

## Young Muslim Consumers in Manado: Investigation of Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty towards Halal Labeled Fast Food

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**Abstract:** *This research aims to explore the role of young Muslim consumer satisfaction and its antecedents and consequences. The research sample was 100 young Muslim respondents who visited fast food restaurants in Manado City at least twice in the last month and were aged 18-25 years. Data was collected through a questionnaire survey conducted in various locations within Manado. The analysis employed the Structural Equation Model with Partial Least Square methodology. The findings indicate that halal labeling, price perception, product quality, and customer satisfaction directly influence customer loyalty. However, the indirect impact reveals that price perception does not significantly affect customer loyalty through satisfaction. The research results demonstrate that the satisfaction of young Muslim consumers with halal labeling and product quality enhances their commitment to halal products.*

**Keywords:** *customer satisfaction; halal labeling; customer loyalty; price perception; Muslim consumers in Manado city*

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, the development of the halal industry has experienced a very significant increase so that many parties are interested in this matter. According to data from the Global Islamic Economic Report 2017/2018 (Reuters, 2018), halal business is seen in trend indicators in seven industry categories that continue to increase, including Islamic financial services, halal food and beverages, halal tourism, fashion, media, halal pharmaceuticals and cosmetics and recreation. In each product, all sectors carry the halal concept. This is to optimize the development of the Islamic economy. The sharia financial services category and the halal food and beverage sector are the highest categories compared to other sectors. In 2016, the value of expenditure on food and drinks categorized as halal by Muslims reached \$1.24 trillion, and will increase to \$1.93 trillion in 2022.

The development of franchise businesses in the food industry, especially fast food restaurants, is currently booming in Indonesia. This can cause intense competition between business actors in attracting customers, especially for Indonesia as a developing country (Parmitasari & Rusnawati, 2023). Fast food restaurant brands can be recognized as TOP Brands according to a national survey conducted by Frontier Consulting Group (Top Brand Award, 2018). The TOP Brand Index survey phase 1 in 2018 showed that KFC was the most popular fast food restaurant with 42.7% of the vote, followed by McDonald's 24.3%, A&W 6.3%, Hoka-Hoka Bento 5.8%, and Richeese Factory 2.7%. In 2019 KFC remained the most popular with 26.2% of the vote, followed by McDonald's 22.4%, A&W 5.4% and Hoka-Hoka Bento 5.4%, and Richeese Factory 4.3%. In 2020, KFC was still the most popular with 26.4% of the vote, followed by McDonald's 22.8%, A&W 6.5%, Hoka-Hoka Bento 5.9%, and Richeese Factory 4.9%. In 2021 KFC received 27.2% of the vote, followed by McDonald's 26.0%, Hoka-Hoka Bento 8.5%, A&W 7.9% and Richeese Factory 5.9%. Finally, in 2022 KFC continues to lead with 27.2% of the vote, followed by McDonald's 26.2%, Hoka-Hoka Bento 9.4%, A&W 7.6%, and Richeese Factory 4.7%.

KFC, McDonald's, A&W, Hoka-Hoka Bento, Richeese Factory produce fast food which is a type of food that is easy to serve, packaged and processed and easy to prepare. Typically, these foods are produced by food processing companies that use modern equipment and a variety of additives to maintain freshness and improve taste. Instant food often consists of pre-packaged dishes, such as sandwiches, kebabs, salads, nuggets, instant noodles, and others. Professor K.H. Ibrahim Hosen, who served as the Chairman of the MUI Fatwa Commission from 1980 to 2000, asserted that a product might be deemed questionable if its technological processing has altered the original form of the raw material to the extent that it is no longer recognizable. Additionally, in the Qur'an, Allah Subhanahu Wata'ala, in Surah Al-Maidah verse 3, advises Muslims to refrain from consuming foods and beverages that contain haram elements. Similarly, products that lack clear classification as halal or haram, or remain uncertain, should be avoided by Muslims (BPS).

