



It's giving halal: Gen Z behavior bridging halal certification and MSMEs' purchase intention

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Abstract

Purpose – This study evaluates the influence of halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies on the purchase intention of MSMEs culinary products, with Gen Z consumer behavior as a mediating variable. The Islamic marketing approach references the SGIE 2023 Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix (HLMM), which integrates the principles of *amanah*, *taqwa*, *ibsan*, and *adl* into the 4Ps framework.

Methodology – Primary data were collected from Muslim respondents aged 17–26 years in West Java, a province promoting halal tourism and MSMEs growth. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the proposed model.

Findings – Halal certification significantly enhances consumer behavior, which in turn drives purchase intention. However, a negative direct effect of halal certification on purchase intention suggests a full mediation effect, where halal certification for MSMEs boosts Gen Z purchase intention only when it shapes how they think and act. Islamic marketing strategies also show a positive, albeit smaller, effect on consumer behavior and purchase intention.

Implications – Government efforts focusing solely on MSME certification could trigger consumer skepticism and discourage purchases. Therefore, initiatives must be coupled with Islamic marketing strategies that translate halal labels into meaningful consumer value.

Originality – This study advances the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by modeling consumer behavior as a second-order construct and operationalizing Islamic marketing through the Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix (HLMM). Focusing on MSMEs offers a novel perspective on how enterprises with typically weak brand identities can leverage the halal label as a market signal that shapes consumer intention.

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Introduction

Islamic economy is a global force that redefines consumption through ethics and faith-aligned values. The State of Global Economy Report (SGIE) in 2023 reported that the demand for halal products reached US\$2.29 trillion in 2022 from US\$1.62 trillion in 2012 (DinarStandard, 2024). The growth of the millennial and Generation Z Muslim populations is a major driving factor, representing 27.8% of the young population. This cohort favors brands that are aligned with universal principles of Islamic values, such as fairness (*adl*), transparency (*amanah*), and ethical conduct (*taqwa*), blending modern consumer behavior with religious identity.

Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim-majority population, represents 87.14% of its 282.75 million people (Ministry of Religious Affairs Republic of Indonesia, 2024), holds a

tremendous untapped market for halal food and tourism. Tourism is Indonesia's third-largest contributor to foreign exchange, employing 22.89 million workers (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2021). In 2020, 20.27% of the total tourism industry and creative economy businesses implemented halal tourism. Around 43,6% of all business owners in the tourism industry and creative economy are in the culinary subsector, most of which (91.05%) are medium, small, and micro enterprises (MSMEs). Given this opportunity, the government has intensified efforts to expand halal certifications for MSMEs. The Government Regulation in Lieu of Law Number 2 of 2022 provides a legal foundation supported by the BPJPH's free certification program for 25,000 self-declared business owners (Pardiansyah & Abduh, 2022).

These initiatives signal the urgency of a study that examines whether halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies can meaningfully shape consumer intention, as substantial fiscal resources and policy efforts are being directed toward strengthening MSMEs' competitiveness. Prior studies have linked halal certification to brand trust and positioning (Shah et al., 2020), how social media can strengthen the halal brand image (Fachrurazi et al., 2022), and how other factors (religiosity, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) shape halal consumption (Loussaief et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2023). However, no research has systematically applied and tested The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to model psychological mechanisms in the context of MSMEs culinary products.

This study addresses this gap by examining the effectiveness of halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies in influencing the consumption patterns of MSMEs culinary products. Specifically, this research problem is formulated as follows. (1) How do external factors (halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies) influence the purchase intention of MSMEs culinary products? (2) How do the role of internal factors (consumer behavior) mediate the influence of external factors on the purchase intention of MSMEs culinary products?

This research complements previous studies on halal certification, specifically regarding consumer intention to purchase MSMEs culinary products. Practically, the results of this study can be used as information for MSMEs players to design the right marketing strategy for halal products. In addition, this halal certification study is also directed to strengthen the tourism sector through marketing, promotion, and the digitalization of MSMEs in the future.

Literature Review

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 2011) offers a robust framework for understanding how individual beliefs translate into intentions and behaviors. The theory assumes that individuals are rational actors who evaluate information before deciding to engage in a behavior, which is shaped by three antecedents: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These factors capture the evaluative, social, and control-based influences that precede decision making. TPB has been widely adopted to explain consumer behavior, in which ethical, social, and religious considerations play a role (Fachrurazi et al., 2022; Loussaief et al., 2024; Ramli et al., 2023).

In this study, TPB provides the foundation for modeling how external variables shape the consumer behavior of Generation Z in the halal food sector. Consumer behavior is framed as the "organism" in a stimulus–organism–response (SOR) configuration, where external stimuli such as certification and marketing influence internal evaluations of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Prior work confirms that certification shapes attitudes and norms, which then translate into purchase intention (Febriandika et al., 2023; Siregar & Sobari, 2024). Similarly, studies of halal knowledge among Gen Z highlight how internalized awareness fosters selective purchasing, consistent with the TPB's emphasis on cognitive evaluations (Purnasari et al., 2023). The SOR approach has also been applied to halal food, where certification acts as a stimulus that influences attitudes and strongly predicts intentions (Ossman et al., 2025).

Therefore, this study extends TPB by positioning consumer behavior as a mediating structure that translates marketing inputs into purchase intention. While most TPB studies model direct effects, recent evidence has shown that external halal cues become meaningful only through

their impact on attitudes, norms, and perceived control (Ossman et al., 2025; Siregar & Sobari, 2024). By embedding TPB within a broader SOR paradigm, consumer behavior is conceptualized as the psychological processing layer through which halal-related stimuli are interpreted and acted upon, offering a more nuanced explanation of how values, perceptions, and religious framing guide decision making among young Muslim consumers.

