

Regulatory and institutional dynamics in accelerating Halal product certification for achieving the SDGs in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

The rapid expansion of halal certification in Indonesia has shifted from being largely a matter of religious compliance to becoming an integral component of state policy that supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those related to inclusive economic growth (Goal 8), industrial development and innovation (Goal 9), and sustainable patterns of consumption and production (Goal 12).

Objectives

This study aims to examine how governmental regulatory frameworks drive the expansion of halal certification and to assess their broader implications for the governance of sustainable economic development.

Method

The research employs a qualitative approach based on a critical review of scholarly literature, analysis of relevant policies and institutional arrangements, and secondary data obtained from public authorities and business stakeholders.

Results

The findings indicate that halal certification in Indonesia functions not only as a technical regulatory mechanism but also as a form of bureaucratized religious governance, through which the state institutionalizes religious authority and collective identity. Halal certification in Indonesia functions not only as a technical regulatory mechanism but also as a form of bureaucratized religious governance, through which the state institutionalizes Islamic authority and collective identity. Despite a standardized framework established by BPJPH, implementation faces structural barriers such

JEL Classification:

L26, L67, M31, O31, Z12

KAUJIE Classification:

C53, H65, O4, P3, P5

ARTICLE HISTORY:

Submitted: December 21, 2025

Revised: March 12, 2026

Accepted: March 27, 2026

Published: March 28, 2026

KEYWORDS:

bureaucratized religious governance; halal certification; halal industry; Indonesia; MSMEs; political economy; SDGs

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as unequal access, limited infrastructure, and low digital literacy among MSMEs. As a public policy instrument, halal certification safeguards religious values, strengthens state legitimacy, and enhances global competitiveness. In relation to the SDGs, it contributes concretely to inclusive economic growth (SDG 8), industrial development and innovation (SDG 9), and ethical, sustainable consumption (SDG 12).

Implications

The study suggests that the SDGs framework can serve as an evaluative tool for assessing bureaucratic transformation in the halal industry, positioning halal certification not only as a mechanism for protecting religious values but also as part of a broader strategy for sustainable and responsible economic development.

Originality/Novelty

This study introduces a conceptualization of halal certification as bureaucratized religious governance, demonstrating how religious symbolism can be transformed into a rationalized policy instrument within the framework of sustainable development. By integrating political economy, the research provides a new analytical lens for understanding the institutionalization of religious norms through state regulation to achieve development objectives.

CITATION: Nahidloh, S., Hilmy, M., Pujiati, T., Fajar, & Musadad, A. (2026). Regulatory and institutional dynamics in accelerating Halal product certification for achieving the SDGs in Indonesia. *Journal of Islamic Economics Lariba*, 12(1), 811–838. <https://doi.org/10.20885/jielariba.vol12.iss1.art29>

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the country with the second-largest Muslim population globally, possesses significant potential to establish itself as a leading hub for the global halal industry. Beyond its domestic relevance, the halal sector has evolved into a global phenomenon encompassing not only food consumption but also finance, tourism, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and lifestyle practices rooted in Islamic ethical values (Mujahidin, 2020; Rusydiana & Marlina, 2020; Sukesu & Hidayat, 2019). In this context, halal certification has emerged as an essential regulatory mechanism that ensures compliance with Islamic principles while simultaneously strengthening consumer trust, product quality assurance, and international market competitiveness (Pratama, 2022; Wibowo et al., 2025). From a broader development perspective, halal certification also contributes to sustainable economic governance by promoting responsible production practices, improving supply chain transparency, and supporting ethical consumption patterns aligned with global sustainability agendas (Ab Talib & Zulfakar, 2024; Ariska et al., 2024; Haleem et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2024).

The enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance represents a pivotal regulatory milestone in structuring and strengthening the national halal

ecosystem. The halal status of consumer goods, including food, pharmaceuticals, apparel, cosmetics, and other everyday products, has become an essential concern for Muslim consumers (Sarisa, 2023). Furthermore, the presence of a halal label reinforces consumer trust by signaling that the products have met recognized hygiene and quality benchmarks (Aslan, 2023; Hanim Yusuf et al., 2016; Supriyadi et al., 2024). Halal certification is no longer just a religious issue, but also an instrument of national economic development, state legitimacy, and part of international trade diplomacy. However, the complexity of bureaucracy and limited infrastructure are challenges for small business actors in accessing certification services.

The Indonesian government, particularly through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has implemented a range of educational and outreach programs to strengthen public awareness of halal regulation. The enactment of the Halal Product Assurance Law has contributed significantly to the expansion of Indonesia's halal industry (Maharani & Suma, 2023; Rofi'ah et al., 2024; Siswara et al., 2024). Growth in the sharia-based economy is widely regarded as an important indicator of national economic development, with the halal sector constituting a central component of this trajectory (Handayani & Resti, 2022). Despite this progress, efforts to accelerate halal certification continue to face structural constraints. While the state seeks to broaden certification requirements at the national level, many micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) encounter obstacles related to financial costs, administrative complexity, and limited access to information. In addition, regulatory governance of halal certification reflects ongoing political dynamics, including tensions between religious authorities and state institutions. At the same time, the global shift toward sustainable development has reshaped national policy agendas. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 now function as a global framework encouraging governments to integrate sustainability principles into development planning (United Nations, 2015).

As the country with the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia occupies a strategic position in advancing a halal economic system as part of its broader contribution to achieving the SDGs. This potential not only offers opportunities to strengthen domestic economic performance, but also supports Indonesia's aspiration to emerge as a global halal hub (Dewi & Pratomo, 2023). Within the sustainable development agenda, halal certification is closely associated with several SDGs, particularly Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), Goal 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), and Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production). When implemented effectively, halal certification can enhance the competitiveness of the national halal industry while ensuring consumer protection and upholding ethical standards. Achieving these outcomes, however, requires regulatory approaches that are inclusive, adaptive, and grounded in empirical evidence.