In Indonesia, these fast food restaurants are labeled halal through the implementation of Law Number 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Guarantees and Government Regulation Number 31 of 2019, which serve as regulatory frameworks. These regulations stipulate that the halal label serves as an indicator of a product's halal status. The definition of a halal label, as outlined in Law 33/2014, includes a specific halal logo to be determined by the Minister of Religion (Minister of Law and Human Rights, 2014). The issuance and revocation of Halal Certificates and Halal Labels on products fall under the purview of the Halal Product Guarantee Organizing Agency (BPJPH). Businesses that have obtained a Halal Certificate are obliged to display the Halal Label on certified products (Harahap et al., 2021). For Muslim

consumers, the presence of a halal label is crucial, as it serves as a religious endorsement for products that have been certified and adhere to Islamic Food Law (Abdul et al., 2009; Ahmed, 2008; Wilson & Liu, 2010). Particularly for devout Muslims, the halal label becomes a paramount consideration in their food choices. Consistent with this perspective, research by Verbeke et al. (2013) indicates that Muslim consumers are willing to pay premium prices for meat labeled as certified halal in Islamic butcher shops. Numerous studies conducted in Islamic-majority countries, such as Malaysia or Indonesia, affirm the importance of halal certification for Muslim consumers when making purchasing decisions (Amat et al., 2014; Farhan & Andriansyah, 2016; Sukesti & Budiman, 2014).

In Indonesia, Soesilowati et al. (2010) in their research found five relatively interrelated factors influencing the behavior of Muslims in consuming halal food. Firstly, the level of awareness among Muslims regarding Halal and Haram foods is quite high, especially in choosing foods that need further processing before eating, items such as meat, fish and vegetables. They consistently place a high priority on Halal issues when they buy food, buy meat, or choose a restaurant. Second, the Indonesian Government's role in promoting and controlling religious behavior regarding the consumption of halal food is considered a bit insensitive. Most respondents stated that religious behavior laws and religious leaders enforce their decision to consume halal food. Thirdly, there is a positive correlation between the level of religiosity among respondents and their heightened concern regarding the consumption of halal food. This heightened level of religiosity is shaped by factors such as religious experiences and educational background, with respondents who have received education in Islamic boarding schools demonstrating greater vigilance and concern regarding the halal status of their food. Additionally, fourthly, a significant portion of respondents continues to place importance on the presence of a Halal label on food packaging and within dining establishments. The research findings indicate a prevailing trust in the Halal label issued by MUI compared to other Halal labels. The majority of respondents expressed that even with the higher prices of halal products, their purchasing behavior of halal food items remains unaffected. Lastly, individuals with higher educational attainment, middle-income earners, housewives, and younger age groups exhibit a heightened interest and consideration in the consumption of halal food.

On the other hand, more and more researchers point to the fact that there is uncertainty regarding halal quality among Muslim consumers (Bonne & Verbeke, 2008; Lever & Miele, 2012). In other words, the level of Muslim confidence in the health and safety of halal certified products can vary depending on certain conditions (Shafiq et al., 2015). Shafiq et al., (2015) showed that participants only trusted green or black and white halal logos and judged the others as fake, even though halal logos can be officially changed as desired by the manufacturer and can take different colors (Mahmood, 2011). This may mean that in some situations the halal label could even distract Muslim consumers from perceiving the product in a positive way. In our research, we assume that this may occur to be the case when there is an explicit sign of "halal" (i.e. a halal label).

Consumers rely on various indicators when making purchasing decisions, with some directly linked to the intrinsic quality attributes of a product, as outlined by Blanco et al. (2007). These intrinsic attributes define the product's function and cannot be altered without changing the nature of the product itself. For instance, in food purchases, individuals may seek products with specific taste or aroma (e.g., sweet) or those crafted with health-conscious ingredients. On the other hand, others may concentrate on extrinsic characteristics not physically inherent to the product, such as price, brand, origin, or packaging features (Blanco

et al., 2007; Maison & Gregg, 2016). This study aims to investigate whether extrinsic cues associated with the product, specifically the halal label, can impact positive perceptions of the product among young Muslim consumers who prioritize adherence to Islamic law. Additionally, we include product quality as an intrinsic attribute and another extrinsic cue, namely, price perception.

