

## Halal product awareness and trust from students perspectives: The role of gender

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### Abstract

This research aims to investigate the impact of awareness of halal products on consumer trust levels by considering the moderating role of gender. The research method involves regression analysis to evaluate the relationship between these variables. The research sample consisted of 126 respondents randomly selected from the consumer population. The main findings show that awareness of halal products positively and significantly impacts consumer confidence levels. The regression results confirm that the higher the consumer's awareness of the halal product, the higher the consumer's trust in the product. Moderation analysis confirms that female consumers strengthen the positive relationship between awareness of halal products and consumer trust, compared to male consumers.

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## **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dampak kesadaran produk halal terhadap tingkat kepercayaan konsumen dengan mempertimbangkan peran moderasi gender. Metode penelitiannya melibatkan analisis regresi untuk mengevaluasi hubungan antar variabel-variabel tersebut. Sampel penelitian terdiri dari 126 responden yang dipilih secara acak dari populasi konsumen. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa kesadaran terhadap produk halal berdampak positif dan signifikan terhadap tingkat kepercayaan konsumen. Hasil regresi menegaskan bahwa semakin tinggi kesadaran konsumen terhadap produk halal maka semakin tinggi pula kepercayaan konsumen terhadap produk tersebut. Analisis moderasi menegaskan bahwa konsumen perempuan memperkuat hubungan positif antara kesadaran produk halal dan kepercayaan konsumen, dibandingkan konsumen laki-laki.

**Kata kunci:** *Halal awareness, trust, gender, halal product*

## **Introduction**

In today's globalized and culturally diverse world, the demand for products and services that follow halal principles is increasing among Muslim consumers. The halalness of a product not only matters in religious contexts but also represents social and ethical values in society. This issue is becoming more important as people pay more attention to their consumption decisions' sustainability and social impact. The halal industry is growing rapidly worldwide, covering food, beverages, pharmaceuticals, and other products. The discussion of halal awareness is important economically because it reflects the increasing demand for halal products. A better understanding of the factors influencing consumer awareness of halal can help the industry optimize marketing and production strategies.

Awareness of halal products is directly related to consumer trust and purchase decision (Aditya Wulandari et al., 2023; Aslan, 2023; Handriana et al., 2021). Consumers who believe a product complies with halal standards will tend to trust the brand and product. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence halal awareness can help build stronger consumer trust. Consumption decisions reflect individual preferences and have social and environmental impacts. Moreover, understanding halal awareness allows us to explore how consumption decisions can reflect social values and how consumers can influence changes in business and production practices. Halal products are closely related to religious values, especially in Islam. Consumers who understand and care about halal products look for products that comply with their religious principles. Therefore, the halal awareness discussion reflects consumer preferences and includes strong cultural and religious dimensions.

This study investigates the connection between halal awareness and trust while considering gender as a boundary condition. While previous studies have confirmed the relationship between halal awareness and trust, it is still relatively uncommon to consider gender as a factor. Past research has primarily linked gender with brand loyalty (Lues & De Klerk, 2017), brand awareness (Koca & Koc, 2016; Valkenburg & Buijzen, 2005; Zailskaitė-Jakstė & Damasevicius, 2017), brand sensitivity, brand equity (Laoviwat et al., 2014; Tifferet & Herstein, 2012; Workman & Lee, 2013), and consumer trust (Kolsaker & Payne, 2002; Zhang et al., 2019), moderating the relationship between trust and purchasing (Taluka & Masele, 2016), eWOM on trust (Chetioui et al., 2021), and consumer shopping behavior (Chen et al., 2015). This study aims

to fill the gap in understanding the role of gender as a moderator of the relationship between halal awareness and consumer trust.

This study aims to assist marketers in comprehending consumer preferences related to halal products. By understanding the degree to which consumers care about halal aspects, marketers can devise marketing strategies that cater more appropriately to the needs and preferences of the target market. In an increasingly competitive market, halal awareness can be a significant differentiation factor. This research helps marketers identify unique ways their brands comply with halal standards, differentiate their products from competitors, and attract consumers who prefer halal products. Insights obtained from the research on halal awareness can provide marketers with a better understanding of the products or innovations most desired by consumers who care about halal.

