

Halal Labeling and Product Quality on Purchase Intention of Halal Food MSMEs: The Role of Consumer Trust as an Intervening Variable

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The halal industry has grown rapidly and has become an important sector in the global economy. Halal products are not only associated with religious obligations for Muslim consumers but are also considered indicators of product quality, safety, and credibility. This study aims to examine the effect of halal labeling and product quality on purchase intention of halal food Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), with consumer trust as an intervening variable.

Methods: This research employs a quantitative approach using data collected from 100 respondents who have purchased or consumed halal food products from MSMEs. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS).

Results: Product quality significantly influences consumer trust, while halal labeling does not. However, halal labeling directly affects purchase intention. Product quality does not directly influence purchase intention but has an indirect effect through consumer trust. Consumer trust significantly affects purchase intention and mediates the relationship between product quality and purchase intention, but not between halal labeling and purchase intention.

Conclusion and Suggestion: Product quality plays a key role in building consumer trust, which drives purchase intention, whereas halal labeling primarily acts as a direct cue in purchasing decisions. Therefore, halal food MSMEs should focus on maintaining product quality while ensuring credible halal certification.

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1. Introduction

The halal industry has experienced rapid growth and has become one of the important sectors in the global economy. Halal products are no longer understood solely as religious obligations for Muslim consumers, but also as indicators of product quality, safety, and integrity in the global market. The development of the halal industry has encouraged many countries to strengthen halal certification systems as a guarantee for Muslim consumers in identifying products that comply with Islamic principles (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Wilson & Liu, 2011). In the broader context of the global economy, the concept of halal is also associated with economic, social, and political dimensions that influence international trade and the consumption behavior of Muslim communities across different countries.

In Indonesia, halal issues have unique characteristics because Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world (Najmudin et al., 2025). Food products circulating in society are often socially assumed to be halal. Nevertheless, the government continues to promote the implementation of halal certification through the halal product assurance policy administered by the Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH), as regulated in Law Number 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance. Through this policy, business actors, including Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), are required to obtain halal certification as a form of consumer protection and to strengthen public trust in products available in the market. (Fajaruddin, 2018)

To accelerate the implementation of halal certification, the government has launched several programs aimed at MSMEs, including the free halal certification program (SEHATI). This initiative is intended to increase the number of halal-certified products and enhance the competitiveness of MSME products in both domestic and global markets. However, the certification process still requires MSME actors to fulfill various administrative requirements such as business registration and supporting documents, which can be challenging for some small business owners.

Previous studies have shown that halal labeling can influence consumer behavior, particularly in increasing purchase intention for halal products. Halal labels are often perceived as signals of product quality and compliance with Islamic standards, which may enhance consumer trust and purchasing interest (Lada et al., 2009). However, most of these studies focus on large brands or industrial-scale companies, while research specifically examining halal food MSMEs remains relatively limited. In addition, in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, halal labels may not always be the main factor in building consumer trust, as many consumers assume that food products available in their social environment are already halal. (Lever & Miele, 2012)

Based on these conditions, several research gaps can be identified. First, previous studies have largely focused on large-scale companies rather than MSMEs. Second, in the context of Muslim-majority societies, halal labels may not always play a dominant role in shaping consumer trust due to existing social assumptions regarding the halal status of food products. Third, prior research tends to focus on the direct relationship between halal labeling and purchase intention, while the psychological mechanism underlying this relationship, particularly the mediating role of consumer trust, has received limited attention in the context of halal food

MSMEs. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effect of halal labeling and product quality on purchase intention of halal food MSMEs with consumer trust as an intervening variable.

2. Literature Review

Halal labeling

Halal labeling refers to a mark or information attached to a product indicating that the product complies with halal standards according to Islamic law (Purnomo et al., 2024). The presence of a halal label provides assurance for Muslim consumers that the product has undergone a verification process regarding its ingredients and production procedures. For Muslim consumers, halal certification is an important factor because it guarantees that the product is permissible for consumption according to religious principles. In theoretical terms, halal labeling is often positioned as an extrinsic cue (Hassan et al., 2016), that means it provides external information which helps consumers evaluate a product without directly experiencing it. As an extrinsic attribute, the halal label communicates not only religious compliance but also reflects aspects of product integrity, safety, and adherence to specific standards established by authorized certification bodies (Anam et al., 2018; Ariffin & Wahid, 2017).

