

HARMONIZING FAITH AND MARKETS: THE ROLE OF HALAL CERTIFICATION IN ISLAMIC ECONOMICS

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Abstract: *This mini review examines the role of halal certification in Islamic economics, highlighting its importance as both a religious safeguard ensuring Shariah compliance and an economic tool that enhances consumer trust, supports SMEs, and promotes global trade. A structured literature search was conducted in the Scopus database using keywords related to halal certification and Islamic economics, with inclusion limited to peer-reviewed studies published in English and exclusion of grey literature to ensure reliability. The review identifies four key thematic areas. First, global standards remain fragmented, with inconsistent criteria, auditing processes, and enforcement mechanisms creating inefficiencies and undermining consumer confidence, though initiatives such as Malaysia's JAKIM and OIC-SMIIC provide partial frameworks. Second, consumer trust is reinforced by certification logos as markers of authenticity, yet fraudulent practices, weak oversight, and unrecognized certifying bodies erode confidence, raising debates over whether certification should expand beyond religious authenticity to include sustainability and ethical dimensions. Third, regulatory frameworks vary widely: centralized models offer credibility but face bureaucratic inefficiencies, while decentralized models provide flexibility but risk inconsistency and fraud, highlighting the need for hybrid approaches. Finally, the economic impact of halal certification is significant, contributing to GDP growth, brand competitiveness, and SME development, though high compliance costs and sectoral concentration limit inclusivity. Despite its potential, knowledge gaps persist in understanding demographic-specific consumer behaviour, cross-sectoral applications, and long-term economic outcomes. Future research should prioritize harmonized standards, cost-effective SME models, and technological integration, particularly blockchain and digital traceability, to enhance transparency, build trust, and position halal certification as a driver of sustainable and ethical global economic growth.*

Keywords: *Halal Certification, Islamic Economics, Consumer Trust, Regulatory Framework, Economic Impact*

Introduction

Halal certification has evolved into a catalyst for economic growth and innovation within the realm of Islamic economics. Empirical studies demonstrate that obtaining halal certification significantly enhances innovation and financial performance, especially in the food and beverage sector; for example, analysis of Indonesian publicly listed firms between 2015 and 2018 confirmed a positive and significant effect of halal certification on both innovation and profitability (Urumsah & Puspitasari, 2021). In addition, the certification process plays a vital role in supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), boosting their competitiveness, product continuity, and market access, evidence drawn from systematic literature reviews across several Southeast Asian contexts (Hidayat & Witta, 2024). Moreover, technological integration is offering new pathways to enhance halal certification systems. Multiple studies have proposed and tested blockchain-based supply chain models, and even combinations with AI, to improve traceability, transparency, and consumer trust. These include frameworks leveraging smart contracts and decentralized ledgers, tested in contexts such as Malaysia and Indonesia, which demonstrate notable enhancements in supply chain security and auditability (Attarbashi et al., 2024; Anwar et al., 2025; Adinugraha et al., 2024).

Despite promising economic and technological advancements, halal certification faces persistent institutional and regulatory challenges. Fragmented standards and inconsistent enforcement mechanisms across jurisdictions undermine credibility and trade. For instance, Malaysia's halal ecosystem grapples with ambiguous guidelines, limited inter-agency collaboration, high costs, and challenges particularly faced by smaller enterprises (Mohd Fuazi et al., 2020). Similar institutional complexities are evident in Bangladesh and China, where discrepancies in certification standards and opaque processes hinder market integration and consumer trust (Aziz & Moniruzzaman, 2022; Othman et al., 2025). Moreover, at the global trade policy level, halal measures have become a contentious interface between religious compliance and international trade norms. Under WTO frameworks, the lack of international consensus on halal labelling and certification processes raises both substantive and procedural concerns, potentially obstructing trade and complicating regulatory compliance (Sudi, 2025). Furthermore, challenges at the certification process level, such as inconsistent auditor training, weak oversight, erratic record-keeping, and limited resources, have been flagged as critical barriers to certification reliability and scalability (Nadzri et al., 2025).