## **Theoretical framework and hypotheses**

The level of consumer trust in a brand or product will influence their purchasing decisions. Consumer trust can be related to product quality, brand honesty, and ethical factors such as sustainability and halal. Consumer trust is crucial to business-to-consumer e-commerce (Yang & Ngo, 2023). It is a complex concept influenced by various factors such as the perception of retailers' ethics, consumer repurchase intention, product type, consumer online shopping habits, and attitude. Trust measures a business's ability to fulfill its commitments, contributing to consumer loyalty. One way to strengthen consumer trust in a company's social responsibility practices is by increasing transparency in the supply chain. Trust plays a vital role in online food purchase decisions in the food industry, as consumers often rely on brand names since they cannot verify products directly. Overall, consumer trust is critical in e-commerce, loyalty, and purchase decisions, influenced by various factors and contexts.

Consumer trust is critical in various industries, particularly in the food and drinks sector. It is influenced by various factors, including supply chain transparency, food packaging labels, certifications, and the credibility of food chain actors. Trust in the food system is established through assurances related to individual food products and the actors involved, including producers, processors, retailers, government agencies, third-party institutions, advocacy groups, and the mass media (Kraft et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2021). Beliefs about the trustworthiness of actors, such as competence, benevolence, integrity, credibility, and openness, play a significant role in consumer trust (Li et al., 2021). Moreover, consumer trust in food chain actors significantly impacts consumer confidence in food products and the technology used in their production. Companies must understand consumer trust and its influencing factors to improve their communication strategies, enhance supply chain visibility, and build consumer trust in their products and practices. Consumer trust is a crucial factor contributing to consumer loyalty. It is associated with a business's ability to fulfill consumer expectations (Benson et al., 2020; Macready et al., 2020)

In the context of halal awareness, consumer confidence can be influenced by the extent to which they are aware and confident that the product meets halal standards. Halal awareness refers to the level of understanding and knowledge about halal food and its importance. It is influenced by various factors such as knowledge of halal, perception of its benefits, religiosity, subjective norms, and trust in the halal status of products (Aslan, 2023; Oemar et al., 2022). The level of halal awareness plays a significant role in the intention to obtain halal certification and purchase halal products. However, the food needs to be more aware of the importance of selling halal-certified foods, leading to a shortage of halal certificates in the market (Bashir, 2019; Rohman & Windarsih, 2020). Misconceptions about the procedures for obtaining halal

certificates also hinder the registration process. Regular inspections of culinary products and the development of halal food products are recommended to increase halal awareness and encourage the purchase of halal products (Rohman & Windarsih, 2020).

Halal awareness is a crucial aspect of the Islamic faith and plays a vital role in consuming Halal products. It refers to the level of knowledge and understanding that individuals have regarding the Halal principles and certifications that govern the production and distribution of Halal products. The concept of Halal awareness encompasses a wide range of factors, including the sources of ingredients, the manufacturing processes, and the safety and hygiene standards followed in producing Halal products (Awan et al., 2015). The more aware people are of these principles and certifications, the more likely they will purchase Halal products and integrate them into their daily lives. Therefore, promoting Halal awareness is an essential component of the Halal industry, as it helps create a culture of informed, responsible, and conscious consumption. Numerous studies have been conducted to understand halal awareness among Muslim consumers. In Indonesia, factors such as the availability of halal information, media exposure, and halal programs contribute to the awareness of halal cosmetic products among millennial Muslim women (Hendy Tannady & Meilisa Alvita, 2023). In Malaysia, variables such as labeling and packaging of halal logos, exposure to regulatory authorities and enforcement, and consumer attitudes play a significant role in promoting halal food among Muslim consumers (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Similarly, in Perlis, Malaysia, advertising, knowledge, attitude, product characteristics, and social influence have a significant positive relationship with customer awareness of halal cosmetic products (Fuad et al., 2023).