From a consumer behavior perspective, halal labeling is grounded in signaling theory, where the label acts as a signal that conveys credible information about product attributes that are otherwise difficult to observe. This signal becomes particularly important in markets characterized by information asymmetry, where consumers rely on labels and certifications to make informed decisions. In addition, halal labeling is closely related to the concept of perceived quality (Jamal & Sharifuddin, 2015), as certified products are often associated with higher standards of production and control processes. Theoretical frameworks also highlight that the meaning and importance of halal labeling are influenced by contextual factors such as cultural background, religious values, and the credibility of certification institutions (Borzooei & Asgari, 2016), which together shape how the label is interpreted by consumers

Product Quality

Product quality refers to the ability of a product to perform its functions and meet consumer expectations. According to marketing theory, product quality encompasses several key dimensions, including performance, reliability, durability, and overall excellence of a product (Kotler & Keller, 2012). These dimensions indicate how well a product fulfills its intended purpose and how consistently it delivers value to consumers. In theoretical perspectives, product quality is often categorized as both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes, where intrinsic attributes relate to the physical characteristics of the product itself, while extrinsic attributes involve external cues that influence consumer evaluation. High product quality is therefore associated with a product's ability to meet standards and specifications, which in turn contributes to favorable consumer perceptions and evaluations (Anam et al., 2018; Lascu et al., 2016).

In the food industry, product quality holds a critical role due to the direct consumption of products and the potential impact on consumer health and satisfaction. Consumers typically assess food quality based on attributes such as taste, safety, freshness, and overall consumption experience (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). From a theoretical standpoint, perceived product quality is closely linked to information cues such as ingredient transparency and production standards, which help consumers form judgments about a product's reliability and acceptability (Mohamed, 2013). Furthermore, consistent quality performance reinforces consumers' confidence in a product, as repeated positive experiences strengthen their evaluation of the product's standards

and characteristics. Thus, product quality is conceptualized as a fundamental construct in consumer evaluation processes, particularly in contexts where safety and assurance are essential considerations (Mohayidin, 2014).

Consumer trust

Consumer trust refers to the belief that a product or company is reliable and capable of fulfilling consumer expectations. Trust plays an essential role in consumer decision-making because it reduces perceived risk in purchasing activities (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). According to Morgan & Hunt (1994), trust is a key element in establishing and maintaining long-term relationships between consumers and companies, as it reflects confidence in the reliability and integrity of a product or brand. In theoretical perspectives, trust is often conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that includes trust in the product, the brand, and the institution or authority behind it. Within the context of halal products, trust is also associated with confidence in certification bodies and regulatory systems that ensure compliance with halal standards (Koc et al., 2024; Ramlan et al., 2025).

When consumers trust a product, they tend to believe that the product will deliver the expected benefits and will not cause harm or disappointment. In the context of halal food products, trust can be formed through various factors such as product quality, brand reputation, and the presence of halal certification (Kristiana et al., 2020). From a theoretical standpoint, halal certification and labeling serve as important signals that strengthen consumer trust by providing assurance regarding product safety, quality, and religious compliance (Miftahuddin et al., 2022). Furthermore, trust is closely related to perceived risk reduction, where higher levels of trust lead consumers to feel more secure in their purchasing decisions. As a result, trust becomes a fundamental construct in understanding consumer evaluation and behavior, particularly in markets where assurance and credibility are critical considerations (Bakhtiar et al., 2021)

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's tendency or willingness to buy a particular product in the future. It reflects the likelihood that consumers will engage in purchasing behavior after evaluating available information about the product. In consumer behavior theory, purchase intention is considered an important predictor of actual purchasing behavior (Zakaria et al., 2018). Theoretically, purchase intention is often explained through frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), where intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this context, purchase intention represents the cognitive outcome of a consumer's evaluation process, shaped by both internal and external factors (Elseidi, 2018; Nawang et al., 2023).

Consumers generally develop purchase intention after assessing several factors such as product quality, brand image, trust, and perceived value. These factors function as evaluative inputs that form consumers' overall attitudes toward a product. From a theoretical perspective, purchase intention is also influenced by informational cues and external signals, such as labeling and certification, which help consumers reduce uncertainty and form positive evaluations (Hamzah et al., 2020). Furthermore, social influences and perceived importance of product attributes contribute to shaping intention, as consumers tend to align their decisions with personal values and social expectations (Gilal et al., 2022). Thus, purchase intention can be

understood as a central construct in consumer behavior that reflects the outcome of a comprehensive evaluation process before actual purchasing behavior occurs (Silalahi, 2024).

