

HALAL MATCHMAKING SERVICES GUIDELINE FOR MUSLIM MARRIAGE IN JAPAN

BY

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ABSTRACT

Maintaining a halal lifestyle is required by Islam. To avoid engaging in any haram (prohibited) behaviors, such as free dating, cohabitation, or premarital sex, Muslims must employ halal (lawful) means when looking for a halal spouse. Halal dating services, including halal speed dating and halal internet dating, have lately emerged in a number of Muslim and non-Muslim nations. In recent years, there has been a sharp rise in the number of Muslim immigrants in Japan who require halal matchmaking services for Muslim marriage, both offline and online. Therefore, the goal of this study is to develop guidelines for halal matchmaking services that guarantee religious protection while meeting the needs of Muslim couples looking to be married in Japan. The study used a qualitative approach, analyzing data through thematic and content analysis. The Chiba Islamic Cultural Center's social media accounts were used to find possible attendees for a halal matching event. Muslims in Japan who were divorced or single and could speak Japanese well were specifically chosen to participate in in-depth interviews. Following the halal matchmaking, semi-structured in-depth interviews with each participant were used to gather feedback. In less than one month, 111 individuals created personal profiles. One hundred and nine (98.1%) of the responses were valid. They traveled from 20 prefectures across Japan. It demonstrated Japan's real need for halal matchmaking services. A total of 35 individuals responded to the initial interviews. Twenty attendees of the matching were asked to participate in in-depth interviews for feedback. According to the study, Muslim couples looking to get married in Japan required halal matchmaking services to get past three major obstacles: the low number of Muslims using Japanese matchmaking services, the time and money-consuming nature of the process, and the anxiety associated with marriage because individualistic marriages lack the trust and assurance that communal arranged marriages do. Nearly all attendees expressed satisfaction with their actual matchmaking experience, and by hearing about their experiences, the study identified new requirements for pre-marriage counseling and education as well as group Q&A sessions with prepared marriage-related questions. There are a few research limitations and suggestions for further study. One of these is that not enough samples were gathered from all of Japan's prefectures for this study, which made it challenging to perform a comprehensive analysis. To address this, it is advised to work with nearby masjids and Islamic centers throughout Japan to gather larger samples. Another drawback was that the findings did not show the steps involved in getting married beyond the first planned encounter. It is advised to interview married Muslims in-depth to learn more about the reasoning behind their decision to marry in Japan.

ملخص البحث

تتطلب تعاليم الإسلام الالتزام بنمط حياةٍ حلال. ولتجنب الانخراط في أي سلوكيات حرام، مثل المواعدة الحرة أو التعايش دون زواج أو العلاقات الجنسية قبل الزواج، يجب على المسلمين استخدام وسائل حلال عند البحث عن شريك حياةٍ حلال. في الآونة الأخيرة، ظهرت خدمات المواعدة الحلال، بما في ذلك المواعدة الحلال السريعة والمواعدة الحلال عبر الإنترنت، في عدد من الدول الإسلامية وغير الإسلامية. وخلال السنوات الأخيرة، شهدت اليابان زيادة كبيرة في عدد المهاجرين المسلمين الذين يحتاجون إلى خدمات توفيق الزواج الحلال، سواء عبر الإنترنت أو بشكل مباشر. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تطوير إرشادات لخدمات التوفيق الحلال التي تضمن الحماية الدينية وتلبي احتياجات الأزواج المسلمين الراغبين في الزواج في اليابان. استخدمت الدراسة منهجاً نوعياً، حيث تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام التحليل الموضوعي والمضموني. تم استخدام حسابات وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي الخاصة بمركز شيبا الثقافي الإسلامي لتحديد المشاركين المحتملين في حدث للتوفيق الحلال. وتم اختيار مسلمين يعيشون في اليابان، سواء كانوا مطلّقين أو عازبين، ويتحدثون اللغة اليابانية بطلاقة لإجراء مقابلات متعمقة. عقب فعالية التوفيق الحلال، تم إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة لجمع الملاحظات من كل مشارك. وخلال أقل من شهر، أنشأ 111 فرداً ملفات شخصية، وكانت 109 من الاستجابات (98.1٪) صالحة. وقد حضر المشاركون من 20 محافظة مختلفة في اليابان، مما يؤكد الحاجة الماسة لخدمات التوفيق الحلال. من بين المستجيبين، شارك 35 فرداً في المقابلات الأولية، وتم اختيار 20 منهم لإجراء مقابلات متعمقة لتقديم ملاحظاتهم. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن المسلمين الراغبين في الزواج في اليابان يحتاجون إلى خدمات التوفيق الحلال للتغلب على ثلاث عقبات رئيسية وهي: قلة عدد المسلمين الذين يستخدمون خدمات التوفيق اليابانية، استهلاك العملية للوقت والمال، والقلق المرتبط بالزواج نتيجة افتقار الزيجات الفردية إلى الثقة والضمان التي توفرها الزيجات الجماعية المرتبة. كما أعرب غالبية المشاركين عن رضاهم عن تجربة التوفيق، ومن خلال استماع الباحثين إلى تجاربهم، حددت الدراسة متطلبات جديدة، من بينها الحاجة إلى تقديم إرشاد وتعليم قبل الزواج، بالإضافة إلى جلسات أسئلة وأجوبة جماعية تتناول قضايا محددة متعلقة بالزواج. وعلى الرغم من ذلك، تواجه الدراسة بعض القيود وتقدم اقتراحات لدراساتٍ مستقبلية. ومن بين هذه القيود عدم جمع عينات كافية من جميع محافظات اليابان، مما جعل من الصعب إجراء تحليلٍ شامل. وللتغلب على ذلك، يُوصى بالتعاون مع المساجد والمراكز الإسلامية المحلية في جميع أنحاء اليابان لجمع عيناتٍ أكبر. علاوة على ذلك، لم توضح النتائج الخطوات المتبعة لإتمام الزواج بعد اللقاء الأول المخطط له. لذلك، يُوصى بإجراء مقابلات متعمقة مع مسلمين متزوجين للحصول على فهم أعمق للأسباب التي دفعتهم لاختيار الزواج في اليابان.

APPROVAL PAGE

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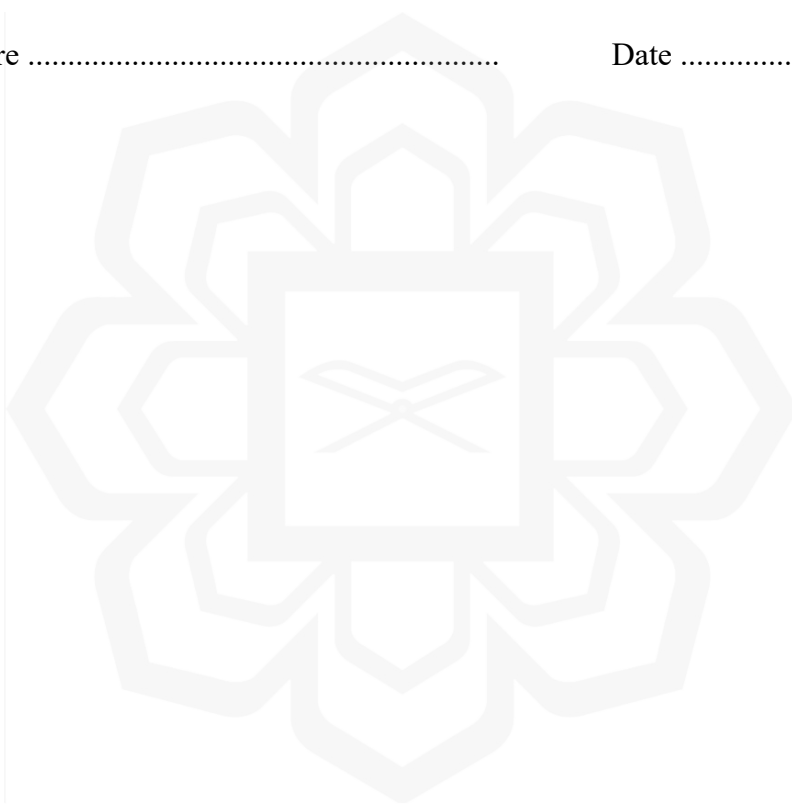
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This research is wholeheartedly dedicated to Almighty Allah, Alhamdulillah, thank you for letting me through all the difficulties. I have experienced your guidance day by day. You are the one who let me finish this research. I appreciate for guidance, protection, knowledge and for giving me a healthy life. It was difficult to balance my research with my Dawah activities in Japan, but with the help of Allah, I was able to complete my research thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Today, halal matchmaking services, such as halal online dating and halal speed dating have appeared recently in various Muslim and non-Muslim countries. For example, AlKhataba in Saudi Arabia, Baituljannah, Halal Wave, Cintaku, TillJannah.my, Soul Seekers and Halal Speed Dating in Malaysia, Rumah Taaruf myQur'an, Mawaddah Indonesia and Taarul ID in Indonesia, Sunnah Match, Muzz, SingleMuslim and Islamic Singles in UK, Salams in USA, Salaam Swipe in Canada, Muslima in Australia, Way to Nikah and Nikah Forever in India. Muslims need to use halal (legal) methods in finding halal marriage partners to avoid committing any haram (prohibited) acts such as premarital sex, cohabitation and free dating. The Qur'an says, "and do not approach unlawful sexual intercourse. Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way." (Surah al-Isra 17:32). The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "the adulterer is not a believer while he is committing adultery" (Book of Faith, Jami'at-Tirmidhi 2625). In addition, a Muslim man or woman is basically prohibited to marry a non-Muslim (Surah al-Baqarah 2:221) and while a Muslim man is basically permitted to marry a Christian or Jewish woman, a Muslim woman is not permitted to marry a Christian man and Jewish man (Al-Qaradawi, 2018). Muslims submit themselves to Allah. The Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah 2:112 states, "Yes, whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others) he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for him nor shall he grieve." This is because human life does not end with death: there will be a resurrection. The Qur'an Surah al-Yasin 36:51 says, "the Horn will be blown; and at once from the graves to their Lord they will hasten." Then, there will be heaven and hell. No rational person wants to go to hell because it is an eternal torment. The methodology to enter heaven is to obey Allah and His Messenger. The Qur'an Surah an-Nisa 4:13 states, "these are the limits [set by] Allah, and whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted by Him to gardens [Paradise] under which rivers flow, abiding eternally therein; and that is the great attainment." Therefore,

it is obvious that there is a religious necessity to find halal marriage partners in a halal way.

In the past, Muslim marriage was the responsibility not only of the youth, but also of their families, relatives, communities, and workplaces. When young people reached the right age but could not find a life partner, a succession of marriage partners were introduced by adults close to them, and “halal matchmaking” took place to ensure that they did not commit haram (forbidden acts). Today, however, individualism is widespread and the institution of communal marriage is weakening; we can see rapid decline of the number of family-based arranged marriages in Muslim and non-Muslim communities. For example, Yusuf Abdur Rahman (2019) living in the UK mentions explicitly that “the biggest challenge for many people is simply to identify the right person for marriage in the first place. One way to find a person may work for some and not for others. One of the issues we face in our communities is that not too many people are arranging marriages anymore. Traditionally, aunts, uncles and other community elders would be involved in matchmaking with the ability to synchronize details and make suitable suggestions based on a pool of young people they would know in the locality or through family networks. Now, fewer people are doing it for various reasons. People are now increasingly individualized and communities have become fragmented.” In other words, both individualization and collapse of the collective marriage system are the social reality behind the popular use of halal matchmaking services today.

Japan is one of the top countries in the world where the number of unmarried populations is rapidly increasing since 1970s. In recent years, many changes in marriage behaviour have been occurring simultaneously, with both men and women marrying later in life and not marrying at all (an increase in the proportion of unmarried people at age fifty). Looking at the future proportion of unmarried people aged fifteen and over (unmarried rate in the population by gender, age and marital status), this is projected to rise from 34.6% for men and 24.8% for women in 2020 to 36.5% for men and 27.1% for women in 2050 (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 2024). On 5 June 2024, the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (2024)

announced the vital statistics (estimated figures) of Year 2023 Japanese population. The total fertility rate, which indicates the number of children a woman will have in her lifetime, was 1.20, the lowest record since 1947, declining for the eighth consecutive year. Tokyo, where population concentration is progressing, fell below 1 at 0.99 accelerating the decline in the birthrate and population. The number of marriages was 474,717 couples that is 30,213 fewer than the previous year, and the first time it has fallen below 500,000 since 1933 (486,058). The average age at first marriage was 31.1 years old for husbands and 29.7 years old for wives, the same as the previous year, but the average age of mothers at the time of the birth of their first child was 31.0 years old, up for the first time in two years from 30.9 years old the previous year. In addition to the trend of later childbirth, the diversification of values is thought to be the cause of the increase in couples choosing not to have children even after marriage. The number of children born (births) in 2023 was the lowest since statistics began in 1899, at 727,277 (down 43,482 from the previous year), marking the eighth consecutive year of decline. The number of deaths was the highest ever at 1,575,936. The natural decline in which the number of births is lower than the number of deaths has continued for 17 consecutive years, with last year seeing the largest decline ever at 848,659. Arakawa (2023) pointed out that one of the major reasons for this decline is the decrease in communal marriage systems such as arranged marriage and workplace marriage due to the wide spread of individualistic ideology (Kato, 2011; Arakawa, 2019). According to Arakawa (2018), whether or not to get married is actually not at the level of an individual's will. Everything revolves around the social system. In the past, young Japanese people were able to get married even though they were poor because there were companies that promised lifelong employment even if they were poor. In rural areas, people got married with peace of mind because they had the security of a strong community.

In Japan, the number of Muslim immigrants and their families has been increasing rapidly in recent years. The growth rate of the Muslim population in Japan for the past 30 years from 1990 to 2020 is 666% from 29,734 to 230,000 Muslims (Tanada, 2021). Children of foreign Muslim immigrants who came to Japan during the bubble economy period of the late 1980s are now about 30 years old. It is time for them

to find a marriage partner because the average age of the first marriage in Japan in 2023 is 31.1 years old for husbands and 29.7 for wives (Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2024). According to Asahi Shinbun Digital (2023), Hirofumi Okai of Kyoto Sangyo University mentioned, “Muslims were not familiar in Japan in the past, but they are now becoming our neighbours. As the society is increasingly diversifying today, we need to think about coexistence.”

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Halal industry, consisting of edible and non-edible products, and services, has become a new trend in various regions of the world, including East Asia, the majority of the population is not Muslim. Konety et al. (2021) indicate that “for non-Muslim countries, particularly Japan, to develop the halal industry is a rational choice.” They studied the importance of halal foods and restaurants, halal cosmetics, and halal fashion in Japan: it does not address the potential importance and practical ways to develop halal matchmaking services for Muslim marriage. Considering Japan’s declining population, increasing Muslim population, and the popularity of halal matchmaking services in Western Muslim minority countries and Muslim majority countries, providing the similar halal services is considered as a rational choice for Japan. But there is no halal online and offline matchmaking services made for Muslim marriage in Japan (Sugimoto, 2023). The conventional matchmaking is based on free dating which may lead to fornication. There are two problems with providing halal matchmaking services. The first problem is that it is unclear what kind of matchmaking services are halal. In other words, the essential elements that make up a halal matchmaking service have not been sufficiently identified and organised academically. The other problem is that the actual needs of Muslim marriage seekers are unknown. No research was conducted to analyze actual needs of halal matchmaking services among Muslim marriage seekers in Japan. (Nagasawa, 2019). There is no information on actual needs in any past literature, so it is worth investigating. In order to deliver halal matchmaking services that promise the protection of faith and satisfy the needs of Muslim marriage seekers, this research has aimed to propose a guideline for halal matchmaking services in Japan.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 Main Objective

The purpose of the research is to establish a guideline for halal matchmaking services that promises the protection of faith and satisfies the needs of Muslim marriage seekers in Japan. Halal matchmaking service needs of single and divorced Muslims are to be determined.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

In order to analyse halal matchmaking service needs among Muslim marriage seekers, the researcher gains understanding of their characteristics, their past experiences in finding marriage partners, and their actual experiences and challenges in participating in a halal matchmaking event in Japan. Hence this research aims:

- a) To identify are the main characteristics of the Muslim marriage seekers who show a need for halal matchmaking services in Japan.
- b) To analyse manifest and latent needs (insights) of halal matchmaking services among the Muslim marriage seekers in Japan.
- c) To examine the actual experiences of the Muslim marriage seekers who participated in the halal matchmaking event in Japan.
- d) To analyse the challenges of the Muslim marriage seekers who participated in the halal matchmaking event in Japan.

The main characteristics of the Muslim participants in this research include final educational background, current job, age, annual income, opinions on household work sharing, wife's employment, pros and cons in terms of polygyny, and their views on the purpose of marriage, etc.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is guided by the following questions:

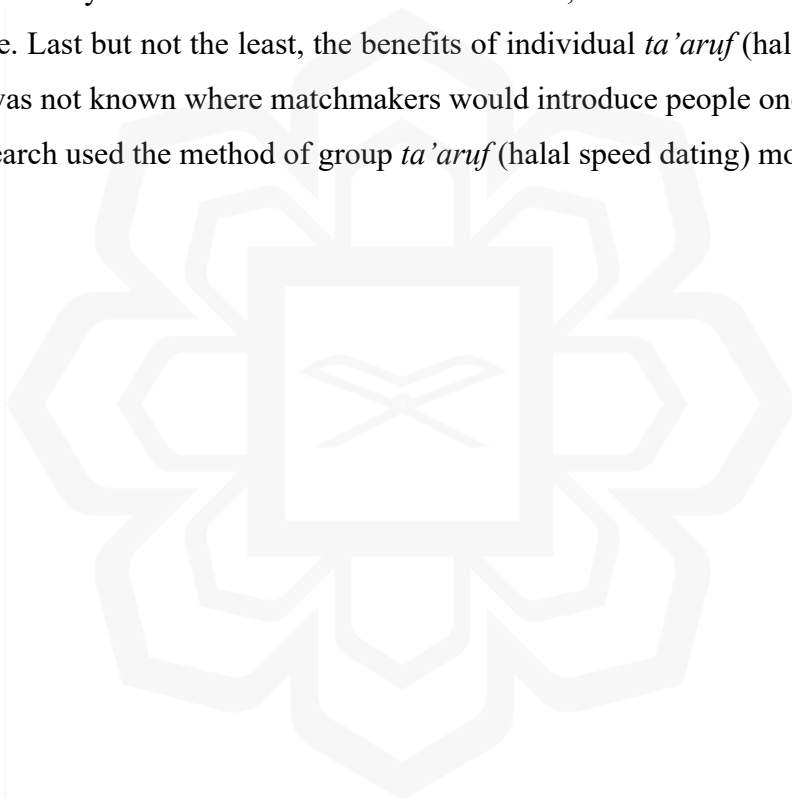
- a) What are the main characteristics of Muslim marriage seekers in Japan who show a need for halal matchmaking services?
- b) What manifest and latent needs (insights) do Muslim marriage seekers have towards halal matchmaking services?
- c) How do Muslim marriage seekers actually experience a halal matchmaking in Japan?
- d) What are main challenges faced by the participants in the halal matchmaking in Japan?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

(1) Knowledge contributions: this research is the first research on halal matchmaking services guideline in the non-Western Muslim minority country. It also found that there are multiple needs structure of Muslim marriage seekers to use halal matchmaking services in Japan. (2) Muslim marriage seekers: it hopes increase the opportunities of halal matchmaking services for Muslim marriage in Japan. The research facilitated the development of halal matchmaking services tailored to the needs of Muslim marriage seekers living in Japan. (3) Muslim community leaders: it should give hints for developing and practicing halal matchmaking services for Muslim marriage in Japan. (4) Non-Muslim matchmaking service providers: not only Muslim organizations but also non-Muslim matchmaking companies can use this research to make their services halal and offer halal matchmaking services for Muslim marriage in Japan. (5) Nobility: this study identified actual needs of Muslim marriage seekers in Japan in using halal matchmaking service as well as potential marriage market segment for the development of halal industry in Japan. It also proposed the guideline for halal matchmaking services that promises the protection of faith and satisfies the needs of Muslim marriage seekers in Japan.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

First, the researcher was unable to collect enough samples from all prefectures in Japan in this research, making it difficult to conduct a wide-ranging analysis. In the future, it is desirable to increase the number of samples, verify the validity and reproducibility of this results, and conduct detailed statistical analysis. Additionally, although this study focused on the primary needs of Muslim matchmaking, the results did not reveal the actual process from the initial meeting to marriage. It is important to identify specific approach to what kind of matchmaking services will lead to actual marriage. Although it is a necessary condition for the service to be halal, it is not a sufficient condition for marriage. Last but not the least, the benefits of individual *ta'aruf* (halal matchmaking) model was not known where matchmakers would introduce people one by one because this research used the method of group *ta'aruf* (halal speed dating) model.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of literature review is to define the necessary components of halal matchmaking services from the perspective of the Qur'an, the hadith and Muslim practices in the Western Muslim minority countries and the Muslim majority countries as well as to identify research gaps which have not been addressed in the previous research. The researcher also would like to review the importance of marriage and family to develop global Islamic/halal economy in order to lead a *halalan tayyiban* lifestyle.

2.2 GLOBAL ISLAMIC ECONOMY

State of Global Islamic Economy 2023 says, "The word "halal" is an Arabic term meaning permissible or lawful under Islamic law. The halal economy, also referred to as the "Islamic economy," consists of a number of sectors comprising core products and services that are structurally affected by Islamic ethics and law, including food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, finance, travel, and media and recreation. The Islamic economy, as a market, caters primarily to the ethical needs and values of Muslims, who follow Islamic law and guidance in their daily lives, as outlined by the principles derived from the Qur'an (the Muslim holy book comprising the word of God) and the Sunnah (the sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him))." In short, the United Arab Emirates' Government Portal (2024) clearly defines that "the Islamic economy is anchored around the Islamic faith-inspired ethical needs of Muslims. These are the principles and values adopted by them as a 'way of life'." Islamic economy can also be defined as an ethical economy which abides by Islamic law based primarily on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him).

The global Islamic economy is the economy whose economic activities are expanding globally.

The global Islamic economy is growing in a wide variety of areas. According to the State of Global Islamic Economy 2023, the global Islamic economy can be broadly divided into three areas. 1) Islamic consumer market: This is divided into food, medicine, cosmetics, fashion, travel, and media/recreation sectors. The market size has increased from USD1.62 trillion (248 trillion yen) (2012) to USD2.29 trillion (350 trillion yen) (2022) (approximately 41% increase over 10 years), 2) Islamic financial transaction market: the market size is increasing from USD2.19 billion (335 billion yen) (2021-2022) to USD14.4 billion (2.2 trillion yen) (2022-2023) (approximately 558% increase rate per year). 3) The Islamic financial asset market has increased from USD3.3 trillion (505 trillion yen) (2021-2022) to USD3.96 trillion (606 trillion yen) (2022-2023).

The growth of the world Islamic economy is made up of five demand-side driving forces, five supply-side driving forces, and Islamic values that support them (DinarStandard, 2023). For example, the five demand-side drivers are 1) a sizeable Muslim youth population, 2) the affluence of Muslim consumers, 3) the centrality of Islamic values for Muslim consumers, 4) the increase of digital connectivity and e-commerce in Muslim-majority countries, and 5) the intersection of Islamic values with sustainable and ethical consumerism. The five supply-side drivers are: 1) government bodies functioning as enablers, 2) national Islamic economy strategies, 3) global brand involvement, 4) Islamic economy investment activity, and 5) rise in trade agreements and intra-OIC trade. Islamic values that support these are 1) justice and equity, 2) social responsibility, 3) modesty, 4) moderation, and 5) family value.

One of the strongest demand drivers in the Islamic economy is the growing youthful Muslim population. In 2023, the Muslim population exceeded two billion, as per a careful estimate, representing more than 25% of the global population (Sara, 2023). Over the next decade, it is anticipated that the Muslim population will continue to grow

at about twice the rate of the non-Muslim population. It is forecasted to reach 2.8 billion by 2050 representing 30% of the world's population (Pew Research Center, 2022). In 2023, Muslim youth and young adults (ages 15-29) represented 27.8% of the world's youth and young adults. By 2030, nearly three in ten of the world's youth and young adults are projected to be Muslims (Pew Research Center, 2011). With generation Z (those from between 1997 and early 2012) and millennials (those from between 1981 and 1996) being the largest consumers, the youthful composition of the Muslim population is poised to play a critical role in the future expansion of the halal economy. Young Muslim consumers would consider Islamic values central to their lifestyle and consumptions, which is already evident in the continued growth of the Islamic economy. A large percentage of Muslims in Asia-Pacific and Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) region (70-90%) have rated religion as "very important" in their lives (Pew Research Center, 2022). In other words, the growth of Islamic economy requires individuals and families which have centrality of Islamic values to Muslim lifestyle and consumption patterns in this modern and globalized world. For example, young Muslims said that "*shari'ah* is not only about worship, praying, fasting or *sadaqah*. It's a matter of how we apply it in every single part of our lives." (Deuraseh, 2017). "*Shari'ah* compliance to me personally is very important. I would want to practice my religion 100% completely; that's why knowing what I'm consuming and what I'm using is halal is essential for me." "Halal does not only cover food; it is a matter of our practical life – what is wrong and what is right."

The growth of the global Islamic economy is largely supported by the increase in the young population and the improvement in their Islamic values. Muslim youth awareness of *shari'ah* has also increased. Muslim population, which supports the Islamic economy, is reproduced by families, and "as a matter of fact, within the family system the basic Islamic values and its teachings are transmitted." (Deuraseh, 2017, p.190). However, a marriage matchmaking (relationship building) service is not recognised in the reports of the State of Global Islamic Economy (2021, 2022, 2023) as a critical market segment of global Islamic/halal economy to realise *halalan tayyiban* (lawful and good) lifestyle.

