



Assessment of Current and Future Status of Date Exports from Iran to Indonesia

Masoumeh Saeid

MASTER'S THESIS
November 2025

International Business Management
24YIBM-A

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Master of International Business Management

Masoumeh Saeid:

Assessment of Current and Future Status of Date Exports from Iran to Indonesia

Master's thesis 68 pages, appendices 1 page November 2025

This Thesis examines the current and future status of Iranian date exports to Indonesia. Indonesia as the target market in this study is the most populous Muslim country in the world, this country is considered as one of the most important halal food markets, and Iran, with its advantage in date production, has a high potential to develop exports to this market. This study aims to examine export trends, identify tariff and non-tariff barriers, and estimate untapped export potential by using data from ITC (International Trade Centre).

This research method was conducted in a mixed manner. In the quantitative part, secondary data on international trade from the ITC and FAO databases were analysed, and in the qualitative part, interviews were conducted with 24 exporters, logistics experts, and relevant officials. The combination of these two approaches has enabled the simultaneous analysis of statistical, institutional, and structural dimensions of exports.

The findings show that Iran's comparative advantage index (RCA) has been above 30 in all years of the study, But Iran's share of the Indonesian date market is small. In addition, Iran's date export potential is about \$46 million by 2029, while Iran has only utilized about 5 percent of its potential capacity in 2023.

Qualitative analyses showed that complex halal certification requirements, cumbersome administrative and international banking sanctions and processes, lack of appropriate logistics infrastructure, poor packaging and branding, and lack of awareness of Indonesian consumer tastes are among the most important barriers to export development. In contrast, increasing demand for products that are halal, the growth of online food markets, and the possibility of concluding bilateral trade agreements with Indonesia are important opportunities for expanding Iran's date exports.

Key words: Date exports, Iran, Indonesia, Revealed comparative advantage, non-tariff barriers, export potential, halal trade

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	5
	1.1. Research Objectives	7
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	9
	2.1. Introduction	9
	2.2. Theoretical foundations	10
	2.3. Dates Production and Export Status	13
	2.4. Indonesian Market	15
	2.5. Data-driven export analysis tools	19
3	METHODOLOGY	21
	3.1. Research Design	21
	3.2. Data Sources	22
	3.3. Analytical Framework	25
4	RESEARCH RESULTS	27
	4.1. Date Production and export trends in Iran and the world	27
	4.2. Iran's Share in Indonesia's Date Import Market	28
	4.3. Major Competitors of Iran in Indonesia's Date Import Market	30
	4.4. Revealed Comparative Advantage of Iranian Dates	31
	4.5. Export Potential Map Output	32
	4.6. Market Access Map Results	33
	4.7. Analysis of Qualitative data (interviews)	35
	4.8. Extracted Themes and Detailed Analysis	38
	4.9. Combining quantitative and qualitative findings	40
	4.10. SWOT Analysis	43
5	DISCUSSION	47
	5.1. Discussion and interpretation of findings	47
	5.2. Recommendations	50
	5.3. Suggestions for future research	51
	5.4. Conclusion	51
	TABLES	54
	REFERENCES	55
	APPENDICES	65
	Appendix 1. Interview Questions	65

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

ITC	International Trade Centre
RCA	Revealed Comparative Advantage
NTM	Non-Tariff Measures
BPOM	Indonesian Food and Drug Authority
BPJPH	Halal Product Assurance Agency
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
UN Comtrade	Official database of the United Nations trade statistics

1 INTRODUCTION

In the past years, agricultural products and exports, especially in developing countries, have been considered key tools for economic growth, food security, and sustainable development. Among these products, dates, as a strategic tropical crop with high nutritional value, good shelf life, compliance with halal food standards, and many economic benefits, have gained an important place in the agricultural trade. (Al-Habsi, 2025, 1; Pawlak & Kołodziejczak, 2020, 1–2)

Iran with more than 1.02 million tons of dates, is one of the most important producers of dates in the world. wide climatic diversity, the existence of commercial varieties such as Mazafati, Kabkab, Piarom, and Esta'maran, and the historical history of date production have created a special place for Iran in the global market (Rastegar, 2015). However, despite its high potential, Iran's share of global date exports is below of its actual capacity. (FAO, 2023; Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, 2023)

According to experts, some barriers are lack of a comprehensive marketing strategy, tariff and non-tariff barriers, International Sanctions, logistical constraints, and the concentration of exports to a few limited markets.

Meanwhile, the populous and Muslim countries of Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, are emerging markets. These markets have high potential for Iranian date exports. According to World Population Review (2025), population of Indonesia is over 285 million and this country is one of the largest importers of dates in the region, especially during Ramadan when consumption of this product increases significantly. some countries including Tunisia, the UAE, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia have a high share of this market, while Iran's share remains insignificant (Trade Map, 2024).

Given Iran's non-oil export development policies and the need to diversify target markets, it is of great importance to accurately identify the opportunities and threats to date exports to the Indonesian market. In this context, using modern data-driven tools including Export Potential, Market Access, and Trade Map that are presented by the International Trade Center helps us with a more accurate analysis of trade flows, untapped potential, and market barriers.

Therefore, the present study aims to assess the current and future status of date exports from Iran to Indonesia, review historical trends, analyse export data, identify market access barriers, and estimate potential export capacities, and attempt to provide an analytical framework for effective trade policymaking in this area. This study considers the period 2014 to 2023 and uses a combination of descriptive and exploratory methods.

Problem Statement

Dates are important agricultural products that are cultivated in developing countries, and play a strategic role in international food security, given their important share to nutrition and the economy. The increasing demand and expansion of cultivated areas indicate global and regional production trends for this crop, confirming the importance of this fruit in economic frameworks policies and domestic food security (Al- Habsi, 2025, 1.). Iran has a variety of varieties, high quality and significant production volume of dates but has not been able to reach a proportionate share of the global date markets, especially in Asia. global dates exports share of Iran is around 13% (ITC, 2023). But according to experts, due to technical, climatic and commercial potential of Iran for dates production, is far beyond this amount.

Based on World Population Review (2025), Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country. This country is also the largest Muslim country (Pew Research Center, 2025). Indonesia is recognized as an emerging consumer market with a high demand for imported dates. According to Trade map (2024), Indonesia imports more than 55,000 tons of dates annually. Arab and North African countries are the main exporters of dates to Indonesia and Despite Iran's potential, the share of date exports from Iran to Indonesia remains insignificant, accounting for about 6 percent of the world's total date exports to this country.

Therefore, identifying the factors affecting Iran's low share of the Indonesian date market and scientifically analysing export opportunities is necessary to design a comprehensive export strategy.

Importance of the Study

This research is important in two aspects:

Economic and Developmental Importance: Exporting high value-added agricultural products such as dates, in the context of Iran's declining oil revenues, plays a key role in foreign exchange, job creation, and prosperity of less developed regions. Provinces in Iran such as Hormozgan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Khuzestan, and Bushehr are heavily dependent on date exports. (Sadeghi et al, 2019)

The Importance of Indonesian Market: According to experts Indonesia is not only a huge consumer market but also known as a gateway to ASEAN markets (OECD, 2024). Developing exports to this country can provide long-term geo-economic benefits for Iran.

Also, the use of data-driven analytical tools such as Export Potential Map allows for evidence-based analysis for trade policymakers. Therefore, the results of this research can be used as a reference for the Trade Development Organization, the Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, and private sector exporters.

1.1 Research Objectives

The main objective of this thesis is to examine the current status of the exports of dates from Iran to Indonesia and identify untapped potential and opportunities for future development of these exports by using reliable international data and quantitative and qualitative analyses. Given the importance of Indonesia in the halal food trade (Masrurroh, 2020), as well as Iran's position as a large date producers (Al-Karmadi & Okoh, 2024, 4-5), this research attempts to provide a complete and practical picture of Iran's export potential in this market.

The sub-objectives of this research are:

- Analyse the trends of date exports from Iran to Indonesia (2014-2023) in terms of volume, value, and market share.
- Identify tariff and non-tariff barriers (NTMs) of date exports from Iran to the Indonesian market.

- Estimate and forecast the untapped export potential of Iranian dates to Indonesia by using data-driven tools such as the Export Potential Map and Market Access Map presented by International Trade Centre.
- Provide practical and data-driven recommendations for authorities, exporters, and export support institutions to develop access of Iran to the Indonesian market.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

International agricultural trade plays a vital role to develop of countries economically and ensure food security. Apart from high-consumption commodities such as cereals, products such as dates with high nutritional value, adaptability to arid and semi-arid climates and deep cultural-religious ties have gained special importance in world trade (Schiavo, 2025). Exporting dates not only provides a strong source of foreign exchange earnings for producing countries but also facilitates cultural transmission and the development of target markets (Al-Karmedi, A. & Okoh, A. I, 2024).

Iran is one of the most important producers of dates. This country produces more than one million tons dates annually, that shows a comparative advantage (FAO, 2023; Rafiee, 2022, 89-90). This tangible capacity shows the importance of carefully examining potential markets, especially important importing countries.

Among regional markets, Indonesia, has more than 285 million population, is the largest Muslim country in the world and a key market for dates; according to studies, demand for dates in this country increases especially during the month of Ramadan (Herath et al., 2014). Although statistical sources such as Trade Map show an increasing trend in date imports (ITC, 2023), Iran's share in this market is not noticeable compared to competitors including the UAE, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia (ITC, 2023). Such a gap highlights the need to identify market barriers and opportunities.

In addition, analysis tools such as Market Access Map, Export Potential Map, and Trade Map, from the ITC examine export trends, date exports barriers and potentials (ITC, 2023). By Combining these tools with a theoretical framework of international trade provides a rich basis for developing export strategies.

With these considerations, this chapter is categorised into five sections: first, the theoretical foundations which are related to international trade and agriculture are discussed; then, the status of date production and exports in Iran and the world is reviewed; then, the characteristics and potential of the Indonesian market are

analysed; and finally, data-driven tools for market and export analysis are introduced. The aim of this structure is providing the necessary theoretical and analytical framework to examine the status of Iranian date exports to Indonesia.

2.2 Theoretical foundations

Comparative Advantage Theory

Comparative advantage as a very important theory was introduced by David Ricardo firstly in the nineteenth centuries (Krugman, 2008, 924-929). The theory says that if a country produces all products efficiently, it can still benefit from trade, because that country can be specialized to produce of goods that they have the lowest opportunity cost (Ricardo, 1817). In recent decades, Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) has been developed as an important tool for assessing the competitiveness of countries in global markets. Introduced by Balassa (1965), this indicator uses actual trade data rather than opportunity cost data, which are difficult to measure (Balassa, 1965).

Based on to the findings of World Trade Organization (WTO, 2023), comparative advantage analysis can be an important guide for policymakers to allocate resources to sectors with the greatest export potential. This is especially important in countries facing resource constraints (UNCTAD, 2022).

Trade Gravity Model

This Model is used empirical frameworks in bilateral international trade. the main idea of this model was inspired by Newton's law of gravity. Based on this model, the volume of trade between two countries is proportional to the size of their economies (usually GDP) and inversely proportional to the geographical distance between them (Tinbergen, 1962). In its simplest form, this model is expressed as follows:

$$\text{Trade } ij = ((\text{GDP } i \times \text{GDP } j) / \text{Distance } ij) \times G$$

Distance is the distance between two countries, GDP_i and GDP_j are the sizes of their economies, and G is a constant coefficient (Anderson & van Wincoop, 2003).

