

## HALAL CERTIFICATION AND MUSLIM CONSUMER PROTECTION SOCIOLOGICAL JURIDICAL STUDIES IN HALAL CULINARY AREAS TULUNGAGUNG REGENCY

Hasan Sultoni

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung

E-mail: [hasansultoni.msy@gmail.com](mailto:hasansultoni.msy@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of halal certification as a form of protection for Muslim consumers and to reveal the social factors and legal awareness that influence business compliance in the Tulungagung halal culinary sector. Although regulations on halal certification requirements have been enforced through Law No. 33 of 2014, implementation at the micro level still faces obstacles from both businesses and consumers. Many business actors have not yet obtained halal certificates, while consumers do not demand guarantees of product halalness. The research uses a qualitative juridical-sociological approach with data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and field documentation during the period of July 2025. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive approach through the stages of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, using Satjipto Rahardjo's Legal Awareness theory as the main foundation and the Maslahah Mursalah principle as support. It was found that business actors consider halal certification to be an administrative burden, not part of their sharia responsibilities or business strategy. Consumers rely more on social trust than on the formal legality of products. Regulations have not been internalized in the legal culture of society. Halal certification has not become a collective consciousness among either business actors or consumers. Regulations are implemented without strong social control. Therefore, community-based educational strategies and local value approaches are needed so that halal regulations can become an effective and sustainable instrument for protecting Muslim consumers.*

**Keywords :** Halal Certification; Legal Awareness; Muslim Consumers; Sharia Economics

### INTRODUCTION

The growth of the halal industry globally has shown a significant increase in recent years (Prayuda et al., 2023). Indonesia, as a country with the largest Muslim population, has a strategic role in the development of the halal ecosystem, including through the obligation to certify food and beverage products (Almunawar et al., 2025). However, various cases that have occurred, such as the findings of the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM) and the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) in 2025 which state the presence of porcine content in several halal-certified products, have given rise to a crisis of public trust in the halal certification system (Nazri et al., 2025). This confirms that the existence of halal labels does not fully guarantee the protection of Muslim consumers (Prayuti, 2020).

Regulatively, Indonesia has strictly regulated halal certification obligations through Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance (Ismail et al., 2025). This law emphasizes that every food and beverage product circulating in Indonesia must have a halal certificate (Ariefiara et al., 2022). In addition, Law No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection also emphasizes that consumers have the right to get true, clear, and honest



information about the condition and warranty of products. Therefore, halal certification should not only be an administrative obligation, but also an instrument of legal protection and fulfillment of Muslim consumer rights in the context of the rule of law (Taklima et al., 2023).

At the local level, Tulungagung Regency has been designated as the first Halal Culinary Area pilot area in East Java. Although administratively the area has been inaugurated, the reality on the ground shows that not all business actors have halal certificates. The results of observations and interviews show that most consumers still use the seller's religious identity as an indicator of the halal of the product, not based on labels or formal legality. This phenomenon shows that there is a gap between regulations and public awareness in applying halal principles as a whole.

Some previous studies have shown that halal certification has a significant influence on Muslim people's consumption behavior and decisions (Billah et al., 2020). It found that halal certification, along with electronic word of mouth and brand image, plays an important role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions on popular food and beverage products (Rosyid et al., 2023). The results of this study confirm that consumers not only consider the taste and price, but also the legality of the halal products consumed.

(Qurrata & Puteri, 2021) in their study on the customer loyalty of halal restaurants in Surabaya shows that halal labeling significantly increases consumer loyalty. Consumers feel safer and more confident when consuming certified foods, thus positively impacting long-term relationships with service providers.

Moreover (Bahrudin et al., 2024) In his study on the implications of halal certification on strengthening the halal industry in Indonesia, stated that product legality through halal certification is an important instrument to strengthen national competitiveness. Halal certification is no longer seen as a purely religious obligation, but has become an integral part of the industry's branding and sustainability strategy.