Recognizing the strategic importance of the halal sector, the Indonesian government enacted Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance, which established halal certification as a mandatory requirement for products circulating in the domestic market. The law created the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) as the primary



regulatory authority responsible for administering the certification system. However, the governance structure of halal certification in Indonesia involves multiple institutions, including BPJPH, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) as the authority issuing halal fatwas, and Halal Inspection Bodies (LPH) that conduct auditing and verification processes. While this multi-institutional structure aims to ensure both regulatory accountability and religious legitimacy, it also introduces institutional complexity within the certification system.

Within the broader framework of regulatory governance, public policies often involve interactions among state institutions, market actors, and social authorities that collectively shape regulatory outcomes. Regulatory governance theory emphasizes that effective policy implementation depends not only on formal regulations but also on institutional coordination, administrative capacity, and stakeholder collaboration (Liu, 2018; Sulistiyowati et al., 2026). In the case of halal certification, governance arrangements must balance religious authority, bureaucratic regulation, and market dynamics. The involvement of BPJPH, MUI, and LPH reflects an institutional configuration where religious legitimacy and state regulation intersect in managing halal compliance.

Nevertheless, such institutional arrangements may also generate coordination challenges and overlapping regulatory authority. The certification process requires sequential interactions between auditing institutions, religious authorities, and regulatory agencies, potentially creating procedural redundancies and administrative delays. In addition, halal certification policies intersect with regulations from other ministries related to food safety, trade, and industrial standards. These overlapping regulatory frameworks can create bureaucratic barriers, particularly for micro and small enterprises (MSEs), which often face limited administrative capacity, financial constraints, and insufficient access to certification infrastructure (Djakfar et al., 2025; Fattah et al., 2025; Mausufi et al., 2023; Mulyati et al., 2023; Naisabur & Putra, 2024).

This study seeks to explore the dynamics of halal certification in Indonesia from the perspective of political economy and religious institutionalization. In particular, the research examines how halal certification functions not only as a regulatory mechanism but also as a process through which religious authority becomes institutionalized within state governance structures. This study aims to analyze the institutionalization of religious authority within Indonesia's halal certification governance, focusing on the interaction between state institutions and religious actors in shaping regulatory practices; to examine the dual function of halal certification as both a symbolic expression of Islamic values and a strategic economic instrument within the halal industry; to evaluate the contribution of halal certification policies to the broader sustainable development agenda, particularly in relation to inclusive economic growth, industrial development and innovation, and responsible production and consumption and to identify key institutional and structural constraints that may affect the effectiveness of halal certification policies, thereby providing a deeper understanding of how halal governance operates within Indonesia's broader political economy of sustainable development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Certification, Sustainable Development, and Economic Outcomes

Scholarship on halal certification has expanded beyond its religious origins to examine its economic and social impacts. Research indicates that halal certification influences not only compliance with *Shari'ah* norms but also local economic development, market competitiveness, and consumer confidence (Hasyim, 2023). Studies in global contexts underscore how halal assurance systems enhance supply-chain resilience, ethical production practices, and broader sustainability outcomes (Lever & Miele, 2012; Wilson & Liu, 2011). In Indonesia, halal certification has been linked to expanded market access for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), improved managerial competence, and stronger product positioning in international markets (Purnomo, 2023; Salsabila et al., 2025; Tuhuteru & Iqbal, 2024).

From a sustainable development perspective, halal certification contributes to multiple SDGs, including poverty reduction and decent employment (SDGs 1 and 8), food safety and public health (SDG 3), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), and accountable governance (SDG 16) (Ariska et al., 2024). The Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) integrates mandatory documentation, traceability, and monitoring of halal-critical points, thereby embedding ethical and quality standards throughout supply chains.

In Indonesia, halal certification has been linked to expanded market access for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), improved managerial competence, and stronger product positioning in international markets (Purnomo, 2023; Salsabila et al., 2025). Empirical data from BPJPH indicate that as of October 2025, around 9.6 million products in Indonesia have obtained halal certification, with only about 12.85 % of MSMEs holding certification despite the vast number of MSMEs operating in the country.

From a sustainable development perspective, halal certification contributes to multiple SDGs. It supports SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) by creating economic opportunities for certified MSMEs, SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) through embedding ethical production practices and traceability across supply chains, and SDG 3 (food safety and public health) by ensuring compliance with halal critical points (Ariska et al., 2024). However, the contribution to these goals must be substantiated empirically. At 9.6 million certified products and only 12.85 % MSME participation provide measurable indicators of access and coverage. The halal industry contributes to the national economy with projections of US\$ 311.7 billion and annual growth of 14.2 %, reflecting its role in economic development and global market competitiveness. The predominance of *self-declaration* certification (61.36 %) highlights potential oversight gaps, while disparities in digital literacy and institutional capacity among MSMEs indicate inequitable implementation.

These indicators demonstrate that halal certification is not merely a normative or discursive commitment to the SDGs but can be evaluated through measurable outcomes. Moreover, the Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) integrates mandatory documentation, traceability, and monitoring of halal critical points, embedding ethical



and quality standards throughout supply chains, which further strengthens its empirical link to sustainability objectives. These studies demonstrate that halal certification serves multiple economic and social functions, supporting the premise that certification is not merely technical or symbolic but embedded in broader sustainability and market development frameworks. However, less attention has been paid to how regulatory mechanisms themselves shape the pace and equity of certification outcomes.

