

Motivations and Barriers to Halal Supply Chain Implementation: A Case Study of the Pempek Industry in Palembang, Indonesia

Bayu Wahyudi^{1*}, Tuwandi Juniarto¹, Anindita Rahmalia Putri¹, Yasmin¹, Mirza Bhilqis Jiratullah¹, Petrik Aulia Akbar¹

¹Industrial Engineering Department, Faculty of Technology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: bayu_wahyudi@um-palembang.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the level of understanding, motivational factors, perceived impacts, and barrier factors related to halal certification adoption among pempek business actors in Palembang City using a statistical descriptive of 97 respondents. The analysis included validity and reliability testing using IBM SPSS Statistics v.26, followed by descriptive statistical analysis. The results indicate that respondents demonstrate a high level of understanding of halal certification, particularly regarding its conceptual meaning and business benefits. Motivation to obtain certification is primarily driven by the intention to enhance Muslim consumer trust and strengthen market credibility rather than by external incentives. The perceived impacts of halal certification are largely associated with increased consumer trust, improved product quality, and expansion of customer base, while financial gains are viewed as secondary outcomes. Although overall barriers are categorized as moderate, certification costs and administrative complexity remain the most significant constraints, especially for micro-scale enterprises. The findings suggest that halal certification functions as a credibility-based competitive strategy supported by strong normative awareness, yet constrained by structural and institutional challenges. Strengthening procedural simplification and institutional support mechanisms is essential to enhance sustainable halal certification adoption among micro and small food enterprises.

Keywords: halal certification; halal supply chain; MSMEs; consumer trust; certification barriers

INTRODUCTION

Pempek is a traditional dish that embodies the culinary identity of Palembang City. It is not only considered a food product, but also a cultural and historical symbol that has been deeply embedded in the daily lives of the Palembang community (M. Astuti, 2020; Wargadalem et al., 2023). This cultural and traditional representation has been handed down through generations, rendering pempek an invaluable symbol of regional identity (Syarifuddin et al., 2020). Pempek, a product that is predominantly composed of ground fish, has undergone significant growth in recent years, transitioning from a home-based product to a more commercialized and mass-produced industry (Suhandi & Gustriansyah, 2021). The emergence of numerous pempek brands, product innovations, and the expansion of distribution networks are indicative of this substantial transformation, which is indicative of the organization's adaptation to market dynamics and changing consumer demand (Masnila et al., 2022; Mellita et al., 2020). As a result, pempek not only has culinary value but also has a significant economic potential for industry participants.

The implementation of halal certification has become increasingly significant in conjunction with the rapid expansion of the pempek industry. Halal certification, which was previously voluntary, is now mandatory for all business actors operating in the food and beverage sector, as stipulated in the Halal Product Assurance Law (Undang Undang Jaminan Produk Halal) No. 33 of 2014 (Gunawan et al., 2021). This regulation is consistent with the increasing recognition of the significance of halal products among consumers, particularly Muslim consumers (Leksono et al., 2024). Halal certification is no longer perceived as a mere legal obligation; it is also a prerequisite for fostering consumer trust and loyalty.

Nevertheless, there is a discrepancy between pempek MSMEs that have obtained halal certification and those that have not, suggesting the existence of substantial obstacles. Despite acknowledging the significance of halal certification, numerous MSME actors have yet to obtain it (Saadah & Sampoerno, 2023). Additionally, some still lack a comprehensive comprehension of the certification process (Wahyudi, Rosyidah, et al., 2025). This

condition is further exacerbated by financial constraints that present obstacles for the majority of MSMEs in adhering to the regulation, as well as a lack of knowledge and information regarding the halal certification procedure. MSMEs that lack halal certification are at risk of losing a significant portion of their market share, particularly among consumers who prioritize halal status as a critical purchasing criterion (Suhanah & Mardamin, 2022). Consumers prioritize products that are labeled with halal certifications (Wahyudi, Yasmin, et al., 2025).

