". According to this result, it can be concluded that lack of halal food affects the performance of the athlete.

82.5% of the athletes answered "Yes" to Question 6: "Does the presence of halal-certified products in sports competitions abroad affect your performance?". Thus, it can be concluded that athletes can have positive effects on their sports performance by having access to halal-certified products.

92.5% of the athletes answered "Yes" to Question 7: "Do you take halal food with you in sports competitions abroad?". Thus, it can be concluded that athletes feel that it is important to have access to halal-certified products.

45% of the athletes answered "Yes" and 35% answered "partially" to Question 8: "Do you believe that you cannot get the desired results due to the lack of halal food abroad?". According to this result, we can think that the lack of halal food affects the athletes' performance, psychological and motivational status and prevents them from getting the desired results.

**Table 5.** Multiple responses to Question 10: What kind of foods are usually eaten at the sport in competitions held abroad?

<b>Question 10: What kind of foods are usually eaten at the sport competitions held abroad?</b>	
<b>Food Product</b>	<b>% of Athletes who include this food product</b>
Vegetables	90
Fruits	87.5
Pilaf (Rice)	85
Chicken	65
Fish	60
Pasta	32.5
Nuts	32.5
Bread and similar product	4
Red Meat	2.5

In table 5, the results show that the national wrestlers participating in the research stated that they include the following kinds of food; 90% vegetable, 87.5% fruit, 85% rice (rice), 65% chicken, 60% fish, 32.5% pasta and dried fruit and nuts. Only 2.5% stated that they eat red meat. The rate of red meat consumed is quite low.

## DISCUSSION

In this study, 95% of the participants responded “No” to Question 2: “Can you easily consume the food at the accommodation place in the sports competitions held abroad?”. In this result showed that elite wrestler cannot eat food easily abroad. Also elite wrestler was mentioned in the interview; many times they take halal food with them (Table 3).

In the study 100% percent of the participants pay attention to the halal food products and have knowledge of the halal food (Table 3). This result showed that participants follow Muslim food regulations and have knowledge of halal foods.

The study showed that 80% of participants said that a lack of halal food in the sport organization will affect their sport performance. In elite sport nutrition is a key factor in the success of the athletes. Muslim athletes at the international sport events usually couldn't get their proper nutrition because of the lack of halal food products or lack of the halal food product preparation process.

The study showed that participants in the survey gave multiple answers Question of the: What kind of food are usually eaten at the sport in competitions held abroad? The participants were given answer the multiple answers questioned; 90% included vegetables, 87.5% included fruits, 85% included pilaf (Rice pilaf), 65% included chicken, 60% included fish, 32.5% included pasta and nuts, 4% bread and similar product and only 2.5% included red meat (Table 5). The result showed that many elite wrestlers didn't eat any meat product. Meat products have a very high protein level. Energy and macronutrient needs, especially carbohydrate and protein, must be met during times of high physical activity to maintain body weight, replenish glycogen stores, and provide adequate protein to build and repair tissue (Rodriguez et al., 2009). From this result we can see that usually elite wrestlers must meet protein needs from consumption of carbohydrate food products.

Soesilowati, (2010) showed in the study result that between the degree of individual religiosity and halal food consumption shows that the higher the degree of a respondent's religiosity, the greater their concern to consume halal food. In our study showed also that 100 % participant answered in the survey they have knowledge of the halal food product.

The most important criteria for the halal food product by the Muslim respondents that their food must be free of pork and alcohol (Soesilowati, 2010). Usually, most Muslim communities are very careful with pork and alcohol. But most importantly Muslim communities have to concern with the certificated halal food and halal food product cooking or preparation process. Recently, customers have not only requested for halal products but also for the halal process. As a result, customers choose to buy halal products particularly because of the halal process (Bonne and Verbeke, 2008). On the international level, most of the hotel and other accommodations are preparing food in the same kitchen. Halal food preparation should be separate.

Sherry et al., (2010) showed that the study examines the experiences of international students at The University of Toledo, where international students comprise approximately 10% of the student population. This issue was also raised by other students in other parts of the research, for instance, by a Muslim student with regard to the absence of Halal food on campus. The lack of halal food products is an most important concern of the many Muslim peoples in every corner of the international life.

The majority of athlete's report following some type of dietary regime, with avoidance of red meat, and vegetarian, Halal, and low lactose regimes are reported most frequently (Pelly and Burkhart, 2011). Western style food meets most needs, however some athletes follow a culturally specific style of eating and therefore it is important to have a broad cultural representation on the menu (Pelly and Burkhart, 2011). Athletes report sufficient items to meet sports nutrition, cultural & special dietary requirements (Pelly et al., 2009; Pelly et al., 2011; Burkhart and Pelly, 2012). Especially in the big international sport events, such as the Olympics games (summer and winter), World championships, Mediterranean games, European Championships and similar events, the organization committee members should be considerate for the inclusion of halal food products and the preparation of the halal food.

## CONCLUSIONS

Elite athletes have a strong consideration for the lack of halal food products abroad. All of the elite athletes mentioned that lack of halal food products affect their sport performance directly. After this moment whole the Muslim community and Muslim Country National Sport Federation and Muslim Country National Olympic committee member requests about halal food consideration and give information about the halal food. If we don't mention and request the needs of Muslim athletes, how can we expect some changes? Also halal food

sectors have to improve their standard and quality and be able to serve to international sport organizations around the world.

Currently, the IOC does not have any study or work about halal food. Some of Olympic athletes mentioned that the Olympic village have a halal food section, but athletes didn't know the preparation process of the halal food product. Because of halal food cooking and preparation process problem many times athletes couldn't feel comfortable eating halal products being served. The IOC is the organization that advocates the equal opportunity of sport and manages world sports. We believe that IOC and International Sport Federation have to give the opportunity to Muslim athletes for halal food. This movement also brings opportunity to halal food sector. This year summer Olympic game will be held in Tokyo, Japan. Before Olympic game Muslim country national Olympic committee and national sport federation and halal food companies give declaration to IOC and International Sport Federation concern of the halal food.

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