For more than 86 years, Harvard University has been conducting large-scale research to find the keys to good and happy life and well-being. It has been continuously collecting data on the living conditions and health of people, including university graduates, the wealthy and the poor, children and adults, and interviewed them face-to-face about their happiness levels about every ten years. The participants are now more than 2,600 people. According to this study, whether a person can enjoy a good or happy life is determined by the quality of their relationships (Waldinger & Schulz, 2023). Good human relationships reduced the incidence of heart disease, diabetes and arthritis, on the other hand, chronic loneliness not only lowered happiness, but also lead to deterioration of health conditions and reduced mortality by 26% per year. For example, John Marsden, for example, grew up in a wealthy family. He was an outstanding student at Harvard University, graduating from law school and eventually fulfilling his dream of becoming a lawyer. John married in his 30s and had children. John was one of the most successful experts in the entire study. However, according to the researchers and his own words, he was one of the least happy people in the study. John was a successful lawyer, but his marriage suffered and he was estranged from his children. He was more interested in himself and his career accomplishments than in forging bonds with others. He eventually divorced and remarried in his 60s, but never made a serious effort to develop good or happy relationships. Leo DeMarco also went to Harvard and dreamed of becoming a famous writer. However, his dream did not come true, as after college he became a high school teacher and loved working with students. Leo taught for 40 years. Although he never made a lot of money, he found his work rewarding and loved his job and his students. John and Leo were two of the original members of the longest study on happiness ever conducted. Leo had a much lower income than John and lived a relatively simple life. He was a very ordinary person and one of the happiest of the research subjects. So why was John miserable and Leo happy, as they claim? It is relationships. Leo, on the other hand, nurtured relationships with family, friends, colleagues, and students. Leo was not financially well-off, but he lived a rich life. He enjoyed the people he worked with and the satisfaction he got from helping others. The results of the study are outlined in *The Good Life* by Robert Waldinger and Mark Schultz. The main lesson from 86 years of Harvard adult development research is that good relationships can make us healthier and happier. The authors of the book explain that People who are well connected to their families, friends, and communities are happier and physically healthier than those who are less connected. Those who are

unwillingly isolated will experience a faster decline in health than those who feel connected to others. Lonelier people also have shorter life spans. One of the main factors that determines a good and happy life is the quality of human relationships. The relationships that are most familiar to us are parent-child relationships and husband-wife relationships. Biological parent-child relationships basically cannot be chosen, while people can choose their partners. Marriage and family relationships are so fundamental to lead a *hayaatan tayyibah* (good/happy life).

The Islamic conceptual model of human well-being has been developed by integrating the Qur'anic world view, the philosophical insights of *sa'aadah* (happiness) with the goal list of *Maqasid al-Shari'ah* traditions based on five essential goods: Religion (*al-Din*), Self (*al-Nafs*), Intellect (*al-Aql*), Lineage (*al-Nasl*), and Wealth (*al-Mal*) corresponding to spiritual, physical and psychological, intellectual, family and social, and material wellbeing, respectively. (Dwi Joko Siswanto et al., 2023). According to Abdullah and Wan Mansor (2016), the ultimate objective of Islamic law is for humans to lead happy lives. They said that “for instance, protection of life, which involves living in secure and healthy conditions, is a necessity for a happy life; protection of progeny, which includes establishing a strong and harmonious family institution, could also bring about happiness; protection of property, which signifies possession of basic assets, such as house and transportation, could trigger happiness; protection of honour, which implies the preservation of an individual's dignity and privacy, is definitely a prerequisite of man's happiness; finally protection of religion, which involves methods for self-purification, is of course an essential aspect for a holistic concept of happiness.” Abdullah and Wan Mansor (2016) also said that “there is unanimous agreement among Muslim scholars, be it classical or contemporary, that Islam provides a holistic conception of happiness. Muslim scholars agree that happiness is attainable within the context of worldly life and while also being one of the prerequisites for eternal happiness in the afterlife.”

The first requirement for a good and happy life is a righteous spouse or wife. For example, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas reported that the Messenger of Allah, peace and

blessings be upon him, said, “Four things are part of happiness: a righteous spouse, a spacious dwelling, a righteous neighbor, and a comfortable mount. Four things are part of misery: a bad spouse, a restrictive dwelling, a bad neighbor, and a bad mount.” (Ibn Hibbaan, 4032). It is said that a righteous spouse, for instance, denotes a stable family life; a spacious home denotes dignity, security and fair distribution of wealth; a good neighbor denotes social solidarity; and a comfortable mount could denote efficient infrastructure as a result of good governance. (Abdullah and Wan Mansor, 2016). The Qur’an 16:97 mentions that “whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward according to the best of what they used to do.” Righteous believers lead a good life (*hayaatan tayyibah*). On the other hand, a part of misery is a bad spouse. Deuraseh (2017) says, “we are fully aware that the very foundations of contemporary society are being threatened. Most of symptoms show that the crisis occurring is due to the disintegration and degeneration of the family institution.” For example, there are serious issues of divorce and family disharmony among the Muslim communities (Amal Killawi et al., 2017; Binti Ali et al., 2020; Abubakar Ibrahim Adamu & Hamidu Ardo, 2021; Ella Faridati Zen et al., 2021). That is why choosing a suitable life partner is so important to lead *halalan tayyiban* lifestyle. Though marriage is a half of the Muslim faith and there are many problems related to families, the State of the Global Islamic Economy Reports (2021, 2022, 2023) has not mentioned halal matchmaking or matrimonial services.

2.3 MATCHMAKING (RELATIONSHIP BUILDING) SERVICE MARKET

Matchmaking service refers to “a kind of behaviour that makes use of the information network advantages owned by people or institutions to provide paid or free services to people who need to find partners in society.” (Guizi et.al, 2023). Typically, such organizations use data matching and hold opposite-sex friendship activities and similar blind dating activities to help singles build relationships and get married. The matchmaking market is divided into online matchmaking and matchmaking through traditional matchmakers. Prominent players in the matchmaking market include Match

Group Inc, Bumble Inc, eHarmony Inc, Tinder (owned by Match Group), OkCupid (owned by Match Group), EliteSingles, Coffee Meets Bagel, and Zoosk.

Kharrati (2023) forecasted that the global matchmaking market size will grow significantly from 2023 to 2032 due to the growing popularity of online matchmaking platforms, changing dating and relationship preferences, and the convenience offered by digital matchmaking services. During this period, the market is expected to achieve a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 6.7%; in 2023, the market size is estimated at US\$8.5 billion and is projected to reach US\$12.9 billion by 2032.

Kharrati (2023) analyzed 19 factors driving growth in the global matchmaking market. For example, 1) Rising demand for companionship: the matchmaking market thrives on the constant human desire for companionship and meaningful connections, supported by busy lifestyles and digitalization; 2) Diverse target audience: the matchmaking services industry caters to a wide range of demographics including singles of all ages, religions, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds, ensuring sustained demand for its services; 3) Highly skilled and experienced matchmakers: the matchmaking market is growing at an unprecedented rate. 2) Diverse Target Audience: The matchmaking services industry caters to a wide range of demographics, including singles of all ages, religions, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds, ensuring sustained demand for its services. 3) Artificial Intelligence-enabled Algorithms: Continuous innovation in matchmaking technology has led to the development of advanced AI-enabled algorithms that provide more accurate and personalized match recommendations. 4) Specialized Matchmaking: For example, matchmaking by nationality and dating meet the needs and preferences of specific customer segments. integration between traditional matchmaking services and online dating platforms, providing a comprehensive approach to connecting individuals that combines both algorithmic and human expertise. 6) Video and Virtual Dating: The adoption of video and virtual dating options enhances the matchmaking experience and allows individuals to connect in a more immersive way. 7) Relationship Coach and Guidance: Access to relationship coaches and experts is a valuable component of the matchmaking service, providing clients with guidance throughout their dating journey.

8) Compatibility Assessments: Detailed personality and compatibility assessments help create more meaningful matches and increase the likelihood of successful relationships. 9) Feedback Driven Improvement: Continuous customer feedback and ongoing service enhancements are key drivers of success in the global matchmaking market. 10) Endorsements: Social media platforms and influencer endorsements play an important role in promoting matchmaking services and sharing success stories. 11) International and cross-cultural matches: The global reach of matchmaking services promotes international and cross-cultural connections and adds diversity to the marketplace. 12) Privacy and Security Measures: Strong privacy and security measures are essential to build trust and ensure the safety of users of matchmaking services. 13) Education Campaigns: Efforts aimed at educating individuals about healthy dating habits and fostering positive relationships contribute to market growth. 14) Pandemic Change: The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a surge in demand for virtual matchmaking services. 15) Matchmaking Sustainability: The increased emphasis on long-term relationships is consistent with the matchmaking market's mission to create lasting connections. 16) Marriage and Family Planning: Matchmaking services focused on marriage and family planning are growing in popularity, especially among individuals looking for a life partner. 17) Community and Social Networking Events: Matchmaking-related community and networking events will expand market reach and increase opportunities for face-to-face interaction. 18) Growth in Emerging Markets: Increasing urbanization, changing social dynamics, and the desire for a more structured dating experience are expanding the matchmaking market in emerging markets. 19) Research and Innovation: Ongoing research into human behavior, psychology, and relationship dynamics is expected to drive the development of even more effective matchmaking solutions.

IBJ (2022) said that though it is a marriage counseling agency, the annual cost per member is 300,000 to 400,000 yen (USD 1,900 to USD 2550) in Japan. About 1.2% of respondents answered that they use a counseling centre, and the population of unmarried people in their 20s to 40s is approximately 19 million, so the market size is expected to be around 60 billion to 70 billion yen (USD 384 million to USD 448 million). As for online matchmaking services, the annual cost per member is 30,000 to 40,000 yen (USD 190 to USD 255), and according to an online survey on the actual situation

and awareness of marriage among Tokyo residents, about 6.8% of respondents answered that they use it, and the population of unmarried people in their 20s to 40s is approximately 19 million, so the market size is expected to be around 40 billion to 50 billion yen. It is thought that there are more users now than in 2018, so the current market size is probably around 60 billion to 70 billion yen (USD 384 million to USD 448 million). Finally, regarding matchmaking parties and events, the annual cost per person is 10,000 to 20,000 yen (USD 64 million to USD 128 million), and according to an online survey on the actual situation and awareness of marriage among Tokyo residents, Currently, private matchmaking events and parties are Approximately, 4.3% of respondents answered that they are participating, and the population of unmarried people in their 20s to 40s is about 19 million, so the market size is expected to be around 10 billion yen. Adding up the above, the overall market size of the matchmaking business is expected to be between 130 billion yen and 150 billion yen (USD 840 million to USD 965 million) in Japan.

According to Maripita (2024), an online marriage-related information service operated by Next Level Co., Ltd., there are nine major federations of marriage matchmaking agencies in Japan. They are for example, IBJ (89,620 members), TMS (87,000 members), Japan Bridal Association (52,000 members), BIU (50,000 members), Ryoenkai (40,000 members), Rnet (37,000 members), Japan Bridal Union (28,000 members), Nihon Nakodo Renmei (15,000 members) as well as NK (10,000 members). A federation is a system that shares multiple affiliated matchmaking offices and their memberships. Marriage agencies can share member information with other agencies with whom they have formed a federation, allowing them to introduce each other. This company also operates Matching App University (MAU) and En-Musubi University (EMU). MAU's website has a department for finding a partner, a department for finding love, a department for finding friends, and a department for dating, and the website provides digital content that teaches how to make the most of matchmaking websites, apps, and matchmaking parties. It may support to build and maintain good human relationships. EMU introduces dating spots in each prefecture across Japan and introduces attractive landscapes, restaurants, souvenirs and more. Maripita also brings together all the matchmaking offices, marriage counseling and dating services run by

prefectural and local governments across Japan on one website because depopulation is more prevalent in regional cities in Japan, making the problem of declining birth rates and an aging population more serious (Maripita, 2024).

According to Kambayashi & Kodama (2018), the business models of the Japanese marriage matchmaking service industry can be divided into four categories as of 2017: matchmaker's consultation type (n=420), data matching type (n=151), internet type (n=56), and others (n=22). In particular, the proportion of matchmaking and marriage consultation services is declining, while the proportion of internet-based services is increasing slightly, among small-scale companies. As for ways to increase people's awareness and attraction of matchmaking services, the most common method is to provide counseling, followed by courses or seminars. Counseling includes advice on how to date someone of the opposite sex, relationship issues, and non-relationship issues. When comparing the reasons why single people do not marry based on whether or not they have used some matchmaking services, those who have used the services are more likely to answer that they "cannot find a suitable partner."

According to the matchmaking survey conducted by Recruit Bridal Research Institute (2019), the percentage of people who got married through matchmaking services was 12.7% of those who got married in entire Japan in 2018, the highest record. In particular, the increase in the percentage of people who got married through online matchmaking services is quite notable. Among those who got married in 2018, the percentage of the people who used matchmaking services was 32.3%, the highest record in Japan. Furthermore, if we look only at those who used matchmaking services (i.e. regular users), the percentage of the people who got married through matchmaking services remains high at 39.4%. Regarding the use of matchmaking services by singles, the percentage of people who have used matchmaking services in the past is 23.5%, which is about one in four people who have used matchmaking services, an increase from the 2017 survey. (15.6% in 2017 → 18.1% in 2018 → 23.5% in 2019). It is well notable that the percentage of the people who have used the matchmaking services has increased in all genders and age groups. Looking at the percentage of people who have

used matchmaking services, online matchmaking services are growing, both men and women in their 20s and 30s use online matchmaking services more than other matchmaking services. On the other hand, women in their 40s use matchmaking parties and events more than other services. Regarding the singles' image of matchmaking services, there is a difference in the image of matchmaking services between those who have used them and those who have not. Compared to those who have not used them, those who have used matchmaking services are more likely to have a positive perception, such as "I think more people around me will use matchmaking (dating) services in the future." On the other hand, those who have not used them are more likely to have a negative view, such as "I think matchmaking (dating) services are troublesome." Regarding the characteristics of singles who have successfully go married in using matchmaking services, they used matchmaking services frequently. There is a strong correlation between frequency of use and success in matchmaking services.

Eli et al. (2012) found advantages and disadvantages of online dating. The advantages are threefold: 1) it provides an unprecedented (and surprisingly convenient) level of access to potential partners, which is especially helpful for singles who are otherwise inaccessible; 2) online daters use computer-mediated communication (CMC), which allows them to see how compatible a potential partner is before deciding to meet; and 3) some dating sites allow people to see how compatible a potential partner is before deciding to actually meet, 3) Some dating sites may be able to collect data that can generally exclude people from dating who may not be suitable as relationship partners. On the other hand, the disadvantages are fivefold: 1) online dating does not necessarily improve the outcome of a relationship, but rather may negatively impact such an outcome. 2) In terms of accessibility, meeting potential partners through online dating profiles reduces three-dimensional personalities to two-dimensional information displays, and these displays fail to capture the experiential aspects of social/personal interactions that are essential for assessing compatibility with potential partners. 3) Furthermore, easy access to a large number of potential partners may induce an evaluative and assessment-oriented mindset, which may objectify potential partners and undermine the willingness of online daters to commit to one of them. 4) It can also lead to lazy and inconsiderate decisions when choosing among a large number of potential

partners. 5) In terms of communication, online daters can benefit from doing CMC for a short period of time before meeting potential partners in person, but doing it for an extended period of time before meeting in person can actually harm people's romantic prospects. In particular, people tend to over-interpret the social cues available in a CMC, and if it proceeds without a face-to-face reality check, unpleasant disappointments may occur in the actual meeting that follows. This is because a CMC does not have the same wealth of experience as a face-to-face meeting, and some important information about potential partners cannot be gathered by the CMC alone. Most users prefer to meet potential partners in person before entering into a romantic relationship to integrate and be consistent with CMC information and in-person impressions. Online dating does not end online.

Matchmaking services are to make people happy, however there is a phenomenon of fatigue in using matchmaking apps and singles are turning to new matchmaking services for dates. (CNBC, 2024). Sharabi and Dorrance-Hall (2024) administered to a sample of 923 married U.S. adults, roughly half of whom met their spouse in online dating and found online daters reported less satisfying and stable marriages than offline daters. These matching app services are not limited to the purpose of marriage but for the purpose of paid dating and networking. Free dating between a man and a woman without the proper intention of marriage may lead to sexual intercourse outside marriage, which is considered haram under Islamic law. In fact, Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting (2021) said that in Japanese marriage matchmaking services, a dedicated advisor individually introduces suitable partners, set up matchmaking meetings and provide support such as advice on relationships. On the other hand, in matching apps, members themselves search for partners and make arrangements for dating, etc. If a member likes a person displayed in a search, they can take an action such as “like.” If the other person also takes an action such as “like,” a match is made and the two can exchange messages. Through message exchange, the two can make an arrangement to meet in person and go on a date. This way of matchmaking may lead to sexual intercourse outside marriage.

2.4 CONCEPT OF HALAL AND HARAM IN MARRIAGE AND GENDER RELATIONSHIP

According to Al-Qaradawi (2018), halal means lawful and haram means prohibited. The concept of halal and haram has been known to every people since ancient times. People have different definitions and understandings of what is lawful and what is prohibited in their culture and communities. The Islamic view of the halal and haram is very clear and simple because what is lawful and what is prohibited is the right of Allah alone. The Qur'an (Surah an-Nahl 16:116) says, "But say not - for any false thing that your tongues may put forth - 'This is lawful, and this is forbidden,' so as to ascribe false things to Allah. For those who ascribe false things to Allah, will never prosper." Therefore, "nothing is haram except what is prohibited by a sound and explicit *nass* from the Law-Giver, Allah." (Al-Qaradawi, 2018). *Nass* means either a verse of the Qur'an or a clear, authentic, and explicit Sunnah (practice or saying) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Muslims obey not only Allah but also Prophet Muhammad because the Qur'an says "O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Muhammad) and those in authority among you." (Surah an-Nisa 4:59).

Islam is a way of life, and the concept of halal and haram are not limited to food and drink. For example, it is not only haram to consume alcoholic beverages, but it is also haram to transport, buy and sell (trade) and produce alcoholic beverages or intoxicants. For example, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Wine is cursed from ten angles: the wine itself, the one who squeezes (the grapes, etc.), the one for whom it is squeezed, the one who sells it, the one who buys it, the one who carries it, the one to whom it is carried, the one who consumes its price, the one who drinks it and the one who pours it." (Sunan Ibn Majah 3380). It means that not only certain things are prohibited but also certain actions are prohibited. In this way, the concept of halal and haram has a wide range of meaning.

Al-Qaradawi (2018) specifies twelve haram acts in marriage and gender relationships such as follows:

1. *Zina* (fornication and adultery)
2. *Khalwat* (close proximity between man and woman's being alone together in a closed place)
3. Looking with desire at the opposite sex
4. Looking at the *awrah* (private parts) of other people
5. Intermingling with the opposite sex/gender in such a way that their bodies can come in contact
6. Sexual perversion such as homosexuality
7. A Muslim woman's marrying with a non-Muslim-man
8. A Muslim man's marrying with a non-Muslim-woman except the People of the Book (Jews and Christians)
9. Monasticism
10. Marriage proposal to a divorced and widowed woman during her *iddah* (waiting period during which she is not allowed to remarry)
11. Marriage proposal to those who have engaged in marriage
12. Marrying a *mahram* (a person who is prohibited to marry)

For example, eight types of women are prohibited for men to marry; a) The mother, b) The father's wife whether divorced or widowed, c) The daughter, d) The sister, e) The paternal aunt, f) The maternal aunt, g) The brother's daughter, and, h) The sister's daughter. All twelve haram acts are connected to the prevention of *zina* and protection of faith and Muslim family lineage. For example, the Qur'an Surah al-Isra 17:32 says, "and do not approach *zina* (such as fornication, adultery, and unlawful sexual intercourse). Indeed, it is ever an immorality and is evil as a way." For example, *khalwat* is prohibited because it may lead to *zina*. Men and women should lower their gaze and women should avoid excessive make-up in meeting with other men and neither emphasising their body line nor wearing a cloth that shows their underwear. Women should not attract men that lead to *zina*. Al-Qaradawi (2018) also mentions that "whatever is conducive to or leads toward the haram is itself haram." *Zina* is prohibited because "it leads to confusion of lineage, child abuse, the breaking-up of families, bitterness in relationships, the spread of venereal diseases and a general laxity in morals."

In Islamic teachings, there are three ways to avoid haram of *zina* in gender relationships, that is, *ta'aruf* (introduction), *khitbah* (engagement) and *nikah* (marriage).

2.5 CONCEPT OF TA'ARUF (INTRODUCTION) IN ISLAM

Ta'aruf means “get acquainted” or “know each other” (Fathoni and Hidayah, 2023). *Ta'aruf* is the process of getting to know someone close, be it a friend or acquaintance. In the Qur'an, Allah says, “O people! Indeed, We have created you from a male and a female, then We made you nations and tribes so that you may know one another (*li ta'arafu*). Verily the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most pious. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” (Surah al-Hujurat 49:13). This verse explains that Allah created men and women, tribes and nations so that they both could know one another.

In a marriage context, *ta'aruf* is a process of acquaintance that aims to realise a marriage, not just wanting to get to know each other. In other words, “*ta'aruf* is a process of exploring and getting to know potential life partners by using the help of a person or it can also be by using a trusted institution as a mediator or intermediary in choosing a partner according to the criteria someone wants which is an initial process towards marriage level.” (Fathoni and Hidayah, 2023). Both *khitbah* and *ta'aruf* are process of knowing a potential marriage partner. While in *khitbah* the marriage partner candidate is fixed to one person, in *ta'aruf* the marriage partner has not yet been specified to one person. The *ta'aruf* process is carried out before the *khitbah*, engagement or proposing to offer oneself to marry.

Ta'aruf is usually carried out in a short time, starting with the introduction of the candidate by a third party and continuing to the meeting stage of the two parties accompanied by their *mahram* (a family member with whom marriage is considered

permanently unlawful) that is to see each other. Fathoni and Hidayah (2023) explain four characteristics of *ta'aruf* procedures;

- 1) *Ta'aruf* must be within the limits permitted by Islam, such as not having *khalwat* (close proximity-where a non-*mahram* man and woman being on their own together without the presence of a *mahram* or any other person) or *ikhtilat* (free mixing with non-*mahram* except for the purpose of education, teaching and a group making travel together).
- 2) Clear vision of the good man and good woman according to Islam.
- 3) Involvement of parents or guardians so they can lead to the right choice.
- 4) *Istikharah* (consultation seeking the good) prayer.

They also indicate five characteristics of *ta'aruf*;

- 1) *Ta'aruf* matchmakers can be from the various parties, such as their own parents, families, teachers, friends or Muslim community leaders they already trust.
- 2) *Ta'aruf* must be carried out on their own accord, there should be no coercion or pressure.
- 3) Before doing *ta'aruf* both parties must have good intentions, because that is the key to happiness. It can bring good to the human relationship between the two.
- 4) All information obtained should be kept confidential to each other so that when the process is forced to be canceled it will not cause slander and backbiting. Confidentiality is prioritised considering that everyone has the right to have their privacy maintained.
- 5) Whatever the candidate says, the other parties still need to dig up in-depth information. If both parties feel confident, marriage or *nikah* could take place immediately without the period of *khitbah*. All processes are carried out in a halal manner.

Juswandi et al. (2023) explains the procedures of *ta'aruf* in Islam.

- 1) Exchanges biodata: the process is usually carried out by both men and women, through their respective biodata that includes photos is submitted to the matchmaker and the two of them exchange biodata. They perform *istikharah* (seeking the good) prayer and discuss ideas with their respective parents.
- 2) Sending envoys: the process is sending envoys to get to know a potential partner and his or her families well.
- 3) Visiting her parents: in the Islamic view, if a man is interested in a woman, it is recommended to visit her parents establishing friendly relations.
- 4) Establishing communication: this is the process of asking a few questions about themselves, what they like and what they do not like.
- 5) Not alone: What is seen today is when they get approval from their parents, they are arbitrary to bring the woman together. This is prohibited in Islam.

Rusmala Dewi, Nurmala HAK, and Sara Alvianita. (2023) explain the halal status of photos and social media in online *ta'aruf*. When getting to know each other online, exchanging photos and communication are important for people seriously considering marriage. But it is not completely free; freedom is allowed within the limits of *shari'ah* (Islamic law). In other words, people can choose whether or not to share their photos online. Four provisions that must not be violated in the implementation of *ta'aruf*, namely, must guard the view, must protect the *hijab*, must protect oneself from seclusion, and must protect oneself from acts of adultery and those that lead to these actions. Also, after registering with online *ta'aruf*, they join separate WhatsApp groups for men and women, and the administration of the online *ta'aruf* agency will announce information. The first information to share is the personal name, preferred type, occupation, without providing the telephone number, address, or social media belonging to one of the candidates until it is official to the next stage. If they like each other, the agency will create a separate WhatsApp group consisting of *ustaz* (male teacher/master), *ustazah* (female teacher/mistress), and the male and female candidate to share information from the admin. Both candidates actually meet and talk with a matchmaker. If their desire to get married becomes stronger after some meetings, they

should discuss this with their parents. Once an agreement is reached, *khitbah* (engagement) stage begins. At this point, the role of online *ta'aruf* ends. The admin will remove the male and female candidate from WhatsApp groups.

