
**THE URGENCY OF HALAL CERTIFICATION ACCORDING TO GEN Z AS
BUSINESS ACTORS AND CONSUMERS IN VIRAL CULINARY: CASE STUDY
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Abstract

The culinary trend that spreads through social media is apparently not a mild phenomenon. He reshaped the way Gen Z consumes food as well as the way they see business opportunities and in it, questions about the halalness of products began to be carried away. This research is also here to answer one thing that has gone unnoticed seriously: how urgent halal certification really is in the eyes of Gen Z, both those who are pioneering the culinary business and those who become consumers every day, in the midst of the viral culinary frenzy of Pamekasan City. This research does not stop at the conceptual level. The choice of empirical legal methods with case studies is not without reason. This approach allows researchers to really hear the voice of the perpetrator in the field, rather than just fumbling from afar. In-depth interviews and direct observations were conducted on business actors and Gen Z consumers whose lives have indeed been integrated with the digital culinary ecosystem. And from there, one thing becomes clear: halal certification is seen not as a complement, but as a pillar. It is considered important to protect consumers, build trust, and provide a strong legal basis for culinary businesses in the midst of rapidly changing trends. But the reality on the ground is not always in line with expectations. Awareness exists, but the execution is stuck. The understanding of halal is still shallow in many circles, certification is often considered an administrative matter that can be set aside, and the management process itself still feels burdensome for MSME actors whose resources are limited. What's even more surprising is that Gen Z consumers of the supposedly critical generation often buy without asking. Interesting content on the screen moves their hands faster than information about the halalness of the product. Ultimately, this research carries a broader message than just the matter of labels on the packaging. Halal touches on social aspects, has economic weight, and holds real strategic value for the sustainability of modern culinary businesses. Theoretically, this study enriches the understanding of the halal lifestyle of Gen Z through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior, a framework that has been used more often in other contexts. In practical terms, the recommendations are clear and urgent: strengthen halal literacy from the roots, and simplify the certification process so that it is no longer a barrier for growing culinary MSMEs.

Keywords: Halal Certification, Gen Z, Viral Culinary, Halal Lifestyle, Culinary MSMEs

INTRODUCTION

The development of the halal industry globally shows an increasingly significant trend as public awareness of the consumption of products in accordance with sharia principles increases. The global halal market has now developed into one of the largest economic segments in the world, covering the food, cosmetics, pharmaceutical, and tourism sectors, with projected market value that continues to increase from year to year. Global data shows that the halal market is not only limited to Muslim-majority countries, but is also expanding to international markets as part of an inclusive and health-conscious modern lifestyle. This phenomenon has a direct impact on the increasing need for halal product guarantees, especially in the culinary sector which is dynamic, innovative, and rapidly changing according to market tastes. Halal instrument certification is crucial in ensuring consumer trust while increasing the competitiveness of products in the global market, especially in the increasingly fierce competition between business actors. (Tiara Rochmawati, 2025). He emphasized that the existence of halal certification is able to increase consumer perception of quality and trust in food products, which ultimately has an impact on loyalty and repeat purchase decisions. (Nurazizah Azizah et al., 2024). This condition shows that the urgency of halal certification is not only religious and normative, but also has economic and strategic dimensions that cannot be ignored in the context of globalization and free market competition.

The development of viral culinary trends driven by social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube has also strengthened and accelerated the dynamics of public consumption, especially in Gen Z who were born between 1997 and 2012. This group is known as digital natives who are highly responsive, adaptive, and enthusiastic to food trends that are popular on digital platforms, often consuming them as part of their expression of identity and lifestyle. (Yulianto et al., 2023) Viral food products such as Korean food, bubble tea, ramen, or various types of international street food are often consumed impulsively without considering the halal aspect in depth, especially related to the raw materials, processing process, and source of the product. (Zenita Alvina Fauziah et al., 2025). It shows that Gen Z's purchasing decisions for viral food products are significantly influenced by halal literacy and the existence of halal certification as a signal of reliable trust. (Abdul Rosyid, 2025). The halal lifestyle in Gen Z is still in the transition stage between cognitive awareness and real practice in daily life, which indicates a gap between knowledge and action. This phenomenon shows that there is a fairly serious mismatch between the rapidly growing consumption trend and halal principles that should be the main consideration for Muslim consumers.

