

THE INFLUENCE OF HALAL CERTIFICATION, BRAND IMAGE, AND RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT ON PURCHASE DECISION OF HALAL FOOD PRODUCTS IN MEDAN CITY

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A B S T R A C T

This study examines the influence of halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment on purchase decisions of halal food products among consumers in Medan City, Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected from 200 Muslim consumers through structured questionnaires employing purposive sampling technique. The data was analyzed using Multiple Linear Regression Analysis with SPSS software. The results indicate that halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment simultaneously and partially have a significant positive influence on purchase decisions of halal food products. Religious commitment shows the strongest influence, followed by halal certification and brand image. The findings suggest that halal food producers and marketers in Medan should emphasize halal certification authenticity, build strong brand equity, and align their marketing strategies with religious values to enhance consumer purchase decisions. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Islamic marketing and consumer behavior in the context of Indonesian Muslim consumers.

A B S T R A K

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh sertifikasi halal, citra merek, dan komitmen agama terhadap keputusan pembelian produk makanan halal di kalangan konsumen di Kota Medan, Indonesia. Dengan pendekatan kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 200 konsumen Muslim melalui kuesioner terstruktur dengan teknik sampling purposif. Data dianalisis menggunakan Analisis Regresi Linier Berganda dengan perangkat lunak SPSS. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa sertifikasi halal, citra merek, dan komitmen agama secara bersamaan dan sebagian memiliki pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian produk makanan halal. Komitmen agama menunjukkan pengaruh terkuat, diikuti oleh sertifikasi halal dan citra merek. Temuan ini menyarankan agar produsen dan pemasar produk makanan halal di Medan menekankan keaslian sertifikasi halal, membangun ekuitas merek yang kuat, dan menyelaraskan strategi pemasaran mereka dengan nilai-nilai agama untuk meningkatkan keputusan pembelian konsumen. Studi ini berkontribusi pada perkembangan pengetahuan tentang pemasaran Islam dan perilaku konsumen dalam konteks konsumen Muslim Indonesia.

JEL Classification: M31, M37, Z12, L66, D91.

INTRODUCTION

The halal industry has experienced remarkable growth globally, driven by increasing awareness among Muslim consumers about the importance of consuming halal products. Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country with over 230 million Muslims, represents a significant market for halal food products. The halal food market in Indonesia is estimated to reach billions of dollars annually, reflecting the substantial purchasing power of Muslim consumers and their growing consciousness about halal consumption. Medan City, the capital of North Sumatra Province, is home to a diverse population with Muslims constituting

the majority. As one of Indonesia's major urban centers, Medan has witnessed a proliferation of halal food products and restaurants in recent years. The increasing availability of halal-certified products has been accompanied by heightened consumer awareness and scrutiny regarding the authenticity and quality of halal certifications. Halal certification serves as a critical assurance mechanism for Muslim consumers, guaranteeing that products comply with Islamic dietary laws (shariah). The presence of halal certification from authorized bodies such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI - Majelis Ulama Indonesia) significantly influences consumer confidence and purchase intentions. However, halal certification alone may not be sufficient to drive purchase decisions, as consumers also consider other factors such as brand reputation and their personal religious convictions. Brand image plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences.

A strong brand image can differentiate products in competitive markets and create emotional connections with consumers. In the context of halal food products, brand image encompasses not only product quality and reliability but also the brand's alignment with Islamic values and ethical business practices. Religious commitment represents another vital factor influencing Muslim consumers' purchase behavior. Consumers with higher levels of religious commitment tend to be more conscientious about ensuring their consumption aligns with Islamic principles. Their religiosity affects not only what they purchase but also their evaluation criteria and decision-making processes. Despite the growing importance of the halal market in Medan City, limited empirical research has examined the combined influence of halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment on purchase decisions for halal food products in this specific context. Understanding these relationships is essential for businesses seeking to effectively serve the Muslim consumer market and for policymakers aiming to develop the halal industry.