Halal Style Marketing Mix (HLMM)

Traditional marketing theory emphasizes the 4Ps (product, price, place, and promotions) as essential components of marketing mix strategies (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). However, to better align with the ethical and religious expectations of Muslim consumers, the State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) 2023 report introduced a modified framework called the Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix (HLMM) (DinarStandard, 2024). In this framework, product design must reflect *Amanah* by ensuring authenticity, transparency, and compliance with halal standards. Price should embody *Adl*, promote fairness, and avoid exploitative pricing. The place must be influenced by *Ihsan* to ensure accessibility, quality, and ethical distribution channels. Finally, promotion strategies are rooted in *Taqwa*, requiring marketers to communicate truthfully and responsibly, avoiding exaggeration or deception.

Thus, the HLMM framework provides a comprehensive model for businesses targeting Muslim consumers where marketing activities are economically strategic and ethically compliant. Integrating these Islamic principles into marketing practices is especially pertinent for MSMEs in predominantly Muslim regions as it enhances consumer trust, strengthens brand loyalty, and ensures alignment with religious and cultural values. This adaptation is particularly relevant for Generation Z consumers who increasingly seek authenticity, ethical practices, and value-based consumption (Shah et al., 2020).

Hypothesis Development

The relationship between halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies

Halal certification (HC) and Islamic marketing strategies (IMS) are often treated as complementary mechanisms for building consumer trust and market legitimacy. HC functions as an institutional assurance that products comply with Sharia principles, reducing uncertainty, and reinforcing consumer confidence (Islam et al., 2023; Sudarsono et al., 2023). Certification also enables businesses to expand into international markets where halal credibility is a key requirement (Sungnoi & Soonthonmai, 2024). In parallel, IMS embeds Islamic ethical principles into the marketing mix, aligning products with consumers' moral expectations (Shah et al., 2020). The Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix (HLMM) framework reflects how HC and marketing strategies are increasingly integrated by linking regulatory legitimacy with value-driven promotion (DinarStandard, 2024). Recent studies also highlight that halal ecosystem development relies on synergy between certification and marketing competitiveness (Hanafiah et al., 2023). Thus, HC and IMS reinforce each other by combining formal assurance and ethical engagement.

H₁: There is a reciprocal relationship between halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies.

The effect of halal certification on consumer behavior

Halal certification (HC) functions as an institutional signal that directly shapes consumer behavior by fostering trust, confidence, and perceived authenticity. When a product carries a halal label, consumers interpret it as a guarantee of compliance with the Sharia principles and ethical standards that strengthen positive attitudes (Fachrurrozie et al., 2023). By contrast, when it is absent, Muslim consumers tend to be more selective and cautious, often rejecting uncertified products altogether to avoid potential risks (Arifin et al., 2023). HC also enhances brand image, which reinforces favorable perceptions and motivates behavioral responses such as product consideration (Desmaryani et al., 2024). Recent research has further highlighted that certification interacts with deeper psychological factors that shape attitudes, subjective norms, and intentions. In this sense, HC is not a standalone determinant but a catalyst that strengthens the internal mechanisms of

consumer evaluation and choice (Siregar & Sobari, 2024). These studies confirm that halal certification fosters trust, reduces ambiguity, and drives consumer behavior.

H₂: Halal certification has a positive effect on consumer behavior.

The effect of Islamic marketing strategies on consumer behavior

Islamic marketing strategies (IMS) influence consumer behavior by embedding religious and ethical values directly into the marketing mix. By emphasizing Islamic principles, IMS extends beyond conventional promotions to shape how consumers evaluate products and brands (Shah et al., 2020). These strategies are particularly effective in cultivating trust and emotional value, which strengthens positive attitudes and perceived social norms. However, their impact can vary depending on consumers' level of religiosity and halal awareness (Ramli et al., 2023). In practice, IMS also faces skepticism when marketing messages appear inconsistent with actual practice (Rostiani et al., 2024). Recent work further demonstrates that integrating sustainability and corporate social responsibility into IMS enhances their ability to shape consumer evaluations, as young Muslim consumers view ethical conduct as part of their religious compliance (Bhutto et al., 2024; Shah et al., 2022). Therefore, IMS fosters consumer trust, aligns purchasing decisions with Islamic values, and reinforces the internal psychological processes that drive consumer behavior.

H₃: Islamic marketing strategy has positive effects on consumer behavior.

The effect of halal certification on purchase intention

Halal certification (HC) is widely recognized as a driver of purchase intention (PI), although its influence is not always straightforward. Certification contributes to positive evaluations by enhancing brand image and reinforcing consumer trust, which in turn motivates consumers' intention to buy (Desmaryani et al., 2024; Fachrurrozie et al., 2023). Among younger consumers, awareness and knowledge about halal status play a decisive role: when certification clarifies permissibility, it provides confidence that underpins intention (Febriandika et al., 2023). However, research has also shown that the strength of this pathway is often indirect. HC tends to work through attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioral control rather than as isolated determinants of intention (Ramli et al., 2023; Siregar & Sobari, 2024). In some contexts, consumers view certification as bureaucratic or costly, which can weaken its direct effects (Yasri et al., 2020). However, overall, evidence shows that halal certification remains a significant driver of purchase intention.

H₄: Halal certification has a positive effect on purchase intention.

The effect of Islamic marketing strategies on purchase intention

Islamic marketing strategies (IMS) are designed to align business practices with religious and ethical principles, making them a powerful determinant of purchase intention (PI). By embedding values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *adl* (fairness) into the marketing mix, IMS strengthens credibility and authenticity, which positively influence the intention to buy (Shah et al., 2020). Empirical studies confirm that value-based marketing enhances trust and emotional attachment, reinforcing consumers' willingness to purchase halal products (Ramli et al., 2023). The Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix (HLMM) framework further institutionalizes this approach: marketing effectiveness improves and leads to stronger purchase intention when Islamic values are integrated into product, price, place, and promotion (Bux et al., 2022; Purwanto et al., 2021).