Hypothesis Development

Halal labeling can provide assurance for Muslim consumers regarding the permissibility of a product according to Islamic principles, as it serves as an extrinsic cue that signals compliance with established halal standards and reduces information asymmetry (Hassan et al., 2016). The presence of halal certification may reduce uncertainty and strengthen consumer confidence in the product, particularly when the certification is issued by credible and recognized authorities, thereby enhancing perceived reliability (Koc et al., 2024). Lada et al. (2009) stated that halal labels can increase consumer trust because they provide information about the compliance of a product with halal standards. In addition, halal labeling contributes to the formation of trust across multiple dimensions, including trust in the product, brand, and certification body, as it reinforces perceptions of product integrity, safety, and quality (Miftahuddin et al., 2022). The role of clear certification systems and recognizable halal logos further strengthens this relationship by increasing consumer confidence in the authenticity of the product (Ariffin & Wahid, 2017). Therefore, halal labeling is expected to positively influence consumer trust

H1: Halal labeling has a positive effect on consumer trust.

Product quality is also considered an important factor that can influence consumer trust, as it reflects a product's ability to consistently perform and meet consumer expectations. In theoretical perspectives, product quality functions as an intrinsic attribute that directly signals reliability and credibility to consumers, thereby reducing uncertainty in product evaluation (Anam et al., 2018). Consumers tend to trust products that consistently deliver good performance and meet their expectations, as repeated positive experiences reinforce perceptions of dependability and integrity (Kotler & Keller, 2012). In addition, high product quality is closely associated with perceived value and reduced risk, which further strengthens consumer trust on the product and the brand (Miftahuddin et al., 2022). The presence of clear information regarding product attributes, such as ingredients and production standards, also supports the formation of trust by enhancing transparency and perceived quality (Mohamed, 2013). Therefore, product quality is expected to positively influence consumer trust

H2: Product quality has a positive effect on consumer trust.

Halal labeling also influence consumer purchase intention, particularly among Muslim consumers who consider halal compliance as a key criterion in their consumption decisions. As an extrinsic cue, halal labeling provides clear and credible information that helps consumers evaluate products and reduces uncertainty during the decision-making process (Hassan et al., 2016). For Muslim consumers, halal certification can serve as an important consideration when choosing food products, as it signals not only religious permissibility but also quality, safety, and ethical standards associated with the product (Hamzah et al., 2020). When consumers are confident that a product complies with halal standards, they are more likely to develop an intention to purchase the product (Aziz & Chok, 2013). This effect is further strengthened when the halal label is perceived as important and trustworthy, as it enhances positive attitudes and reinforces consumers' willingness to choose the product over alternatives (Silalahi, 2024). Therefore, halal labeling is expected to have a positive influence on consumer purchase intention

H3: Halal labeling has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Product quality is another important determinant of purchase intention, as it reflects the product's ability to deliver value and satisfy consumer expectations. In consumer behavior theory, product quality acts as an intrinsic cue that directly influences consumer evaluation and decision-making processes (Anam et al., 2018). Consumers generally prefer products that provide better quality because such products are perceived to offer higher value, reliability, and overall satisfaction. Several studies have found that higher product quality can increase consumers' intention to purchase a product (Purnomo et al., 2024). This relationship is further explained by the role of perceived value and reduced risk, where high-quality products enhance consumer confidence and encourage favorable purchase decisions (Miftahuddin et al., 2022). Additionally, clear information regarding product attributes, such as ingredients and production standards, can strengthen perceived quality and further support consumers' intention to choose the product (Mohamed, 2013). Therefore, product quality is expected to positively influence purchase intention

H4: Product quality has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Consumer trust also plays a significant role in influencing purchase intention, as it reduces perceived risk and increases consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions. In theoretical perspectives, trust acts as a central mechanism that links consumer evaluation to behavioral intention, particularly in situations involving uncertainty (Koc et al., 2024). When consumers trust a product, they are more confident that the product will deliver the expected benefits and will not cause harm or disappointment. Previous research indicates that trust can significantly affect consumers' intention to purchase a product (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). This relationship is further supported by the role of trust in enhancing perceived value and strengthening positive attitudes toward a product, which ultimately leads to higher purchase intention (Miftahuddin et al., 2022). Additionally, trust in certification systems and product claims reinforces consumers' willingness to choose the product, especially in contexts such as halal products where credibility is essential (Ramlan et al., 2025). Therefore, consumer trust is expected to positively influence purchase intention

H5: Consumer trust has a positive effect on purchase intention.