**H1:** Halal awareness is positively related to trust

### **The role of gender**

Gender is crucial in shaping consumer attitudes and behavior, especially trust. Previous studies have shown that gender has a significant impact on various specific aspects. For instance, a study conducted by Yue Chen and colleagues 2015 analyzed the influence of trust propensity and gender on consumers' online shopping behavior. The results showed that trust propensity is essential in moderating the link between perceived risk and overall satisfaction. Additionally, gender moderates the connection between perceived benefit and re-purchase intention (Chen et al., 2015). However, the research did not explicitly examine the correlation between consumer trust and gender. A study by Prendergast in 2018 revealed that females tend to trust eWOM messages more than males. Both genders trust mixed valence eWOM more than entirely positive or negative eWOM (Prendergast et al., 2018). Another study by Cho and Jialin (2008) found that females have lower trust levels in internet commerce than males. The results suggest that emotional expectations, trust, and self-efficacy can influence attitudes toward Internet commerce. However, females tend to have lower levels of trust and self-efficacy than males, resulting in less positive attitudes towards online purchases. E-tailers must consider gender differences to create positive perceptions of online purchases. A study by Muslim Amin delves into the influence of trust propensity on repurchase intention in online shopping. The study points out that there are greater differences between genders in trust propensity than in perceived usefulness and ease of use (Amin et al., 2015).

More specifically Cheng et al. (2023) found that gender plays a moderating role in the relationship between trust and online shopping attitudes, with female consumers showing a stronger effect of eWOM on trust and attitudes toward online shopping. Shaouf's study investigates how different website design elements affect consumer trust in e-commerce. The research findings reveal that website information design is more significant in building trust among male consumers. In

contrast, website navigation design is more important for female consumers. However, the study does not mention any specific moderating effect of gender on consumer trust in e-commerce (Shaouf & Lu, 2022).

**H2:** The link between halal awareness and trust is moderated by gender.

## Methods

This research study employs a rigorous quantitative approach to explore the intricate relationship between halal awareness and consumer trust in the context of halal products. The overarching objective of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that influence consumer behavior regarding halal products. The study employs a survey instrument that captures consumer responses to a wide range of halal awareness and trust questions.

### Research samples

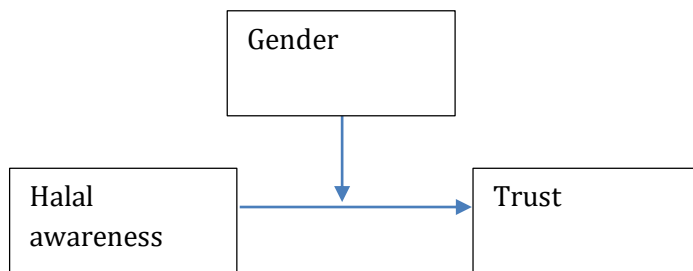
The research sample consisted of 126 respondents who were consumers who had experience consuming halal products. Sample selection was randomly selected through an online survey related to halal product purchasing.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics

	Freq.	Percent
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	86	68.49
Female	22	17.81
<i>Age</i>		
< 25 yrs	109	86.30
25 - 30 yrs	14	11.00
> 30 yrs	3	2.70
<i>Education</i>		
High School	29	23.30
Undergraduate student	76	60.30
Graduate	21	16.40
<i>Marital status</i>		
Married	5	4.10
Single	121	95.90

The descriptive analysis results reveal that the research sample was predominantly composed of male respondents (68.49%), with a majority of them being under the age of 25 (86.30%) and having a bachelor's degree (60.30%). Almost all respondents were unmarried (95.90%). These findings imply that the sample has a fairly homogenous demographic structure, especially regarding age and marital status. However, the predominance of male respondents and their younger age group may impact the generalization of the findings to a larger population. Moreover, the high education level, particularly in the bachelor's category, can offer additional insights into the respondents' educational background. This interpretation is crucial in comprehending the

extent to which the study results can be applied to broader population groups and highlighting the demographic context that needs consideration in the analysis of the findings.



**Figure 1.**  
*Research model*

### **Variable measurement**

The main measurement instrument in this research is a questionnaire specifically designed to measure the level of halal awareness and consumer trust in halal products adapted from previous research (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2019). The questionnaire consists of two main parts: the first part measures the level of consumer awareness of the halal status of a product. In contrast, the second part measures consumer trust in the halal product.

### **Data analysis procedures**

This study uses the moderation regression techniques to understand how the moderator variable, gender, influences or moderates the relationship between the independent variable (halal awareness) and the dependent variable (trust).

