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Research Paper

Muslim Consumers' Purchase Decisions on Food and Beverage Products Without a Halal Label

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ABSTRACT

The expansion of food and beverage products without halal labels in Indonesia poses challenges for the country's Muslim-majority population, as Islamic law requires the consumption of halal products. This qualitative study explores the purchasing decisions of Muslim consumers toward non-halal-labeled products. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with 14 Muslim consumers in Jember Regency, East Java, selected through snowball sampling. The qualitative approach was employed to capture the contextual factors and subjective considerations underlying consumers' decisions. The findings reveal a gap between consumers' awareness of the importance of halal certification and their actual purchasing behavior. Despite recognizing the halal label as an important indicator of religious compliance, many respondents continue to purchase non-labeled products based on trust in the product's ingredients, brand reputation, manufacturer, and assumptions of inherent halalness. Purchasing decisions are also influenced by social recommendations, urgent situations, and sensory factors such as taste and product popularity. In the absence of halal certification, consumers frequently rely on alternative indicators, including the producer's Muslim identity, product origin, and word-of-mouth information, to assess halal status. These findings highlight the complexity of Muslim consumer behavior and provide insights for policymakers and businesses in strengthening halal assurance and consumer trust.

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Introduction

In 2021, Indonesia will surpass all other countries in terms of Muslim population, according to the World Population Review. In keeping with this, most cultures adhere to

Islamic ideals and adapt their consumption and requirements accordingly. According to Islamic law, all Muslims must only use and eat halal items. There are a lot of things that might impact Muslim consumer behaviour, such as personal preferences, social level, cultural traditions, religious views, and particular cultural practices. A consumer's outlook on consumption habits and social behaviour, as well as their product choice, are affected by this condition. (Adriani & Ma'ruf, 2020).

Muslims look for products with the halal certification seal as a guarantee of quality. Muslims who are conscientious about what they eat may be reluctant to purchase items that do not have the halal seal of approval. This is because products without halal certification may have been made using methods or contain substances that do not comply with Islamic legal requirements. Despite Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Guarantees, which requires all products circulating in Indonesia to be halal-certified, the number of certified products remains far below the total number of products in circulation. As of October 2025, BPJPH reported that approximately 9.8 million products in Indonesia had obtained halal certification (BPJPH, 2025) a significant achievement and the highest since the regulation was enacted. However, this figure represents only a fraction of the overall market, as there are approximately 66 million micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia (BPOM, 2025), of which around 18 million are engaged in the food and beverage sector. Of these, only 4.7 million food and beverage businesses are registered with BPOM as of early 2025.

The substantial gap between the millions of products that require certification and those that actually bear a halal label underscores the urgency of understanding why Muslim consumers continue to purchase non-certified products despite their legal obligations and religious awareness. This gap is further complicated by the fact that even products with halal certification have faced scrutiny, as evidenced by BPJPH and BPOM's April 2025 announcement regarding the detection of porcine DNA in 9 food products (LPPOM MUI, 2025) a finding that highlights ongoing challenges in halal assurance and consumer trust. The mandatory halal certification policy is rooted in Law No. 33 of 2014 (Fansuri et al., 2025), yet the gap between legal obligations and practical implementation underscores the urgency of this research.

It is essential for Muslims to be halal conscious, which means they understand what it means to be halal according to Sharia law, are familiar with the manufacturing process, and make sure to only eat halal items. (Dewanti & Irwansyah, 2021). Knowing how to decipher halal certification items and emblems allows consumers to evaluate the quality requirements of halal food and beverages. (Burhanuddin & Riyanto, 2022). Consumers' food purchase choices are impacted by their knowledge about halal items. (Musthofa & Buhanudin, 2021). Confidence in purchasing halal food is fostered by halal information. (Mohamed et al., 2013).

The issue extends beyond products that explicitly contain non-halal ingredients. Many Muslim consumers purchase food and beverage products that lack halal certification often from small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that have not yet obtained formal halal

certification despite the products not necessarily being categorized as non-halal based on their ingredients. This distinction is important: consuming a product that has not yet been certified halal is different from consuming a product that is definitively non-halal due to the presence of prohibited (haram) ingredients. The former reflects a regulatory compliance gap, while the latter constitutes a direct violation of Islamic dietary law. As Dewanti and Irwansyah (2021) noted, some Muslim consumers exhibit cognitive dissonance by purchasing products without halal labels, even when they understand the religious obligation to consume only halal-certified items. This behavior is particularly prevalent among products from MSMEs, where consumers often rely on trust in the manufacturer's Muslim identity or the product's perceived natural halalness rather than formal certification to determine permissibility.

