



THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF HALAL CERTIFICATION IN INDONESIA'S FOOD INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *The commercialization of halal certification in Indonesia has shifted its function from a religious safeguard to an economic commodity. This development raises concerns about the balance between spiritual values and market-driven practices. This study aims to critically analyze three major aspects of this phenomenon: the use of halal labels as branding tools, the rise of external halal consultants, and the financial implications of certification fees, particularly for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through document analysis of government regulations, scholarly articles, online news, and BPJPH publications. The findings show that certification fees, fast-track services, and consultant involvement reinforce the commercial orientation of halal certification. While these mechanisms increase administrative efficiency, they also impose financial burdens on MSMEs and reduce the spiritual integrity previously associated with halal assurance. The results further reveal that non-Muslim companies actively adopt halal labels to compete in the Muslim consumer market, strengthening the commodification of religious symbols. The study concludes that without stronger regulatory oversight and ethical standards, commercialization may erode public trust and weaken the religious significance of halal certification. These findings highlight the urgency of policy reforms to maintain authenticity, fairness, and accountability within Indonesia's halal certification system.*

Keywords: *Indonesian food industry; halal certification; commercialization*

Abstract: *Komersialisasi sertifikasi halal di Indonesia telah menggeser fungsinya dari penjaga kepatuhan religius menjadi komoditas ekonomi. Perkembangan ini menimbulkan kekhawatiran mengenai keseimbangan antara nilai spiritual dan praktik pasar yang berorientasi profit. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis secara kritis tiga aspek utama fenomena tersebut: penggunaan label halal sebagai strategi branding, munculnya konsultan halal eksternal, serta implikasi finansial dari tarif sertifikasi terutama bagi pelaku usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM). Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif melalui analisis dokumen terhadap regulasi pemerintah, artikel ilmiah, berita daring, dan publikasi BPJPH. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tarif sertifikasi, layanan fast-track, serta keterlibatan konsultan memperkuat orientasi komersial dalam proses sertifikasi halal. Mekanisme ini memang meningkatkan efisiensi administratif,*

tetapi juga menambah beban biaya bagi UMKM dan mengurangi integritas spiritual yang sebelumnya melekat pada jaminan halal. Temuan lain menunjukkan bahwa perusahaan non-Muslim turut memanfaatkan label halal untuk bersaing di pasar konsumen Muslim, sehingga memperkuat komodifikasi simbol keagamaan. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa tanpa pengawasan regulatif dan standar etika yang lebih kuat, komersialisasi berpotensi mengikis kepercayaan publik dan melemahkan makna religius sertifikasi halal. Temuan ini menegaskan urgensi reformasi kebijakan untuk menjaga autentisitas, keadilan, dan akuntabilitas sistem sertifikasi halal di Indonesia.

Keywords: industri makanan Indonesia; sertifikasi halal; komersialisasi

BACKGROUND

The commercialization of halal certification has become a major topic for both public and academic discussion in Indonesia's food industry. Originally developed as a religious tool to ensure that food products were halal and of high quality for Muslim consumers, halal certification has progressively evolved into a more commercially focused undertaking (Calder, 2020). This change in viewpoint has been the catalyst for debates that highlight the tension between religious principles and commercial pragmatism.

Since certification costs were introduced, it has become more and more obvious that the halal certification industry has turned into a for-profit venture. As more goods are submitted for certification, the cost goes up; expedited certification processes, or "fast track," are available for an additional fee. This is especially important since it creates economic barriers for small and medium-sized firms (SMEs), who sometimes lack the capacity to satisfy these financial responsibilities. For instance, many small-scale food producers in Indonesia's rural areas find it challenging to obtain certification due to a lack of funds (Yakin et al., 2021). As a result, the commercialization of the certification process raises socioeconomic issues that impact inclusion and equity in the food industry, going beyond straightforward administrative issues.

A new ecosystem is emerging around halal certification, according to scientific studies, particularly as the number of independent halal consultants increases. This phenomenon is significant because it shows how priorities can shift, with business concerns sometimes taking precedence over the moral and religious foundations of the certification process. Studies like Aziz (Aziz, 2023) show that these third-party players usually prioritize financial gain over the certification's spiritual integrity. For example, some consulting firms promote "instant halal certification packages" without sufficient religious oversight. Scholarly study is therefore emphasizing the need to strengthen regulatory frameworks in order to protect the religious integrity of halal certification from being exploited for profit.