Research (Yusuf et al., 2019) It also revealed that the decision to purchase halal products, especially cosmetics, is influenced by the factor of consumer trust in the halalness of the products sold. Halal labels are a symbol of trust and a differentiating tool in market competition. Meanwhile, the study (Badjamal et al., 2025) Finding that halal brand trust can be a strong mediating variable in the relationship between brand personality and brand loyalty, suggests that halal labels have strategic value in sharia marketing.

Although the five studies prove the importance of halal certification from the perspective of consumer behavior and marketing, there have not been many studies that highlight the effectiveness of halal certification in terms of legal protection and social awareness of the community. This research is here to fill this gap with a juridical-sociological approach, which combines the normative aspects of halal regulation with the social reality of business actors and consumers.

This study uses the theory of Legal Awareness from Satjipto Rahardjo as the main analytical framework. This theory asserts that the effectiveness of the law depends not

only on normative formulations, but also on the extent to which people are aware, understand, and voluntarily obey the law. In the context of halal certification, the low level of legal awareness among both business actors and consumers is the main factor that hinders the substantive protection of Muslim consumers (Mulyana et al., 2024). "O people, eat some of the (food) on earth that is lawful and good and do not follow the steps of Satan. Indeed, he is a real enemy to you". (QS. Al- Baqarah: 168)

The phenomenon that occurred in the Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area shows that the law is not yet present in the collective consciousness of the community (Savirani et al., 2024). Many business actors consider that their products are halal because they are locally sourced and come from the Muslim market, so they do not feel the need to take care of halal certificates (Ab Talib et al., 2016). Meanwhile, consumers tend to rely on personal beliefs and social habits rather than regulatory considerations (Zou & Chan, 2019). This shows the low legal culture in understanding the importance of halal certification as a form of consumer protection (Fibrianti et al., 2023).

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of halal certification as an instrument for Muslim consumer protection and uncover socio-cultural factors that affect people's legal awareness. The focus of this research lies on the Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area as a representative case study of the implementation of halal regulations in areas with a predominantly Muslim population.

The findings of this study are expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution. In terms of novelty, this study not only examines the aspect of the influence of halal certification on consumer behavior, but also places halal certification in the legal and social awareness framework. The implication is that the results of this study can be the basis for the preparation of halal education strategies that are more contextual and based on a sociological approach, as well as input in the formulation of consumer protection policies based on Islamic values and the legal culture of local communities.

## **METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a juridical-sociological type of research. This approach was chosen because it is able to bridge the legal norms contained in laws and regulations with social practices that occur in society (Huda & S HI, 2021). The focus of the study lies in the effectiveness of the implementation of halal certification as a form of legal protection for Muslim consumers, by emphasizing the aspect of legal awareness of the community and business actors in carrying out applicable regulations.

The location of the research is in the Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area, to be precise The halal culinary area in Tulungagung is located on Jalan Pangeran Antasari, precisely in the Pasar Sore Lama area. This area was inaugurated on October 3, 2024 and aims to support the development of MSMEs and become a model for other regions in East Java, an area that has been designated as a halal pilot area by the Tulungagung Regency Government (Ningtyas et al., 2024). This area was chosen because it has unique social characteristics, namely the majority of business actors and consumers come from the Muslim community, but in practice the implementation of halal certification is not

optimal(Darmalaksana, 2023). This phenomenon provides space for analysis of the extent to which legal norms regarding halal product assurance are lived and implemented by the community in the local context.

The data used in this study consisted of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with culinary business actors in the region, Muslim consumers as objects of protection, as well as officials from related agencies such as the Cooperatives and SMEs Office, the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH), and the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH). Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through a documentary study of relevant laws and regulations, such as Law Number 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance, Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection, as well as references in the form of scientific journals, results of previous research, media news, and official reports of government agencies (Beales et al., 1981).

The data collection technique was carried out in three ways, namely semi-structured interviews, field observations, and documentation studies. The interviews were conducted to explore the informants' understanding, perceptions, and attitudes towards halal certification and Muslim consumer rights (Sahiluddin et al., 2024). Observation is used to observe direct practices in the field, such as the use of halal labels, raw material information, and interaction between business actors and consumers. The documentation study was conducted to examine regulations and administrative documents as comparative materials for the social realities found in the field.