The formula of this model states that the volume of trade between two countries is related to economic size directly and related to distance and communication costs inversely. When analysing a distant market like Indonesia, this model helps to understand why Iran has a low share and what factors need to be strengthened.

The trade gravity model as one of the main empirical frameworks in international trade, (Tinbergen, 1963; Anderson & van Wincoop, 2003). plays a fundamental role in the analytical tools Export Potential and Market Access Map, which both developed by ITC. In the Export Potential Map, the gravity model is used to estimate the “potential level of trade” between both nations based on structural variables including geographical distance, economic size, trade agreements, and common language. After that this estimate is then compared with actual trade data, and the positive difference between the predicted and actual value that is identified as “untapped export potential” (ITC, 2023).

The Market Access Map uses the gravity model as a reference framework for assessing barriers, including tariff and non-tariff. In this tool, potential trade volume is first estimated without considering barriers and then compared with actual data to determine the gap caused by tariffs, quotas, or technical barriers (Head & Mayer, 2014). Thus, the gravity model not only allows the identification of target markets with high growth potential but also provides a means to quantify the impact of restrictive trade policies.

This model is chosen as the fundamental theoretical framework for this study; however, due to the availability of standard and reference outputs from the International Trade Centre (ITC), which are themselves produced based on updated versions of the gravity model, the present study does not estimate the model directly. Instead, the amount of “predicted trade” calculated by the ITC is accepted as a structural reference, and the gap between predicted and observed trade (TradeGap) is extracted as a measure of untapped potential. Institutional and policy factors are then included in the analysis to determine which barriers play the most important role in preventing Iran from realizing its export potential to

Indonesia. This approach allows us for the provision of targeted solutions in a practical and policy-oriented manner.

Export Potential

Export potential is the potential capacity of a country to increase exports to foreign markets provided that structural, institutional, or policy barriers are reduced or eliminated (Mulabdic & Yasar, 2021). This potential is usually measured by comparing actual trade volumes with predicted volumes under ideal conditions. In this process, the trade gravity model is a significant instrument for estimating potential trade volumes based on factors including geographical distance, common language, economic size, and trade agreements (Anderson & van Wincoop, 2003).

The main application of this approach is seen in the Export Potential Map. It is a data-driven platform that has been developed by ITC. Using a gravity model and global data, this tool calculates the amount of “untapped export potential” for products and markets and identifies export priorities by combining indicators of demand in the destination market, the capacity of supply the exporting country and level of market access (Decreux & Spies, 2016; ITC, 2023).

In addition, the Market Access Map is another ITC product that analyzes tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and preferential market conditions. This tool complements the Export Potential Map because, after identifying potential markets, a detailed examination of existing barriers identifies what restrictions are preventing the full realization of export potential. In fact, if the Export Potential Map shows that exports of a product to a specific market could increase significantly, the Market Access Map helps identify the necessary measures to remove barriers and achieve this growth (ITC, 2023).

In general, the concept of export potential, based on the gravity model and real data, provides an analytical framework to identify trade development opportunities. Using the export potential map for examining these opportunities and the market access map to examine barriers simultaneously can significantly improve the trade policy-making process and export planning (Yotov et al, 2016).

In this thesis, the concept of export potential is directly used in data analysis. That is, using the Export Potential Map tool, data related to Iranian date exports (HS080410) are extracted and compared with the predicted trade volume. This comparison lets us to calculate export gap. If the actual volume of Iranian exports to Indonesia is lower than the expected value, this indicates that Iran has not yet been able to exploit all the capacities of the destination market. Subsequently, this gap is combined with the Market Access Map data to determine what factors have prevented the realization of this potential. In fact, the concept of export potential in this study becomes a practical tool for identifying missed opportunities and explaining their reasons. On the other hand, these results help us to design policy proposals to improve position of Iran in the Indonesian market. In other words, the use of the concept of export potential in this research is not merely theoretical, but rather establishes a direct link between theory, real data, and practical solutions.

2.3 Dates Production and Export Status

Dates Production Capacity of Iran

Iran is a prominent player in the global dates market and has a stable position in this field. According to FAO data, Iran is one of the biggest producers with a production of about one million tons of dates (FAO, 2023; Ashraf and Hamidi-Esfahani, 2011). by development of palm groves and the expansion of production quality This position has been maintained. In 2025, date production in Iran reached 1.4 million tons from more than 300,000 hectares of palm groves, and about 30% of this product was allocated for export, with an estimated value of \$400 million (Tehran Times, 2025).

Iran enjoys a distinct genetic diversity with more than 400 date varieties such as Mazafati, Piarom, Kabkab, and Zahedi and these varieties have been among the most prominent export ones (Karizaki, 2017). For example, Mazafati dates, produced in southern provinces such as Kerman, account for 20% of Iran's date exports, with 120,000 tons exported annually.

But there are some challenges such as: only a limited number of gardens use modern technologies such as drip irrigation. According to experts, weak irrigation systems and widespread use of traditional methods in up to 65% of palm groves (Jahangirpour & Zibaei, 2022). Pests such as the red-bellied beetle and plant diseases also pose a serious threat to the sustainability of production (FAO Press, 2024). Scientific research has also shown that because of climate change, areas in southern Iran will only have positive economic potential for the next few decades; that is, the long-term future benefits of date production are not assured (Shabani, et al.,2016).

Dates Export Status of Iran

Iran is an important producer of dates in the world regarding to its production and plays a prominent role in international trade. Based on FAO (2023), annual date production in Iran is over one million tons, placing the country in the top three global producers after Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The genetic diversity of dates in Iran is very impressive; more than 400 date varieties are cultivated in the southern and southeastern provinces of the country, among which Mazafati, Piarom, Kabkab, and Zahedi are considered the most important export varieties (Rafiee, 2022).

In terms of exports, statistics from the International Trade Centre (ITC, 2023) show that Iran exports more than 370,000 tons of dates to global markets annually. This is equivalent to about 19 percent of global date exports. The main destinations for Iranian dates are South and Southeast Asian countries (such as India, Pakistan, and Indonesia), Persian Gulf countries, and some European markets (such as Germany and France) (ITC, 2023; FAO, 2023). Among them, Piarom dates have the best share among European countries due to their superior quality and long shelf life (Al-Karmadi, 2024).

Date exports are not only of economic importance for Iran but also have special importance from the perspective of comparative advantage and competitive advantage. Iran's geographical location in the world's date belt and access to international waterways, including the Persian Gulf, have enabled the development of trade and reduced transportation costs. Studies show that the development of

date exports can make an important contribution to diversifying Iran's non-oil income and help create sustainable employment in rural areas (Herath et al., 2014; Rafiee, 2022).

However, there are also challenges facing Iranian date exports. The most important of these challenges are weakness in standard and modern packaging, limitations in international marketing, and lack of full compliance with quality and food safety standards of importing countries (FAO, 2022; ITC, 2023). For some target markets including European countries, compliance with pesticide residue requirements, halal certification, and food safety standards are essential for successful date exports (Schiavo, 2025).

Overall, Iran, with its notable production capacity, varietal diversity, and favourable position in the global date trade, can reach a greater share of target markets. Achieving this goal needs investment in processing and packaging, developing international branding, improving product quality, and complying with global standards; factors that can bring Iranian date exports to a more sustainable and competitive level (Rafiee, 2022).

2.4 Indonesian Market

Dates Market Size and Import Volume

Indonesia is one of the largest and most attractive markets for date production in Asia. The reason of this attraction is its high Muslim population. The high demand for dates during religious occasions such as Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr has made this country a major importer of dates globally (Haris et al., 2025).

According to ITC, the amount of Indonesia's imports of fresh or dried dates with the HS code of 080410 in 2023 were \$80.52 million, with the weight of 56.74 thousand tonnes (ITC, 2023). This was slightly higher in 2022, that reaches \$86.25 million and 61.35 thousand tonnes (ITC, 2022). These statistics show that Indonesia's date imports have been stable over the past two years and the demand volumes fluctuates between 55 and 60 thousand tonnes.

Reports from the Indonesian Bureau of Statistics (BPS) confirm that date imports in 2024 reached US\$84.44 million. It is almost at the same level as the average imports in previous years (BPS, 2025a). Also, in February 2025, date imports increased to US\$18.09 million (equivalent to 16,469 tons), which shows a significant seasonal increase of 187% in value and 125% in volume compared to the previous month. This increase was because of the dates demand in the month of Ramadan (BPS, 2025b).

According to BPS (2025b), Egypt has the highest share of Indonesian date imports in recent years, 56% in February 2025, followed by Saudi Arabia (16%) and the United Arab Emirates (7%). Nonetheless, other countries like Iran and Tunisia are also quite important to the economy of Indonesia. For example, Iran exported about 4.10 thousand tons of dates to Indonesia in 2023, worth \$2.12 million (ITC, 2023), compared to 3.96 thousand tons and \$2.80 million in 2022 (ITC, 2022). Despite Iran has a smaller market share than its competitors, Iran's export trend is steady and expanding, suggesting that it may eventually gain more market share.

Totally, Indonesian date market is a large and stable market. The seasonality of demand, especially during religious holidays, creates vital opportunities for exporters including Iran.

Date Product Standards and Requirements in Indonesia

Three primary legal and technical criteria apply to the Indonesian market for importing and supplying dates are Halal Assurance, Food Product Safety and Labelling (BPOM), and Plant Quarantine and Sanitary Documentation (SPS) regulations. Under the Halal Product Assurance Law (Law No. 33/2014), the first phase of halal labelling requirements in Indonesia started in October 2024 and will be extended to different product categories. Official reports focus that the final deadline for full implementation for imported food and beverages should not be later than October 17, 2026 (BPJPH, 2024; FAS Jakarta, 2024; DFAT, 2025). The Indonesian Halal Regulatory Authority (BPJPH) requires importers of dates to obtain a valid halal certificate from an approved body and to affix the halal label on the packaging in Bahasa Indonesia. If they do not comply, the product may be

recalled from the shelves or face administrative action (BPJPH, 2024; Reuters, 2024).

In the field of product labelling and registration, the Indonesian Food and Drug Administration (BPOM) requires, in accordance with Regulation No. 31 of 2018 on the Labelling of Processed Food, that all domestically produced or imported food products that includes packaged dates be labelled in Indonesian, which includes the product name, list of ingredients, net weight, date of manufacture/expiration, country of origin, importer/distributor details, registration number (ML), and, where applicable, a nutrition facts panel and allergy warnings (BPOM Reg. 31/2018). Also, BPOM Regulation No. 1 of 2022 on the Control of Claims stipulates that any nutritional/health shows on labels and advertisements must be subject to scientific evidence and approved frameworks; therefore, any claim such as “high antioxidant value” or “good for heart health” about dates must be documented and authorized in accordance with this regulation (BPOM Reg. 1/2022).

regarding to technical/national standards, although the specific SNI standard for “Fruit Dates (Fresh/Dried)” is not finalized and is available for public, date products are subject to SNI horizontal standards—including Maximum Residues of Pesticides in Plant Products (SNI 7313:2024)—and approved test methods; compliance with the permitted residue limits is mandatory for entry and distribution (BSN, 2024). In addition, food packaging must comply with food contact safety requirements and storage conditions; Any translation of the label into Bahasa Indonesia must be accurate and not misleading to the consumer (BPOM Reg. 31/2018).

