



Halal Certification and Culinary Traditions: Rethinking Cultural Food Practices in Muslim-Majority Indonesia

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Received : November 1, 2025

Revised : February 26, 2026

Accepted : March 6, 2026

Online : June 12, 2026

Abstract

This study explores the relationship between halal certification and culinary traditions in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country. Despite the government's efforts to expand halal certification through formal regulations, the extent to which certification influences everyday food consumption practices remains unclear. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research combines quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews involving Muslim consumers and food vendors in Majalengka Regency, West Java. The findings reveal a significant gap between awareness and behavior. While participants generally understand the concept of halal certification and can recognize the official halal logo, most do not consider certification a primary factor in their food purchasing decisions. Instead, food choices are largely influenced by cultural familiarity, affordability, and trust within the local community. Traditional foods are commonly perceived as inherently halal due to their local origins and preparation by Muslim vendors. The study concludes that halal certification functions more as a regulatory mechanism than as a cultural determinant of consumption behavior. These findings highlight the importance of developing culturally grounded halal governance that bridges formal regulatory frameworks and community-based values. This research contributes to the broader discourse on religion, culture, and governance by demonstrating that halal practices in Indonesia are shaped not only by institutional compliance but also by social trust, cultural traditions, and everyday ethical considerations.

Keywords: *Halal Certification, Culinary Traditions, Cultural Trust, Muslim Consumers, Halal Governance*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, presents a fascinating intersection between religious observance and cultural heritage, particularly in the context of food. Since the enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance, halal certification has become mandatory for all goods circulated and traded within Indonesia (Muchtar et al., 2025). The law emphasizes that all food and beverage products, raw materials, additives, and auxiliary materials, as well as slaughtering services, must comply with halal standards as regulated in Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021. These regulations demonstrate the state's commitment to institutionalizing halal consumption as part of everyday life. Yet, despite the comprehensive legal framework, a paradox emerges: halal certification does not always translate into an ingrained halal consumption culture within society.

This phenomenon underscores a deeper sociocultural tension between religious regulation and traditional culinary practice. Indonesian Muslims are doctrinally familiar with the concept of *halalan thayyiban*, which is both lawful and wholesome. The nation's culinary landscape remains diverse, hybridized, and locally rooted. In many regions, traditional dishes are prepared based on inherited recipes rather than formal certification processes. For example, street food such as *seblak*,

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cilok goang, or *nasi tutug oncom* are widely consumed by Muslims who believe these foods are inherently halal, despite the absence of formal certification. This disconnect raises an important question: does the proliferation of halal certification genuinely reshape cultural food practices in a Muslim-majority context, or does it merely serve as a regulatory formality?

The urgency of this issue is reinforced by the Indonesian government's ambitious policy goals. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, through the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH), has targeted the issuance of 10 million halal certificates by 2024 (LPPOM MUI, 2023). Minister Yaqut Cholil Qoumas has stated that this initiative is part of a broader effort to position Indonesia as the world's leading producer of halal food and beverages (LPPOM MUI, 2023). Similarly, Dodi Rahadi, Head of the Industrial Services Standardization and Policy Agency at the Ministry of Industry, emphasized the acceleration of halal certification services as a strategic step toward that goal. These developments signal the emergence of a state-driven halal industrial culture, aligning religious observance with economic competitiveness. However, the question remains whether these institutionalized efforts have effectively penetrated the grassroots culinary culture, where traditional food practices continue to define everyday consumption.

Existing studies on halal certification and consumer behavior in Indonesia generally fall into three dominant strands. The first investigates the impact of halal labeling on consumer purchasing decisions, often concluding that visible halal symbols encourage consumer trust and choice (Fauzi, 2023; Khasanah, 2025; Muflih & Juliana, 2021). The second focuses on the role of institutional accompaniment and community education in improving compliance among small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The third explores procedural challenges within the BPJPH–MUI certification system, highlighting bureaucratic complexities and inconsistencies in choice (Hulwati et al., 2025). While these studies contribute significantly to understanding halal certification as an institutional and economic process, they rarely engage with its cultural and behavioral implications. This means that this is a concentration that is completed that halal certification must result in the process and culture of consumption of the Muslim community.

Indeed, a critical research gap persists: there is limited empirical examination of how halal certification specifically affects cultural meaning-making and symbolic legitimacy dimensions—how traditional food practitioners and consumers construct religious and cultural meanings, interact with local culinary traditions, and shape everyday food practices among Muslim consumers. Indonesian culinary heritage embodies not only consumption but also cultural identity and social meaning. Food is more than sustenance; it is a vessel of collective memory, regional pride, and religious symbolism (Djono et al., 2023a; Fatimah et al., 2021; Wardana & Setiarto, 2024). Yet, halal certification introduces a new form of cultural negotiation, wherein religious legitimacy is mediated through bureaucratic documentation rather than community trust. This shift prompts us to rethink how halalness is experienced, practiced, and validated in contemporary Indonesia.