The growing number of Muslim consumers worldwide with over 1.9 billion Muslims globally and Indonesia being the largest Muslim-majority country has positioned the halal market as a multi-trillion-dollar industry spanning food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and lifestyle products. Consequently, understanding Muslim consumer behavior has become a critical research agenda for both academics and practitioners (Zafar, A., & Abu-Hussin, M. F., 2026).

Existing studies have predominantly focused on factors that influence purchase intention and behavior toward halal-certified products. For instance, research has examined the impact of halal labels, halal awareness, and religiosity on consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. Studies employing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) have identified attitude, subjective norms, and religiosity as significant predictors of halal purchase intention (Yusof, S. W. M., et al., 2025), though findings on perceived behavioral control remain inconsistent across different consumer segments. Additionally, prior research has explored the mediating role of halal labels in purchase decisions and the influence of halal certification on consumer loyalty.

However, there remains a significant research gap in understanding Muslim consumer behavior toward products without halal labels or certification. Most existing studies focus on consumers who actively seek halal-certified products. However, little attention has been given to the growing phenomenon of Muslim consumers who purchase and consume non-certified products despite their religious obligations (Rahmawati, A. A., & Aji, H. M., 2022). This gap is particularly relevant given the substantial disparity between the millions of products that require halal certification and those that actually bear a halal label. Furthermore, research on consumers' legal awareness of halal certification obligations particularly regarding the purchase of non-certified products remains underexplored.

To address these gaps, this study aims to Analyze the factors influencing Muslim consumers' purchase decisions for food and beverage products without a halal label, with a particular focus on the cognitive, social, and contextual drivers that shape their choices. Second aims is to examine the legal awareness of Muslim consumers in purchasing non-certified food and beverage products using Kustchinsky's theory of legal awareness, which encompasses knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and behavior toward halal labeling

regulations. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights for businesses, policymakers, and halal certification bodies in understanding the complexities of Muslim consumer behavior in the absence of formal halal labeling.

Method

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive case study design. The qualitative method was selected for several reasons. First, the research aims to explore the subjective meanings, underlying reasons, and contextual factors that shape Muslim consumers' decisions to purchase and consume products without a halal label—phenomena that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative surveys (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2015). Second, given the sensitive nature of religious compliance, qualitative interviews allow informants to express their personal experiences, justifications, and cognitive dissonance in their own words, providing richer, more nuanced data (Patton, 2002). Third, the study seeks to understand the sociocultural dynamics in Jember Regency, which require an inductive and flexible approach to capture unexpected themes and local specificities (Sugiyono, 2017). Therefore, this qualitative design is ideal for answering the "how" and "why" questions underlying Muslim consumer behavior in this specific context (Yin, 2018).

Research Informants

The informants for this study were Muslim consumers in Jember Regency, East Java, who regularly purchase food and beverage products without a halal label. Researchers selected study subjects using the snowball sampling technique, a method in which initial informants nominate other participants who meet the study's eligibility criteria (Patton, 2002; Sugiyono, 2017). This method is particularly suitable for locating participants who share specific characteristics and is highly effective for in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2014). The snowball approach also allows researchers to reach "hidden" informants or groups that may not be easily accessible through other sampling strategies (Moleong, 2015).

The criteria for selecting primary informants were as follows: 1) Muslim consumers residing in Jember Regency, East Java. 2) Regularly purchase food and beverage products without a halal label. 3) Willing to participate in in-depth interviews and share their experiences and reasons for purchasing non-certified products. 4) Have sufficient time to provide comprehensive information (Martha & Kresno, 2016).

To ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the data, researchers determined that 14 informants would be interviewed. This number was selected based on several considerations. First, saturation often occurs around 14 participants in homogeneous groups (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Second, the use of 14 informants allows for triangulation of data and subjects, ensuring that information remains consistent regardless of when, where, or to whom questions are asked (Moleong, 2015).

Table 1. Research Informants

Code	Gender	Age	Occupation	Informant Category
Resp. 01	Female	22	Student	Primary
Resp. 02	Male	25	Private Employee	Primary
Resp. 03	Female	28	Housewife	Primary
Resp. 04	Male	35	Entrepreneur	Primary
Resp. 05	Female	24	Teacher	Primary
Resp. 06	Male	27	Private Employee	Primary
Resp. 07	Female	24	Student	Primary
Resp. 08	Male	24	Trader	Primary
Resp. 09	Female	32	Civil Servant	Primary
Resp. 10	Male	29	State-Owned Enterprise Employee	Primary
Resp. 11	Female	26	Private Employee	Primary
Resp. 12	Male	38	Entrepreneur	Primary
Resp. 13 (Key)	Male	50	Community Leader	Key
Resp. 14 (Supporting)	Female	45	Food Business Owner	Supporting

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

Table 1 presents the list of research informants, consisting of 12 primary informants, 1 key informant, and 1 supporting informant, totaling 14 informants. The primary informants comprised 6 males and 6 females aged 22-40 years, with diverse occupational backgrounds, including students, private employees, entrepreneurs, civil servants, teachers, and traders. The key informant was a 50-year-old community leader with extensive knowledge of consumer behavior in Jember Regency. In contrast, the supporting informant was a 45-year-old food business owner who provided additional insights into the challenges of halal certification for small businesses.