The context of this local research is focused on Pamekasan Regency which has unique and strategic characteristics as an area with the majority of the population is Muslim and the very rapid growth of culinary Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in recent years. This area is also known to have a strong and deep-rooted religious culture, so the issue of halal products becomes very relevant and sensitive in the social life of its people. However, the development of viral culinary in this region shows that there is a quite real shift in consumption patterns among Gen Z, who tend to follow trends without always verifying the halal aspects of the products they consume. Food products that are currently viral and popular on social media are often quickly adopted by local businesses and consumers without adequate attention to the halal certification aspect that should be the main scene. This



condition reflects the real tension between the religious values that have been the identity of the Pamekasan people and the rapid influence of globalization and social media-based consumption culture. Therefore, this study is very important to understand in depth and contextual these dynamics in the context of a specific locality.

The research gap in this study lies in the lack of studies that simultaneously integrate the perspective of Gen Z as business actors as well as consumers in one complete framework, especially in the context of rapidly growing viral culinary. Most previous research has only focused on one dimension of roles, either viewing Gen Z solely as consumers who make purchasing decisions, or as business actors who make production decisions (U I N Maulana, and Malik Ibrahim, 2025). The analysis of the pressure is more on the aspect of consumer purchase decisions, while attention (Haryanti et al., 2024). to the interest in halal certification from the perspective of business actors when viewed through this separate and partial approach has not been able to provide a comprehensive and comprehensive picture of the urgency of halal certification that is actually felt by Gen Z in its dual capacity. The novelty and main contribution of this research lies in the integration of the two perspectives in one integrated and complementary framework. This holistic approach is expected to make a more substantial and meaningful contribution in understanding the phenomenon of halal certification in the viral culinary era.

The purpose of this research is to analyze in depth the urgency of halal certification according to Gen Z in their capacity as business actors and at the same time consumers in the context of increasingly massive viral culinary. This research also aims to identify and map the factors that affect the attitudes, intentions, and real behaviors of Gen Z towards halal certification, both driving and inhibiting. The benefit of this research theory is to enrich and expand the existing literature on consumer and business behavior from a halal economic perspective, especially in the digital era. In addition, this research is expected to develop and expand the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior in a more specific, contextual, and relevant context to the conditions of millennial Muslims and Gen Z. Practically, the results of this research can be a concrete policy reference for business actors, local governments, and halal certification institutions in improving the scope and quality of halal certification adoption in the culinary sector. Thus, this research has high relevance and real use value, both academically and practically for the development of an inclusive and sustainable halal ecosystem.

The urgency of this research is further strengthened by the urgent need for innovative solutions that are able to effectively bridge the gap between normative awareness and the actual implementation of halal certification in the field. The proposed approach is the integration of in-depth halal literacy enhancement with digital strategies that are relevant, attractive, and in accordance with the characteristics and preferences of Gen Z as active technology users. (Fitriyani Nurul, 2026). The importance of Gen Z's strategic role in driving the transformation of the halal ecosystem through product innovation, the use of digital platforms, and an inclusive community-based approach. This literacy-based and digitalization-based solution is expected to significantly increase the intrinsic motivation of business actors to carry out halal certification, while strengthening consumers' critical awareness in making consumption choices in accordance with sharia principles. With the

strong synergy between the two roles of Gen Z as responsible producers and smart consumers, a sustainable, competitive, and globally competitive halal ecosystem can be realized. This research is expected to be a strategic first step in developing more effective, measurable, and applicable recommendations and strategies in increasing the implementation of halal certification in the viral culinary sector in Indonesia.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The theoretical basis of this research refers to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen, which explains that individual behavior is systematically influenced by three main elements, namely attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms of the social environment, and perceived behavioral control over the individual's ability to perform certain actions. This theory has developed into a key analytical framework that is widely used in explaining various forms of consumption behavior and business decisions, including in the context of decision-making related to halal certification. (P Haryanti et al., 2024). Halal literacy affects the positive attitude of business actors which then has a direct impact on the interest and intention to carry out halal certification as part of a responsible business strategy. The evolution of theoretical thinking shows that external factors such as digital trends, social media influence, and peer pressure are also increasingly playing a dominant role in shaping Gen Z's behavior and decisions, both as consumers and as business actors. Therefore, the TPB approach has become very relevant and appropriate to analyze the complex relationship between halal literacy, attitudes, social norms, and real behavior in the context of an ever-evolving viral culinary.