2.6 CONCEPT OF KHITBAH (ENGAGEMENT) IN ISLAM

According to the website “Mufti of Federal Territory’s Office of Malaysia” (2021), *Khitbah* (engagement) is the first step toward a happy marriage. When a man is ready to choose a woman to be his wife, he informs her of his intention and then notifies his family. If both parties agree to the proposal, a contract is formed. Engagement refers to the period from when a couple has an intention of getting married to when they get to know their partner well before actually getting married. According to Salwa Shofiatul Khulqi et al. (2023), *khitbah* refers to the formal request made by a man to a woman, or vice versa, expressing intention to marry. It can be done directly or indirectly through intermediaries, in accordance with the provisions of *shari’ah*. The legislation of *khitbah* (engagement) in Islam is extracted from the Qur’an. For example, the Qur’an says, “there is no blame upon you whether you hint at a *khitbah* to such women or keep the proposal hidden in your hearts. Allah knows that you will think of them in that connection. But do not make any secret engagement with them and speak openly in an honorable manner. Do not resolve on the marriage tie until the ordained term has come to its end. Know well that Allah knows even what is in your hearts. So, have fear of Him and know well that Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing.” (Surah al-Baqarah 2:235). There are at least three benefits and wisdom of *khitbah*. First, it gives the bride and the groom the opportunity to get to know each other. Marriage is a firm promise. It is not something can be easily dissolved. Couples need to think carefully before deciding. It is necessary to have a certain period of time to get to know the person they are marrying, and *khitbah* provides this period in a halal way. It can give female guardians the opportunity to assess the quality of their prospective son-in-law. Third, it also gives women enough time to prepare themselves, both physically and mentally, to follow and live with her husband (Salwa Shofiatul Khulqi, et al., 2023).

But Aliyu Alhaji Rabi'u et al. (2019) recommend that *khitbah* period “should be made as brief as reasonably possible to eliminate chances of illicit relationship.” Abuses and malpractices in *khitbah* and courting behaviour by to be couples and their families that adversely affect the moral standing of matrimonial homes and the larger society. According to research of Muslim couples conducted in northern Nigeria, 133 out of 241 participants engaged in haram acts during the engagement period: 50 were kissing, 26 were hugging, and 24 were doing massages one another (Aliyu Alhaji Rabi'u et al., 2019). It is of course true that seeing and conversing with a potential marriage partner is permitted under the *shari'ah* (Islamic law). In one hadith narrated by Jabir ibn Abdullah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “When one of you asked a woman in marriage, if he is able to look at what will induce him to marry her, he should do so. He (Jabir) said: I asked a girl in marriage, I used to look at her secretly, until I looked at what induced me to marry her. I, therefore, married her.” (Sunan Abu Dawud 2082). Abu Hurairah reported that “I was in the company of Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) when there came a man and informed him that he had contracted to marry a woman of the *Ansar* (local resident of Medina known as the helpers). Thereupon the Messenger of Allah said: Did you cast a glance at her? He said: No. He said: Go and cast a glance at her, for there is something in the eyes of the *Ansar*.” (The Book of Marriage, Chapter: It is recommended for the one who wants to marry a woman to look at her face and hands before proposing marriage to her, Sahih Muslim 1424). Man and woman who are bounded by the marriage proposal, their status remains as strangers so that they are totally forbidden to have sexual intercourse as well as something leads to it. They are only allowed to see each other and get to know based on the *shari'ah* or Islamic law (Swararahima, 2020).

According to Swararahima (2020), as *khitbah* is performed in a commonly known manner, the cancellation of *khitbah* usually has social consequences, such as tension and hostility between two large families and rumors in society. In order to avoid the negative effects of *khitbah* cancellation, some Muslim communities prefer to take the process of getting to know each other (*ta'aruf*) through courtship, which is claimed to have no social consequences in the event of an annulment or separation, and take

khitbah before marriage if they feel that they are suitable for each other, so that the possibility of an annulment is smaller.

2.7 CONCEPT OF NIKAH (MARRIAGE) IN ISLAM

Marriage as defined by the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the only way a man and a woman can legally have intimate relationship in Islam. Marriage has been defined as a religious, social, moral and sacred contract that has been referred to in the Qur'an (Surah an-Nisa 4:21) as "strong covenant (*mithaqan ghalizan*)."

In Islamic jurisprudence, it means union or '*aqd*'. The Arabic word for marriage is *nikah*. The Qur'an Surah al-Baqarah 2:235 says that "marriage contract (*uqdatan nikahi*)."

The objectives of marriage stated in the Qur'an are three: (1) It helps increase the population. Allah has ordained, "Oh mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him (Adam) He created his wife (Hawwa or Eve), and from them both He created many men and women." (Surah an-Nisa 4:1). Sharmin and Azad (2018) regard marriage as the union of two souls for affection and two bodies for procreation and legalising of children. (2) It is to protect chastity and moral excellence. The Qur'an also mentions, "Also (forbidden are) women already married, except those (slaves) whom your right hand possess. Thus has Allah ordained for you. All others are lawful, provided you seek (them in marriage) with *mahr* (bridal-gifts given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) from your property, desiring chastity, not committing illegal sexual intercourse, so with those with of whom you have enjoyed sexual relations, give them their *mahr* as prescribed; but if after *mahr* is prescribed, you agree mutually (to give more), there is no sin on you. Surely, Allah is Ever All-Knowing, All-Wise." (Surah an-Nisa 4:24). Abdullah narrated that "the Messenger of Allah said to us: O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married (*yankihu*), for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding chastity, and whoever cannot then he should fast, for it will be a restraint for him." (The Book of Marriage, Chapter: Encouragement to Marry, Sunan an-Nasa'i 3209). (3) Marriage gives not only sexual pleasure, but also sustain mutual tranquility, affection and mercy which may be attained by mutual co-operation and understanding. The Qur'an also states that "and of His signs

is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought.” (Surah ar-Rum 30:21). Marriage in Islam is also for psychological and spiritual satisfaction. This verse highlights tranquility (*sakinah*), love (*mawaddah*) and mercy (*rahmah*) as divine signs in the creation of spouses for one another. It serves as a reminder that the essence of marriage is not just legal and religious “contract” but also the peace and contentment that comes from it. Tranquility is one of the major purposes of marriage. Love is the bridge that connects hearts, and mercy is forgiveness to repair cracks in this bridge, ensuring its strength and long-lasting. Thus, the Qur’an establishes marriage as a highly recommended act, conveyed as a priority.

Marriage is a half of the religion of Islam. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, “When a man marries, he has fulfilled half of the religion; so, let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half.” (The Book of Marriage: Mishkat al-Masabih 3096). Marriage is also a sunnah (practice) of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Messenger of Allah said: “Marriage is part of my sunnah, and whoever does not follow my sunnah has nothing to do with me. Get married, for I will boast of your great numbers before the nations. Whoever has the means, let him get married, and whoever does not, then he should fast for it will diminish his desire.” (The Book of Marriage, Chapter: What was narrated concerning the virtue of marriage, Sunan Ibn Majah 1846). Marriages increase the population of Muslim communities. Marriage is a good deed and one that can be expected to be rewarded by Allah. Without this incentive, the people may find marriage and child-rearing to be a burden chore and may have a reason to postpone or avoid it. In Japan where Muslim is a minority, it can be understood that marriage, which can legally increase the Muslim population has an important meaning.

2.8 HALAL DATING AND HALAL MATCHMAKING: CONCEPT, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

According to Cambridge dictionary (2024), dating means “a romantic meeting when two people go out somewhere” and “to regularly spend time with someone you have a romantic relationship with.” From Islamic point of view, dating cannot be considered halal in the first place for two unmarried man and woman to go out together which leads to *khalwat* and *zina*. Ali et al. (2019) studies the attitudes of young British Muslims towards halal dating and finds the minimum requirements of halal dating. That is, dating is allowed:

- 1) when accompanied by a chaperone.
- 2) physical intimacy is avoided.
- 3) the intention of marriage is present.

The Muslim skeptics believe that dating cannot be halal in any way because it makes both man and woman come closer. It is a self-contradiction. However, *khalwat* and *zina* are practically impossible because they are accompanied by the chaperone. Of course, the chaperone cannot control the gaze of Muslim male and female marriage seekers. But controlling the gaze is required even in everyday life too. It is unclear from this study how many of the 56 young British Muslims of Pakistani heritage are skeptical about halal dating and how many actually accept and need it. The opinions of other Muslim national heritage are also unknown.

In the UK, halal speed dating has emerged as a matchmaking service that uses intermediaries to replace the role of parents or relatives. Billaud (2019) says “the vast majority of the young people I met during this research insists upon the importance of Muslim marriage and convey the need for assistance in their search for the ideal spouse.” This is because the tradition of arranging marriage partners through Muslim parents and relatives is no longer functioning adequately within the British Muslim communities. The method of individually introducing marriage partners through parents and relatives has reached its limits. He also states “parents are no longer able to set up potential

spouses. Muslims of the second and third generations no longer wish to marry a relative or someone from “the village” of their parents who can speak little English and/or is poorly educated.” It shows latent needs for halal matchmaking. This is a “new public culture” that can be called “Islamic modernity,” and it is “neither totally anchored in the ideological paradigms of Western modernity nor literally faithful to Muslim tradition.” De Rooij (2016) points out that 70% of marriages among British Muslims involve coercion from elders or parents, and explains that the main reason for the popularity of online matchmaking apps for Muslims is that the service increases an individual’s freedom (agency) and at the same time fulfills their religious cultural criteria of marrying a Muslim.

Nisa (2021) explains specific procedures of halal matchmaking. For example, she introduces the group *ta’aruf* model of halal matchmaking: Halal Speed Dating and Soul Seekers. They provide platforms of halal group dating for Muslim marriage seekers. The detail procedures are as follows:

Step 1. Online Registration

This halal speed dating service is for Muslim membership only. Their profiles are not opened (no access) for others at all. The following information should be provided.

1. Gender
2. Date of birth
3. Career information (occupation, income, career plan)
4. Spouse preference (marital status, spouse age)
5. Prayers
6. Hijab
7. Pictures
8. Contact numbers

Step 2. Team Review, Selection and Face to Face Event

The team invites selected participants from their online platforms into one face to face group meeting event.

1. All participants are numbered.
2. It is compulsory for every female participant to be chaperoned by a parent, a relative or a friend.
3. The participants are provided with a selected amount of time to speak each other and are then required to cast a ballot of their selected candidates.
4. The participants are not allowed to have a one-to-one direct discussion but grouping into five men and five women and supervised by the facilitators.
5. The participants are not allowed to do flirting, touching or exchanging contact details.
6. The participants are obliged to attend a conference delivered by preachers.
7. At the end of the event, the team collects the forms and contact the candidates who matches.

This method of halal dating meets the three minimum requirements for dating to be halal as pointed out by Ali et al. (2019) mentioned before. This means that they are all accompanied by chaperones. Men and women do not touch each other. The matchmaking support team selects only those who are willing to get married. Moreover, it is also important to keep participants' names anonymous and to avoid one-on-one conversations between men and women so that men and women do not directly contact each other after the event.

Nisa (2021) also explains the individual *ta'aruf* model of halal matchmaking. That is Rumah Ta'aruf myQur'an (RTM) model which is as follows:

Step 1: Online Registration

This is also for Muslim membership only. Selected brief biodata is showed to the members.

1. Input biodata without names, contact numbers, and social media accounts after fulfilling of membership requirements.
2. RTM admin will select biodata of prospective members who have already participated in RTM online training group.
3. The biodata that passes the selection will be displayed in a brief profile on the list of male *ta'aruf* members and female *ta'aruf* members with member numbers based on the order of entry biodata that meet the requirements.

Step 2: Biodata Exchange by RTM Admin

Early interactions between candidates occur online.

1. Member biodata with face picture will be exchanged based on the matching of the criteria written in the biodata through emails of the admin intermediary.
2. Information related to personal data will be deleted to maintain the privacy of the owner of the biodata.
3. The admin will send several reminder emails during the biodata consideration period. The member's profile will be deactivated if there is no confirmation by the time limit.

Step 3: Q&A Sessions by Emails via RTM Admin

1. If both man and woman match the biodata received, it will be followed by questions and answers through emails of the admin intermediary.
2. Female members get the opportunity to ask questions first with a maximum of 3 questions and male members 2 questions, one session with a maximum of 5 questions.
3. The admin will send several reminder emails during the biodata consideration period. The member's profile will be deactivated if there is no confirmation by the time limit.

Step 4: Direct Face to Face Meet

1. Direct face-to-face meetings are scheduled to find out the physical condition of the two parties directly with the assistance of a third party.
2. The third party who accompanies the *ta'aruf* meeting is the RTM mediator team or from the closest family/friends of the female members if the mediator team is not available.
3. The venue of the *ta'aruf* meeting is usually in a large mosque which is close to the domicile of the female members or in another location according to the agreement of the two members and the mediator of the *ta'aruf* meeting.
4. After the *ta'aruf* meeting, there will be about a week for both man and woman to *istikharah* and reconsider whether to continue the process or not.

Step 5: Ta'aruf to Family

1. *Ta'aruf* to family is undertaken if both man and woman are willing to continue the process after direct *ta'aruf*.
2. Both man and woman will get to know each other better through their respective families.
3. It starts with the boy's *ta'aruf* to the girl's family, then the girl's *ta'aruf* to the boy's family, and *ta'aruf* to both families if they both want to continue the process.

Step 6: Ta'aruf to Close Friends

1. *Ta'aruf* to neighbors, co-workers, organisational colleagues, and close associates of both parties can be undertaken as an additional source of information after *ta'aruf* to the family.
2. This additional information can be explored by the *ta'aruf* members directly (with the assistance of a third party), or it can be represented by trusted colleagues of both parties.

Step 7: Medical and Psychological Tests

1. Medical and psychological tests can be taken to determine the physical and psychological conditions of both parties based on the recommendations of doctors and psychologists, and the agreement of both parties.
2. If after this stage both man and woman are willing to continue the process, then it can proceed to the *khitbah* (engagement) stage, and the next process is left to the families of both parties. All stages of the *ta'aruf* process are carried out with the assistance of admin or other third parties, and not alone. *Ta'aruf* members are not allowed to communicate and interact directly during the *ta'aruf* process, unless they have passed the *ta'aruf* period of both families.

In other words, halal dating is an act of finding a marriage partner using halal methods, and halal matchmaking is an intermediary act of arranging halal dating opportunities for Muslims. Matchmaking means “the activity of trying to arrange marriages or relationships between other people” (Oxford dictionary, 2023). Halal matchmaking service in this research means “the activity by the third party to arrange relationships for Muslim marriage between a man and a woman in a lawful manner under Islamic law”. It means that halal dating is a part of the activities of halal matchmaking service that is a marriage arrangement from *ta'aruf* stage to *khitbah* stage (Figure 2.1).

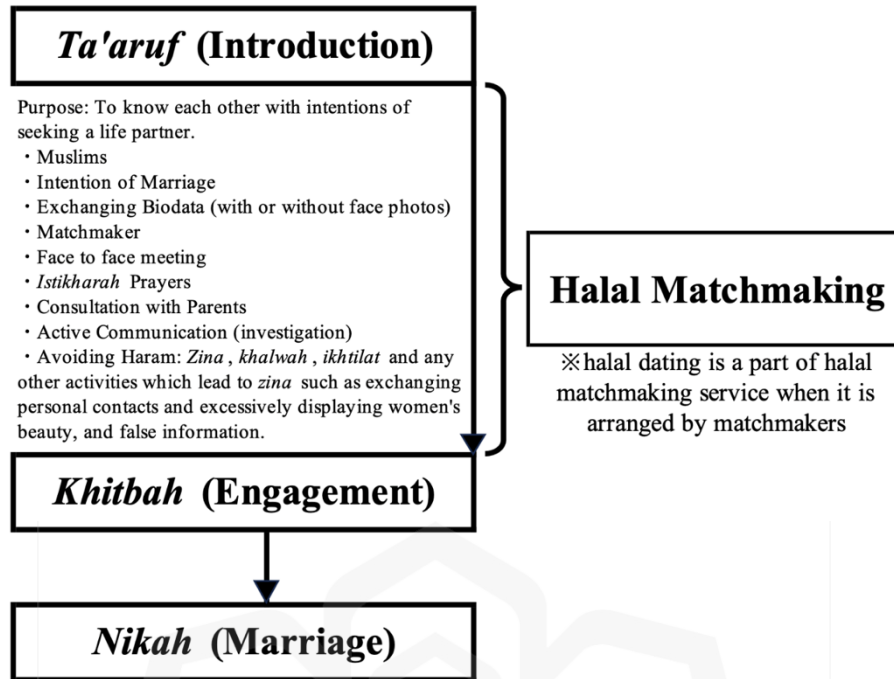


Figure 2.1 Relationship of *Nikah*, *Khitbah*, *Ta'aruf*, Halal Dating and Halal Matchmaking. Source: Al-Qaradawi, 2018; Ali et al., 2019; Nisa, 2021.

Previous studies discussed advantage and disadvantage of online matchmaking among Muslims in the Western countries. Online matchmaking sites have emerged as technological tools to satisfy man's internal need of self-determination. One of the most important factors is that online matchmaking promotes individual freedom and personal choices, and provides an opportunity to express personal views, values, interests, hopes and interests (De Rooij, 2016). Rochadiat et al. (2018) found that 16 Muslim American women using online dating sites had increased agency (personal freedom) to control selective self-expression and strategic self-disclosure in online dating. This gives women greater freedom to initiate contact with men. They also feel less embarrassed by the confidentiality and privacy afforded by online matchmaking. Previously, when disclosing personal data to third parties such as community matchmakers, women risked having their personal data exposed to an unspecified number of men at their discretion, but with online matchmaking, women can choose which men to disclose their personal

information to. Also, because they meet in a virtual space, Muslim women have the advantage of interacting while maintaining an appropriate level of hijab (isolation); Sotoudeh et al. (2017) found that Muslim women living in the West are 360% more likely than men to use the Internet for both arranging dates and online dating reported a 360% and 560% increase, respectively, compared to men. Immigrants use the Internet to find future marriage partners because informal social networks of parents and relatives exist in Muslim majority countries but not in the non-Muslim majority West (Sotoudeh et al., 2017). These studies revealed religious needs (confidentiality, privacy and *hijab*) and psychological needs (self-determination, personal freedom and personal choice) of Muslims for choosing halal matchmaking services.

On the other hand, the difficulties of discerning fake information always come with it when using online matchmaking (Rochadiat et al., 2018; Sotoudeh et al., 2017). Online dating sites cannot control others' misrepresentation: their personal information may be fake. Al-Saggaf (2013) conducted semi-structured interviews with ten Muslims living in different places such as the USA, the UK, the UAE, Australia and Bahrain. He found the participants indicated three signs of lack of trust in Muslim matrimonial sites (MMS). 1) they expressed serious concerns over a large number of members' profiles being fake. 2) they appeared suspicious about these matchmaking sites and approached them with caution. 3) Third, they felt intimidated by the unrealistic expectations that members placed on them. But the same users adopted several strategies to handle the lack of trust in the MMS. For example, they use their communication skills to investigate others carefully, they do police work to uncover inconsistencies in their statements, and they use a pre-developed list of questions and involve their family members in their communication (Al-Saggaf, 2013). It has become evident that there is a need for methods to compensate for this kind of false information which can be a risk for individuals who make a rational choice in using matchmaking services.

Another study using anthropological perspective on halal speed dating event was conducted by Billaud (2019) to investigate Muslim practices of how Islamic morality is maintained and negotiated in everyday social interactions rather than

cultivated via discipline and the pursuit of virtuous dispositions in the UK. The study found the “moral flexibility” of British young Muslims. Young Muslims do not appreciate traditionally arranged marriages by families, nor do they have completely free dating, but rather use halal speed dating and halal matchmaking apps according to the situation where they live (such as in the UK). By doing so, they flexibly practice Islamic morality to make their rational choices which are “neither totally anchored in the ideological paradigms of Western modernity nor literally faithful to Muslim tradition” (Billaud, 2019) in order to maximise their benefits.

Other studies discussed cultural needs when matchmaking in Muslim majority countries. For example, Al-Dawood et al. (2018) mentioned that gender segregation is culturally enforced in Saudi Arabia. It makes it more difficult for men and women to meet or find future life partners. They also found that trust comes not only from the fact that the two have never met in person, but also from the fact that a relationship requires a common connection. That is, either the two families know each other or the intermediary person is known to both families. This family involvement is also important in Saudi culture. The participants want to find their own partners outside the control of the family: “technology can broaden the search horizon since traditional means are limited to personal connections.” However, at the same time, they also want to see their family’s opinions. Nisa (2021) found halal speed dating in Malaysia and halal matchmaking services in Indonesia involve parents’ *restu* (approval) that is inherent in the idea of *birr al-walidayn* (kindness and respect to parents) to filial piety. She said halal matchmaking “platforms might be seen as a push to completely individualised marriage partner selection, but in fact, it does not totally individualize the entire process.” These platforms signify the importance of “deindividualising the process.” In other words, family involvement meets the religious-cultural needs of Muslim marriage seekers in their choice of life partners.

In the field of Muslim marriage in Japan, several studies have been focusing on motives and issues of Pakistani husband and Japanese wife. Kudo (2015) found that mixed-race Japanese-Pakistani couples utilize religious and cultural resources to meet

the various changing needs that arise during the life cycle. The majority of Japanese women married to Pakistani Muslims converted to Islam at the time of marriage. Pakistani men had to follow the marriage laws of both Japan and Pakistan in order to obtain a spouse visa. In other words, spouse visa in Japan can increase economic utilities as there are no employment restrictions. Marriage for visa purposes can be said to be a rational economic choice from the perspective of Pakistani Muslims. Kudo (2009) also reported that according to Pakistani law, a Muslim man's marriage partner must be a person of Islamic faith or person of the People of the Book (Christian and Jew). In her interviews, many Japanese women revealed that they embraced Islam "out of necessity to prepare for marriage" or "without really thinking about it deeply." Against this backdrop, Komura (2019) discussed the challenges of a Japanese woman who married to a Pakistani man who had a history of overstaying in Japan. He should have been deported, however since he fled the country, he was treated as a criminal by the immigration authorities of Japan. This fact was hidden before marriage and she was not informed about it. He married her for a spousal visa. She was forced to become a guarantor for his business financing, and the man returned to Pakistan without telling her, only to find out that he had actually already married another woman in Pakistan. The Japanese woman miscalculated or underestimated risks and costs of choice in making right decision of her marriage. Previous research in Japan has revealed that Pakistani Muslims require Japanese women to be Muslim in order to marry. When it comes to choosing a marriage partner, it is also required that the partner needs to be halal. For Muslims, a halal marriage partner is, in principle, a Muslim.

2.9 SUMMARY

The relationship of the above five concepts (*ta'aruf*, *khitbah*, *nikah*, halal dating and halal matchmaking) reviewed can be summarized in Figure 1. Halal matchmaking consists of ten fundamental elements in this research; 1) Muslims, 2) intention of marriage, 3) exchange of biodata, 4) matchmaker, 5) face to face meeting between man and woman, 6) *istikharah* prayers, 7) consultation with parents, 8) active communication (investigation), 9) avoiding haram such as *zina*, *khalwat*, *ikhtilat* and

any other activities lead to *zina*, 10) contactable information (telephone number, email, social media accounts, and website, etc.) should not be shared between man and woman during the initial stage of halal matchmaking. Foreign Muslims in Japan live far away from their parents and relatives. It is difficult for the foreign Muslims to prepare a chaperone at the initial matchmaking stage. But no chance of *zina* is expected with a group matchmaking under the supervision of matchmakers, though *zina* of eyes cannot totally be controlled by others in this situation.

What the research to date has revealed is that there are many different views of halal dating. Some consider the presence of a chaperone, the prohibition of physical intimacy, and the intention to marry to be requirements for a halal date when a man and a woman meet in person. Others argue that it is not halal for a man and a woman to meet in person in the first place. Others say that even in such cases, telephone or online communication is permissible. In Japan, differences of opinions are likely due to limitations in providing halal matchmaking services. For example, men and women cannot be completely segregated as is the case in Saudi Arabia. The majority of Muslim marriage seekers living in Japan for reasons, either for work or study. It is difficult for their parents and relatives to become a chaperone in Japan. Furthermore, the matchmaking service provider cannot control the gaze of the service recipients. Caution must be exercised in using online. Of course, there are many advantages for Muslim women online, such as privacy and not revealing more personal information than necessary. There is always a risk that information on online sites is false. One should be especially wary of inconsistencies in conversations, and it can be difficult to get family and friends to identify one's true identity. If you give false information in order to marry someone in the first place, marriage fraud is to be expected and a healthy marriage will be difficult to achieve. Since time, effort, and financial resources are limited in this research, the researcher would like to analyse the needs of Muslim marriage seekers by adopting the minimum necessary requirements for a matching service to be halal. To sum up, the previous studies have shown three dimensions of the needs; religious needs (Muslim identity, confidentiality, privacy and *hijab*), psychological needs (self-determination, personal freedom and personal choice) and social needs (family involvement) of Muslims for choosing halal matchmaking services.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

To answer the four research questions, this research employs a qualitative methodology. This methodology section explains step by step approach to answer the research questions in the following order: It 1) formulates hypotheses (Chapter 1 and 2), 2) explains the methods to investigate each research question, 3) creates questions that fit the purpose of investigating the research questions, 4) presents recruitment method of informants or participants for halal matchmaking event, 5) determines the criteria for selecting the informants for interviews, 6) identifies points to note during interviews, and 7) conducts interviews. Next, the qualitative data collected from the interviews will be compiled and analysed. The research 1) transcribes verbatim records, 2) codes the transcription and 3) after coding the data from the first person, proceeds to code the second and third people, and summarise them into a storyline (Figure 3.1) that presents meaningful interpretation of the hypothesis. Data collection methods are online survey via social media and in-depth interview sampling method (Ohei and Chukwuere, 2022). The research uses data analysis techniques using content analysis and thematic analysis, by analysing, sorting and extracting main themes from the interview records of Muslim marriage seekers.