Table 2. Informant Demographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	6	42,9%
	Female	8	57,1%
	Total	**14**	**100%**
Age Group	20-24 years	5	35,7%
	25-29 years	3	21,4%
	30-34 years	1	7,1%
	35-39 years	3	21,4%
	40-49 years	1	7,1%
	50+ years	1	7,1%

	Total	**14**	**100%**
Occupation	Student	2	14,3%
	Private Employee	3	21,4%
	Entrepreneur	2	14,3%
	Housewife	1	7,1%
	Teacher	1	7,1%
	Trader	1	7,1%
	Civil Servant	1	7,1%
	State-Owned Enterprise Employee	1	7,1%
	Community Leader	1	7,1%
	Food Business Owner	1	7,1%
	Total	**14**	**100%**
Informant Category	Primary	12	85,7%
	Key	1	7,1%
	Supporting	1	7,1%
	Total	**14**	**100%**

Source: Primary data processed (2025)

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of all 14 informants. In terms of gender, the majority of informants were female (57.1%, n=8), while males comprised 42.9% (n=6). Regarding age distribution, the largest age group was 20-24 years (35.7%, n=5), followed by the 25-29 years and 35-39 years groups, each representing 21.4% (n=3). This indicates that most informants were young adults (20-29 years), accounting for 57.1% (n=8) of the total. In terms of occupation, private employees constituted the largest category (21.4%, n=3), followed by students and entrepreneurs, each at 14.3% (n=2). The remaining occupations each contributed 7.1% (n=1). In terms of informant category, 85.7% (n=12) were primary informants, with one key informant and one supporting informant, each representing 7.1% (n=1). This demographic diversity—spanning various age groups, genders, and occupational backgrounds—ensures a comprehensive understanding of Muslim consumer behavior across different segments of society (Moleong, 2015; Patton, 2002).

Data Collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide (Patton, 2002). This technique was chosen because it allows researchers to explore informants' experiences, motivations, and justifications in detail while maintaining flexibility to probe emerging themes (Creswell, 2014). Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes and was conducted in a comfortable setting chosen by the informants. All interviews were recorded with the informants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. In addition to interviews, documentation was used as a secondary data collection technique, including photographs, field notes, and relevant documents (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three concurrent activities:

1. Data Reduction: The process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data from interview transcripts and field notes. This step aimed to identify relevant themes and patterns related to Muslim consumers' purchase decisions (Miles et al., 2014).
2. Data Display: Organizing and compressing the reduced data into an easily understandable format, such as narrative text, matrices, or charts. This step facilitated interpretation and drawing of conclusions (Miles et al., 2014).
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Interpreting the displayed data to identify patterns, explanations, and causal relationships. Conclusions were verified by returning to the data for confirmation (Miles et al., 2014).

Data Trustworthiness (Triangulation)

To ensure the data's quality and trustworthiness, the study employed triangulation, a technique that involves using multiple data sources, methods, or investigators to cross-check and validate findings (Moleong, 2015). In this study, data source triangulation and methodological triangulation were primarily employed. Data source triangulation was achieved by collecting information from key informants (community leaders and business owners), primary informants (Muslim consumers), and supporting informants, then cross-checking their responses for consistency. Methodological triangulation was achieved by comparing data from in-depth interviews with documentation, field notes, and relevant literature (Sugiyono, 2017).

Results

Overview of Research Findings

This study explores the factors influencing Muslim consumers' purchase decisions regarding food and beverage products without a halal label. Based on in-depth interviews with 12 primary informants, 1 key informant, and 1 supporting informant in Jember Regency, East Java, the findings reveal that Muslim consumers' purchase decisions are shaped by a complex interplay of cognitive, social, contextual, sensory, and trust-based factors (Rifki, M., Rozi, F., & Anggraini, D. P., 2025). The findings are organized into five main themes that emerged from the data analysis: (1) legal awareness and purchase decisions, (2) social influence on purchase decisions, (3) contextual factors shaping purchase decisions, (4) trust as an alternative cue in purchase decisions, and (5) sensory factors and product virality.