In addition, consumer trust has role as a mediating variable that links halal labeling and product quality with purchase intention, as suggested in various consumer behavior frameworks. Halal labeling and product quality may first influence the formation of consumer trust by providing credible signals related to product compliance, safety, and reliability, which reduce uncertainty and strengthen consumer confidence (Anam et al., 2018; Hassan et al., 2016). In this context, trust is not formed instantly but develops through consumers' evaluation of both extrinsic cues, such as halal certification, and intrinsic attributes, such as product quality. This trust then functions as an intermediate mechanism that translates these evaluations into behavioral intentions (Koc et al., 2024). When consumers perceive a product as trustworthy supported by valid certification and consistent quality, they are more likely to develop a stronger intention to purchase the product, as trust enhances perceived value and reduces perceived risk (Miftahuddin et al., 2022). Therefore, consumer trust is expected to mediate the relationship between halal labeling and product quality on purchase intention.

H6: Halal labeling influences purchase intention through consumer trust.

H7: Product quality influences purchase intention through consumer trust.

3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research approach with an explanatory research design to examine the effect of halal labeling and product quality on purchase intention of halal food MSMEs with consumer trust as an intervening variable. The population of this study consists of consumers who have purchased or consumed halal food products produced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling with several criteria, namely: (1) respondents aged at least 17 years old, (2) respondents who have purchased or consumed halal food MSME products, and (3) respondents who are willing to participate voluntarily in this research.

The determination of the sample size refers to the rule of thumb suggested by Joseph F. Hair Jr. which states that the minimum sample size in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed at a particular latent variable. In this study, the endogenous variable with the highest number of incoming paths is purchase intention, which receives three structural paths from halal labeling, product quality, and consumer trust. Therefore, the minimum sample size required is 30 respondents. In this study, data were collected from 100 respondents, which exceeds the minimum requirement and is considered sufficient for SEM-PLS analysis.

Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed online using Google Forms. The questionnaire was measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 5 indicates strongly agree. The measurement indicators were developed based on previous studies related to halal labeling, product quality, consumer trust, and purchase intention. The data analysis technique used in this research is Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM). The analysis was conducted using the SmartPLS version 4.0 software. The analysis procedure includes two main stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The outer model evaluation aims to assess the validity and reliability of the indicators, while the inner model evaluation is conducted to examine the relationships among variables and to test the proposed research hypotheses

4. Results And Discussion

Respondents Profile

The respondent profile describes the demographic characteristics of individuals who participated in this study. The characteristics of respondents include age and gender distribution. The detailed information regarding respondent characteristics is presented table 1

Table 1. Respondents Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
17–25 years	79	79%
26–35 years	13	13%
36–45 years	5	5%
>45 years	3	3%
Gender		
Male	25	25%
Female	75	75%