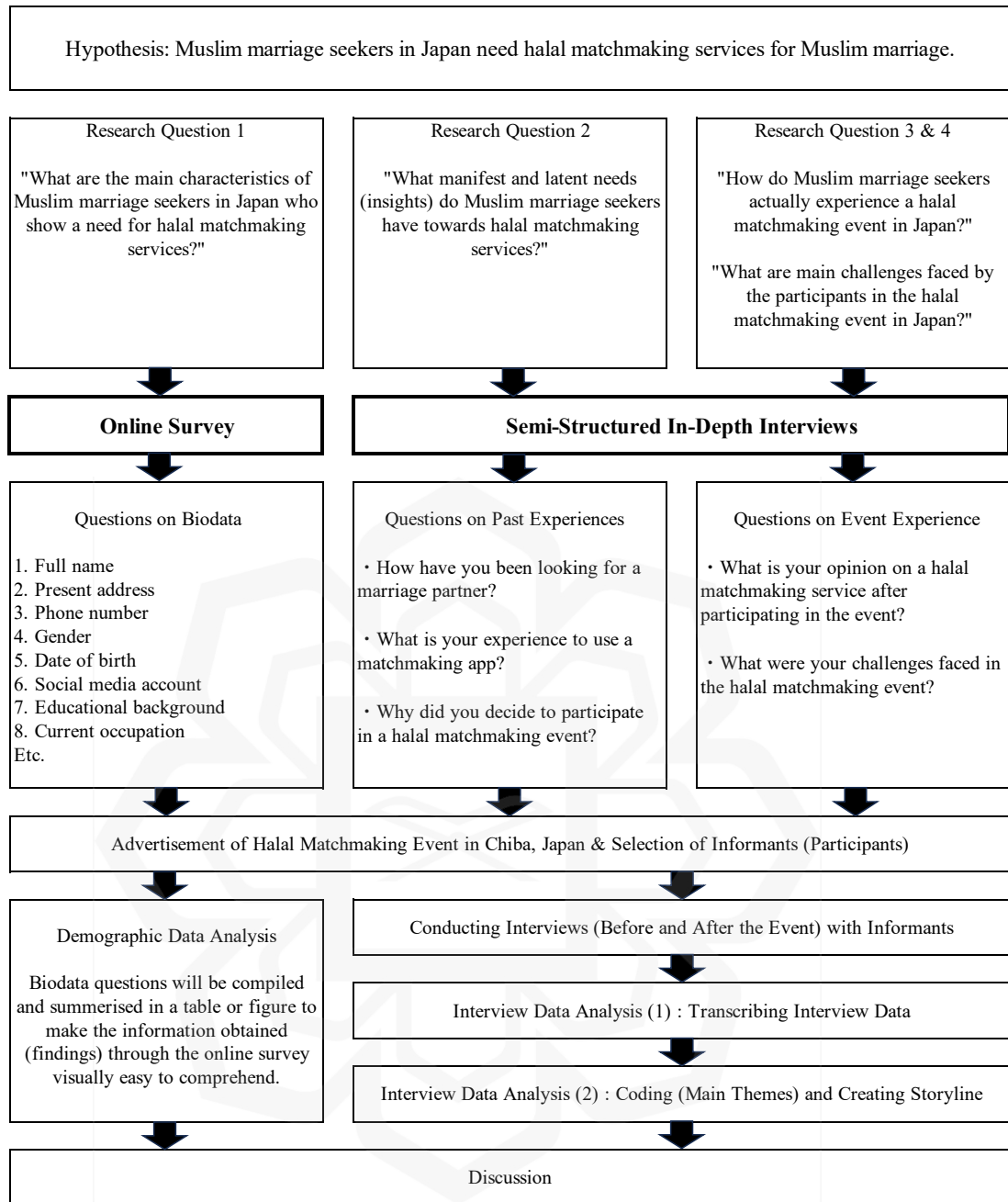


Figure 3.1 Methodology Flow

3.2 HYPOTHESIS

As clarified in Chapter 1 and 2, halal matchmaking services have appeared in various Muslim and non-Muslim countries. As today's society where globalisation and IT are advancing, arranged marriages by families are on the sharp decline (Arakawa, 2019), this research makes a hypothesis that Muslim marriage seekers in Japan need halal matchmaking services. In order to prove this hypothesis, this research conducted a halal matchmaking event as a trial case. The matchmaking method used in this event was the group halal matchmaking model identified in the literature review. Rather than simply counting how many people in need signed up, the research analysed who signed up for the event and why. Furthermore, the research analyzed participants' experiences and the challenges they faced during the event. (Figure 3.2).

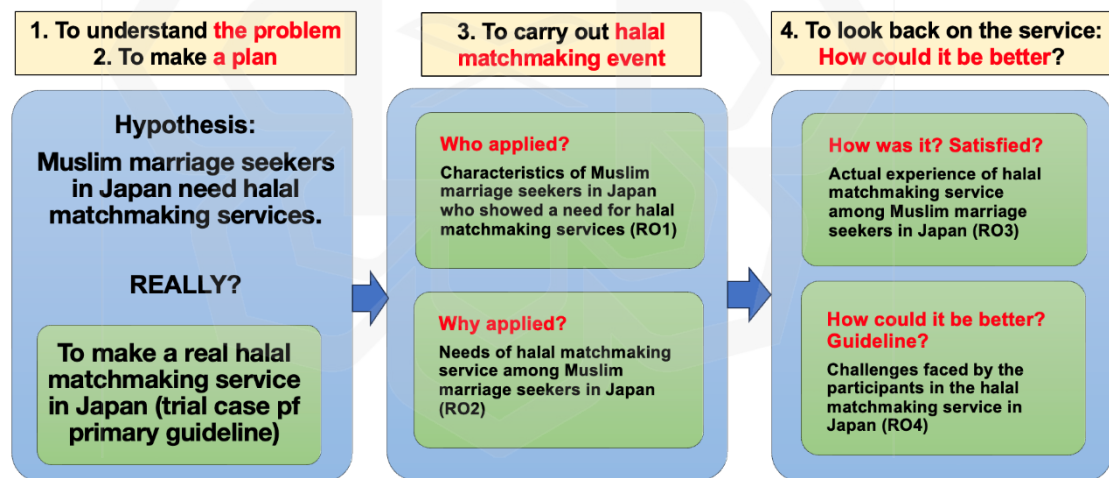


Figure 3.2 Relationship between Hypothesis and Research Questions

This research derives a hypothesis regarding the necessity of halal matchmaking services by relying on previous research on the sociological theory of individualization that is weakening the communal marriage matchmaking system. Individualisation refers to the process by which individuals are forced to spend more time and effort deciding

what choices to make in their daily lives and accept greater personal responsibility for the consequences of those choices as society undergoes increasingly rapid change and uncertainty. This concept is closely related to the late modern sociological views of Beck (1992 and 1999) and Giddens (1999). Individualisation is “coercive” rather than concerning true individual freedom of choice and is an integral part of the self in the neoliberal (un)order. As Beck argued, individuals are now forced to make combative choices throughout their lives and are expected to be solely responsible for the consequences of their choices. Individualisation is a contradictory phenomenon that leads to risk-averse behavior in decision-making. It feels like freedom, especially for women who have been freed from patriarchal control. However, when things go wrong, no one has an excuse. Individuals are severely punished not only for personal failures, but for mere bad luck in a highly competitive and unforgivingly harsh socioeconomic environment. This self-imposed freedom and solitary responsibility are cultivated by itself through neoliberalism, globalisation, and privatisation combined with unfettered consumer sovereignty and enterprising business skills. In globalised society, individual choices become freely accessible on a global scale. Individuals will then continue to search for the best option on a global scale in search of the more rational best option. Thus, weakening of local ties is inevitable, and it is a natural process of individualisation.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The methodology used to answer each research question is summarized in Figure 3.1.

3.3.1 Online Survey: Method to Investigate Research Question 1

First, the first research question (RQ1) is “What are the main characteristics of Muslim marriage seekers in Japan who show a need for halal matchmaking services?” In order to find an answer to this question, the researcher uses online survey to collect profiles of the people who register to the halal matchmaking event in Japan.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews: Method for Investigating Research Questions 2-4

Research question 2, 3, 4 (RQ2, RQ3, RQ4) are: “What manifest and latent needs (insights) do Muslim marriage seekers have towards halal matchmaking services?” “How do Muslim marriage seekers actually experience a halal matchmaking in Japan?” and “What are the main challenges faced by the participants in the halal matchmaking in Japan?” In order to find out the answers to these questions, semi-structured in-depth interviews are conducted respectively.

The researcher used in-depth interview as a method when conducting qualitative research. In-depth interview refers to a one-on-one interview between the researcher and a research participant. This is a method of selecting suitable informants/participants and digging deeper into the opinions of each participant through the interviews. It has the following benefits:

- 1) the researcher can ask questions related to their private life such as marriage matchmaking activities.
- 2) it is easy to express their true feelings without worrying about those around the participants.

It will be useful to discover their latent (hidden) needs. The disadvantage of in-depth interviews is that they are time-consuming because each person is interviewed one by one. Due to the spread of teleconference services and the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the interviews were conducted online.

A main advantage of semi-structured interviews is that they can offer a good balance between the “fair evaluation” of structured interviews and the “flexibility” of unstructured interviews. By asking questions that are common to all marriage seekers, the researcher can maintain a fair evaluation while still being able to respond flexibly based on the interviewer’s judgment. In other words, since questions are asked according to the pre-determined question items, no matter who is the interviewer, they can evaluate participants based on the same criteria. Also, after the pre-determined

questions are asked, the interviewer asks questions freely, just like in an unstructured interview, it is possible to dig deeper into the participants' real experience and true feelings.

Needs research is one of the marketing research methods practised to analyse the needs of consumers (Dentsu Macromill Insight, 2022). In the first place, needs refer to demands or desires, and in the field of marketing, they refer to customer desires. They may feel some kind of dissatisfaction with their current situation, but this dissatisfaction is a feeling that arises when there is a discrepancy between their ideals and reality, and their needs are the desires to eliminate that gap. For example, what problems do Muslim marriage seekers feel dissatisfied with the current matchmaking services? Knowing this point will lead to needs research. In today's world where consumer attributes and preferences are diversifying, it is becoming increasingly important to have a deep and accurate understanding of customer needs.

Needs can be divided into manifest needs and latent needs depending on the degree of clarity of the thoughts (Dentsu Macromill Insight, 2022). Manifest needs refer to needs at the stage when customers have something specific that they want and are aware of that desire themselves. Since it is clear what the person wants, it can be said that the needs are similar to actions such as comparing and purchasing products and services. Latent needs refer to needs at a stage when customers do not clearly understand their own desires. They are not clear feelings like manifested needs, but rather feelings that are held inside. Latent needs become manifest needs when they are clarified for some reason and become aware of their desires. For example, in this research, by disseminating advertisements for halal matchmaking services for Muslims, their latent needs will be educated, and the needs of Muslim marriage seekers will become apparent.

Needs and wants are different things, and can be seen as a relationship between ends and means (Dentsu Macromill Insight, 2022). Needs are desires that serve as objectives, and wants are specific means to satisfy those needs. For example, if Muslims

want to use a matchmaking service, his or her essential desire is to get married or find a partner. Essentially, the marriage that they want to fulfill is a need, and using a matchmaking service is just one way to get married, so it is a want. In order to meet the needs of people who want to get married, it is possible to use other methods such as introductions from parents or friends in addition to the halal matchmaking service. Therefore, even if they are using the same matchmaking service, their needs may be different. For example, when using dating apps, there are those who have needs of “I want to find a marriage partner” and those who have needs of “I want to find a playmate of the opposite gender.” Therefore, it is essential to find out what kind of needs Muslim marriage seekers have in order to develop and improve services that meet their needs.

There are two types of needs research: quantitative and qualitative research. This research employs qualitative research. This is because qualitative research uses words to understand the feelings and consciousness of individuals, which cannot be quantified. The voices of the Muslim marriage seekers obtained through interviews were the main data that were analysed. Qualitative research is suitable when the researcher wants to uncover the latent needs of the Muslim marriage seekers in Japan. In particular, it can allow the researcher to capture their thoughts, values, and behavioural backgrounds that cannot be quantified. For example, the researcher can obtain directly valuable information from the participants, such as their first experience of a halal matchmaking service in Japan.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF QUESTIONS

3.4.1 Demographic Questions

It is necessary to create questions that answer the research questions. The questions to answer the first research question (RQ1) was based on the biodata format developed by Rumah Ta'aruf myQuran in Indonesia. The researcher made additional questions that

are uniquely important in the social and legal context of Japan. By doing so, the researcher can develop a halal matchmaking service that is suitable to Japanese society.

Registration of a personal profile for Muslim marriage matchmaking

We help match single Muslims (married people are not allowed to join) living in Japan. Please register your personal profile below only if you are seriously looking for a marriage partner.

Muslim Marriage Matchmaking Event (Date to be decided)
Date: it will be informed after registration is completed and during online meeting.
Number of participants: 10 men and 10 women
Conditions of Participation: Complete personal profile
Venue: Ruma Rahim (Cafe on the 1st floor of Chiba Islamic Cultural Center)

*The personal information you provide below will not be used for any purpose other than matching purposes.
*Personally identifiable information (name, e-mail, phone, address) will not be disclosed even during the matching process. Participants must not disclose this information either.

日本国内に住む独身ムスリム（既婚者は参加禁止）とのマッチングを支援します。真剣に結婚相手をお探しの方のみ下記の個人プロフィール登録をお願いいたします。

ムスリム結婚お見合い会（日程は未定）
日時：登録完了後、面談にてお知らせします。
参加予定人数：男性10名、女性10名
参加条件：個人プロフィールにもれなく記入登録すること
会場：Ruma Rahim（千葉イスラーム文化センター1階カフェ）

※以下の記入していただく個人情報は、マッチング目的以外には使用致しません。
※個人を特定できる情報（名前、メール、電話、住所）はお見合いのときも公開しません。参加者も公開してはいけません。

Figure 3.3 The first Page of the Registration of a Personal Profile for Muslim Marriage Matchmaking. Source: Nisa, 2021.

The following questions were asked by the online survey as “registration of a personal profile for Muslim marriage matchmaking” (Figure 3.3). The questionnaire was developed based on the biodata information items that registrants should fill out on the website of Rumah Ta’aruf myQuran, a specialised *ta’aruf* organisation in Indonesia.

Rumah Ta'aruf myQuran is an Islamic media that specialises in the field of premarital *ta'aruf*. The existence of Rumah Ta'aruf myQuran cannot be separated from the birth of the online Islamic discussion forum "myQuran.com." Starting in 2001 with the name of the Introduction and Matchmaking subforum which was one part of the forum, in 2004 the name changed to the Ta'aruf Marriage and Household Intertwining subforum which was used as a facility for *ta'aruf* and matchmaking by forum members, as well as a means of discussion about marriage and the household. To focus on the discussion, the subforum is further divided into the Family Development subforum which focuses on discussions about marriage and the household, and the Ta'aruf Process subforum as a means of *ta'aruf* and finding a mate for forum members. From 2011 to the end of 2013, the Ta'aruf Process subforum changed its name to the Ta'aruf and Soulmate subforum, until finally in January 2014 the Rumah Ta'aruf myQuran was established to further increase the benefits for the ummah. This service is one of the oldest modern halal matchmaking services in the world and has practical knowledge and experience.

The researcher collected data from informants or participants on the following questions in regards to research question 1.

1. Full name
2. Present address
3. Phone number
4. Gender
5. Date of birth
6. Social media account
7. Educational background
8. Current occupation
9. Name of company you currently work for/manage
10. Current annual income (in Japanese yen)
11. Nationality
12. Nationality of parents (example; father: Japanese, mother: Malaysian)
13. Number of siblings (example; 1 older brother, 2 younger brothers, etc.)
14. Current visa type (answered only by foreign nationals)
15. Current visa expiration date (answered only by foreign nationals)

16. Communicative languages
17. Chronic disease or physical or mental disabilities
18. If you have a chronic disease or disability, please provide specific details.
19. Marriage history
20. If you have been married, please indicate the year of divorce or death.
21. Religion
22. Muslim history (only by converts)
23. History of Islamic study
24. Amount of Qur'an memorised
25. Frequency of prayer
26. Do you wear Hijab or not (answered only by women)
27. Do you accept polygyny of husbands? (answered only by women)
28. Do you intend to practice polygyny in the future? (answered only by men)
29. Do you approve of your wife working outside the home? (answered only by men)
30. Desired percentage of household chore to be shared by the couple
31. Do you allow the couple to reside outside of Japan?
32. Desired number of children
33. Wishes for Children's Islamic Learning
34. Drinking alcohol
35. If you answered that you drink, please indicate how often you drink
36. Smoking
37. If you answered that you smoke, please indicate how often you smoke
38. When would you like to get married?
39. Are you currently single?
40. Do you currently have a fiancée?
41. Preferred burial method

These question items were largely based on the biodata format of Rumah Ta'aruf myQuran (Figure 3.3), but this research included question items specific to Japan, such as the registrant's nationality, language, visa status, alcoholic drinking habits, polygamy, and burial method, as well as desired percentage of household chore to be shared by the

couple and the possibility of a wife working outside the home. The founder of AlKhataba points out that when a halal matchmaking service goes beyond one's own country, it should be adjusted based on the local customs (Muzz & Al-Jazeera, 2023). He says, "Every time we enter a new market, we adjust the app according to the traditions of people in this new country. Our compatibility questions that show up when a user creates their account vary from one country to another." Since 90% of Muslims living in Japan are foreigners, international marriages are common. Intercultural communication is a serious problem in international marriages. If they do not understand each other's culture and language like a native speaker, communication is hindered, causing misunderstandings and friction (Qu, 2009). In addition to this, it has been pointed out that visa status and polygyny are serious matters that can lead to divorce (Komura, 2019). It has also been said that Japan has a strong alcohol consumption culture and that the response to treatment for alcoholism is lagging behind Western countries (Milne, 2022). With regard to a graveyard, there is very limited land available for Muslims to bury after they died (Kojima, 2023). It is also important to consider a funeral method and location before they get married. Yamaguchi (2007) found that work-life balance factors significantly affect marital satisfaction. This finding suggests that the time that couples spend at home has a strong influence on marriage satisfaction. In his study in Japan, time spent at home refers to the amount of time couples spend talking during the week, the amount of time they spend together on weekends and holidays, and the husband's share of childcare responsibilities. It is important to ask desired percentage of household chore to be shared by the couple and the possibility of a wife working outside the home in Japan.

3.4.2 Interview Questions

The researcher collected data from 35 informants on the following questions in regards to research question 2 for semi-structured in-depth interview. The following interview questions were formed from the simple problem-solving techniques (Polya, 1990).

- How have you been looking for a marriage partner? (devise a plan)
- What is your experience to use a matchmaking app? (carry out the plan)

- Why did you decide to participate in a halal matchmaking event? (new plan)

The researcher collected data from 35 informants on the following questions in regards to research question 3 and 4 for semi-structured in-depth interview.

- What is your opinion on a halal matchmaking service after participating in the event? (carry out the plan)
- What were your challenges faced in the halal matchmaking event? (new plan)

3.5 INTERVIEW FLOW

An interview flow is a flow diagram that summarises the content of interview questions, the order of the questions, and the time spent on each question in a single table. The researcher conducted the interviews according to this interview flow, so this became an important document that can be considered as a blueprint for the interview (Frances and Coughlan, 2009). In this research, the researcher set the interview time to approximately 60 minutes and ask the questions listed in the questions mentioned above.

There are basically two ways to interview informants: interviewing one person and interviewing multiple people at the same time. The latter is also called a group interview. The standard method is to interview one person to another. By listening to the statements of other informants, it may be easier to answer questions that are difficult to answer alone, but, since marriage partner search is a highly private matter, it must be kept secret in the presence of others. Therefore, a one-on-one interview method is used in this research.

There were four things the researcher took extra care in conducting interviews.

- 1) Questions were asked in easy-to-understand words. The questions that contain abstract words or technical terms make the interviewees difficult to answer them.
- 2) Informants' stories were not evaluated during the interviews: When the informants are talking, the researcher just limit himself to nodding and did not try to summarise or evaluate answers of the informants.
- 3) The researcher checked anything he did not understand immediately. When the researcher came across a word he did not know or an explanation that was difficult to understand, the informants were asked on the spot to confirm it.
- 4) He should let the informants speak in a way that is easy for them to understand. He should not interrupt or force the informants to talk.

3.6 RECRUITMENT OF INFORMANTS (PARTICIPANTS)

In order to answer the research questions, it is necessary to recruit informants who can properly answer the demographic interview questions above. Recruitment in qualitative research means selecting people for interviews. The interviews are expected to be meaningful in carefully selecting some people with suitable profiles and experiences as research subjects and collecting their opinions. By not narrowing down the recruiting criteria too much, and by setting selection criteria with a wide range, the researcher was able to hear about unexpected issues on the interview side, and as a result, can find perspectives that could lead to new marketing needs. Since there are no halal matchmaking services in Japan yet, the researcher should start by planning an experimental halal matchmaking event. From 25 July, 2022 to 21 August, 2022, the researcher recruited collaborators for a halal matchmaking event through social media advertisements (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) posted by the Chiba Islamic Cultural Center (CICC), a non-profit organization. Inclusion criteria for informants or participants in this study were: 1) Muslim, 2) living in Japan, 3) seriously seeking a marriage partner, 4) unmarried (married people could not participate in the event because Japanese law

prohibits polygamy registration), and 5) able to communicate appropriately in Japanese language.

Both single and divorced Muslims were purposively selected for online semi-structured in-depth interviews. Feedback on the event was also obtained through online interviews with all informants (participants) who attended the halal marriage activity event (Frances and Coughlan, 2009). All interviews with informants were recorded. The study focused specifically on the informants' internal struggles in finding a compatible marriage partner in the past and their experiences with halal marriage activity events. To avoid creating an opportunity to meet alone after the event, the researcher kept the participants' personal information completely private. Qualitative data were collected on the purpose of marriage and the extent of participants' knowledge of the rights and obligations of married couples in Islam.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1 Demographic Data Analysis

Methods of demographic analysis are used to gain insight into population characteristics such as age, gender, race and ethnicity, income, and education level. These methods allow the researcher to better understand the characteristics of Muslim marriage applicants in Japan. The primary methods of demographic data analysis used in this study were descriptive and comparative methods (Emmanuel, 2024). Descriptive methods are the most common type of demographic analysis. These methods include the calculation of statistics about the population, such as median age and sex ratio. The most common descriptive method is the simple frequency count. This type of analysis counts how many times a particular characteristic appears in a sample of the population. Comparison methods are used to compare two or more populations. For example, one might compare how many Muslim male informants in Japan with annual incomes over 4 million yen with how many Muslim female informants with the same income.

Comparative methods can be used for a variety of purposes, including to understand the causes behind a particular trend or phenomenon. For example, comparative methods can be used to understand why there are so many more female participants than male registrants in a halal matchmaking event.

3.7.2 Interview Data Analysis

Qualitative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005) and thematic analysis (Patton, 2015) were used in this study. In particular, thematic analysis allows the researcher to inductively investigate themes and experiences common to almost all the informants. This approach ensures that the knowledge gained is based on the unique personal experiences of the informants rather than preconceived theories. The key to summarise the qualitative data collected in the interviews is coding and presenting a storyline. Coding is the process of converting statements from interviews into text and attaching abstract labels to find patterns and themes. Both content analysis and thematic analysis are systematic classification processes for coding qualitative texts into patterns and themes that share similar meanings (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005; Patton, 2015; Neuendorf, 2019). Developing a storyline is the process of explaining patterns between codes. In preparation for this research, it is necessary to put interview records into text. Coding and storyline backed by a wealth of theoretical knowledge are powerful tools in a qualitative research method that deals with interpretations of meaning.

3.7.2.1 Transcription

In summarising the data, the researcher transcribed interview records into texts. When making a verbatim transcript, the researcher paid attention to the following points.

- 1) He made a transcript immediately (usually within 24 hours) after the interview. Over time, he might forget thoughts and feelings that arose during the interview. These will affect the quality of his subsequent analysis and interpretation. The researcher started creating his transcripts right away.
- 2) He should not summarise the statements of the informants. He should create his transcripts using the exact words as they were spoken as much as possible.
- 3) He marked parts that are likely to be meaningful. While creating his transcripts, mark any parts that he feels may be important for later analysis. This will make it easier to organise the transcripts when he reviews them later.
- 4) He read the completed transcripts over and over again. He divided the texts of the verbatim transcripts into several meaningful chunks.
- 5) He backed up all interview data: Once the researcher has created interview transcripts, he needs to copy the data to multiple locations. This will make it easier to recover the data if it is damaged during the research.

3.7.2.2 Coding

The method of coding is described as follows:

- 1) The researcher created a sequence of numbers, narratives, headings, summaries, and codes. Then he grouped similar codes together and gave them sequential numbers, it became easier to understand the order of the stories.
- 2) The researcher divided the speech into small chunks and created the minimum chunks of the story and put them in the narrative section.
- 3) The researcher added headings and concisely expressed the main themes.

This research particularly employed descriptive coding and value coding. Descriptive coding involves the researcher summarizing the response into a description and coding the data based on a keyword or noun in that description. Values coding, on the other hand, means the researcher takes his qualitative data and creates codes according to values, attitudes or beliefs of the informants (Martinez, 2024). For example, one transcribed text said that “I have never used an app for marriage. The biggest barrier is being a Muslim. I know that you cannot get married unless he is a Muslim, whether he

is Japanese or from another nationality. I do not think it is possible to find a Muslim partner in Japan.” Then, the researcher identified keywords, values and attitudes like “cannot get married unless he is a Muslim.” Another transcribed text said “I had a matchmaking meeting with a Japanese atheist man, but he said he did not want to become a Muslim, so I turned him down.” He found a similar value and attitude like “he did not want to become a Muslim, so I turned him down.” It means both narrations indicate a common theme on the rarity of meeting with Muslim marriage seekers in Japan. It implies Muslims value protection of faith in searching Muslim marriage partners.