Institutional Arrangements in Halal Governance

In Indonesia, halal certification operates through a multilayered institutional framework involving the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH), Halal Inspection Bodies (LPH), and the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) (Ahasmi & Fatwa, 2026; Akim et al., 2019; Faridah, 2019). BPJPH is mandated as the central regulatory authority responsible for administering certification processes under Law No. 33 of 2014, while LPHs perform technical audits, on-site assessments, and verification of halal-critical points. MUI, as the holder of religious authority, issues the formal halal fatwa upon which BPJPH bases certification decisions (Ahasmi & Fatwa, 2026; Al-Mawarid & Rohmah, 2023; Rachman & Khokhar, 2023).

Although this structure aims to balance religious legitimacy with regulatory accountability, it also introduces coordination challenges and overlapping procedures. Sequential verification steps between LPH and BPJPH, coupled with the fatwa validation process by MUI, can generate procedural redundancy and administrative delays. Such overlaps are particularly onerous for MSMEs, which often lack the institutional capacity to navigate complex certification processes (Fathoni et al., 2025; Fattah et al., 2025; Jakiyudin & Fedro, 2022). Understanding how institutional interplay shapes regulatory accessibility is crucial. Existing literature describes institutional roles descriptively but rarely examines the implications of overlapping authority for the efficiency and inclusivity of halal certification processes, particularly in relation to MSME participation.

Political Economy of Halal Governance

The governance of halal certification can be conceptualized through the lens of political economy, wherein state regulation, market interests, and religious norms interact to shape economic governance. In this context, halal certification exemplifies bureaucratized religious governance, the institutionalization of religious values within formal regulatory frameworks that both legitimize and regulate market activities (Arifin et al., 2025; Lever & Miele, 2012; Lutfi, 2025; Rahmatullah et al., 2025).

Within political economy frameworks, regulatory governance is defined not merely by legal texts but by the coordination capacity of institutions, the distribution of authority, and the negotiation between public and private actors (Ahmad & Mahmood, 2024; Cashore et al., 2021; Guidi et al., 2020; Sulistiyowati et al., 2026). This perspective has been applied in analyses of food safety, environmental, and trade regulations, illustrating that the effectiveness of regulatory systems hinges on coherence, administrative capacity, and stakeholder engagement. Applying political economy to

halal governance highlights that regulatory design and institutional coordination influence not only compliance outcomes but also the distribution of costs and benefits among actors (state, firms, communities). Yet, empirical applications of political economy to halal certification remain limited, especially in terms of how institutional arrangements affect regulatory speed, equity, and alignment with SDG commitments.

Previous Studies on Regulatory and Institutional Dynamics in Accelerating Halal

Numerous studies on halal certification have explored its multifaceted role in Indonesia. One stream of research highlights the political dynamics of halal certification, emphasizing the prominent role of the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) as a non-state actor endowed with religious legitimacy and considerable influence over market mechanisms (Hasyim, 2023; Mashudi & Ilmi, 2024; Sujibto & Fakhruddin M., 2023). Another line of inquiry investigates the implications of halal certification for business management, showing that certification enhances managerial effectiveness, product reliability, and competitiveness in both domestic and global markets (Amer, 2024; Hidayat & Witta, 2024; Nurjamjam, 2024). Research on digital transformation demonstrates the contribution of information technologies in facilitating certification processes, yet these studies focus primarily on operational efficiency rather than critically examining the role of government regulation or its link to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Murti, 2023).

Despite the extensive documentation of halal certification's economic, social, and operational impacts, few studies critically analyze how regulatory structures can be optimized to expedite certification, enhance compliance, and simultaneously advance SDG-related objectives (Ariska et al., 2024; Jakiyudin & Fedro, 2022). Other strands of scholarship include comparative studies of halal certification regulations between Indonesia and Malaysia, which explore differences in regulatory approaches adopted by two Muslim-majority countries without addressing the pace of implementation or its relevance to the SDGs (Shalahuddin et al., 2024). Additional research underscores the urgency of halal certification in supporting the growth of Indonesia's sharia economy, while stopping short of analyzing regulatory dynamics or sustainability-oriented policy objectives (Latifah & Yusuf, 2024). Studies examining the role of halal certification in industrial and business management largely concentrate on sectoral implications rather than regulatory acceleration aimed at achieving the SDGs (Hartini & Malahayatie, 2024; Wardo & Samsuri, 2020). Similarly, research on the impact of halal certification on enhancing MSMEs competitiveness has yet to address how regulatory frameworks contribute to accelerated certification in support of SDG targets (Azizah et al., 2025; Hidayat & Witta, 2024; Purnomo, 2023). Further studies investigate consumer preferences toward non-certified halal food (Pratiwi et al., 2024), and supervisory gaps in halal certification for MSMEs through ArcGIS-based dashboard integration (Huda et al., 2024), but neither explicitly engages with the issue of accelerating halal certification as a strategy for advancing the SDGs in Indonesia.

Recent peer-reviewed studies provide insights into governance, socio-economic outcomes, and the role of certification in sustainable development. Nugroho et al.



(2024) developed a model of halal-labeled vaccine purchasing behavior within the context of the Muslim lifestyle in Indonesia. Mansur et al. (2025) examine the role of collaborative governance among regulatory authorities, religious institutions, and MSMEs within Indonesia's halal ecosystem. Tangkham (2025) explores compliance with halal standards among community food producers in Pattani Province, Thailand, focusing on sustainable food systems and SDGs. Sopiah et al. (2024) highlight that changes in Indonesia's halal product guarantee regulations, viewed through legal politics and consumer rights protection, aim to strengthen the national halal industry and streamline compliance for producers while raising critical questions about balancing regulatory simplification with safeguarding consumers' legal protections.