In terms of sanitary and quarantine measures (SPS), dates (HS 080410) are a plant commodity that are subject to a phytosanitary certificate from the country of origin and their entry is supervised by the Indonesian Agricultural Quarantine Agency. According to official notices, the time windows for issuing the certificate and the shipment leaving the port of origin are limited (typically within 21 days for issuance and departure) and a Prior Notice must be filed before the vessel departs; failure to meet these deadlines can result in delays or rejection of the shipment (FAS Jakarta, 2025). In addition, imports require standard commercial doc-

uments, importer authorization (API), and compliance with classification restrictions as set out in Tariff Book 2022 and Regulation 3/2024 (Trade.gov, 2024; AHP Law, 2024).

In totally, to reach the Indonesian market sustainably a chain of compliance must be observed for Iranian dates including halal certification and labelling from BPJPH-approved entities, full registration and labelling in Bahasa Indonesia according to BPOM regulations, pesticide residue control according to SNI 7313:2024, and SPS/quarantine documents with precise timing. Aligning these requirements with quality assurance, traceability and transparency of label information will reduce the risk of shipment rejection and compliance costs and increase the chances of success in retail/modern distribution (modern grocers/supermarkets) (BPJPH, 2024; BPOM, 2018/2022; FAS Jakarta, 2024/2025).

Consumer Behaviour in the Indonesian Date Market

The Indonesian date market is influenced by cultural, religious and Islamic lifestyle factors. Date consumption peaks during the month of Ramadan, and this season sees a significant increase in demand for dates, both in terms of volume and economic value (Herath et al., 2014).

regarding to social and generational perspective, some studies have shown that religious identity and halal consumption culture is an important factor in the purchasing behaviour of Indonesian consumers. especially, among Generation Z, consumption habits, halal awareness and religious involvement are the main drivers of the desire to purchase halal products, and these factors are often mediated by purchase intentions (Khasanah, 2024; Febriandika et al., 2023).

In another view, a a research by millennials (Generation Y) in Indonesia shows that purchasing dates as a halal food accepted in religious identity, is mostly done as a habitual behaviour, with religious beliefs, social norms, and perceived behavioural control that plays vital role in the purchase decision (Amalia et al., 2020).

Furthermore, in the villages of West Java (Dayeuh Village), factors such as halal lifestyle have had a significant impact on purchase behaviour of people. one of

the main barriers to active consumption of these products is Lack of sufficient awareness of halal standards remains (Oktapiani et al., 2025).

2.5 Data-driven export analysis tools

Analysis of International trade data plays an important role in identifying export opportunities, assessing market barriers and making strategic decisions. In recent years, the use of international databases and digital trade analysis tools has become a central pillar of economic research and trade policymaking. These tools help researchers and policymakers to assess future export potential in addition to examining past trends (UNCTAD, 2022).

Trade Map

Trade Map has introduced by International Trade Centre; the Trade Map tool provides access to export and import data for over 220 countries and territories. It allows for the analysis of historical trade trends, market shares, major trading partners and identification of competitors at the HS code level (Bothma & Cant, 2010). In studies such as date exports, using HS code 080410 (dates) helps researchers to examine and compare the volume and value of countries' exports to different destinations.

Market Access Map

This map is designed for focusing on market access conditions and provides comprehensive information on customs tariffs, non-tariff measures (NTMs), sanitary and technical requirements (SPS/TBT) and trade agreements. This tool is very useful for analysing trade barriers for date exports to Indonesia, as it can clarify import tariff rates, halal certification requirements, packaging requirements and other regulatory standards (ITC, 2023a).

Export Potential Map

The Map is a predictive tool. It combines data on supply (export capacity of the country of origin), demand (destination market) and market access barriers to estimate the volume of unrealized export potential (ITC, 2023b).

Using this map, three main components are examined in an integrated manner: supply (Iran's actual date exports to various markets), demand (date imports by Indonesia and other target markets), and access barriers (tariffs, halal requirements, and non-tariff restrictions). The tool calculates the amount of Iran's "unrealized export potential" to Indonesia; meaning that if actual exports are lower than the projected level, the gap between these two amounts is recognized as the capacity that could be realized if barriers were removed. The results from the export potential map are then combined with data from the "market access map" to determine which categories of barriers (such as tariffs or halal standard requirements) have had the greatest impact in preventing the realization of date export potential. Thus, the export potential map in this study plays a pivotal role in connecting the theoretical framework of international trade to real data and provides a basis for providing policy solutions to increase Iran's share in the Indonesian market.

Other complementary databases

In addition to the ITC tools, other sources are also used in trade analysis such as UN Comtrade, the WTO Statistics and FAOStat (for agricultural data) (WTO, 2023; FAO, 2022). These databases allow for data validation and comparison of results from different tools.

The simultaneous use of these tools allows the researcher to draw a comprehensive picture of the target market. For example, the use of Trade Map shows the trend of date imports by Indonesia, while Market Access Map identifies the legal requirements for date imports, and Export Potential Map estimates Iran's potential capacities in the Indonesian market. This combination of tools makes the research analysis not only descriptive but also predictive and policy oriented.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to examine the current status and future potential of Iranian date exports to Indonesia. In this study, the choice of a mixed methods research approach was made consciously and based on the recommendations of the methodological literature. According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2018), the use of mixed methods is recommended when the researcher needs to integrate quantitative and qualitative data to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. In fact, quantitative analysis of international trade data such as Trade Map, Market Access Map, and Export Potential Map developed by ITC, alone can provide a picture of export trends and patterns, but it is not able to accurately explain the causes of the gap between “export potential” and “realized exports”. On the other hand, qualitative analysis obtained from interviews without relying on substantiated quantitative data will lack the ability to generalize and compare. The combination of these two approaches provides conditions for examining both the objective and statistical dimensions and the subjective and interpretive dimensions of the subject simultaneously (Bryman, 2012).

3.1 Research Design

The design of this research is descriptive-exploratory. The descriptive part, focusing on secondary data, analyses trends, patterns, and Iran’s share of the Indonesian date market during the period 2014-2023. This time period was chosen to cover a full decade and to allow for the analysis of structural changes in Iran-Indonesia trade. The exploratory part, using qualitative data (interviews), attempts to shed light on hidden factors, institutional barriers, and the perspectives of key players in the field of date exports. This exploratory design, as defined by Stake (1995), is appropriate when a phenomenon requires an explanation of “why” and “how,” rather than just “what” and “how much.”

The theories selected in Chapter 2, including comparative advantage, the trade gravity model, and the concept of export potential, are applied in the design of the data collection tools:

comparative advantage theory is the basis for selecting secondary data on date exports and calculating the RCA (Revealed Comparative Advantage). the quantitative data is collected aimed at examining Iran's comparative advantage in the global market (Balassa, 1965).

The trade gravity model framework is applied in ITC tools such as the export potential map and the market access map. This framework allowed for the extraction of variables such as potential trade, export gaps, and tariff and non-tariff barriers (Andarson & van Wiincoop, 2003).

The concept of export potential is also reflected in the design of interview questions with exporters and experts. The questions are designed to determine why a significant portion of Iran's export potential is not being realized in the Indonesian market and what institutional, structural, and marketing barriers exist in this direction (ITC, 2024).

3.2 Data Sources

Secondary Data

This kind of data is a very important resource for researchers because it allows them to analyse broad trends and answer new research questions, without the need to spend time and money on initial collection and increases the accuracy and validity of results (Kelly, 2024). This kind of data refers to information that has been previously collected and published by reputable and well known national and international organizations and databases. These data include bilateral trade statistics, tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and export capacity from databases including Market Access, Export Potential, and Trade Map, of the International Trade Centre (ITC), Iranian and Indonesian customs data, and reports from organizations such as FAO, UN COMTRADE, and WTO. The use of these data, due to their extensive time coverage, statistical accuracy, and international validity, allows for a comprehensive analysis of trends and forecasting of date export capacity.

Trade Map: One of the ITC or International Trade Centre services is Trade Map which Provides bilateral trade flows at HS code level, export value and market share (Bothma & Cant, 2010).

Market Access Map: the other service of ITC is Providing information on tariffs, non-tariff measures (NTMs) and import regulations.

Export Potential Map: ITC also provides services through Estimating export potential according to demand and market access conditions and supply, (Decreux & Spies, 2016).

Official sources: Ministry of Agricultural Jihad of Iran, Customs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Statistical Centre of Iran, and Statistics Indonesia.

Multilateral organizations: WTO (World Trade Organization), UN COMTRADE, FAO, and the World Bank.

Primary Data

This kind of data allows researchers to collect accurate and relevant information about the research question directly from original sources, which increases accuracy, reliability, and the ability to analyse contextual details (Saunders et al., 2009). In this research primary data are the information that is collected directly from face-to-face interviews that were conducted with producers and exporters of dates, logistics professionals, and experts with the aim of supplementing and interpreting the quantitative findings from secondary sources.

In designing the interview questions of this study, the three main theories presented in Chapter 2 – namely, Comparative Advantage Theory, Gravity Model, and Export Potential Framework – were used as guiding frameworks.

Based on the comparative advantage theory, questions were asked about Iran's structural and cost advantages in date production, the level of productivity of producers, and the factors affecting the competitiveness of date exports in global markets. In this framework, interviewees were asked what factors make Iran have a comparative advantage in date production over its competitors or to what extent this advantage has been realized in practice. This theoretical connection helps

identify the link between quantitative data (RCA index) and qualitative understanding of market actors.

The trade gravity model presents a framework for knowing the effect of structural factors of trade such as distance, transportation costs, trade policies, and bilateral economic relations. In the interview design, this model inspired questions about the impact of geographical distance, logistics costs, tariffs, and non-tariff barriers (NTMs) on the flow of Iranian date exports to Indonesia. Therefore, through qualitative questions, data were collected that allowed for the interpretation of the gap between “anticipated trade” and “actual trade” within the theoretical framework of the gravity model.

The concept of Export Potential Framework, which examines unrealized export capacities and institutional or structural barriers to the use of export capacity, was the basis for asking questions about the reasons for the unrealized export capacity of Iranian dates to Indonesia, the existing institutional and market barriers, and the measures needed to increase Iran’s export share in the Indonesian market. The purpose of using this theory in the interviews was to interpret the data obtained from the quantitative tool from the perspective of real stakeholders.

In summary, these three theories were used in a complementary manner:

- The comparative advantage theory covers the production and competitiveness aspects,
- The trade gravity model focuses on the structural aspect of trade relations,
- and the export potential framework focuses on the policy aspect and the realization of opportunities.

Data Collection and Management

Secondary data collects between the years of 2014-2023. The HS code 080410 (dates) is used to extract the data for uniformity. Before analysis, the data are cleaned, and duplicates and outliers are removed. Excel software is used for classification, and preliminary analysis of the data.

3.3 Analytical Framework

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

This kind of analysis is used to explain the current status of Iranian date exports. This analysis includes mapping the annual date export trend in terms of volume (tons) and value (USD) during the period 2014-2023. Also, Iran's share of the Indonesian date market is examined and compared with the performance of major competitors.

This type of analysis helps to better understand the determinants of export flows (Anderson & van Wincoop, 2003). The use of time series data and comparison of market shares allows for the assessment of competitive dynamics at the target market level (Tinbergen, 1962).

Market Access Assessment

this tool is used to analyse the barriers to access of Iranian dates to the Indonesian market and allows for the examination of import tariffs and the structure of Indonesian customs duties for dates (HS 080410), sanitary and quarantine (SPS) requirements, non-tariff measures (NTMs), and documents required for clearance of goods (ITC, 2024).