Methods

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using the Scopus database. Keywords such as ("halal certification" OR "halal" OR "certification" OR "compliance") AND ("Islamic economics" OR "Islamic finance" OR "Shariah" OR "Islamic law") AND ("supply chain" OR "market" OR "trade" OR "business") AND ("consumer behavior" OR "demand" OR "preferences" OR "attitudes") AND ("ethical" OR "sustainable" OR "responsible" OR "socially responsible") were utilized to collect relevant articles. Below, we provide the inclusion and exclusion criteria for studies in this review article.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies discussing halal certification in Islamic economics emphasize its central role as both a religious safeguard ensuring Shariah compliance and an economic instrument that enhances

consumer trust, supports SMEs, and facilitates cross-border trade. Research highlights key thematic areas, including global standards, consumer trust, regulatory frameworks, and economic impact, with evidence showing certification strengthens market credibility but suffers from fragmentation and inconsistencies (Ahmad & Shaharuddin, 2019; Ab Talib, Chin, & Fischer, 2017).

Studies focusing on the application of digital technologies in halal certification identify blockchain, QR-code traceability, and mobile apps as potential tools to improve transparency, reduce fraud, and enhance consumer confidence, though practical implementation remains limited and underexplored in empirical research (Tieman, 2017).

Studies analyzing the strengths, limitations, and potential applications of halal certification demonstrate clear benefits such as increased brand loyalty, enhanced export competitiveness, and significant contributions to GDP in countries like Malaysia, but also underline weaknesses, including regulatory duplication, high compliance costs, and uneven benefits between large firms and SMEs (Rahman, Ahmad, & Ab Talib, 2020). Controversies persist regarding whether certification should remain focused on religious authenticity or broaden to include sustainability and ethical dimensions (Ali & Suleiman, 2018).

Studies published in English reveal persistent gaps in comparative analyses of regulatory models, cross-sectoral applications beyond food and beverage, and demographic-specific consumer behaviour, particularly among youth and digital-native buyers. Future research should investigate hybrid governance structures, cost-effective SME models, and integration of certification into emerging sectors such as finance, logistics, and digital services to advance both academic understanding and practical development of halal certification within Islamic economics.

Exclusion Criteria

- Studies published in languages other than English were excluded.
- Studies that discuss Islamic economics without explicit reference to halal certification were excluded.
- Grey literature (e.g., conference abstracts, unpublished reports) was excluded to ensure the quality and reliability of the review findings.

Discussion And Results

Current Status of Halal Certification In Islamic Economics Research

Halal certification has become a central mechanism in Islamic economics, serving both as a religious safeguard to ensure Shariah compliance and as an economic tool for enhancing consumer trust, facilitating trade, and promoting ethical market practices. Its significance has expanded beyond Muslim-majority contexts, with halal certification increasingly recognized in global markets as a benchmark for hygiene, safety, and quality. Furthermore, educational institutions now incorporate halal certification into curricula in business, economics, and law, emphasizing its relevance as a subject of scholarly inquiry and professional practice. Despite its importance, halal certification continues to face challenges related to **global standards**, **consumer trust**, **regulatory frameworks**, and **economic impact** (Figure 1), which remain unresolved and debated within academic, policy, and business circles. This mini review synthesizes current findings in these four thematic areas, highlights existing debates and knowledge gaps, and identifies opportunities for future research and development.