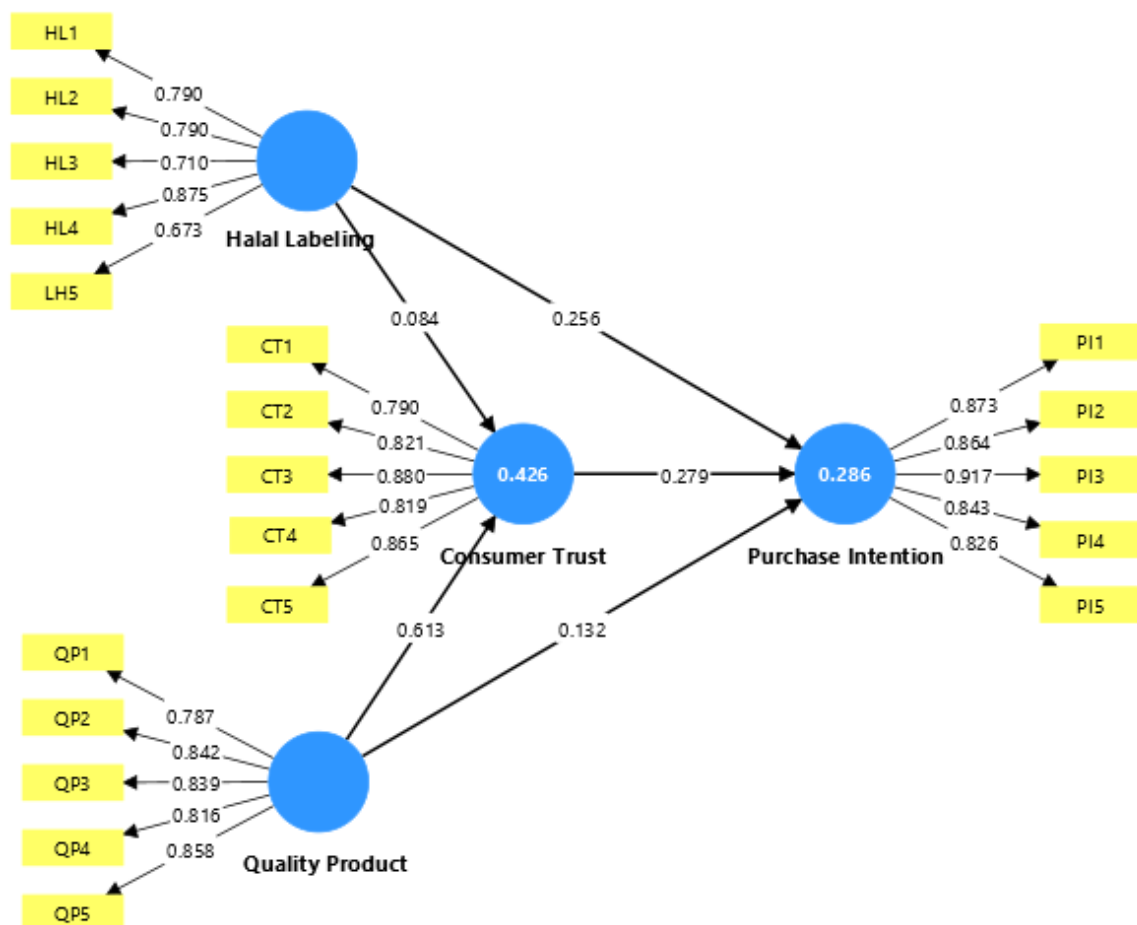
Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents were aged 17–25 years, accounting for 79% of the total respondents. This was followed by respondents aged 26–35 years at 13%, respondents aged 36–45 years at 5%, and respondents aged above 45 years at 3%. In terms of gender, female respondents dominated the sample with 75%, while male respondents accounted for 25%.

Research Results

Structural Model Results

Figure 1 illustrates the structural model obtained from the analysis using SmartPLS. The model shows the relationships between halal labeling, product quality, consumer trust, and purchase intention. The R-square value of consumer trust is 0.421, while the R-square value of purchase intention is 0.292, indicating the explanatory power of the proposed research model.

Figure 1. Outer Model
 Source: Authors' own work (based on survey data)



Measurement model evaluation

The evaluation of the measurement model was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study. Convergent validity was evaluated using loading factor values, while reliability was assessed through Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 2. Measurement Model Evaluation

Construct	Loading Factors	CA	CR	AVE	Description
Halal Labelling	0.790	0.839	0.892	0.675	Valid
	0.790				Valid
	0.710				Valid
	0.875				Valid
	0.673				Invalid
Product Quality	0.787	0.886	0.916	0.687	Valid
	0.842				Valid
	0.839				Valid
	0.816				Valid
	0.858				Valid
Consumer Trust	0.790	0.892	0.920	0.698	Valid
	0.821				Valid

Construct	Loading Factors	CA	CR	AVE	Description
	0.880				Valid
	0.819				Valid
	0.865				Valid
Purchase Intention	0.873	0.916	0.937	0.749	Valid
	0.864				Valid
	0.917				Valid
	0.843				Valid
	0.826				Valid

Source: Authors' Elaboration

Based on Table 2, most indicators show loading factor values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, ranging from 0.710 to 0.917, indicating that the majority of indicators have good convergent validity. However, one indicator under the halal labeling construct has a loading factor of 0.673, which is slightly below the recommended threshold. Nevertheless, this value is still considered acceptable, particularly in exploratory research, and does not substantially affect the overall validity of the construct.

Furthermore, the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.839 to 0.916 and the Composite Reliability values range from 0.892 to 0.937. These values exceed the minimum recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that all constructs in this study are reliable.

In addition, the AVE values for all constructs range from 0.675 to 0.749, which are above the recommended threshold of 0.50. This indicates that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance of its indicators, confirming adequate convergent validity. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs used in this study are valid and reliable for further analysis.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion to ensure that each construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the research model. According to this criterion, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct should be

greater than the correlations between that construct and other constructs. The results of the Fornell–Larcker test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

Variable	Consumer Trust	Halal Labeling	Purchase Intention	Produk Quality	Description
Consumer Trust	0.836				Valid
Halal Labeling	0.342	0.771			Valid
Purchase Intention	0.452	0.407	0.865		Valid
Quality Produk	0.648	0.420	0.420	0.82	Valid

Source: Authors' Elaboration

The discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Based on Table 3, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than the correlation values with other constructs.