In addition, SWOT analysis aims to assess the position of Iranian dates in the Indonesian market. This approach focuses on identifying export strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as an effective tool for formulating market development strategies (Gurl, 2017). The SWOT analysis in this study helps for explaining the interaction between internal variables (production capacity, product quality, branding) and external factors (market demand, import regulations, and international competition).

Forecasting Export Potential Capacity

Using the Export Potential Map, the following are estimated:

- Current utilization rate of export potential capacity.

- Potential export ceiling under conditions of improved business environment.
- Key constraints include logistical infrastructure, political risks, and regulatory uncertainties.

Data collection process was also designed with complete transparency. In the quantitative part, data were extracted from official international databases such as Market Access Map, ITC Trade Map, Export Potential Map, and FAOSTAT as well as from national sources such as Iranian and Indonesian Customs. For integrity, all data were collected based on HS080410 (dates) code. The data were first cleaned (removal of outliers and duplicates) and then coded and analysed in Excel. In the qualitative part, semi-structured interviews were conducted; this type of interview was chosen due to its flexibility and the possibility of comparing responses while being open to new perspectives (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

This methodological design ensures that the present study has both quantitative accuracy and qualitative depth, and its results are enriched with practical market realities and stakeholder perspectives in addition to relying on reliable statistical data. In other words, the use of methodological literature and its connection with the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 2 ensures that the choice of methods is fully appropriate to the research topic and its objectives.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Date Production and export trends in Iran and the world

Table 4-1 shows the trend of Iranian and global date production and exports during the period 2014 to 2023. According to this table, Global date production has increased during this period, reaching from about 7.4 million tons in 2014 to more than 9.6 million tons in 2023. This growth shows the increasing global demand for high-value-added agricultural products. It is a phenomenon that is consistent with Balassa's (1965) theory of comparative advantage. because countries with more efficient production structures and lower opportunity costs gain a greater share of world trade.

In contrast, although Iran is a traditional producer of dates, the fluctuating trend in production and the country's share of global production (from 14 percent to 11 percent) shows that Iran's potential comparative advantage has not fully converted into a clear advantage in the global market. This can also be explained by the theoretical approach of trade gravity that means in addition to supply factors, variables such as transportation costs, geographical distance, and infrastructure efficiency also affect export volume.

In terms of exports, although the value of Iran's exports has increased during this period (from \$226 million to \$340 million), the country's share of global exports has decreased (from 17 percent to 13 percent). This increase shows that competitors have been able to better use their trade opportunities and structural advantages. This finding is consistent with the studies of Eydzadeh et al. (2022) and FAO (2023), because they emphasize that weak logistics infrastructure, non-compliance with market standards, and financial constraints are resulting from sanctions were among the factors reducing Iran's export competitiveness in the date market.

Table 4-1. Date production and export trends in Iran and the world

Year	World Production (tons)	Iran Production (tons)	Iran's Share of World	World Exports (USD thousand)	Iran Exports (USD thousand)	Iran's Share of World Exports (%)
2014	7.4	1.0	14	226	38	17
2023	9.6	1.1	11	340	43	13

			Production (%)			
2014	7428940	1032804	14%	1,308,542	226,174	17%
2015	8094353	1032804	13%	1,409,902	232,981	17%
2016	8316006	1185165	14%	1,449,959	208,548	14%
2017	8404449	1202200	14%	1,667,393	250,492	15%
2018	8767836	1356684	15%	1,924,933	338,348	18%
2019	9215779	1307908	14%	2,138,283	205,230	10%
2020	9471710	1237317	13%	2,106,776	261,579	12%
2021	9845491	1168066	12%	2,448,201	309,135	13%
2022	9304184	1030460	11%	2,323,457	291,051	13%
2023	9661175	1024117	11%	2,549,869	340,278	13%

Source: Author's compilation based on ITC and FAO data

4.2 Iran's Share in Indonesia's Date Import Market

Table 4-2 shows the trend of Iranian date exports to Indonesia from 2014 to 2023. At the beginning of this period, Iran had a high market share. In 2014 and 2015, Iranian exports accounted for 11 and 13 percent of total Indonesian date imports.

Since 2016, Iran's share has decreased sharply and has reached about 3 percent in recent years, but Indonesian date imports have increased from \$37 million to more than \$80 million during the same period.

This trend shows that despite Iran's date production capacity, Iran's competitors have done much better in exporting dates to Indonesia.

From theoretical perspective, according to the trade gravity model (Tinbergen, 1962) the volume of trade between countries is related to the size of the economy and the demand of the target market and inversely related to the trade costs and institutional barriers. For Iran, some factors such as the lack of direct shipping lines, banking barriers because of sanctions have increased the transaction costs and reduced its market share (Eydizadeh et al., 2022).

Based on revealed comparative advantage theory (Balassa, 1965), the decline in Iran's share shows that the country's potential comparative advantage in date production has not been converted into a revealed advantage because of structural barriers and poor adaptation to Indonesian market preferences. Competitors such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE have been able to benefit on their comparative advantage by using modern packaging and effective branding (FAO, 2023; OECD, 2024).

Table 4-2. Iran's Share in Indonesia's Date Import Market

Year	Iran's date exports to Indonesia (USD thousand)	Indonesian date imports from the world (USD thousand)	Iran's share of the Indonesian date market
2014	4,199	37,170	11%
2015	3,856	29,728	13%
2016	2,095	32,929	6%
2017	3,792	53,628	7%
2018	3,209	63,760	5%
2019	2,986	62,290	5%

2020	3,064	81,371	4%
2021	2,344	69,002	3%
2022	2,813	86,256	3%
2023	2,119	80,522	3%

Source: Author's compilation and calculation based on ITC data

4.3 Major Competitors of Iran in Indonesia's Date Import Market

Table 4-3 shows Top seven countries exporting dates to Indonesia during the years 2020-2024. According to this table, Egypt and Tunisia are the main exporters of dates to Indonesia; with Egypt consistently ranking first in the years 2020-2024, and its export value reached \$30.5 million in 2022.

Tunisia also has a significant share of the Indonesian market with stable exports between \$13 and \$22 million. This is followed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, whose shares are relatively stable, mainly fluctuating between \$11 and \$15 million.

In comparison, Iran's exports to Indonesia have been much more limited, remaining between \$3.6 and \$5 million during this period, a small share compared to its main competitors.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding can be interpreted with Balassa's (1965) RCA theory. Based on this theory, if the relative advantage index (RCA) for a product is higher than one, that product is capable of competing and exporting internationally. In the case of Iran, despite the high RCA index for dates (above 30 according to ITC, 2023), the potential comparative advantage has not been converted into an actual competitive advantage.

On the other hand, according to Porter's competitiveness framework (Porter, 1990), Iran's poor export performance can be attributed to weaknesses in the two

iran date ex- port(million USD)	226	233	209	250	338	205	262	309	291	340
iran total ex- port(million USD)	90,328	60,041	78,267	91,737	96,618	50,983	33,037	69,496	93,458	104,487
world date ex- port(1000 mil- lion USD)	1.31	1.41	1.45	1.67	1.92	2.14	2.11	2.45	2.32	2.55
world total ex- port(1000 mil- lion USD)	19,002	16,422	16,024	17,719	19,547	19,008	17,648	22,290	24,904	23,886
RCA	36.36	45.20	29.45	29.02	35.56	35.78	66.32	40.50	33.37	30.47

Source: Author's compilation and calculation based on ITC data

4.5 Export Potential Map Output

Data extracted from ITC Export Potential Map shows that the export potential of Iranian dates to the Indonesian market is estimated \$46 million for 2029 (ITC, 2024). This estimate is based on the trade gravity model. This model considers bilateral trade flows as a function of economic size, geographical distance, and trade barriers (Tinbergen, 1962; Anderson & van Wincoop, 2003). Based on this model, if trade costs, including tariffs, non-tariff restrictions, and inefficiencies in export infrastructure, are reduced, the actual level of exports can approach the potential level.

According to the Trade Map data, Iran's actual date exports to Indonesia in 2023 were only \$2.1 million. This difference (\$43.8 million) is considered a trade gap. The utilization ratio was also calculated by dividing the realized value by the potential value and was equal to 0.046 (or about 4.6 percent).

These findings indicate that Iran has only utilized a very small part of its potential capacity in the Indonesian market. In fact, despite the high comparative advantage in date production, competitive and growing demand for halal products in Indonesia, some barriers have prevented Iran from fully utilizing this potential.

4.6 Market Access Map Results

This tool provides data on tariffs, non-tariff measures (NTMs), and preferential import conditions for specific products and different trade destinations (Santeramo & Lamonaca, 2019). In this study, information on HS080410 (dates) and the destination country of Indonesia was extracted from this database to identify the market access structure and barriers affecting Iranian date exports.

Import Tariffs

According to the Market Access Map data (ITC, 2024), the most favored nation (MFN) tariff rate for date imports into Indonesia is 5 percent. However, under some bilateral or preferential agreements (such as Indonesia's free trade agreements with the Gulf or South Asia countries), some countries enjoy partial tariff exemptions. Iran is not currently under any active preferential agreement with Indonesia, so date exports from Iran are subject to full tariffs.

In comparison, countries including United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia enjoy indirect tariff benefits through regional arrangements, which could explain part of the difference in the final cost of imported dates.

Non-tariff barriers (NTMs)

The results from the Market Access Map and official documents from the Indonesian government (BPJPH, BPOM, FAS Jakarta, 2024–2025) show that dates as a food product are subject to several categories of technical and sanitary non-tariff barriers:

Halal Certification: Law No. 33 of 2014 concerns Halal Product Assurance and its Implements Regulations (BPJPH, 2024), all imported food products must have halal certificates from approved institutions. This certificate must be issued before entering the market and must be included on the product label in Indonesian. The cost of issuing and verifying the certificate, along with the administrative processing time (2–3 weeks), increases the cost of entry and is a factor in reducing the Utilization Ratio in date exports.

Food Product Labeling and Registration Requirements (BPOM Regulations): According to BPOM Regulations No. 31 of 2018 and No. 1 of 2022, all products must include nutritional information, expiration date, country of origin, and registration number (ML Number). Product registration is a time-consuming process (approximately 45–60 days) and if delayed, the shipment may be stopped from entering the market. Registration and labeling costs are estimated at around \$300–500 per SKU.

Quarantine and Sanitary Measures (SPS) Regulations: Dates, as a plant commodity, must have a Phytosanitary Certificate issued by the country of origin. The deadline for issuing this certificate is limited (up to 21 days before the shipment departs) and any discrepancy can lead to delays or return of the goods (FAS Jakarta, 2025).

Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

Based on the results obtained, although the nominal tariff for dates is relatively low (5%), non-tariff barriers have negative impact on limiting Iran's market access. Complex requirements in the field of halal certification, product registration, and quarantine effectively increase transaction costs and lengthen the time to market entry.

These findings are aligned with the predictions of the trade gravity model (Anderson & van Wincoop, 2003), which states that even under conditions of tariff parity, institutional barriers, indirect costs, and regulatory differences can severely constrain bilateral trade flows.

Consequently, the positive trade gap between estimated export potential and realized exports, as well as the utilization ratio of less than one, indicate that Iran's potential in the Indonesian date market has not been realized due to these non-tariff barriers. This result is also aligned with previous studies such as Looie Kee et al. (2009), which emphasize that non-tariff barriers in developing countries have a tariff-equivalent effect of up to several times the official tariff rate.

4.7 Analysis of Qualitative data (interviews)

Interviewee Sample Profile

A total of 24 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the Iranian date value chain between May and August 2025. The interview questions are provided in [Appendix 1](#).

