

Research Article

Business Spirituality: The Role of Religious Awareness, Institutional Support, Competitive Advantage, Consumer Trust in Motivating Halal Certification MSMEs

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to examine religious awareness, institutional support, competitive advantage, and consumer trust, which influence halal certification motivation and are mediated by halal behavioral intentions in MSMEs. The researchers used a survey method for primary data collection. Respondents were the Muria Raya Entrepreneurship Group (WMR) in Kudus Regency. Furthermore, we used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS SEM) analysis on 168 respondents to test the hypotheses. We found that Religious awareness, institutional support, competitive advantage, and consumer trust have a significant influence on the motivation for halal certification in MSMEs. Indirectly, religious awareness, institutional support, competitive advantage, and consumer trust have a significant influence on the motivation for halal certification in MSMEs through halal behavioral intentions. The findings highlight the importance of halal certification in enhancing MSMEs' competitiveness and consumer trust. Additionally, the study suggests that MSMEs should strengthen their commitment to religious values and institutional support to increase their halal certification motivation and align with market demand for halal products.

Keywords: Consumer Trust; Competitive Advantage; Institutional Support; Motivation Behavioral Intention; Religious Awareness.

1. Introduction

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, has a strategic opportunity to become a global hub for the halal industry. The State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) 2024/2025 report shows that Indonesia ranks third globally in the Islamic economy, with strong performance in modest fashion (ranked first), halal pharmaceuticals and cosmetics (second), and halal food (fourth) (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, 2025). This position reflects not only domestic market strength but also the growing integration of halal products into global value chains.

The development of the halal industry in Indonesia has shown significant progress in recent years. More than 140,000 business units operate in halal-related sectors, dominated by the food and beverage industry, and over 584,000 products have obtained halal certification. Investment in halal sectors, including Islamic finance, reached USD 5.8 billion in 2023–2024, with Indonesia receiving the largest share (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, 2025). In addition, halal product exports to Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries reached USD 12.33 billion. These figures indicate increasing awareness among business actors and consumers regarding the importance of halal assurance and its economic potential.

From a regulatory perspective, the implementation of Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance provides legal certainty for halal products circulating in the market. The law aims to ensure comfort, safety, and consumer protection while strengthening the

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competitiveness of domestic products (Konaras, 2017). Institutional restructuring has shifted the authority for halal certification from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) through LPPOM to the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH). In this new system, BPJPH issues halal certificates, LPPOM functions as a Halal Inspection Agency (LPH), and the MUI Fatwa Commission remains responsible for determining halal status (Aliyudin et al., 2022). This transformation is expected to improve efficiency, accessibility, and governance of the halal certification process across regions.

For business actors, halal certification provides multiple strategic benefits. It functions as a quality assurance mechanism, enhances consumer trust, strengthens brand image, and creates competitive advantage in both domestic and international markets (Mollah et al., 2019; Nurjamjam, 2024). In line with Porter's competitive advantage theory, certification can differentiate products and support long-term business sustainability (Porter, 1985). Empirical studies show that halal certification positively influences competitive advantage and business performance among MSMEs (Apriliyanto, 2023). Moreover, halal quality assurance practices contribute significantly to strengthening market positioning and consumer confidence (Nurjamjam, 2024; Suki, 2016).

Despite this promising development, several challenges remain. MSMEs still face difficulties related to complex certification procedures, limited access to halal raw materials, insufficient innovation capacity, and uneven institutional support (Aliyudin et al., 2022). The number of halal inspection agencies, although increasing, is still inadequate to serve millions of MSMEs efficiently (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, 2025). These structural constraints indicate that regulatory support alone is not sufficient; internal motivational factors and external ecosystem support are equally important.

From a behavioral perspective, the decision of MSMEs to obtain halal certification can be explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which emphasizes the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in shaping intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). Previous studies show that religiosity and knowledge significantly influence the intention to adopt halal certification (Handayati et al., 2023; Mukhtar & Butt, 2012). Religious commitment also affects ethical consumption behavior and compliance with halal standards (Alam et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2001). In addition, consumer trust plays a crucial role in encouraging firms to adopt halal certification as a market signal of credibility (Mayer et al., 1995; Suki, 2016).