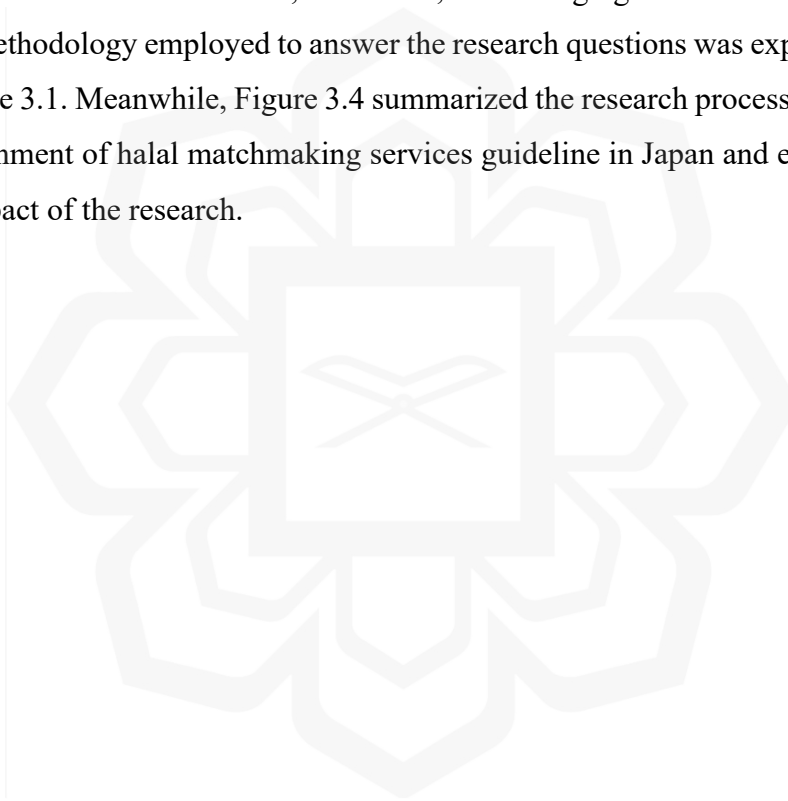
3.7.2.3 Storyline

After coding data of the first informant, the researcher continues coding for the second and third people. When no new themes appeared, he could consider he collected enough themes and can move on to the stage of summarising them into a storyline (Nagoya University, 2022). The basic steps are as follows.

- 1) The researcher grouped similar themes together and give them code names: These will become the main themes.
- 2) He drew causal relationships between the main themes. He can focus on preceding and following events on a timeline, and diagram the relationships between the main themes to create a storyline.
- 3) The researcher considered whether it could serve as a hypothesis for the theme. He may consider how what can be said from the storyline differs from what has been said in previous research, and whether it could serve as a new hypothesis.

3.8 SUMMARY

This research adopted a qualitative methodology to answer the research questions. For research question 1, data was collected through an online survey. For research questions 2, 3, and 4, data was collected through semi-structured interviews. To recruit informants, the researcher organized a trial halal matchmaking event with the cooperation of the Chiba Islamic Cultural Center in Chiba City and recruited informants (participants). As for data analysis, research question 1 was analysed by using demographic data analysis. As for research questions 2, 3, and 4, interview data analysis was used to transcribe the conversations in the interviews, code them, find emerging themes and create a storyline. Each methodology employed to answer the research questions was explained for details in Figure 3.1. Meanwhile, Figure 3.4 summarized the research process leading up to the establishment of halal matchmaking services guideline in Japan and expected outcome and impact of the research.



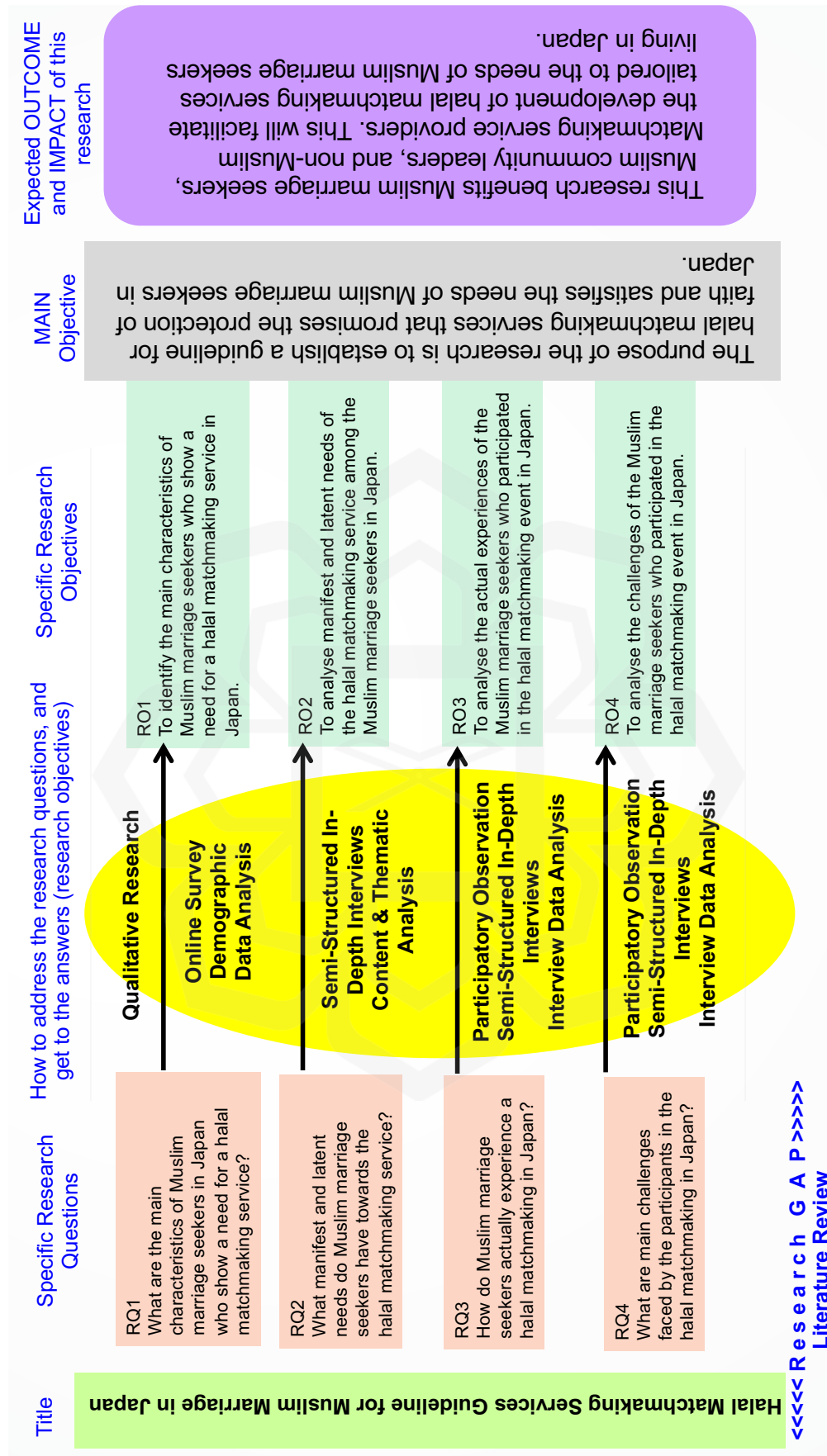


Figure 3.4 Research Framework

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents four main findings: the characteristics of the research participants, their partner-seeking experiences in the past and their reasons for signing up to a halal matchmaking event, their actual experience of participating in the halal matchmaking event, and their challenges on how the service could be improved.

4.2 PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

One hundred and sixty-six people showed interest after social media advertisement by filling up participation form from 25 July 2022 to 21 Aug 2022 to attend the Muslim matchmaking event at the Café of Chiba Islamic Cultural Center. One hundred and eleven people registered their personal profiles. Among them, there were one hundred and nine valid answers (98.1%). Muslim women accounted for 68.8% of the registration (Figure 4.1).

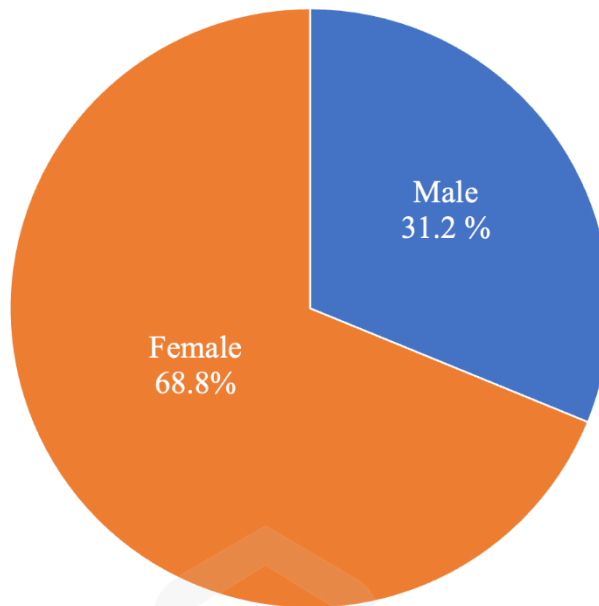


Figure 4.1 Male and Female Ratio of the Registered Individuals (n = 109)

The half of the registered individuals identified as Indonesian (n = 60), followed by Japanese (n = 19), Malaysian (n = 10), Pakistani (n = 4), Egyptian (n = 4), Bangladeshi (n = 2), Syrian (n = 2) and others (n = 8). In particular, Indonesian Muslim women accounted for 44% of the total participants. This number is four times higher than that of Indonesian men. As for Japanese Muslims, there are fifteen registered women compared to four men, meaning there are four times as many women. On the other hand, when it comes to Malaysian Muslims, there are eight registered men and two registered women, meaning there are four times as many men. As for other nationalities, the male and female ratio was almost the same. A total of eighty-nine people from Indonesia, Japan, and Malaysia accounts for 81.7% of the total one hundred and nine participants (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Number and Ratio of the Registered Individuals by Nationality (n = 109)

Nationality	Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female
Indonesian	12	48	60	55.0%	11.0%	44.0%
Japanese	4	15	19	17.4%	3.7%	13.8%
Malaysian	8	2	10	9.2%	7.3%	1.8%
Pakistani	2	2	4	3.7%	1.8%	1.8%
Egyptian	2	2	4	3.7%	1.8%	1.8%
Bangladeshi	2	0	2	1.8%	1.8%	0.0%
Syrian	1	1	2	1.8%	0.9%	0.9%
Others	3	5	8	7.3%	2.8%	4.6%
Total	34	75	109	100.0%	31.2%	68.8%

Of the total 109 registrants, 82 people (58 females, 24 males) had an undergraduate degree or higher (75.2%) (Table 4.2). Fifty eight out of 75 female registrants had an undergraduate degree (n = 40) or a postgraduate school degree (n = 18). That is to say, 77.3% of the female registrants had an undergraduate degree or higher. 24 out of 34 males had an undergraduate degree (n = 10) or a graduate school degree (n = 14). In other words, 70.5% of the male registrants had an undergraduate degree or higher. For both men and women, the proportion of the registrants with an undergraduate degree or higher exceeded 70%. But, the proportion of female registrants with an undergraduate degree or higher (n = 58) out of the total number of the registrants was 53.2%, while the proportion of male registrants with an undergraduate degree or higher (n=24) out of the total number of the registrants was only 22%. Therefore, looking at the total number of event registrants, female registrants are more likely to meet male registrants with lower educational backgrounds than themselves (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Educational Background of the Registered Individuals (n = 109)

Gender / Education	High School (General)	High School (Vocational)	Junior College	University (Undergraduate)	University (Postgraduate)
Male	6	4	0	10	14
Female	5	6	6	40	18
Sub Total	11	10	6	50	32
Grand Total	109				

Of the total 109 registrants, 82 people (75.2%) had an annual income of 4 million yen or less (Table 4.3). Of these, 41 had an annual income of 2 million yen or less, and 41 had an annual income of 2 million to 4 million yen. The gender ratio of the 41 registrants with an annual income of 2 million yen or less was approximately 83% female and 17% male. On the other hand, the gender ratio of the 41 registrants with an annual income of 2 million to 4 million yen was 63.4% female and 36.6% male. In addition, the gender ratio of the 21 registrants with an annual income of 4 million to 6 million yen was 57.1% female and 42.9% male. This means that employed female registrants tend to have higher annual incomes than men (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Annual Income Amount of the Registered Individuals (n = 109)

Gender / Japanese Yen	0-2 million	2-4 million	4-6 million	6-8 million	Over 8 million
Male	7	15	9	1	2
Female	34	26	12	2	1
Sub Total	41	41	21	3	3
Grand Total	109				

In terms of occupation, 76 people were company employees, civil servants, or employees of a non-governmental or non-profit organisation (Table 4.4). This accounts for 69.7% of the total 109 registered people. The gender breakdown of these 76 people was 28 men (36.8%) and 48 women (63.2%). On the other hand, the gender breakdown of the unemployed was 2 men (students) and 12 women (6 students). Of the total 14 unemployed, 8 people were students, of which 2 were male students (scholarship recipients). In other words, 32 out of 34 male registrants (94.1%) have some kind of job and are preparing to support their future marriage. Similarly, 63 out of 75 female registered people (84%) have some kind of job and are trying to secure a source of income.

Table 4.4 Occupation of the Registered Individuals (n = 109)

Occupation	Company Employee	Part-Time Job	Unemployed	Civil Servant	Self-Employed	Group Employee
Male	27	3	2	0	1	1
Female	42	13	12	3	2	3
Total	69	16	14	3	3	4
Grand Total	109					

One hundred and nine registrations came from all over Japan. For example, they were from Tokyo (n = 27), Chiba (n = 20), Kanagawa (n = 11), Saitama (n = 9), and 16 other prefectures in Japan (Figure 6). Sixty seven out of 109 participants, that is 61.5%, were from the Tokyo metropolis and three prefectures (Chiba, Kanagawa and Saitama). Though it was known that this halal matchmaking event was hosted by Chiba Islamic Cultural Center and that the event would be held in Chiba city, there were registrations from as far north as Sapporo, Hokkaido (1,200 km from Chiba) and as far south as Hiroshima Prefecture (850 km from Chiba) and Tokushima Prefecture (680 km from

Chiba). It obviously means that there is a need for halal matchmaking services for Muslim marriage nationwide (Figure 4.2).

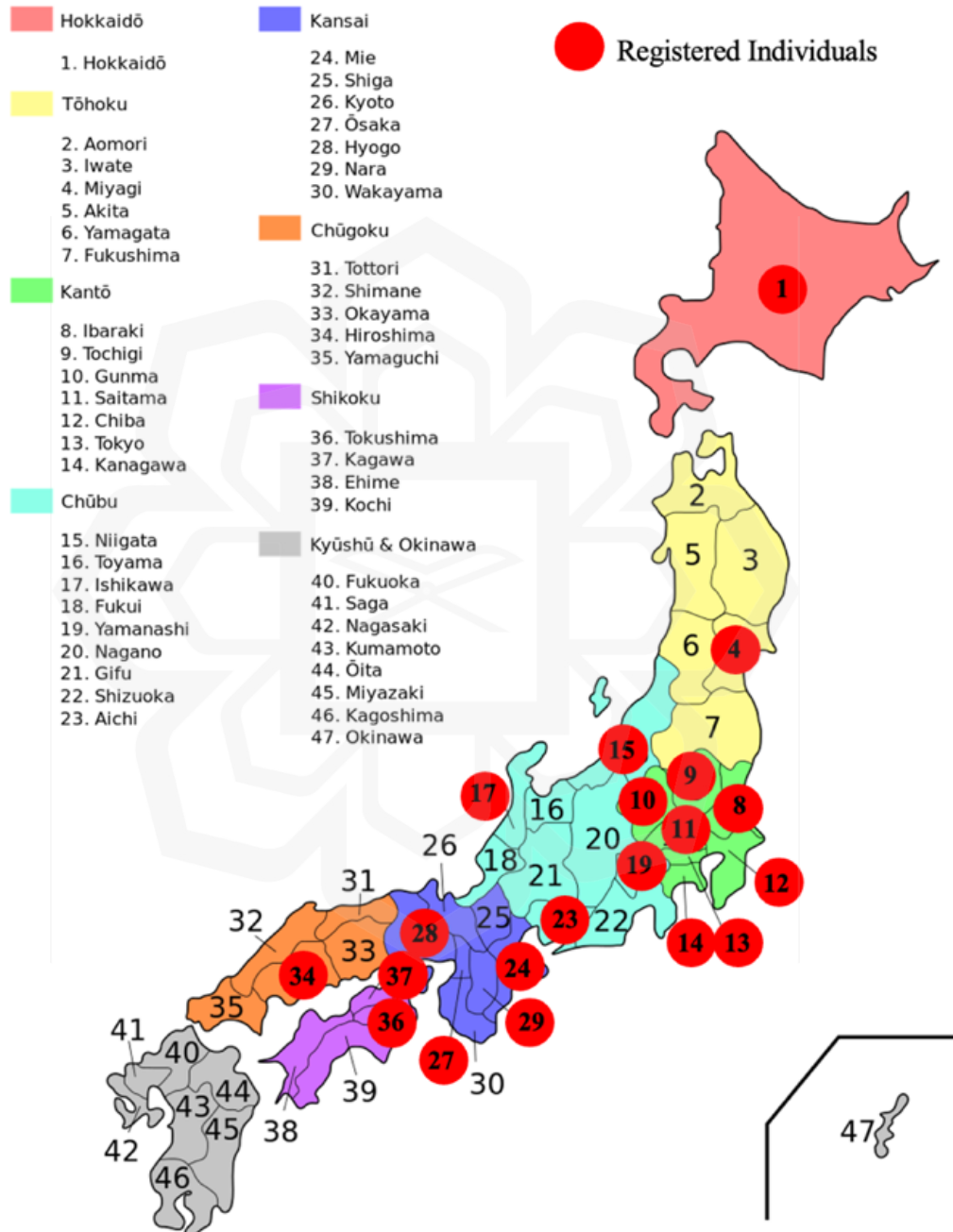


Figure 4.2 Present Address of the Registered Individuals (n = 109). Source: Sugimoto, 2023.

Table 4.5 Age Group of the Registered Individuals (n = 109)

Birth Year	Male	Female	Total	Age
2004	0	1	1	18
2003	1	0	1	19
2002	0	0	0	20
2001	0	1	1	21
2000	0	0	0	22
1999	0	2	2	23
1998	1	1	2	24
1997	1	2	3	25
1996	4	5	9	26
1995	1	4	5	27
1994	5	6	11	28
1993	3	3	6	29
1992	4	4	8	30
1991	0	9	9	31
1990	4	7	11	32
1989	4	8	12	33
1988	2	2	4	34
1987	2	3	5	35
1986	0	2	2	36
1985	0	2	2	37
1984	1	2	3	38
1983	0	2	2	39
1982	0	4	4	40
1981	0	1	1	41
1980	1	0	1	42
1977	0	2	2	45
1976	0	1	1	46
1965	0	1	1	57
Total	34	75	109	Weighted Ave. Age: 31.3

The ages of the registrants ranged widely from 18 to 57 years old (Table 4.5). In particular, 80 people registered between the ages of 26 and 35, which accounts for 73.4% of all registrants. It was found that this age group is the most active in searching for a marriage partner for both men and women. By gender, there were 29 men in this age group, accounting for 85.3% of the total number of male registrants, comparing to 51 women in this age group, accounting for 68% of the total number of female registrants. Meanwhile, there were only 2 men (5.9% of the total number of male registrants) and 17 women (22.7% of the total number of female registrants) between the ages of 36 and 57. It means that many women over the age of 36 are looking for a marriage partner more actively than men are. Furthermore, the research found 3 men (8.8% of the total male registrants) and 7 women (9.3% of the total female registrants) between the ages of 18 and 25 years old. It means that young Muslim women are less willing to use halal matchmaking services in Japan. Otherwise, perhaps the younger age group under 25 is not yet seriously considering marriage in the first place. The weighted average age was 31.3 years old (Table 4.5). Interestingly, average age at the first marriage in Japan in 2021 was 31.0 years for husbands and 29.5 years for wives, according to the Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2021). Therefore, it can be said that these registrants are representative of the average age group of the first marriage in Japan.

Table 4.6 Divorced Experience of the Registered Individuals (n = 109)

Divorced	Yes	No	Total
Male	3	31	34
Female	6	69	75
Total	9	100	109

Only nine people were previously married but currently divorced, and 100 out of 109 people (91.7%) were first-time married (Table 4.6). Of the nine divorced people, five (3 female and 2 male) of them are divorced.

Regarding religious practices, 91 out of 109 registered respondents (83.5%) answered that they pray five times a day (Table 4.7). By gender, 63 out of 75 female registered respondents (84.0%) pray five times a day, while 28 out of 34 male registered respondents (82.4%) pray five times a day. As the percentages are over 80% for both genders, it can be seen that users of halal matchmaking services are relatively more religious.

Table 4.7 Frequency of Daily Prayer of the Registered Individuals (n = 109)

Daily Prayer	5 times	Less than 5 times	Total
Male	28	6	34
Female	63	12	75
Total	91	18	109

Of the 75 female registrants, 60 (80.0%) answered that they always wear the hijab (Table 4.8), indicating that this service is preferred by women who wear the hijab.

Table 4.8 Hijab of the Registered Individuals (n = 75)

Hijab	Yes	Sometimes	No	Total
Female	60	1	14	75

Polygyny registration is prohibited in Japan. This research found that the majority (92%) of women disapproved of their future husbands' polygyny (Table 4.9). This may not be an answer limited to those who sign up for the halal matchmaking service, while none of the registered men in this research had an intention of polygyny (Table 4.10). It may not be the right time for them to think about marrying more than one wife in this stage because they have not found a partner for the first marriage yet, though three men answered that they were not sure about their intentions of polygyny.

Table 4.9 Female Opinions towards Husband's Polygyny (n = 75)

Husband's Polygyny	Yes	No	Others	Total
Female	3	69	3	75

Table 4.10 Male Intention of Polygyny of the Registered Individuals (n = 34)

Intention of Polygyny	Yes	No	Others	Total
Male	0	31	3	34

Regarding the household chores after marriage, 59 out of 109 registrants (54.1%) were of the opinion that men and women should share the same share of housework (Table 4.11). By gender, 26 out of 34 male registrants (76.4%) believed in 50:50 household chores, while 33 out of 75 female registrants (44%) did the same. Nineteen women (25.3%) thought that wives should do more than 50% of the housework. On the other hand, only 5 men (14.7%) thought that wives should do more than 50% of the housework. In other words, there is a tendency for men who registered with the halal matchmaking event to think that husbands should do equal housework responsibilities with their wives. It was also found that approximately 70% of women who registered with the halal matchmaking event thought that wives should do 50% or more of the housework. Although a minority, eight women (10.7%) tended to think that their husbands should shoulder more than 50% of the housework.

Table 4.11 Desired Percentage of Household Chore to be Shared by the Couple (n = 109)

Household Chore	Husband > 50%	Wife > 50%	50:50	Others	Total
Male	1	5	26	2	34
Female	8	19	33	15	75
Total	9	24	59	17	109

Regarding possibility of living overseas after marriage, 75 out of 109 registered participants (68.8%) had a positive opinion (Table 4.12). By gender, 79.4% of 34 male registrants (n = 27) and 64% of 75 female registrants (n = 48) were in favor of living overseas. While, 19 female registered participants (25.3%) were of the opinion that they cannot say anything yet because it depends on particular situation and reasons. In any case, the majority of the registrants are looking for a marriage partner in Japan, but they are not particular about living in Japan.

Table 4.12 Number of People who Allows the Couple to Reside Outside of Japan (n = 109)

Drinking Alcohol	Yes	No	Total
Male	4	30	34
Female	2	73	75
Total	6	103	109

Regarding drinking alcohol beverages, 103 out of 109 registrants (94.5%) answered that they do not drink alcohol at all (Table 4.13). Even the 12 people who answered that they do drink alcohol only do so socially for work-related reasons, and do not drink alcohol when they are alone. Regarding smoking, all registrants answered that they do not smoke. It was found that the registrants of the event have a strong tendency to neither drink alcohol nor smoke.

Table 4.13 Number of People who Drinks Alcohol (n = 109)

Living outside Japan	Yes	No	Others	Total
Male	27	4	3	34
Female	48	8	19	75
Total	75	12	22	109

Of the 109 total registrants, 19 were Japanese and 90 were foreigners. Of the 90 registrants, only five had permanent residency in Japan. Therefore, it was found that the 85 foreigners who registered with the halal matchmaking event were all people with visas of less than one year or less than three years.

Regarding the timing of marriage, 74 out of 109 total registrants (67.9%) answered that they would like to get married anytime if they find a suitable partner (Table 4.14). By gender, 21 out of 35 male registrants (61.8%) and 53 out of 75 female registrants (70.7%) answered that they would like to get married whenever they find the right partner. In addition, 27 out of 109 (24.8%) wanted to get married within a year: they would get married whenever they find the right partner is the same as saying that they have no intention of getting married if they do not find the right partner. In any case, the majority of the registrants have a strong desire to get married.

Table 4.14 When to Get Married (n = 109)

Time to get married	Whenever I find a marriage partner	Within 3 months	Within 6 months	Within 12 months	Total
Male	21	0	2	11	34
Female	53	2	4	16	75
Total	74	2	6	27	109

All registrants answered that they were currently single and did not have a fiancée. All of them also agreed that their preferred funeral method would be burial and not cremation. It was completely agreed that the marriage partner of both men and women who registered must be Muslim, and that the funeral method should be burial.

4.2.1 Summary

The main trends of female registrants are Indonesian (44%), employee (56%), age between 26 and 35 (68%), average annual salary of less than 2 million yen (45%), and single. They are married for the first time (92%), pray five times a day (84%), wear a

hijab (80%), do not approve of their husbands' polygyny (92%), and share the burden of household chores equally (44%), do not drink alcohol (97%), do not smoke (100%), are open to living abroad (64%), and are ready to get married right away if they have a good matching (71%). The main trends of male registrants are Indonesian (11%), employee (79%), age between 26 and 35 (85%), and average annual salary between 2 million yen and 4 million yen (44%), are single and married for the first time (91%), attend prayers five times a day (82%), believe that the burden of housework is split equally between husband and wife (76%), do not drink alcohol (88%), and do not smoke (100%), are open to living abroad (79%), and are ready to get married right away if they have a good matching (62%).