From a sociological perspective, food practices are embedded within systems of belief, identity, and modernity. The integration of halal certification into daily consumption patterns, therefore, represents a transformative cultural encounter between modern regulatory institutions and traditional culinary knowledge (Arslan & Aydın, 2024; Jayasinghe et al., 2025; Ramenzoni, 2023). argues that dietary customs are shaped by local traditions and spiritual cosmologies, where eating certain foods is both a moral and cultural act. Consequently, when state regulation intervenes to define what is “halal,” it inevitably influences these cultural logics. However, whether this influence translates into actual behavioral change remains underexplored.

This study situates itself at the intersection of religion, culture, and governance, examining how halal certification policies influence culinary traditions in a Muslim-majority context. It asks: to what extent does halal certification affect local food practices and cultural perceptions of halal consumption in Indonesia? This question carries both theoretical and practical significance.

Theoretically, it challenges the assumption that formal religious certification automatically fosters religiously compliant behavior. Practically, it addresses the effectiveness of halal policy implementation in transforming consumer habits and industry practices.

In addressing this problem, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews to capture the nuanced relationship between certification and culinary tradition. The focus is not merely on consumer awareness but on the cultural embodiment of halalness, how individuals internalize and negotiate the meaning of halal food beyond legal or religious prescriptions. Preliminary evidence from field interviews in Majalengka, West Java, suggests that while respondents recognize halal labels, they often base consumption decisions on familiarity, price, or communal trust rather than certification status. Such findings imply that halal consciousness remains more normative than procedural, anchored in long-standing cultural confidence rather than administrative verification.

Moreover, the emergence of controversies such as the “halal wine” (*jus anggur Nabidz*) case in 2023, where producers manipulated certification data, has undermined public confidence in the halal certification system. These incidents expose the vulnerability of bureaucratic halal mechanisms to misuse and the consequent erosion of consumer trust (Butt et al., 2021; Dashti et al., 2024a). They also illustrate the complexity of ensuring authenticity in an era of digitalized certification systems like *SIHALAL*, where regulatory oversight often lags behind rapid market expansion. Thus, the discourse on halal certification must transcend administrative concerns and engage with questions of authenticity, trust, and social legitimacy in everyday cultural life.

The urgency of rethinking halal certification in Indonesia lies in its dual nature: it is simultaneously a religious obligation and a cultural construct (Musa & Shahlehi, 2025). As explained, the *halalan thayyiban* principle reflects not only compliance with divine law but also the pursuit of moral purity and social harmony. However, when halal certification is reduced to a bureaucratic label detached from its ethical and cultural foundations, its transformative potential diminishes. The state’s push for mass certification must therefore be complemented by community-based education, transparency in certification procedures, and the integration of cultural values into policy frameworks.

Consequently, this research aims to explore how the halal certification regime reconfigures Indonesia’s culinary identity, particularly in how it shapes perceptions of purity, safety, and authenticity. It seeks to contribute to broader debates on religious commodification, policy-driven moral economies, and the localization of global halal standards in Southeast Asia. The findings are expected to inform policymakers, industry stakeholders, and cultural scholars about the intricate balance between regulation and tradition, highlighting the need for culturally responsive approaches to halal governance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culinary Traditions and Cultural Identity

Cultural identity refers to a sense of belonging to a particular cultural group, shaped by shared values, traditions, symbols, language, and collective history. It is a dynamic construct that develops through socialization and everyday practices, allowing individuals to recognize themselves as part of a community with common meanings and norms. Identity is not fixed or purely inherited; it is continuously formed through historical experiences, social interactions, and power relations that define who “we” are in contrast to “others” (Ward & Szabó, 2023).

Indonesian culinary traditions play a vital role in shaping collective identity, as food functions not only as nourishment but also as a cultural symbol embedded in social values and religious ethics. Within Muslim communities, the halal nature of traditional dishes is often assumed to be inherent due to long-standing practices, familiar ingredients, and trusted community

relationships. This means that halal legitimacy has historically been rooted in communal trust and cultural continuity, rather than institutional verification (Fatimah et al., 2021; Wardana & Setiarto, 2024).

Halalan thayyiban represents a comprehensive ethical framework in Islamic consumption, emphasizing that food must not only be legally permissible (halal) but also wholesome, safe, and beneficial (*thayyib*) for human well-being. While “halal” ensures compliance with religious prohibitions, the “*thayyib*” dimension expands the standard to include cleanliness, nutritional value, hygiene, ethical sourcing, environmental care, and fairness in production. This indicates that Islamic dietary ethics view consumption as a moral practice embedded within physical health, spiritual integrity, and social responsibility. As recent scholarship highlights, *halalan thayyiban* shifts the focus from merely avoiding prohibited elements to ensuring quality, transparency, and sustainability throughout the supply chain, aligning Islamic food ethics with modern concerns in food safety and ethical consumerism. Consequently, the principle underscores that true halalness cannot be reduced to certification alone; rather, it involves maintaining the dignity and welfare of consumers, producers, and the broader environment in which food is produced and consumed.

