

Halal Certification as a Business Strategy: An Influence Analysis of Gen-Z Consumers' Perceptions of Leather Goods

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of halal certification on Generation Z consumers' perceptions of leather products through a descriptive quantitative approach. A total of 100 Gen-Z respondents were sampled in this study. The instrument was tested using validity with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) which showed a KMO value of 0.801 and a significance of 0.000, and reliability with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.822. The results showed that the majority of respondents gave positive responses to the four indicators measured, namely trust in halal products, psychological aspects and beliefs, interest and preference in leather products, and purchasing decisions. The findings indicate that halal certification has a significant effect on Gen-Z's perceptions and consumption decisions

INTRODUCTION

In the past decade, the halal industry has experienced significant growth globally, not only in the food sector, but also in non-food sectors such as fashion, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and leather goods. This development is driven by the increasing Muslim population and public awareness of the importance of products that comply with sharia principles (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2020). Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, this trend has led to increased demand for halal-certified products, including leather products such as bags, shoes, and accessories.

Leather is one of the main ingredients in various consumer products, but this sector is still relatively underutilized in the context of halal certification. In fact, leather comes from animals that in Islam must go through a halal slaughter process so that the product is considered holy for use (Alao et al., 2017). Halal certification, issued by the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH) based on the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), provides assurance to consumers that a product has met halal standards in terms of ingredients, processes, and production hygiene (Hasibuan, 2023).

In the context of modern marketing, halal certification is not only a form of compliance with religious regulations, but can also be utilized as a business strategy that differentiates a product in the market. The halal label has become a symbol of quality, hygiene, and production ethics that non-Muslim consumers are also beginning to appreciate. For young consumer segments such as "Generation Z", who are known to have a high awareness of ethical values, sustainability, and product transparency, the presence of halal certification has the potential to influence their perception of a product, including in the aspects of trust, inner comfort, and purchasing decisions.

However, Gen-Z consumers' awareness of the importance of halal certification in non-food products such as leather goods has not been widely studied. On the other hand, manufacturers also face challenges in obtaining halal certification, such as lack of understanding of the certification process, cost, and compliance with halal standards (Ab Talib et al., 2015; Schiuma, 2012). In fact, if utilized strategically, halal certification can be an added value that increases product competitiveness in the market and builds consumer loyalty.

Therefore, it is important to conduct this research to analyze the effect of halal certification on Gen-Z consumers' perceptions of leather goods. By understanding how this generation perceives the halalness of products in relation to personal values, lifestyle, and purchasing decisions, the results of this study are expected to provide strategic insights for businesses to develop relevant marketing approaches, while supporting the growth of the halal industry in the non-food sector. This research also contributes to bridging the gap between halal certification policies and their implementation in business practices, especially in the context of a more value-conscious future generation of consumers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Halal Certificate

The legal basis that regulates legal protection for Indonesian citizens and guarantees halal products for Muslim customers in Indonesia is Law Number 33 of 2014. According to Article 4 of the law, all goods imported, circulated, and sold on Indonesian soil must obtain a halal certificate. This indicates that the product must go through an evaluation procedure and meet halal standards set by a religious authority or organization selected by the government.

The following are the main points of regulation and their derivatives:

1. Ensure the availability of halal products
2. Regulate the rights and obligations of business actors in JPH
3. Implementation of JPH by BPJPH
4. Procedures for obtaining halal certification
5. BPJPH cooperation with related Ministries or institutions, MUI, LPH
6. JPH Supervisor
7. Administrative sanctions and criminal sanctions

The function of halal Certificates for consumers is:

1. Protect Muslim consumers from products that are not halal. With a halal certificate, Muslim consumers have a guarantee that the products they consume or use have met the halal standards set by religious authorities.
2. Psychologically, the hearts and minds of consumers are calmed.
3. Protecting the body and soul from deterioration due to haram products. Consumption or use of haram products can have a negative impact on an individual's health and well-being.
4. Provides a good response and increases consumer interest in buying products. Muslim consumers who care about the halalness of food, drinks and other products will tend to look for products that have halal certificates.
5. Halal certificates also share legal guarantees and consumer protection (Putra, 2022).