The main problem that is the focus of this study lies in the low level of halal certification in culinary business actors, although consumer awareness of the importance of halal products continues to show a significant increase. Many business actors, especially from Gen Z who are just starting a business, do not consider halal certification as an urgent need, but just a burdensome administrative obligation. (Gina at all Fitriyani Nurul, 2026). Although Gen Z has great potential and a strategic role in encouraging ecosystem halal certification through the application of technology and innovation, its implementation in business practices is still not optimal and even. This condition is exacerbated by the rise of viral culinary products that do not always have a clear halal guarantee, both in terms of ingredients, processes, and the supply chain involved. The widening mismatch between the demand of halal conscious consumers and the readiness of business actors to meet halal standards is a structural problem that needs to be addressed immediately through a comprehensive and collaborative approach. The urgency of solving this problem lies in the need to increase awareness, motivation, and capacity both from the producer and consumer sides at the same time.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a type of empirical legal research with a case study approach that focuses on the urgency of halal certification according to Gen Z as business actors and consumers in the viral culinary phenomenon in Pamekasan Regency, which was carried out

in the period from January to April 2026. Empirical legal research is chosen because it allows researchers to not only examine legal norms doctrinally and textually, but also to examine directly how these norms are also implemented, protected, and complied with in the actual social reality of society, including in the context of rapidly developing culinary economic activities. The case study approach is used to obtain an in-depth, comprehensive, and contextual understanding of the phenomenon of halal certification that occurs in the specific scope of certain regions and social groups, so that research findings can accurately reflect the peculiarities of local conditions and not lose their social nuances. This approach is specifically used to understand the implementation of legal norms in social practice contextually through direct interaction with the research subject, so as to be able to describe the empirical reality related to compliance with halal certification in production and consumption activities (Hasan Syahrizal and M. Syahrani Jailani, 2023). Thus, this chosen approach is considered the most appropriate and appropriate to answer exploratory and interpretive research questions regarding the dynamics of halal legal awareness among Gen Z in the midst of a growing viral culinary flow.

The research subjects consisted of Gen Z who played a dual role as business actors and consumers in the viral culinary ecosystem in Pamekasan, each as many as five informants from each group, so that the total number of informants was ten people who were seen as representative to produce rich and in-depth data. Gen Z was chosen as the main subject because this group has an increasingly dominant role in the digital-based culinary economy landscape, as well as being the most active and responsive segment of consumers in interacting with viral food trends on various social media platforms. The criteria for selecting informants were carefully designed, covering the ages between 18 and 27 years old, actively using social media platforms as a means of information and daily interaction, and being directly involved in culinary business activities or consuming viral culinary products regularly as part of their lifestyle. Informants were selected using random sampling techniques to ensure the objectivity and representativeness of the data in the study population. (Sugiyono, 2013). The application of random sampling in this study aims to ensure that every member of the population who meets the criteria has an equal chance of being selected, so that the potential for subjectivity bias in the informant selection process can be significantly minimized and the results of the research can be generalized more broadly in a relevant and meaningful context.

Data collection techniques are carried out through two main methods that complement each other, namely in-depth interviews and direct observation to viral culinary practices that include social media-based products, street food, and local MSMEs, thus allowing researchers to obtain comprehensive, authentic, and truly representative data on the field conditions contextually. In-depth interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner using a systematically designed and organized question guide, while still providing ample space for informants to express their experiences, views, and judgments freely, openly, and not limited to the pre-prepared question corridors. The interview process is specifically directed to explore the perceptions, attitudes, motivations, obstacles faced, and the level of urgency felt by the informant towards halal certification, both from the perspective of business actors who consider certification decisions in the context of their business continuity

and from the perspective of consumers who emit and consider the halal aspects of the products they consume. Observations were carried out non-participatory at viral culinary business locations that became popular consumption points in Pamekasan, in order to directly identify the friendship between business practices running in the field and halal principles that should be applied by every business actor. The combination of these two data collection techniques allows for triangulation between the strength of the information conveyed by the informant in the interview and the real conditions observed in the field, so that the level of validity and reliability of the overall research data can be maintained and properly accounted for.