Beyond religiosity, intrinsic motivation factors such as competence, autonomy, and relatedness—derived from Self-Determination Theory—can influence MSMEs' willingness to adopt certification as a form of self-driven quality improvement (Deci & Ryan, 2017). Institutional support, both formal and informal, has also been shown to enhance innovation performance and business competitiveness (Yang & Yu, 2022; Schøtt & Jensen, 2016). Networking, policy support, and access to resources can reduce certification barriers and strengthen MSMEs' strategic orientation.

Although prior studies have examined religiosity, knowledge, and institutional factors separately, limited research integrates internal motivation, perceived benefits, consumer trust, and competitive advantage within a single behavioral framework. Furthermore, the mediating role of halal behavioral intention in linking these factors to MSMEs' certification motivation remains underexplored. This gap indicates the need for a comprehensive model that combines psychological, institutional, and strategic perspectives.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the determinants of MSMEs' motivation to obtain halal certification by examining the roles of religious awareness, institutional support, competitive advantage, and consumer trust, with halal behavioral intention as a mediating variable. This research is expected to contribute to the development of a holistic halal ecosystem and provide policy recommendations to accelerate MSMEs' participation in halal certification.

2. Literature Review

Theory Planned Behavior

This research uses Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a theory proposed by Ajzen. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), originally introduced by Ajzen in 1980, is a development of this theory. According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, the intention to do something is influenced by subjective norms and attitudes towards the action. The Theory of Reasoned Action was later changed into the Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1988) by adding one element, namely perceived behavioral control. The first independent variable is a person's religious awareness of halal certification which has important values in religion. Second, institutional support provides encouragement for MSMEs to carry out halal certification. Third, competitive advantage which is important for maintaining the halalness of products. Fourth, consumer trust which provides confidence in halal products. This is related to a person's beliefs about behavior.

Religious Awareness

The degree to which a person is willing to worship religiously and the extent to which that commitment is reflected in the person's views and behavior is known as religiosity. [According to Alam et al. and Mukhtar & Butt, religiosity is a key factor that regulates people's behavior. It can also influence consumer attitudes and behavior. In other words, religiosity refers to a person's level of religiousness

Institutional Support

All corporate activities cannot be separated from the institutional environment. Xin et al. divided institutional support into formal institutional support (regulated institutional support) and informal institutional support (political connections), and this classification method has been recognized by many scholars. This study adopts this classification method to explore the impact of various types of institutional support on new venture innovation activities. Among them, formal institutional support refers to regulated support from government institutions to facilitate entrepreneurial innovation such as government subsidies, tax breaks, intellectual property rights, government procurement of innovative products, and the promotion of industry-university-research alliances. Informal institutional support refers to efforts by firms to build political connections to obtain government support. Informal institutional support is a complement and refinement of formal institutional support.

Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage refers to the extent to which an organization can build a strong and defensible position compared to its competitors. [19] Meanwhile, Farhikhteh, Kazemi, Shahin, and Shafiee define competitive advantage as a company's ability to create and sustain higher added value than its competitors over a long period of time. It represents the unique qualities and strengths that enable a company to outperform others in the market, thereby enabling the company to achieve superior performance and long-term success. Competitive advantage is an important concept in strategic management and its importance for MSMEs has received considerable attention in the literature. Various scholars have explored the sources and determinants of competitive advantage for MSMEs, highlighting the unique characteristics and challenges faced by these organizations

Consumer Trust

Trust measures the extent to which consumers perceive sustainability claims used to market sustainable fashion to be authentic. Lack of consumer trust has been identified as one of the main barriers limiting sustainable fashion purchasing behavior. Credibility attributes are commonly used to differentiate sustainable fashion from fast fashion.

Motivation for Halal Certification

The motivation theory that the researcher uses in relation to the research title is Self-Determination Theory (SDT). This theory is a very unique theory among social cognitive theories because it tries to understand why people do what they do. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was introduced more than 20 years ago by two psychologists, namely Edward Deci and Ryan Richard. According to Edward Deci and Ryan Richard, self-determination is an approach to human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods using organismic theory that focuses on the importance of human resources (HR) for personality development and empirical theory derived from human motivation and personality in a social context that distinguishes motivation in autonomous and controlled parts. This theory emphasizes the importance of human inner resources for personality development and self-regulating behavior. Edward Deci and Ryan Richard proposed a theory that all humans have three basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, meaning People feel autonomous when individuals make decisions for themselves without external pressure. Competence, meaning that competence makes people feel like they know what they are going to do and are able to achieve it and relatedness, meaning showing a sense of self to be connected with others, such as being part of a certain group, and that group cares about the individual.