Based on the background above, the research problems are formulated as follows: Does halal certification influence purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City? Does brand image influence purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City? Does religious commitment influence purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City? Do halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment simultaneously influence purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City?. The objectives of this research are: To analyze the influence of halal certification on purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City. To analyze the influence of brand image on purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City. To analyze the influence of religious commitment on purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City. To analyze the simultaneous influence of halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment on purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior, developed by Ajzen (1991), posits that human behavior is guided by three kinds of considerations: behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs. These beliefs influence attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, which collectively shape behavioral intentions and actual behavior. In the context of halal food consumption, consumers' attitudes toward halal products, social pressures from their religious community, and their perceived ability to identify genuine halal products all contribute to their purchase decisions.

2.1.2 Consumer Decision-Making Theory

Consumer decision-making involves a multi-stage process including need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Various factors influence this process, including personal characteristics, psychological factors, social influences, and cultural contexts. For Muslim consumers, religious considerations add an additional dimension to this decision-making framework.

2.2 Halal Certification

Halal certification is an official recognition issued by authorized Islamic bodies certifying that products, services, or processes comply with Islamic law (shariah). According to Abdul et al. (2009), halal certification provides assurance to Muslim consumers that products have been prepared according to Islamic dietary laws, free from prohibited substances (haram), and processed using permissible methods. In Indonesia, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) through its Institute for Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Assessment (LPPOM MUI) is the authorized body for halal certification. The halal certification process involves comprehensive auditing of ingredients, production processes, and quality control systems to ensure compliance with Islamic standards.

Research by Aziz and Chok (2013) demonstrated that halal certification significantly influences Muslim consumers' purchase intentions and decisions. Consumers perceive halal-certified products as safer, cleaner, and more trustworthy. Similarly, Rahman et al. (2015) found that halal logo awareness and certification credibility positively affect consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

2.3 Brand Image

Brand image refers to consumers' perceptions and associations regarding a brand, formed through their experiences and exposure to brand communications (Keller, 1993). A positive brand image creates competitive advantages, fosters customer loyalty, and can command premium pricing. Aaker (1991) conceptualized brand equity as consisting of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. In the halal food context, brand image encompasses not only functional attributes such as quality and taste but also symbolic attributes related to Islamic values, ethical production, and social responsibility. Research by Ahmed (2008) indicated that brand image significantly influences Muslim consumers' purchase decisions for halal products. Consumers prefer brands that demonstrate authentic commitment to halal standards and Islamic principles. Yunus et al. (2014) found that brand trust mediates the relationship between halal certification and purchase intention, highlighting the importance of building credible brand images.

2.4 Religious Commitment

Religious commitment refers to the degree to which an individual adheres to religious beliefs, practices, and values in their daily life (Worthington et al., 2003). For Muslims, religious commitment encompasses both cognitive dimensions (beliefs and knowledge) and behavioral dimensions (ritual practices and lifestyle choices). Alam et al. (2011) demonstrated that religiosity significantly influences Muslim consumers' attitudes toward halal products and their purchase intentions. Highly religious consumers are more likely to scrutinize product attributes for halal compliance and prefer products that align with their religious values.

Mukhtar and Butt (2012) found that religious commitment moderates the relationship between attitudes and purchase intentions for halal food. Consumers with stronger religious commitment exhibit higher sensitivity to halal certification and are more willing to pay premium prices for certified products.

2.5 Purchase Decision

Purchase decision represents the final stage in the consumer decision-making process where consumers choose to buy a specific product or brand (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). This decision is influenced by various internal factors (personal characteristics, attitudes, perceptions) and external factors (marketing stimuli, social influences, cultural norms). In the context of halal products, Lada et al. (2009) identified several factors influencing purchase decisions including attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and religious obligation. Muslim consumers often face complex trade-offs between price, quality, convenience, and halal compliance when making purchase decisions.