Data analysis is carried out manually through systematic and semi-structured stages, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn, to ensure the validity and consistency of all research findings. (Sugiarti, 2020). At the data reduction stage, all interview results and observation notes are sorted, categorized, and strictly focused on the themes that are most relevant to the research question, so that the data is redundant, duplicate, or irrelevant can be eliminated by pinching without losing the depth of the information obtained. The data presentation stage is then carried out through the preparation of a structured and coherent descriptive narrative, equipped with a thematic categorization table and a comparison matrix between informant perspectives, which makes it easier for researchers to read patterns, tendencies, and relationships between variables holistically and thoroughly. Conclusions are drawn inductively based on empirical findings obtained from the field, while still referring to the previously constructed theoretical framework in order to maintain a strong coherence between the theoretical foundation and the actual findings. To ensure the validity of the data more comprehensively, this study also applies member checks to selected informants as a verification mechanism for the interpretation produced by the researcher, so that the possibility of distortion of meaning or misinterpretation can be detected and corrected early. With this comprehensive and layered analytical approach, the research is expected to be able to produce an in-depth, reliable, and scientifically accountable understanding of the dynamics of halal certification awareness and implementation among Gen Z in the context of viral culinary in Pamekasan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today's Gen Z Lifestyle

Gen Z is a generation that is currently entering a productive period where this young generation faces more various kinds of challenges. With the rapid development of technology, the ease of accessing various kinds of news with just the flick of a finger can change various perspectives in life. (Heather M.W. Petrelli et al., 2023). The lifestyle embraced by Gen Z will usually follow the development of existing trends, it is not uncommon for them to just follow along without knowing what they are imitating, they tend to prefer what they have just seen on social media, many influencers introduce various trends, ranging from food to consumer products. Most of the goods and products they introduce are the result of foreign countries which sometimes come from countries where the majority of citizens are not followers of

Islam so that the goods they use and consume are not clear about halal, which is still questionable.

Gen Z, who is often labeled as *flexing* and *fomo*, often pay little attention to this. So that we as consumers and business actors need to be wise in making a transaction and we also have the right to get protection and clarity about the goods and products we use. (Aang Yusril M, 2020). In Islam itself, the regulation regarding consumers reflects his relationship with Allah SWT. regarding the limits that Islam gives to us as consumers. In the use of halal goods and services so that they are in accordance with the existing sharia. consumers in the Islamic economy are not only to consume material things based on mere rationalism but also for basic spiritual, social, and environmental needs, the need for clarity about the goods and products we use and the consumption is very important, especially we as Muslims need to be careful to implement the existing Islamic law. The rise of various products and goods at this time that are circulating in the community without clarity on halal and haram labels (Dwi Agustina Kurniawati and Andi Cakravastia, 2023). For a Muslim, an item or product is closely related to worship because it affects the religious rules that bind every Muslim. Uncertainty about the existence of haram or halal labels on a product can affect public trust in an item and reduce people's purchasing power for a product and can reduce the company's productivity so that it can cause losses.

The protection of Muslim consumers in Indonesia itself is very important because Pamekasan is an area with a majority of adherents of the Islamic religion. Therefore, it is appropriate that the government in Indonesia is required to make several efforts to protect Muslim consumers for the sake of safety and comfort and trust in the products and goods they use. It is not uncommon for Muslim consumers in Indonesia to become victims of unfair trade of products and goods offered by manufacturers, one of which is with the many findings of products that use haram substances or even the process and purpose of production of these goods are not in accordance with sharia (Dwi Hidayatul Firdaus and Teguh Setyobudi, 2022). Therefore, there is a need for bodies and institutions as well as the role of the community in the realization of a halal *lifestyle* by intensively promoting halal certification in every product and item that we use every day. Halal lifestyle in various countries with a majority Muslim population will have a great impact on the country's economy because with awareness in meeting halal needs, in addition to being able to provide a sense of security and trust in the products we use, it is also a basic right for every Muslim. The urgency of halal certification on every product we use is a form of effort to deal with concerns about the products and goods we use.