This research focuses on young consumers who consume fast food and was specifically conducted in the city of Manado, where the majority of the population adheres to religions other than Islam, something that few researchers have done. There needs to be a study for Muslim youth in choosing fast food restaurants based on their halal labels (Pradana et al., 2020). Although research regarding halal labels in the food and beverage sector has been researched before, the gap in these findings shows the need for research in the food and beverage sector to continue, especially in research that discusses the consumption patterns of Muslim youth, which still requires in-depth study, so that it can be valuable information for the industry in increasing consumer confidence, especially in the food sector. The novelty of this research study is finding the consumption patterns of Muslim youth in the city of Manado, including the antecedents of satisfaction and loyalty as well as the specific role of satisfaction that can encourage the creation of loyalty. This research also integrates product quality and price perceptions with halal labeling to increase insight and knowledge about marketing and purchasing behavior of young Muslims in consuming halal products. In the context of halal ready-to-eat food products, research focuses on young consumers because they like challenges and new things. This will also answer the extent to which young consumers choose halal products because of their beliefs.

This research uses a quantitative approach where the parameters and presentation of research results are presented in the form of numbers and then interpreted. The population in this research is customers of fast food products in the city of Manado. Using a purposive sampling technique, samples were taken with the following criteria: (1) adherents of the Islamic religion, (2) regular customers with a minimum of more than 2 visits, and (3) aged 18-25 years because it targets the younger generation who have initiative to act hedonistically without abandoning religious attributes. The data source was obtained by distributing questionnaires to potential respondents according to predetermined criteria. The questionnaire is divided into six sections. The first section contains the demographic parameters of the respondents, namely age, gender, shopping location, and purchase frequency. The second part contains the halal label measurement parameters adopted from (Sobari et al., 2022). The third part is a price perception measurement parameter adapted from (Han & Kim, 2009; Hanaysha, 2016b, 2016a). The fourth section discusses product quality measurement parameters adopted from (Hanaysha, 2016b; Ryu et al., 2012). The fifth section contains satisfaction measurement parameters adopted from (Hanaysha, 2016a; Qin & Prybutok, 2009). Finally, the sixth section is the loyalty measurement parameters adopted from (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019; Gong & Yi, 2018; Ryu et al., 2012). All parameters use a 5-point Likert Scale and testing uses the Smart-PLS program, where the outer model and inner model are used to answer the research objectives.

## **DISCUSSION**

This research tries to answer the extent to which young consumers choose halal products based on their beliefs. The result is to find out previous satisfaction and loyalty as well as specific role satisfaction that can encourage the creation of loyalty. In the context of ready-to-eat halal food products, research focuses on young consumers because they like

challenges and new things. Smart-PLS 3.0 was used to investigate relationships within a research and hypothesis testing framework.

### Respondent data

There were 100 respondents collected and suitable for use in this research. For more details, see Table 1 below. Tabel 1. *Respondent data*

	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
< 20	20	20
20 – 22	33	33
23 - 25	47	47
Gender		
Males	42	42
Females	58	58
Location		
KFC	41	41
McDonald	33	33
A&W	11	11
Richeese Factory	9	9
Burger King	6	6
Frequency		
< 5x	35	35
6 – 10	44	44
> 10 x	21	21

Descriptive data (see Table 1) shows that 47% of respondents were from the 23–25 year age group, 33% were 20–22 years old, and 20% of respondents were 20 years and under. 58% of the respondents were women and 42% men. 41% of respondents have visited KFC, 33% McDonalds, 11% A&W, 9% Richeese Factory, and only 6% have visited Burger King. Of these participants, 35% visited fast food restaurants less than five times a month, 44% visited 6-10 times a month, and 21% visited more than ten times a month.

### Measurement model (outer model)

The outer model analysis is summarized in Table 2, which is confirmed to have very good reliability and validity (Asfiah, 2021).