Traditional foods such as *rendang*, *kerak telur*, *gudeg*, and *sate* embody local ingredients, preparation techniques, and narratives that connect communities to their ancestral past. According to culinary traditions, can be understood as cultural systems of meaning, where what is eaten, how it is prepared, and with whom it is shared reflect broader social values (Musa & Shahlehi, 2025).

In this sense, the introduction of formal halal certification into traditional food systems introduces new layers of authority and validation, potentially reshaping the social meanings of consumption. Local food producers who have long relied on communal trust and inherited knowledge must now navigate complex bureaucratic processes to authenticate their products. Furthermore, culinary heritage is closely linked to collective memory and identity politics (Fatimah et al., 2021; Wardana & Setiarto, 2024). Note that traditional Indonesian dishes function as tools of national branding and cultural diplomacy, symbolizing unity in diversity. Yet, the increasing standardization of food production through halal regulation risks homogenizing culinary diversity, as small-scale producers struggle to comply with certification requirements. This tension between tradition and standardization poses a challenge for sustaining local gastronomic heritage in the face of globalization and religious commodification.

The growing influence of formal halal certification introduces a shift in how authenticity is validated. Certification brings standardized criteria and institutional oversight, potentially strengthening food safety and religious compliance. However, these formal requirements can also create friction with inherited culinary practices, particularly for small producers who lack the resources to navigate bureaucratic procedures. As a result, the intersection between regulation and tradition becomes a negotiation process where cultural identity confronts administrative control.

This dynamic highlights a broader tension: while halal certification aims to ensure a uniform standard of halal assurance, traditional foods embody regional uniqueness and social memory that resist homogenization. Therefore, the integration of halal certification into local food systems not only affects production practices but may also reshape the symbolic meaning of halalness itself, transforming it from a lived communal ethic into a standardized legal status.

Religion, Culture, and Regulation

The processes of religious bureaucratization and halal capitalism reflect how halal, originally a religious-ethical norm, has been institutionalized and commodified within modern economies. Through bureaucratic mechanisms such as formal certification agencies and regulatory regimes, halal compliance becomes a matter of paperwork, institutional oversight, and legal status rather than solely communal trust or personal piety. Meanwhile, halal products evolve into market

commodities with symbolic and economic value, as halal certification confers legitimacy, expands consumer markets, and transforms religious values into symbolic capital that can be traded globally. This dual transformation from lived religious practice to bureaucratic regulation and from ethical duty to market opportunity reshapes Muslim consumption, production, and identity within a capitalist framework. As scholars note, bureaucratic halal regulation often privileges larger, industrial producers and may marginalize small-scale producers and traditional food systems; in effect, halal becomes not just a matter of faith, but also a commercial asset that reflects inequalities embedded in global markets (Fischer & Nisa, 2025).

The interplay between religion and culture in the halal certification discourse has been widely debated. Scholars such as Musa and Shahlehi (2025) argue that the *halalan thayyiban* concept extends beyond dietary law to encompass broader ethical dimensions, including environmental stewardship, fairness in trade, and consumer welfare. Thus, halal certification should ideally reflect holistic Islamic ethics rather than mere ritual conformity. However, in practice, certification often becomes technocratic and transactional, reducing a moral-religious principle into a bureaucratic checklist. This transformation reflects what sociologists term religious bureaucratization, the process through which sacred practices are managed by state institutions for administrative efficiency. While this may enhance regulatory coherence, it also risks alienating the spiritual and cultural essence of halal consumption (Raimi et al., 2025). In Indonesia, where religiosity and cultural pluralism coexist dynamically, such bureaucratization introduces a cultural friction: traditional trust-based systems of food legitimacy are supplanted by formal legal mechanisms. At the same time, the halal industry's rapid expansion positions Indonesia within a global economic network of halal capitalism, where religious identity becomes an economic resource (Utomo et al., 2021). The government's ambition to make Indonesia a global halal hub, targeting 10 million certified products by 2024 LPPOM MUI, 2023, reflects a shift toward viewing halal certification not only as religious assurance but as a competitive economic asset. This approach, while economically beneficial, necessitates critical reflection on its implications for local culinary identity, consumer trust, and ethical authenticity.

Consumer Behavior in Halal Contexts, Local Trust Mechanisms, And Certification Challenges Among SMEs

Research consistently shows that halal labels influence perceptions of product safety and religious compliance, but their effect on purchase decisions is conditional and mediated by consumer values, religiosity, and socio-economic factors. In many Muslim markets, awareness of halal certification raises perceived product credibility, yet this awareness does not always translate into consistent purchase behavior, especially when price, convenience, or brand familiarity are stronger purchase drivers. Recent studies indicate that differences in religious understanding and generational values further shape whether consumers treat certification as decisive or merely reassuring (Aglozo & Cohen, 2025).