Despite this generally positive evidence, recent research shows that consumers respond with skepticism when marketing is perceived as symbolic rather than substantive, which weakens its influence on purchase intention (Rostiani et al., 2024). Among Generation Z, Islamic branding alone has no significant effect on food purchase decisions, indicating that awareness and knowledge of halal principles are more decisive than the branding itself (Febriandika et al., 2023). Additional evidence highlights that halal knowledge reinforces consumers' intentions when the IMS is seen as credible and informative (Purnasari et al., 2023). While the strength of IMS may vary depending on consumer perceptions and context, strategies that combine ethical values with genuine practices consistently generate positive effects on purchase intention.

H₅: Islamic marketing strategy has a positive effect on purchase intention.

The mediating role of consumer behavior

Within the TPB, consumer behavior is the immediate determinant of intention (Iranmanesh et al., 2020). External cues such as halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies rarely directly shape purchase intentions. Rather, they exert their influence once internalized into consumers' evaluations and choices. Studies show that HC influences PI by strengthening brand image and building confidence, but its impact becomes significant only when consumers translate these signals into favorable evaluations of their own behavior (Fachrurrozie et al., 2023; Loussaief et al., 2024). Ramli et al. (2023) confirm that awareness and perceived behavioral control mediate this process, while Siregar and Sobari (2024) emphasizing that religiosity triggers awareness, trust, and norms that ultimately form attitudes that lead to PI. Among younger Muslim consumers, especially Gen Z, halal awareness and knowledge provide clarity that allows certification to be internalized and converted into intention (Febriandika et al., 2023). Therefore, the CB is the channel through which the HC becomes meaningful for purchase decisions.

Meanwhile, the persuasive power of an IMS depends on consumer perceptions. Studies confirm that value-driven marketing strategies influence intention through trust, emotional attachment, and perceived fairness, all of which are behavioral evaluations (Ramli et al., 2023; Shah et al., 2020). When skepticism arises, consumers' intentions are shaped by how they evaluate credibility and value (Rostiani et al., 2024). Halal knowledge plays a role: consumers who are more informed respond more selectively to IMS, reinforcing their intention when messages are perceived as authentic (Purnasari et al., 2023). Hence, IMS can lead to stronger PI by first shaping attitudes, norms, and control mechanisms within the CB. These two pathways confirm that CB acts as a bridge connecting external factors with purchase intention. Without this mediating process, the risk of external cues is symbolic, rather than influential.

H₆: Consumer behavior mediates the effect of halal certificates and Islamic marketing strategies on purchase intentions.

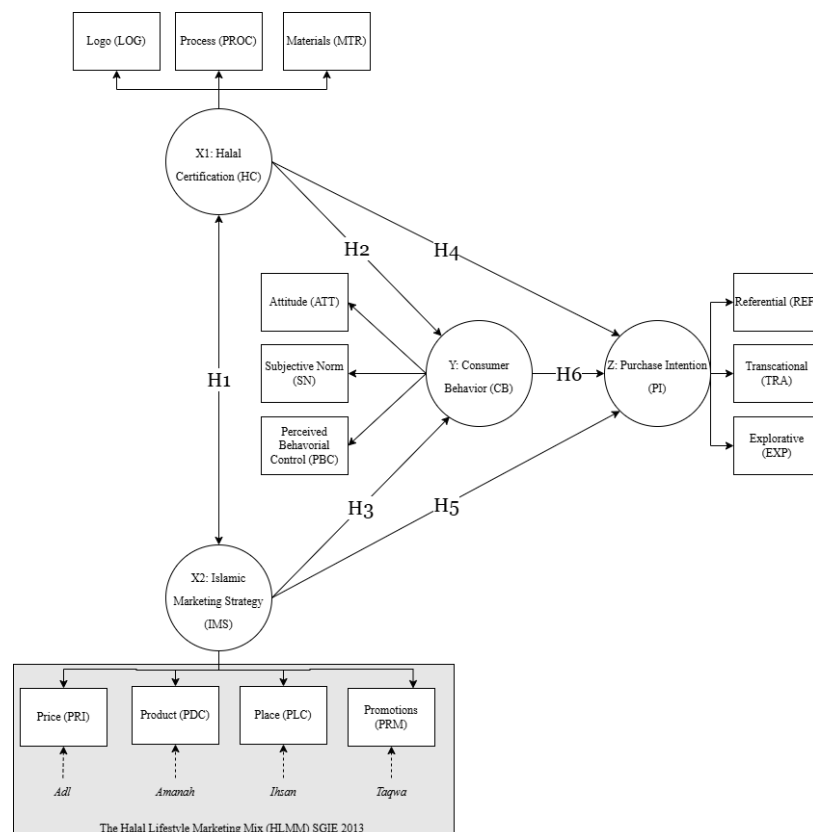


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Authors' own work

Together, the six hypotheses form the foundation of the proposed research model. This model integrates halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies as external factors, consumer behavior as the mediating mechanism, and purchase intention as the outcome. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the conceptual framework of the empirical analysis.

Research Methodology

This study employs Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) to analyze the relationships between indicators, constructs, and their structural paths. The method aligns with our objective of validating a theory-driven model by extending the Theory of Planned Behavior with halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies. CB-SEM emphasizes theory confirmation and evaluates the overall model fit, which is especially suitable when the constructs are reflective rather than formative ([Hair et al., 2021](#)). Moreover, previous studies have demonstrated that CB-SEM produces stable estimates with a sample size of 200-300 for models of comparable complexity ([Dash & Paul, 2021](#)). Therefore, the sample of 433 respondents in this study provides a strong empirical basis for stable estimation and meaningful model assessment.