Tabel 2. Construct Validity And Reliability

Constructs /Item	Loading Factor	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
Halal Labeling		0.811	0.875	0.636
X1.1	0.774			
X1.2	0.814			
X1.3	0.811			
X1.4	0.790			
Perceived price		0.813	0.877	0.644
X2.1	0.625			
X2.2	0.880			
X2.3	0.795			
X2.4	0.882			
Product quality		0.837	0.890	0.671
X3.1	0.840			
X3.2	0.759			
X3.2	0.837			
X3.4	0.838			
Satisfaction		0.885	0.920	0.742
Y1.1	0.895			
Y1.2	0.823			
Y1.3	0.873			
Y1.4	0.854			
Loyalty		0.818	0.880	0.671
Y2.1	0.762			
Y2.2	0.812			
Y2.3	0.823			
Y2.4	0.818			

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 3.0 (2023)

Table 2 shows that all construct measurement parameters have loading factors greater than 0.6. The Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value is above 0.8, where halal labeling has the smallest value (0.811) and satisfaction has the largest value (0.885). Meanwhile, all constructs have AVE values above 0.6. Thus, the outer model test has met the requirements for further testing. Furthermore, discriminant validity testing can be seen in Table 3.

Tabel 3. Discriminant Validity

Variables	Halal labeling	Loyalty	Perceived price	Product quality	Satisfaction
Halal labeling	0.797				
Loyalty	0.598	0.804			
Perceived price	0.419	0.555	0.802		
Product Quality	0.539	0.654	0.466	0.810	
Satisfaction	0.514	0.668	0.500	0.577	0.862

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 3.0 (2023)

Based on the results of construct validity and reliability, it can be said that all loading scores are above 0.5. Therefore, no indicators should be removed from the investigation model. Discriminant validity can be assessed by looking at the AVE score which must be above 0.5. Table 2 shows that all AVE scores have sufficient values. Discriminant validity is good.

**Structural Model (inner model)**

After testing the outer model, the next step is to test the direct and indirect effects between variables as shown in Table 4.

Tabel 4 . Hypothesis testing

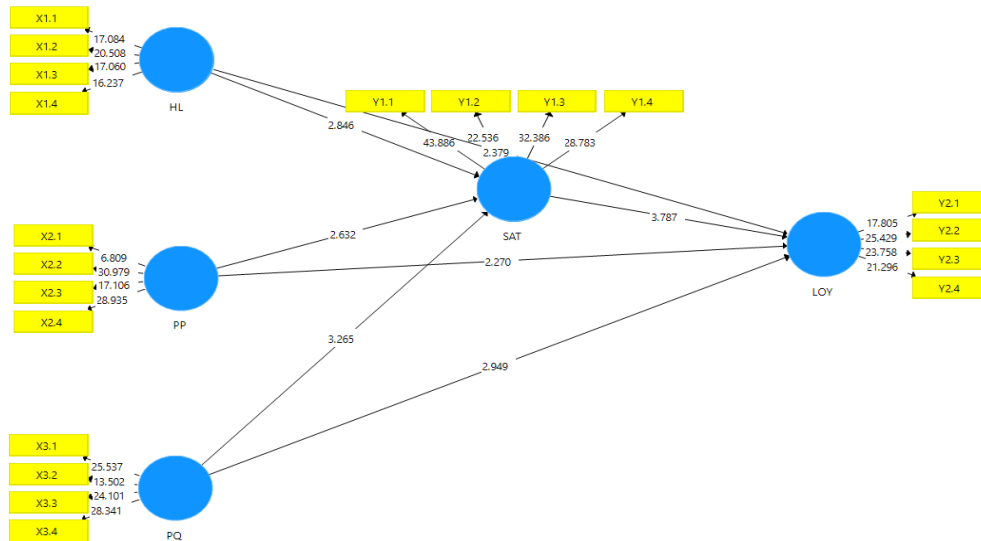
Variable	Direct Path Coefficient	t Statistic	Indirect Path Coefficient	t Statistic	Total Path Coefficient	t Statistic
H1: HL – LOY	0.216	2.379*	0.070	2.368*	0.286	3.400*
H2: HL – SAT	0.228	2.846*			0.228	2.846*
H3: PP – LOY	0.182	2.270*	0.076	1.906	0.258	3.814*
H4: PP – SAT	0.246	2.632*			0.246	2.632*
H5: PQ – LOY	0.275	2.949*	0.105	2.093*		0.379
H6: PQ – SAT	0.340	3.265*			0.340	3.265*
H7: SAT - LOY	0.308	3.787*			0.308	3.787*