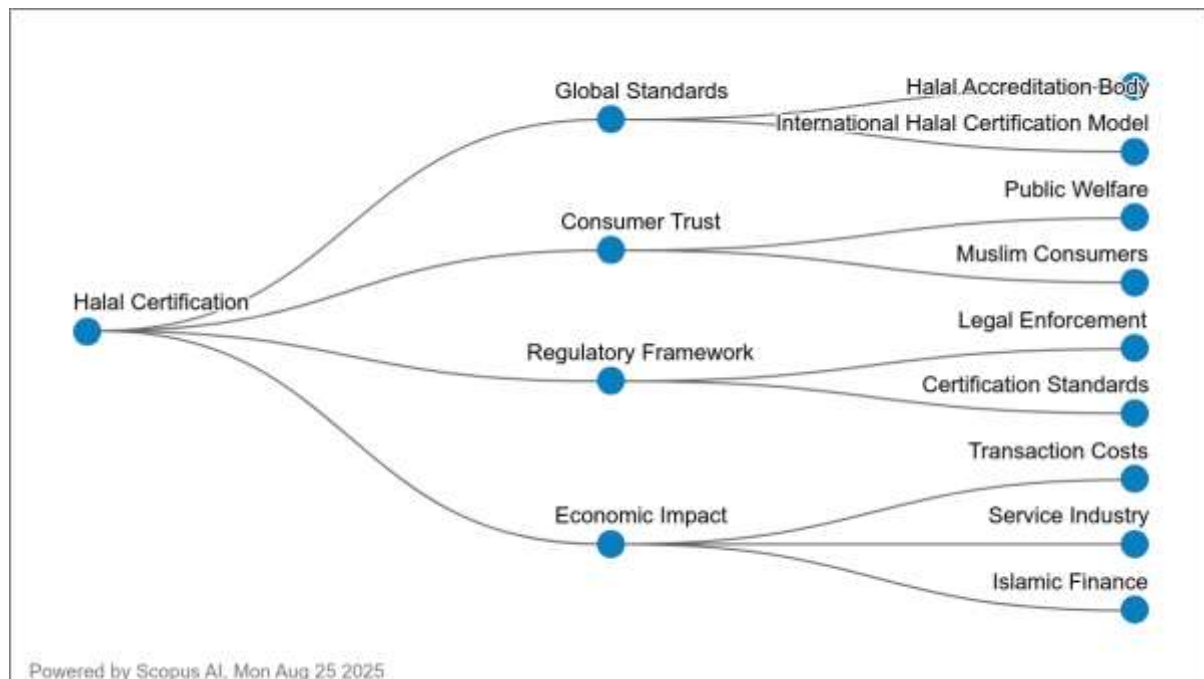


Figure 1: Halal Certification in Islamic Economics

Source: Generated by SCOPUS AI Analyzer

Global Standards

Halal certification suffers from a lack of globally harmonized standards, with countries and regions adopting diverse criteria, auditing processes, and enforcement mechanisms. Malaysia's JAKIM certification and the OIC's Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) have emerged as influential frameworks, yet fragmentation persists, creating duplication, higher certification costs, and inefficiencies in cross-border trade (Ahmad & Shaharuddin, 2019). The debate centres on whether a centralized global halal authority could improve efficiency and consumer confidence or whether regional mutual recognition systems would better respect the diversity of Islamic jurisprudential interpretations (Tieman, 2017). While centralization offers standardization, it risks privileging dominant cultural interpretations; conversely, decentralized systems provide flexibility but perpetuate confusion. Current scholarship highlights a gap in empirical studies assessing the impact of fragmented standards on SMEs and consumer perceptions. Future research should explore hybrid governance and digital verification technologies, such as blockchain traceability, to enhance transparency and credibility across borders.

Consumer Trust

Consumer trust is one of the most critical dimensions of halal certification in Islamic economics. Certification logos serve as trust markers that influence consumer confidence, brand loyalty, and purchasing behaviour across Muslim and non-Muslim markets (Ab Talib, Chin, & Fischer, 2017). For Muslims, certification validates faith-based consumption, while for non-Muslims, it signals quality and hygiene comparable to international food safety standards (Shafie & Othman, 2006). Nevertheless, controversies such as fraudulent halal logos, inconsistent monitoring, and proliferation of unrecognized certifying bodies have eroded confidence in some markets (Ali & Suleiman, 2018). Scholars increasingly argue that halal certification should expand beyond religious authenticity to incorporate sustainability and ethical production, reflecting evolving consumer expectations (Tieman, 2017). However, gaps remain in understanding how different demographics—especially younger consumers and

digital-native buyers—interpret halal logos, and little is known about the role of e-commerce and social media in shaping halal perceptions. Future research should investigate the potential of blockchain, QR-code traceability, and mobile applications in enhancing transparency and trust in certification systems.