Data analysis is carried out interactively by following the stages developed by Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification(Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). The data obtained from interviews and observations were reduced and categorized according to the research theme, then interpreted by referring to the theory of legal awareness (Rahardjo, 2010). This theory is the basis for understanding the extent to which law can be internalized by society as part of values and culture. To strengthen the study from a sharia perspective, the principle of *maslahah mursalah* is used as a supporting theory in assessing the urgency of Muslim consumer protection as part of *Sharia maqashid*(Alwi et al., 2025).

The validity of the data in this study is maintained through triangulation of sources and methods. Triangulation was carried out by comparing the results of the interviews with field observations and available legal documents, as well as cross-clarification between informants to ensure the consistency of the information obtained. This step is taken to ensure that the results of the research have a high level of validity and can be scientifically accounted for (Moleong, 2017).

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Overview of Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area**

The Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area is one of the areas designated as a pilot for the development of the sharia economy based on the halal industry by the local government. Located not far from Tulungagung Station, this area is the center of culinary

activities for local people and immigrants. Based on the results of field observations, there are around 45 micro business actors who open food and beverage stalls in the area, ranging from various market snacks, traditional drinks, to local fast food (*Bakorwil Jember 2024, n.d.*).

Visually, this area has been laid out with the branding of "Halal Culinary Area" complete with an official banner from the Tulungagung Regency Cooperatives and SMEs Office. However, in practice, not all business actors have obtained a halal certificate from BPJPH. Only about 20 percent of the total traders display halal logos, and most of them are the result of the facilitation of the mass certification program from the Cooperative Office in the previous year (*Afederasi 2024, n.d.*).

Bakso bakso trader (PU-01, personal interview, July 5, 2025) said: *"I sell using materials from the market. Everyone knows I'm a Muslim. Consumers also never ask about halal certificates. So I don't think there's any need to bother taking care of it"* (Baked meatball trader 2025). This statement reflects the perception that halal is considered inherent because of the religious identity of business actors, without the need for formal verification through the authorized institutions.

The same thing was also conveyed by traditional beverage traders (PU- 02, personal interview, July 12, 2025) who have been selling for more than five years in the same location. He stated: *"If it is a matter of halal certificates, it seems to be for large factories or restaurants. If we are small sellers, the important thing is to be clean and honest."* (Traditional beverage merchant 2025). This statement shows that there is a limitation of understanding that halal certification only applies to large-scale business actors, while micro businesses are considered not obliged to comply with the same regulations.

This data shows that there is a difference between the legal norms that apply nationally and the perception of the law that lives in society. In the context of Satjipto Rahardjo's theory of legal awareness, this situation shows a low level of substantive legal awareness, which is an awareness that is not only based on knowledge of the rules, but also appreciation and belief in the importance of these rules as a protector of rights and obligations.

From the consumer side, the results of observations show that the majority of visitors to the area do not pay attention to the existence of halal labels when making purchases. They prefer based on taste, habits, and trust in the seller. One consumer (KONS-01, private interview, July 20, 2025) stated: *"The important thing is that it is delicious and clean. After all, I believe that all Muslims are selling."* (Consumer 2025). This statement is a reflection that social legitimacy is still considered more important than formal legal legitimacy in terms of halal guarantees.

To provide a more systematic picture, the following is a comparison table between ideal conditions according to regulations and factual conditions in the field: Comparison Table Between Ideal Condition (Regulation) and Factual Condition (Field)

Aspect	Ideal Condition (Regulation)	Factual Condition (Field)
<b>Halal Certificate</b>	Must be owned by all food/beverage business actors	Only a small portion have it, the rest have not applied for it
<b>Business Actors' Knowledge</b>	Know and understand the procedures and the importance of certification	Consider it unimportant because the ingredients are local and the identity is Muslim
<b>Consumer Concern</b>	Demand formal halal assurance (label, certificate)	Do not mind the label, trust the seller more
<b>Role of Local Government</b>	Provide continuous facilitation and education	Facilitation is still limited and uneven

**Table 1** : comparison between ideal conditions according to regulations and factual conditions in the field

The incompatibility between normative rules and social practices shows the importance of interventions based on legal culture approaches. Halal certification will not be effective as an instrument of consumer protection if it is not accompanied by increasing public legal awareness. In the framework of Satjipto Rahardjo's theory, law is not just a text, but must be a meaningful social experience. As long as the law exists only as an administrative obligation, not as an internalized value, then its effectiveness will always face obstacles at the level of praxis (Rahardjo, 2010).