Data collection

This study used a structured questionnaire to measure respondents' perceptions of halal foods in MSMEs. The indicators for halal certification, consumer behavior (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control), and purchase intention were derived from previous studies on halal consumption and intention. The dimensions and definitions from these studies were extracted and adapted to the culinary context of MSME. The model applies the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to examine how halal certification (HC) and Islamic marketing strategies (IMS) influence Muslim consumer behavior (CB) and purchase intention (PI). HC was measured through nine indicators based on three dimensions: the halal logo (log), materials (mtr), and production process (proc), adapted from [Cheng and Low \(2008\)](#), [Khan et al. \(2019\)](#), [Shafie and Othman \(2006\)](#), and [Wilson and Liu \(2010\)](#). The logo represents the official halal status, which is granted after assessing the materials and production process.

IMS follows the 4P structure—product (pdc), price (pri), place (plc), and promotion (prm)—as outlined in the Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix (HLMM), which integrates Islamic values such as *amanah*, *taqwa*, *ihسان*, and *adl*. Unlike conventional marketing, HLMM emphasizes spiritual accountability, in addition to profit. IMS was measured using 12 indicators (three per dimension) [Fachrurazi et al. \(2022\)](#), [Ramli et al. \(2023\)](#), [Sandikci and Ger \(2010\)](#), [Shafie and Othman \(2006\)](#), [Shah et al. \(2020\)](#), [Wilson and Grant \(2013\)](#), and [Wilson and Hollensen \(2013\)](#).

Consumer behavior (CB) is conceptualized as a second-order construct based on TPB, comprising three components. Attitude (ATT) reflects consumers' positive or negative evaluations of consistently choosing halal products. Subjective norm (SN) measures the perceived social pressure from family, peers, and the Muslim community to comply with halal principles. Perceived behavioral control (PBC) captures the perceived ease or difficulty of accessing and identifying halal-certified products. These nine indicators were adapted from previous studies [Cheng and Low \(2008\)](#), [Iranmanesh et al. \(2020\)](#), [Isa et al. \(2020\)](#), [Marmaya et al. \(2019\)](#), and [Soon and Wallace \(2017\)](#).

Purchase intention (PI) reflects the likelihood of choosing halal-certified MSMEs culinary products. This was measured using 12 indicators grouped into three dimensions. Religious reference (ref) assesses the extent to which consumers rely on halal-haram guidance in their choices ([Khibran, 2019](#); [Shukla et al., 2015](#)). Transactional flexibility (tra) captures context-specific justifications such as purchasing under urgent or limited alternatives ([Ali et al., 2017](#); [Fachrurazi et al., 2022](#)). Exploratory behavior (exp) reflects Gen Z's tendency to evaluate products beyond certification by considering social responsibility and sustainability ([Duffett, 2015](#); [Isa et al., 2020](#); [Leonga & Tatb, 2023](#)).

[Table 1](#) presents the indicators along with the sources from which they were adopted, ensuring transparency and theoretical grounding. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 7 "Strongly agree"). To confirm the validity and reliability, the questionnaire was pre-tested with 30 respondents before full distribution.

Table 1. Variables and indicators

| Construct | | Indicators | Sources |
|----------------------------|-------|--|--|
| Halal certification | Log1 | I only trust the halal status of an MSMEs product if there is logo and certification number by MUI | (Cheng & Low, 2008; Khan et al., 2019; Shafie & Othman, 2006) |
| | Log2 | The halal logo on the packaging provides assurance that MSMEs products comply with Islamic law and standards recognized by the ulama | |
| | Log3 | The presence of a halal logo guarantees that MSMEs products would be safely consumed by everyone | |
| | Proc1 | I trust that MSMEs products with halal certification have been processed in a hygienic and sacred way | (Khan et al., 2019; Shafie & Othman, 2006; Wilson & Liu, 2010) |
| | Proc2 | Halal certification gives certainty that MSMEs food items from meat have been processed according to Islamic law | |
| | Proc3 | Halal certification ensures that the mixing and cooking process does not contaminate the product with impurities (<i>najis</i>) | |
| | Mtr1 | The existence of halal certification on MSMEs products makes me believe that all the ingredients used are halal | (Khan et al., 2019; Shafie & Othman, 2006; Wilson & Liu, 2010) |
| | Mtr2 | I have faith that MSMEs products with halal certification do not contain any substance that can harm human health | |
| | Mtr3 | Halal certification proves the provenance and quality of the raw materials used | |
| Islamic marketing strategy | Pri1 | The price of MSMEs products should be clearly stated before carrying out transactions (<i>ijab qabul</i>) | (Shah et al., 2020; Wilson & Grant, 2013) |
| | Pri2 | I am willing to pay more for MSMEs products if a portion of the profit is donated to the Ummah | |
| | Pri3 | MSMEs products should be traded at a fair price based on the seller's profit and the benefits received by consumers | |
| | Pdc1 | I tend to buy MSMEs products that ensure the welfare of their workers | (Wilson & Hollensen, 2013) |
| | Pdc2 | I feel more at ease when consuming MSMEs products that have been verified halal and <i>tayyib</i> | |
| | Pdc3 | MSMEs products that comply with Islamic law have a better and more consistent quality | |
| | Plc1 | The location of MSMEs businesses that are safe from impurities (<i>najis</i>) has given me confidence in buying their products | (Sandikci & Ger, 2010) |
| | Plc2 | I avoid MSMEs that are located near places of vice | |
| | Plc3 | I prioritize visiting MSMEs that are located close to places of worship | |
| | Prm1 | I am more likely to buy if MSMEs promote halal products | (Fachrurazi et al., 2022; Ramli et al., 2023; Shafie & Othman, 2006) |
| | Prm2 | I am more interested in MSMEs promotions that use Islamic language and symbols | |
| | Prm3 | Promotions that showcase the contribution of MSMEs to the Muslim community make me keener to buy | |
| Consumer behavior | Att1 | I am more comfortable when I eat food products that are confirmed to be halal | (Leonga & Tatb, 2023; Wilson et al., 2013; Wilson & Grant, 2013) |
| | Att2 | I would feel sinful if I consume non-halal products | |
| | Att3 | I have faith that consuming halal products is part of practicing my religious beliefs | |