Intention of Halal Behavior

The word intention can be defined as the intention (intention) of behavior determined by attitudes, controlling conscious behavior and subjective norms, the desire to choose to act or not that can be supported by influential others. According to Peter and Olson, behavioral intention is a proportion related to future actions. Intention itself refers to the extent to which a person's awareness is in line with his behavior.

Conceptual Framework

The form of the framework of thought in this research is as follows

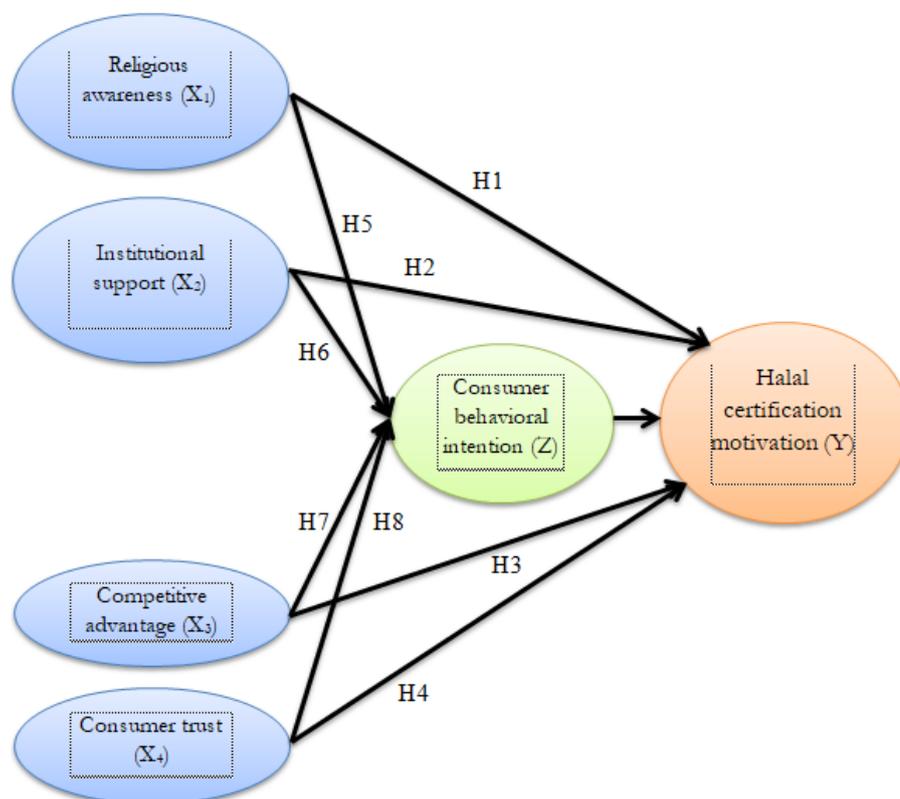


Figure 1. Conceptual framework. Source: Researcher Data (2025).

Research Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical basis and the results of previous research that support it, the hypothesis in this study can be formulated as follows:

H1: Religious awareness has a positive influence on halal certification motivation.

H2: Institutional support has a positive effect on halal certification motivation.

H3: Competitive advantage has a positive effect on halal certification motivation.

H4: Consumer trust has a positive influence on halal certification motivation.

H5: Consumer behavioral intention mediates religious awareness with halal certification motivation.

H6: Consumer behavioral intention mediates institutional support with halal certification motivation.

H7: Consumer behavioral intention mediates competitive advantage with halal certification motivation.

H8: Consumer behavioral intention mediates consumer trust with halal certification motivation.

3. Research Methodology

Types and Approaches of Research

The type of research applied in this study is field research or field research, namely research that emphasizes collecting data and information directly from the research location. While this approach is quantitative with a method of explanatory survey, which aims to explain the cause and effect between the variables studied systematically and measurably. According to Sugiyono, explanatory research is a research method that aims to explain the position of the variables being studied as well as the influence and relationship between one variable and another. The main reason this researcher uses this research method of explanatory is to test the proposed hypothesis, so it is hoped that this research can explain the influence and relationship between the independent and dependent variables in the hypothesis.