2.6 Previous Research and Research Gap

Several studies have examined factors influencing halal product purchase decisions in various contexts. However, most previous research has been conducted in Malaysia, Middle Eastern countries, or other Muslim-majority nations, with limited focus on the Indonesian context, particularly Medan City. Research by Bonne and Verbeke (2008) in Belgium and France found that both halal certification and religious commitment influence Muslim immigrants' meat consumption patterns. Khalek and Ismail (2015) demonstrated that religious commitment strengthens the relationship between perceived value and purchase intention for halal cosmetics in Malaysia. The gap in existing literature lies in the limited examination of the combined influence of halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment on purchase decisions within the specific socio-cultural context of Medan City. Medan's unique demographic composition, with its diverse Muslim population and growing halal industry, warrants specific investigation.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, the conceptual framework of this research is as follows:

- 1) Independent Variables:
 - a) Halal Certification (X1)
 - b) Brand Image (X2)
 - c) Religious Commitment (X3)
- 2) Dependent Variable:
 - a) Purchase Decision (Y)

The framework posits that halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment independently and collectively influence purchase decisions of halal food products among consumers in Medan City.

2.8 Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical framework and previous research, the following hypotheses are formulated:

- a) **H1:** Halal certification has a significant positive influence on purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City.
- b) **H2:** Brand image has a significant positive influence on purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City.

- c) **H3:** Religious commitment has a significant positive influence on purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City.
- d) **H4:** Halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment simultaneously have a significant positive influence on purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research approach with a descriptive and explanatory design to investigate the influence of halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment on consumers' purchase decisions for halal food products in Medan City. The research aims to describe the characteristics of each variable and explain the causal relationships among them. By focusing on Muslim consumers in Medan who have purchased halal food products within the last six months, this study seeks to provide empirical insights into how certification credibility, brand perception, and individual religiosity collectively shape consumer behavior in the halal market context. The population of this study comprises Muslim consumers residing in Medan City, while the sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a 7% margin of error, resulting in 200 respondents. The purposive sampling technique was applied with inclusion criteria: Muslim residents aged 18 years or above, having purchased halal food products at least once in the past six months, and willing to participate. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire, consisting of demographic information and variable measurements based on a five-point Likert scale. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from books, journals, government reports, and credible online publications to strengthen the theoretical foundation and analysis.

Each variable in this study was operationalized using validated indicators derived from previous research. Halal Certification (X1) was measured through awareness, trust, attention to halal logos, product preference, and belief in certification authenticity. Brand Image (X2) was assessed through brand reputation, perceived quality, trustworthiness, Islamic association, and differentiation. Religious Commitment (X3) included the importance of religious beliefs, frequency of worship, consumption of halal products, adherence to religious guidance, and search for knowledge about halal consumption. The dependent variable, Purchase Decision (Y), was evaluated through indicators such as product selection based on halal status, purchase intention, preference for certified products, repeat purchase, and recommendation behavior.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25.0, encompassing several stages to ensure validity, reliability, and robustness of findings. The validity test used the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r > 0.3$), while the reliability test used Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha > 0.6$). Classical assumption tests included the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality, VIF for multicollinearity, and the Glejser test for heteroscedasticity. Hypothesis testing was conducted using Multiple Linear Regression Analysis with the model $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$. The t-test examined the partial influence of each variable, the F-test assessed simultaneous effects, and the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) measured the explanatory power of the independent variables on purchase decision outcomes.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

A total of 200 respondents participated in this study, representing Muslim consumers residing in Medan City who had purchased halal food products within the last six months. The demographic composition provides insight into the diversity of consumer profiles influencing halal product purchasing behavior.