Research Gap and Justification

While existing literature has examined halal certification's influence on business competitiveness, digitalization, and sharia economic growth, there remains a notable research gap in understanding how government regulation can actively accelerate halal certification as a strategic instrument to achieve the SDGs. Prior studies have rarely addressed the design of inclusive, adaptive regulatory strategies that balance the interests of the state, market actors, and civil society, particularly in contexts where overlapping institutional responsibilities (BPJPH–MUI–LPH) may impede timely certification. Addressing this gap is essential for providing both theoretical and practical insights into sustainable halal governance, policy optimization, and national competitiveness in the global halal economy.

Contribution of This Study

This study employs Clifford Geertz's interpretive approach to religion, specifically his conceptualization of religion as a symbolic system, to examine halal certification in Indonesia. Geertz's framework emphasizes that religious symbols, rituals, and institutions shape social behavior, collective identity, and economic practices, making it particularly suitable for analyzing the interplay between religious authority and market mechanisms in the halal industry. Applying this approach allows researchers to move beyond a purely technical or procedural understanding of halal certification and instead interpret it as a bureaucratized manifestation of religious authority, where the state institutionalizes Islamic norms within formal regulatory and market structures. This perspective aligns with current developments in the halal sector, where certification serves simultaneously as a religious safeguard, a market legitimacy tool, and a public policy instrument that connects ethical compliance with economic growth and sustainability objectives (Faridah, 2019; Makiah et al., 2022; Rahmatullah et al., 2025).

By integrating Geertz's symbolic approach with the Sustainable Development Goals framework, the study demonstrates that halal certification contributes to SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) by linking religious values with institutionalized market governance. The framework also facilitates identification of structural barriers, such as unequal access, limited infrastructure, and low digital

literacy among MSMEs, offering a foundation for evidence-based policy interventions, inter-agency coordination, and governance reforms informed by sustainability principles. Practically, this theoretical lens clarifies how halal certification enhances state legitimacy, strengthens global competitiveness, and promotes an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable halal economy, bridging symbolic religious authority with rational regulatory objectives.

METHOD

Research Design

This research adopts a descriptive qualitative methodology grounded in a critical paradigm that emphasizes the analysis of social phenomena involving human actors (Charity, 2018). The approach is employed to examine the dynamics of state regulation in accelerating halal product certification and its linkage to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), drawing on a political economy perspective that highlights interactions among the state, market forces, and civil society. A key theoretical lens employed in this study is Clifford Geertz's interpretive approach, particularly his conceptualization of religion as a symbolic system that shapes social behavior and collective identity. Incorporating Geertz is justified because halal certification is not only a technical regulation but also a manifestation of religious authority and cultural values institutionalized by the state.

Through in-depth examination of public policies and regulatory documents, the study seeks to uncover the configuration of power relations and competing interests that shape both the formulation and execution of halal certification regulations (Ikhwan, 2024). At the conceptual level, the study is informed by a critical political economy framework that interrogates the interconnections between state authority, capital interests, and ideological forces embedded in halal certification policy. From this perspective, regulatory outcomes are understood not simply as the result of neutral or technocratic administrative processes, but as products of historically constituted power relations (Cox, 1981). Accordingly, the acceleration of halal certification is interpreted not merely as an administrative or procedural necessity, but as an expression of negotiation, contestation, and compromise among diverse actors within Indonesia's broader socio-economic structure.

This study examines national-level public policies, regulatory instruments, and institutional arrangements, including Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance, Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021 concerning the implementation of halal product assurance, as well as related policy measures issued by the Ministries of Religious Affairs, Industry, and Cooperatives and Small-Medium Enterprises. Particular emphasis is placed on inter-institutional initiatives, such as the Halal Center program, which integrates halal certification processes with strategies for inclusive economic development and the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered through systematic document and literature analysis drawing on three principal sources: (1) scholarly publications addressing halal certification and political economy, (2) statutory and regulatory instruments, including Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance and Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021 governing the implementation of halal product assurance, and (3) key strategic policy materials, notably the 2020–2024 National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) and official Indonesian Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reports. These sources were selected to capture both the theoretical foundations and practical regulatory frameworks relevant to halal certification and its alignment with SDGs. Data from these documents were analyzed using thematic content analysis, focusing on regulatory structures, institutional roles, and policy strategies. The main limitation of this method is that it relies on secondary sources, which may underrepresent micro-level perspectives such as MSMEs and consumers.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed qualitatively using the [Miles & Huberman's \(2014\)](#) framework, including data reduction, display, and drawing conclusions. Analysis was guided by critical political economy theory and Geertz's interpretive lens, which frames halal certification as both a state economic instrument and a cultural-religious phenomenon. Thematic coding was applied to identify patterns in regulatory texts, policy documents, and literature related to halal certification and its alignment with the SDGs. Triangulation of sources, methods, and theoretical perspectives ensured validity, while findings were cross-checked through academic discussions and literature enrichment. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the interactions between religious authority, governance, and sustainable development, while acknowledging the interpretive nature of qualitative analysis.

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to fundamental ethical principles in qualitative research. As the research relies exclusively on document and literature analysis, it does not involve direct interaction with human participants or the collection of personal or sensitive data, thereby minimizing ethical risks related to consent, privacy, or potential harm. All data sources used in this study, including academic publications, legal documents such as Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance and Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021, and official policy reports, are publicly accessible and are cited appropriately to maintain academic integrity and avoid plagiarism. The researcher also acknowledges the interpretive nature of qualitative analysis and therefore applies systematic thematic analysis, cross-referencing multiple sources, and maintaining analytical transparency to reduce bias and ensure responsible interpretation. Through these practices, the study aims to uphold scholarly integrity, objectivity, and accuracy in examining the political economy and regulatory dynamics of halal certification in relation to sustainable development.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed triangulation limited to document verification, policy comparison, and literature enrichment, consistent with the critical qualitative approach. This method allows for a deep interpretive understanding of regulatory mechanisms, institutional interactions, and their implications for accelerating halal certification and achieving SDGs.