Population and Sample

The population was MSMEs involved or interested in halal certification and domiciled in Kudus Regency. The sample consisted of 168 respondents, using a random sampling technique. purposive sampling, This sampling technique involves selecting samples according to the researcher's wishes by establishing specific characteristics or requirements to ensure the data answers the research questions. This means that the researcher selected respondents based on the criteria of food and beverage MSMEs, MSMEs affiliated with Wirausaha Muria Raya (WMR) Kudus.

Variable Operation

Religious awareness (X_1)

- Knowing about the obligations of MSME management in religion
- Knowing about religious prohibitions in managing MSMEs
- Always carry out religious commands in managing MSMEs

Institutional support (X_2)

- Formal institutional support
- Informal institutional support

Competitive advantage (X_3)

- The product is known for its high quality
- Competitive prices compared to competitors
- Providing superior customer service
- The brand is well known and has a good reputation in the market

Consumer confidence (X_4)

- Reliability
- Integrity
- Goodwill / Benevolence
- Transparency and Reputation/Brand Trust

Motivation for halal certification (Y)

- Competence

- Independence
 - Connectedness
- Halal behavioral intention (Z)
- Conducting halal certification
 - Responsibility for halal certification
 - Halal quality standards

Data Analysis Techniques

The link between the variables under investigation is tested in this study using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analytical approach with Smart-PLS 4.1.1.6 SEM software. An R-Square value was utilized to assess the model's fit, and a t-statistical test was employed to determine the significance of the link between the variables. The test's findings give insight into whether the information gathered supports the hypothesis put forward.

4. Results and Discussion

Business spirituality in the context of MSMEs, with an emphasis on the role of religious awareness, institutional support, competitive advantage, and consumer trust in motivating MSMEs to obtain halal certification. The research results were obtained through processing and analyzing data that had been collected in accordance with the methods and analysis techniques explained in the previous chapter.

Table 1. Outer Loadin.

Indicator	<i>Outer Loading</i>	Results
KK1	0,812	Valid
KK2	0,845	Valid
KK3	0,798	Valid
DI1	0,742	Valid
DI2	0,781	Valid
DI3	0,804	Valid
DI4	0,826	Valid
DI5	0,791	Valid
DI6	0,768	Valid
DI7	0,853	Valid
DI8	0,879	Valid
KeKo1	0,781	Valid
KeKo2	0,823	Valid
KeKo3	0,847	Valid
KeKo4	0,802	Valid
TR1	0,754	Valid
TR2	0,812	Valid
TR3	0,834	Valid
TR4	0,861	Valid
TR5	0,789	Valid
MSH1	0,846	Valid
MSH2	0,881	Valid
MSH3	0,902	Valid

The results of the analysis show that all indicators used to measure the constructs in this model are valid, withouter loadingabove the minimum limit of 0.7. The construct of religious awareness (KK) is well measured through the KK1 indicator (0.812), KK2 (0.845),and KK3 (0.798).Likewise with institutional support (DI), which has indicators withouter loadingbetween 0.742 and 0.879, with DI7 (0.853) and DI8 (0.879) showing

excellent measurement power. Competitive advantage (KeKo) also measured effectively by its indicators, especially KeKo3 (0,847). Meanwhile, consumer confidence (TR) is measured well through the TR4 indicator (0.861), which shows a very valid measurement.

On the other hand, the motivation for halal certification (MSH) is measured strongly through the MSH3 indicator (0.902). Meanwhile, the intention to halal behavior (NPH) also showed high validity, with NPH2 (0.846) having the highest factor loading. Overall, all indicators in this model have outer loading valid, ranging from 0.742 until 0.902, indicating that all constructs were measured well. These results demonstrate that the model has a solid, reliable structure and is ready for further analysis.

Table 2. Min Loading and AVE.