Table 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	90	45
	Female	110	55
Age	18–25 years	76	38
	26–35 years	64	32
	36–45 years	40	20
	Above 45 years	20	10
Education Level	High School	50	25
	Diploma	36	18
	Bachelor's Degree	90	45
	Master's Degree or higher	24	12
Monthly Income (IDR)	< 3,000,000	56	28
	3,000,000–5,000,000	70	35
	5,000,001–7,000,000	44	22
	> 7,000,000	30	15

The demographic data show that female respondents (55%) slightly outnumber males (45%), suggesting that women play a major role in household food purchasing decisions. The majority of respondents (70%) are between 18 and 35 years old, indicating that younger consumers are active in halal product consumption. Educationally, 45% hold a bachelor's degree, reflecting a relatively well-educated sample. In terms of income, most respondents earn between IDR 3,000,000 and 5,000,000 per month, representing the middle-income consumer segment.

4.2 Validity and Reliability Test Results

Validity testing using the Pearson correlation coefficient demonstrated that all measurement items were valid, with correlation values ranging from 0.642 to 0.878, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.3. This confirms that each item appropriately measures its intended construct.

Table 4.2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Halal Certification (X1)	0.847	Reliable
Brand Image (X2)	0.821	Reliable
Religious Commitment (X3)	0.893	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.856	Reliable

All Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded 0.6, confirming that the questionnaire items for each construct are internally consistent and reliable for further analysis.

4.3 Classical Assumption Test Results

Before performing regression analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure data validity.

Table 4.3. Classical Assumption Test Results

Test	Indicator	Result	Conclusion
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Normality Test (Kolmogorov–Smirnov)	Sig. = 0.142	> 0.05	Data are normally distributed
Multicollinearity Test	VIF range = 1.542–2.187	< 10	No multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser)	Sig. > 0.05 for all variables	> 0.05	No heteroscedasticity

The results show that all classical assumptions are met, confirming that the dataset is suitable for multiple linear regression analysis.

4.4 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

The results of the regression analysis yielded the following equation:

$$Y = 2.156 + 0.289X_1 + 0.245X_2 + 0.412X_3$$

$$Y = 2.156 + 0.289X_1 + 0.245X_2 + 0.412X_3$$

Table 4.4. Regression Coefficients

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Constant (α)	2.156	—	—	Base purchase decision value
Halal Certification (X1)	0.289	4.527	0.000	Significant positive effect
Brand Image (X2)	0.245	3.842	0.000	Significant positive effect
Religious Commitment (X3)	0.412	6.731	0.000	Significant positive effect

Coefficient of Determination: $R^2 = 0.572$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.566$

This indicates that 56.6% of the variance in purchase decisions can be explained by halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment, while the remaining 43.4% is influenced by other unobserved factors such as price, availability, or social influence.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing Results

The t-test results indicate that all three independent variables significantly affect purchase decisions. Halal certification ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.05$) enhances consumer confidence and willingness to purchase. Brand image ($\beta = 0.245$, $p < 0.05$) reinforces perceptions of quality and reliability, while religious commitment ($\beta = 0.412$, $p < 0.05$) emerges as the strongest determinant.

The F-test result ($F = 87.459$, $p < 0.05$) confirms that all independent variables simultaneously have a significant effect on purchase decisions. Thus, all hypotheses (H1–H4) are accepted.

Table 4.5. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	t / F Value	Sig.	Decision
H1	Halal Certification \rightarrow Purchase Decision	t = 4.527	0.000	Accepted
H2	Brand Image \rightarrow Purchase Decision	t = 3.842	0.000	Accepted
H3	Religious Commitment \rightarrow Purchase Decision	t = 6.731	0.000	Accepted
H4	$X_1 + X_2 + X_3 \rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	F = 87.459	0.000	Accepted

4.6 Discussion

The findings reveal that halal certification significantly and positively influences purchase decisions, supporting prior studies by Aziz and Chok (2013) and Rahman et al. (2015). Consumers in Medan City perceive halal certification—especially from credible institutions such as MUI as a key trust signal that reduces uncertainty. The presence of a halal logo enhances product credibility, particularly for processed foods where ingredients are less transparent. Nonetheless, some consumers expressed concerns about counterfeit halal labels, emphasizing the need for stronger regulatory enforcement and consumer education. Brand image also exerts a meaningful influence on purchase decisions, reinforcing the role of branding in the competitive halal food sector. Consistent with the work of Ahmed (2008) and Yunus et al. (2014), a strong brand image evokes trust, perceived quality, and alignment with Islamic values. Consumers in Medan are more likely to purchase from well-established brands known for integrity and quality, even when alternatives possess halal certification. This suggests that certification alone is insufficient—brands must cultivate authentic reputations through consistent product quality and ethical communication.