| Construct | Indicators | Sources |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Purchase intention | Sn1 I consume halal food because I imitate the habits of the people closest to me | (Iranmanesh et al., 2020; Marmaya et al., 2019; Soon & Wallace, 2017) |
| | Sn2 I prefer halal culinary products because I wish to be part of the Muslim community | |
| | Sn3 I feel that I ought to buy halal culinary products because that is the accepted norm in the society | |
| | Pbc1 I find it easy to find MSMEs products with halal labels in my home/school/office area | (Cheng & Low, 2008; Isa et al., 2020) |
| | Pbc2 I have the knowledge to distinguish halal MSMEs products from non-halal products | |
| | Pbc3 I believe I am able to be consistent in selecting and consuming halal products | |
| | Ref1 Family and friend recommendations are important factors in the decision to purchase halal MSMEs products | (Khibran, 2019; Shukla et al., 2015) |
| | Ref2 I rely on the scholars and experts' judgment to choose halal culinary product | |
| | Ref3 I follow accounts or influencers who recommend halal MSMEs products on social media | |
| | Tra1 I am willing to spend additional funds to buy halal MSMEs products | (Ali et al., 2017; Fachrurazi et al., 2022) |
| | Tra2 I plan to make purchases of halal MSMEs culinary products in the near future | |
| | Tra3 I am willing to buy halal MSMEs culinary products routinely | |
| | Exp1 I check reviews and buyer testimonials before deciding to buy MSMEs culinary products | (Duffett, 2015; Isa et al., 2020; Leonga & Tatb, 2023) |
| | Exp2 I compare various culinary products based on their halal status before making a purchase decision | |
| | Exp3 I read books/articles or watch videos/podcasts about halal products | |

Source: Author's own work

The population of this study was Generation Z Muslim adults (aged 17-26 years) who live in West Java Province, estimated at 2,116,181 people based on the 2021 population census data by the Central Statistics Agency of Indonesia. The location was selected because of its Tourism Development Master Plan, in which the West Java Provincial Government launched the *Juara Halal Tourism program* in response to the challenges and needs of halal tourism (Taufik et al., 2019). A stratified sampling technique based on the population in each district and city was chosen to ensure that each population layer within the research region was proportionally represented. Once the strata were determined, the samples were randomly drawn.

Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using STATA MP17 software. There are several stages before the model can be interpreted: model specification, identification, estimation, evaluation (fit test), and re-specification (Latan & Ramli, 2013). CB-SEM can produce three types of analyses.

1. A confirmatory factor analysis was used to check the validity and reliability of the instrument. The measurement model or the outer model assesses the quality of the construction.
2. Testing the relationship model between the latent variables based on the path coefficient and R-square. The inner model describes the causality between the construct variables hypothesized based on theory.
3. Obtain a model useful for forecasting using a full model fit test (overall model), measurement model fit test, and structural model fit test. Model fit (goodness of fit) determines the extent to which the relationship model between variables is supported by the reality that exists in the empirical data.

Result and Discussion

Respondents' demographic profile

Table 2 summarizes the demographics of the 433 respondents based on gender, age, education, monthly expenditure, and occupation. The majority of the respondents were female, aged 18-20, had a high school education, were in the lower middle class, and were students. The distribution of respondents' locations is not shown because the sampling technique used is stratified such that the distribution of respondents is proportional to the population in each district/city.

Table 2. Respondents' demographic profile

| Attribute | Value | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 158 | 36.49% |
| | Female | 275 | 63.51% |
| Age | Below 18 | 86 | 19.86% |
| | 18 – 20 | 158 | 36.49% |
| | 21 – 23 | 121 | 27.94% |
| | 24 – 26 | 68 | 15.70% |
| | | | |
| Education | Junior High School/Below | 40 | 9.24% |
| | High School | 263 | 60.74% |
| | Vocation | 37 | 8.55% |
| | Bachelor | 79 | 18.24% |
| | Postgraduate | 14 | 3.24% |
| Monthly spending | <IDR 500k | 171 | 39.49% |
| | IDR 500k – 1.5 million | 147 | 33.95% |
| | IDR 1.5 million – 3 million | 65 | 15.01% |
| | IDR 3 million – 6 million | 38 | 8.78% |
| | >IDR 6 million | 12 | 2.77% |
| Occupation | Student | 308 | 71.13% |
| | Civil Servant | 19 | 4.39% |
| | Private Sector Worker | 70 | 16.17% |
| | Professional | 14 | 3.23% |
| | Household | 10 | 2.31% |
| | Business owner | 4 | 0.92% |
| | Others | 8 | 1.85% |

Source: STATAMP 17 output collected by authors

Gender trends show that women are often responsible for household consumption, thus becoming important factors that influence the purchase of halal products. Young consumers, such as Generation Z, are highly exposed to digital media usage, making them more likely to access information related to the halal status of a product. In addition, considering that the majority of respondents were of the age of religious identity formation, halal certification could significantly influence their perceptions and consumption behavior. Students are susceptible to trends that are influenced by their environment. Meanwhile, respondents from the lower middle class tend to be more receptive to Islamic marketing strategies that emphasize the price fairness and affordability of halal products.