In parallel, a large strand of literature examines how relational trust in producers, vendors, and community norms functions as a primary legitimacy mechanism for halalness in everyday consumption. For many consumers, especially in contexts with dense Muslim social networks, traditional foods are assumed halal by virtue of who prepares them and how recipes are inherited; this communal trust often substitutes for formal verification. Certification, therefore, operates alongside, rather than fully replacing, local trust systems. When institutional processes are perceived as opaque or prone to abuse, communal trust becomes even more salient (Dashti et al., 2024b).

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) face recurring structural obstacles to obtaining and benefiting from halal certification: limited financial and human resources,

bureaucratic complexity, unclear procedures for low-volume or artisanal products, and weak access to advisory services. These constraints produce two outcomes: (a) under-representation of traditional producers in certified product registries; and (b) a perception among some consumers that certification is biased toward larger, industrial producers. Recent analytic and empirical work has prioritized the barriers (costs, documentation, technical compliance) and proposed targeted strategies (streamlined procedures, capacity-building, digital assistance, and community-based verification) to increase MSME uptake and preserve culinary diversity.

Halal Certification to Culinary Tradition

Halal certification is designed to provide formal assurance that food products meet Islamic dietary requirements; however, its influence on culinary traditions depends on how consumers and producers perceive and adopt such standards within established cultural practices. In many Muslim-majority contexts, traditional foods are often considered inherently halal due to their long-standing preparation methods and trusted community-based production. Therefore, the introduction of formal certification introduces a new layer of legitimacy that may either reinforce existing consumption patterns or trigger changes in traditional food practices. When consumers internalize certification as a marker of religious authenticity and food safety, traditional food producers may be encouraged to adopt certification to maintain market trust and cultural relevance. Conversely, if certification is viewed as unnecessary or burdensome, especially by small food vendors, traditional culinary practices may resist formalization, resulting in a weak link between certification and cultural food choices. Thus, halal certification has the potential to influence how culinary traditions are practiced, perceived, and preserved within society, whether by strengthening traditional legitimacy through formal validation or by creating tensions between cultural heritage and regulatory compliance.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in a multi-dimensional theoretical framework that integrates concepts of bureaucratization, symbolic capital, and cultural trust to analyze how halal certification reshapes traditional food practices.

Bureaucratization of Religion: Drawing on Weber's rationalization theory ([Weber, 1922](#)) and contemporary scholarship on religious governance, this study examines how the formalization of halal certification transforms religious practice from community-based systems to state-regulated bureaucratic structures. This process involves the standardization of religious knowledge, the professionalization of religious authority, and the institutionalization of faith-based practices into legal and administrative frameworks.

Symbolic Capital: Following Bourdieu's framework ([Pierre Bourdieu, 1986](#)), halal certification functions as a form of symbolic capital that confers legitimacy and religious authority. The certification process creates new hierarchies of credibility, where certified products gain institutional recognition while uncertified traditional foods may be symbolically delegitimized, despite their long-standing cultural and religious acceptance within communities.

Cultural Trust and Embedded Knowledge: This study employs the concept of embedded trust to understand how traditional food systems operate through interpersonal relationships, shared cultural knowledge, and community-based verification mechanisms. Cultural trust operates differently from institutional trust: it is built through repeated interactions, kinship networks, and collective memory rather than formal certification processes.

These theoretical lenses allow us to examine not only whether halal certification affects consumer behavior, but more fundamentally, how it reconfigures the relationship between religious authority, cultural practice, and community-based knowledge systems. By integrating

these frameworks, the study moves beyond binary questions of compliance or resistance to explore the nuanced ways traditional food practitioners navigate, negotiate, and sometimes contest the institutionalization of religious dietary norms.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study is designed as an exploratory mixed-methods research, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of how halal certification interacts with cultural culinary practices. As the topic involves complex social behaviors, cultural norms, and religious values, a single method would be insufficient to reveal the full dynamics. The quantitative component helps identify general patterns of awareness and behavior concerning halal certification, while the qualitative interviews provide deeper contextual insight into how individuals interpret and negotiate halalness in their everyday food choices.

A mixed-methods exploratory design is particularly suitable in this context because the relationship between formal halal regulation and traditional food practices in Indonesia is still under-researched and not fully understood. By combining numerical evidence with lived narratives, this study can uncover not only what people do but also why they do it. This design allows for triangulation that strengthens the validity of the findings and captures the interplay between institutional influences and cultural trust within halal consumption practices. Ultimately, this mixed approach supports a richer and more nuanced exploration of the cultural, behavioral, and religious dynamics embedded in halal culinary traditions. Given that the research explores both measurable perceptions and nuanced cultural practices, a mixed approach ensures methodological complementarity. The study aims not merely to test hypotheses statistically but also to interpret how individuals construct the meaning of halalness in everyday culinary life within Indonesia's Muslim-majority society.