The significance of halal certification for pempek MSMEs is especially noteworthy in terms of market expansion. Halal-certified products have a greater potential to enter a wider and more diverse range of markets, both domestically and internationally (Gunawan et al., 2021; Sauky & Misnawati, 2024). Halal certification directly increases the appeal of a product from the consumer's perspective, as certified pempek guarantees that the product meets halal requirements, thereby increasing the likelihood of increased sales (Gunawan et al., 2021). This illustrates that halal certification functions as a strategic instrument to improve the competitiveness and image of a product.

However, in order for pempek MSME actors to derive the greatest possible benefit from halal certification, a variety of obstacles must be overcome. Previous research has identified certification costs, intricate procedures, and inadequate comprehension of halal requirements as significant obstacles to the acquisition of halal certification by MSMEs (Ariska et al., 2023; Saadah & Samporno, 2023; Suhanah & Mardamin, 2022). Therefore, it is imperative that MSME actors are provided with education and support throughout the halal certification process to ensure that they comprehend the required procedures and the benefits of obtaining certification (Leksono et al., 2024; Wahyudi, Rosyidah, et al., 2025).

In spite of its significance, there is a persistent discrepancy between the perceived significance of halal certification and its actual implementation by business actors. The interest of MSMEs in East Jakarta toward self-declared halal certification remains at a moderate level, according to a study conducted by (Fabrian, 2024). The research determined that the interest of MSMEs in obtaining halal certification is significantly influenced by halal knowledge, the services provided by halal institutions, sales performance, and halal awareness. In the same vein, (Aslan, 2023) discovered that consumers' intention to purchase halal food is substantially influenced by religiosity, subjective norms, and halal awareness. However, (Kuncorosidi et al., 2025) conducted a study that underscored the significance of halal practices in industrial supply chains. The study identified consumer trust, production process quality, and compliance with halal standards as the three primary components of contemporary halal practices. The study also revealed that consumers are prepared to pay a premium for halal-certified products when they have a high level of confidence in the product.

However, the key or dominant factors, particularly within a more specific context such as the pempek industry, have not been explicitly determined, despite the fact that previous studies have identified several motivating and inhibiting factors influencing MSMEs in pursuing halal certification. Additionally, the analysis of factors such as the scope of the business and the perceptions of halal certification by business actors has not been comprehensive. Consequently, the objective of this study is to address this void by conducting an analysis of the primary motivational and barrier factors that influence the implementation of halal certification among pempek industry actors from a supply chain perspective. The results are anticipated to make a substantial contribution to the development of the pempek industry in Palembang.

METHODS

This study was conducted in the pempek industry in Palembang City and aims to identify the dominant factors that motivate and hinder pempek industry actors in Palembang City from obtaining halal certification. The research population consists of pempek industry actors in Palembang City. According to (Charterlina, 2023), based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs of the Republic of Indonesia, there are 3,006 pempek industry actors in Palembang City. The sample was selected using random sampling with a convenience sampling technique to ensure representativeness. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 10%.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad (1)$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e = margin of error (10% or 0.1)

$$n = \frac{3006}{1 + 3006 \times 0,1^2} = 96,78 \approx 97$$

This means a minimum of 97 respondents is necessary for the purpose of this study.

Data Collection Techniques. Data were collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires administered directly to respondents. The questionnaire consisted of several sections, including respondent identity, understanding of halal certification (for all respondents), motivational factors for halal certification (for respondents who have obtained or are in the process of obtaining halal certification), impact of halal certification (for respondents who have obtained halal certification), and barrier factors to halal certification (for respondents who have not obtained or are in the process of obtaining halal certification).

Respondent Profile. A total of 97 respondents representing pempek business actors in Palembang City participated in this study. Respondents were categorized based on several characteristics, including gender, business scale, marketing area, and halal certification status. This categorization aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the conditions of pempek industry actors in Palembang City and to support further analysis related to halal certification implementation.