RESULTS

Halal Certification Regulation in Indonesia as Public Policy

The implementation of halal certification in Indonesia illustrates a complex interplay between legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms, market actors, and religious authority, with implications for both national development and global competitiveness. The results can be understood through three interrelated levels: macro-level regulatory architecture, meso-level institutional and operational challenges, and micro-level compliance and enforcement.

Macro-Level: Regulatory Architecture and State Strategy

At the macro level, Law No. 33 of 2014 and the establishment of BPJPH reflect a deliberate state strategy to transform halal certification from a voluntary religious practice into a mandatory, standardized, and globally recognized regulatory system. Through Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021, Indonesia has implemented a phased certification scheme, targeting various product categories from food and beverages to medical devices over the next decade (Akim et al., 2019; Faridah, 2019).

This regulatory design not only secures consumer trust and public health but also positions Indonesia strategically within the global halal market, aligning policy with SDG 8 (economic growth and decent work), SDG 9 (industrial development and innovation), and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production) (Apridayani et al., 2023). However, provisions granting lifetime validity to halal certificates (Law No. 6 of 2023) have raised concerns about the adequacy of oversight, as routine audits are no longer mandatory. This illustrates the tension between bureaucratic efficiency and substantive compliance, highlighting the political-economic nature of state regulation.

Additionally, Law No. 11 of 2020 on Job Creation mandates mandatory halal certification, and halal certification regulations can be sorted hierarchically: Laws, Government Regulations, Ministerial Policies, and agency-level programs. Various government initiatives, such as the free halal certification program (SEHATI), accelerate certification and improve access, particularly for MSMEs.

Meso-Level: Institutional Implementation and Operational Challenges

Implementation at the meso level reveals institutional and structural bottlenecks. First, the Halal Information System (SI Halal), intended as a digital facilitation tool, faces accessibility and reliability issues. System delays, OTP errors, and inaccurate data entry by PPH assistants have resulted in certificates being issued without verification of actual business operations, highlighting weaknesses in institutional monitoring and



accountability (BPJPH, 2024). Second, financial and resource constraints pose barriers, particularly for MSMEs. Certification costs can range from IDR 350,000 to several million, creating a substantial burden for small-scale producers. Programs such as SEHATI aim to mitigate these costs, yet limited quotas and digital barriers prevent universal access, especially in remote regions with low literacy and technological capacity (Apridayani et al., 2023). Third, bureaucratic complexity prolongs certification timelines. Processes involve multiple layers of verification, from business registration and material inspection to MUI fatwa decisions and final BPJPH approval. Coupled with insufficient socialization and low awareness among MSMEs, this contributes to unequal participation and highlights the importance of combining formal regulation with capacity-building and outreach. These meso-level dynamics reveal how state, market, and religious authority negotiate compliance, illustrating that formal certification alone is insufficient to guarantee substantive halal adherence.

Micro-Level: Compliance, Enforcement, and Ethical Practice

At the micro level, instances of non-compliance demonstrate the importance of ethical behavior among business actors. On 21 March 2025, BPJPH and BPOM withdrew seven products containing pork derivatives and issued recalls for two additional products, including Corniche and ChompChomp marshmallows, highlighting ongoing risks when producers fail to uphold halal standards.

These cases underscore that the substantive meaning of halal certification depends not only on regulatory structures but also on the integrity and accountability of producers, reflecting the broader Geertzian notion that religious symbols, halal certification, require both institutional codification and moral adherence to maintain legitimacy. Moreover, international scrutiny, particularly from the United States regarding foreign certification bodies, points to the need for transparent, accessible, and internationally compatible accreditation processes, ensuring that Indonesia's halal system remains credible in global markets.

Political-Economic Dynamics and SDGs

Halal certification functions as a tool for the state to structure markets, codify religious norms, and facilitate economic development. The state mediates between market incentives and religious legitimacy, while businesses respond to economic and reputational motivations, and religious authorities provide moral and cultural validation. At the same time, halal certification contributes to inclusive and sustainable development. By lowering financial barriers for MSMEs through SEHATI, leveraging digital platforms for certification, and standardizing product quality, the policy aligns with SDGs, particularly in fostering decent work (SDG 8), industrial growth (SDG 9), and responsible consumption (SDG 12). Yet disparities in access, oversight, and capacity demonstrate that structural and social inequalities can limit policy effectiveness.

Acceleration of Halal Product Certification as an Achievement of SDGs Implementation

Halal product certification in Indonesia has evolved from a voluntary religious observance into a strategic instrument of state policy, shaping markets, codifying moral authority, and interfacing with global economic frameworks. By 2022, over one million products had obtained halal certification, reflecting both the rapid growth of the halal sector and the intensifying imperative to expedite certification, particularly in food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. This expansion unfolds within a complex web of negotiations among government institutions, market actors, and religious authorities, each influencing the interpretation, enforcement, and definition of halal compliance.

The Indonesian government frames halal certification not merely as a mechanism for consumer protection or religious observance, but as a national development strategy aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, halal certification intersects with SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 9 on industry, innovation, and infrastructure, and SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production. From a critical political economy perspective, these intersections are not merely normative claims; they reflect the strategic deployment of SDGs to legitimize policy, mobilize market participation, and embed religious norms within economic governance.

Symbolic Dimensions of Halal Certification: Clifford Geertz's Perspective on Political Economy of Halal Certification

In the socio-political economy approach, public policy is conceived as a site of contested interests among the state, the market, and civil society. The state is not a neutral arbiter; rather, it strategically shapes markets while legitimizing its authority through regulatory frameworks. Within this context, halal certification emerges as a technocratic tool imbued with ideological values and political-economic stakes. Resource allocation, institutional capacities, and access to information fundamentally influence the dynamics of halal governance, both nationally and internationally. Integrating Clifford Geertz's perspective enriches the political economy analysis of halal certification. Geertz conceptualizes religion as a system of symbolic meaning, providing a lens to understand halal certification not merely as a technical regulation but as a medium through which moral, cultural, and religious values are articulated and institutionalized. Halal certification, therefore, functions as a codified representation of Islamic norms, transforming religious ideals into formal administrative practices.