*Note. HL: halal labeling, PP: perceived price, PQ: product quality, SAT: Satisfaction, LOY: loyalty; Significance \*0.05*

Source: Data processed with SmartPLS 3.0 (2023)

Based on the test results, the direct effect on Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 shows that halal labeling has a significant effect on loyalty (0.216) and satisfaction (0.228). The results of Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 show that price perception has a significant effect on loyalty (0.182) and satisfaction (0.246). The results of Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 show that product quality has a significant effect on loyalty (0.275) and satisfaction (0.340). Then, the results of testing hypothesis 7 show that satisfaction has a significant effect on loyalty (0.308). The results of the direct effect show that almost all variables have a significant influence. Meanwhile, the results of the indirect influence show that price perception does not have a significant effect on loyalty through satisfaction.

Figure 2. Testing of the structural model from the conceptual model



The analysis results indicate that satisfaction can be predicted by all factors leading to halal labeling, product quality, and price perception. The inclusion of halal labeling contributes to consumer satisfaction as it ensures both cleanliness and spiritual comfort, as highlighted in the study by Ardyan et al. (2021). The consumption of halal products fosters a sense of safety in consumers through health guarantees and comfort by aligning with their religious values, preventing any conflicts with firmly held beliefs. This finding is consistent with the research of Astuti & Asih (2021). Simultaneously, the impact of halal labeling on loyalty is influenced by religiosity, with consumers feeling secure about the food, subsequently returning due to perceptions of hygienic safety and alignment with religious values. Trust in the halal quality of products encourages consumers to remain loyal, avoiding a shift to other products lacking guaranteed halal quality, as indicated by the trend identified in the findings of Muflih & Juliana (2021).

This research highlights the positive and significant influence of halal labels on Muslim customer loyalty, which is consistent with the findings of (Quoquab et al., 2020) and (Hasib & Khoirul Anwar, 2020). According to (Quoquab et al., 2020) manufacturers must prioritize the promotion of halal labels as a marketing strategy to attract and retain Muslim customers. Muslim customers consider the halal label as a guarantee of halal certification, and this is one of the main factors influencing their purchasing decisions. Therefore, the person in charge of the fast food kiosk must ensure that the halal label is clearly displayed in the outlet. (Karimah & Darwanto, 2021) argue that having a halal label written on the packaging will convince customers that the product is fit for consumption (halal), especially because Muslim customers prefer food products with a certified halal label from a trustworthy halal authority. Therefore, fast food outlets in Manado City need to focus more on their products by displaying halal labels clearly, so that it will increase the loyalty of young Muslim customers towards fast food outlet products. The visibility of the halal label on product packaging is the most important factor in halal labeling. When purchasing fast food products, Muslim customers tend to look for the halal label. Manufacturers are required to maintain halal certification and include halal labels on product packaging and outlets. This



increases Muslim customers' confidence and trust in the halal status and safety of products for consumption, which leads to the development of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Meanwhile, price perceptions also influence consumer satisfaction. This is because, in halal products, the worth and advantages offered extend beyond just monetary value; they encompass spiritual and prestige values. The spiritual value arises from adhering to rules grounded in faith. Conversely, the prestige value is derived from the consumption of products from franchise restaurants, typically catering to social classes with above-average income. Overall, the outcomes of this study align with assertions made in earlier research studies, such as those by Mamuaya & Pandowo (2020) and Zainuddin et al. (2019). On the other hand, price perception also influences loyalty, where consumers feel that the price offered is proportional. Therefore, consumers intend to avoid looking for other alternatives and commit themselves to visiting the same place again. This is proven by the frequency of purchases of respondents who have made purchases at least twice. Thus, the findings of this research support Sobari et al., (2022) which found a positive response from consumers. (Nuryadin, 2007) explains that price fairness for society is required by law which prohibits the sale of products at prices above a certain threshold. Although Muslim customers do not consider price when determining product loyalty, the halal labeling process requires additional costs such as standardized Islamic ingredients, special equipment that complies with Islamic law, hygienic serving practices, and halal certification, resulting in higher prices for products. such as fast food products. (Dimiyati & Subagio, 2016) stated that price has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. (Safrizal, 2015) also states that price has a positive and significant effect on Muslim customer satisfaction. (Sitepu, 2016) explains that in achieving a level of satisfaction, Muslims must consider various factors, including ensuring that the goods or services they consume are halal, avoiding excessive consumption, avoiding waste (*tabdzir*), and not wasting (*ishraf*). Therefore, the satisfaction of Muslims is based on the benefits obtained from the price of the product, whether it is valuable or not, because the virtue of worship obtained from what one consumes must not be in vain.