### **Field Findings of Halal Certification Practice**

Based on the results of interviews and field observations conducted during the July 2025 period, the practice of halal certification in the Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area shows that the process of obtaining halal certificates is still not running optimally. The majority of business actors admitted that they had never taken care of halal certification independently.

They rely on facilitation activities from the government or certain institutions, which are usually only carried out in a certain period and with limited quotas. One of the business actors selling fried rice (PU-03, interview on July 12, 2025) revealed: *"In the past, I was offered free certification from the agency, but the quota was full. After that I don't know where to go and how to take care of it."* (Fried Rice Seller Business Actor 2025).

This statement indicates that there are obstacles to access to information that make business actors lose the initiative to carry out certification independently. The lack of post-socialization assistance causes most business actors to stop at the stage of knowing, without proceeding to the stage of taking care of. Some informants also stated that the main reason they did not take care of halal certificates was the cost and complexity of the procedure. Chicken Noodle Trader (PU-04, July 15, 2025 interview)

stated: *"If you have to pay yourself, you have to go to the district office, you have not copied this. Complicated. Even though my turnover is not big either."*

Another fact that is quite striking is the assumption that raw materials that come from traditional markets and production processes carried out by Muslims are automatically considered halal. In an interview, a traditional pastry merchant (PU-05, July 18, 2025 interview) said: *"I shop at the Muslim market, use eggs, plain flour, sugar. Do you have to use a certificate as well?"* This attitude shows that there is a normative understanding of halal based on identity and tradition, not legally formal as stipulated in Law Number 33 of 2014.

Furthermore, in field observations, it was found that some business actors who already have a halal certificate do not display their logos on their stalls. When asked why, a trader (PU-06, July 20, 2025 interview) replied: *"I already have it, but I don't have time to print and install it. After all, consumers never ask either."* This shows that halal certification is not considered a strategic selling point, but only limited to fulfilling administrative obligations when there is a program from the government.

Based on these findings, the level of participation of business actors in the halal certification program is highly dependent on external intervention. If there is no facilitation from the local government or accompanying organizations, most business actors will not take care of the certification independently. This indicates that legal awareness has not grown from within business actors as a form of fulfilling Islamic legal and ethical responsibilities, but it is still instrumental or due to external pressure.

In the perspective of Satjipto Rahardjo's Legal Awareness Theory, this condition shows that the law has not yet become part of the collective consciousness of society. Halal certification has not been seen as a moral and social necessity, but only as a troublesome administrative procedure (Rahardjo, 2010). The law runs formally, but it has not yet permeated the value system and beliefs of business actors. The absence of internalization of this law makes the halal certification program stagnant and unsustainable, because it depends on external programs, not encouragement from within the community itself. These findings also show that halal certification has not yet become a *value differentiator* in the context of the local market. Although halal labels legally provide a guarantee of protection for consumers, in practice business actors do not feel a significant impact on increasing sales. As conveyed by a satay trader (PU-07, interview July 28, 2025): *"Use labels or not, buyers are still the same. The important thing is taste and service."* This statement corroborates the analysis that the regulatory value of halal certificates has not been translated as economic value by small business actors.

Thus, the implementation of halal certification at the MSME level has not been fully used as an effective consumer protection instrument. Strategic efforts are needed to build substantive legal awareness, namely an understanding of the purpose and benefits of the law, not just an administrative formality. Local governments, educational institutions, and community leaders have an important role to play in transforming this paradigm so that halal certification truly becomes part of the legal culture of the Muslim community.