Outer model result

The data gathered through questionnaires were subsequently analyzed using the CB-SEM model. The measurement model assesses the validity and reliability of the latent constructs (Fan et al., 2016; Stevens, 2002). Meanwhile, the structural model helps to analyze the relationship between constructs and their influence on purchase intention among Generation Z Muslim consumers for MSMEs culinary products.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) should be conducted to identify and understand the underlying structure of the data obtained (Spector et al., 2015). It explores the potential

relationships between the observed variables and latent constructs, with no hypotheses developed beforehand. Constructs related to halal attributes, Islamic marketing strategies, and consumer behavior are complex and suspected to be interrelated. Thus, this study must ensure that only the most relevant indicators are retained by grouping the variables based on their correlations measured through EFA. Studies in the field of social science generally use a threshold value of 0.5 to 0.7.

Table 3. Outer model result

| Construct | Items | EFA LF | KMO | CFA LF | CA | CR | AVE |
|-----------|-------|--------|--------|--------|------|-------|--------|
| HC | Log | 0.6924 | 0.9051 | 0.7599 | 0.86 | 0.834 | 0.6906 |
| | Proc | 0.7738 | 0.8809 | 0.8529 | | | |
| | Mtr | 0.7811 | 0.8647 | 0.8753 | | | |
| IMS | Pri | 0.6370 | 0.8930 | 0.7330 | 0.85 | 0.850 | 0.5855 |
| | Pdc | 0.6937 | 0.8942 | 0.8127 | | | |
| | Plc | 0.7108 | 0.8930 | 0.7941 | | | |
| | Prom | 0.6663 | 0.8534 | 0.7165 | | | |
| CB | Att | 0.6270 | 0.8952 | 0.8586 | 0.86 | 0.860 | 0.6739 |
| | Sn | 0.6396 | 0.8595 | 0.7212 | | | |
| | Pbc | 0.4849 | 0.9383 | 0.8731 | | | |
| PI | Ref | 0.8750 | 0.8666 | 0.9305 | 0.94 | 0.938 | 0.8381 |
| | Tra | 0.8777 | 0.8613 | 0.9112 | | | |
| | Exp | 0.8621 | 0.8851 | 0.9047 | | | |

Note: EFA LF: Exploratory Factor Analysis Loading Factor, KMO: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, CA: Cronbach's Alpha, CR: Composite Reliability, AVE: Average Variance Extracted.

Source: STATAMP 17 output collected by authors

The EFA results show that almost all indicators have a loading factor greater than 0.5, except for the behavior control indicator (0.4849). However, this value is still within the acceptable range and indicates a moderate relationship between the PBC and CB. Based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB), PBC is vital in shaping consumer behavior, and is thus worth being included in the model ([Khibran, 2019](#)). However, this should be further reviewed using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Meanwhile, KMO values above 0.8 are generally considered "meritorious" for factor analysis, which means that the correlations among the questionnaire items are high enough to use EFA. The sample size and relationships between variables evidenced by the KMO are sufficient to extract reliable factors, making the EFA results more robust.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was then conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the measurement model. CFA is used to ascertain whether empirical data support the relationship between the variables formulated in the hypothesis. [Table 3](#) shows the results of the CFA. Four parameters measured the validity and reliability of the model constructs: the CFA loading factor, Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE).

The CFA results reinforced the factors generated by the EFA. While the EFA identifies potential factors, the CFA validates the findings through more rigorous testing. For instance, the behavioral control indicator was previously found to have a relatively low EFA loading factor. However, the CFA loading factor value confirms that the indicator still contributes to the overall model and thus should be retained. Future research could refine the questionnaire items for behavioral control to reflect consumer behavior more accurately.

A CA value of 0.7 is considered an acceptable threshold, and a value above 0.8 indicates strong reliability. Based on the results in [Table 3](#), all indicators used to measure halal certification, Islamic marketing strategy, consumer behavior, and purchase intention were highly reliable. This measurement is fundamental, given the abstract nature of constructs such as Islamic marketing, which integrates Islamic values into the marketing mix. High CA values for consumer behavior and purchase intention further support the robustness of the measurement model, ensuring that the latent constructs are captured consistently and meaningfully.

The value of CR measures the internal consistency of the construct, with values above 0.70 deemed acceptable, indicating that the item measures the construct reliably. AVE evaluates convergent validity, with values above 0.50, indicating that the construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators. All four variables showed strong reliability and convergent validity. The CR for all constructs was above 0.70, indicating consistent item measurement. Similarly, the AVE values exceeded 0.50, confirming that the construct explained most of the variance in indicators. These results confirm the reliability and validity of the measurement model, allowing confidence in interpreting the structural relationships between the variables.

Inner model result

After verifying the reliability and validity of the measurement constructs, the analysis evaluates the structural relationships among these constructs. The structural model examines the effect of independent variables, in this case, external factors (halal certification and Islamic marketing strategy), on the dependent variable (purchase intention) through the mediator variable (consumer behavior) as an internal factor. Goodness-of-fit (GOF) analysis was necessary to assess the overall suitability of the model. To ensure the adequacy of the model, a goodness-of-fit (GOF) analysis was conducted using eight standard criteria (Kline, 2023): overall goodness of fit, chi-square, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and coefficient of determination (CD).

The results show a strong performance across nearly all measures. Overall, the explanatory power was high ($r^2 = 0.9794$). However, the chi-square value was significant ($\chi^2 = 172.213$, $p < 0.05$), indicating poor model fit. The chi-square value can be disregarded as it tends to be sensitive to sample size, provided that the other criteria are met. The RMSEA of 0.067 indicated an acceptable fit (<0.08), and both the CFI (0.970) and TLI (0.961) exceeded the 0.95 threshold, reflecting an excellent fit. An SRMR value of 0.031 further confirmed the excellent fit (<0.05). Finally, the coefficient of determination (CD) of 0.979 reinforces the model's strong explanatory power. Together, these results confirm that the theoretical framework provides a robust representation of purchase intention and consumer behavior. The excellent suitability of the model is a foundation for continuing hypothesis testing and path analysis. Figure 1 shows the research path analysis diagram used to test the proposed hypotheses.