Validity Test. Validity testing was conducted to ensure that each questionnaire item accurately measured the intended variables. The test was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics v.26 with a significance level (sig.). An item was considered valid if the Pearson Correlation value exceeded the r-table value or if the significance value was less than 0.05 (Hariawan & Canggih, 2022).

Reliability Test. Reliability testing was conducted to assess the consistency of respondents' answers and to ensure the reliability of the research instrument. The test was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics v.26 using Cronbach's Alpha. A variable was considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeded 0.6, indicating stable and trustworthy data.

Identification of Respondents' Understanding of Halal Certification. This stage measured the level of understanding among pempek industry actors regarding halal certification, including applicable regulations, requirements, and the certification application process. This analysis was conducted using responses from all 97 respondents to capture a comprehensive representation of industry awareness.

Identification of Motivational Factors for Halal Certification. Motivational factors were identified based on responses from 85 respondents, consisting of 80 business actors who have obtained halal certification and 5 who are currently in the certification process. These factors were analyzed to understand the key drivers encouraging certification adoption. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of strategies, systems, or technological support mechanisms that can strengthen these motivations and improve the sustainability of halal certification implementation within the pempek industry.

Identification of Impact of Halal Certification. The impact of halal certification was identified based on responses from 80 respondents who have already obtained halal certification. This stage aimed to evaluate the perceived business effects of certification, including its influence on consumer trust, product quality, market expansion, and financial performance. The results provide insight into the tangible and intangible benefits associated with halal certification implementation among certified pempek business actors.

Identification of Barrier Factors for Halal Certification. Barrier factors were identified based on responses from 17 respondents, consisting of 12 business actors who have not yet obtained halal certification and 5 who are currently in the certification process. The purpose of this stage was to identify the main obstacles that hinder certification adoption. The findings are expected to serve as a foundation for developing strategies, support systems, or technological interventions that can reduce these barriers and enhance industry readiness and compliance with halal certification requirements.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 97 respondents representing pempek business actors in Palembang City participated in this study. The respondent profile provides a comprehensive overview of demographic and business characteristics relevant to halal certification implementation.

Gender Distribution. The majority of respondents were female (72.16%), while male respondents accounted for 27.84% of the total sample. This finding indicates that the pempek industry in Palembang is predominantly managed or represented by women. The strong presence of female entrepreneurs reflects the important role of women in micro and small-scale food enterprises. This gender structure may also influence managerial decision-making, including decisions related to halal certification adoption and compliance practices. As illustrated in Figure 1, female respondents significantly outnumber male respondents.

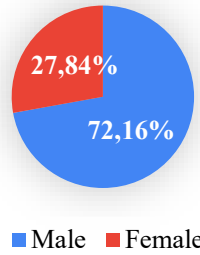


Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Business Scale. In terms of business scale, most respondents operate micro-scale enterprises (73.20%), followed by small-scale businesses (24.74%), and only a small proportion categorized as medium-scale enterprises (2.06%). This distribution confirms that the pempek industry in Palembang is largely dominated by micro and small enterprises. Such business characteristics are particularly relevant when analyzing halal certification implementation, as micro-scale enterprises often face limitations in capital, administrative capacity, and regulatory understanding. Figure 2 illustrates the dominance of micro-scale businesses within the sample.

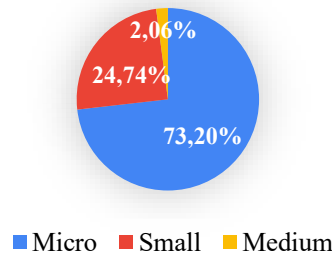


Figure 2. Business Scale Distribution

Halal Certification Status. Regarding halal certification status, 80 of respondents (82.47%) have already obtained halal certification, 5 Respondents (5.15%) are currently in the certification process, and 12.37% (12 respondents) have not yet obtained certification. Although the certification rate appears relatively high, the presence of uncertified businesses suggests that barriers still exist. These may include cost considerations, procedural complexity, or limited awareness of regulatory requirements. Figure 3 presents the distribution of halal certification status among respondents.