## **Consumer Perception of Products Without Halal Certificates**

The results of interviews with a number of consumers in the Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area during the July 2025 period show that the majority of consumers have not made halal certificates the main factor in consumption decisions. Consumers tend to judge the halalness of the product from who sells, the cleanliness of the place, and the social habits that have taken root, not from formal labels or certificates. Informant KONS-02 (*personal interview, July 12, 2025*), a 34-year-old female consumer who regularly buys breakfast in the area, stated: *"I have never asked about halal certificates. The important thing is that the place is clean and the one who sells it is also Muslim, it must be halal."*

This statement reflects the high level of social belief based on religious identity as the main indicator of product halalness. Consumers consider that social relationships and the reputation of business actors are more guaranteed than administrative evidence such as certificates from official institutions. Another interview with KONS-03 (*personal interview, July 18, 2025*), a college student living in the vicinity of the area, also showed something similar: *"I just found out that there is halal certification for street vendors. So far, if food like this, it's normal. My friends never thought about it either."*

This sentence illustrates that halal literacy among the younger generation is still low, especially related to awareness of the importance of legal protection in the consumption of halal products. In many cases, consumers are unable to distinguish between substantial halal and formal halal. They think that as long as the food does not contain pork and alcohol, and is cooked by fellow Muslims, then its halal status does not need to be questioned. In fact, in the national halal product assurance system, the production process, additional ingredients, and the cleanliness of tools are also part of the halal criteria. This ignorance shows that there is a quite serious gap in legal literacy.

A housewife (KONS-04, private interview, July 25, 2025) interviewed while buying snacks said: *"I just believe it because I have always eaten here. No problem. After all, the government has never told us the importance of halal certification for food like this."* This statement confirms that there has been no systematic counseling or education from local governments on the importance of protecting Muslim consumers in the local context.

In the researchers' observations, there is a tendency that consumers in this region rely more on social habits and emotional comfort than legal procedures. This is particularly relevant to the framework of Legal Awareness Theory. According to Satjipto Rahardjo, legal awareness is not enough just to know the rules, but must involve social experiences that form the perception of the importance of the law as a protector of rights. In this context, the law does not "flow" in the social space of consumers, since it is not yet part of their daily life experience.

This condition certainly has serious implications for consumer protection. When consumers do not have the care or courage to question the legality of halal products, then social control over business actors becomes weak. This has the potential to open up space for business practices that are not transparent and detrimental to the rights of Muslim

consumers. In addition, the absence of demands from the consumer side also strengthens the passive attitude of business actors in meeting formal halal standards.

From the sharia side, the principle *Maslahah Mursalah* placing the protection of soul, religion, and property as part of the main purpose of Islamic law. When consumers do not have critical power to the halalness of the product, then potential spiritual and material losses can occur without realizing it. Consumption of products that do not go through halal verification can be a loophole for violating the principle *Hifz al-Din* and *Hufz al-Nafs*, even if it is done without any element of intentionality (Laila et al., 2023).

Therefore, strengthening consumer awareness is an important agenda in building a healthy halal ecosystem. Legal literacy and halal education need to be instilled from an early age, not only through regulations but also through the approach of communities and local leaders (Masruroh & Sugiono, 2022). When consumers understand that the right to halal products is part of legal protection, a new culture will grow in which halal certification is not only the responsibility of the producer, but also the aspiration of consumers as part of their spiritual and social rights (Asyari et al., 2025).

### **Analysis of Legal Awareness of Business Actors and Consumers**

Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted during the month of July 31, 2025, it is known that legal awareness from both business actors and consumers towards halal certification obligations is still not fully formed. Knowledge about regulations has indeed spread through socialization, social media, and official programs, but awareness to comply with the law due to internal encouragement is still very low.