Table 1

Political Economy and Symbolic Dimensions of Halal Certification in Indonesia

Dimension	Key Actors & Relationships	Functions & Implications	Geertzian Symbolic Perspective	Current Development / Indicators
State & Religion	BPJPH (government agency), MUI	Formulate and supervise halal standards	Halal certification as a symbolic articulation of religious values and moral legitimacy; codifies religion into institutional forms	BPJPH established to formalize halal certification- MUI's fatwas



Dimension	Key Actors & Relationships	Functions & Implications	Geertzian Symbolic Perspective	Current Development / Indicators
	(religious authority)	Transform religious values into technocratic policies Act as cultural broker of Islamic values		integrated into legal frameworks Religious values standardized for market and bureaucratic purposes
Countries & Markets	State, local businesses, global halal market	Open global market access (~USD 3 trillion/year)- Package religious meaning as a guarantee of quality and trust Promote economic growth through compliance	Halal becomes a cultural symbol commodified for international trade; representation of national identity and modernity	Indonesian halal exports increasing Businesses incentivized to meet halal standards Halal certification used in branding for global competitiveness
Religion & Market	Religious institutions, consumers, market actors	Religion as a commodity of trust- Influence consumer behaviour Transform moral/religious values into economic signals	Religious symbols undergo rationalization/commodification; halal as marker of legitimacy and moral trust	Halal certification widely recognized by consumers Religious legitimacy converted into economic value Growing private certification schemes for consumer trust
State, Religion & Market (Integrate)	BPJPH, MUI, business actors, civil society	Halal certification as strategic policy tool Institutionalizes religious and moral values into law- Strengthens national and global positioning	Halal certification as "thick description": dense with moral, cultural, and economic meaning	Indonesia aiming to be global halal hub Halal law integrated into national development strategy Public health, food security, and consumer convenience linked to certification- Synergy between religious legitimacy and economic competitiveness

Source: Authors' analysis.

Discourse on Compliance, Standardization, and Economic Rationality

Business actors' compliance with halal certification regulations is not solely based on normative religious reasons, but is also seen as a strategic step in strengthening market position and increasing business credibility amidst increasing consumer awareness of halal products. Business actors not only comply with halal certification as a religious requirement, but also as a strategic business step. In this context, business actors comply with halal certification procedures because they consider economic benefits,

international market access, and social legitimacy. This program aims to ease the burden of certification costs for MSMEs and expand sharia economic inclusion. This program aims to ease the burden of certification costs for MSMEs and expand sharia economic inclusion.

However, the reality on the ground shows a gap between the idealism of bureaucratic rationality and the implementation practices at the grassroots level. Many Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) face structural obstacles such as high certification costs, limited access to halal inspection institutions (LPH), and low digital and regulatory literacy. Certification, which is ideally a means of empowerment, can actually become an administrative and financial burden for business actors in remote areas. However, the reality on the ground shows that certification costs, limited access, and minimal literacy are the main obstacles for MSMEs. In response, the government launched the following programs:

- a. Free Halal Certification (SEHATI) from BPJPH for 1 million MSMEs in 2023–2024 ([BPJH, 2023](#)). This program aims to ease the burden of certification costs for MSMEs and expand sharia economic inclusion.
- b. APBD incentives from local governments such as Banyuwangi and Aceh ([PEMKAB Banyuwangi, 2023](#)) for financing halal certification as part of the local economic strategy. This initiative shows that regional autonomy has an important role in encouraging equal access to national regulations.
- c. As a socio-economic node, it also contributes to social innovation in the halal certification system.

The halal certification acceleration policy can also be analyzed from its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in points 8, 9, and 12. *First*, in relation to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, the acceleration of halal certification opens up new job opportunities in the halal supervisory services sector, halal auditors, consultants, and industrial training. This strengthens the formal sector economy and increases the competitiveness of domestic business actors. *Second*, related to SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, institutional development such as BPJPH (Halal Product Guarantee Agency), as well as the digitalization of the halal certification process, reflects the strengthening of institutional infrastructure and increasing innovation in the industrial sector. Halal regulations stimulate business actors to develop products and production processes based on measurable and value-based standards ([BPJPH, 2024](#)). *Third*, in the context of SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, halal certification encourages industry players to implement clean, transparent, and ethical production practices. This is in line with Weberian rationalization, where the economic actions of society, both producers and consumers, are regulated by legal considerations and formal normative systems ([United Nations, 2015](#)).



DISCUSSION

Institutionalization of Religious Authority in Halal Certification

The analysis reveals that halal certification in Indonesia operates as a mechanism for institutionalizing religious authority. The collaboration between BPJPH and MUI illustrates that the state does more than regulate technical standards; it actively shapes the symbolic meaning of halal in domestic and global markets. The certification process transforms Islamic principles into formal administrative procedures, demonstrating that religious norms are codified and standardized through bureaucratic mechanisms.

Halal certification also functions as a hybrid moral-economic commodity. Beyond signaling religious compliance, halal labels indicate product quality, safety, and international trustworthiness, allowing businesses to capitalize on global markets valued at over USD 3 trillion annually. This dual transformation maintains the symbolic religious meaning while commodifying it for market purposes. Consumers purchase not only products but also invest in the symbolic legitimacy of halal, reflecting a shift from moral-religious values to economic considerations (Calder, 2020; Rahmatullah et al., 2025).