For instance, the square root of AVE for purchase intention (0.865) is higher than its correlations with consumer trust (0.452), halal labeling (0.407), and product quality (0.420). Similarly, the square root of AVE for consumer trust (0.836), halal labeling (0.771), and product quality (0.829) are all greater than their respective correlations with other constructs.

These results indicate that each construct has adequate discriminant validity, meaning that all constructs are empirically distinct and capable of measuring different concepts within the research model.

Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model evaluation aims to determine the predictive power of the research model by examining the coefficient of determination (R-square). The R-square value represents the proportion of variance in the endogenous variables explained by the exogenous variables in the model.

Figure 2. Inner Model

Source: Authors' own work (based on survey data)

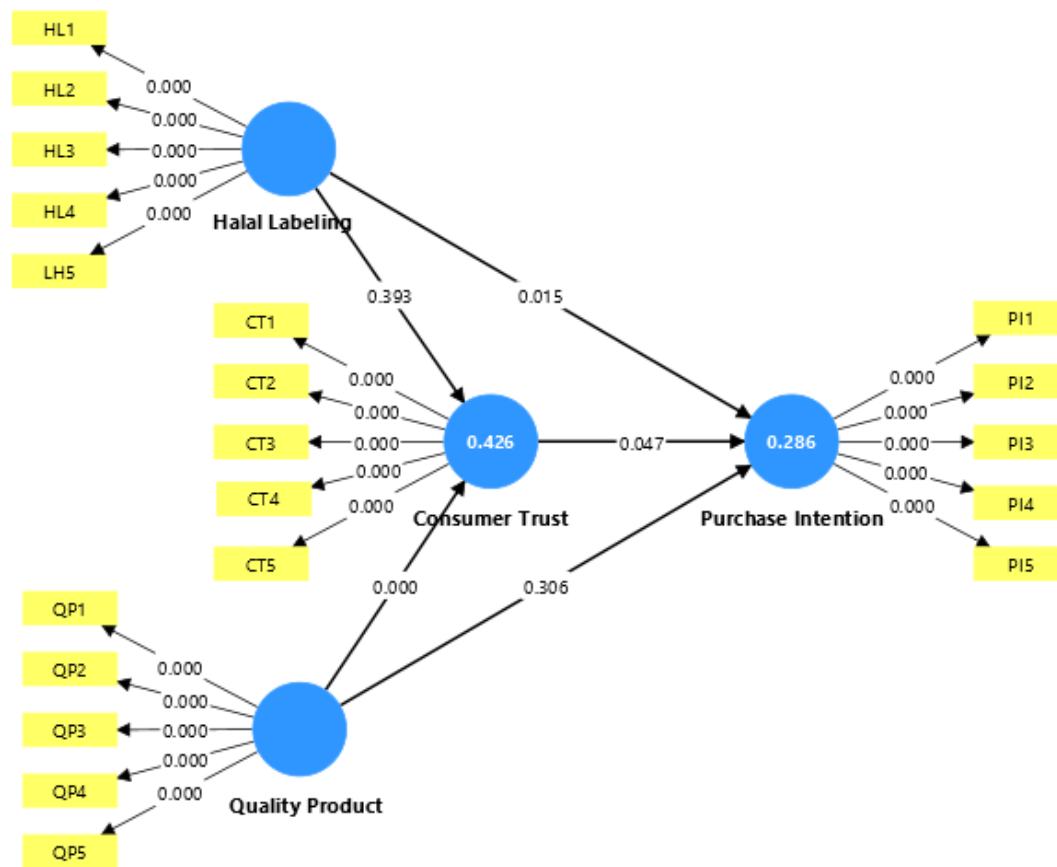


Table 4. R-Square Value

Variable	R-Square
Consumer Trust	0.426
Purchase Intention	0.286

Source: Authors' Elaboration

As shown in Table 4, the R-square value for consumer trust is **0.426**, indicating that halal labeling and product quality explain **42.6%** of the variance in consumer trust, while the remaining **57.4%** is explained by other variables outside the model.