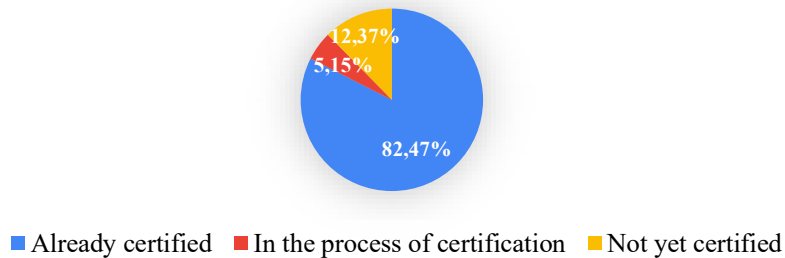


Figure 3. Halal Certification Status of Respondents

Marketing Area. Most businesses operate at the local level within Palembang (50.52%), followed by regional markets within South Sumatra (40.21%), and a smaller proportion reaching national markets (9.28%). This pattern indicates that while the majority of pempek businesses remain locally oriented, there is emerging market expansion beyond the city level. Businesses targeting broader markets may perceive halal certification as a strategic tool to enhance competitiveness and consumer trust. Figure 4 shows the distribution of marketing coverage among respondents.

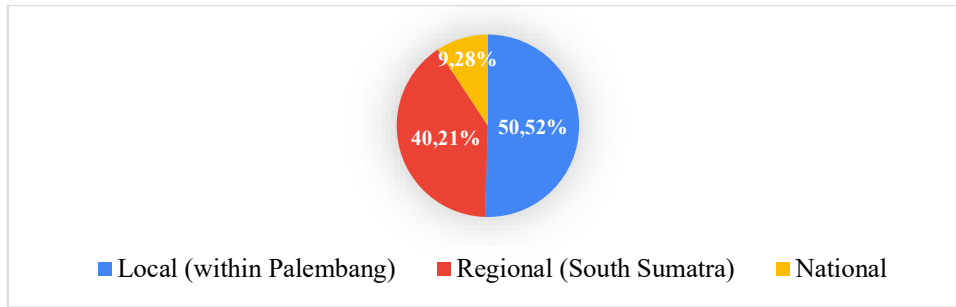


Figure 4. Marketing Area Distribution

Validity Test. Construct validity was examined using Pearson Product–Moment Correlation analysis in IBM SPSS Statistics v.26. An item was considered valid if the Pearson correlation coefficient exceeded the critical r-table value ($\alpha = 0.1$).

Table 1. Summary of Validity Test Results

Section	Variable	Number of Items	Pearson Correlation	R Table	Result
B	Understanding of Halal Certification	10	0.790, 0.815, 0.851, 0.809, 0.840, 0.888, 0.838, 0.872, 0.828, and 0.909	0.1680 (n = 97)	Valid
C	Motivational Factors	20	0.735, 0.634, 0.701, 0.672, 0.748, 0.801, 0.700, 0.684, 0.645, 0.753, 0.661, 0.632, 0.794, 0.866, 0.785, 0.850, 0.777, 0.845, 0.831, and 0.840	0.1796 (n = 85)	Valid
D	Impact of Halal Certification	15	0.718, 0.657, 0.693, 0.569, 0.652, 0.690, 0.737, 0.803, 0.777, 0.772, 0.666, 0.666, 0.791, 0.832, and 0.744	0.1852 (n = 80)	Valid
E	Barrier Factors	20	0.745, 0.561, 0.800, 0.805, 0.834, 0.868, 0.630, 0.764, 0.899, 0.802, 0.871, 0.630, 0.240, 0.150 , 0.579, 0.750, 0.894, 0.788, 0.594, and 0.494	0.4124 (n = 17)	E13 and E14 Not Valid

The initial validity testing indicated that all items in Sections B (Understanding of Halal Certification), C (Motivational Factors), and D (Impact of Halal Certification) met the required validity criteria. However, in Section E (Barrier Factors), two items (E13 and E14) were found to have Pearson correlation coefficients (r-value) below the critical (r-table). These results indicate that the two items did not adequately represent the underlying construct. Accordingly, items E13 and E14 were removed from the instrument. A second validity test was conducted after the deletion of these items. The results confirmed that all remaining items in Section E met the validity criteria (Table 2).