The following tendencies were found to be the main characteristics of people who felt a need for the halal matchmaking event:

- 1) Muslims.
- 2) Major nationalities: Indonesian, Japanese, Malaysian.
- 3) Two-thirds of registrants are female.
- 4) Female registrants are more highly educated, have higher annual incomes, and are older than male registrants.
- 5) The largest age group for both men and women is between 26 and 35 years old.
- 6) Some have been divorced, but the vast majority are first-time married.
- 7) Most people are relatively pious, praying five times a day, women wearing hijab, and both men and women do not drink or smoke.
- 8) The people believe that housework is shared equally between men and women.
- 9) Living abroad is acceptable.
- 10) Polygyny is not accepted by almost all women.
- 11) Possibility of postpone marriage until a suitable partner is found.

4.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW: BEFORE HALAL MATCHMAKING EVENT

4.3.1 Interview Purpose

It is to analyse the latent needs of the Muslim marriage seekers in Japan who were interested in the halal matchmaking event. Of the 109 registrants, only 35 registrants responded for the online interview in Japanese language were interviewed.

4.3.2 Interview Overview

- (1) Informants: 35 Muslim single men and single women (Japanese: 12 people, Indonesia: 11 people, Malaysian: 4 people, Egyptian: 2 people, Syrian: 2 people, Canadian: 1 person French: 1 person, Bangladeshi: 1 person, Chinese: 1 person), this includes 2 divorced men and 3 divorced women (Table 4.15 and Table 4.16).
- (2) Method: Semi-structured in-depth interview
- (3) Interview period: July 25, 2022 to August 21, 2022

Table 4.15 Nationality and Gender of the Informants Before the Event (n = 35)

Nationality	Male	Female	Total
Japanese	3	9	12
Indonesian	4	7	11
Malaysian	3	1	4
Egyptian	1	1	2
Syrian	1	1	2
Canadian		1	1
French	1		1
Bangladeshi	1		1
Chinese		1	1
Total	14	21	35

Table 4.16 Coding of the Informants Before the Event (n = 35)

Code	Gender	Nationality	Age	
F1	Female	Japanese	25	
F2	Female	Indonesian	26	
F3	Female	Chinese	28	
F4	Female	Japanese	29	
F5	Female	Indonesian	30	
F6	Female	Canadian	33	
F7	Female	Japanese	37	
F8	Female	Japanese	37	(Divorced)
F9	Female	Egyptian	38	
F10	Female	Japanese	46	
F11	Female	Japanese	41	(Divorced)
F12	Female	Indonesian	28	
F13	Female	Indonesian	29	
F14	Female	Indonesian	30	
F15	Female	Indonesian	34	
F16	Female	Malaysian	32	
F17	Female	Japanese	40	(Divorced)
F18	Female	Indonesian	27	
F19	Female	Japanese	37	
F20	Female	Japanese	28	
F21	Female	Syrian	33	
M1	Male	Japanese	27	(Divorced)
M2	Male	Indonesian	29	
M3	Male	Malaysia	30	
M4	Male	Indonesian	29	
M5	Male	Syrian	30	
M6	Male	Japanese	32	
M7	Male	Bangladeshi	33	
M8	Male	Malaysian	33	
M9	Male	Egyptian	26	
M10	Male	Malaysian	26	
M11	Male	Indonesian	29	
M12	Male	French	35	
M13	Male	Indonesian	27	
M14	Male	Japanese	38	(Divorced)

4.3.3 Main Themes

Theme 1: Rarity of meeting with Muslim marriage seekers. Almost no Muslim is registered as the user of conventional non-Muslim matchmaking services in Japan. Many informants claimed that they had a very few opportunities to meet Muslim marriage seekers in the past. Muslims are concerned about free dating with non-Muslims. There is a risk of *zina* (illegal sexual relationship) with a non-Muslim partner.

“It would be best to marry with people want to convert to Islam regardless of nationality or race in Japan. But it is difficult” (F1).

“Japanese matchmaking services are not Muslim friendly so that I have never used them” (F2).

“My father is not seriously interested in Islam, so he does not have any recommendations or introductions of Muslim men to me” (F3).

“I have been looking for a marriage partner, but I could not find one. I often volunteered at a Muslim organisation and tried to meet someone. I have used matching apps like *Muzmatch*. There are not many Muslims in Japan, so we had a little chat. But we are not ideal partners, so we part ways. I do not know if I can find a good match but I think this event is good because we have Muslim environment” (F6).

“I started using *Muzmatch* app. But it does not suit me because there are only men of Indian Pakistani descent. I prefer Arabs (Egyptians, Tunisians) or Japanese. I am still using it, but I have not found a good match that suits my needs. It is not appearing. I expanded my target to include people who live in Dubai and other countries. Even if I find a right person, it is hard to meet him because he lives overseas. It is not

progressing. Finding a marriage partner is the biggest challenge in my life right now. I think that Japanese matchmaking events are not for Muslims, so I do not even want to listen to their service content. Someday, I want to create a matchmaking service for Muslims. Before that, at first, I want to find my life partner” (F9).

“I have never used an app for marriage. The biggest barrier is being a Muslim. I know that you cannot get married unless he is a Muslim, whether he is Japanese or from another nationality. I do not think it is possible to find a Muslim partner in Japan” (F10).

“I have used the orange colour matching app once. At first, it was difficult to find a Muslim man. I only used it for a short period of time. There were not many Muslims, and when I thought I had found a partner, I was wrong. I would like to find a partner according to Islamic rules, but most people today are looking for a girlfriend, dating and then getting married, but it is not possible. I do not have anyone to marry. I have used the apps before, but I have not made any progress, so I thought it was a waste of time” (F11).

“I had a matchmaking meeting with a Japanese atheist man, but he said he did not want to become a Muslim, so I turned him down” (F12).

“I have been in a relationship, but it has not resulted in marriage, so it is difficult. There are no Muslim men around me. It is difficult for people to understand that unless he becomes a Muslim, I will not be able to get married. It is hard for Japanese people to understand me. It might be faster to find a marriage partner if I can match with a Muslim who is willing to get married, rather than by interacting with non-Muslims” (F13).

“I am a Muslim. I want to meet a Muslim” (F14).

“I decided to participate in this Muslim friendly matchmaking event because I like halal and because the process to find women who have lived in a Japanese environment to accept Islam is very difficult. I cannot really say that this is an obligation, because I was born and raised in Japan. It is definitely difficult to suddenly change their life to Islamic principles. Of course, it is halal to marry and live together after her becoming a Muslim. I feel safer if I am dating a Muslim woman or woman who is at least interested in Islam. It is safe. Extremely safe. My situation is quite dangerous. The strength of sexual desire varies from person to person, but I am worried about if I can control my desire. Normally, it would be easy to get a girlfriend and go on a date. But it is not easy for Muslims. Even if they want to go on a date, they cannot. It is difficult. That is why I was so surprised and hopeful that there is a matchmaking event for Muslims. I am really happy and it is a great opportunity. So, I would definitely like to participate” (M1).

“Currently, I am using matchmaking apps such as Tapple and Bumble. I have a picture of myself on my profile and write that I am looking for a serious relationship. I do not need female friends. I am looking for a serious relationship. There are quite a few women. I met with them, but it was often only once. The women showed interest, I tried not to express too much of my Islamic identity. But I want to live my life in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Therefore, the teachings of Islam inevitably came into the conversation. As a Japanese non-Muslim woman, it is hard when I say things like dos and don'ts. I am currently in a deep relationship with a Japanese non-Muslim woman. Whenever I met her, she asked me to shake her hand. I refused. She asked me again to shake her hand, even if it was just a pinky finger. Sometimes she hugged me in front of stations. Sometimes she invited me to her house, and I make dua to Allah. It was really dangerous” (M1).

“I do not think there has ever been a marriage matchmaking event for Muslims before” (M5).

“I did use Japanese matchmaking apps before, but there were almost no Muslims registered. Most probably, one Muslim out of 1,000 people. The first requirement is that my marriage partner should be a Muslim. I was also using matchmaking apps for overseas Muslims such as Muzmatch and Salaams. When I searched potential partners living in Japan, I could find only 30-40 Muslims. I have already finished checking all these profiles” (M6).

“People of my parent’s generation still do not understand importance of the current situation of the second-generation Muslims in Japan. Even though we Muslims grew up in Japan and educated only the basics of *deen* of Islam, for example, it is still quite a big jihad to protect ourselves from sins. It will only become more difficult as time goes by. The harder halal gets, the easier haram becomes. I looked around me and found that some friends have given up and others were at their limits. This is a big problem in Japan. I asked for my father and my friends to assist me to find a Muslim marriage partner. My friend sent me a Facebook link for this halal matchmaking event. I have been shouting about having a halal matchmaking for Muslim marriage for the past two years, but there were no such services yet here in Japan” (M6).

“One woman was seriously considering marriage with me, but she was not ready to embrace Islam, so our marriage became difficult” (M8).

“If my marriage partner is not a Muslim to begin with, or if she is not a serious Muslim, my priorities are different. I do not think most Muslims use marriage matchmaking services for Japanese people. If I date with a non-Muslim, I don’t know if she will become a Muslim or not. I do not know if she will become serious even if she becomes a Muslim. Personally, my first priority is Islam. I have to choose a good

wife for myself and good mother for my future children. When I look at Japanese society, there are people who are dating without marriage. I want to avoid this.” (M9).

“When using a matchmaking service that does not cater to Muslims, there are some conflicts about Islam” (M11).

Theme 2: It takes a lot of time, effort and money to identify marriage partners.
Many female participants were especially tired of communicating with the marriage partners they met on the matchmaking apps.

“I was grateful to have been matched with someone on a matchmaking app, but I received a lot of messages, and some people sent me very long messages every time, and it was quite a mental and physical burden. I felt like I was being stalked and that it was too much for me. When I asked him about his job on the apps, he said he was a consultant, but he was actually still working part-time at a restaurant, and he wrote about his job when he went to France a long time ago, and his profile was a little different though he was a nice guy. But, after we met, I received a lot of long messages and I got tired of communicating with him, so I had to say sorry and decline. I felt like it was quite tiring. I got a lot of long messages saying that he was a nice guy, but when I met him, he was not, and I got tired of exchanging many messages, so I said I was sorry and stop our relationship. It was quite exhausting” (F4).

“It is really hard to match, and depending on the website, I cannot meet someone unless I really match, and I cannot move forward unless I pay. I could not meet the person I wanted. There was a time when my one-year renewal fee was automatically renewed. I have talked to a few men in the past, but things did not go very well, and I sometimes felt like I could not get married. I thought it would be difficult to meet my partner in Tokyo. So, I thought it would be better to go back to Kobe, where my parents

live, and asked my father to introduce someone to me. I had actually someone to meet in person, but I have not married yet until now” (F7).

“I think it's impossible to find a partner in Japan. It's a waste of time and money” (F10).

“I have been introduced to women by friends in the past, but our conditions did not match. Our education levels, our understanding of Islam, and especially our ages did not match. I have been introduced to older women in the past, but I want a younger woman” (M2).

“My girlfriend in Malaysia is far away, so I do not get to see her much or communicate with her. I once attended an IJB matchmaking event near Yokohama Station. There were 12 men and women in total. We matched with one person and exchanged contact with them. We met occasionally, but we cut ties after the other person was transferred to Kansai” (M3).

“As a Muslim in Japan, I think it is better to protect myself from haram and get over it as quickly as possible. The most formal way to find someone is to find someone your family knows through your parents, and someone who is at the same level as a Muslim. I was hoping to find someone, but I have not been able to find anyone. In addition, some women did not seem to be seriously thinking about marriage right now. I was little surprised that young girls in their early 20s tended to be like that. They said that they are not planning on getting married in five years, so for now they are just chatting” (M6).

“When I came to Japan, I felt very lonely. I tried various apps. It did not seem to work. A lot of people were using apps, and I used apps like *Pairs*, *Tapple*, and *Zexy*.

There were many people who wanted to have fun. I gave up. One woman was seriously thinking about getting married, but she did not have the desire to convert to Islam yet, so marriage became difficult. Another wanted marriage to forget the painful memories of the past. The other two were just for fun” (M8).

“I have used about four dating apps (*Omiai*, *Pairs*, etc.) until now. But my messaging skills were weak. It did not go well. It is difficult to exchange messages with people I have never met before. I once thought about going to a town party or a matchmaking party, but the price was over 10,000 yen for men, and I cannot drink alcohol even if I went there, and all what I can drink is maybe only ginger ale, the cost was 10,000 yen, that is too expensive. I guess it is too much. All I can eat is salad. I cannot meet marriage partner with apps. I am already tired. I got busy with my work, and the apps took up too much of my time. I could not do what I needed to do. I am canceling the contract. I forgot about it and used the matchmaking apps for about 3 months. Actually, I only used them for 1 month” (M10).

“I used to use apps. It is like a dating app like *Bumble*. It is like *Tinder*. I used to use it, and when I met someone, it was like, hmmm. The purpose was to go out with friends first. From there, I started meeting people. Once you know that, you have to decide if you are the right person. We both liked each other, but we wanted to get to know each other first, and became good friends, but nothing happened after that.” (M11).

“I paid a matchmaking app once, but I could not meet anyone I liked even though I paid for the service.” (Unmarried woman)

Theme 3: Anxiety for marriage mainly due to the lack of trust/assurance of individualistic marriage compared to communal marriages. Many female participants tended to be cautious to find and decide a marriage partner. They did not know how much they could trust the potential partner. They continued to search a more suitable

partner rather than compromise. They are inundated with information about post-marital problems, and they are constantly worried. When the communal arranged marriages were still active, family and community were the guarantees of trust and assurance about the marriage partner. In Japan today, however, the communal arranged marriage has been weakened, so that the individual should bear the full responsibility for deciding on a marriage partner. There is a strong risk-averse mentality that prevents people from marriage. In the past, communities served as a guarantee against risk. But when the responsibility falls on the individual, there is a strong tendency to avoid risk. In the end, some of them tend to avoid taking marriage seriously.

“My mother is a Muslim. She consulted me about finding a marriage partner. I registered on the app, but I did not do anything with it. I was introduced to it a few times, but in reality, I have never met him before. We lost contact when I was in Indonesia. The reason I decided to participate in this event is not only because I want to get married, but because I want to get serious about marriage” (F1).

“I am not sure if the app is effective in learning about personality” (F3).

“One married woman told me that she married her husband because she thought he seemed kind, but after marriage he became very strict and even if she overslept at fajr prayer, he would complain to her. She said that even in her daily life, if her husband is too fussy about keeping the room tidy, he often complains about it, and it makes her feel bad. My impression is that the more complaining people are, the more likely they are to get married within six months of meeting each other. They may not know each other's personality, they may not understand the culture of the other's country, or they may have language problems (the husband cannot speak Japanese very well, the wife speaks good Japanese but not so good English, and the wife cannot speak the language of the husband's country very well either). I also heard of husbands who have started breaking things in the house because of their inability to communicate well. I became worried when I heard that the husbands might be committing domestic violence against each other. So, I was afraid to get married within six months of meeting someone. If I

love someone, I want to marry him, but at the same time, I thought it would be safer to take time to get to know him better before deciding to marry. People who got married late often advised me that instead of rushing into marriage, I should enjoy my alone time now, study Islam, and get married when I am ready and a really good person comes along. If you rush to get married, have children, and have all kinds of problems with your husband, you will end up with family discord. There are various types of Muslims. I heard that most foreign Muslims who approach Japanese women are looking for visas or money to move to Japan. My friend advised me that it is safer to meet them in Japan if possible. The husband of one of my friends had a provisional visa when we met him. If he was right, apparently his wife got involved with the wrong person and her husband went to jail. His visa had expired. After the child was born, the wife worked hard for about a year to finally get a spouse visa so she could work legally. After that, the husband wanted to return to his home country and had a new house prepared, but the wife insisted on staying in Japan. The husband is not fluent in Japanese, and when he gets frustrated, he often breaks glass bottles he is holding or knocks over tables. I feel uneasy about our married life listening to her” (F4).

“The man I met and talked to was Japanese. He was a Muslim who had converted to Islam. I heard that his parents did not think very well of his conversion to Islam, and when we were thinking about getting married, the man said he would ask his parents. I was worried because I felt that he must be someone whose parents had quite a lot of power. The other thing was that I myself had a desire to eat halal foods, and I had lived my life since I was a little girl thinking about eating halal food by researching the ingredients and such at home. I thought it was a good thing for me. And once I had a chance to have a party with the Japanese man, my Muslim female student friend, and his male friend, and we all ate together. At that time, we talked about food. My friend, a Muslim male student was checking the ingredients of the food and the Japanese man got angry. His opinion itself was good, but the way he got angry was a little scary. I got the impression that he might be an angry person when he gets married. His parents are against Islam, so I probably felt a lot of anxiety. I thought I would feel lonely if the image I had after marriage did not match my personality. I decided this was impossible.” (F7).

“My husband passed away due to bereavement. I wonder if I could remarry after about five years. An acquaintance introduced me to a good person. But due to the coronavirus pandemic, we lost touch. He was from Iran and was a Shiite. Therefore, even though we were in contact, we did not end up getting married.” (F8).

“I used an app called Muslim Match. The Arab man I was dating wanted to be polygamous, but I refused. I used it for six months and then stopped because I cannot trust the people I meet online” (F12).

“I have never used a Japanese matchmaking service. I am reluctant to use the service because I think the purpose of meeting people is different. Many people around me use the service, and many of them end up getting married. There are also people who do not. My condition is that my marriage partner should be a Muslim, I probably will not be able to find him on a Japanese matchmaking service. I do not trust it. I have never registered for an app in the past. Even if it was recommended, I do not think I would register” (F13).

“I know there are matchmaking apps, but I do not believe them. I cannot check whether the information on the apps is true or not” (F14).

“I would like to find a partner using Islamic methods. I had registered for a matchmaking app called *OkCupid* that my friend used. The type of users who have registered are not good. I get messages, but they are not serious. In my profile, I write down my religion, but everyone completely ignores my religion and contacts me, so it is not a good idea. That is why I wanted to get to know my marriage partner as much as possible through introductions from people I know.” (F15).

“We don't meet on the app, so it doesn't last long. I'm not good at messaging” (F16).

“His nationality was Egyptian. I divorced him after a year and a half. I also lived in Egypt. Our relationship was not good. We were both unemployed. I later found out that he was in a bigamous relationship with another Japanese woman. I heard that he was going to divorce her. So, I came to Egypt without registering to the government in Japan and went through the procedures to register in Egypt. However, his divorce was not finalised. At the beginning I met him at a nightclub in Tokyo. We made nikah without registration to the government in Japan. The masjid where we made nikah did not find out that he was a bigamist. His attitude was different when he was in Japan from when he was in Egypt. I was worried that he would be okay because his attitude was changing. I do not use Japanese companies' matchmaking services. I am a little reluctant. I do not like posting pictures of myself. I used Muslimah.com once, but I did not post any pictures at that time either. In the end, I quit right away. I did not have contact with anyone in particular and I was not really into it, so I quit. I met a Turkish person through a Muslim female friend. His teacher was in Türkiye and we had a nikah online. A few months after we got married, the Turkish person also divorced his previous wife. I learned that the school of his ex-wife's daughter who lives in Türkiye asked me to submit documents proving the parent-child relationship and when I went to the Turkish embassy in Japan to get a family certificate. I discovered that the divorce had not yet been granted. I found out it for the first time. I was so shocked by that fact that I could no longer trust him and divorced him” (F17).

“I registered on the Indonesian matchmaking app Mawaddah Indonesia managed by Ustadz Khalid Basalamah. I just registered the app. I did not use it. I did not know anyone about the app. I was a little worried. So, I quit” (F18).

“I tried using matchmaking apps, registered with marriage agencies, and went on dates with people I met, such as Pairs, Tinder, and PCMA. There was also a foreign

matchmaking site called Muslimah.com. It is a foreign site, so all the people live far away. There are no people who live in Japan. This is a bit harsh reality. Other apps are for fun. There are many people who cannot communicate properly. So, it is no good. Also, the security of the information is not guaranteed. For example, age falsification. People say that they are single while they are actually married. Also, many people's identities are not guaranteed. In fact, there have been cases where the person they matched with was actually married. This matchmaking app does not require proof of single certificate. I did not even know if there was an app for Muslims.” (F19).

“I am starting to feel myself culturally becoming close to Japanese people. Nikah is a big decision. I was really scared, so I asked my parents, and they said it is Islam, so it is not about romantic feelings and Allah will let you have feelings for him when you get married, so marriage will just continue. But marriage is too scary for me. I cannot move forward unless I get rid of the fear or anxiety in my heart. Personally, I think it would be good to have something like marriage counseling before the matchmaking event, for example, to hear what is written in the Qur'an or hadith, and to ask several times in advance what I am scared of about marriage, what my ideal is, and because I grew up in Japan, I know that it is not a Muslim country, it would be good to have something like Zoom counseling” (F20).

“I know such matchmaking apps but I have not tried because I do not trust actually. I do not know anything about the person who can tell anything, any lies, usually when we marry in our culture, the family asks and they know everything about the family, asking different people, but the people online it is somehow I do not know actually but it is not the way we used to do” (F21).

“I have already looked into marriage proposals from my country. I would say I am not ready to settle there. I do not want to generalise everybody over there but most guys are either into clubbing, or are not following the religion properly (not saying that I am better than them), their families or they follow a few un-Islamic cultural practices,

etc. I personally have started a journey on bettering my *deen* - I studied traditional Arabic to be able to read Qur'an and completed my first recitation of the whole Qur'an when I was just 5 years old and I was living in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia but since I moved to my country, I got busier with the worldly life and did not really think of reading the English translation of Qur'an to understand it well. I only ever read the Arabic version but I do not know the meanings. Hence, I recently realised the importance of understanding Qur'an, reading the translation and bettering my *deen*. I began reading the translation, Alhamdulillah, and I am on a journey to better my *deen*. I was mostly thinking of marrying a revert as many of the things that I already know could help them too. On that note, I have not found any reverts there yet. If you would ask why not I marry somebody from my place and help them better their *deen* in case I am expressing that is not the case with people there, that is because the stereotype there is such that most guys only want to have a housewife who would follow their practices later on and I have seen many such live examples. They do not change and they are arrogant when somebody says something they are doing is un-Islamic. Male dominance in marriages is so huge there on another level. I fear that my journey on bettering my *deen* would be hindered and I would rather marry somebody who is much more dedicated to the religion and is following it correctly. Recently, my cousin took divorce from her husband because his family lied to her family saying that the guy was very well educated and works a well reputed job in one of the good companies there but after marriage it turned out that he failed his 10th grade and never worked in his life and was ready to depend on her income, and later his parents asked her to leave her job as well. She questioned them on how would they survive and they told they do not know however they want her to leave working as well. They were also abusive. Another cousin of mine also got recently married and her in laws also lied about the guy while the guy is not even ready to speak to the bride, they got them married on lies. It is just sad and scary, I think. So, this is normalized there - abusing, lying, beating, then divorcing. I will not say every Muslim household but most of them." (F21).

"Tinder and other general apps are not a good fit because people are registered for the purpose of dating people or having sexual relationships. It is hard to find someone I want to marry" (M2).

“My impression of dating apps is that they introduce you to strange shops and sometimes rip you off, and there are some shady things in the news, so I don't use them” (M3).

“I do not know what kind of person would be good as a marriage partner. I am still unsure. I have not found any criteria yet. I think it is best to start with friends. Like going out to eat together in a group. However, I have not thought about marriage. My mother says she will introduce me to people, but I always refuse. I want to decide for myself. I try not to look at their profiles. I feel bad about refusing. Why not at least looking at their photos? They introduce me, but I refused. My parents were okay with it as long as the partner is a Muslim. I do not know what criteria other people use to choose a partner” (M4).

“I should talk to my friends and people I trust. If I know someone personally, I ask for him to introduce someone to me. When I need marriage counseling, is it possible Chiba Islamic Cultural Center (CICC) introduce someone I can trust?” (M7).

“I used the matchmaking apps chat, but I could not understand the other person very well” (M12).

4.3.4 Summary

In the case of Muslim marriage seekers living in Japan, the current situation is that even if they try to find a Muslim marriage partner on their own, but they cannot. First, it is difficult to find a Muslim who has intention to marry, and their options are extremely limited because the number of Muslims is very small. Second, even if they find Muslim

marriage seekers on an individual basis, they are concerned about whether their partners can be trusted or not and they would rather avoid marriage risks. In the past, the communities provided some form of guarantee against the risks. But, when the responsibility falls on individual, there is a strong tendency to avoid the risks, which are the risks of family problems after marriage. Third, in order to reduce the risks, it is a good idea to research their partner carefully before marriage, but free personal relationships are prohibited under Islamic law. What is more, there is also a psychology at work that makes Muslim marriage seekers want to spend as little effort and money as possible before getting married. In other words, they need someone to find some reliable Muslim marriage seekers for them without requiring much effort or money. In short, the research found that the Muslim marriage seekers need halal matchmaking services to overcome three main challenges: a rarity of Muslims as a user of the Japanese matchmaking services, time and money consuming efforts, and anxiety for marriage due to the lack of trust or assurance of individualistic marriage compared to that of communal marriages.