## **Results and discussion**

### **Confirmatory factor analysis**

The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) indicate that the latent constructs of Halal Awareness (HAW) and Trust (TRS) in this study are valid and reliable. A high average score on Halal Awareness items suggests that respondents know about halal products. The low standard deviation indicates consistency in respondents' responses to each question, and the high loading coefficient on each item confirms that all questions effectively reflect the concept of halal awareness. Additionally, good Composite Reliability values and adequate Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicate that the Halal Awareness construct is reliable and most of the variance is explained by the latent construct. Similarly, the latent construct of Trust also shows positive results. A high average score on Trust items indicates that respondents place a significant level of Trust in halal products. The low standard deviation indicates stability in respondents' perception of the level of Trust in halal products. The high loading coefficient on each Trust item confirms the strong relationship between these items and the latent construct of Trust. Moreover, the high Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted values indicate that the Trust construct has high reliability, and these latent variables can explain most of the variance. These results provide confidence that the Halal Awareness and Trust measurement instruments are reliable and

suitable for further analysis regarding the influence of both on purchasing decisions or other variables in the context of halal products.

**Table 2.**

*Confirmatory factor analysis*

Latent	Observed	Mean	SD	Loading	CA	AVE
HAW	HAW1	4.37	0.97	0.690	0.915	0.612
	HAW2	4.29	1.1	0.773		
	HAW3	4.44	1.08	0.833		
	HAW4	4.42	1.06	0.815		
	HAW5	4.33	1.09	0.828		
	HAW6	4.28	1.06	0.777		
	HAW7	4.35	1.00	0.723		
TRS	TRS1	3.98	1.24	0.910	0.928	0.812
	TRS2	4.03	1.11	0.897		
	TRS3	4.1	1.11	0.896		

**Hypothesis test**

The analysis results presented in Table 3 provide valuable information. Firstly, the regression analysis findings show that Halal Awareness has a significant positive impact on trust. The estimated coefficient of 0.301 ( $p < 0.001$ ) suggests that a higher awareness of halal products is associated with increased consumer confidence in those products. This result implies that the more aware consumers are about the halalness of a product, the more they trust it.

Secondly, the variable of Gender also plays a significant role in determining Trust. The estimated coefficient of -1.049 ( $p < 0.001$ ) indicates that the female Gender tends to hurt consumer confidence levels compared to the male Gender. Hence, in general, women have a slightly lower level of Trust in halal products compared to men in the context of this research.

Thirdly, the results of the moderation analysis reveal that Gender moderates the relationship between Halal Awareness and Trust. The estimated interaction coefficient (0.145,  $p = 0.016$ ) indicates that the positive effect of Halal Awareness on Trust is more pronounced in female respondents than in male respondents. Hence, female Gender strengthens the positive relationship between awareness of halal products and consumer trust in those products.

**Table 3. Moderated regression analysis**

Moderation Estimates

	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Halal Awareness	0.301	0.0306	9.84	<.001
Gender	-1.049	0.3035	-3.46	<.001
Halal * Gender	0.145	0.0604	2.41	0.016

**Discussion**

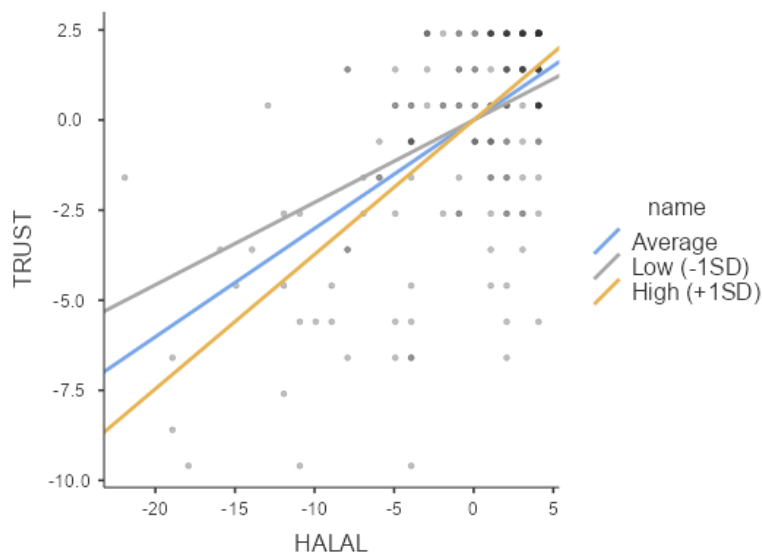
The results of this regression analysis have significant implications for companies and marketers in the context of halal products. Halal awareness covers ingredients, manufacturing processes, and hygiene standards in producing Halal products. Promoting Halal awareness is vital in

creating a culture of informed, responsible, and conscious consumption. Studies show that the availability of information, media exposure, labeling, packaging, attitudes, and social influence play a significant role in promoting Halal awareness among Muslim consumers in Indonesia and Malaysia (Awan et al., 2015; Fuad et al., 2023; Hendy Tannady & Meilisa Alvita, 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2023). The study's findings suggest that increasing consumer awareness of a product's halal status can effectively build consumer trust. Therefore, companies can focus on marketing campaigns that highlight the halal aspects of their products and provide information about halal certification, production processes, and ingredients used to gain customers' trust.