Table 2. Validity Test Results for Indicator E

Section	Variable	Number of Items	Pearson Correlation	R Table	Result
E	Barrier Factors	18	0.764, 0.579, 0.833, 0.828, 0.863, 0.882, 0.596, 0.749, 0.925, 0.823, 0.855, 0.579, 0.510, 0.762, 0.909, 0.797, 0.577, dan 0.503	0.4124 (n = 17)	Valid

Reliability Test. Reliability testing was conducted to assess the internal consistency of each construct using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient in IBM SPSS Statistics v.26. A construct is considered reliable if the Cronbach’s Alpha value exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.60. The reliability test results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Section	Variable	Final Number of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Interpretation
B	Understanding of Halal Certification	10	0.955	Reliable
C	Motivational Factors	20	0.959	Reliable
D	Impact of Halal Certification	15	0.962	Reliable
E	Barrier Factors	18	0.949	Reliable

As shown in Table 3, all constructs demonstrate Cronbach’s Alpha values well above the acceptable threshold (0.60), indicating strong internal consistency among measurement items. These results indicate satisfactory to high internal consistency, confirming that the instrument provides stable and consistent measurements.

Understanding of Halal Certification. To examine the level of respondents understanding regarding halal certification, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted based on the distribution of responses across the five-point Likert scale. The data were obtained from 97 respondents, consisting of pempek business actors in Palembang. The results are summarized in Table 4, which presents the frequency distribution, total scores, and mean values for each indicator.

Tabel 4. Descriptive Statistics of Understanding of Halal Certification

No	Question	Number of Respondents Answer					Total	Mean
		1	2	3	4	5		
B1	Understanding of the concept of halal certification	3	2	19	63	10	366	3.77
B2	Understanding of the benefits of halal certification for business	3	2	25	57	10	360	3.71
B3	Understanding of the requirements for obtaining halal certification	2	3	40	47	5	341	3.52
B4	Understanding of halal certification procedures and stages	3	3	46	38	7	334	3.44
B5	Understanding of the costs associated with halal certification	4	3	42	44	4	332	3.42
B6	Understanding of the authorized halal certification institution	2	2	49	39	5	334	3.44
B7	Understanding of halal certificate validity and renewal procedures	3	6	47	34	7	327	3.37
B8	Understanding of halal raw material criteria	2	3	42	42	8	342	3.53
B9	Understanding of halal production process criteria	2	3	39	45	8	345	3.56
B10	Understanding of government regulations on halal certification	3	4	42	43	5	334	3.44
Overall Mean Score								3.52

As shown in Table 4, the overall mean score for Understanding of Halal Certification is 3.52, which falls into the high category. Based on the classification criteria proposed by (W. Astuti & Ikhsan, 2025) a score of 4.21–5.00 is interpreted as very positive or very high, 3.41–4.20 as positive or high, 2.61–3.40 as fair or moderate, 1.81–2.60 as low, and 1.00–1.80 as very low. The highest mean score was found in the understanding of the concept of halal certification (3.77), indicating strong conceptual awareness among pempek business actors. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was observed in the understanding of halal certificate validity and renewal procedures (3.37), categorized as moderate. This suggests that although respondents are generally familiar with halal principles and certification benefits, administrative and renewal-related aspects still require further strengthening.