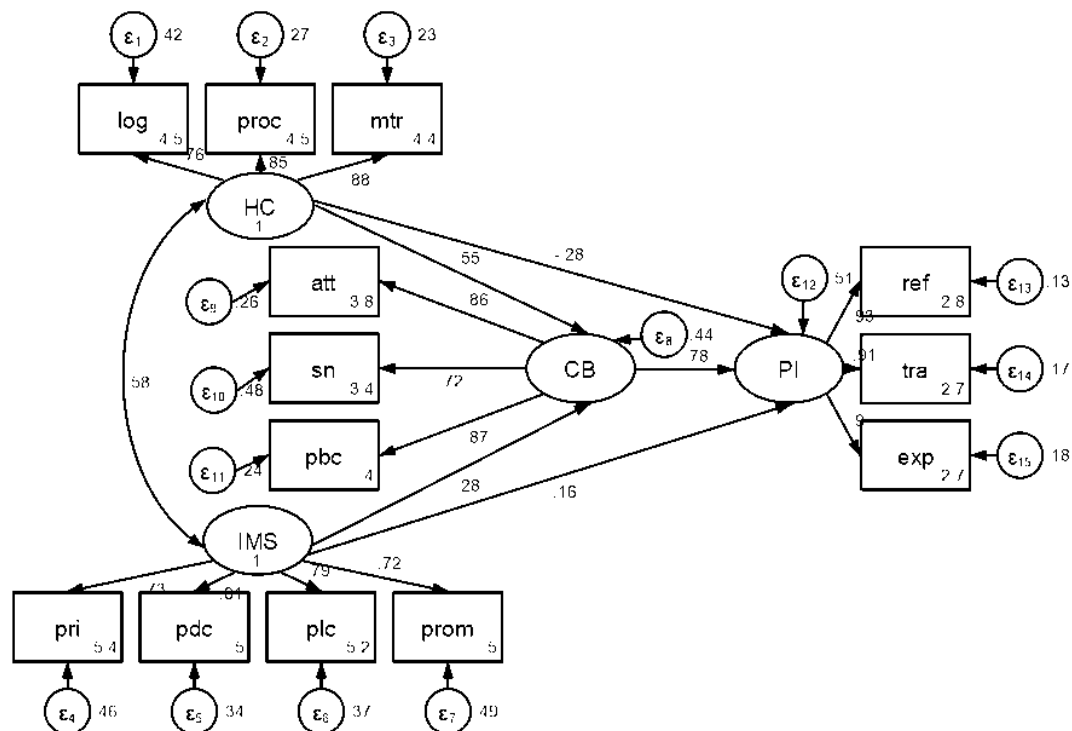


Figure 2. Path analysis

Source: STATAMP 17 output collected by authors

Each path was analyzed for its coefficient, level of significance, and role in supporting or rejecting the proposed hypothesis. A summary of the path coefficient results and hypothesis conclusions are presented in [Table 4](#). The results of the path analysis show that Islamic Marketing Strategy and Halal Certification are the two strongest predictors of Consumer Behavior and Purchase Intention among Gen Z Muslim customers. In addition, Consumer Behavior is a key mediator that links external factors with the intention to purchase halal culinary products. These findings suggest that producers and marketers should prioritize halal certification and Islamically aligned marketing strategies to engage this consumer group and effectively increase purchase intent.

Table 4. Regression Result

| Paths | Coeff | SE | CR | P-Value | Conclusion |
|----------|---------|--------|-------|---------|----------------------------------|
| HC ↔ IMS | 0.5780 | 0.0398 | 14.52 | 0.000 | Significant positive correlation |
| HC → CB | 0.5504 | 0.0489 | 11.26 | 0.000 | Significant positive effect |
| IMS → CB | 0.2831 | 0.0532 | 5.32 | 0.000 | Significant positive effect |
| HC → PI | -0.2825 | 0.0711 | -3.97 | 0.000 | Significant negative effect |
| IMS → PI | 0.1554 | 0.0596 | 2.61 | 0.009 | Significant positive effect |
| CB → PI | 0.7797 | 0.0679 | 11.48 | 0.000 | Significant positive effect |

Source: STAMP 17 output collected by authors

Discussion

This study aims to analyze the role of consumer behavior in mediating the effect of halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies on the purchase intention of MSMEs culinary products. Six hypotheses were proposed and all were accepted, except for halal certification on purchase intention. This study highlights two central findings: (1) external factors shape purchase intention in different ways, as halal certification weakens it (negative direct effect), while Islamic marketing strategies strengthen it (positive direct effect); and (2) internal factors, represented by consumer behavior, fully mediate these external influences and explain how they translate into intention. The following discussion elaborates on these results, beginning with the dynamics of external factors before turning to the mediating role of consumer behavior and its broader implications.

We find a significant correlation between halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies, reflecting their shared role in assuring consumers of product compliance with Islamic values. Certification provides formal guarantees of permissibility, while Islamic marketing embeds ethical principles into products, prices, places, and promotions ([DinarStandard, 2024](#); [Shah et al., 2020](#)). Earlier studies similarly noted that both certification and marketing act as complementary signals of authenticity. Certification strengthens brand image and consumer attitudes, reduces uncertainty, and reinforces positive product evaluations ([Arifin et al., 2023](#); [Desmaryani et al., 2024](#); [Fachrurrozie et al., 2023](#)). This complementarity underscores why both factors are central to shaping consumer evaluations, even though their direct influence on purchase intention differs.