Research Site and Context

The research was conducted in Majalengka Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. The region provides a representative context for exploring halal certification and cultural food practices due to its demographic characteristics, predominantly Muslim, yet maintaining strong local culinary traditions. Majalengka's culinary landscape is characterized by small-scale food industries, traditional street vendors, and microenterprises that often operate outside formal certification frameworks. This makes it an ideal site for observing the intersection of state-imposed halal regulation and grassroots culinary tradition.

Population and Sampling

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants who met specific criteria: (1) involvement in traditional food production or sales for at least 5 years, (2) operation within Majalengka Regency, and (3) willingness to participate in both survey and interview phases. This non-probability sampling approach was chosen to ensure participants possessed relevant experience and insights into the intersection of traditional food practices and halal certification requirements. Although the quantitative component of this study involved a relatively small sample size ($n = 10$), this is appropriate considering the research design and purpose of the data collection. The quantitative phase is not intended to support statistical inference or population generalization; rather, it serves a descriptive and exploratory function to identify preliminary response patterns that inform and contextualize the subsequent qualitative interpretation. In mixed-methods research, small samples are acceptable when the objective is to illustrate variability, provide initial insights, and guide qualitative inquiry rather than to test hypotheses (Creswell & Creswell, 2018;

Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Additionally, exploratory mixed-methods studies commonly emphasize the qualitative element while using a small-scale quantitative phase to complement thematic findings, especially when focusing on culturally embedded behaviors (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Therefore, this study's sampling strategy prioritizes information-rich cases and contextual depth over numerical representativeness. The results should be interpreted as illustrative rather than generalizable, consistent with the pragmatic approach of exploratory mixed design.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred in two sequential stages: a quantitative survey and a qualitative interview following an exploratory mixed-methods design.

Quantitative Phase

A structured questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms to capture participants' perceptions of halal certification and its influence on their culinary preferences. The instrument contained closed-ended questions using a Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Key constructs measured included:

1. Halal Certification (X1): awareness of halal labels, recognition of halal logos, and perceptions of certification credibility.
2. Culinary Tradition (Y1): habitual consumption patterns, cultural understanding of halalness, and preference for traditional food practices.

Qualitative Phase

Following the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore deeper meanings behind participants' responses. The interviews, lasting approximately 30–45 minutes each, were carried out face-to-face and recorded with participant consent. Guiding questions focused on:

1. How participants perceive halal certification in relation to their traditional food choices.
2. Whether halal labels influence their consumption decisions.
3. How cultural and familial traditions shape their understanding of halal food.

Field observations complemented the interviews, focusing on culinary settings such as local markets, street food vendors, and small restaurants to contextualize consumer behavior within real-world practices.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlational analysis to determine the relationship between halal certification awareness and culinary tradition indicators. Responses were processed to identify frequencies, mean scores, and dominant trends across variables. The descriptive analysis provided a statistical summary of consumer awareness and behavioral tendencies, while the correlation analysis examined whether perceived halal certification influenced food selection patterns.

Reliability and Validation Procedures

To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research instruments, several reliability and validation procedures were implemented. First, a pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with a small group of respondents prior to the main data collection. Feedback from this preliminary assessment helped refine item clarity, wording, and relevance to the research constructs. Instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency (noting

that with the small sample size of $n=10$, this coefficient should be interpreted as preliminary evidence, with primary reliability supported through expert validation and conceptual coherence of the instrument) across each construct. A coefficient value of ≥ 0.70 was considered acceptable to demonstrate that the measurement scales consistently captured the intended variables. In addition, expert validation was carried out by consulting academics in the fields of Islamic economics and food policy to review content adequacy, cultural relevance, and construct representation in the questionnaire. Their suggestions were incorporated to improve the validity of the survey items.

For the qualitative component, several credibility strategies were applied. Member checking was performed by allowing interview participants to review summaries of their responses to confirm accuracy in interpretation. Peer debriefing was used by discussing coding decisions and thematic development with research colleagues to minimize bias during analysis. Furthermore, inter-rater reliability was ensured by involving at least two independent coders in reviewing a subset of the qualitative data to reach agreement on emerging themes. These steps strengthened the trustworthiness and authenticity of the qualitative findings.