This paper critically examines the commercialization of halal certification and its impact on Indonesia's food industry. This focus is crucial because the business orientation of the religious institution is shifting, putting consumer faith and the social legitimacy of halal certification at risk. A tangible example of this issue is the growing skepticism of consumers toward halal-labeled items, particularly when those labels are applied to inherently halal products such as rice or bottled water that do not undergo complex production processes. Thus, this research aims to give a more comprehensive understanding of how commercialization has altered the economic, social, and religious functions of halal certification in contemporary Indonesia.

This essay argues that the commercialization of halal certification has fundamentally altered the traditional role of halal institutions, which ranged from acting as protectors of religion to actively engaging in the dynamics of market competition. This modification is significant because it increases the potential for conflicts of interest to compromise the authenticity and legitimacy of halal certification. Empirical evidence, such as the halal logo's commodification as a branding tool, supports this trend. For example, many companies utilize the halal insignia as a marketing strategy to differentiate themselves in a highly competitive field, even when their products are inherently halal.

The study's conclusion makes the case that, in the absence of governmental action and higher ethical standards, the commercialization of halal certification may compromise both its religious importance and its utility for Muslim consumers. This urgency underscores the need for immediate policy reforms to prevent the erosion of public trust, protect the rights of MSMEs, and ensure that halal certification remains aligned with its foundational spiritual and social purposes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal certification and its relationship to the dynamics of the food industry have been the subject of several earlier studies. However, this study provides a new viewpoint by critically examining the marketing of halal certification, particularly in light of Indonesia's food industry.

Previous studies have looked at the global commercialization of religious ideals, including the transformation of religious symbols into marketable goods (Izberk-Bilgin & Belk, 2025). However, these studies focus on Western or Middle Eastern backgrounds and give little consideration to Indonesia's unique predicament. However, this study focuses on the commercialization process inside Indonesia's halal certification system, examining issues such as faster certification, service charges, and the emergence of halal consultants as new rivals.

This approach provides a contextual contribution that hasn't been fully explored in the corpus of recent research.

The majority of earlier research on halal certification, including that conducted by (Desky et al., 2025), concentrated on how consumers perceive halal-certified products and the importance of certification for international marketing strategies. These studies often see halal certification as an unbiased procedure free from commercial prejudice, despite the fact that it is relevant. However, this paper argues that a commercial strategy that prioritizes profit over all other considerations has replaced the religious goal of halal certification. It examines critically how the certification process has evolved from safeguarding religious ideals to becoming a marketable product.

Several studies, such as those by Bima (Bima et al., 2025) and (Mujib & Masruroh, 2025) have highlighted the importance that halal certification plays in encouraging food exports and increasing the competitiveness of Indonesia's local food industry. These studies are primarily concerned with the economic potential of halal certification as a competitive advantage. This study offers an alternative perspective by examining the negative consequences of this commercialization, including the heightened financial burden on small businesses, the use of halal labeling only for branding, and the decline in consumer trust due to perceptions of the commodification of religious values. This critical approach, which has not been thoroughly studied in prior studies, has contributed both theoretically and practically to the topic of halal certification in Indonesia's food industry.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the commercialization of halal certification within Indonesia's food industry. A qualitative design was chosen because this phenomenon involves shifts in meaning, institutional behavior, policy changes, and socio-economic implications that require interpretive understanding rather than numerical measurement. As stated by Hidayah (Hidayah et al., 2025) and Fathoni (Fathoni et al., 2025), qualitative analysis is appropriate for exploring religious economic transformations, especially when examining how halal certification evolves from a spiritual safeguard to an economic commodity. The research is categorized as a document-based critical descriptive study, focusing on three primary issues: (1) the commercialization of halal certification services, (2) the emergence and expansion of halal consultants, and (3) the use of halal labeling as a branding strategy in increasingly competitive markets. This study investigates how regulatory changes, certification fees, and business practices influence the accessibility of halal

certification particularly for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) as well as how these dynamics reposition the religious meaning of certification (Hidayat et al., 2025).

The research location covers a national scope, aligning with the nationwide implementation of Law No. 33/2014, Government Regulation No. 39/2021, and BPJPH administrative policies. Data were collected from Indonesian government institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and BPJPH, national food companies, and public repositories of halal consultants. Focusing on Indonesia as a whole is essential because halal certification is regulated uniformly at the national level and affects diverse types of businesses across the country (Khasanah, 2025). The research subjects consist of key actors identified through secondary data sources; government bodies (BPJPH and Kementerian Agama), halal consultants and institutions listed in official BPJPH registries, large Muslim and non-Muslim food companies utilizing halal certification as part of their competitive branding strategies, and MSMEs that are directly affected by certification fees and administrative processes. These subjects were selected because they represent the institutional, commercial, and socio-economic groups most influenced by and influencing the commercialization of halal certification (Alwi et al., 2025).