Meanwhile, the R-square value for purchase intention is **0.286**, which means that halal labeling, product quality, and consumer trust explain **28.6%** of the variance in purchase intention, while the remaining **71.4%** is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

These results indicate that the proposed research model has a **moderate level of explanatory power** in predicting consumer trust and purchase intention.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 4.0 to evaluate the significance of the relationships between variables in the structural model. The

bootstrapping technique is commonly used in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess the stability and significance of path coefficients by generating repeated subsamples from the original dataset. In this study, the significance of each hypothesis was determined based on the statistical criteria where a hypothesis is considered supported when the t-statistic value exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that the relationship between variables is statistically significant.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	T-Statistic	P-Value	Result
H1	Halal Labeling → Consumer Trust	0.855	0.393	Not Supported
H2	Product Quality → Consumer Trust	7.421	0.000	Supported
H3	Halal Labeling → Purchase Intention	2.429	0.015	Supported
H4	Product Quality → Purchase Intention	1.023	0.306	Not Supported
H5	Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention	1.991	0.047	Supported
H6	Halal Labeling → Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention	0.190	0.850	Not Supported
H7	Product Quality → Consumer Trust → Purchase Intention	2.050	0.040	Supported

Source: Authors' Elaboration

The results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 5. Based on the results, halal labeling does not have a significant effect on consumer trust, as indicated by a t-statistic value of 0.855 and a p-value of 0.393. This finding suggests that the presence of halal labeling alone is not sufficient to build consumer trust in halal food products.

On the other hand, product quality has a positive and significant effect on consumer trust, with a t-statistic value of 7.421 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that higher product quality significantly increases consumer trust, as consumers tend to rely on consistent product performance and perceived quality.

Furthermore, halal labeling is found to have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, as indicated by a t-statistic value of 2.429 and a p-value of 0.015. This implies that consumers are more likely to purchase halal food products when halal certification is clearly present. However, product quality does not have a significant effect on purchase intention, with a t-statistic value of 1.023 and a p-value of 0.306, indicating that perceived quality alone does not directly influence consumers' intention to purchase.

In addition, consumer trust has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, as shown by a t-statistic value of 1.991 and a p-value of 0.047. This finding indicates that trust plays an important role in encouraging consumers' intention to purchase halal food products.

The mediation analysis further reveals that consumer trust does not significantly mediate the relationship between halal labeling and purchase intention, as indicated by a t-statistic value of 0.190 and a p-value of 0.850. This suggests that halal labeling does not indirectly influence purchase intention through consumer trust. In contrast, consumer trust is found to significantly mediate the relationship between product quality and purchase intention, with a t-statistic value of 2.050 and a p-value of 0.040, indicating the presence of an indirect effect through trust.

Discussions

The findings of this study indicate that halal labeling does not have a significant effect on consumer trust toward halal food MSME products. Although halal labeling theoretically functions as an extrinsic cue that provides credible information regarding product compliance with Islamic dietary laws and reduces information asymmetry (Hassan et al., 2016), its role in shaping trust appears to be limited in this context. In Muslim-majority environments such as Indonesia, where food products are often socially assumed to be halal, consumers may not rely heavily on halal certification as a primary basis for trust formation. Instead, halal labeling tends to function as a confirmatory or reinforcing signal rather than a determinant factor. While prior studies suggest that halal labels enhance trust by signaling product integrity, safety, and compliance (Lada, 2009; Miftahuddin et al., 2022), the present findings indicate that such effects may be context-dependent and influenced by pre-existing consumer assumptions. This implies that the effectiveness of halal labeling in building trust is contingent upon situational factors such as market characteristics, consumer awareness, and perceived necessity of certification.

In contrast, product quality emerges as a significant determinant of consumer trust, highlighting the importance of intrinsic attributes in trust formation. As an intrinsic cue, product quality directly signals reliability and credibility, thereby reducing uncertainty in product evaluation (Anam et al., 2018). In the context of halal food MSMEs, where brand recognition is often limited, consumers are more likely to rely on direct product experience, including taste,

freshness, and consistency, to assess trustworthiness. Repeated positive consumption experiences reinforce perceptions of dependability and strengthen consumer confidence (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Furthermore, high product quality enhances perceived value and reduces perceived risk, both of which are essential elements in trust formation (Miftahuddin et al., 2022). These findings suggest that, in practice, consumer trust is more strongly driven by experiential and performance-based factors rather than formal certification alone.