This finding aligns with research highlighting the growing institutionalization of halal governance within modern regulatory frameworks. However, Indonesia's institutional arrangement differs from more centralized certification regimes in countries such as Malaysia, where authority is concentrated under JAKIM. In contrast, Indonesia distributes authority between BPJPH as the regulatory body and MUI as the religious authority responsible for fatwa validation. Similarly, halal governance in Thailand integrates certification with scientific institutions and research centers. These variations illustrate that halal certification systems are shaped by distinct institutional configurations reflecting national political and regulatory traditions. Halal certification in Indonesia demonstrates how religious legitimacy can be embedded within state governance structures, positioning the state simultaneously as a regulator of markets and a mediator of religious authority within the halal economy.

Halal Certification and Inclusive Economic Growth (SDG 8)

The acceleration of halal certification supports SDG 8 by promoting inclusive economic growth, particularly for halal-based micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Programs such as SEHATI and regional APBD incentives reduce financial barriers, enabling small producers to access both domestic and international markets. The increasing consumer demand for halal-compliant products has intensified the need for certification. Data from the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH) indicate that the number of certified products surpassed one million by 2022, while more than two million MSMEs have registered under the Halal Product Assurance Law. This expansion highlights the growing economic relevance of halal certification in Indonesia.

Nevertheless, regulatory frameworks alone cannot ensure effective implementation. Variations in digital literacy, limited access to certification platforms,

and reliance on ethical behavior among producers reveal structural constraints that influence certification outcomes. Without addressing these institutional and socio-cultural limitations, accelerated certification may generate administrative compliance without guaranteeing substantive *halalan thayyiban* quality. From a comparative perspective, Indonesia's certification model prioritizes economic inclusivity for MSMEs. This approach contrasts with certification systems in countries such as Malaysia, where stricter compliance requirements enhance international credibility but often involve higher administrative and financial burdens. Indonesia's policy framework therefore reflects a governance trade-off between regulatory rigor and economic accessibility. This trade-off suggests that halal certification policies must balance economic inclusion with quality assurance to ensure sustainable market competitiveness.

Industrial Infrastructure, Innovation, and Ethical Consumption (SDG 9 and SDG 12)

The institutional development of halal certification also contributes to SDG 9 by strengthening industrial infrastructure and encouraging innovation within the halal sector. The establishment of BPJPH, the integration of digital certification platforms such as the SI Halal system, and the regulatory timelines introduced under PP No. 39/2021 demonstrate efforts to modernize the halal certification process and improve administrative efficiency.

However, disparities in auditor distribution, regional administrative capacity, and digital accessibility indicate that technological innovation alone cannot guarantee comprehensive implementation. These limitations reveal that the effectiveness of digital certification systems depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on institutional coordination and governance capacity. Halal certification further contributes to SDG 12 by signaling ethical production and responsible consumption. The codification of *halalan thayyiban* translates Islamic moral principles into market-based trust, reflecting Geertz's conceptualization of religion as a system of symbolic meaning. Through certification, religious values are transformed into tangible guarantees of product quality and safety for consumers.

Halal Certification within the Political Economy of Sustainable Development

Halal certification in Indonesia has evolved from a voluntary religious practice into a structured regulatory system following the enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance. This transformation reflects the strategic alignment of religious authority, economic policy, and state governance, institutionalizing halal compliance while expanding the state's role in shaping market participation (Apridayani et al., 2023). The phased implementation under PP No. 39 of 2021 further demonstrates Indonesia's ambition to position itself as a global halal hub.

From a political economy perspective, halal certification operates as a hybrid governance mechanism that integrates moral authority with market regulation. Institutionalized through BPJPH and validated by MUI, certification embeds Islamic values within economic governance frameworks while simultaneously functioning as a



market credential signaling ethical legitimacy and product reliability. However, this regulatory expansion also reveals structural tensions. The introduction of lifetime validity for halal certificates under Law No. 6 of 2023 may reduce oversight capacity, while complex certification procedures can impose administrative burdens on MSMEs, particularly in regions with limited technological infrastructure. These constraints highlight the importance of institutional capacity in determining the effectiveness of halal certification policies.

The Indonesian government also frames halal certification within the broader agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), linking it to inclusive economic growth (SDG 8), industrial development and innovation (SDG 9), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). Nevertheless, empirical evidence suggests that certification expansion alone does not automatically translate into measurable development outcomes. (Aini & Go, 2025) show that although the number of certified products has increased, export performance depends on broader market dynamics. Similarly, (Tangkham, 2025) emphasizes that regulatory acceleration produces sustainable outcomes only when supported by adequate organizational capacity and institutional support, while (Sopiah et al., 2024) highlight the need to balance regulatory efficiency with consumer protection. Indonesia's halal certification system reflects a hybrid governance model that attempts to reconcile religious legitimacy, market incentives, and development objectives. Its long-term effectiveness therefore depends on the alignment of regulatory enforcement, institutional capacity, and market behavior, demonstrating that halal certification functions not only as a regulatory instrument but also as a strategic component of Indonesia's political economy of sustainable development

Theoretical Implications and Contributions

This study reconceptualizes halal certification as a form of bureaucratized religious governance, moving beyond its conventional portrayal as merely a technical regulatory procedure or a mechanism of religious compliance. By integrating perspectives from political economy with Clifford Geertz's interpretive understanding of religion as a symbolic system, the study demonstrates how religious norms are systematically institutionalized by the state within bureaucratic and market structures. In doing so, it contributes to political economy scholarship by illustrating that halal certification operates simultaneously as an instrument of market regulation, a source of state legitimacy, and a mechanism for economic development, thereby challenging the conventional dichotomy between religious regulation and economic rationality.