The data for this study were collected using document analysis techniques, covering more than 40 sources, including government regulations, academic journals, national news articles, BPJPH certification guidelines, tariff tables, and public listings of halal consultants. These secondary data provide a comprehensive view of the policies, commercial practices, and market behaviors shaping halal certification in Indonesia. The analysis followed the Miles and Huberman (Ridder, 2014) framework; Data Reduction selecting, coding, and organizing data based on themes such as commercialization, costs, branding, and MSMEs; Data Display presenting organized information in tables and narrative summaries. Conclusion Drawing and Verification ensuring the validity of interpretations through cross-source comparison.

Through this methodological approach, the study aims to produce a critical, systematic, and contextual understanding of how commercialization impacts the authenticity of halal certification, the financial burden on MSMEs, and the competitive structure of Indonesia's food industry. The findings are expected to contribute meaningfully to theoretical discussions on the commercialization of religion while offering practical recommendations to policymakers for improving transparency, fairness, and ethical governance (Ahmad et al., 2023). Ultimately, this research anticipates strengthening the social credibility and religious integrity of halal certification in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

It is increasingly clear that halal certification services are being marketed as certification processes now demand service fees. The cost of certification increases with the number of products submitted for certification. Further evidence for this is provided in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1. ndonesian Halal Certification Service Fees

No	Judul	Isi	Sumber
1.	Take note, this is the tariff for Halal Certification Application Service	The Ministry of Religious Affairs as of December 1, 2021, began to apply the service tariff of the Public Service Agency (BLU) of the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH).	https://kemenag.go.id/pers-rilis/catat-ini-tarif-layanan-permohonan-sertifikasi-halal-pju73j
2.	How to Apply for Halal Certification?	As a micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) engaged in culinary, the issue of product halalness is one of the requirements for its products to be widely accepted by the market. So it is undeniable that having halal certification has now become a necessity.	https://indonesia.go.id/kategori/perdagangan/8178/mengurus-sertifikasi-halal-bagaimana-caranya?lang=1
3.	Halal Certification Costs and How to Make the Latest Halal Certificate	In Indonesia, certification was originally issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council. However, after the issuance of Law Number 33 of 2014 and PP 39 of 2021, the implementation of halal certification, which was originally voluntary, has become mandatory, and is subject to tariffs.	https://www.akuhalal.com/?page_id=916
4.	Differences in Regular and Self Declare Scheme Halal Certification	Halal certification services for MSE actors through the regular scheme, the service fee is charged to business actors, which is IDR 650,000. Meanwhile, halal certification services for MSE actors through the self-declaration scheme, the cost of applying for halal certification is subject to a zero Rupiah rate. However, the Rp0 service rate does not mean that the halal certification process does not cost money, in the implementation of self-declaration, there is a charge for the service fee for halal certification	https://halalcenter.id/blog/details/perbedaan-sertifikasi-halal-skema-reguler-dan-self-declare/12

No	Judul	Isi	Sumber
		applications for business actors of IDR 300,000, which is budgeted from the APBN, APBD, or facilitators who facilitate MSEs.	
5.	Check it out! Latest Halal Certification Costs in Indonesia	The government states that the tariff provisions for halal certification application services with a statement of business actors (self-declaration) are subject to a tariff of IDR 0.00 (zero rupiah), but are charged to the APBN, APBD, alternative financing for MSEs, financing from partnership funds, government grant assistance or other institutions, revolving funds, or other legal and non-binding sources. While regular ones are charged Rp 300.000,-	https://halal.unair.ac.id/blog/2022/10/03/simak-berikut-ini-biaya-sertifikasi-halal-di-indonesia/

(Primary Data Processing, 2025)

Information regarding the service fees for applications for halal certification in Indonesia is given in Table 4.1, which is based on several relevant sources. According to rules that entered into effect on December 1, 2021, the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH), through the Public Service Agency (BLU), has implemented service fees for halal certification applications. These fees are assessed to business actors under several schemes. The fees for the various schemes vary greatly between the self-declare and standard plans. The conventional program includes a service fee of IDR 650,000, while the self-declare plan has no direct fees because its costs are covered by the state budget (APBN), regional budgets (APBD), or other authorized sources. The government or relevant organizations fund the IDR 300,000 administrative charge for the self-declare plan, even if there is no direct cost. Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021 and Law No. 33 of 2014, which made halal certification mandatory rather than discretionary, are the causes of these fee adjustments.