The results also indicate that halal labeling has a significant effect on purchase intention, suggesting that certification still plays an important role in influencing consumer behavior, albeit not through trust. As an informational cue, halal labeling provides assurance regarding religious compliance and helps reduce uncertainty during the decision-making process (Hamzah et al., 2020; Hassan et al., 2016). This implies that halal labeling may operate more directly at the level of behavioral intention rather than through psychological mechanisms such as trust. In this sense, halal certification functions as a decision heuristic that simplifies consumer evaluation and reinforces purchasing decisions, particularly when consumers seek confirmation of product permissibility. This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that halal labeling can directly influence purchase intention by enhancing perceived credibility and aligning with consumers' religious values (Aziz & Chok, 2013; Silalahi, 2024).

On the other hand, product quality does not have a significant direct effect on purchase intention, suggesting that its influence is not immediate but operates through indirect mechanisms. While product quality is theoretically associated with higher perceived value and satisfaction (Anam et al., 2018), its impact on purchase intention may depend on intervening variables such as trust. In this context, consumers may not directly translate perceptions of quality into purchasing decisions unless those perceptions first contribute to the formation of trust. This indicates that product quality plays a more foundational role in shaping internal evaluations rather than directly triggering behavioral intention. Such findings highlight that the relationship between product quality and purchase intention is more complex and mediated by psychological constructs.

Consumer trust is found to have a significant effect on purchase intention, confirming its role as a central mechanism linking consumer evaluation to behavioral outcomes. In conditions characterized by uncertainty, trust reduces perceived risk and increases consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions (Koc et al., 2024). When consumers trust a product, they are more likely to believe that it will deliver the expected benefits, thereby strengthening their intention to purchase. This finding is consistent with the commitment-trust theory, which emphasizes that trust is a key determinant of behavioral intention (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In the context of halal products, trust encompasses not only product performance but also confidence in certification systems and claims, making it a critical factor in consumer decision-making (Ramlan et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the mediation analysis reveals that consumer trust does not mediate the relationship between halal labeling and purchase intention, but it does mediate the relationship between product quality and purchase intention. This suggests that halal labeling influences

purchase intention directly rather than through trust, reinforcing its role as an immediate decision-making cue (Hassan et al., 2016). In contrast, product quality influences purchase intention indirectly through trust, indicating that consumers first evaluate product performance before developing trust, which then translates into purchasing intention (Anam et al., 2018). This finding highlights the different pathways through which extrinsic and intrinsic attributes influence consumer behavior. While halal labeling operates as a direct signal affecting decision-making, product quality requires the formation of trust as an intermediate mechanism (Koc et al., 2024; Miftahuddin et al., 2022).

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the effect of halal labeling and product quality on purchase intention of halal food MSMEs with consumer trust as an intervening variable. The findings reveal that halal labeling does not significantly influence consumer trust, suggesting that in the Indonesian context—where halal status is often socially assumed—halal certification functions more as a reinforcing rather than a determining factor of trust. In contrast, product quality plays a more substantial role in shaping consumer trust, indicating that consumers rely more on direct product experience and consistent performance to evaluate reliability. The results further show that halal labeling has a direct and significant effect on purchase intention, highlighting its role as an important informational cue in consumer decision-making, while product quality does not directly influence purchase intention but operates indirectly through consumer trust. Consumer trust itself is found to significantly influence purchase intention, confirming its role as a key mechanism that translates evaluation into behavioral intention. In terms of indirect effects, consumer trust does not mediate the relationship between halal labeling and purchase intention, but it does mediate the relationship between product quality and purchase intention, indicating different pathways through which extrinsic and intrinsic factors influence consumer behavior. These findings suggest that halal food MSMEs should prioritize maintaining consistent product quality to build consumer trust, while continuing to utilize halal certification as a strategic tool to directly enhance purchase intention.

Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, halal food MSMEs are encouraged to obtain halal certification and maintain consistent product quality in order to enhance purchase intention and build consumer trust. Improving these aspects may help MSMEs enhance their competitiveness in the halal food market. For future research, it is recommended to explore additional variables such as brand image, perceived value, or consumer awareness in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior toward halal products. Future studies may also involve a larger number of respondents or expand the research area to obtain more comprehensive results.

Author contribution statement

Amalia Salsabila contributed to conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, manuscript writing, and editing. Efi Syarifudin contributed to data verification. Budi Sudrajat contributed to supervision and methodological guidance. Hadi Peristiwo contributed to manuscript review and

critical revision. Sujai contributed to manuscript preparation and editing. Najmudin contributed to manuscript translation and last overview.

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