In meeting the needs of daily life, all forms of basic fulfillment start from basic needs, clothing, food, and board. Consuming and using halal food and products is a basic right of every Muslim. Clarity about the halalness of a product is a mandatory need for every consumer, especially Muslim consumers. (Faculty of Law, Muhamadiyah University, and North Sumatra, 2020). In an effort to meet the needs of halal life or halal *lifestyle* at this time is a basic right for every Muslim, this is just a relationship with religious beliefs, but this is related to security, worship needs, health and the economy (Law, Mohammad, and North, 16). As business actors or producers, of course, they will be required to provide certainty about halal for the implementation of halal *lifestyle* in the Gen Z era, in addition to the role of

business actors, cooperation from the government is also needed in every regulation or policy regarding halal on every goods and products produced by every business actor. In this case, there is a need for regulations from related parties and instruments in the realization of a halal lifestyle. Gen Z is basically a generation that has a privilege in the ease of meeting needs. Gen Z can easily meet all their needs through various kinds of *e-commerce*. Now, they don't have to bother going out, with just one flick of the wrist they can already meet their needs. There are several features of *e-commerce* offered ranging from purchasing services to delivering goods, this method is certainly very easy and more efficient. Dwi Hidayatul Firdaus and Teguh Setyobudi, "The Role of Digital Platforms in Halal Certification of MSMEs After the Establishment of Law Number 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic," 136.

Fulfilling the Needs and Halal of *Filestyle* for Gen Z as Business Actors and Consumers

The rise of industrial development in the field of consumption (Muhammad Anwar Fathoni, 2020). that is developing with the ease of accessing an existing trend, Gen Z not only plays the role of consumers, not a few of them also see the existence of various trends that often occur at this time as an opportunity to run a business (Petrelli et al., 2023).. Based on the results of interviews and observations that researchers have made in the field, the ease of accessing news about hot trends among young people, also provides convenience for business actors, especially Gen Z, usually they will use social media platforms to market the products they offer. Gen Z is required to be able to open jobs or establish a business to empower their own lives by seeing opportunities around them. One example of a business in the culinary field is often found on the side of the road, in addition to colonizing their sales directly, they also sell them through social media platforms that are packed with various kinds of interesting content such as advertisements on TV. Usually, these business actors colonize their goods with small tents and container booths. traders by following existing trends such as Trend, Cromboloni, Croisont, Creeps, Fish Ball, Risol Mayo, and so on. This food trend often follows the trend of cooking and food from abroad.

Examples of viral foods among Gen Z



Interview & Live Observation



On several stamps, pictures of examples of MSME products with imported product emblazons that had gone viral and trended. These products are products produced by Gen Z. They take advantage of the opportunity by looking at the trends on social media to be used as opportunities as a business. Based on the results of interviews and observations that have been made, both as business actors and consumers, they do not understand what halal certification is and what the meaning of halal itself is, so that in the event that there are also some of them who think that halal certification is just a formality. They as consumers do not check information about the food they consume because they think that the food they buy is definitely halal, they put their trust in the seller completely. So he prefers to include a halal logo from the internet without registering the product on the halal certificate service (LPPOM). In addition, in marketing, the media used is marketing through social media in the form of advertisements displaying the food products they sell. We can easily get the fulfillment of needs in the current era, but there are several things that need to be considered, such as MSME products that usually require special attention because in general they rarely include compositions or labels regarding halal on the products they offer. One of the business actors said that in the halal certification process there were several obstacles such as They

admitted that they were stalled when they were at the stage of NIB (Business Identification Number) registration requirements or business identity numbers, they said that the process of obtaining NIB was very much and was considered troublesome.