Regulatory Framework

The regulatory landscape of halal certification varies widely across contexts, reflecting tensions between state-led and private-sector governance. In Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, centralized state bodies like JAKIM and BPJPH dominate certification, offering credibility but often criticized for bureaucratic inefficiencies and high compliance costs (Rahman, Ahmad, & Ab Talib, 2020). In contrast, non-Muslim countries rely largely on private certifiers, resulting in competition but also inconsistencies and consumer confusion (Ali & Suleiman, 2018). The key debate revolves around whether state-controlled, decentralized, or hybrid frameworks best serve efficiency and credibility. Centralized systems promote standardization but risk rigidity; decentralized models offer flexibility but may encourage fraudulent practices. Research gaps include comparative empirical studies on how different frameworks impact trade flows, SME participation, and consumer trust. Emerging opportunities lie in hybrid governance structures that integrate state authority with private innovation, alongside digital auditing technologies that improve transparency and cross-border recognition.

Economic Impact

Halal certification significantly contributes to economic growth, particularly by enhancing brand credibility, facilitating international trade, and driving innovation. In Malaysia, the halal economy represents a multi-billion-dollar sector, contributing substantially to GDP and export performance (Ahmad & Shahrudin, 2019). Firms with certification often demonstrate stronger market performance, consumer loyalty, and access to global markets (Ab Talib, Chin, & Fischer, 2017). Certification has also supported SMEs in expanding into new markets, although high compliance costs and fragmented standards remain barriers (Rahman, Ahmad, & Ab Talib, 2020). Critics highlight that economic benefits are uneven, favouring larger corporations over SMEs, and that certification is heavily concentrated in food and beverage sectors while neglecting other high-potential domains such as logistics, finance, and digital services (Tieman, 2017). Research gaps include limited cross-sectoral studies and insufficient examination of how halal certification intersects with sustainability and fintech. Future directions should investigate cost-effective models for SMEs, integration of certification into non-food sectors, and alignment with sustainable development goals, ensuring halal certification serves as both a religious requirement and a driver of inclusive economic growth.

Documents by year

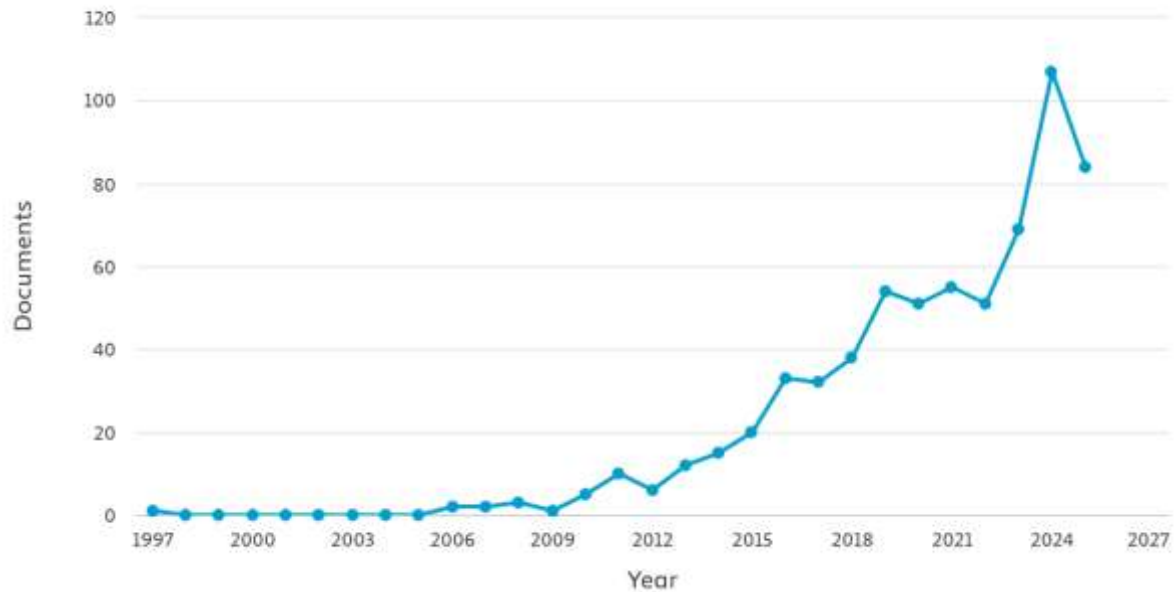


Figure 2: Document by Year

Source: Generated by SCOPUS

The graph shows a sharp increase in publications from 2022, peaking in 2024 with 107 publications. There is a significant drop in both metrics in 2025, likely due to incomplete data for the current year.