Furthermore, the study advances the concept of bureaucratized religious governance as an analytical framework for examining how religious authority is translated into formal administrative procedures, regulatory mechanisms, and policy instruments. Through this perspective, religious governance is understood not merely as a domain of belief, doctrine, or moral guidance, but as a structured and institutionalized process embedded within state bureaucracies and market systems, interacting dynamically with broader governance and development agendas.

In addition, situating halal certification within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscores the potential of religiously informed governance to contribute to inclusive economic growth, industrial innovation, and responsible production and consumption. By linking these domains, the study bridges scholarly debates on the relationship between state, religion, and market governance with discussions on sustainable public policy. Ultimately, it offers an interdisciplinary perspective for understanding how religious authority can be integrated into modern governance frameworks, particularly within Muslim-majority societies navigating the intersection of economic development, regulatory governance, and cultural legitimacy.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

The findings emphasize the importance of institutional coordination and governance capacity in the halal certification system. Effective implementation requires collaboration among regulatory bodies, economic ministries, and digital governance institutions to ensure that policies are integrated and administratively effective. Although the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) has established a standardized bureaucratic system that reinforces regulatory certainty and state authority, these structures should be complemented by reforms guided by sustainability principles, including transparency, inclusivity, and flexibility, particularly in an increasingly digital environment.

At the operational level, MSMEs face structural challenges such as unequal access, limited infrastructure, and low digital literacy, which may marginalize smaller actors in the halal economy. Addressing these gaps calls for targeted interventions, including financial support, streamlined certification processes, skills development programs, and digital facilitation initiatives tailored to small-scale enterprises. By framing halal certification through the SDGs lens, policymakers can view it not just as regulatory compliance but as a lever for broader development goals, including decent employment, innovation, and sustainable production, thereby strengthening the role of halal governance in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

CONCLUSION

Based on this study, the dynamics of halal product certification in Indonesia reveal that the state functions as an active political-economic actor, strategically shaping market governance while grounding policies in religious values. Law No. 33 of 2014 and the establishment of BPJPH reflect deliberate state intervention to restructure the relationships among religion, market, and development, transforming halal certification from a voluntary religious obligation into a formalized, standardized, and globally recognized regulatory system.

Halal certification has evolved beyond its traditional role of ensuring religious compliance and food safety, becoming a strategic policy tool that addresses global market demands and supports several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure), and SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production). The governance



system established by BPJPH demonstrates inclusive social innovation, promoting MSMEs participation, market access, and the codification of religious values into economic and bureaucratic frameworks.

However, practical challenges remain. The limited number of halal auditors, inadequate digital infrastructure, and regional disparities constrain effective implementation, especially in remote or underserved areas. From a political economy perspective, this demonstrates the bureaucratization and commodification of religious norms, institutionalizing Islamic values within national and global economic structures while generating potential tensions between moral legitimacy and market rationality.

The uneven implementation across regions highlights the necessity for region-specific affirmative policies, capacity-building programs, and enhanced digital support, ensuring that halal governance not only standardizes certification but also promotes inclusive economic growth without exacerbating social or economic inequalities. Overall, Indonesia's halal certification framework illustrates how legal, religious, and market dimensions can be strategically integrated, producing a multidimensional policy tool that mediates morality, economic opportunity, and global competitiveness.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses solely on the dynamics of Indonesian government regulations in accelerating halal product certification, particularly Law No. 33 of 2014 and its implementing regulations, without analyzing business experiences outside Indonesia, which limits cross-country comparisons. Second, it relies mainly on secondary data such as government reports, regulations, and literature, restricting insights into the subjective experiences of business actors, halal auditors, or consumers. Third, the study emphasizes the early stages of mandatory certification (up to October 2024–2026), making it difficult to assess long-term impacts on industry sustainability, compliance, and SDGs achievement. Finally, its context is confined to Indonesia, and social, cultural, and economic factors in other regions are not fully examined, limiting the generalizability of the findings internationally.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research can expand in several directions. Comparative studies could examine halal certification mechanisms in countries with developed halal industries, such as Malaysia, Thailand, or the UAE, to identify best practices and cross country regulatory challenges. Empirical field studies involving interviews, surveys, or case studies with business actors, halal auditors, and consumers are needed to capture real-world experiences and obstacles, particularly among MSMEs. Further research could also assess the impact of halal certification on SDGs 8, 9, and 12, analyzing economic indicators, industrial innovation, and responsible consumption. Additionally, studies could explore the role of digitalization, including the effectiveness of SI Halal, digital literacy challenges, and the implications for inclusive access. Future research could explore comparative studies of halal governance in other majority-Muslim countries to

refine the concept of bureaucratized religious governance. Longitudinal analyses could examine how halal certification evolves over time amid digitalization, market pressures, and sustainability priorities. Finally, studies assessing the impact of halal certification on SDG achievement and economic inclusivity, particularly for MSMEs, would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of religiously-informed governance frameworks.

Authors Contributions

Conceptualization	S.N. & M.H.	Resources	F. & A.M.
Data curation	S.N. & M.H.	Software	A.M. & T.P.
Formal analysis	F. & A.M.	Supervision	F. & A.M.
Funding acquisition	F. & A.M.	Validation	S.N. & A.M.
Investigation	S.N. & M.H.	Visualization	A.M. & T.P.
Methodology	F. & A.M.	Writing – original draft	A.M. & T.P.
Project administration	S.N. & M.H.	Writing – review & editing	S.N. & M.H.

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

This study received no direct funding from any institution.

Institutional Review Board Statement

The study was approved by Program Studi Hukum Bisnis Syariah (S1), Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura, Kab. Bangkalan, Indonesia.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was not required for this study.

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank Program Studi Hukum Bisnis Syariah (S1), Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura, Kab. Bangkalan, Indonesia for administrative support for this research.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work the authors used ChatGPT, Grammarly, and PaperPal to translate from Bahasa Indonesia into American English, and to improve clarity of the language and readability of the article. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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