Research results show that high quality products are able to predict consumer satisfaction (Syariati et al., 2023). In this research, products that are guaranteed to be halal will certainly provide satisfaction for their users because they have reliability, performance and suitability that meet consumer expectations. This follows previous findings (Pradana et al., 2020), where product quality that meets consumer expectations encourages satisfaction. The superiority of a product is reflected in the quality inherent in the product. For consumers, there is no strong reason to change brands if the product they need has shown performance that exceeds their expectations. High quality products will certainly strengthen consumers' emotions to attach themselves to the product. This is what encourages consumers to be loyal and avoid switching behavior and is in accordance with previous studies conducted (Hanaysha, 2016b) in their research in the fast food sector. (Agus Khoironi et al., 2018) stated that product quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. (Aziz & Chok, 2013) state that there are two points of view regarding quality food. From an Islamic perspective, food quality must meet several criteria, such as hygienic, safe and healthy. On the other hand, from a layman's point of view, food quality is seen by comparing the food sold with competitors' products or by providing food products that can meet demand and meet consumer needs. Therefore, prioritizing product quality can increase benefits and obtain customer satisfaction, this reflects the Prophet's morals in trading (Nirwana & Rahim, 2020).

As satisfied consumers, their tendency to respond to satisfaction is to recommend to others, make repeat purchases, and become loyal consumers. Emotionally, satisfied consumers will bind themselves, especially because belief in halal products guarantees their health and spiritual value. This finding is in line with (Muflih & Juliana, 2021), which significantly shows the influence of satisfaction on loyalty. Another finding that cannot be ruled out is the possibility of a mediating effect caused by satisfaction. In this study, satisfaction was able to mediate the relationship between halal labeling on loyalty and product quality on loyalty. Meanwhile, satisfaction plays a different role in the relationship between price perception and loyalty. Thus, satisfaction plays a spatial mediating role. These findings explain the ability of satisfaction as a construct that can strengthen consumer commitment to halal products which originates from halal labeling and product quality.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study state that halal labeling, price perception and product quality can positively predict the satisfaction of young Muslim customers in Manado City. Likewise, the loyalty of young Muslim customers in Manado City is significantly influenced by halal labeling, price perception, product quality and customer satisfaction. Another important finding regarding the role of young Muslim customer satisfaction in Manado City was also found to strengthen the relationship with customer loyalty which comes from halal labeling and product quality but failed to mediate price perception with customer loyalty.

The practical recommendation is for fast-food enterprises to consistently enhance customer satisfaction, as it has been demonstrated that the connection between halal labeling and product quality reinforces customer loyalty. Committed customers bring advantages to the company by repeatedly making purchases, thereby boosting profitability. Additionally, they offer recommendations to others, contributing to marketing gains, and exhibit resistance to switching to rival products.

This study comes with certain limitations. Firstly, its focus is solely on fast-food restaurants in Manado City, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other cities and different types of restaurants. Secondly, the investigation only encompasses three antecedents of customer satisfaction—halal labeling, product quality, and price perception—while other literature may propose additional factors that could influence customer satisfaction. Thirdly, although the study explores the mediating role of customer satisfaction, there may be other mediators as suggested by alternate literature. These constraints underscore the importance for both practitioners and academics to undertake further research in the future, particularly within the context of halal products, given the growing interest and faith in these products.

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