Theme 1: Legal Awareness and Purchase Decisions

The findings reveal a significant gap between legal awareness and actual purchase decisions among Muslim consumers. Applying Kutchinsky's four-dimensional framework of legal awareness—knowledge, understanding, attitude, and behavior—the study found

that informants demonstrated strong legal knowledge and positive attitudes toward halal labelling, but this did not consistently translate into halal-compliant purchase decisions. This finding aligns with research by Ridha and Fitriani (2025), who found that awareness of uncertainty is a key theme in Muslim consumers' ethical consumption decisions, reflecting the moral tension between knowing religious obligations and acting upon them in everyday purchasing contexts.

All informants demonstrated a strong understanding of the legal requirement for halal certification. They were aware that products entering, circulating, and being traded in Indonesia must be halal-certified, as mandated by Law No. 33 of 2014. Informants also recognized that the halal label serves as a critical assurance of a product's religious compliance (Hati, S.R.H., et al., 2025). Studies by Hamami and Kafabih (2025) confirm that halal labels significantly influence consumer awareness, though the effect on actual purchase behavior may vary across consumer segments.

> *"I know that Muslims should not consume products without a halal label because we cannot be sure about the ingredients or the production process"* (Resp. 04).
>
> *"The halal label is important because it gives us certainty that the product is safe for consumption according to Islamic law"* (Resp. 09).

This finding is consistent with research by Pradana et al. (2024), who found that Indonesian young consumers demonstrate strong awareness of halal principles, though this awareness does not always translate into consistent purchasing behavior.

Informants demonstrated a clear understanding of the halal label's function beyond mere symbolism. They understood that the label represents a comprehensive certification process that verifies the entire production chain—from raw materials to processing and packaging. Research by Alfadri et al. (2025) emphasizes that communities often have nuanced understandings of halal certification that incorporate cultural and traditional values alongside formal religious requirements.

> *"Having a halal label means MUI or BPJPH has audited the product. It is not just a sticker; it means they checked the ingredients and the process"* (Resp. 10).

However, despite this understanding, informants acknowledged that they sometimes prioritize other factors in their purchase decisions. Similarly found that despite understanding the importance of halal labels, consumers in traditional markets often prioritize trust in sellers and long-standing consumption habits over formal certification when making purchase decisions (Febrianti, L., Ramayani, I., & Asrandi, A., 2025).

All informants expressed positive attitudes toward halal certification and agreed that businesses should display halal labels on their products. They also supported the enforcement of penalties for businesses that failed to comply with halal labelling requirements. This aligns with research by the Garuda Digital Reference (2026), which found that halal label serve as important indicators in consumer evaluation, strengthening trust in product quality and sharia compliance (Rifki, M., Rozi, F., & Anggraini, D. P., 2025).

> *"Businesses should definitely have halal labels. It is our right as consumers to know what we are consuming"* (Resp. 05).

"I agree with the law requiring halal certification. It protects us as Muslim consumers" (Resp. 12).

Despite having legal knowledge, understanding, and positive attitudes, informants admitted that their actual purchase decisions often did not align with these dimensions. Many informants acknowledged purchasing and consuming products without halal labels. This finding resonates with research by Hamami and Kafabih (2025), who found that purchase intention toward products is influenced by multiple factors beyond halal awareness, including environmental knowledge and product perception.

"I know I should check the halal label, but sometimes I am in a hurry, and I just grab whatever is available" (Resp. 02).

"I often buy snacks from street vendors without checking the halal label because I assume they are halal" (Resp. 08).

This gap between knowledge, understanding, attitude, and actual purchase behavior indicates low legal awareness among Muslim consumers in Jember Regency, consistent with the findings of Azizah and Sulistyowati (2012) and Sofiani (2018). Ridha and Fitriani (2025) describe this phenomenon as "awareness of uncertainty," in which consumers experience moral tension but may still act contrary to their religious knowledge due to contextual pressures.

Theme 2: Social Influence on Purchase Decisions

The findings indicate that social factors significantly influence Muslim consumers' purchase decisions. Informants reported that they often rely on the behavior and opinions of others in their social circles when making purchase decisions for products without halal labels.

"I bought the product because many people consume it too" (Resp. 01).

"Many Muslims consume it, so I no longer hesitate to consume this product" (Resp. 07).

"It is widely consumed by Muslim communities in this country" (Resp. 05).