The sample included:

Date exporters (n=9)

Date producers (n=4)

International transport and logistics companies (n=2)

Experts from government organizations providing services to exporters (n=3)

Officials from the Date Association (n=3)

Experts from the Chamber of Commerce (n=3)

Method of Qualitative Data Collection

In the qualitative part of this thesis, data were collected by face-to-face semi-structured interviews. This approach was chosen due to its flexibility and ability to elicit in-depth perspectives from participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The main objective was to identify barriers, opportunities, and factors that affects the realization of Iran's date export potential to Indonesia.

The data collection process included the following steps:

Designing the Interview Guide: Interview questions were designed based on the theories used in the conceptual framework of the research (comparative advantage, trade gravity model, and export potential) to ensure that the conversations were related to the research objectives.

Conducting face-to-face interviews: this kind of interviews were chosen as the best option to increase direct interaction and depth of responses (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Note-taking and data recording: During each interview, notes were recorded and detailed notes were used as the main source of data.

Data transfer and organization in Excel software: After completion of the interviews, the raw notes were digitally entered into an Excel file. Each row was assigned to one interview and the columns included: Interviewee ID, main topics covered, and Key points of the interview as showed in Table 4-5.

Data coding and analysis: Open coding was used by repeatedly reviewing the data in Excel. Similar codes were then combined and grouped into axial coding. At this stage, thematic analysis method was used based on the Brown and Clark (2006) model.

Table 4-5 shows a summary of the interviews. The key points presented are extracted from the interview notes and quotes and form the basis of the subsequent analyses in the qualitative findings section.

Table 4-5. Summary of interviews and qualitative research findings		
Interview code	Main topics covered	Key points from Interviews
INT01	Transportation costs, tariffs	Shipping costs to Indonesia are twice as high as Malaysia; export profits are low.
INT02	Halal certificate, brand registration	The BPJPH process is time-consuming and not possible without a local representative.
INT03	Marketing and market knowledge	The Indonesian consumer has different tastes; we don't know the market.
INT04	Competition with Egypt and Saudi Arabia	Low prices and strong competitor relationships prevent us from entering supermarkets.
INT05	Banking sanctions	It is not possible to transfer money through a bank; we have to use intermediaries.
INT06	Digital marketing cost	Advertising on Indonesian platforms is expensive and without government support.
INT07	Date quality	Some buyers rejected the dates due to high humidity.
INT08	Logistics and Customs	Delays in clearance of goods cause part of the shipment to be lost.

INT09	Export insurance cost	Date insurance for the Indonesian market is expensive and has a long process.
INT10	Production and packaging	We don't have export packaging; it's hand-packed.
INT11	Quality and maintenance	The lack of cold storage reduces the quality of dates before export.
INT12	Financing	Loans and facilities are not available for export development.
INT13	Traditional marketing	Local producers are unaware of modern marketing.
INT14	Sea transportation	There is a shortage of cold containers for fresh dates.
INT15	Shipping schedules and costs	Shipping rates to Jakarta are high and arrival times are long.
INT16	Sanctions, export support	The lack of a direct banking channel hinders legitimate trade.
INT17	Indonesian tariff and preferential tariff	Iran is not present in ASEAN's preferential agreements.
INT18	Export procedures	The complexity of export documents and errors in declarations are time-consuming.
INT19	National brand and marketing	There is no single Iranian date brand; other countries have created brands.
INT20	Seasonal demand	During Ramadan, demand multiplies, but our exports are not ready.
INT21	Packaging and price	The cost of standard packaging is high and small exporters cannot afford it.
INT22	Iran-Indonesia trade cooperation	The relationship between businesspeople from the two countries is weak.
INT23	Export training	Exporters lack knowledge of Indonesian export regulations.
INT24	Market information infrastructure	Indonesian market data is not available to exporters.

4.8 Extracted Themes and Detailed Analysis

The qualitative data analysis of the interviews was conducted by using the thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this process, the interview transcripts were converted to open coding, axial coding, and selective coding after multi-stage implementation and rereading.

The interview data were analysed in six groups of stakeholders, and a total of five main themes with eleven subthemes were identified:

Theme 1: Institutional and Regulatory Barriers

Sub-themes:

- Banking sanctions and difficulty in transferring money
- Complexity in obtaining halal certification (BPJPH)
- Lack of preferential trade agreement between Iran and Indonesia

Most interviewees (19 out of 24) emphasized that international sanctions and banking restrictions are the most important barrier to conducting direct financial transactions with Indonesia. Exporters are forced to use third-party intermediaries in other countries, which increases costs and risks. In addition, the process of obtaining halal certification from the BPJPH is time-consuming, expensive, and requires cooperation with a local representative in Indonesia. Government experts also said that Iran's absence from ASEAN preferential agreements means that the import tariff for dates from Iran is higher than that of other competitors.

Interpretation: Institutional barriers and banking sanctions directly affect the reduction of the export potential utilization ratio. Removing or reducing these barriers can reduce the gap between potential and actual exports.

Theme 2: Logistical and Infrastructure barriers

Sub-themes:

- Lack of direct shipping lines between Iran and Indonesia
- shortage of refrigerated containers and customs delays
- High transportation and insurance costs

According to interviewees (11 interviews), the cost of shipping dates to Indonesia is high. There is a shortage of refrigerated containers in Bandar Abbas city and also delays in clearance, which there are detrimental to sensitive dates such as Piarom and Mazafati. Export insurance companies also provide limited coverage for dates to distant target markets.

Interpretation: Weak logistics and transportation are key factors in reducing the competitiveness of Iran's exports. Developing port infrastructure and increasing direct lines can significantly reduce the total cost of exports.

Theme 3: Product Quality and Standards

Sub-themes:

- Non-standard packaging
- High humidity and lack of cold storage
- No compliance with Indonesian BPOM requirements

Producers and exporters (8 interviews) emphasized weaknesses in packaging and storage.

Interpretation: Improving packaging, labelling, and quality control is a prerequisite for entering modern Indonesian distribution channels. This is also closely related to halal requirements and the adoption of food safety certification.

Theme 4: Marketing and Market Knowledge and Promotion

Sub-themes:

- Ignorance of Indonesian consumer tastes
- Lack of national date brand
- High cost of digital marketing

Fourteen interviewees admitted that Iranian exporters have limited knowledge of the Indonesian market. Indonesian consumer tastes tend to be soft and sweet (like the Egyptian variety). While Saudi Arabia and Egyptian brands are known for their attractive packaging and active advertising on local platforms, Iranian dates lack a unified brand.

Interpretation: Lack of market information and weak branding are important factors behind Iran's lagging share of the Indonesian date market. Investing in digital marketing and national branding can improve Iran's competitive position.

Theme 5: Opportunities and Policy Implications

Sub-themes:

- Ramadan Seasonality
- Iran-Indonesia Bilateral Cooperation
- Proposed Supportive Policies

Almost all interviewees emphasized the importance of Ramadan as a peak demand period. Chamber of Commerce experts suggested that Iran's share of the Indonesian date market could be doubled by concluding bilateral agreements and removing some tariff barriers. It was also suggested that the Iranian government consider targeted transportation and marketing facilities to support agricultural exports in Southeast Asian markets.

Interpretation: This theme emphasizes positive aspects and untapped capacities. Quantitative results from ITC also confirm the finding that Iran has only realized about half of its export potential in Indonesia (Utilization Ratio < 0.5).

4.9 Combining quantitative and qualitative findings

This kind of combination leads to comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study, as it integrates numerical data with contextual and interpretive insights and increases the validity of research results (Creswel & Claark, 2017). The combination of data in this study was carried out with the aim of providing a deeper and multidimensional understanding of the situation of Iranian date exports to Indonesia. The quantitative data was taken from official international sources such as ITC and FAO and included export performance indicators, comparative advantage, trade gap, barriers related to tariffs, and potential export capacity. In contrast, the qualitative data was obtained from semi-structured interviews.

The quantitative findings showed that Iran's share of the Indonesian date market has decreased from about 11 percent to 3 percent during the period 2014-2023. This is while the overall volume of Indonesian date imports has increased significantly during the same period. Interviewees also confirmed this decline and attributed the main reason to the instability of trade relations, dependence on intermediaries, and lack of long-term contracts. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data emphasize the weakness of Iran's trade and marketing networks.

In the context of Revealed comparative advantage (RCA), quantitative data showed that Iranian dates have always had an index above 30 over the past decade and in some years have reached more than 60, indicating a sustainable competitive advantage. This finding is also consistent with qualitative data, as most interviewees emphasized the high quality of Iranian date varieties (such as Piarom and Mazafati) and the country's strong production capacity. Consequently, both sets of data indicate the existence of a structural advantage and strong competitive potential of Iran in the date trade.

Regarding export potential and trade gap, ITC data analysis showed that Iran's date export potential to Indonesia is estimated at around \$46 million by 2029, while actual exports in 2023 were only around \$2.1 million. The export capacity utilization ratio was also calculated to be around 5%. Interviewees also attributed this large gap to administrative barriers, complex certification requirements, and high marketing costs. Therefore, the gap between potential and actual performance is more related to ineffective trade policies and weak infrastructure than to weak production.

In terms of non-tariff barriers (NTMs), ITC Market Access Map data showed that importing dates to Indonesia requires a halal certificate (BPJPH), product registration with the Indonesian Food and Drug Administration (BPOM), and a phytosanitary certificate. Qualitative findings also confirmed these results; Exporters complained about the time-consuming licensing process, high costs, and difficulty coordinating with Indonesian institutions. As a result, both sources indicate that non-tariff barriers are the most important factor limiting Iran's access to the Indonesian market.

Analysis of the logistics and infrastructure sector also showed a high level of agreement between the two types of data. Statistically, the cost of transporting

dates to Indonesia is reported to be about 20-25 percent higher than the regional average. Interviewees also complained about the lack of direct shipping lines, the absence of refrigerated containers, and customs delays at ports. Therefore, it can be concluded that weak logistics and infrastructure are key factors reducing the competitiveness of Iranian exports.

In the context of financial constraints, limited data point to the existence of banking barriers and the lack of access to formal payment systems. This was also confirmed in the interviews; most exporters were forced to use financial intermediaries in third countries, especially the UAE, which increases the cost and risk of transactions. These findings indicate that sanctions and banking problems directly affect the reduction of Iran's export capacity utilization.

From a marketing and target market understanding perspective, quantitative data indicate a more active presence of countries such as Egypt and Tunisia in the Indonesian market. Interviewees also acknowledged that Iranian exporters have limited familiarity with Indonesian consumer tastes and lack a national brand and targeted advertising strategy. Therefore, weak marketing and lack of market information are soft but effective obstacles to Iran's backwardness.

Finally, both quantitative and qualitative findings emphasize the role of seasonal opportunities, especially the month of Ramadan. Statistical data show a more than 40 percent increase in date imports during this month, and all interviewees described it as the "golden period for date sales." This convergence indicates that coordinating the export program with the Indonesian religious calendar can be effective in increasing sales and utilizing export capacities.

Overall, the integration of findings provides a comprehensive picture of Iran's date export performance. Statistical data objectively identifies gaps and capacities, while qualitative findings explain the institutional, operational, and structural reasons for these gaps. The final result shows that weaknesses in logistics infrastructure, non-tariff barriers, banking problems, and the lack of a systematic marketing strategy are the most important obstacles to realizing Iran's export potential to Indonesia. In contrast, the existence of a sustainable comparative advantage, the high quality of Iranian dates, and seasonal opportunities (such as Ramadan) are among the most important strengths that, if targeted policies are implemented, can strengthen Iran's position in the Indonesian date market.