Not infrequently they have several times several customers from them ask about the products they offer, whether there are ingredients that should not be there, and whether during the manufacturing process can be ensured safety, cleanliness, and even the hygiene of the product. The problem of questions like this that is often obtained by business actors, Gen Z who are famous for not wanting to be bothered more often take shortcuts by directly giving a halal logo on the packaging, even though such a thing is actually not justified, because in the halal certification process it is not just about giving halal stickers or logos, but there are several processes that they really have to do. Because in the process of obtaining halal certification itself, it must be clear where the goods used come from, what are the compositions of the materials used, how is the process of obtaining the materials, how is the manufacturing process, what tools are used, what kind of packaging and so on. Therefore, many MSME managers do not continue with the halal certification process because of the complexity of the process that they have to go through, starting from the completeness of several documents and the stigma that arises regarding the business identity number or business identification number must pay taxes. At this stage they as business actors also say that they do not want to increase prices, they are afraid, they as MSMEs still have to pay to obtain halal certification, because it is a small business scale with mediocre capital and little results so they are afraid that the income will be reduced if they still have to spend part of their income that is not much.

The Important Role of Halal Certification

Halal certification is a testing and assessment process carried out by the authorities to ensure that a product is in accordance with Islamic law in order to guarantee the quality of a product (Rifki Ali Reza and Nasrulloh, 2024). The important role of halal certification is an important and necessary need. Considering that as business actors and consumers alike need clarity about the products and goods used. In this case, of course, the role of the government is needed to protect the public for products and goods in circulation if there are defects in the goods, goods indicated to be dangerous, or do not meet the standards that have been set (Mughtar Ali, 2016). This is regulated in the Indonesian Law No. 33 of 2014, regarding Halal Product Assurance in article 1 (2) "Halal products are products that have been declared halal in accordance with Islamic law (Minister of Law and Human Rights, 2014). Then in PP RI No. 39 of 2021 concerning "Implementation of Halal Product Assurance" in article 2 (1) "Products that enter, circulate, and trade in Indonesian territory must be halal certified. (2) Products derived from prohibited ingredients are exempt from the obligation to be halal certified. (3) Products as intended in paragraph 2 must be given non-halal information (President of The Republic of Indonesia, 2021). In this case, it can be seen that respecting the importance of halal certification is not only limited to fixing and formalities, but is an obligation as a business actor. Considering the development of an increasingly modern era that makes it easier for business actors to market their products, of course, the existence of halal certification will be an added value for actors because the existence of halal certification on a product can increase the sense of trust from the public.

Not only giving a halal logo, however, halal if it meets several existing criteria such as, *halal Li Zatibi* halal in terms of ingredients, foodstuffs and drinks consumed must come from animal and plant ingredients that are not prohibited in Islam such as pigs, alcohol, animals that are slaughtered not in the name of Allah, blood, carcasses, intoxicating substances or substances that can be harmful. Secondly, the food does not go through a process that is forbidden in Islam as well as in the process of procuring the ingredients obtained by stealing, cheating, and so on. The last is in the way of singing, delivering and storing delivery and storage. In this case, it is also necessary to pay attention because there are several provisions in Islamic law, for example, in terms of presentation, it is not allowed to be served on a gold plate or stored in a dangerous place if it is later consumed. Therefore, the provision of halal certification should not be arbitrary because there is a special body that has been tasked with supervising products circulating in the community regarding halal certificates so that the products can guarantee that the products they use are really halal and can be held accountable (Nico Alexander Vizano, Khamaludin Khamaludin, and Mochammad Fahlevi, 2021).

Halal product certification is useful as a guarantee protection to consumers regarding the goods used to ensure their halal, starting from the materials used, the process of processing the production process to the marketing process to the marketing process to the community. This can also increase sales figures because it is not only aimed at the benefit of Muslim consumers but can also be in demand by non-Muslim people because as consumers and non-Muslim people think that halal products are proven to be of very good quality and guaranteed to be hygienic. The challenge of developing halal products through halal certification is one of the challenges for Gen Z in the current era, the obstacles experienced in previous research (Azizah et al., 2024). with what researchers have done for business actors and Gen Z consumers include the need to raise public awareness of the importance of consuming using goods that have been certified halal, the complexity of administration, the existence of the halal market in the current era of rapid trend development especially trends in western countries and other countries. Regarding the supply of halal product guarantees, starting from raw materials such as meat and finished products, then an active role in society is also needed because in fact most consumers consider that all goods traded in the majority market are halal goods because the majority of sellers are Muslims, even though not all goods and products offered by business actors are not necessarily able to guarantee their halal as they are not aware of ingredients that are not allowed in a drug or cosmetic that they assume can be believed to be a halal item but cannot be certified or proven directly (Hukum, Muhamadiyah, and Utara, 2020).