This social proof mechanism—where consumers rely on others' behavior to determine appropriate action—appears to override religious compliance in certain purchase decisions. Informants indicated that observing other Muslims consuming a product provides a sense of reassurance, leading them to assume the product is permissible even without formal halal certification. Research by Hamami and Kafabih (2025) found that social factors, such as family, religious communities, and religious leaders, significantly shape preferences and increase consumer awareness of the importance of consuming products in accordance with sharia. Febrianti et al. (2025) similarly found that social values—including close relationships between sellers and buyers and collective trust in local products—are more influential than formal considerations, such as halal certification, in traditional market contexts.

The key informant (a community leader) confirmed this observation:

> *"In our community, people often follow what others are doing. If they see many people buying a particular food product, they assume it must be halal. It is a form of social trust that sometimes replaces formal certification"* (Resp. 13).

This finding is consistent with Kotler and Keller's (2008) social influence theory. It aligns with Hashim et al.'s (2024) observation that social influence plays a crucial role in enhancing brand visibility and trust among Muslim consumers. Studies employing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) have consistently found that subjective norms—the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior—are significant predictors of halal purchase intention.

Theme 3: Contextual Factors Shaping Purchase Decisions

The findings reveal that contextual factors—including urgency, emergencies, time constraints, and product availability—significantly shape Muslim consumers' purchase decisions regarding products without halal labels.

Several informants cited being in a hurry or having limited time as reasons for not checking the halal label before making a purchase decision.

> *"Usually, it is more about being in a hurry, so you do not have time to see the halal label"* (Resp. 02).
>
> *"Sometimes I do not realize that the product does not have a halal logo"* (Resp. 02).

Some informants acknowledged that emergencies or being in a distressed area influenced their purchase decisions, leading them to prioritize immediate needs over religious compliance.

> *"I consume products without the halal logo because it is an emergency"* (Resp. 06).
>
> *"If you are in a distressed area, you have to make sure that it is related to the food products you consume"* (Resp. 04).
>
> *"An urgent need for which other products cannot replace the product"* (Resp. 03).

These findings resonate with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), specifically the concept of perceived behavioral control (Asnawi, N., Sukoco, B. M., & Fanani, M. A., 2018). In situations of urgency or limited alternatives, consumers perceive that they have little control over their choices, leading them to prioritize convenience or survival over religious compliance. Research by Hamami and Kafabih (2025) found that perceived behavioral control significantly influences purchase intention, with consumers perceiving their ability to choose halal products as being constrained by various contextual factors. This is consistent with the observation that perceived behavioral control strongly predicts behavior rather than intention.

Theme 4: Trust as an Alternative Cue in Purchase Decisions

An important theme emerging from the findings is the role of trust as a substitute for formal halal certification in consumers' purchase decisions. Informants reported relying on various alternative cues to determine halalness in the absence of a halal label.

Some informants rely on the product's inherent characteristics to assess halalness.

"We often assume the halalness of a product in a way: some products may not have a halal logo, but people believe that the product is naturally halal or complies with halal requirements. For example, many people consider fresh products such as fruit and vegetables halal, even though they do not have special certification" (Resp. 09).

"We believe in the halalness of products from the product name, composition, brand, testimonials from other consumers, etc., so that we no longer hesitate to consume the product" (Resp. 03).

Several informants noted that they assess the manufacturer's reputation and origin to determine whether a product is halal.

"I looked at the manufacturers who produce these products because often there are products processed by themselves that have not registered their products to get halal certification. Usually, they are from small businesses or MSMEs" (Resp. 08).

"For example, the types of products are snacks such as homemade chips, which are sold in stalls with simple packaging. I am quite confident that they are halal even though they do not have a logo. I will check the halal logo first if the product manufacturer is a large-scale producer, such as a factory or company. If it is a small-scale producer with a product that can be trusted to be halal, I will still consume it even without a halal logo" (Resp. 10).

Some informants rely on the manufacturer's Muslim identity as a signal of halal compliance.

"One of them is the factor of trusting and believing that the product or food I consume is guaranteed to be halal, both in terms of the raw materials and the manufacturing process" (Resp. 04).

"Even without a halal label, I feel confident if I know the product comes from a Muslim-owned business or a company known for making halal products" (Resp. 10).

This reliance on alternative cues in purchase decisions reflects what Kotler and Keller (2008) describe as selective attention and selective distortion in consumer decision-making. Consumers selectively attend to information that confirms their existing beliefs—for instance, that products from Muslim-owned businesses are inherently halal—and selectively distort information that contradicts these beliefs. This cognitive process helps explain why some consumers make purchase decisions that appear to contradict their legal knowledge. Research by Rifki, M., Rozi, F., & Anggraini, D. P. (2025), found that trust in halal certification, risk perception of non-halal products, and product quality all interact to shape purchasing decisions.