B. Halal Certificate Standards for Animal-based Goods MUI

1. Goods used that are made from animals must be halal certified.
2. Utilization of animal elements for guinaan goods must be guaranteed purity
3. Utilization of animal elements that are ma'kul lahm (meat can be eaten) and slaughtered in a shar'i manner for usable goods is permissible.
4. Utilization of the skins of dead animals, both animals that are ghair ma'kul al-lahm (whose meat cannot be eaten) for usable goods is permissible after being purified through tanning, except for the skins of aniing and pigs, and those born from both or one of them.
5. The procedure for tanning leather is as follows:
 - a) The type of animal is any animal other than pigs and dogs;
 - b) Using means to remove the lender or rancid odor attached to the skin;
 - c) Removing feces attached to the skin
 - d) Rinsing the cleansed skin to purify it from impurity.

6. Utilizing the bones of ma'kul al-lahm and ghair ma'kul al-lahm animals that were not slaughtered in a shar'i manner is not permissible.

7. The use of fur, hair and horns from ma'kul al-lahm and ghair ma'kul al-lahm animals for usable goods is permissible, except from dogs, pigs and those born from both or one of them.

C. Leather craft UMKMs

The leather fashion industry in Indonesia is currently experiencing rapid growth. Products such as leather bags, shoes, and accessories have become an important part of the lifestyle of modern society (Smith and Jones, 2021). Demand for leather fashion products continues to increase along with changing trends. In the development of this industry, local craftsmen, especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (UMKMs), play a key role in supporting the Indonesian economy (Suryawardani, et.al., 2023). UMKMs in the leather sector always offer products that are unique and in line with evolving consumer needs. Leather is chosen as a material for fashion products because of its durability and high quality, making it attractive to consumers (Anderson and Thompson, 2020). In addition, the use of leather in a product gives a luxurious and classic impression to the user.

D. Gen-Z Consumers' Perceptions of Halal Certification

Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, is a group of consumers who grew up in the digital age and have a very high level of access to information. Gen-Z's unique characteristics include awareness of ethical values, sustainability, and product quality. They tend to be critical in choosing products, not only in terms of function and aesthetics, but also from moral and spiritual aspects, including the halalness of a product (Pratiwi & Rahmawati, 2021). Halal certification in the context of Gen-Z is not only understood as a religious aspect, but also as a symbol of cleanliness, safety, and compliance with ethical processes. A study by Muslichah et al. (2020) revealed that halal awareness among young consumers is strongly influenced by their knowledge and perception of halalness and its production process. This suggests that the better Gen-Z's understanding of the meaning and function of halal certification, the more likely they are to show preference for halal-certified products, including non-food products such as leather goods.

E. Halal Certification as a Determinant of Purchase Decision

In various studies, halal certification has been shown to be one of the important factors that influence Muslim consumers' purchase decisions, especially when it comes to animal-based products (Ab Talib et al., 2015). Leather products fall into this category as they are sourced from animals and may contain unclean elements if not processed in accordance with the Shariah. Therefore, clarity on the halal status of leather products is very important in building trust among Muslim consumers, especially among Gen-Z who make religious identity an important part of their lifestyle.

Research by Putra (2022) shows that the presence of a halal label can increase psychological peace of mind, improve perceptions of product quality, and strengthen consumer loyalty. In the context of UMKMs, this opens up great opportunities to make halal certification not only an administrative obligation, but as an effective business strategy to attract value-conscious young consumers.

F. Implications for the Leather-based UMKM Industry

For leatherworking UMKM, especially those in the fashion sector, understanding Gen-Z consumers' perceptions towards halal certification can be key in developing products and marketing strategies that are more responsive to changing market preferences. While challenges such as cost constraints and the complexity of the certification process remain, the huge market potential and growing halal-consciousness of the Gen-Z segment make halal certification a strategic investment.

With the increasing demand for ethical and Shariah-compliant products, UMKM can gain a competitive advantage through the implementation of halal standards, which not only increases product appeal but also expands market access to global consumers who also value similar principles in their consumption (Schiuma, 2012).