4.4 CONDUCTING THE HALAL MATCHMAKING EVENT

Twenty people (10 men and 10 women) out of forty-three people were selected according to fluency of Japanese language, age, and education and invited to the halal matchmaking event on 21 August 2022. The twenty selected nationalities were 8 Japanese (3 male and 5 females), 5 Indonesians (3 males and 2 females), 2 Malaysians, and 5 others (Bangladeshi, Canadian, Chinese, Egyptian and Syrian) (Table 4.17). Most of them (85.0 %) had an undergraduate or postgraduate degree (Table 4.18). Half of them (55.0 %) had less than 4 million yen and more than 2 million yen (Table 4.19). According to the Statistical Survey of Private Sector Salaries 2021 by the National Tax Agency of Japan, the average annual income for those aged 25-29 years old was 3.7 million yen, and 4.1 million yen for those aged 30-34 years old. 70.0 % of the participants were company employees. The average age of the participants was 31.4.

Table 4.17 Coding of the Event Participants (n = 20)

Code	Gender	Nationality	Age	Code	Gender	Nationality	Age
F1	Female	Japanese	25	M1	Male	Japanese	27
F2	Female	Indonesian	26	M2	Male	Indonesian	29
F3	Female	Chinese	28	M3	Male	Malaysia	30
F4	Female	Japanese	29	M4	Male	Indonesian	29
F5	Female	Indonesian	30	M5	Male	Syrian	30
F6	Female	Canadian	33	M6	Male	Japanese	32
F7	Female	Japanese	37	M7	Male	Bangladeshi	33
F8	Female	Japanese	37	M8	Male	Malaysian	33
F9	Female	Egyptian	37	M9	Male	Indonesian	27
F10	Female	Japanese	37	M10	Male	Japanese	38
Average Age			31.9	Average Age			30.8

Table 4.18 Education Background of the Event Participants (n = 20)

Gender / Education	High School (General)	High School (Vocational)	Junior College	University (Undergraduate)	University (Postgraduate)
Male	2	0	0	5	3
Female	0	0	1	5	4
Sub Total	2	0	1	10	7
Grand Total	20				

Table 4.19 Annual Income Amount of the Event Participants (n = 20)

Gender / Japanese Yen	0-2 million	2-4 million	4-6 million	6-8 million	Over 8 million
Male	0	6	3	1	0
Female	3	5	2	0	0
Sub Total	3	11	5	1	0
Grand Total	20				

All 20 participants selected attended the halal matchmaking event at the Halal Café of Chiba Islamic Cultural Center (CICC) on 21 August 2022. Four people per table, one male pair and one female pair, sit together and talked freely for 20 minutes each table (Figure 4.3). However, there was no sharing of personal information such as names, phone numbers, email addresses, social media, homepages, blogs, and current addresses. All the twenty participants were recognised by number. Each participant was given two sheets of own profiles to pass to the opposite gender in front of them (they collect their own profiles at the end of the meeting). Male pairs rotated through all five tables so that all male and female participants could meet and talk each other (Figure 4.4a and 4.4b). At the end of the halal matchmaking event, everyone should select not more than three participants out of ten opposite gender whom he or she would like to have another conversation and write the numbers down on a paper and give it back to the researcher (i.e. matchmaker) before they leave. In short, this halal matchmaking event is composed of five elements in this particular research;

- 1) Muslims
- 2) Intention of marriage
- 3) No physical contact between opposite gender
- 4) Two opposite genders should not stay alone in a closed space
- 5) Contactable information (i.e. telephone number, email, social media accounts, and website) should not be shared between the opposite gender in the event.

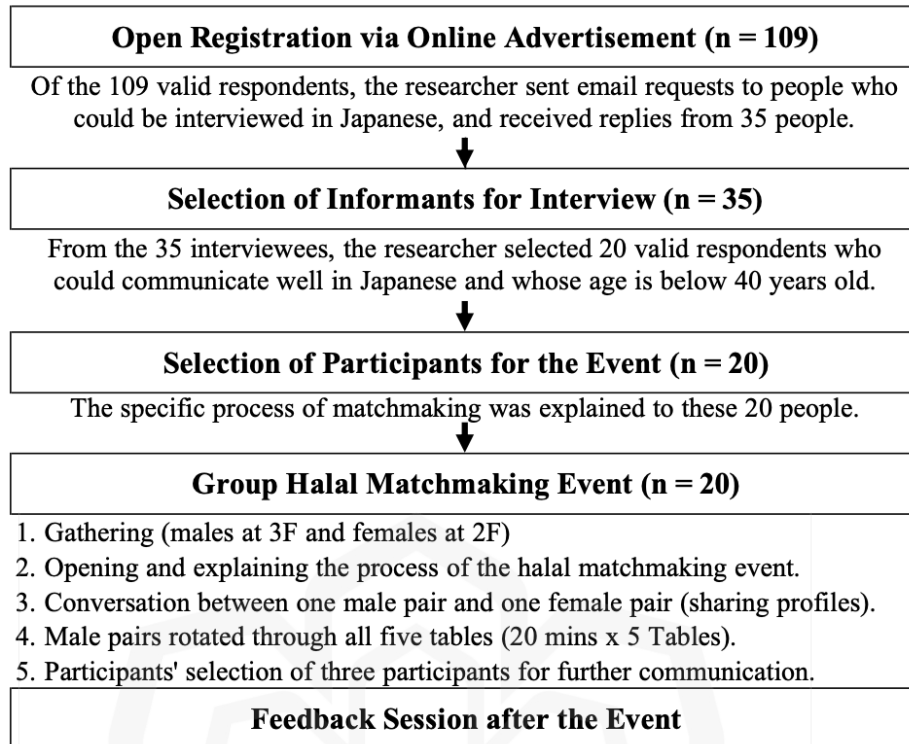


Figure 4.3 Process of Selecting Informants and Participants

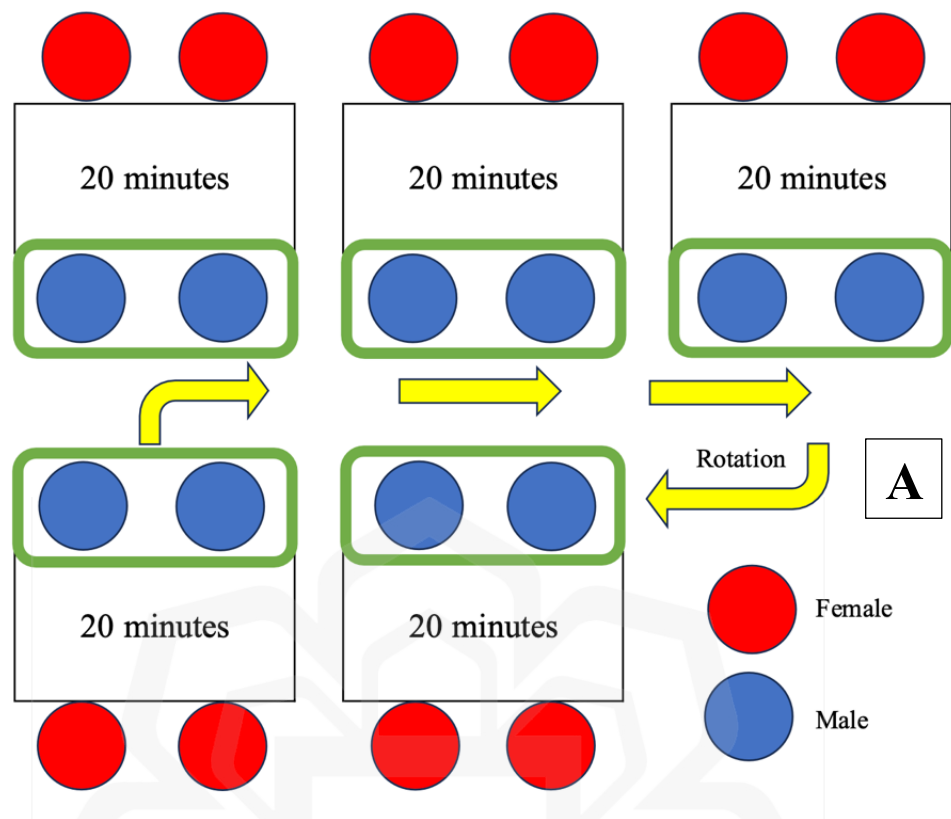


Figure 4.4 a) Halal Matchmaking Rotation Diagram, b) Photo of the Halal Café (Matchmaking Venue) in CICC

4.5 SEMI-STRUCTURED IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW: AFTER HALAL MATCHMAKING EVENT

4.5.1 Interview Purpose

It is to analyse the experiences of the Muslim marriage seekers in Japan who actually joined to the halal matchmaking event at Chiba Islamic Cultural Center (CICC).

4.5.2 Interview Overview

- (1) Participants: Of the 35 interviewees, 20 participants were selected according to fluency of Japanese language and invited to the halal matchmaking event on 21 August 2022 at CICC, Japan. Their nationalities were 8 Japanese (3 male and 5 females), 5 Indonesians (3 males and 2 females), 2 Malaysians, and 5 others (Bangladeshi, Canadian, Chinese, Egyptian, Syrian) (Table 17).
- (2) Method: In-depth interview
- (3) Interview period: 22 August, 2022 to 10 September 2022

4.6 IMPRESSIONS OF THE HALAL MATCHMAKING EVENT

4.6.1 Main Themes

Theme 1: Good experience and learning. The majority of the participants had not had a deep conversation about marriage with a person of the opposite gender before the event. Therefore, the experience of this event and learning was highly valued even though many of them could not find ideal candidates.

“Of course, it was a great experience, and that was a really good thing, and the same goes for the men, but I think it was also a great thing to be able to hear a variety of opinions from women who want to get married.” (F1).

“It was very good. After talking with the ladies around me, I realised that there were some things that I thought were so true. Personally, I have never had an experience to get together with people who are seriously thinking about getting married and talk to each other, so as we talked, I became clear about what I wanted to do and what I was looking for. I am glad I did” (F2).

“It was a very good experience” (F3).

“It was great experience because I was able to meet a lot of people at once and get to know women friends too” (F4).

“It was a lot of fun. Thank you very much” (F5).

“I think it was good” (F6) .

“It was fun” (F8).

“It was very, very good. Overall, I learned for the first time that there are so many Muslims who are seriously thinking about getting married and for example, someone came even from Osaka” (F9).

“Well, yes, the event was good” (M2).

“Well, I think it was good overall” (M4).

“I think it was good” (M5).

“First of all, let me conclude by saying that it was a really great event. *Mashallah*. I could tell that everyone I met, including both male and female participants, were really kind and very dedicated to finding a partner. It makes me wonder why I have never seen a marriage activity event like this before. *Mashallah*, I hope events like this continue to be held” (M6)

“The good thing is that I was looking for a serious partner and I was able to clearly tell her what I actually cared about. Not in a vague way. I was keeping that in my mind. Personally, I learned a lot from listening to women’s opinions on how women look for partners. I do not really have an experience to find out what kind of partner women are looking for. Since this was my first experience, there is no Muslim organisation yet that can help women who are more than 35 years old and have no partner in Japan” (M7).

“In general, people are looking for a partner, and some people are really thinking about marriage. There were also people who were looking for friends first and then something more. It did not feel like they were just playing around. I think this halal matchmaking event was a good thing that they were looking for someone seriously” (M8).

“I think the feedback was good” (M9).

“To be honest, it was fun. I also made some friends, and although it may have been a little different from what I was aiming for, I was able to communicate with my seniors who were studying Islam first. Besides the mosque in Meguro, I have only been to a mosque in Fussa, but I have also been to Chiba, so that was also a good experience, and I learned a lot from it. This may be off topic, but I think it was fun, and I also had fun talking to a lot of people for the first time in a while. Well, it was good, and the time was just right. If it was longer than that, there would be a lot of silence, but if it was shorter than that, I might not be able to understand it. Well, maybe I was lucky. It was easy to talk to the guy I was paired with because we were really compatible, but I also got the feeling that depending on the pair, there might be a lot of silence. I was glad to see others and have a chance to talk” (M10).

Theme 2: Good management and halal environment. Most of the participants found value in halal and efficient event management, as they chose a method that was both halal and cost less time, effort and money.

“I thought that 20 minutes was a bit short, but considering the total time spent talking with 10 men and 10 women, I think it was just right and I did not feel tired.” (F4).

“I think 20 minutes was just right. Conversation was neither too long nor too short. I thought it might be difficult to understand others without disclosing any personal information, but surprisingly, I was still able to get the information of the others, so I think it turned out well” (F7).

“I wanted a break. 20 minutes was just right for one table. Sometimes it was too short when I could not speak well. It was just right for the first time. I wanted a break” (F9).

“I am extremely satisfied with my impression of this matchmaking event. In a word, excellent. It was very good. I knew that the participants had been interviewed beforehand and I knew that they would be a solid group of people, but they were more solid than I expected. Everyone had their own thoughts and opinions, and they spoke them clearly, so it was easy to imagine what it would be like to be matched with these participants. (F10)

“Matchmaking events for Muslims are amazing, and I have a lot of friends who live in Japan who are struggling with finding a Muslim partner, and some of them who are younger than me and are half-Pakistani. However, there are many people who have relationships that are not halal, and my parents’ generation also gave birth to children in non-halal relationships. So, I am caught in the middle. It is quite a fitnah. I am called as a second-generation Muslim in Japan, but the teachings of Islam fade gradually away as generations pass. It is difficult for us to date a Muslim woman and have a nikah. It is really difficult. *Mashallah, Barakallah, Takabbalallah*. This matchmaking event was great. I am going to make dua.” (M1).

“I felt very good. It was good. I have not quite figured it out in my head yet, but first of all, setting the time is 20 minutes at a time, which is perfect for me. It was just the right amount of time for me to get to know the others. It was great to have a matchmaker (the researcher) in the event as an administrator or rather as an organiser. The time keeping also helped me. It was extremely helpful in the meeting. *Alhamdulillah*. It was also pretty good to have that seating arrangement so that I could see the other groups too. I felt good. The other good thing was that all the women and men were Muslims, which was really great, and it was a Muslim Islamic space where I could meet and talk with the women within halal limits. I do not know much about *shari’ah*, but I think it is within the limits of *shari’ah*, and within that, it was a form of arranged marriage in a halal manner.” (M1).

“The atmosphere was very easy to participate in, and even though time was limited, everyone was able to communicate and talk, looking back on it now. Also, the personal information of the participants was well controlled, which made it easy to ask questions while referring to it, which I thought was a good thing. Regarding the venue, since it was my first time here, I think it was also nice. I think the number of participants was also appropriate” (M3).

4.6.2 Summary

We received feedback from participants who experienced the halal matchmaking event. Two themes emerged in particular. The first was “good experience and learning.” In other words, the event provided the participants with an opportunity to have serious conversations about marriage between male and female Muslims. The other was “good management and halal environment.” The participants appreciated that the event allowed men and women to talk about marriage in a halal way. They were able to talk to many people of the opposite gender efficiently while concealing personal information.

4.7 CHALLENGES OF HALAL MATCHMAKING EVENT

4.7.1 Main Themes

Theme 1: The participants did not have good ideas of what to ask for the other gender. Many participants felt that they should have asked more meaningful and appropriate questions than the standard questions written on their profiles. The majority of participants, who have never actually been married except for a few divorced people, had little idea of the problems they may face in real married life. Therefore, they do not know what to check in a marriage partner.

“I wish there were recommended questions. The questions asked during these 20 minutes will allow for free talk. I do not know what to ask” (F3).

“My impression is that it was good. It was very good. I thought that the people who would come would be reliable because they had interviewed them properly beforehand, but they were even more reliable than I thought. Everyone had their own thoughts and opinions, and they spoke about them clearly, so it was really easy to imagine what it would be like if I were matched with this person. The number of people was just right, and if there had been more than 10 people, I wouldn't be able to remember them all. So, I think the number of people was just right, and it was good. In that sense, I think that it was a big deal that they interviewed people properly beforehand. What they interviewed and screened out was” (F10).

“The topics we talked about were, where to start when abroad, what is the idea of marriage, and when it comes to Japanese people, the last table I was at, the last two people were Japanese, so we ended up talking about the reasons for conversion. On the contrary, it was not a more casual and relaxed conversation” (M8).

“In terms of things, I could improve on myself, I did not think much about the content of the talk or the questions I was going to ask beforehand, so I ended up asking the usual questions. I feel that the people at the end of the turn were getting tired of each other, and the next pair of questions kept asking the same questions until the fifth pair, so the pair next to them knew and were asking the same questions. From the third pair onwards, it seemed like my pair was starting to sag. There was a profile on paper and it is also necessary. There are some people who take this as information, but I think it is difficult to expand the conversation if that is all I have, and if I ask them about their hobbies right then and there, it would take a lot of time. I think some people are unable to think the content of the questions according to language proficiency. There was no information about the Japanese language proficiency test, so I was wondering how much conversation I could have. I felt like I could not talk about that lineage, or that I

would not be able to ask the question if it was taken with the opposite nuance. Maybe I am overthinking it myself, but it seems like it is easier for me to talk when the other person is talking, but when it comes to people or group who start from silence, especially in the last group, there was long silence first, and only one woman was talking, and the other Japanese person was not talking, and as expected, the pair was not talking either, and they did not talk at all” (M10).

Theme 2: Difficulties to establish quality conversations. Those who are good at talking could monopolise the conversation. The participants chose marriage candidates not simply because they felt matching through conversations but because they could not talk each other at all as others monopolised conversations and time allocation for each table was too short. So, some people requested to multiple rounds. Some of them felt more nervous if they should talk one to one. Other problem with having one-on-one conversations is that some people are too shy to have conversations. In addition, the conversation is greatly influenced by the personalities and abilities of the pair. They cannot know the other person’s true nature in this short period. There is no enough time to ask deep questions.

“However, there is a small improvement point. The four of us talked in a 2-2 format at first, and I thought that we would talk for 20 minutes, but the woman next to me seemed to think that we would talk 1-1. I asked the two men, but I ended up talking to the one next to me, so I could not talk to the first person, number 12, at all. After that, I thought that it was a good idea to talk with the four of us, and she seemed to think that we would talk 1-1, so I think she could not talk to some people. I felt sorry to interrupt in the middle of the conversation, so I kept quiet. But that was also an experience. I thought it was really good to have all kinds of people. This is my personal opinion, but it was 20 minutes for four people, and I thought that I wanted to talk to that person again, so I thought that it might be good to talk with the four of us for 10 minutes and do it twice. After it was over, I felt like, Oh, I forgot to ask this at that time. Since none of us were familiar with the topic, it felt like we would end up just introducing ourselves. On

the other hand, if it had been a short time and we were on the second lap, we might have thought, "Oh, I'll tell this person this next time" (F1).

"We all talked about how it would be better to have it two times 10 minutes sessions, instead of just one 20-minute session. I said it like this the first time, but I wanted to dig a little deeper the second time, so I think that is true" (F2).

"In my case, I talked about casual things and wondered if I did not get to ask the important stuff, but some girls were already asking me bluntly about what points they value in a marriage partner. When I used a matchmaking app before, I thought that if you choose based too much on conditions, you will end up with a lot of people you do not get along with, so this time I talked to them without thinking about that, but then I ended up feeling like that person was not right after all, so I only talked about casual things because I did not want to make things awkward after we got married, and I was only interested in whether they were easy to talk to. Listening to other girls' stories, I realised that I should have asked them what they value in marriage. The 20 minutes went by pretty quickly" (F4).

"I think that it might be difficult to ask questions about marriage in this setting, and sometimes we only had 20 minutes to ask questions and talk as friends. So, you might be a little worried. You might be a little worried about when to ask important questions. In the first rotation, I asked questions from a friend's perspective, and if there was a second rotation, I might be able to ask more in-depth questions" (F5).

"There were five groups, and everyone in the first group was a little nervous, so, well, if I were to look back, I think I would have asked different questions or given different answers. With the last group, everyone and I were so tired, I asked a few questions, but conversation-wise, the second, third, and fourth conversations were probably more natural. I was nervous at the beginning and the end. If there is a future event, I have spoken to other women, but, if possible, I would like to have a chance to

have a first round of conversation with the same members and then a second round of conversation” (F6).

“It was long. I was tired. I wanted a break. 20 minutes at one table was just right. Sometimes it was too short when I could not speak well. It was just right for the first time. I definitely want a break. It was really noisy. I do not know why they were getting so excited, but I was like an old lady who cannot hear, and I kept asking, what is going on? and what is going on?” and the people in the hall behind us were really excited, so I wish they could have reduced the number of people a little, and it would have been better if they could have reduced the voices. It was really noisy. It felt like we were talking at a wedding” (F9).

“After that, we had five groups, and everyone in the first group was a little nervous, so, well, if I were to look back, I think I would have asked different questions or given different answers. For the last group, everyone and I were tired, so I asked a few questions, but conversation-wise, the second, third, and fourth conversations were probably more natural. I was nervous at the beginning and the end. If there is an event in the future, I have consulted with other women, but, if possible, I would like to have a chance to have a first round of conversation with the same members and a second round of conversation. At first, the 20 minutes was either short or long, but sometimes, the 20 minutes were over, but sometimes, the conversation was a bit, Ah, I guess so, hmm, and sometimes, hmm, two women, two men, sometimes, hmm, if another member, ah, there are two men, and they are interested in one of them, if the other man next to them asks a question, the interested man doesn't have much time, but if it was one person, it would be a bit tense, but if it was two people, the time might end quickly. I don't know what it's like, hmm, first two people for the same amount of time, and then round 2 is one person at a time? Maybe?” (M1).

“It is one-on-one, but there's someone next to me. They are not actually participating in the discussion, but just knowing that they are there makes it feel like they're there. I like that feeling” (M4).

“It may be difficult to talk with four people. (Man and woman) I think two people is better. I do not know who will talk and who will listen. When we all talk, it's hard to hear each other” (M5).

“I participated in this with a friend, and after the event, we were talking, and we both had a common opinion that we should not monopolize the other person, and I personally felt that my partner had a tendency to do that. It was not every time, but in one group of two people, I found it difficult to ask a question, or, well, that is a bit much, that person talked for 10 minutes straight, and as a result, there was no time at all, so we had to move on to the next person. So, the solution is not to do this one by one, since it is 20 minutes among the four of us, it would be good if everyone actually did it so that they don't monopolize the time, and another thing that happened to me was that when a woman asked a question, I was so busy answering it that I could not talk to the other person at all, which certainly happened to me a little. So, it's 20 minutes, but it is 10 minutes, 10 minutes, one-on-one, and even if you are at the same table, I think it is possible to talk to one person for 10 minutes and then talk to the person next to you for another 10 minutes” (M6).

“It was the last table, and we had rotated between the four tables, so I was tired of talking. The person next to me became friends with me, so we started chatting away. It depends on who you pair up with” (M8).

“I really think it is great that there are so many different types of people. This is just my personal opinion, but we were four people and it was 20 minutes, and I thought

I would have liked to talk to that person again, so I thought it might be good to have four people talk for 10 minutes and do that twice” (M10).

Theme 3: Need to group by age, marital status, and language categories. If participants are not divided into groups based on specific attributes, some of them will be excluded from the start as potential marriage partners when holding a matchmaking event.

“I felt that one of the suggestions would be to separate those who will marry first time and those who have already been married in matchmaking.” (F8).

“It is best to ask for the age difference, and it may be difficult to create a quota for the number of people in the event, but it might be a good idea to have a quota based on age. Some people may think that since people who are so far apart in age are not the target audience in the first place, it is a waste of time to talk to them. Maybe a five-year age difference would be a good thing. Personally, I think it would be better to write down the month you were born as well” (F9).

“In my opinion, I think it would be better to break it down into categories next time. I think it would be better to have age restrictions, such as under 30 years old, international marriage only, remarriage only” (M2).

“It seems like everyone (the female participants) are older than me. We were about 10 years apart, so there were not many choices. I really do not like older people. I have experienced it many times, but I think being older makes them feel like a senior” (M9).

“Everyone was good at Japanese, but I had no information about the Japanese Language Proficiency Test, I wondered how much I could talk to them in Japanese. Just like Japanese people can understand simple English, but not high-level English, if they have a Japanese Language Proficiency Test result, for example, N1, I thought I could use some difficult words. In my case, I looked at the educational background, everyone had graduated, I thought they could speak, but if not good at Japanese, it would be bad if some words would be taken a little differently, it would be troublesome if it was taken with the opposite nuance, so I could not ask some questions. I like Indonesian language group, I can jump in the Indonesian group, the matchmaking was fun. Thank you” (M10).

4.7.2 Summary

There were three main themes that emerged through the interviews. First, the participants did not have good ideas of what to ask for the other gender. In other words, the participants had not experienced an opportunity for men and women to talk seriously about marriage, and had not experienced marriage itself, so they were unclear about what to ask. Second, the participants felt difficult to establish a quality conversation. This was because certain people dominated the group conversation, and other people were not able to ask what they wanted to ask within the time limit. Third, the participants believed that they needed to be grouped by age, marital experience, and language. These are the minimum condition for matching, they will filter the candidates from the beginning.

4.8 DISCUSSION

Regarding demographic information, the following tendencies were found to be the main characteristics of those who felt the need for the halal matchmaking services. The majority of the registered Muslims were from Indonesia, Japan, and Malaysia, and many

of them were women, who tended to be more highly educated, have higher annual incomes, and were older than their male counterparts. In terms of age, the largest number of needs were from 26 to 35 years old for both men and women, and although there were some divorced people, the vast majority was first-time marriage. Most of them were religious, offering prayers five times a day, wearing hijab among the women, and neither drinking nor smoking.

One of the reasons for the large number of Indonesian participants is that Indonesians are the largest Muslim population in Japan. Pakistani and Bangladeshi are overwhelmingly more numerous than Japanese and Malaysian nationalities. But they refrained from participating in the group halal matchmaking event probably because the tradition of families arranging marriage partners for their sons and daughters remains stronger even today in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

One possible reason why there were twice as many female registrants as male registrants is that, unlike males, females have time limits for pregnancy and childbirth. Usually, women attain menopause between the ages of 48 and 52 years (Shankam et al., 2018). When they delay marriage, it will be a high risk that their bodies will become unable to have children. According to IBJ (2023), Japan's largest matchmaking service company, time is so valuable for women who are looking for marriage. It has been pointed out that women who want to have children in near future, in particular, begin to feel more anxious about getting married in their late 20s. As there is an earlier time limit for women to get pregnant and give birth, they tend to have a higher need or more desires to get married than men.