Our results confirm that Islamic marketing strategies exert a direct positive effect on both consumer behavior and purchase intention. This finding aligns with the Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix framework, which emphasizes the ethical principles within the traditional 4Ps of marketing ([DinarStandard, 2024](#)). Empirical studies demonstrate that value-driven marketing strategies strengthen attitudes and loyalty among Muslim consumers ([Ashraf, 2019](#); [Khan et al., 2021](#)). Clear and fair pricing is particularly decisive for enhancing consumer confidence and ensuring mutual benefits for buyers and sellers. Location also plays a role: consumers are more likely to avoid MSMEs situated near places associated with immorality or impurity, whereas proximity to religiously significant spaces reinforces their decision to purchase ([Mamun et al., 2021](#)). Thus, promotion is an important driver. Consumers respond more strongly to messages that highlight product quality, halal assurance, and contribution to the Muslim community ([Akbari et al., 2018](#); [Bakar et al., 2013](#)). These findings suggest that Islamic marketing strategies consistently strengthen intentions by embedding ethical values in tangible marketing practices.

Conversely, the negative direct effect of halal certification on halal intention highlights how, instead of reinforcing confidence, the label may give signals of higher cost or extra bureaucracy,

which turns away price-sensitive Gen Z segments (Yasri et al., 2020). Weak or inconsistent certification practices further undermine intentions, with studies in Turkey showing that confidence in certifying bodies is critical for certification to be effective (Aslan, 2023). Broader labelling research, such as on environmental and sustainability claims, supports this mechanism: skeptical consumers often treat such labels as persuasion tactics, which suppress rather than stimulate intentions (Cho et al., 2024). When labels are perceived as merely symbolic or “greenwashed,” they backfire by amplifying doubt rather than building trust (Fella & Bausa, 2024). These parallels explain why halal certification can also discourage purchases when it signals cost or distrust rather than authenticity.

Although halal certification has a negative direct effect on purchase intention, our results confirm that it indirectly drives intention through consumer behavior. In line with the Theory, certification strengthens attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control, which translate external cues into actual decisions. Recent studies reinforce this mechanism: certification and awareness influence purchase intention indirectly through attitudes (Shahnia et al., 2024), whereas halal brand awareness shapes intention primarily via attitudes (Pratama et al., 2023). Cross-contextual evidence in halal cosmetics and food quality further shows that external signals motivate purchasing only when mediated by internal evaluations (Anubha, 2023; Ismail, 2025). These findings demonstrate that consumer behavior is the bridge that converts certification from a formal label to a trusted driver of purchase intention.

While they exert a direct positive effect on purchase intention, their influence is amplified when consumers internalize marketing cues into their attitudes, norms, and sense of control. Prior studies confirm that Islamic marketing strengthens behavioral drivers and loyalty when grounded in ethical values and fairness (Ashraf, 2019; N. Khan et al., 2021). Likewise, location and promotion affect consumer responses by shaping perceptions of legitimacy and social appropriateness (Mamun et al., 2021). Evidence further shows that the effects of halal attributes and awareness on intention are mediated through internal factors, especially attitudes (Shahnia et al., 2024). Insights from halal tourism research echo this pattern, where perceived value and skepticism jointly influence behavior, underscoring the role of consumer evaluations in reinforcing marketing strategies (Ramli et al., 2023; Rostiani et al., 2024).

Muslim consumers’ ability to distinguish halal from haram makes them analytical and cautious about their purchasing choices. This knowledge is rooted in a religious doctrine that prohibits the consumption of non-halal food (Sholihin & Shalihin, 2023). Beyond individual choice, halal consumption functions as a shared ethical commitment, reinforced by social norms and religious accountability. Consumers act as moral agents within their communities, where consistency in halal adherence (*istiqamah*) forms part of the collective identity, and deviations may invite social sanctions (Sandikci & Jafari, 2013). Islamic teachings allow exceptions in emergencies; however (Riaz & Chaudry, 2018), in everyday life, consumption is shaped more by communal expectations, peer influence, and the desire to uphold shared values. Public endorsements, such as reviews and ratings, further strengthen halal adherence as both a lifestyle and a form of social regulation.

By modeling consumer behavior as a second-order construct that mediates both certification and marketing, this study refines the Theory of Planned Behavior and clarifies the psychological mechanism through which external strategies translate into purchase decisions. We are also advancing the operationalization of Islamic marketing through the Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix. Overall, the results show that certification alone cannot secure consumer intention, and may even generate skepticism when detached from behavioral engagement. Its value emerges only when it is paired with Islamic marketing strategies that translate halal assurance into a meaningful consumer experience. Focus MSMEs with limited brand power offer a new perspective on how halal assurance can serve both as a signal of compliance and a strategic tool for building purchase intention.

Conclusion

This study examined how halal certification and Islamic marketing strategies influence the purchase intention of culinary MSME products and how consumer behavior mediates these effects. The findings confirm both research questions: (1) external factors do not operate uniformly, as Islamic

marketing strategies strengthen intention by embedding ethical values in everyday market practices, while halal certification, though reinforcing consumer behavior, shows a negative direct effect on purchase intention because it is perceived as costly or bureaucratic; and (2) consumer behavior fully mediates the relationship between certification and purchase intention and partially mediates the effect of Islamic marketing strategies, making it the bridge between external signals and consumer decisions.

The results refine the Theory by demonstrating consumer behavior as a second-order construct that translates external cues into intention and operationalizes Islamic marketing through the Halal Lifestyle Marketing Mix. In the MSMEs context, where brand identity is often weak, certification alone cannot drive sales and may even trigger skepticism when viewed as costly or bureaucratic. When paired with marketing strategies that highlight fairness, transparency, and contributions to the community, halal assurance becomes more than a label. It functions as a market signal that resonates with the younger consumers.

However, this study is limited by its focus on Gen Z Muslims in Indonesia and the use of cross-sectional survey data. Broader age groups, cultural settings, and longitudinal designs could provide deeper insights into how halal assurance shapes purchasing behavior over time. Future research may also consider mediators such as trust, religiosity, or lifestyle to more fully capture the ways in which external signals are internalized into consumer intention.

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