Based on the literature review, this research has a general hypothesis: Does halal certification have a significant effect on Gen-Z consumer perceptions of leather products? Where this hypothesis with 4 indicators in analyzing more deeply from various aspects, namely: Trust in Halal Products, Psychological and Consumer Confidence, Interest and Preference for Leather Products and the Effect of Halal Certification on Purchasing Decisions.



Figure 1. Research Indicators

METHODOLOGY

This research uses descriptive quantitative methods. Where quantitative data is a research method based on positivistic (concrete data), research data in the form of numbers that will be measured using statistics as a calculation test tool, related to the problem under study to produce a conclusion (Sugiyono 2018). Meanwhile, descriptive is a collection of sentences that reveal problems or circumstances or events as they are so that they are just revealing facts (Moleong, 2000). Another reason for using descriptive methods in this study is reinforced by Arikunto's (2010) opinion that "...descriptive research is research intended to investigate circumstances, conditions or other things that have been mentioned, the results of which are presented in the form of a research report".

The indicators in this study aim to analyze more deeply from various aspects, namely: Trust in Halal Products, Psychological and Consumer Confidence, Interest and Preference for Leather Products and the Effect of Halal Certification on Purchasing Decisions. The design in this study uses descriptive statistics. This study uses a Likert measurement scale with the lowest rating given a scale of 1 and the highest given a scale of 5 with a space level of 1: Strongly Agree, 2: Agree, 3: Neutral, 4: Disagree, 5: Strongly Disagree. The number of respondents was 102 people. The sample in this study is Generation Z, especially the age scale of 13-18 years this year. The instrument construction used in this study is the validity and reliability of the instrument. The instrument in this study uses the validity of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) analysis. Where the validity value is used to simplify and explain the relationship between components in the form of factors (Firdaos, 2016). Analysis is needed to determine the number of factors or dimensions measured obtained through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) analysis (Mardapi, 2008). As for reliability using Alpha Cronbach, both of these measurements use the SPSS application.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	Measure	of	.801
Sampling Adequacy.			
Bartlett's Test	Approx.	Chi-	515.027
of Sphericity	Square		
	df		66
	Sig.		.000

Based on the results of the validity test using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.801 was obtained, indicating that the data had excellent sample feasibility. In addition, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity results show a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), which means that there is a significant correlation between items. Thus, it can be concluded that the instrument used has met the validity requirements and is feasible (Hair et al., 2019; Taherdoost, 2016).

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.822	.831	12

Based on the reliability test results, the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.822. This value indicates that the instrument has a good level of internal consistency, because it has exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70 which is considered adequate in social and behavioral research (Hair et al., 2019). Thus, all items on the instrument are declared reliable and suitable for use in further research.

RESULTS

The effect of halal certification significantly on Gen-Z consumer perceptions of leather products is the main hypothesis in this study, with 4 indicators to analyze more deeply from various aspects, namely: Trust in Halal Products, Psychological and Consumer Confidence, Interest and Preference for Leather Products and the Effect of Halal Certification on Purchasing Decisions.

Table 3. Interval Value of Overall Analysis Results

Interval Value	Category	Frequency
$X \geq 50$	Strongly Agree	34
$49 \geq X \geq 43$	Agree	49
$42 \geq X \geq 37$	Neutral	14
$36 \geq X \geq 31$	Disagree	2
$30 \geq X$	Strongly Disagree	1
	Total	100

Based on the results of the overall analysis of respondent data, it is known that most respondents gave positive responses to the instruments used. This is indicated by 34 respondents (34%) in the 'Strongly Agree' category ($X \geq 50$) and 49 respondents (49%) in the 'Agree' category (values between 43-49). Meanwhile, 14 respondents (14%) expressed a 'Neutral' attitude (values 37-42), while only a small proportion of respondents showed disagreement, namely 2% in the 'Disagree' category (values 31-36) and 1% in the 'Strongly Disagree' category ($X < 30$). This finding indicates that the majority of respondents tend to agree with the items in the instrument, which reflects a good acceptance of the measured constructs. Thus, in general it can be concluded that respondents' perceptions of the instrument are in the positive category. So it can be concluded that halal certification has a significant influence on Gen-Z consumer perceptions of leather products. The following is a diagram of the results above:

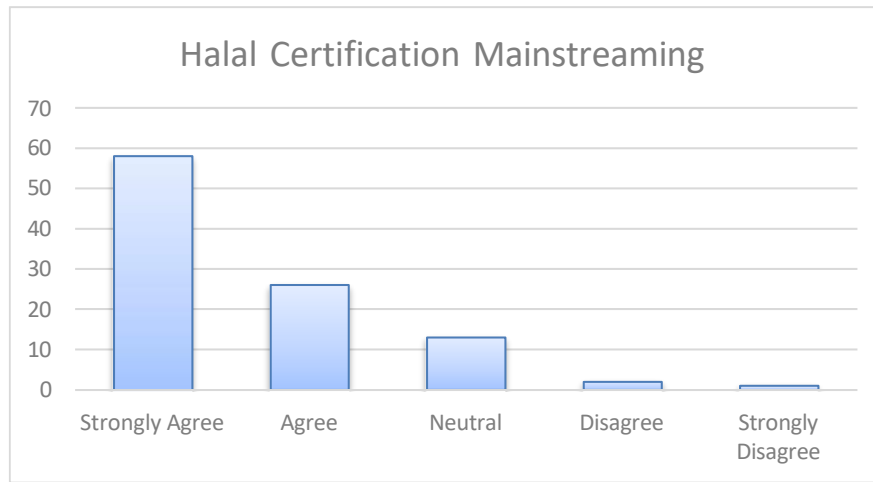


Figure 2. Overall Analysis Results

Furthermore, each indicator has its own analysis results based on the question items that have been measured constructively. The first indicator is trust in halal products.

Table 4. Interval Value Analysis Results of Indicators of Trust in Halal Products

Interval Value	Category	Frequency
$X \geq 14$	Strongly Agree	45
$13 \geq X \geq 12$	Agree	41
$11 \geq X \geq 10$	Neutral	11
$9 \geq X \geq 8$	Disagree	3
$7 \geq X$	Strongly Disagree	0
	Total	100

The results of the frequency distribution analysis based on the interval score of respondents' responses show that most respondents are in the 'Strongly Agree' category ($X \geq 14$), with a total of 45 respondents or 45% of the total sample. The 'Agree' category ($12 \leq X \leq 13$) was followed by 41 respondents (41%), which also shows a positive response trend. A total of 11 respondents (11%) were in the 'Neutral' category ($10 \leq X \leq 11$), while only 3 respondents (3%) fell into the 'Disagree' category ($8 \leq X \leq 9$), and no respondents fell into the 'Strongly Disagree' category ($X \leq 7$). This finding indicates that overall, the instrument used received a very positive response from the majority of respondents. This strengthens the assumption that the constructs measured in the instrument have conceptual relevance and clarity, and have been well accepted by the sample studied regarding the perception of trust in halal products. The following is a diagram of the results above:

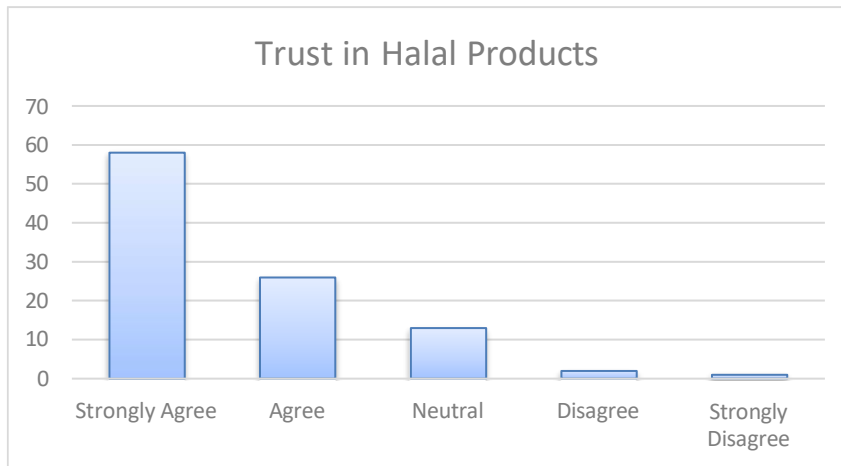


Figure 3. Results of Analysis of Indicators of Trust in Halal Products

The second indicator is Psychological and Consumer Confidence, based on the results of the perceptions of 100 respondents in this study, they produce opinions by answering questions with the following value interval results:

Table 5. Interval Value Results of Psychological Analysis and Consumer Confidence

Interval Value	Category	Frequency
$X \geq 13$	Strongly Agree	55
$12 \geq X \geq 11$	Agree	27
$10 \geq X \geq 9$	Neutral	14
$8 \geq X \geq 6$	Disagree	3
$5 \geq X$	Strongly Disagree	1
	Total	100

Based on the results of descriptive analysis of the distribution of respondent response scores, it is known that most respondents are in the 'Strongly Agree' category ($X \geq 13$), with a total of 55 respondents or 55% of the total respondents. Furthermore, 27 respondents (27%) gave responses in the 'Agree' category (scores between 11 to 12), which also represented a positive attitude. A total of 14 respondents (14%) were in the 'Neutral' category (values 9 to 10), while the proportion of respondents who gave negative responses was very small, with only 3% in the 'Disagree' category (values 6 to 8), and 1% in the 'Strongly Disagree' category ($X \leq 5$). Indicators related to psychological and consumer confidence in leather products, where halal certification that affects business strategies really affects Gen-Z's opinion in considering purchases. The following is a diagram of the results above:

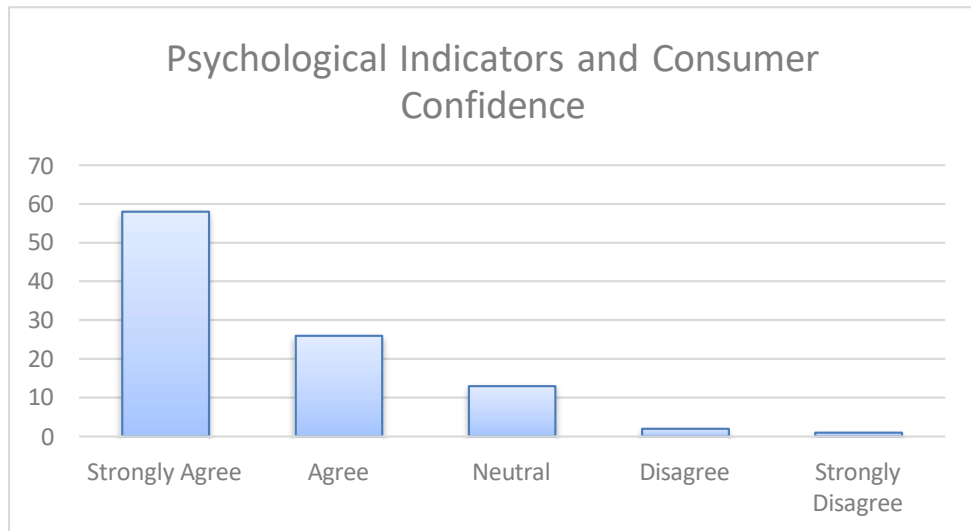


Figure 4. Analysis Results of Psychological Indicators and Consumer Confidence

The next analysis is the indicator of Interest and Preference for Leather Products, where Gen-Z as the population in the study to convey the perception of interest in becoming consumers, the value interval is as follows:

Table 7. Value Interval of Interest and Preference Analysis Results for Leather Products

Interval Value	Category	Frequency
$X \geq 12$	Strongly Agree	27
$11 > X \geq 10$	Agree	31
$9 > X \geq 8$	Neutral	32
$7 > X \geq 5$	Disagree	9
$4 > X$	Strongly Disagree	1
	Total	100

Descriptive analysis of the distribution of respondents' response scores shows that most Gen-Z respondents in their interest and preference for leather products responded in the neutral to positive category. The 'Neutral' category ($X = 8-9$) accounted for the largest proportion, at 32 respondents (32%), followed by the 'Agree' category ($X = 10-11$) at 31 respondents (31%), and 'Strongly Agree' ($X \geq 12$) at 27 respondents (27%). Meanwhile, only 9 respondents (9%) were in the 'Disagree' category ($X = 5-7$), and 1 respondent (1%) in the 'Strongly Disagree' category ($X \leq 4$). This distribution pattern indicates that most respondents have a relatively positive perception of the interest and preference to become a consumer of leather products as this is the construct being measured. The following is a diagram of the results above:

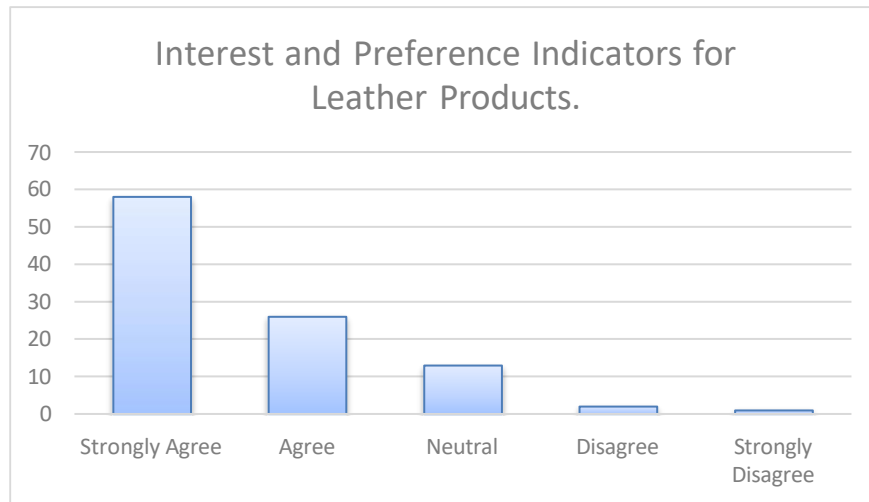


Figure 5. Results of Analysis of Interest And Preference Indicators for Leather Products

The last indicator of the effect of halal certification on purchasing decisions. With the value interval as follows:

Table 8. Interval Analysis Results of Indicators of the Effect of Halal Certification on Purchasing Decisions

Interval Value	Category	Frequency
$X \geq 12$	Strongly Agree	58
$11 \geq X \geq 10$	Agree	26
$9 \geq X \geq 8$	Neutral	13
$7 \geq X \geq 5$	Disagree	2
$4 \geq X$	Strongly Disagree	1
	Total	100

The results of the descriptive analysis of the distribution of respondents' response scores show that respondents' perceptions of the construct, namely the last indicator of the effect of halal certification on purchasing decisions, tend to fall in the positive category. A total of 13% of respondents were in the 'Neutral' category ($X = 8-9$), followed by 26% of respondents in the 'Agree' category ($X = 10-11$), and 58% in the 'Strongly Agree' category ($X \geq 12$). Meanwhile, only 2% of respondents were in the 'Disagree' category ($X = 5-7$), and 1% were in the 'Strongly Disagree' category ($X \leq 4$). This distribution pattern indicates that most respondents have a clearly positive perception regarding the effect of halal certification on purchasing decisions. The following is a diagram of the results above:

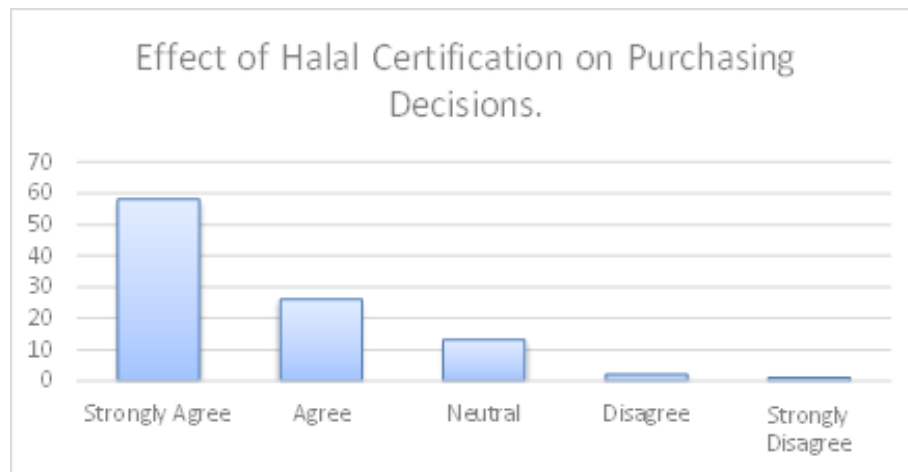


Figure 6. Results of Indicator Analysis of the Effect of Halal Certification on Purchasing Decisions

DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the effect of halal certification on Generation Z (Gen-Z) consumers' perceptions of leather products, by analyzing four main indicators: trust in halal products, psychological aspects and consumer confidence, interest and preference in leather products, and the effect of halal certification on purchasing decisions. Based on data analysis, the findings show that the majority of respondents gave positive responses to all constructs measured.

This study shows that halal certification plays an important role in shaping the positive perceptions of Gen-Z consumers, especially in the context of leather products that were previously often associated with halal issues because they are derived from animal materials. Respondents in this study showed a high level of trust in the halalness of products, indicating that the halal label is not only considered a religious guarantee, but also a symbol of integrity, safety, and transparency of the manufacturer. This is in line with the opinion of Ahmad et al. (2020) which states that halal certification is a key element in building Muslim consumer trust and loyalty to brands and products.

Furthermore, psychological indicators and consumer beliefs also show that halal certification exerts an emotional and cognitive influence on individuals' beliefs in consuming skin products. This factor is important, given that Gen-Z consumers are a generation that is very aware of the value, ethics, and authenticity of the products they consume. As stated by Nurhayati and Nugroho (2019), the perception of halal is not only limited to religious aspects, but also reflects the lifestyle and consumer principles that prioritize social responsibility and sustainability.

From the aspect of interest and preference for leather products, the results show that there is a positive trend, although some respondents show a neutral attitude. This can be interpreted that Gen-Z's interest in leather products remains high, but purchasing decisions can be strongly influenced by non-material aspects such as halal values, sustainability, and production ethics. In line with a recent study by Al-Harran et al. (2022), halal certification is starting to become an important factor in influencing consumer purchase intention, not only in food products but also non-food products such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and fashion products such as leather.

Finally, indicators related to the effect of halal certification on purchasing decisions strengthen the main hypothesis of the study that the halal label is an important determinant in the decision-making process of Gen-Z consumers. Purchasing decisions are no longer solely based on the functional aspects of the product, but also on the extent to which the product reflects consumers' personal and spiritual values. This finding supports the study by Syahputra and Lubis (2021) which emphasizes that Muslim consumers' decisions are strongly influenced by their perceptions of product halalness and the credibility of certification bodies.

Overall, the results of this study make an important contribution to understanding the dynamics of consumer behavior in the context of the non-food industry, especially leather products. These findings are not only relevant for businesses and marketers in designing value-based branding strategies, but also for halal certification bodies to expand coverage and public education on the importance of halalness in various product lines.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that halal certification has a significant influence on Gen-Z consumers' perceptions of leather products. The four indicators analyzed-belief in halal products, psychological aspects and consumer beliefs, interest and preference in leather products, and influence on purchasing decisions-showed a majority positive response. This confirms that halal labeling is not only seen as a religious obligation, but also as a symbol of trust, ethics, and product quality. Thus, halal certification can be an effective business strategy for UMKM players in the leather industry to attract young consumers who are increasingly value and sustainability conscious.

FURTHER STUDY

Further research that can be conducted based on these findings is to dig deeper into the moral, ethical and religiosity values that influence Gen-Z consumption behavior through qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions. In addition, comparative studies between generations such as Gen-Z, millennials, and Gen-X can be conducted to understand differences in perceptions of halal-certified non-food products. Research can also focus on the relationship between halal certification and brand loyalty, as well as the effectiveness of halal branding campaigns on social media, which is the main channel of information for Gen-Z. In addition, it is also important to study the level of halal literacy among young consumers and how

this knowledge contributes to purchasing decisions. These studies are expected to enrich understanding of the dynamics of the non-food halal market and provide strategic input for business actors and certification bodies.

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