On the other hand, the men can produce healthy sperm until 60 years of age before the sperm count begins to go down (Lashkari, 2019). They do not have urgency to have children. Also, because men have a financial obligation to support women and their families, they tend to put off the decision to get married if they are not financially stable. This is why it is thought that there were fewer male registrants than female

registrants. Arakawa (2019) pointed out that in the marriage market, the number of female marriage seekers tends to be greater than the number of male ones. His research in Japan found that women between the ages of 20 and 39 have a higher desire (need) to get married than men. In terms of gender differences, women between the ages of 25 and 29 years old have a 16% higher desire than men to get married. Though the absolute number of unmarried men is more than 3.4 million people (aged between 20 to 50), women outnumber them in terms of their desire to get married.

The researcher found a high need for the halal matchmaking event among older women with higher education and incomes. In Islam, the husband is the leader of the family. The husband may feel that he is unable to assume leadership roles because the wife may be more educated or has a higher income. Also, men may prefer younger women because they are more likely to give birth to more children in their lifetime. On the other hand, the young women were less likely to register for the halal matchmaking event in this research probably because they may think that it is too early to get married. However, many women may miss their chance to get married while they are pursuing a high career or income, and by the time they realize it, they may find it difficult to find a suitable spouse later.

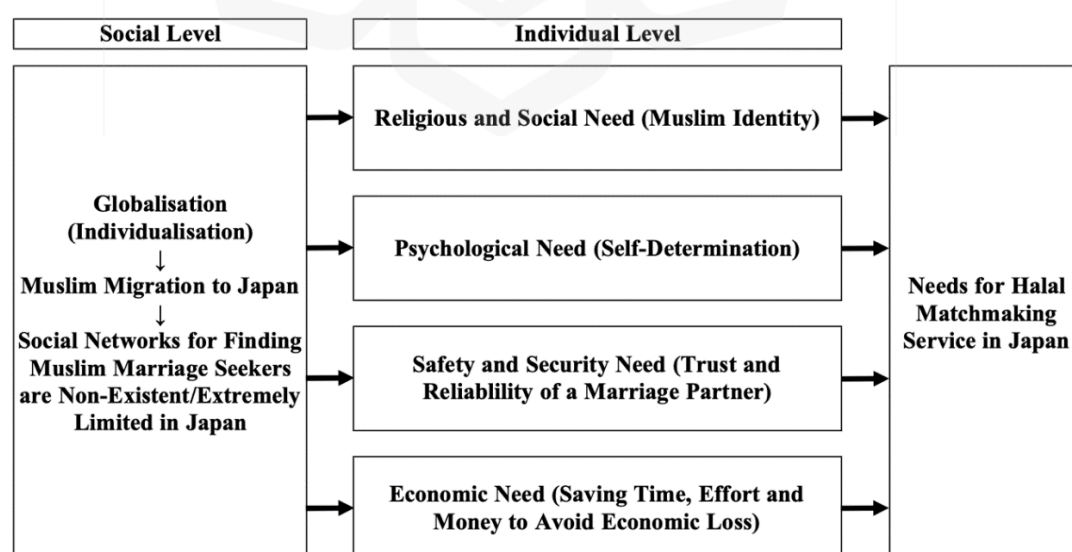


Figure 4.5 Needs Structure of Halal Matchmaking Services

The structure of needs for halal matchmaking services can be understood at both social and individual levels (Figure 4.5). The social background to the needs for halal matchmaking services is globalisation and the resulting increase in Muslim immigrants in Japan. Globalisation refers to “deepening of economic ties around the world through increased movement of capital and labor across national borders, increased exchange of goods and services through trade, and increased overseas investment” (Cabinet Office of Japan, 2004). Deepening of economic ties means that people, money, goods, and information (knowledge) move on a global scale in pursuit of maximizing / optimising benefits. This increases the number of options available globally that inevitably leads to individualisation as individuals think and act rationally in their own ways, thinking there may be better options. As a result of rational choices based on the economic and educational benefits of living in Japan rather than in their own country, the number of Muslim immigrants in Japan is increasing recently. Since most of them came from overseas, social networks of their parents and relatives are absent or extremely limited. They intend to live in Japan for a long time and are familiar with the Japanese language and culture. Even if their parents introduce them to potential marriage partners from their own countries, they are not compatible because they do not understand Japanese language and culture. This is consistent with the findings of the previous study made by Sotoudeh et al. (2017). In other words, the reason why the Muslim immigrants use the internet to find a future marriage partner is that the informal social networks of parents and relatives exist in Muslim-majority countries are almost absent in the non-Muslim majority countries such as Japan. Japanese Muslim converts usually have non-Muslim parents and relatives, they have no choice but to find a Muslim marriage partner through their Muslim friends or by themselves. However, even in this study, the interviewees agreed to introduce their potential spouse to their parents and get their permission before getting married as mentioned by Nisa (2021). This research confirmed the fact that there is individualisation resulting from risk aversion, rather than complete individualism.

The individual-level need structure revealed in this research included not only religious (social) needs and psychological (self-determination) needs as revealed in previous studies, but also safety and security needs and economic needs. First, the reason why the rarity of encounters with Muslim marriage seekers is a problem is

because Muslims have a religious (and social) need to marry other Muslims. This is consistent with the results of previous research by Kubo (2015, 2009). Second, the Muslim registrants in this research tried to find a marriage partner on their own or through friends without relying much on their parents and relatives. This is consistent with the psychological need for self-determination revealed by Billaud (2019) and De Rooij (2016). Rochadiat et al. (2018) showed that American Muslim women use online dating sites because of increasing agency (personal freedom) to control over selective self-presentation and strategic self-disclosures in their online dating. Indeed, fourteen Muslims selected for in-depth interviews in this research used matchmaking apps. However, many of the Muslim women in this research experienced excessive messages from men, which was irritating and exhausting. At the time of the interviews, none of them were using the apps any more. This is not only due to the problem of fake personal information in websites and online apps (safety and security need) that was revealed in previous studies (Rochadiat et al., 2018; Sotoudeh et al., 2017; Al-Saggaf, 2013), but also the problem of app fatigue. Previous studies have pointed out the phenomenon of “risk-averse individualisation” (Rajkai, 2016). It means, when individuals make a rational choice regarding a marriage partner, their risk aversive feeling increases. Similar results were obtained in this research. When individuals search for an ideal marriage partner, they spend time, effort, and money to ascertain the other people’s personalities and compatibilities. This research also found the fact that Muslim marriage seekers have a rational choice to reduce these economic losses associated with marriage matchmaking as much as possible. Halal matchmaking services, by using matchmakers as intermediaries, were seen to meet this need for safety and security as well as economic needs to some extent. In other words, the key to a halal matchmaking service is that it is handled by a trustworthy Muslim matchmaker. The Muslim marriage seekers want the matchmakers to find them a reliable Muslims who meet their criteria of compatibility, without requiring much time, effort or money. However, in reality, there is no such a convenient service today.

The Qur’an, which Muslims believe to be the primary source of law, describes how to avoid human risks when looking for an ideal marriage partner. For example, the marriage story of Prophet Musa gives us some insights. When Musa came to the well

in Madyan, he saw two women having difficulties watering their livestock (Surah al-Qasas 28:23). Musa helped them water their livestock. This means a volunteer work, which is useful to others. Musa did not ask for any reward from them for his help, but only for Allah (Surah al-Qasas 28:24). This is *tawakkul* (trusting Allah). Then he found not only a job but also a marriage partner. First, he got a recommendation from the woman. “One of the women said, O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy” (Surah al-Qasas 28:26). Their father promised to give one of his daughters to Musa on the condition that he will work for him for eight years. To them, Musa is only a stranger. He cannot be trusted at first. That is why they want know him after seeing how he actually works for eight years. Their father said, “Indeed, I wish to wed you one of these, my two daughters, on [the condition] that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be [as a favor] from you. And I do not wish to put you in difficulty. You will find me, if Allah wills, from among the righteous.” (Surah al-Qasas 28:27). Therefore, when foreigners suddenly visit a masjid in Japan and requests Japanese person for marriage, the masjid does not know the real personality of that person. The masjid cannot introduce such a person because the masjid should be responsible when problems arise after marriage. Of course, even if the foreigners agree in advance in writing that the masjid will not be responsible for introduction, it may anyway create problems. It is therefore important for Muslims to foster trust among people by engaging in volunteer activities that are useful to others on a daily basis. This spirit of volunteer work is considered to relate to a spirit of his cooperation in housework and child-rearing when they actually get married. In fact, most of the participants in this research said that desired percentage of household chore to be shared by the couple is 50:50 between husband and wife.

This is very similar to the marriage of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). According to Ibn Ishaq’s *Seerah* (Biography of the Prophet) (2010), what the researcher could see from Prophet Muhammad’s marriage to Khadijah is that she assessed his ability to support and his character through his work with her. For example, when Muhammad was in his early 20s, he started working in trading in earnest in order to marry. Then he met the famous Khadijah binti Huwaylid. She was a widow and had already been married twice. She was very wealthy and was looking for a man to go to

Sham to trade. Sham is Greater Syria including the “parts of modern Turkey, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia” (Hadith Answers, 2017). After hearing rumors about Muhammad, Khadijah wanted to hire him. she had to convince Abu Talib, who was against Muhammad’s visit to Sham. She offered to pay double the fee. Abu Talib agreed to let Muhammad go to Sham on the condition that she also bring her bodyguard, Maisarah, and Muhammad agreed. Maisarah reported to Khadijah that she had been impressed by Muhammad’s trustworthy and excellent character during their trade to Sham. A people’s true personality is revealed when they work together, even without marriage. Muhammad had many more trades with Khadijah with similar success. Khadijah became more interested in him and consulted with her cousin, Waraqa bin Nawfal, who encouraged her to propose marriage to him. Khadijah sent a formal proposal of marriage and called Muhammad to meet her family. Muhammad’s first marriage shows the importance of gaining the trust of woman and others through business work.

4.9 STORYLINE

The following storylines can be constructed: Opportunities to meet Muslim marriage seekers are extremely limited in Japan. Even if they use overseas matching apps for Muslims, there are few Muslim marriage seekers living in Japan registered in the apps. Moreover, they do not know the true identity of the people they meet on the apps to find a marriage partner, so it takes time, effort, and money to understand the other person’s true nature. They also put off marriage in the end because they feel a strong risk in deciding for themselves if they can really trust their potential marriage partner. As they have almost no opportunities to meet a halal marriage partner (i.e. a Muslim) in a halal way, they are not so good at conversing with the opposite gender. As the majority of the registrants had no experience of marriage, they do not know what to look for in a marriage partner before getting married. In other words, there are two major challenges that Muslims face when finding a marriage partner: one is to marry a halal partner in a halal manner, and the other is to find a partner who is compatible with them and whom they can trust. Halal matchmaking services are a service that solves the first challenge.

However, in order to solve the second challenge, more Muslim users are needed and Muslim marriage seekers and halal matchmaking service providers need to have knowledge and experience to produce real Muslim matched couples. Continuous follow-up by the matchmakers may also incur costs. In the past, a communal marriage system allowed people to find marriage partners from multiple reliable sources. What is more, there is also a psychology at work that makes people want to spend as little effort and money as possible before getting married. Relatives, friends and senior co-workers served as facilitators and set up marriages for free of charge. When they were going to be introduced to someone to marry, they must be a decent person assumingly to some extent, and matchmakers made sure they had a good connection. It was possible to save money and time by making decisions based on a few dating or without dating. In short, they want someone to find a reliable Muslim marriage seekers who meet their criteria, without requiring much effort or money. However, in reality, there is no such a convenient service today. Muslim marriage seekers should pay service fees for the halal matchmakers to compensate for their time and efforts.

4.10 GUIDELINE FOR FUTURE EVENTS

Group halal matchmaking services are valuable in providing a place where Muslim men and women can discuss marriage in a halal environment. As for future research methods, first, the following points can be raised as ways to improve group halal matchmaking methods.

- 1) Group matchmaking for 20 people (10 male and 10 female) (Figure 5.1).
- 2) All personally identifiable information should not be shared for others in order to avoid *khalwat* and *zina* before engagement and marriage.
- 3) Event participation criteria are to be informed in advance (e.g. age range, living in Japan, language, single status, and intention to marry, etc.)
- 4) Matchmakers should conduct Islamic premarital education and counselling for every participant in the matchmaking event. The marriage counselling needs to be done before the event for filtering the participants according to the criteria.

- 5) Matchmakers should prepare the deep questions according to the finding of this research: When there were many people, there were cases where conversation was occupied by a specific person who started the conversation. They have also no idea what to ask. Therefore, the matchmakers should have prepared questions for the marriage seekers (Figure 5.1).
- 6) Matchmakers should ask same prepared questions equally for all participants at the event to avoid someone monopolising the conversation (Figure 5.1).
- 7) Matchmakers should post the personal profile of the participants on the wall at first. The participants will look it after the group question and answer session are over.
- 8) Each participant answers the same prepared questions and everyone should listen. This way, matchmakers can ask many different questions and avoid unnecessary questions. They can start with casual questions and end with the most important questions to the participants. They have enough time to think about answers and not get tired because there is no pressure to keep their conversation going. They can also listen carefully to others' opinions and there is no noise from another person while talking (Figure 5.1).
- 9) Matchmakers ask five questions in one halal matchmaking event. Each participant should answer in thirty seconds for each question: twenty people can answer one question in ten minutes. The participants can concentrate on listening while others are answering.
- 10) Participants should record the number of other participants of the opposite gender whose answer seems to be compatible with them and pick up three candidate they have a good first impression. (Figure 5.1).
- 11) All participants spend fifteen minutes to look at the brief personal profile or CV posted on the wall after the first session and take a break (Figure 5.1). During this time, the matchmakers will compile the first impression survey and inform the results to each and every participant.
- 12) In the second session, they will proceed to one-on-one interview (Figure 5.2) and again pick up three candidates again they want to have more conversations.
- 13) Matched couples may exchange their contact numbers to chat on the social media under the seamless supervision of the chaperones or matchmakers. They can communicate intensively through online meetings, telephone calls, and social media. It is an important process to get to know each other to discover

real personality of the potential marriage partners. They can call the third person, whether matchmakers or parents or friends, when they want to meet each other in person, in order to avoid *khalwat* and *zina* before engagement and marriage.

14) The matched couples should consult with their parents.

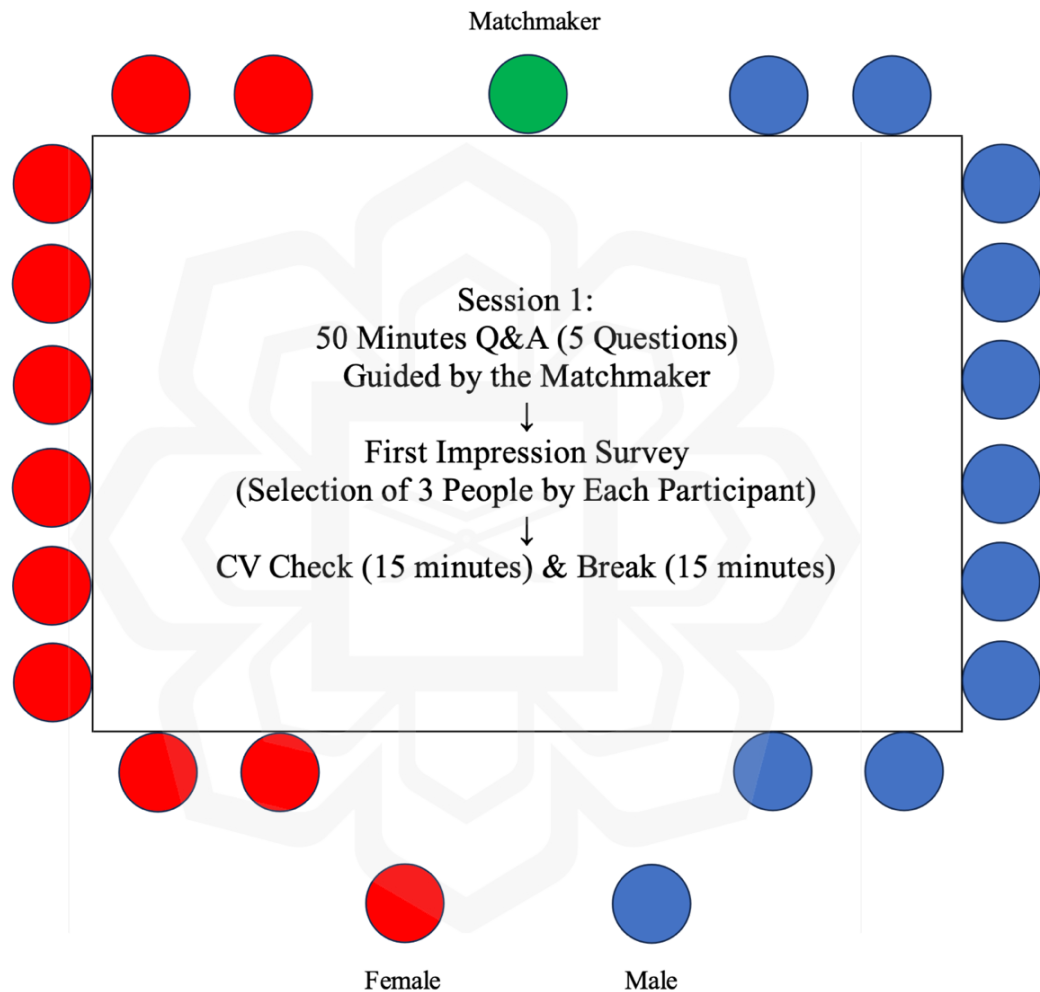


Figure 5.1 Session 1: Group Q&A Session Model Guided by the Matchmaker

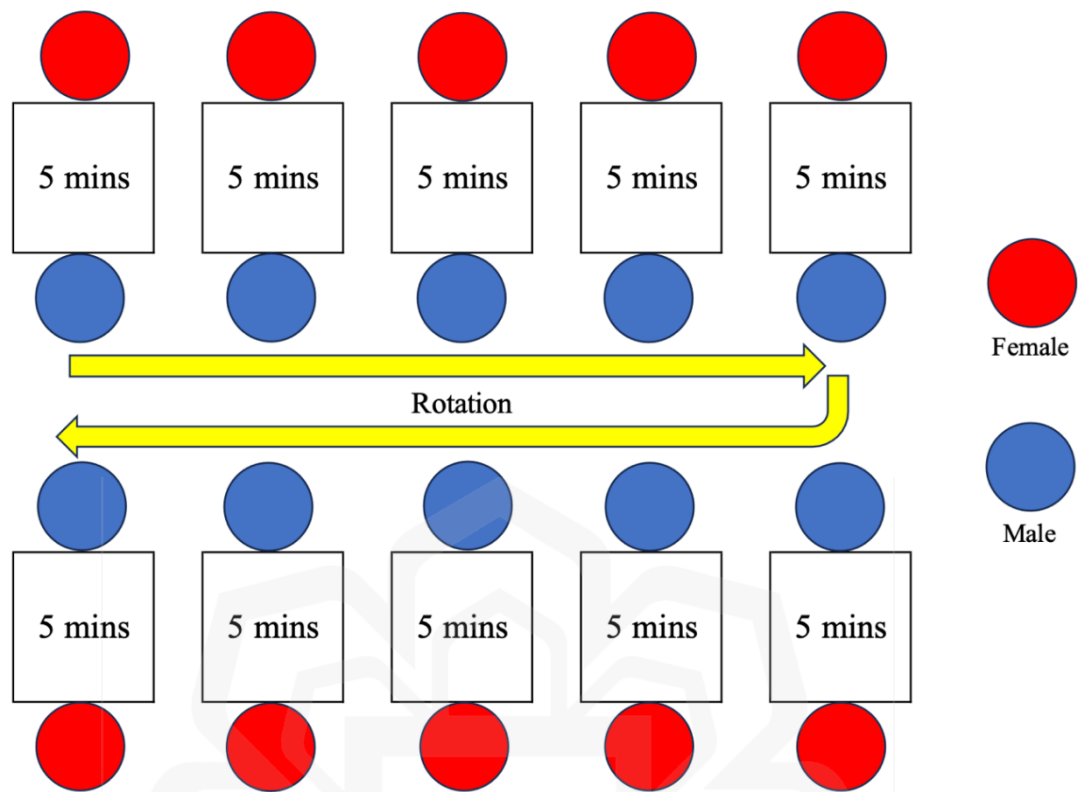


Figure 5.2 Session 2: One to One Interview (5 minutes each) for Second Impression Survey

Secondly, some points should be considered regarding risk avoidance. First, people looking for a marriage partner should be asked to fill out the contact information of multiple people outside of their family who can honestly recommend them. It is desirable for one of them to be a supervisor at workplace or a teacher at the school where they studied in Japan. This is because they closely observe their working and learning attitudes of the people looking for a marriage partner, and they may therefore understand their true personality and ability well. Matchmakers are also encouraged to ask about the volunteer history of the Muslims looking for a marriage partner. Work and volunteer history is important for the reasons discussed in Chapter 4.

Third, the halal matchmaking service providers can appeal to the Muslims' feelings of not wanting to lose. For example, it is recommended to use the message like "You can meet ten opposite genders in a short amount of time!" They can also appeal and emphasise the scarcity and rarity of Muslim marriage seekers. For example, an effective message would be, "You can meet face-to-face with Muslims in Japan who have serious intention to marry!" Jin and Xu (2005) stated that "marriage market is often modeled as a matching process: males and females meet each other randomly and select their spouses based on observed and expected matching quality. Since an individual must spend time and money locating potential options, theorists show that search costs have an adverse effect on the final assignment. In reality, search costs not only depend on the individual value of time and money, but also have deep roots in social norms. Social norms define what search activity is socially acceptable." For many Muslims, marrying a halal marriage partner (i.e. Muslim) in a halal manner is an important social norm, they may use halal matchmaking services even if it means spending time and money on them.

Fourth, the five questions are recommended for matchmakers to ask for the group in the first session. The matchmakers should prioritize questions related to the five objectives of Islamic law and questions that should be checked to avoid risks in marriage. For example, they are related to the questions on 1) telling a lie, 2) intercultural communication issue, 3) domestic violence, 4) strictness in religious matters (level of faith), and 5) finance and job. These five points are especially main concerns that women have about their potential marriage partners. On the other hand, many of the questions that the most registrants want to ask in this research are unrelated to risk avoidance, such as favorite foods and hobbies. In other words, many participants cannot realistically imagine problems in married life; they cannot ask essential questions. Therefore, it is recommended that a matchmaker verbalizes the concerns that the participants have that were identified in the interview session of this study and ask the event participants what they think about them. This will allow them to understand the fundamental value, way of thinking, and problem-solving skills of the event participants.

Last but not the least, it is recommended for the matchmakers to conduct Islamic premarital education and counseling before the events or at the beginning of the events. It should give a right Islamic perspective in marriage and help to form right questions to ask for the opposite gender during matchmaking process. Premarital education also has positive effects on preventing marriage and family related troubles after engagement and marriage (Binti Ali et al, 2020). Marriage counseling can be conducted before and after engagement (additional fee will be needed). It should help to find a suitable partner who is compatible with and whom they can trust. Therefore, parental and community efforts to develop halal matchmaking service are needed for Muslim marriage seekers in Japan.



CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

First, the researcher was unable to collect enough samples from all prefectures in Japan in this study, making it difficult to conduct a wide-ranging analysis. So, he recommends collaborating with many local masjids and Islamic centers across Japan to collect wider samples. Second, the results did not reveal the process from the initial arranged meeting to marriage. Therefore, the researcher recommends conducting in-depth interviews with married Muslims to clarify the detail process by which they came to the decision to get married in Japan. Third, the benefits of individual halal matchmaking services were not known where matchmakers would introduce people one by one. It would be beneficial to examine the method of individual *ta'aruf* model to gain further insights.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The initially stated overarching objective of this research was to analyse the needs of a halal matchmaking service for Muslim marriage in Japan. While recognising the limitations of the analysis, the researcher believes this research has achieved the objective. The researcher has promoted halal matchmaking event on social media of Chiba Islamic Cultural Center and received one hundred and nine registrations from various parts of Japan, and recruited thirty-five registrants for initial in-depth interviews and also selected twenty registrants for actual halal matchmaking. The researcher has first identified the main characteristics of the Muslim marriage seekers who showed a need for the halal matchmaking service in Japan (specific objective 1: Who applied?). The registrants were mainly Indonesian, Japanese and Malaysian, and mostly women who tended to have higher education and income as well as relatively older than men.

The researcher has also analysed the manifest and latent needs of halal matchmaking services among Muslim marriage seekers in Japan (specific objective 2: Why applied?). He also investigated that the Muslim marriage seekers in Japan need halal matchmaking services to overcome three major challenges: a rarity of Muslims as a user of the Japanese matchmaking services, time and money consuming efforts, and anxiety for marriage due to the lack of trust and assurance of individualistic marriage compared to that of communal marriages. The researcher has also analysed the actual experiences of the Muslim marriage seekers who participated in the halal matchmaking event in Japan (specific objective 3: How did you experienced?). This has highlighted the important need, the participants value halal matchmaking services in providing opportunities where Muslim men and women can discuss marriage in a halal environment, which had not previously been prominent in the literature. The researcher has also identified the challenges of the Muslim marriage seekers who joined in the halal matchmaking event in Japan (specific objective 4: How could it be better?). The challenges shape the needs of Muslim marriage seekers. The most of the participants for example have difficulty to hold quality conversations between men and women, especially because they do not know what to ask for opposite gender in terms of marriage. This again confirmed the needs of halal matchmaking services in providing opportunities where Muslim men and women can discuss marriage in a halal environment.

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