Ridha and Fitriani (2025) describe this phenomenon as "faith-based reasoning," in which consumers rely on informal indicators such as store reputation or social endorsements to infer a product's permissibility, revealing a gap between normative religious guidance and practical consumer behavior. Similarly found that trust in sellers and long-standing consumption habits are often more influential than formal halal certification in traditional markets (Febrianti, L., Ramayani, I., & Asrandi, A., 2025).

Theme 5: Sensory Factors and Product Virality

The findings also reveal that sensory factors—particularly taste—and product virality on social media influence Muslim consumers' purchase decisions.

"I consume food that does not have a halal logo because it tastes delicious" (Resp. 11).

The taste factor is particularly relevant for MSME products, which are no less competitive in quality than branded products, as noted by the supporting informant.

"Often, MSME products are just as tasty as branded products, but they have not registered for halal certification yet because the process can be complicated" (Resp. 14).

"When there was a boom in viral foods with names similar to 'devil,' I was tempted to try them with my friends" (Resp. 12).

This finding suggests that attitudes toward the product—specifically, perceptions of taste and quality—can override religious considerations in purchase decisions. This aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), in which attitude significantly predicts halal purchase intention. When consumers perceive a product as delicious or trendy, their positive attitude toward it may outweigh their concern about halal compliance. Pradana et al. (2024) found that attitude is a significant determinant of halal food buying intent among Indonesian young consumers, reinforcing the importance of product perception in shaping purchase decisions.

The supporting informant provided additional context:

"Many small food businesses have not applied for halal certification because they do not know the process or find it expensive. However, they are actually using halal ingredients. This is why consumers sometimes trust us even without the label" (Resp. 14).

This finding is consistent with research by Febrianti et al. (2025), who found that despite varied consumer responses to unlabeled products—ranging from trustful to indifferent to doubtful—all informants continued to purchase and consume unlabeled products, indicating that halal labeling is not the primary determinant of purchasing decisions in traditional markets characterized by strong social and cultural values. Ridha and Fitriani (2025) similarly found that in Makassar's context, traditional markets coexist with modern retail chains, and consumers often rely on informal indicators rather than verified halal status.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a complex interplay between legal awareness, social influence, and contextual factors in shaping Muslim consumers' purchase decisions regarding food and beverage products without a halal label. These findings can be analyzed through several theoretical frameworks that specifically address consumer decision-making processes.

Legal Awareness Perspective and Purchase Decisions

Applying Kutchinsky's four-dimensional framework of legal awareness—knowledge, understanding, attitude, and behavior—the findings reveal a significant dissonance that directly impacts Muslim consumers' purchase decisions. As presented in the results section, Muslim consumers demonstrate strong legal

knowledge of halal certification requirements and a clear understanding of the halal label's function as a guarantee of religious compliance. They also exhibit positive legal attitudes, as all informants expressed support for the Halal Product Guarantee Law and agreed that businesses should display halal labels. However, this knowledge, understanding, and positive attitude do not consistently translate into purchase decisions that align with legal requirements, as many informants admitted to purchasing non-certified products.

This gap between knowing and doing is the hallmark of low legal awareness (Azizah & Sulistyowati, 2012; Kutchinsky, as cited in Tani & Mediatati, 2020). The findings suggest that legal behavior—the highest dimension of legal awareness—is the critical factor in determining whether a consumer's purchase decision complies with halal requirements. This finding aligns with Sofiani's (2018) observation that Indonesian Muslim consumers often exhibit low legal awareness regarding halal product obligations, despite having adequate knowledge of the regulations. The implication is clear: while knowledge and attitude are necessary conditions for halal-compliant purchase decisions, they are not sufficient in themselves. Consumers must also translate their legal awareness into actual purchase behavior for the decision to be considered legally conscious.

The magnitude of this gap is particularly significant given the regulatory landscape. As of October 2025, BPJPH recorded approximately 9.6 million halal-certified products across Indonesia, representing a substantial achievement in the government's efforts toward mandatory halal certification. However, this figure remains a fraction of the total food and beverage products circulating in the Indonesian market, with the government aiming to make halal certification mandatory for all products by BPJPH The substantial gap between certified and non-certified products underscores the complexity of Muslim consumers' purchase decisions in the absence of formal halal labelling.

This finding resonates with the research by Ridha and Fitriani (2025), who found that "awareness of uncertainty" is a key theme in Muslim consumers' ethical consumption decisions, reflecting the moral tension between knowing religious obligations and acting on them in everyday purchasing contexts. They describe that "staying halal" represents not only adherence to Islamic dietary law but also an ongoing process of self-discipline and taqwa (God-consciousness) expressed through restraint. The gap between knowledge and behavior observed in this study confirms that Muslim consumers in Jember experience similar moral tensions in their purchase decisions regarding non-certified products.