Justification for Correlation Analysis

Given the small sample size ($n = 10$), the quantitative analysis focuses on descriptive statistics and simple correlation rather than regression or more complex inferential modeling. Correlation analysis is appropriate because the study aims to identify tendencies and relational patterns between awareness of halal certification and culinary behavior, without predicting or generalizing to a broader population. Regression and multivariate tests typically require larger samples to meet statistical assumptions such as normality, homoscedasticity, and sufficient statistical power for detecting significant effects (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, correlation provides a more suitable and conservative analytic approach for an exploratory mixed-methods study with small participant numbers.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed using the thematic analysis framework adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of three stages:

1. Data Reduction: Coding and categorizing participants' statements into themes related to perception, trust, and behavior toward halal-certified foods.
2. Data Display: Summarizing thematic findings in matrices and narrative form to illustrate key insights.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Synthesizing data to interpret the sociocultural implications of halal certification for local culinary traditions.
4. This combination of numerical and narrative evidence allowed for methodological triangulation, increasing the validity and depth of interpretation. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings was conducted through a convergent analysis approach. Quantitative survey results were first analyzed to identify key patterns and areas of concern regarding halal certification's impact on traditional practices. These findings directly informed the development of qualitative interview protocols, with specific questions designed to explore the mechanisms behind observed patterns. During analysis, qualitative themes were systematically compared with quantitative results to examine convergence (where both data sources supported similar conclusions), complementarity (where qualitative data explained quantitative patterns), and divergence (where findings differed, prompting deeper investigation). This integration strategy strengthens the credibility of the mixed-methods design by allowing triangulation while providing rich contextual understanding of statistical patterns.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**Table 1.** Participant Demographics

Participant ID	Age	Gender	Role/Occupation	Years of Experience
P1	45	Male	Street Food Vendor	20
P2	38	Female	Traditional Restaurant Owner	15
P3	52	Male	Food Industry Consultant	25
P4	41	Female	Home-based Food Entrepreneur	12
P5	35	Male	Market Seller	10
P6	48	Female	Catering Business Owner	18
P7	44	Male	Food Stall Owner	16
P8	39	Female	Traditional Food Producer	14
P9	50	Male	Restaurant Manager	22
P10	36	Female	Food Market Coordinator	11

Table 2. Results of Respondent Interviews

Halal Certification Variable (X)	Narrative/Statement	Respondents	Response Tendency
Halal-Certified Food	Do you know the meaning and characteristics of a halal certification on a food product?	10 respondents	Respondents understand the characteristics of halal certification on food products.
Halal-Labeled Packaging	Do you choose food products that already have a halal logo on the packaging?	10 respondents	Respondents tend not to pay much attention to the halal logo on food packaging, with a ratio of 7:3.
Availability and Accessibility	Do you often find food products that already have a halal logo?	10 respondents	Respondents experience some difficulty finding food products with a halal logo.
Habit	Are you accustomed to consuming food that is already halal-certified?	10 respondents	Respondents are not yet accustomed to consuming halal-certified food.
Understanding	Do you understand the meaning of halal-certified food and its impact on the body and health?	10 respondents	Respondents understand the meaning of halal certification and its impact on the body and health.

Halal Certification Variable (X)	Narrative/Statement	Respondents	Response Tendency
Choice	What is the main factor influencing your choice when selecting food?	10 respondents	Respondents stated that price, packaging, and the popularity of the product are the main factors influencing their food choices.

The results of the interviews presented in Table 2 reveal several key insights into respondents' awareness, perception, and behavior toward halal-certified food products. Overall, the findings indicate that while there is a basic understanding of the meaning and purpose of halal certification, the level of application in daily consumption habits remains relatively low. First, most respondents demonstrated awareness of the concept and characteristics of halal certification. This suggests that halal literacy among consumers has begun to develop, possibly due to the growing visibility of halal campaigns and educational efforts by both government and religious institutions. However, knowledge does not necessarily translate into behavioral adherence, as reflected in the next variables. When asked about the attention to halal logos on food packaging, the majority of respondents admitted that they do not consistently consider the halal logo when purchasing products. The 7:3 ratio between those who notice and those who overlook halal labeling indicates a cognitive-behavioral gap. Respondents understand halal certification, but often prioritize other factors such as price or convenience. This finding aligns with previous studies emphasizing that consumers in Muslim-majority countries may exhibit halal awareness without halal commitment (Silalahi, 2024; Usman et al., 2023).

Furthermore, respondents reported difficulties in finding halal-labeled products in their immediate environment. This reflects a distributional and visibility challenge, suggesting that while halal certification systems exist, their implementation and promotion in local food markets remain uneven. This condition may hinder consumer confidence and limit accessibility to verified halal products. The habit dimension reinforces the same pattern; respondents are not yet accustomed to regularly consuming halal-certified food, even though they recognize its importance. This gap between perception and practice may stem from the perception that most local products are "naturally halal" due to the Muslim-majority context, reducing the perceived necessity to check for certification.

Interestingly, on the understanding variable, respondents displayed adequate comprehension of the religious and health implications of halal consumption. They associated halal certification not only with religious compliance but also with food safety and hygiene. This finding supports prior research suggesting that halal awareness is increasingly linked with notions of quality assurance and consumer trust (Aslan, 2023; Dashti et al., 2024c). Finally, regarding decision-making factors, respondents identified price, packaging design, and popularity as the primary determinants in choosing food products. This highlights a consumer behavior paradox, where economic and aesthetic factors outweigh religious considerations. It indicates that halal certification, although understood, is not yet a dominant motivator in consumer purchase decisions.