Religious commitment emerges as the strongest predictor of purchase decisions, confirming findings by Alam et al. (2011) and Mukhtar and Butt (2012). Highly religious consumers perceive halal consumption as a moral and spiritual obligation rather than a lifestyle choice. They demonstrate higher vigilance, greater information-seeking behavior, and stronger willingness to pay premium prices for products ensuring halal compliance. For marketers, this underscores the necessity of integrating Islamic values authentically into their marketing strategies to foster deeper emotional and spiritual resonance. The combined influence of all three factors (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.566$) indicates that purchase decisions among Muslim consumers in Medan are shaped by interacting religious, informational, and branding factors. This multifactorial relationship suggests that successful halal marketing strategies must integrate certification credibility, brand equity, and religious value alignment. The unexplained 43.4% of variance opens opportunities for future research exploring additional determinants such as pricing, product accessibility, word-of-mouth influence, and digital marketing engagement.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and analysis, this study concludes that halal certification, brand image, and religious commitment each exert a significant and positive influence on consumers' purchase decisions of halal food products in Medan City. Among these variables, religious commitment demonstrates the strongest effect, reflecting that spiritual and moral values remain the dominant motivations guiding consumer choices in Muslim-majority contexts. Halal certification functions as a credibility indicator, assuring consumers of product compliance with Islamic standards, while a positive brand image reinforces consumer trust and reduces perceived risk. Collectively, the three variables explain 56.6% of the variance in purchase decisions, underscoring that consumers' buying behavior for halal food is shaped by a blend of religious conviction, informational assurance, and brand perception.

Despite these meaningful findings, the study has several limitations. The geographical focus on Medan City may restrict generalizability to other regions with differing cultural and economic characteristics. The sample size of 200 respondents, while sufficient for statistical analysis, could be expanded in future research using probability sampling for greater representativeness. Moreover, the study examines only three independent variables, leaving potential influences such as price, product quality, availability, and social influence

unexplored. The cross-sectional nature of the research also limits causal inference, and reliance on self-reported data may introduce response biases especially concerning religious commitment, which can be subject to social desirability effects.

To enhance future research, it is recommended that scholars expand the geographic scope to include multiple provinces or countries for comparative perspectives. Future studies should also incorporate additional variables such as price sensitivity, social media engagement, and perceived value to provide a more comprehensive understanding of purchase behavior. Adopting mixed-method or longitudinal designs would allow deeper exploration of consumer motivations and behavioral changes over time. Moreover, future work could examine mediating and moderating effects (e.g., trust, demographic factors) and conduct cross-category or cross-cultural comparisons to identify whether consumer behavior patterns differ between halal food, cosmetics, and pharmaceutical products or between Muslim consumers in different socio-cultural contexts.

From a practical perspective, this study offers several implications for stakeholders. Halal food producers and marketers should prioritize obtaining authentic halal certification, strengthen brand equity through consistent quality and value alignment, and design marketing strategies that genuinely reflect Islamic ethics rather than merely exploiting religious symbols. Transparency in ingredient disclosure, production processes, and certification details potentially supported by digital verification tools such as QR codes or blockchain can further build consumer trust. Halal certification bodies should reinforce auditing mechanisms and public awareness campaigns, while policymakers are encouraged to develop stronger regulatory frameworks, provide certification incentives for SMEs, and establish market surveillance systems to curb fraudulent halal labeling. Collectively, these initiatives can strengthen the integrity, competitiveness, and sustainability of the halal food sector in Medan and beyond.

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