Most business actors know that there are rules about halal certification obligations. However, they do not feel the urgency to comply because there is no direct pressure from consumers or the government. Informant PU-01 (*personal interview, July 10, 2025*), a fried rice trader, said: *"I know that's the rule. But as long as the buyer doesn't ask, yes, what do I take care of. After all, no one is pushing either."*

This statement indicates that the law is not yet part of personal consciousness, but is only considered necessary if there are external demands. Observations also show that many business actors still consider the certification procedure to be complicated and burdensome. Informant PU-08 (*personal interview, July 15, 2025*), a snack vendor, said: *"I want to have a halal certificate, but I am confused about where to go. I've been training before, but there's no continuation."* When information and assistance are not continuous, legal knowledge will not develop into legal awareness.

In the context of Satjipto Rahardjo's Theory of Legal Awareness, this situation reflects the lack of substantive legal awareness in society. Law has not yet become a part of everyday values and behavior. Law is positioned as something that is "outside of oneself", not part of the internal belief system of business actors. Satjipto Rahardjo stated that laws that are not lived by the community will lose their social effectiveness. It will only be a rigid and morally binding formality (Rahardjo, 2010).

From the consumer side, interviews show that most do not know that they have the right to legally guaranteed halal products. Consumers tend to trust the seller's reputation over halal labels. A buyer who regularly eats breakfast in the area said, "I already subscribe here. After all, all those who sell are also Muslims. I think I'm safe." This approach shows that consumers do not place the law as a tool of control, but rather replace it with social trust.

When consumers do not question the legality of the product, the pressure on business actors to comply with regulations becomes very low. Even business actors who already have a halal certificate do not feel the need to install labels because there is no market demand. PU-09 (*personal interview, July 15, 2025*) "I have a halal certificate. But if it is installed, it will not affect the buyer. So yes, just keep it," said one of the informants. This shows that legal awareness is not only low on the part of business actors, but also not supported by a supportive social environment.

To clarify the level of legal awareness of these two groups, the following table is presented with a table of the categories of findings based on four main indicators: Table of Findings Based on Four Main Indicators.

No.	Indicator	Business Actors	Consumers
1	Awareness of Certification Obligation	● Yes (the majority know from training/socialization)	● Not fully aware, only rely on assumptions
2	Understanding of Certification Procedures	● Most do not fully understand the details	● Do not know or do not care
3	Awareness to Comply with the Law	● Low, only when pushed by external parties	● No encouragement to demand legal compliance
4	Concrete Actions Toward the Law	● Passive, waiting for assistance programs	● Passive, do not demand or criticize

Legend: ● High ● Medium ● Low

**Table : 2** Categories Of Findings Based On Four Main Indicators

The data in Table 2 above shows that there is a disparity in the level of legal awareness between business actors and consumers towards halal certification. Although most business actors have known the obligation of halal certification through training or socialization, they have not understood the details of the certification procedure. On the contrary, most consumers are not even aware of the obligation and rely solely on the assumption that halal products are sold by Muslims. Both groups showed low levels of legal awareness, with a passive tendency to both comply with the law and demand its application. This phenomenon reflects the weak internalization of legal norms in the legal culture of society, as criticized by Satjipto Rahardjo through the theory of legal awareness(Rahardjo, 2010).

Within the framework of *maslahah mursalah*, this low legal awareness also has an impact on the neglect of the protection of Muslim consumer rights. Halal is not only a

matter of symbols or administrative formalities, but part of the protection of religion (*hifz al-din*) and the protection of the soul (*hifz al-nafs*). When business actors do not comply with halal standards and consumers donot demand their rights, then the protection function in the sharia maqashid does not run in its entirety.

Allah says in QS. Al-Maidah verse 88: "And eat of the sustenance that Allah has given you which is lawful and good, and fear Allah in whom you believe in Him." (QS. Al-Ma'idah: 88). "Indeed, Allah is Good, and does not accept anything but what is good." (HR. Muslim, no. 1015)

Therefore, building legal awareness must start from a more participatory and cultural approach. Law is not enough to be conveyed through top-down socialization, but must be brought to life through local values, community forums, involvement of religious leaders, and experiential learning(Coyer et al., 2019). When the law begins to be lived as part of daily life, only then can regulations on halal certification be carried out effectively and with dignity.