Social Influence on Purchase Decisions

The findings also support social influence theory, which posits that individuals are significantly influenced by the actions and views of others in their social circles when making purchase decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2008). As several informants stated, they purchased products without halal labels because "many Muslims consume it" (Resp. 01, 05, 07). This social proof mechanism—where consumers rely on others' behavior to

determine appropriate action—appears to override religious compliance in certain purchase contexts.

This finding is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), in which subjective norms the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior serve as a significant predictor of halal purchase intention. A recent meta-analytic structural equation model (MASEM) synthesizing 42 empirical studies (N = 13,058) confirmed that subjective norms significantly predict halal purchase intention ($\beta = 0.234$, $p = 0.0013$). Hamami and Kafabih (2025) found that social factors, such as family, religious communities, and religious leaders, significantly shape preferences and increase consumer awareness of the importance of consuming products in accordance with sharia. Febrianti et al. (2025) similarly found that social values including close relationships between sellers and buyers and collective trust in local products are more influential than formal considerations, such as halal certification, in traditional market contexts.

In Jember Regency, where communal living and social ties are strong, the influence of the broader Muslim community appears to be a powerful driver of purchase decisions, even when those decisions conflict with formal legal obligations. This phenomenon demonstrates that trust is often transferred through social and family networks rather than formal institutions, a pattern consistent with cultural-religious embeddedness that significantly affects purchase decisions.

Theory of Planned Behavior and Purchase Decision-Making

The findings resonate with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which identifies attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as key determinants of purchase intention and subsequent purchase decisions (Ajzen, 1991). The recent MASEM study confirmed that attitude ($\beta = 0.320$, $p < 0.001$), subjective norms ($\beta = 0.234$, $p = 0.0013$), and religiosity ($\beta = 0.266$, $p < 0.001$) significantly predict halal purchase intention. However, the study also found that perceived behavioral control (PBC) does not predict intention but does strongly predict behavior ($\beta = 0.598$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that consumers' perception of control over their purchase decisions is critical when they actually make a purchase.

In situations of urgency or limited alternatives, as reported by informants (Resp. 02, 03, 04, 06), consumers may perceive little control over their choices, leading them to prioritize convenience over religious compliance in their purchase decisions. This finding aligns with research by Maulana and Efrina (2025), who found that 29.1% of Muslim consumers still bought products without halal labels because of urgent needs. This is particularly relevant given the gap between certified and non-certified products in the Indonesian market.

Pradana et al. (2024) similarly found that subjective norm and attitude are significant determinants of halal food buying intent among Indonesian young consumers, though perceived behavioral control was not established as a purchase intention component in their study. Research by Hamami and Kafabih (2025) found that perceived

behavioral control significantly influences purchase intention, with consumers perceiving their ability to choose halal products as constrained by various contextual factors. Hanifasari et al. (2024) further demonstrated that purchase intention of halal products among the millennial generation is influenced by halal supply chain knowledge, halal certification and logo, and religious beliefs—all factors that ultimately shape purchase decisions.

Trust as an Alternative Cue in Purchase Decisions

An important theme emerging from the findings is the role of trust as a substitute for formal halal certification in consumers' purchase decisions. Several informants noted that they rely on product type (e.g., fresh fruits and vegetables), manufacturer reputation, or the Muslim identity of the producer (Resp. 03, 04, 08, 09, 10) to determine halalness in the absence of a label. This finding suggests that Muslim consumers are not passive recipients of halal labeling but actively engage in cognitive processing to assess product permissibility before making a purchase decision. This behavior can be understood through the lens of identity theory, which holds that consumers' self-concept as Muslims is reinforced by their ability to make informed religious decisions (Shafie & Othman, 2006).

Ridha and Fitriani (2025) describe this phenomenon as "faith-based reasoning" in which consumers rely on informal indicators such as store reputation or social endorsements to infer a product's permissibility, revealing a gap between normative religious guidance and practical consumer behavior. Febrianti et al. (2025) similarly found that trust in sellers and long-standing consumption habits are often more influential than formal halal certification in traditional markets. The research by Khasanah et al. (2025) found that consumers' religious aspect is not ignored but transformed through mechanisms of social trust and 'urf (customary practice), with the identity of known Muslim producers serving as an alternative halal guarantee.

This reliance on alternative cues in purchase decisions reflects what Kotler and Keller (2008) describe as the selective attention and selective distortion processes in consumer decision-making. Consumers selectively attend to information that confirms their existing beliefs—for instance, that products from Muslim-owned businesses are inherently halal—and selectively distort information that contradicts these beliefs, such as the possibility that even Muslim-owned businesses might use non-halal ingredients. This cognitive process helps explain why some consumers make purchase decisions that appear to contradict their legal knowledge.