Secondly, the study emphasizes the importance of prioritizing efforts to increase consumer awareness of halal. This can be achieved through consumer education, clear product labels, and easily accessible information about the product's halalness. By doing so, companies can gain consumer trust and meet the market's increasing demand for halal products. Finally, the study provides a basis for companies and marketers to consider marketing strategies more focused on increasing consumer awareness of halal products to strengthen consumer trust. The marketer needs to develop broader marketing campaigns, integrate halal values in the brand, or engage with communities or institutions associated with halal products.

**Table 4.**  
*Simple Slope Estimates*

	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Average	0.301	0.0310	9.71	< .001
Female	0.229	0.0506	4.51	< .001
Male	0.373	0.0343	10.87	< .001



**Figure 1.**  
*Simple slope plot*

The results of the analysis indicate that gender has a significant impact on consumer trust in halal products. Female consumers tend to have a slightly lower level of trust in halal products than male consumers. The estimated coefficient of -1.049 ( $p < 0.001$ ) supports this finding. This result

suggests the need for a careful and focused marketing approach to overcome differences in preferences and perceptions between male and female consumers. Companies can adopt customized marketing strategies to increase female consumers' trust in halal products. These strategies may include transparent information, clear halal certification, and messages that promote values important to female consumers. It also highlights the importance of educating female consumers about halal products. Companies can develop educational campaigns targeting female consumers to explain the production process, safety, and halal products in detail. Clear information can be crucial in building trust between companies and consumers. Therefore, companies can optimize communication strategies to address concerns and increase consumer trust, especially among female consumers. In conclusion, companies must continuously adjust their marketing strategies to accommodate gender differences in preferences and views toward halal products to maintain consumer trust in an increasingly complex and diverse market.

The results of the study indicate that the positive impact of Halal Awareness on Trust varies based on the gender of the consumer (as presented in Table 4). At an average level, increasing awareness of halal products is significantly and positively related to increasing consumer trust. However, further analysis of gender groups shows that male consumers respond more strongly to increased Halal Awareness, with a higher estimated coefficient (0.373) than the average group. On the other hand, female consumers still exhibit a positive impact but with a slightly lower estimated coefficient (0.229) compared to the average. Hence, gender differences can play a significant role in determining the extent to which awareness of halal products contributes to the level of consumer trust. The key implication is that businesses can tailor their marketing strategies to be more responsive to the preferences and tendencies of male and female consumers to enhance the effectiveness of halal product communication and build consumer trust.

### **Limitations**

This study has several limitations that need to be noted. First, the results may only apply indirectly because participants may come from specific groups. Additionally, cross-sectional data limits the ability to establish cause-and-effect relationships, and additional variables that may influence purchasing decisions must be fully controlled. For further research, consider developing a more comprehensive model by including additional variables such as cultural preferences and shopping experience. A deeper analysis of moderating variables, especially psychological or social factors that moderate the relationship between awareness of halal products and consumer trust in certain gender groups, can also provide a deeper understanding. Additionally, future research could involve cross-cultural analysis and consider different types of products or industries to understand differences in consumer perceptions. Measuring variables in more detail and contextually can also increase the validity and accuracy of research results. By addressing these limitations, research can provide deeper insight into the factors influencing consumer trust in halal products.

### **Conclusion**

In this research, the main findings show that awareness of halal products has a positive and significant impact on consumer trust. The regression results confirm that the higher the consumer's awareness of the halal product, the higher the consumer's trust in the product. In addition, the role of gender in this context cannot be ignored. According to significant estimated coefficient findings, female consumers tend to have a slightly lower level of trust in halal products

than male consumers. The importance of gender is also evident through the moderation results, where female consumers strengthen the positive relationship between awareness of halal products and the level of consumer trust compared to male consumers.

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