4.10 SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is one of the key tools in strategic planning that helps organizations and countries identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and environmental threats and develop more effective strategies (Gurl, 2017). In this Thesis, with the aim of comprehensively analysing the current and future status of Iranian date exports to Indonesia, the SWOT model was used to identify factors affecting export performance. This analysis was based on quantitative data (export statistics, comparative advantage index, and trade gap) and qualitative data obtained from expert interviews and academic resources.

Iran's **strengths** in exporting dates to Indonesia include the following:

1. RCA index for Iranian dates has always been more than 30 in the ten-year period 2014-2023, which shows that Iran's structure is competitive in the global date market.
2. Genetic and qualitative diversity of dates: Iran has genetic and qualitative diversity of dates and can meet the diverse demands of the Indonesian market. This diversity provides opportunities to enter different market segments (Khodaverdizadeh et al., 2025; Hajian, 2008; Latifi and Shabanali Fami 2020).
3. Iran has decades of experience in harvesting and processing dates, which has led to a strong production base and specialized human resources because there are extensive palm groves in Iran's date-growing provinces, which has created a significant structural advantage (Mazlounzadeh and Shammsi 2007; Koshtteh and Kamalian 2004; Sadeeghi and Kuhestani 2014).
4. Obtaining halal certification for date products is easier than other competitors because date production in Iran is carried out in accordance with Islamic principles (Akbar et al., 2023).
5. In Iran, labour costs are low (Shahriyari et al., 2018), and weather conditions are favourable (Sadeeghi and Kuhestani 2014), and according to experts viewpoints in interviews, the final price of Iranian dates can be lower than its competitors.

Iran has the following **weaknesses** in date exports to Indonesia :

1. Date packaging does not match market tastes (Rahmani, 2006). According to interviewee's viewpoints, the packaging of some Iranian export products lacks proper design and multilingual labels and nutritional information on the packaging, which reduces its appeal to consumers.
2. Since some date varieties that have high moisture content, including Mazafati, are sensitive to temperature conditions, the lack of cold storage, especially in southern Iranian ports, reduces the quality and causes product loss during export. In this regard, there is a lack of cold storage facilities and modern transportation infrastructure in Iran (Al-Habsi, 2025).
3. Due to international sanctions, there are many banking and financial restrictions in Iran for foreign exchange transfers. These sanctions have prevented exporters from using formal financial instruments such as letters of credit (L/C) and have forced exporters to use informal methods such as intermediaries, which poses financial risks and increases costs for them (Özdamar and Shahin, 2021).
4. Based on expert viewpoints in interviews, Exporters have little knowledge of Indonesian consumer behaviour and preferences. They use traditional channels instead of modern distribution platforms, and overall, their official representatives and marketing offices are very limited.
5. There are many decision-making organizations in Iran in the field of exports. Inconsistency between policymaking and service-providing organizations for exporters, including the Trade Development Organization, Customs, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Agricultural Jihad, has led to slow decision-making and the absence of integrated export policies. According to Eydiizadeh et al. (2022) the current state of export support policies in Iran will not lead to meaningful export growth if the current trend is going on; this means that the policy-making structure and coordination between institutions need to be reviewed.

Iran has **opportunities** to increase its date exports to Indonesia:

1. Indonesia is a country with a large population (Pew Research Centre, 2025), with a Muslim majority, and halal products in this market is a high need (Pradana et al., 2024). therefore, this market could be one of the largest potential markets for Iranian dates.
2. according to Lulu (2022), Indonesian people have an increasing tendency to eat healthy and organic food, and this makes a good opportunity to promote Iranian dates as a natural product.
3. Based on Syadullah and Miftahudin (2017) study, Indonesia's regional agreements such as RCEP and ASEAN and active participation of its member in these agreements provide opportunities for trade with them. As a result, these is an important potential for Iran to access Southeast Asian markets through these agreements in the future.
4. There is high demand in Indonesia during the month of Ramadan and religious occasions, and this provides an opportunity for targeted exports and increased sales volumes (Setiawan, 2021).
5. Indonesia's geographical location as an ASEAN trade gateway (Setyoko et al., 2024) provides this opportunity that can connect Iran to other regional markets.

Threats to Iran's date exports to Indonesia include the following:

1. According to experts' viewpoints in interviews, there are better-known brands of dates by Iran's competitors in the Indonesian market. these competitors have established trade relations with Indonesia and well-known brands are present in the country's market.
2. Registering dates with BPOM and obtaining halal certification from BPJPH and complying with SPS standards is time-consuming and costly (Hayat et al., 2013).
3. Based on the viewpoints of Date exporters in interviews, there are no direct shipping lines between Iran and Indonesia, and indirect transfer of dates to the Indonesian market increases the cost and time of clearance.

4. Financial problems caused by international sanctions and exchange rate fluctuations cause instability in export pricing and reduce competitiveness (Moeeni, 2021; Laudati, 2023).

5. Increasing temperatures and water shortages in date-growing areas and climate change pose a serious threat to date production in the long term (Shabani et al., 2014; Baaghideh et al., 2020).

SWOT analysis shows that Iran has a sustainable comparative advantage in date exports, but faces serious institutional, logistical and informational barriers in using this advantage to penetrate the Indonesian market. In terms of internal problems, the most important challenges include exporters' lack of familiarity with the target market, poor packaging and lack of cold storage infrastructure. In terms of external problems, international sanctions, strict non-tariff requirements and competition with Arab countries are the most important constraints. On the other hand, there are significant opportunities for Iran to export dates to Indonesia, such as the growth of the halal market, seasonal demand during Ramadan and the possibility of using Indonesia's position in the ASEAN agreement, which, if carefully developed strategies are developed, can lead to the development of Iranian date exports.

Export Development Strategies

In general, to convert strengths into sustainable competitive advantages, export development strategies should focus on the following areas:

- Improving logistics and cold chain infrastructure.
- Improving packaging design and quality in line with destination market standards.
- Establishing Iranian trade offices in Indonesia for direct marketing.
- Developing mutual cooperation in the field of halal certification between organizations in the two countries.
- Creating financial incentives for exporters in the face of sanctions and high transportation costs.

5 DISCUSSION

this chapter summarizes and interprets the study findings by considering the theoretical framework and to answer the research questions. It focused on assessing the current and future status of Iranian date exports to Indonesia.

The findings are analysed from three perspectives:

- Comparative and theoretical analysis of quantitative findings.
- Explanation of qualitative interview results regarding institutional, structural and managerial factors.
- Final integration and interpretation of the findings to provide strategies for developing date exports to the Indonesian market.

5.1 Discussion and interpretation of findings

Revealed Comparative Advantage

This index is used to measure the competitive ability of countries in exporting a good relative to the world average. When the value of this index is greater than one, it indicates that the country has a revealed export advantage in producing and exporting that good (Balassa, 1965). The results of the calculation of the RCA Index showed that Iranian dates have a sustainable competitive advantage. The value of this index has always been above 30 during the years 2014-2023 and has increased to more than 60 in some years, indicating Iran's inherent advantage in date production and export.

However, despite this advantage, Iran's share of global date exports has decreased from 17 percent to 13 percent during the aforementioned period. This gap between "potential advantage" and "actual performance" can be explained by using Porter's (1990) theoretical framework of competitive advantage. According to this theory, having natural resources and production capacity does not guarantee sustainable advantage, but institutional dynamism, export infrastructure, and efficiency in adapting to market needs are the determining factors for success.

In fact, the findings show that Iran has not passed the stage of natural advantage and has not yet reached the level of established competitive advantage.

Trade Gravity Model and Export Potential

Bergstrand (1985) provided theoretical foundations and empirical evidence to show that variables such as economic size, transportation costs, and trade barriers are the most prominent determinants of the volume of bilateral trade. According to the findings of this study, the trade gravity model predicts that Iran's potential export flow to Indonesia could increase to \$46 million by 2029. While actual date exports to Indonesia in 2023 were only \$2.1 million. This gap corresponds to a trade gap of \$44 million and a utilization ratio of 0.05.

These numbers indicate that Iran has only utilized 5% of its potential capacity in the Indonesian market. According to the gravity model's interpretation, this is due to "increasing effective distance costs" that means institutional and logistical barriers act as economic distance and limit actual trade flows.

This result is aligned with the view of Anderson and Van Wincoop (2003) who argue that institutional and administrative costs have a similar impact on trade volume as physical distance. In fact, Iran has been unable to take advantage of its geographical and cultural advantage over Muslim markets in Southeast Asia due to the lack of preferential routes and efficient infrastructure.

Institutional and Non-Tariff Barriers

According to Mayer and Zignago's (2005), analyzing "market access map" data is an effective tool for measuring trade barriers, access costs, and export development opportunities in developing countries (Mayer & Zignago, 2005). In this thesis, analysis of Market Access Map data showed that although the average import tariff for dates in Indonesia is 5 percent, non-tariff barriers (NTMs) have a much more impact on export performance.

The most important of these barriers are:

- Halal certification requirements.

- Food product registration and labelling requirements.
- Phytosanitary (SPS) certification for agricultural commodities.

From a theoretical perspective, these requirements are considered within the framework of Institutional Trade Theory, which focused on the quality of regulatory institutions and the efficiency of bureaucracy have a direct impact on facilitating or restricting trade flows.

Qualitative data (interview) also reinforced this finding: most interviewees identified long, costly, and non-transparent administrative processes as the main factor for reducing their incentive to enter the Indonesian market. Also, banking sanctions and difficulty in conducting financial transactions have added further complexity to the export process.

Logistics, Infrastructure and Transaction Costs

Qualitative findings showed that inadequate logistics infrastructure, especially in maritime transport and cold chain, is one of the most important operational constraints. The lack of direct shipping lines to Jakarta, the shortage of refrigerated containers in Bandar Abbas, and the long clearance time increase the final cost of exports.

In relation to the Transaction Cost Theory, these problems lead to increased hidden costs of trade and reduced attractiveness of exports. Therefore, reducing logistics costs and improving the supply chain are necessary conditions for realizing export potential.

Marketing, Market Awareness and Branding

The findings of the interviews indicate that many exporters have a limited understanding of the cultural characteristics and tastes of Indonesian consumers. Consumers in this market prefer soft and sweet dates (such as Egyptian varieties) and packaging design plays a vital role in the purchase decision.

The lack of a national date brand and limited Iranian promotional activities in the Indonesian market have caused Iranian dates to lag behind Saudi and Tunisian

brands despite their high quality. This finding is consistent with Porter's (1990) view that sustainable competitiveness is not based on production costs but on "customer perception of value".