However, this reliance on trust-based assessments in purchase decisions raises concerns, as it assumes that products from Muslim-owned businesses or naturally halal categories are automatically compliant with halal standards—an assumption that may not always hold. This is particularly relevant given the findings of Maulana and Efrina (2025) that 72% of respondents had limited knowledge of critical halal points, such as the use of rennet enzymes in cheese, gelatin in yogurt, and fat sources in butter. The substantial

knowledge gap suggests that consumers may benefit from enhanced halal literacy and educational initiatives to support more informed purchase decisions.

Implications for Understanding Purchase Decisions

For businesses and marketers, these findings underscore the importance of recognizing that multiple, sometimes conflicting, factors shape Muslim consumers' purchase decisions. While halal certification remains an important signal of quality and religious compliance, some consumers may choose to purchase non-certified products if they trust the manufacturer or perceive the product as naturally halal. Companies seeking to influence Muslim consumers' purchase decisions should therefore adopt a multi-faceted strategy that combines halal certification with transparent communication about production processes and ingredient sourcing.

Research by Hamami and Kafabih (2025) suggests that businesses should focus on enhancing consumers' perceptions of product quality through halal certification and tailor their marketing strategies to consumer characteristics. The Garuda Digital Reference (2026) found that trust in halal certification, risk perception of non-halal products, and product quality all interact to shape purchasing decisions. For small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), this is particularly critical, as many consumers noted that they base their purchase decisions precisely on trust in local producers (Resp. 08, 10). The government's Sertifikasi Halal Gratis (Sehati) program for micro and small businesses, as announced by BPJPH, represents a positive step in this direction.

For policymakers and halal certification bodies, the findings highlight the need to bridge the gap between regulation and practice by addressing the factors that influence consumers' purchase decisions. While Law No. 33 of 2014 mandates halal certification for all products, in reality, millions remain uncertified. As of October 2025, BPJPH has recorded 9.6 million halal-certified products, but with a target of full compliance by October 2026, significant work remains. Simplifying the certification process for MSMEs and increasing public awareness campaigns about the importance of halal certification could help close this gap and encourage more halal-compliant purchase decisions. Additionally, the findings of Maulana and Efrina (2025) suggest that educating consumers about the limitations of relying on trust-based assessments—such as assuming that all Muslim-owned businesses produce halal products—could enhance their legal awareness and support more informed purchase decisions.

Conclusion

This study examined the factors influencing Muslim consumers' purchase decisions regarding food and beverage products without a halal label in Jember Regency, East Java. Through in-depth interviews with 12 primary informants, 1 key informant, and 1 supporting informant, the research revealed that Muslim consumers' purchase decisions are shaped by a complex interplay among legal awareness, social influence, contextual factors, trust-based assessments, and sensory preferences.

The findings demonstrate a significant gap between legal awareness and actual purchase behavior. Applying Kutchinsky's four-dimensional framework knowledge, understanding, attitude, and behavior, the study found that while Muslim consumers possess strong legal knowledge, clear understanding, and positive attitudes toward halal certification, these dimensions do not consistently translate into halal-compliant purchase decisions. This dissonance between knowledge and behavior indicates a low level of legal awareness among Muslim consumers in Jember Regency, consistent with previous research.

Furthermore, the study identified five key categories of factors that influence Muslim consumers' purchase decisions regarding products without a halal label: (1) legal awareness gap, characterized by high knowledge but low behavioral compliance; (2) social influence, including social proof, community norms, and family expectations; (3) contextual factors, such as urgency, time constraints, and emergencies; (4) trust as an alternative cue, where consumers rely on product type, manufacturer reputation, or the Muslim identity of producers; and (5) sensory and information factors, including taste preferences and product virality on social media. These findings extend existing theoretical frameworks, particularly the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and social influence theory, by highlighting the importance of trust-based assessments and contextual factors in shaping purchase decisions in the absence of formal halal labelling.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted only in Jember Regency, which may limit generalizability. Future research could expand to multiple regions to explore regional variations. Second, the qualitative approach with 14 informants limits statistical generalizability; future quantitative studies with larger samples could test the relative influence of different factors. Third, the study focused on food and beverage products; future research could extend to other product categories such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and personal care products. Fourth, the study did not examine demographic variables such as age, education, or income; future research could investigate how these moderate the relationship between legal awareness and purchase behavior. Finally, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias; future research could employ observational methods to complement self-report data.

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