According to the statistics in Table 4.1, the trend of commercialization in halal certification services has become more evident since the regular and self-declare schemes introduced service fees. The halal certification process, which was previously free, is now subject to structural expenses that vary depending on the scheme chosen. This phenomenon demonstrates how the use of halal certification has evolved, increasingly relying on a system that is cost-based. Even while this can simplify administrative procedures, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) might find it challenging to meet the certification costs

because of resource limitations. The emergence of auxiliary groups such as halal consultants underscores the propensity of outside parties to transform halal certification into a business endeavor, which may not always align with the Islamic principles that guide the certification process.

Table 4.2. Name of the Institution and Halal Assistance Consultant

No.	Name of Halal Assistance Consultant	Name of Institution
1	Abdul Murad	Edukasi Wakaf Indonesia
2	Umi Kasum	Pusat Kajian Halal LDPM
3	Ahmad Busro	P3JPH UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta
4	Aswin Rangkuti	Mathla'ul Anwar
5	Ayu Anggraini,S.Hi	Halal Center Al Hidayah
6	Ayu Sartika	Universitas Airlangga
7	Azab Maqruf	LP3H Muhammadiyah Sumbar
8	Brigita Oktasia Ananda	Pusat Kajian Halal LDPM
9	Ernawati, S.E	Halal Center Cendekia Muslim - YPCM
10	Euis	Persatuan Islam Sumatera Barat
11	Muhammad Rangga Cahaya Putra	Halal Center Cendekia Muslim - YPCM
12	Muhammad Rizal Syaifudin	Halal Center Al Hidayah
13	I Gusti Ayu Claudia	LP3H Hidayatullah
14	Iradatul Maufirah	Halal Center Universitas Trunojoyo Madura
15	Feri Sandria	Edukasi Wakaf Indonesia
16	Mochammad Jupron	LSH PW Isnu Jatim

(Primary Data Processing, 2025)

Table 4.2 offers a comprehensive list of halal consultants and the associated organizations that help them expedite the halal certification process. Each entry in the table includes the name of the consultant and the company that helps them finish this task. Among the organizations named are Edukasi Wakaf Indonesia, LP3H Muhammadiyah Sumbar, Universitas Airlangga, and the Halal Studies Center of LDPM. Many religious and academic organizations rely on these experts to help them in their endeavors to certify products and services as halal. The variety of halal consulting services that Indonesia provides is demonstrated by these institutions.

The growing commercialization of the halal certification process is demonstrated by the growing number of businesses and consultants involved, as seen in Table 4.2. The rise of these organizations, many of which are unrelated to religious organizations, suggests that halal certification is increasingly being viewed as a profitable business opportunity. As a result of this transformation, the initial religious objective of ensuring the halal integrity of goods and

services may become less important in favor of increasing profits. This trend demonstrates how third parties are becoming more involved in the halal certification process. The social and spiritual principles that should be at the center of the certification process are sometimes at odds with the business-oriented focus of this engagement.

The halal label is purposefully used for branding purposes, even for inherently halal products (such rice and bottled water), indicating the increasing competition in halal branding. This has led to competition with non-Muslim businesses, as shown in the data in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3. List of Non-Muslim Companies with Halal Branding in Indonesia

No	Nama Perusahaan
1.	Bio Farma-Indonesia
2.	Indofood-Indonesia
3.	Paragon Technology and Innovation-Indonesia
4.	Tempo Scan Pacific-Indonesia
5.	Mayora Indah-Indonesia
6.	Dexa-Indonesia
7.	Martha Tilaar-Indonesia
8.	Victoria Care Indonesia-Indonesia
9.	Beauty Haul Indonesia-Indonesia
10.	Kalbe Farma-Indonesia
11.	Sinar Mas Agro Resources and Technology-Indonesia
12.	Japfa Comfed Indonesia-Indonesia
13.	Musim Semi Mas-Indonesia
14.	Salim Ivomas Pratama-Indonesia
15.	Bio Farma-Indonesia

(Primary Data Processing, 2025)

Table 4.3 lists Indonesian non-Muslim companies that have marketed their products as halal. Companies including Bio Farma, Indofood, Paragon Technology & Innovation, Tempo Scan Pacific, and Kalbe Farma are attempting to get their goods certified as halal. Even though they may already produce naturally halal items, several of these companies have chosen to incorporate the halal mark into their branding strategy. This demonstrates the knowledge of the sizeable and growing Muslim market in Indonesia, where consumers choose products bearing the halal certification.