Table 1: Most-Cited Studies on Halal Certification and Islamic Economics: Authors, Year, and Contribution Areas

Authors	Year	Citations	Contribution Area
Wilson J.A.J.; Liu J.	2010	438	Reviews branding of halal in marketing; conceptualizes halal as a brand identity beyond food, exploring its potential as a global brand.
Battour M.M.; Ismail M.N.; Battor M.	2010	156	Discusses the emergence of halal tourism and Islamic hospitality; addresses challenges in Shariah-compliant standards and future growth.
Khan F.; Callanan M.	2017	84	Critically reviews terminology in halal tourism; discusses the lack of standardization in certification and the rising importance of trust.
Haleem A.; Khan M.I.	2017	81	Identifies critical success factors for halal logistics; emphasizes ICT, training, and supply chain integrity from farm to fork.
Vargas-Sánchez A.; Moral-Moral M.	2020	77	Provides literature review and expert perspectives on halal tourism; clarifies conceptual confusion and stresses the need for standardization.

Authors	Year	Citations	Contribution Area
Khan M.M.; Asad H.; Mehboob I.	2017	58	Studies consumer behavior toward halal-endorsed products in Pakistan; highlights the role of religiosity, self-identity, and behavioral control.
Mohd Suki N.; Abang Salleh A.S.	2016	51	Examines the influence of halal image on consumer intention to patronize halal stores in Malaysia; emphasizes brand trust and Shariah compliance.
Randeree K.	2019	45	Analyzes challenges in UAE halal food ecosystems; highlights interoperability issues, non-unified certification standards, and consumer trust.
Utomo S.B.; Sekaryuni R.; Widarjono A.; Tohirin A.; Sudarsono H.	2021	44	Examines the role of the Islamic finance ecosystem in supporting the halal industry in Indonesia; it combines demand and supply-side perspectives.
Demirci, M. N., Soon, J. M., & Wallace, C. A.	2016	88	Explores the positioning of food safety within halal assurance; highlights the lack of global halal standards and the potential of HACCP integration.
Abdul Rahman N.A.; Mohammad M.F.; Abdul Rahim S.; Mohd Noh H.	2018	40	Investigates implementation of halal air cargo warehouses; identifies challenges in logistics, standard compliance, and handling.

Source: Generated by SCOPUS

The reviewed studies highlight halal certification as a critical driver in Islamic economics, influencing branding, tourism, logistics, consumer behaviour, and food safety. Highly cited works emphasize its role in strengthening consumer trust and market expansion but also reveal persistent challenges, including inconsistent global standards, regulatory overlaps, and varying interpretations of Shariah compliance. While certification enhances credibility and competitiveness, particularly in tourism and supply chains, gaps remain in harmonization, awareness, and technological integration. Future research should focus on developing unified standards and exploring innovative frameworks to optimize halal certification's global impact.

Conclusion

Halal certification in Islamic economics emerges as a critical mechanism for ensuring compliance with Shariah principles while fostering global trade, consumer confidence, and industry competitiveness. This review highlighted four central themes: the persistent fragmentation of global standards, the pivotal role of certification in shaping consumer trust, the complexity of regulatory frameworks, and the significant economic contributions of a robust halal industry. Despite its growing importance, challenges remain, including inconsistent international harmonization, varying enforcement mechanisms, and limited empirical evidence on long-term economic outcomes. Ongoing debates also center on the commodification of halal values and the credibility of certification bodies. To advance both scholarship and practice, future research should prioritize developing unified global standards, exploring the integration

of technology in certification processes, and examining the socio-economic implications of halal industries in emerging markets. Practically, greater collaboration between regulators, industry stakeholders, and educational institutions is essential to enhance transparency, build trust, and unlock the full potential of halal certification as a driver of ethical and sustainable economic growth.

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