Motivational Factors for Halal Certification. To identify the primary motivations encouraging pempek business actors to obtain halal certification, descriptive analysis was conducted. The data were obtained from 85 respondents, consisting of 80 business actors who have already obtained halal certification and 5 who are currently in the certification process. The distribution of responses and mean scores for each indicator are presented in Table 5.

Tabel 5. Descriptive Statistics of Motivational Factors for Halal Certification

No	Question	Number of Respondents Answer					Total	Mean
		1	2	3	4	5		
C1	Increasing Muslim consumer trust	1	0	15	56	13	335	3.94
C2	Increasing general consumer trust	0	0	26	51	8	322	3.79
C3	Expanding local market share	1	0	44	34	6	299	3.52
C4	Expanding national market share	0	1	45	34	5	298	3.51
C5	Expanding international market share	0	1	55	27	2	285	3.35
C6	Enhancing product competitiveness	0	0	50	29	6	296	3.48
C7	Increasing product sales	0	0	47	31	7	300	3.53
C8	Compliance with government regulations	0	0	35	41	9	314	3.69
C9	Encouragement from industry associations	0	0	53	28	4	291	3.42
C10	Encouragement from government institutions	0	0	58	25	2	284	3.34
C11	Easier access to government assistance/facilities	0	1	52	30	2	288	3.39
C12	Availability of incentives (e.g., fee reduction, mentoring)	1	1	62	18	3	276	3.25
C13	Religious awareness to provide halal products	1	0	29	48	7	315	3.71
C14	Social responsibility toward Muslim consumers	0	1	29	45	10	319	3.75
C15	Business ethical values	0	0	49	29	7	298	3.51
C16	Increasing product added value	1	0	39	39	6	304	3.58
C17	Improving business image and reputation	0	1	42	36	6	302	3.55
C18	Enhancing hygiene and food safety standards	1	0	43	35	6	300	3.53
C19	Improving production efficiency	0	1	50	28	6	294	3.46
C20	Opportunity to collaborate with businesses requiring halal certification	1	0	50	28	5	288	3.39
Overall Mean Score								3.53

As presented in Table 5, the overall mean score for motivational factors is 3.53, indicating a high level of motivation among respondents. The most dominant motivational factor is increasing Muslim consumer trust (3.94), followed by increasing general consumer trust (3.79). These findings indicate that halal certification is primarily driven by trust-related and religious considerations rather than purely economic incentives. In contrast, indicators such as availability of incentives (3.25) and encouragement from government institutions (3.34) show relatively lower mean values, suggesting that external policy incentives are not the primary drivers of certification adoption.

Impact of Halal Certification. To evaluate the perceived business impact of halal certification, the data were obtained from 80 respondents who have already obtained halal certification. The descriptive statistics for these indicators are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of the Perceived Impact of Halal Certification

No	Question	Number of Respondents Answer					Total	Mean
		1	2	3	4	5		
D1	Halal certification increases consumer trust	1	0	16	55	8	309	3.86
D2	Halal certification increases the number of customers	0	1	35	38	6	289	3.61
D3	Halal certification increases market share	0	0	45	29	6	281	3.51
D4	Halal certification helps reach new markets	0	0	47	27	6	279	3.49
D5	Halal certification increases customer loyalty	0	1	38	34	7	287	3.59
D6	Halal certification increases sales volume	1	0	35	38	6	288	3.60
D7	Halal certification increases business profit	0	1	44	30	5	279	3.49
D8	Halal certification increases product selling price	1	0	46	29	4	275	3.44
D9	Halal certification provides competitive advantage	0	1	48	25	6	276	3.45
D10	Halal certification increases product value	1	0	42	31	6	281	3.51
D11	Halal certification improves product quality	1	0	34	39	6	289	3.61
D12	Halal certification improves food safety standards	0	1	46	26	7	279	3.49
D13	Halal certification improves production efficiency	0	1	49	23	7	276	3.45
D14	Halal certification improves quality management systems	0	1	54	20	5	269	3.36
D15	Halal certification increases employee motivation	0	1	55	16	8	271	3.39
Overall Mean Score								3.52

As shown in Table 6, the overall mean score for the perceived impact of halal certification is 3.52, categorized as high. The highest perceived impact is the increase in consumer trust (3.86), followed by improvements in product quality (3.61) and increases in the number of customers (3.61). These findings indicate that halal certification significantly enhances reputational and relational aspects of business performance.