5.2 Recommendations

A set of solutions are proposed to improve the situation of Iranian date exports to Indonesia based on the findings:

a) Macro-level recommendations (policymaker and government level)

- Developing a bilateral preferential trade agreement with Indonesia to reduce tariffs and harmonizing health and halal certificates.
- Establishing an Iranian Agricultural Export Coordination Center in ASEAN (Jakarta) to facilitate exchanges, provide market information, and support exporters.
- Investing in cold storage infrastructure, direct shipping lines, and export terminals for agricultural products.
- Improving the halal certification system in Iran in cooperation with the Indonesian BPJPH organization for mutual recognition of certificates.
- Facilitating export financing through intermediary banks and regional credit lines.

b) Sectoral recommendations (firm and exporter level)

- Investing in multilingual packaging and labelling design in accordance with BPOM requirements and Indonesian market standards.
- Creating a national Iranian date brand with a unified visual identity and a digital marketing program based on religious occasions (Ramadan).
- Establishing a date export consortium among producers in the south of the country to create economies of scale and reduce transportation costs.
- Expanding representative relations and trade offices in Indonesia to collect market data, provide after-sales service, and connect with major importers.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

- Comparative study of Iranian date exports to other ASEAN member countries to identify alternative routes.
- Study of the impact of halal certification and food standards on the export performance of Iranian agricultural products.
- Design of an econometric model to quantify the effect of non-tariff barriers on the date export gap.
- Study of the date value chain from farm to consumer market at the regional level with an export value-added approach.

5.4 Conclusion

This thesis aimed to assess the current and future status of Iranian date exports to Indonesia and tried to present opportunities, challenges and improvements of this trade by combining quantitative and qualitative analyses. The results of this study showed that despite notable comparative advantage, Iranian date exports have not been able to gain a suitable share of the Indonesian date market.

In the quantitative part of thesis, the findings showed that Iran's share of the Indonesian date market has decreased from about 11% to 3% in the period 2014-2023. Meanwhile, competitors, have consolidated their position in the Indonesian market by taking advantage of trade agreements and other effective marketing measures. Iran Revealed comparative advantage index (RCA) has been above 30 in all the years (2014-2023), that indicates a sustainable competitive advantage in date production and export. However, when we compared actual exports with the estimated export potential by ITC showed that the utilization ratio of Iran's date export potential is only about 4.6 percent. In other words, from potential capacity of \$46 million in date exports to Indonesia by 2029, only about \$2 million date has been exported in 2023. This large difference highlights the structural gap between Iran's production capacity and export performance.

In the qualitative section, interviews with 24 stakeholders revealed a set of barriers and exploitable opportunities. The most important barriers that were identified included international banking sanctions, the complexity of the process of getting halal certification from BPJPH, strict product registration requirements with BPOM, a shortage of export cold storage facilities, and high transportation and

insurance costs. In addition, a lack of understanding of Indonesian consumer tastes and behaviour, poor packaging and branding, and a lack of active marketing offices in Jakarta and other commercial centres were assessed as the most important non-structural factors that weakens Iran's position in the target market.

Qualitative findings also showed that, beside the challenges, there are also significant opportunities for Iranian date exports growth. The increasing Muslim population in Indonesia, the growing trend towards natural and healthy products, the development of online halal food markets, and the increase in demand during Ramadan are among the opportunities that could expand Iranian date exports. In addition, many interviewees believed that developing bilateral preferential trade agreements or active membership in regional agreements such as ASEAN and RCEP could play an important role in reducing tariff barriers and strengthening Iran's competitiveness.

In this study, quantitative and qualitative results were integrated and presented situation of date exports to Indonesia. Statistical data from ITC and FAO confirmed that Iran has high production capacity and export comparative advantage, but weaknesses in institutional, infrastructural and marketing factors have prevented this capacity from being fully realized. Interview findings also showed that non-economic factors, especially the difficulty in being align with halal regulations, packaging requirements and the lack of sustainable trade relations, have played a more important role than price variables in Iran's export performance.

Overall, the study results shows that a multidimensional approach should be applied to increase the productivity of Iranian date exports to Indonesia. It also shows that Iranian dates not only have a structural comparative advantage but can also develop Iran's non-oil exports in Muslim markets in Southeast Asia. for achieving this goal requires to develop strategies for date value chain, reforming institutional mechanisms, improving export infrastructure, and increasing economic and cultural interactions with Indonesia.

Therefore, the present study emphasizes that the future of Iranian date exports to Indonesia is highly dependent on three key factors:

- Removing institutional and financial barriers.
- Improving product quality and packaging in line with the target market.

- Establishing sustainable marketing networks based on bilateral and regional cooperation.

By implementing these factors, Iran can not only regain its lost share but also gain a sustainable and strategic position in the Indonesian date market and also in the global date market.

TABLES

<u>Table 4-1. Date production and export trends in Iran and the world.....</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Table 4-2. Iran's Share in Indonesia's Date Import Market.....</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Table 4-3. supplying markets for date imported by Indonesia.....</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Table 4-4. Revealed Comparative Advantage of Iranian Dates.....</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>Table 4-5. Summary of interviews and qualitative research findings.....</u>	<u>41</u>

REFERENCES

- Ahmadi, F., & Ranjbar, H. (2017). Study of the factors affecting on Iranian dates export. *Agricultural Economics and Sustainable Development*, 5(1), 43–52. https://www.aes.basu.ac.ir/article_6027.html
- Al- Habsi, N. (2025). Date Palm (*Phoenix dactylifera* L.) Fruit: Strategic Crop for Food Security, Nutritional Benefits, Postharvest Quality, and Valorization into Emerging Functional Products. *Sustainability*, 17(16), Article 7491. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17167491>
- Al-Karmadi, A., & Okoh, A. I. (2024). An Overview of Date (*Phoenix dactylifera*) Fruits as an Important Global Food Resource. *Foods (Basel, Switzerland)*, 13(7), 1024. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods13071024>
- Akbar, J., Gul, M., Jahangir, M., Adnan, M., Saud, S., Hassan, S., ... & Fahad, S. (2023). Global trends in halal food standards: A review. *Foods*, 12(23), 4200.
- Amalia, F., Sosianika, A., & Suhartanto, D. (2020). Indonesian Millennials' Halal food purchasing: Merely a habit? *British Food Journal*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-10-2019-0748>
- Anderson, J. E., & van Wincoop, E. (2003). Gravity with gravitas: A solution to the border puzzle. *American Economic Review*, 93(1), 170–192. <https://doi.org/10.1257/000282803321455214>
- Ashraf, Z., & Hamidi-Esfahani, Z. (2011). Date and date processing: a review. *Food reviews international*, 27(2), 101-133.
- Baaghdeh, M., Azizzadeh, J., Ahmadi, H., & Entezari, A. (2020). Climate change impacts on the cultivation areas of date palm tree in Iran. *Arabian Journal of Geosciences*, 13(22), 1188.
- Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH). (2024). Halal product assurance law No. 33/2014 and its implementation regulations. Jakarta, Indonesia: Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Balassa, B. (1965). Trade liberalisation and revealed comparative advantage. *The Manchester School*, 33(2), 99–123. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9957.1965.tb00050.x>

Bergstrand, J. H. (1985). The gravity equation in international trade: some micro-economic foundations and empirical evidence. *The review of economics and statistics*, 474-481.

Bothma, C. H., & Cant, M. C. (2010). The effectiveness of Trade Map as tool for measuring the trade potential between South Africa and China. *Corporate Ownership and Control*, 8(1), 463.

BPJPH – Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal. (2024, October 20). Phasing period ends, halal certification obligation takes effect starting October 18, 2024. <https://bpjph.halal.go.id/en/detail/phasing-period-ends-halal-certification-obligation-takes-effect-starting-october-18-2024>

BPOM – Indonesian Food and Drug Authority. (2018). Regulation No. 31/2018 on processed food labeling. ChemLinked. <https://food.chemlinked.com/database/view/2273>

BPOM – Indonesian Food and Drug Authority. (2022). Regulation No. 1/2022 on control of claims on processed food labels and advertisements. <https://jdih.pom.go.id/download/rule/1562/1/2022/>

BPS-Statistics Indonesia. (2025a, February 28). Foreign trade statistical bulletin imports, December 2024. Jakarta: BPS. Retrieved from <https://www.bps.go.id>

BPS-Statistics Indonesia. (2025b, March 17). Indonesia imports 16,469 tons of dates in February 2025 worth USD 18.09 million. Retrieved from <https://voi.id>

Brown, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

BSN – Badan Standardisasi Nasional. (2024). SNI 7313:2024 – Maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticide residues in plant commodities.

https://www.bsn.go.id/uploads/attachment/rsni3_7313_2024_siap_jp_ver_ok.pdf

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Decreux, Y., & Spies, J. (2016). *Export potential assessments: A methodology to identify export opportunities for developing countries*. Geneva: ITC. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Export-Potential-Assessments>

DFAT – Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2025). *Complying with Indonesian halal requirements*. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/indonesia/complying-indonesian-halal-requirements>

Eydizadeh, M., Gilaniniia, S., & Korrd, B. (2022). The effect of government support policies on the export of Iranian food industry products using the system dynamics–agent base approach. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(6), 125–136.

FAO Press. (2024, December 30). *FAO, Iran collaborate to strengthen integrated management of date palm diseases*. FAO Newsroom. <https://www.fao.org/iran/news/detail/>

FAO. (2023). *FAOSTAT: Crops and livestock products*. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization. <https://www.fao.org/faostat>

FAS Jakarta (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service). (2024, Nov 6). *Indonesia grants two-year extension for mandatory halal certification*. <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Indonesia+Grants+Two-Year+Extension>

FAS Jakarta (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service). (2025, Feb 20). *Indonesian prior notice must now be submitted before vessel departs U.S. port*. <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Indonesian+Prior+Notice>

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2024). FAO-STAT: Crops and livestock products – Dates (HS080410). Rome: FAO. Retrieved from <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data>

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2025). Indonesia: Food and agricultural import regulations and standards (FAIRS) country report. Jakarta, Indonesia: USDA.

Gurl, E. (2017). SWOT analysis: A theoretical review.

Hajian, S. (2008). Study of the establishment, productivity and quality of Deglet Noor'date palm in southwest Iran. In IV International Symposium on Tropical and Subtropical Fruits 975 (pp. 355-364).

Haris, A., Rismawati, R., Marlina, M., & Mustomi, O. (2025). The economic vibrancy of muslims during ramadan. *AMCA Journal of Community Development*, 5(2), 22-26.

Hassan Banaruee, & Amirizad, S. A. (2017). Internationalization of date industry through small industries development. *European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies*, 2(3). <https://zenodo.org/records/1006276>

Hausmann, R., & Hidalgo, C. (2011). The network structure of economic output. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 16(4), 309–342.

Hayat, R., Den Butter, F., & Kock, U. (2013). Halal certification for financial products: A transaction cost perspective. *Journal of business ethics*, 117(3), 601-613.

Head, K., & Mayer, T. (2014). Gravity equations: Workhorse, toolkit, and cookbook. In G. Gopinath, E. Helpman, & K. Rogoff (Eds.), *Handbook of International Economics* (Vol. 4, pp. 131–195). Elsevier. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780444543141000033>

Herath, H. M. S. P., Cao, L., & Chen, Y. (2014). Impacts of Regional Trade Agreements on food security: A case of ASEAN free trade agreement. *Journal of Food Security Studies*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263673592>

International Trade Centre (ITC). (2023). Evaluation of ITC's Work on Agricultural Value Chains.

International Trade Centre (ITC). (2023). Export Potential Map. <https://exportpotential.intracen.org>

International Trade Centre (ITC). (2024). Export Potential Map: Product 080410 – Dates from Iran to Indonesia (Estimate for 2029). Retrieved from <https://exportpotential.intracen.org>

International Trade Centre (ITC). (2024). Market access map: Indonesia – HS080410 (Dates). Geneva, Switzerland: ITC.

International Trade Centre (ITC). (2024). Trade Map: Bilateral Trade between Iran and Indonesia for Product HS080410 (Dates). Retrieved from <https://www.trademap.org>

Iran National Date Association (INDA). (2024). Annual performance report of Iran's date industry. Tehran, Iran: INDA Publications.