### **Reading the Findings with the Perspective of Maslahah Mursalah**

The concept of *maslahah mursalah* in Islamic law emphasizes that the law must be directed to the benefit of the ummah as a whole, especially in terms of the protection of religion, soul, intellect, descent, and property. In the context of halal certification, *maslahah* includes efforts to maintain the halalness of products consumed by Muslims so as not to damage the basic principles of sharia. Based on the results of field findings in the Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area, it can be seen that the implementation of halal certification has not fully realized the benefits in question.

Some business actors consider that halal certification is not yet the main need because they feel that they have met halal standards personally. One of the business actors of Informant PU-10 (*personal interview, July 12, 2025*) stated: "*I am a Muslim, I cook and I give haram ingredients to my customers. That's a sin.*" This view ethically shows the existence of personal awareness, but systemically it is not enough to guarantee because there is no objective verification of the process, raw materials, or cleanliness of the production equipment.

In *maslahah mursalah*, the aspect of legal guarantees is very important because it concerns broader public trust. Without certification, communities are vulnerable to fraud, misinformation, or dishonest practices that may be hidden in the food supply chain. For example, when asked about the flavoring ingredients used, one of the business actors of Informan PU-11 (*personal interview, July 17, 2025*) admitted: "*Sometimes I use flavorings from the store, I don't know if it's halal or not. But the important thing is that it's delicious.*"

This statement indicates the potential use of ingredients that have not been verified to be halal, which can cause harm to Muslim consumers without realizing it. From the consumer side, many consider that halal certificates are not important as long as the seller is Muslim and the food looks clean. One of the consumers of Informant KONS-04

(private interview, July 25, 2025) said: "I've never thought about halal labels, especially in a place like this. The important thing is not to have pigs."

This view clearly illustrates that awareness of the protection of sharia law is still low, even though halal products do not only concern the ingredients, but also the slaughter, storage, processing, and distribution processes.

If it is drawn into the framework of *maslahah*, then this condition does not reflect the benefits as a whole. Consumers feel comfortable, but not legally guaranteed. Business actors feel calm, but there are no standards that can be tested. In fact, one of the important principles in *maslahah mursalah* is the existence of a mechanism that can guarantee benefits and prevent damage (*jalb al-mashalih wa dar' al-mafasid*). Allah SWT said: "O people, eat of what is lawful and good, and do not follow the steps of Satan. Indeed, he is a real enemy to you." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 168) (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia 2005).

To clarify the position of the field findings in the perspective of *maslahah mursalah*, the following analysis table is presented: Table of Findings and Maslahah (Benefit) Analysis.

Aspect of Maslahah	Field Findings	Maslahah Analysis
<b>Hifz al-din (protection of religion)</b>	Consumers do not ensure formal halal compliance	Potential violation of halal principles without being realized
<b>Hifz al-nafs (protection of life)</b>	Additional ingredients are not legally verified	Risk of using harmful substances if not certified
<b>Hifz al-'aql (protection of intellect)</b>	Minimal education on halal and consumer rights	Low halal literacy hinders proper decision-making
<b>Hifz al-mal (protection of wealth)</b>	Certification is considered to have no impact on sales turnover	Halal products are not utilized as an added economic value

**Table 3 :** Perspective of Sharia Maqashid

From the table, it can be concluded that the weak implementation of halal certification in the context of MSMEs causes suboptimal sharia protection for consumers. When *the aspect of maslahah* is neglected, then Muslim consumers are not only vulnerable from the spiritual side, but also from the health, economic, and educational aspects.

So, a positive legal approach is not enough. There is a need for integration between the normative approach and the approach of sharia values. Local governments, Islamic organizations, and certification bodies must work together to build an awareness system that places halal not just a document, but a measurable and guaranteed religious commitment. This is where the value of *maslahah mursalah* becomes very important as the foundation of normative and sociological argumentation (Rohman, 2019).

## **Social Implications and Regulations of Halal Certification for Business Actors and Consumers**

The results of the research obtained through observations and field interviews during July 2025 show that halal certification has not been fully understood as an instrument of consumer protection and business empowerment. The absence of legal awareness from both producers and consumers not only shows the weak function of regulation, but also gives rise to broader social impacts.