Barrier Factors to Halal Certification. Descriptive statistics used to identify the main obstacles faced by pempek business actors in obtaining halal certification, the data were obtained from 17 respondents, consisting of 12 business actors who have not yet obtained halal certification and 5 who are currently in the certification process. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Barrier Factors to Halal Certification

No	Question	Number of Respondents Answer					Total	Mean
		1	2	3	4	5		
E1	High certification fees	1	1	14	1	0	49	2.88
E2	Consultation costs	0	3	13	1	0	49	2.88
E3	Production facility adjustment costs	2	3	12	0	0	44	2.59
E4	Employee training costs	2	2	11	2	0	47	2.76
E5	Audit and inspection costs	2	1	14	0	0	46	2.71
E6	Complexity of application procedures	2	1	13	1	0	47	2.76
E7	Numerous required documents	0	3	13	1	0	49	2.88
E8	Long certification process duration	0	3	14	0	0	48	2.82
E9	Difficult technical requirements	1	1	15	0	0	48	2.82
E10	Complicated bureaucracy	0	1	16	0	0	50	2.94
E11	Limited knowledge about halal certification	2	2	12	1	0	46	2.71
E12	Limited human resources	0	3	13	1	0	49	2.88
E15	Lack of information about procedures	0	4	13	0	0	47	2.76
E16	Lack of assistance from authorities	0	4	13	0	0	47	2.76
E17	Limited access to certification bodies	1	2	14	0	0	47	2.76
E18	Lack of socialization from authorities	1	1	15	0	0	48	2.82
E19	Limited supporting infrastructure	0	3	14	0	0	48	2.82
E20	Lack of government incentives	0	1	15	1	0	51	3.00
Overall Mean Score								2.81

As indicated in Table 7, the overall mean score for barrier factors is 2.81, which falls into the moderate category. The most prominent barrier is the lack of government incentives (3.00). Meanwhile, technical aspects such as production facility adjustment costs (2.59). These findings imply that administrative and institutional challenges, rather than knowledge or technical capability, constitute the primary barriers to halal certification adoption among pempek business actors.

Discussion. The findings of this study reveal a consistent and meaningful pattern regarding halal certification adoption among pempek business actors in Palembang. The results indicate a relatively high level of understanding of halal certification, particularly concerning its conceptual meaning and business benefits. This suggests that halal certification is perceived not merely as a regulatory requirement but as an integral component of product legitimacy and market credibility. Such findings are consistent with prior studies showing that SMEs generally recognize the strategic importance of halal certification in enhancing consumer confidence and strengthening business sustainability (Anggriani et al., 2024; Sudarmiati et al., 2020). However, despite this strong conceptual awareness, a discrepancy remains between understanding and procedural mastery, particularly in relation to documentation requirements, renewal mechanisms, and administrative complexities. Similar challenges have been identified in previous research, which notes that SMEs often struggle with bureaucratic procedures and technical compliance despite acknowledging the value of certification (Prawiro & Fathudin, 2023). This gap suggests the need for more structured technical assistance, clearer regulatory communication, and continuous mentoring to bridge the divide between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation.