What makes this study different is its courage to place Gen Z in two roles as producers and consumers in one complete analytical framework. From there emerges a new understanding of how the dynamics of halal certification work in the era of fast-paced and unexpected viral culture. This research not only enriches the study of halal economics from the perspective of the digital generation, but also presents recommendations based on the reality of recommendations designed to strengthen the local halal ecosystem so that it is not left behind in the midst of the continuous flow of social change. The findings of this study carry a pretty clear message: the hard work is not done. The government, halal certification bodies, and educational institutions need to go further and more seriously in building halal

literacy among Gen Z, both those who are starting a business and who play a role as consumers every day. Education about halal certification can no longer rely solely on formal channels. This approach needs to be expanded to touch digital spaces that are already the main habitat of Gen Z, so that the message they want to convey is not only heard, but really permeated.

At the same time, the government needs to review the halal certification procedure which has been complained that it is too complicated. Simplification is not a luxury, it is a real need, especially for viral culinary MSME actors who have just found their momentum but are immediately faced with bureaucracy that drains time and energy. From the side of business actors, a change in perspective is also urgent. Halal certification is not a matter of meeting the requirements on paper. It is a form of moral, legal, and business responsibility to win consumer trust in an increasingly competitive market Gen Z consumers are not spared from this responsibility. Following a viral trend is not wrong, but stopping there is definitely not enough. Critical awareness needs to be cultivated questioning aspects of halal, safety, and product quality before deciding to buy is a small step that has a much bigger impact than it seems. For future research, the expansion of the study area and the use of quantitative approaches or (*mixed methods*) are highly recommended, so that the picture of Gen Z's behavior (*halal lifestyle*) in the digital era can be captured more thoroughly and accurately. In the end, all of this boils down to one common vision. When the government, business actors, consumers, and digital platforms move in one rhythm to support each other, instead of waiting for each other to have an inclusive, modern, and sustainable halal ecosystem, it is no longer just an ideal. It can become a reality that is truly realized in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

What this study finds actually shifts the way we view halal certification as a whole. It is no longer just an obligation on paper that must be fulfilled in order to avoid sanctions. More than that, halal certification has grown into a strategic instrument and a tool to build public trust, protect consumers, and maintain the sustainability of culinary businesses that now operate on a digital foundation. The city of Pamekasan, with its deeply rooted religious character, is an interesting and complex setting. Here, the flow of viral culinary consumption brought by Gen Z meets directly with the demands of sharia values that are still alive and firmly held by the community and from that meeting comes a tension that is not simple. Gen Z who stand as business actors see halal certification as an opportunity to strengthen their business position. But good intentions are not always smooth. Administrative obstacles still stand in the way, understanding of halal is still limited, and the technical process of certification often feels strange and complicated. On the other hand, Gen Z as consumers show a different face: their movements are fast, their buying decisions are impulsive, and social media is almost the only compass. Even so, there are positive signals that are worth noting that their awareness of the importance of halal assurance is slowly starting to grow. This condition ultimately confirms one thing: changing the halal ecosystem is not enough just through regulations. It takes an educational, digital, and truly participatory approach according to the way the younger generation thinks and moves. Halal certification needs to be reinterpreted as a symbol of integrity, a guarantee of consumption safety, as well as part

of social identity in the ever-evolving halal economic landscape. The implementation roadmap formulated in this study places halal literacy as a non-negotiable departure point. Strengthening it cannot be done by one party alone, it requires real collaboration between local governments, certification bodies, MSME actors, the Gen Z community, and digital platforms. The most urgent first step is to build an education that speaks the language of Gen Z: visual, dynamic, and flowing through social media channels and the creative communities they already inhabit. After the foundation is formed, attention needs to be diverted to simplifying the bureaucracy of halal certification, especially for small-scale viral culinary MSMEs who have been the most trapped in the complexity of procedures. On the horizon, the integration between *the halal lifestyle* and the digital creative economy is expected to give birth to a culture of consumption and production that is not only competitive, but also responsible and sustainable.

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