Overall, the analysis suggests that while cognitive awareness of halal certification is present, it has not yet matured into consistent behavioral practices. The findings underscore the need for continuous education, visible labeling, and stronger institutional promotion to transform halal awareness into habitual consumer behavior. Moreover, these results point to a research gap in understanding how marketing communication, product availability, and social influence can

reinforce halal-oriented consumption in Muslim-majority contexts like Indonesia

This study investigates the extent to which halal certification influences culinary traditions and consumption behaviors among Muslim communities in Indonesia, particularly in Majalengka Regency. Data collected through surveys and in-depth interviews reveal that while participants generally recognize the meaning and visual markers of halal certification, their consumption choices are not primarily driven by certification. Instead, decisions are shaped by habitual trust, cultural familiarity, price sensitivity, and community perception.

Quantitatively, all 10 respondents indicated awareness of halal logos and acknowledged understanding the concept of halal certification. However, 70% reported not consistently checking for halal labels when purchasing food products, suggesting that awareness does not necessarily translate into behavioral conformity. Descriptive statistical analysis shows that the mean awareness score among respondents was 4.10 (SD = 0.74), indicating a relatively high level of conceptual understanding, while the mean behavioral compliance score in checking halal labels was 2.60 (SD = 0.97), reflecting low habitual implementation in daily consumption practices. Qualitative interviews further reveal that participants rely on long-standing cultural assumptions, believing that local foods are inherently halal due to their traditional preparation and Muslim producers.

For instance, foods such as cilok goang, seblak, and nasi tutug oncom are widely perceived as “naturally halal,” even when not formally certified. Respondents stated that these foods are “safe to eat” because they are made by Muslim vendors and contain no visible non-halal ingredients. As one participant noted:

“I do not always look for the halal logo. If the seller is Muslim and the food looks familiar, I am confident it's halal.” – P1

“My belief in traditional food or sold by people I know, has shown the belief that food is halal.” – P3

“They are very confident that traditional food without the need for a halal certificate is halal” – P3, P2, P3

“I like to prank to ask the producer, whether this is halal certified or not, they say it is not necessary, I am Muslim, and I know this is halal food” – P6

This perception reflects a cultural trust mechanism, where religious legitimacy is socially mediated rather than institutionally verified. In the statement of participants who are professionals as traders, when asked questions related to halal certificates on the products they trade, they said:

“I know that this food is halal and does not need to be certified anymore, since long ago this is halal” – P7, P8

Quantitative Findings: Awareness versus Practice

Survey results indicate that all respondents are familiar with halal certification and can identify the official halal logo. This suggests that public understanding of halal assurance has begun to take root. However, despite this positive awareness, most respondents do not consistently check halal labels when purchasing food products. The descriptive statistics further indicate that the mean frequency of label-checking behavior among respondents was 2.70 (SD = 0.88), suggesting infrequent reliance on certification in everyday purchasing decisions. The majority prioritize practical factors such as price, taste preferences, and product popularity, particularly when buying

street foods or familiar traditional snacks. Respondents also noted that halal-certified products are not always easy to find in local traditional markets, which may contribute to their low reliance on certification as a determinant of choice. Overall, the quantitative data highlight a noticeable gap between knowing and doing, showing that halal literacy does not yet translate into habitual, label-based consumption behavior.

Qualitative Findings: Cultural Interpretation of Halalness

The interview analysis expands the quantitative results by explaining why consumers behave this way. Three dominant themes emerged. First, respondents rely strongly on cultural and social trust. They assume that foods prepared by Muslim vendors, especially traditional dishes, are inherently halal, making formal verification feel unnecessary in daily life. This reflects a long-established belief that halal compliance is embedded in communal culinary practices. Second, economic considerations shape decision-making. Several participants explicitly expressed that while halal is important, affordability and accessibility are far more critical for their daily consumption. Thus, halal certification becomes a secondary concern in the context of routine street-food purchases. Third, some respondents expressed skepticism toward institutional certification procedures, influenced by recent issues regarding certification validity and governance. This distrust reinforces their preference for cultural assurance over administrative labels.

Furthermore, the persistence of traditional culinary practices despite formal regulation demonstrates the resilience of cultural religiosity (Susiang et al., 2024). argue that Malay and Indonesian Muslim communities internalize *halalan thayyiban* as a moral habit rather than an administrative duty. This finding suggests that religious values are culturally embodied long before being bureaucratically codified. Trust emerges as the central mediating variable between halal certification and culinary tradition. While certification provides institutional trust (based on official verification), culinary tradition is maintained through relational trust (based on familiarity and shared belief). The study's participants consistently demonstrated higher reliance on relational trust. This insight parallels the findings of (Djono et al., 2023b), who observed similar tendencies in minority Muslim regions, where halal consumption relies more on interpersonal assurances than state mechanisms. In both contexts, halalness operates as a socially negotiated category rather than a purely legal one.