Jahangirpour, D., & Zibaei, M. (2022). Farmers' decision to adoption of modern irrigation systems under risk condition: application of stochastic efficiency with respect to a function approach. *Frontiers in Water*, 4, 931694.

Karami, A., Heydari, K., & Ebrahimi, M. (2016). Gravity model estimation for date export in Iran: A panel data approach. 6th International Conference on Agriculture and Animal Science (ICAAS). <https://civilica.com/doc/1817187/>

Karizaki, V. M. (2017). Iranian dates and ethnic date-based products. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 4(3), 204-209.

Kelly, M. M., Martin-Peters, T., & Farber, J. S. (2024). Secondary Data Analysis: Using existing data to answer new questions. *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*, 38(4), 615-618.

Khasanah, M. (2024). The impact of habit and halal involvement on the intention to purchase international branded food: Evidence from Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-09-2023-0289>

Khodaverdizadeh, M., Kahriz, A. K., & Abad, R. S. B. (2025). Study of the Factors Affecting on Iranian Dates Export with An Emphasis on The Role of The Market

Structure of Trading Partners. *Journal of Applied Economics Studies in Iran*, 14(54), 139-171.

Koshteh, K., & Kamalian, A. R. (2004, August). Dates marketing & exporting challenges in Iran. In XV International Symposium on Horticultural Economics and Management 655 (pp. 333-339).

Krugman, P. R. (2008). Comparative advantage. In S. N. Durlauf & L. E. Blume (Eds.), *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* (2nd ed., pp. 924-929). Palgrave Macmillan.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Lall, S., Weiss, J., & Zhang, J. (2005). The “sophistication” of exports: A new trade measure. *World Development*, 33(9), 1369–1391. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305750X05002019>

Latifi, Z., & Fami, H. S. (2020). Investigating the technical efficiency of date palm cultivation using the data envelopment analysis. *International Journal of Agricultural Management and Development (IJAMAD)*, 10(4), 383-399.

Laudati, D., & Pesaran, M. H. (2023). Identifying the effects of sanctions on the Iranian economy using newspaper coverage. *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, 38(3), 271-294.

Looi Kee, H., Nicita, A., & Olarreaga, M. (2009). Estimating trade restrictiveness indices. *The Economic Journal*, 119(534), 172-199.

Lulu, L. D. (2022). Purchase Intention Millennial Indonesia Terhadap Produk Makanan Organik. *Jurnal Economic Resource*, 5(2), 334-344.

Masruroh, N. (2020). The competitiveness of Indonesian halal food exports in global market competition industry. *Economica: Journal Ekonomi Islam*, 11(1), 43–64. <https://doi.org/10.21580/economica.2020.11.1.3709>

Mayer, T., & Zignago, S. (2005). Market access in global and regional trade (pp. 1-32). Paris: CEPII.

Mazlounzadeh, M., & Shamsi, M. (2006). Evaluation of alternative date harvesting methods in Iran. In III International Date Palm Conference 736 (pp. 463-469).

Ministry of Agriculture Jihad. (2023). Annual report on production and export of horticultural products (Dates). Tehran: Deputy of Planning and Agricultural Economics, Ministry of Agriculture Jihad.

Ministry of Agriculture, Iran. (2024). Annual report on agricultural exports: Date production and trade statistics. Tehran, Iran: MOA.

Moeeni, S., Sharifi, A., Mozafari Shamsi, H., & Mohammadi, V. (2021). The impact of iran oil sanctions on the exchange rates: An analysis using google search index. *Iranian Economic Review*, 25(3), 397-417.

Mulabdic, A., & Yasar, P. (2021). Gravity model–based export potential: An application to Turkey (Policy Research Working Paper No. 9557). The World Bank. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/716811614628943473/pdf/Gravity-Model-Based-Export-Potential-An-Application-to-Turkey.pdf>

OECD. (2024). Indonesia Gateway (I- Gateway) as hub for ASEAN trading. Observatory of Public Sector Innovation. <https://oecd-opsi.org/innovations/indonesia-gateway-i-gateway-as-hub-for-asean-trading-document>

Oktapiani, N., Al Farisi, M. S., & Herawati, E. (2025). Halal lifestyle, awareness, and consumer behavior. *JEKSYAH: Journal of Islamic Economics*, 5(1). <https://ejournal.iaingorontalo.ac.id/index.php/jeksyah/article/view/2649/1852>

Özdamar, Ö., & Shahin, E. (2021). Consequences of economic sanctions: The state of the art and paths forward. *International Studies Review*, 23(4), 1646-1671.

Pawlak, K., & Kołodziejczak, M. (2020). The role of agriculture in ensuring food security in developing countries: Considerations in the context of the problem of sustainable food production. *Sustainability*, 12(13), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12135488>

Pew Research Center. (2025). Muslim population change. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2025/06/09/muslim-population-change/>

Porter, M. E. (1990). " The Competitiv Advantage of Nations: Free Press. New York.

Pradana, M., Rubiyanti, N., & Marimon, F. (2024). Measuring Indonesian young consumers' halal purchase intention of foreign-branded food products. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1-8.

Rafiee, H. (2022). Investigating and determining the export pattern of Iranian dates. *Journal of Agricultural Economics and Development*, 30(2), 45–62. https://aead.agri-peri.ac.ir/article_127069.html?lang=en

Rahmani, H. (2007). Marketing problems and export of date trading varieties in Iran. In *Proceedings of the 4th International Date Palm Conference* (pp. 421–426). ISHS. https://www.actahort.org/books/736/736_55.htm

Rahmani, R. (2006). Marketing problems and export of date trading varieties in the IR of Iran. In *III International Date Palm Conference 736* (pp. 557-562).

Rastegar, S. (2015). Compare physico-chemical and nutritional properties of some date (*Phoenix dactylifera*) palm varieties. *Tropical Agriculture*, 92(3).

Ricardo, D. (1817). *On the principles of political economy and taxation*. London: John Murray.

Sadeghi, P., Hosseini, S. S., & Moghaddasi, R. (2019). Analysis of Iran's export market potential using gravity model: Evidence from date market. *Journal of Agricultural Science and Technology*, 21(4), 773–783. https://jast.modares.ac.ir/article_16302.html

Sadeghi, Z., & Kuhestani, K. (2014). Ethnobotany of date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) in Baluch tribe of Saravan region, Baluchistan, Iran.

Safdari, M., & Motiee, R. (2011). Sources of date export supply and investigating the elasticity of supply for date export in Iran. *European Journal of Experimental Biology*, 79–89. <https://www.primescholars.com/articles/sources-of-date-export-supply>

- Santeramo, F. G., & Lamonaca, E. (2019). The effects of non- tariff measures on agri- food trade: A review and meta- analysis of empirical evidence. *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 70(3), 595-617.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students*. Pearson education.
- Schiavo, S. (2025). Impacts of international food trade on natural resources. *Food Security Journal*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12571-025-01533-9>
- Setiawan, W. (2021). Ramadan, Pandemic, and Consumer-Audience Behaviors. *Jobmark: Journal of Branding and Marketing Communication*, 3(1), 161-166.
- Setyoko, N. R., Rokhim, R., Rohman, I. K., & Rofii, M. S. (2024). Indonesia's export growth decomposition in ASEAN and ASEAN dialogue partners. *Economic Journal of Emerging Markets*, 178-190.
- Shabani, F., Cacho, O., & Kumar, L. (2016). Effects of climate change on economic feasibility of date palm production. *Human and Ecological Risk Assessment: An International Journal*, 22(5), 1268–1287. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10807039.2016.1162089>
- Shabani, F., Kumar, L., & Taylor, S. (2014). Suitable regions for date palm cultivation in Iran are predicted to increase substantially under future climate change scenarios. *The Journal of Agricultural Science*, 152(4), 543-557.
- Shahriyari, H. A., Amiri, M., & Shahriyari, Z. (2018). A Brief Overview on Poverty in Iran: Comparison With the World. *International Journal of Epidemiologic Research*, 5(2), 67-71.
- Sharifi, N., Omid, F., & Yosefi Hajiabad, R. (2024). Designing a mental model of date export barriers. *International Journal of Nonlinear Analysis and Applications*, 15(3), 337–350. <https://doi.org/10.22075/ijnaa.2023.30728.4476>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE.

Syadullah, M., & Miftahudin, B. G. A. (2017). Analysis of The Potential Impact of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership on the ASEAN Member Countries. *Journal of Social and Development Sciences* (ISSN 2221-1152), 8(2), 28-37.

Tehran Times. (2025, March 14). Iran becomes world's second-largest date producer. Tehran Times. <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/509773/Iran-earns-400m-from-date-exports>

Tinbergen, J. (1962). *Shaping the world economy; suggestions for an international economic policy*.

Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO). (2024). Iran's non-oil export development strategy: Focus on Southeast Asian markets. Tehran, Iran: TPO.

Trade.gov (U.S. Department of Commerce). (2024, Jan 9). Indonesia – Import requirements and documentation. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/indonesia-import-requirements-and-documentation>

UNCTAD. (2022). *Key statistics and trends in international trade*. Geneva: United Nations.

World Bank. (2023). *World development indicators*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

World Population Review. (2025). Total population by country. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries>

World Trade Organization (WTO). (2023). WTO statistics database. <https://data.wto.org>

Yotov, Y. V., Piermartini, R., Monteiro, J.-A., & Larch, M. (2016). *An advanced guide to trade policy analysis: The structural gravity model*. Geneva: WTO & UNCTAD. https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/advanced-wtounctad2016_e.pdf

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

Questions related to the theory of comparative advantage:

- In what fields does Iran have comparative advantage compared to other countries that produce dates?
- To what extent do the costs of production, processing, and packaging of dates in Iran affect export competitiveness of this product?
- In your opinion, what factors have maintained or weakened the export advantage of Iranian dates in the last decade?
- What is the role of technology, innovation, and standard certifications (such as halal and organic) in strengthening the comparative advantage of Iranian dates?

Questions related to the Gravity Model of Trade:

- How do geographical distance and transportation costs affect Iran's export capacity to Indonesia?
- To what extent are the existing logistics infrastructure and transportation routes responsive to date exports to Indonesia?
- What impact do tariffs, technical restrictions or sanitary regulations (SPS and NTMs) in Indonesia have on the export of Iranian date?
- To what extent can regional trade agreements or multilateral cooperation (such as RCEP, OIC or bilateral arrangements) help facilitate date exports?

Questions related to the theory of export potential

- Why are Iran's actual date exports to Indonesia lower than the potential estimated by ITC?
- What are the most important obstacles to realizing the export potential of Iran's dates in the Indonesian market? (Including halal regulations, labeling requirements, quality, marketing, etc.)
- What actions can help increase Iran's export potential utilization ratio?

- What are the main weaknesses in marketing, understanding Indonesian consumer tastes and distribution channels for Iranian dates?

Questions related to SWOT analysis

- What are the strengths of Iranian dates in the Indonesian market in your opinion?
- What are the main weaknesses in the Iranian date export system (at the production, processing, packaging or transportation levels)?
- What opportunities are there to develop date exports to the Indonesian market?
- What are the main threats in the Indonesian market (competition from other countries, changing consumer preferences, import policies)?
- What is the role of the government, the Chamber of Commerce and export support institutions in facilitating date trade with Indonesia?
- In your opinion, what policies can help to ensure the sustainability of date exports to the Indonesian market in the long term?