The numbers in Table 4.3 show that the competition for branding based on halal certification has significantly increased. The halal label is increasingly being used to increase product competitiveness and support marketing efforts, even for products that are naturally halal, such as rice or bottled water. In order to gain a competitive advantage in the market, non-

Muslim companies in Indonesia are trying to attract Muslim clients by incorporating halal certification into their branding. This pattern reflects a shift in thinking from merely meeting the standards for halal products to viewing halal certification as an essential element of standing out and obtaining an edge in a fiercely competitive industry.

Discussion

The implementation of service fees for halal certification applications in Indonesia has caused controversy, particularly among micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), despite its intended goal of streamlining administration and boosting efficiency. The cost of both the traditional and self-declare schemes may exacerbate disparities in access to halal certification, which was formerly optional but is now mandatory. According to the theory of transaction cost economics (Nagle et al., 2025) small business owners' limited resources may limit their capacity to engage in the market due to higher transaction costs. Furthermore, according to market failure theory, such limitations could increase the gap between large and small businesses, making it harder for MSMEs to compete fairly in the halal market and creating new barriers that weren't there in the previous open system (Yuanita & Poetry, 2025).

Although the intention is to improve efficacy and streamline administration, the imposition of halal certification fees may put more financial strain on MSMEs, which typically rely on low costs to remain competitive. Even if the government provides funding for the self-declare system, these businesses may still struggle to pay the additional expenses. The shift from a voluntary to a required system is made more difficult by the fact that halal certification, which was formerly discretionary, is now an administrative necessity. In line with transaction cost economics' conclusion that higher transaction costs typically increase barriers for small businesses to access available services (Amornkitvikai et al., 2025) note that MSMEs are often constrained by higher administrative costs when compared to larger enterprises (Sharma et al., 2025). Additionally, the resource-based view (Arianty et al., 2025) holds that MSMEs' limited access to resources, such as funds for meeting halal certification requirements, limits their ability to engage in the market. Therefore, even though the purpose of these payments is to improve the certification process, there is a risk that they will worsen the gap between large and small businesses, burden MSMEs, and reduce their participation in the increasingly important halal market.

The commercialization of halal certification in Indonesia, as evidenced by the rise of multiple halal consulting businesses, suggests a shift away from spiritual objectives and toward a business-oriented approach. This shift illustrates the growing perception of halal certification

as a business potential. To ensure that products and services are halal, halal certification should place a strong emphasis on following Islamic law. Organizations that prioritize financial gain over spiritual values and are not always religiously affiliated may violate the core tenets of halal certification. This is in line with studies by Sholahuddin (Sholahuddin et al., 2025) who highlight problems with halal certification and standards, including unethical conduct, ignorance of Islamic theology, and marketing strategies that violate Islamic values. Furthermore, Fianto (Fianto et al., 2025) argue that by employing Islamic symbols as marketing tools, halal certification processes may contribute to the commodification of religion, diminishing the spiritual significance of the certification.

The commercialization of halal certification is problematic in Indonesia because it may divert attention from the certification's primary goal, which is to guarantee that Islamic criteria are adhered to when certifying the halal status of goods and services. The emergence of companies and consultants that prioritize profit over religious values raises the possibility that halal certification may no longer be a religious need but rather a commercial opportunity. This commercialization may reduce the spiritual value of halal certification, as well as potentially endangering the standard of oversight and accountability in the certification process. Among the challenges in gaining halal certification are unethical behavior and marketing tactics that go against Islamic beliefs (Yusran et al., 2025). Additionally, Fauzi (Fauzi et al., 2025) note that if religious symbols are employed as marketing strategies, the certification's religious meaning may be undermined. Such activities jeopardize the public's trust in the halal certification system, which has long been utilized to ensure that items comply with Islamic standards.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals a significant shift in Indonesia's halal certification paradigm toward a more commercial orientation, with rising costs and increasingly complex procedures affecting product competitiveness, particularly among SMEs. The proliferation of certifying bodies has turned halal certification into a commercial commodity that serves not only as a guarantee of compliance with Islamic law but also as a tool for enhancing global market competitiveness. Academically, the research contributes to the theorization of the commercialization of religious domains and highlights a broader shift in public policy orientation from spiritual considerations toward economic interests. The findings also address a gap in the literature on the interplay between religious regulation, market structures, and business sustainability within Indonesia's food industry. Furthermore, the study underscores



the need for cost efficiency, stricter regulation, and greater procedural transparency for government and certification bodies, while recommending future research on how this shifting emphasis in halal certification influences the competitiveness of Indonesian food products in domestic and international markets.

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