The findings also highlight how consumer trust is fragile in the face of inconsistent regulation and mismanagement. Scandals involving falsified halal certificates, delays in verification, and digital system inefficiencies have diminished consumer confidence. Thus, the study supports (Mega et al., 2025), who emphasize the need for transparency and procedural integrity in the certification process to maintain public legitimacy. The empirical evidence suggests that while halal certification is a necessary instrument for global competitiveness, it remains insufficient as a cultural transformation tool. Policy efforts that focus solely on mass certification targets risk neglecting the sociocultural dimensions of halal awareness. Without cultural engagement, certification may be perceived as bureaucratic compliance rather than a moral commitment. To address this, halal governance must integrate cultural education, community outreach, and participatory monitoring. Collaborative initiatives between BPJPH, local governments, and community organizations could foster a bottom-up halal culture, bridging the gap between state regulation and everyday practice. Educational campaigns emphasizing the ethical and health dimensions of *halalan thayyiban* could reinforce the intrinsic value of halal consumption beyond the logo itself. Moreover, greater inclusivity in certification simplifying procedures for micro and small enterprises would help preserve culinary diversity. Many traditional foods risk marginalization due to the cost and complexity of certification. Streamlined, community-based halal verification could ensure that local heritage foods remain culturally vibrant yet religiously

compliant.

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this study, it was found that there is no consistency between legalized religious understanding and personal culture in the consumption of Muslim people. The discussion of halal culture in the traditional consumption of the Muslim community is more about habits that have been embedded without halal legitimacy. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research integrated quantitative data on consumer awareness and behavior with qualitative insights from interviews and field observations in Majalengka Regency, West Java. The findings have shown that while awareness of halal certification is widespread, its impact on actual culinary practices remains limited. Most respondents were knowledgeable about the concept of halal certification and could easily recognize the official halal logo. However, their everyday food choices were guided less by certification status and more by cultural familiarity, interpersonal trust, and economic considerations. This reveals a cultural disjunction between institutionalized halal governance and locally embodied understandings of halalness.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Every scholarly investigation is conducted within certain boundaries that inevitably shape its scope, findings, and interpretive potential. Acknowledging these limitations is essential not only for academic transparency but also for contextualizing the conclusions of this study. The present research, while offering novel insights into the intersection of halal certification and culinary traditions in Indonesia, is subject to several methodological and conceptual constraints.

Limited Sample Size and Geographic Scope

The most apparent limitation lies in the small-scale sample of 10 respondents and the geographic focus on Majalengka Regency, West Java. Although this region provides a meaningful lens through which to explore the socio-cultural dynamics of halal consumption, Indonesia's culinary and religious landscapes are highly diverse. Culinary practices and religious attitudes differ across ethnic, regional, and socio-economic lines—from the Minangkabau of West Sumatra, known for their strongly Islamic culinary ethos, to the Javanese and Balinese regions where syncretic traditions prevail. Thus, the findings, while contextually rich, cannot be generalized to represent the attitudes and practices of all Indonesian Muslims. Instead, they should be interpreted as context-specific insights that illuminate how halal certification operates within one cultural microcosm.

Self-Reported Data and Social Desirability Bias

A second limitation concerns the reliance on self-reported data gathered through surveys and interviews. Respondents' statements about their awareness, preferences, and consumption behaviors may be influenced by social desirability bias, particularly given the moral and religious dimensions of halal consumption. Participants might overstate their halal consciousness or underreport behaviors that deviate from religious norms to present themselves in a favorable light. Although qualitative triangulation mitigated this bias, it remains a potential source of distortion in interpreting behavioral data.

Temporal and Policy Context

The study was conducted during a specific regulatory phase in Indonesia's halal certification system shortly after the government intensified efforts to reach 10 million certified halal products. This timing may have shaped participants' perceptions, as public discourse around

halal certification was especially visible in media and policy circles. As the system evolves, attitudes toward halal certification may shift, especially with technological advancements in digital traceability (SIHALAL apps) and broader community education initiatives. Therefore, the findings represent a snapshot in time rather than a static depiction of consumer attitudes.

Absence of Quantitative Generalizability

While the study employed a mixed-methods design, the quantitative component was exploratory rather than inferential. The data analysis focused on descriptive patterns rather than hypothesis testing using large-scale statistical models. This design choice was appropriate given the exploratory purpose of understanding cultural dynamics; however, it limits statistical generalization. Future studies may apply structural equation modeling (SEM) or regression analysis with larger datasets to validate relationships between halal awareness, trust, and behavioral outcomes more rigorously.

Cultural and Religious Heterogeneity

Finally, the study recognizes that “Muslim consumers” are not a homogeneous category. Differences in education, gender, religiosity, and exposure to globalization can significantly affect halal perception. However, these internal diversities were not systematically analyzed due to the small sample size. Future research should adopt comparative frameworks that consider intergroup variations, such as between urban and rural populations or between younger and older generations, to capture the plurality of halal experiences in Indonesia

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