In terms of motivational factors, the study demonstrates that halal certification adoption is predominantly driven by the intention to enhance consumer trust, especially among Muslim consumers. This trust-oriented motivation reinforces the notion that halal certification functions as a signaling mechanism that reduces information asymmetry between producers and consumers. The dominance of consumer trust over government incentives indicates that intrinsic motivations—such as religious responsibility and reputational considerations—are stronger determinants than extrinsic regulatory pressures. These findings align with previous research highlighting the positive influence of halal certification on consumer purchase intention and business performance (Bakar et al., 2025). Unlike contexts where certification is pursued primarily due to regulatory mandates or fear of sanctions (Sunardi et al., 2024), pempek producers in Palembang appear to adopt a more proactive and strategic orientation, viewing certification as a competitive advantage capable of strengthening brand credibility and expanding market reach. This suggests that awareness campaigns emphasizing long-term market benefits may be more effective than purely compliance-based approaches.

The perceived impact of halal certification further reinforces this interpretation. The most significant impact identified in this study is the increase in consumer trust, followed by improvements in product quality and customer numbers. These findings indicate that halal certification contributes substantially to reputational capital and relational performance. While financial outcomes such as profit growth and price increases are perceived positively, they are not the primary benefits. This suggests that halal certification enhances long-term market sustainability and competitive positioning rather than serving as a short-term pricing strategy. Similar conclusions have been drawn in previous studies, which emphasize the role of halal certification in improving competitiveness and facilitating broader market access (Ariefiara et al., 2022; Timur et al., 2025). Moreover, increasing consumer awareness of halal-certified products strengthens the strategic importance of certification as a quality and safety assurance mechanism (Hulwati et al., 2025). Therefore, halal certification in the pempek industry can be interpreted as a credibility-based strategic asset rather than merely a compliance instrument.

Despite high understanding and strong motivation, barrier factors remain moderately present. The primary obstacles identified relate to financial burdens and administrative complexity, particularly certification fees, documentation requirements, and bureaucratic procedures. These findings are consistent with prior research identifying cost and procedural complexity as major deterrents for MSMEs (Hasibuan & Surya, 2025; Utama et al., 2025). The financial strain associated with certification—ranging from certification fees to audit and infrastructure adjustments—can divert limited capital and operational focus away from core business activities, especially for micro-scale enterprises. However, unlike findings in some regions where lack of awareness is a dominant constraint, this study indicates that cognitive limitations are not the primary barrier. Instead, structural and institutional factors appear more significant. This suggests that policy interventions should prioritize procedural simplification, financial facilitation schemes, and structured post-certification assistance rather than solely focusing on awareness enhancement.

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CONCLUSION

This study concludes that halal certification adoption among pempek business actors in Palembang is primarily driven by strong conceptual understanding and intrinsic motivation centered on consumer trust and religious responsibility. The findings demonstrate that respondents possess a high level of awareness regarding the meaning and benefits of halal certification, and they perceive certification as a strategic instrument to enhance credibility, product quality, and customer trust. Although financial performance improvements are acknowledged, the most significant perceived impact lies in reputational strengthening rather than short-term profit gains. Despite this positive orientation, moderate barriers persist, particularly related to certification costs, administrative complexity, and procedural requirements. Importantly, the results indicate that structural and institutional constraints—rather than lack of knowledge—constitute the main challenges in certification adoption. Overall, halal certification within the pempek industry functions as a credibility-based competitive advantage supported by normative awareness but constrained by bureaucratic and financial limitations.

Future research is recommended to expand the analytical scope by employing quantitative inferential approaches, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), to examine causal relationships between understanding, motivation, perceived impact, and barriers. In particular, further investigation is needed to analyze whether a statistically significant relationship exists between the level of understanding and perception of halal certification and the actual certification status of business actors—specifically, whether respondents with higher levels of halal understanding are more likely to have obtained certification or be in the certification process, or whether no significant relationship exists. Comparative studies across different regions or food sectors would also provide deeper insight into contextual variations in halal certification adoption. Furthermore, future studies could explore the role of digital transformation, supply chain traceability systems, and institutional support mechanisms in enhancing halal certification implementation among MSMEs. Longitudinal research designs are also encouraged to assess the long-term economic and operational impacts of halal certification, thereby providing stronger empirical evidence for policy formulation and halal industry development strategies.

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