From a social perspective, business actors' non-compliance with halal certification regulations does not necessarily cause resistance or rejection from consumers. Instead, there is a high social acceptance of the practice without certification, as long as the seller has a trusted religious identity. One of the consumer informants (Interview, July 15, 2025) stated: *"I think if you already know that the one selling is Muslim, it is enough. A certificate is just a formality."* This statement confirms that the formalization aspect of law has not been internalized in the culture of public consumption, because it prioritizes social relations and communal values

This certainly has consequences for consumer protection governance. When consumers do not exercise their critical right to demand certified halal products, the law loses its fangs. The function of the law as a protector does not work because there is no demand or control from the public. In the long run, this can perpetuate business practices that are not transparent, because business actors do not feel the need to show legal proof of halal.

From the side of business actors, the absence of market pressure to comply with halal regulations has the potential to cause stagnation in the adoption of certification. A PU-10 trader (*personal interview, July 21, 2025*) revealed: *"If the buyer still comes even without a certificate, why bother?"* This view shows that non-compliance with the law stems not only from internal factors, but also from a permissive social ecosystem towards administrative violations as long as there is no open conflict.

In this context, halal certification regulations become ineffective not because the content of the regulation is weak, but because its implementation does not rely on the social and cultural awareness of the law of the community. When the law is only positioned as an administrative obligation and does not become part of social values, it will lose legitimacy in the eyes of society. In fact, the function of the law is not only to regulate, but also to educate and shape behavior (Rahardjo, 2010).

This implication is even more complex if it is associated with *maslahah* in Islamic law. The absence of halal certificates is not only an administrative matter, but touches on aspects of protecting religion, soul, and property. Consumers who consume food without formal halal guarantees are in a vulnerable position, while business actors are missing out on strategic opportunities to build long-term trust.

To reinforce the mapping of these social and regulatory implications, the following summary table is presented: Table of Stakeholders, Current Conditions, and Implications

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<b>No.</b>	<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Current Condition</b>	<b>Implication</b>
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1	Business Actors	Do not feel the need to process certification unless pressured	Certification is considered a burden, not a necessity
2	Consumers	Do not demand halal legality, rely only on habits	Weak social control over product halalness
3	Local Government	Still facilitative in nature and limited	Regulations have not fostered a legal culture
4	Certification Institutions	Have not effectively reached the micro level	Certification is uneven and not understood as a consumer right

This table makes it clear that all parties are still moving partially and not synergism. No single actor is able to trigger behavior change without support from other actors. Thus, the success of the halal certification program is not enough to rely only on regulations, but must be accompanied by social transformation and mutual awareness. Building awareness of the importance of halal certification as a form of consumer protection is a long-term investment. This is not only beneficial for regulatory compliance, but also the foundation for an inclusive sharia economy, fairness, and upholding the values of transparency and honesty.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the implementation of halal certification in the Tulungagung Halal Culinary Area still faces significant challenges, particularly in terms of legal awareness among business actors and consumers. Although most business actors recognize halal certification as a legal obligation, they do not prioritize it due to the absence of strong market pressure. Instead, they rely on religious identity, social trust, and personal reputation as indicators of halal compliance rather than formal certification.

Similarly, consumers tend to be permissive toward products without halal certificates. They assume that halal status is sufficiently guaranteed through habit, seller reputation, and emotional comfort. This indicates that halal regulation has not been internalized as a collective necessity to protect the spiritual and consumer rights of Muslims. As a result, halal certification remains an administrative formality rather than a living legal culture within society.

Using Satjipto Rahardjo's Theory of Legal Awareness, the findings show that the law has not yet functioned as a socially embedded instrument but remains a normative rule detached from public consciousness. From the perspective of *Maslahah Mursalah*, the lack of awareness regarding halal certification may potentially lead to long-term harm in safeguarding religion, life, and property.

The study concludes that successful implementation of halal certification requires collective participation among business actors, consumers, local governments, and certification bodies. Therefore, a transformational approach is needed—one that

integrates legal and sharia values into local culture rather than relying solely on formal administrative socialization.

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