Construct	Min Loading	AVE	Results
KK	0,798	0,66	Valid
FROM	0,742	0,63	Valid
Learn	0,781	0,69	Valid
TR	0,754	0,67	Valid
NPH	0,832	0,73	Valid
MSH	0,846	0,79	Valid

The results of the analysis show that all constructs in this model are valid based on minimum loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) that meet the required criteria. KK (Religious Awareness) has a minimum loading of 0.798 and an AVE of 0.66, indicating that this construct is reliable. Likewise, Di (Institutional Support) has a minimum loading of 0.742 and an AVE of 0.63, and KeKo (Competitive Advantage) with a minimum loading of 0.781 and an AVE of 0.69, both of which are also declared valid. The TR (Consumer Trust) construct has a minimum loading of 0.754 and an AVE of 0.67, indicating good measurement. NPH (Halal Behavioral Intention) has the highest minimum loading at 0.832 and an AVE of 0.73, indicating that this construct is measured very strongly. Finally, MSH (Halal Certification Motivation) has a minimum loading of 0.846 and an AVE of 0.79, also indicating a very valid measurement. Overall, all constructs in this model meet validity standards, with AVE ranging from 0.63 to 0.79, indicating that the constructs are well measured and reliable for further analysis.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha And Composite Reliability.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Information
KK	0,842	0,893	Reliable
FROM	0,881	0,915	Reliable
Learn	0,836	0,889	Reliable
TRS	0,854	0,902	Reliable
NPH	0,801	0,871	Reliable
MSH	0,868	0,908	Reliable

The results of the reliability analysis show that all constructs in this model have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability which shows a very good level of reliability. KK (Religious Awareness) has Cronbach's Alpha of 0.842 and Composite Reliability 0.893, which shows that this construct is reliable. Likewise with Di (Institutional Support) which has Cronbach's Alpha 0.881 and Composite Reliability 0.915, both are higher, indicating stronger reliability. The KeKo (Competitive Advantage) construct has Cronbach's Alpha 0.836 and Composite Reliability 0.889, both are valid and reliable. For TRS (Consumer Trust), the value Cronbach's Alpha is 0.854 and Composite Reliability 0.902, indicating consistent measurement. The NPH (Halal Behavioral Intention) construct with Cronbach's Alpha 0.801 and Composite Reliability 0.871 is still in the reliable category, although slightly lower than the others. Finally, MSH (Halal Certification Motivation) shows a value Cronbach's Alpha 0.868 and Composite Reliability 0.908, which is also highly reliable. Overall, all constructs meet good reliability standards, indicating that the model is reliable and the measurement results are highly consistent.

Table 4. AVE Root, Highest Correlation with Other Constructs.

Construct	akar AVE	Highest Correlation with Other Constructs	Information
KK	0,82	0,55	Valid
FROM	0,85	0,58	Valid
Learn	0,83	0,53	Valid
TR	0,84	0,51	Valid
NPH	0,81	0,61	Valid
MSH	0,86	0,61	Valid

The analysis results show that all constructs in this model are valid based on the AVE root and the highest correlation with other constructs. KK (Religious Awareness) has an AVE root of 0.82 and the highest correlation with other constructs of 0.55, indicating good validity. Di (Institutional Support) has an AVE root of 0.85 and the highest correlation with other constructs of 0.58, which also indicates a significant and valid relationship with other constructs. KeKo (Competitive Advantage) has an AVE root of 0.83 and the highest correlation with other constructs of 0.53, indicating good construct validity. The TR (Consumer Trust) construct has an AVE root of 0.84 and the highest correlation with other constructs of 0.51, indicating strong measurement validity. NPH (Halal Behavioral Intention) and MSH (Halal Certification Motivation) both have quite high AVE roots, namely 0.81 and 0.86 respectively, as well as the highest correlation with other constructs of 0.61, which indicates very good validity and interrelationship with other constructs. Overall, all constructs meet high validity standards, with correlations ranging from 0.51 to 0.61, indicating that the constructs are significantly interrelated and can be trusted for further analysis.

Table 5. Estimated results.

Track	Coefficient	t-stat	p-value	Results
KK → NH	0,21	3,12	0,002	Significant (+)
Di → NPH	0,29	4,88	0,000	Significant (+)
KeKo → NPH	0,25	3,97	0,000	Significant (+)
TR → NPH	0,23	3,45	0,001	Significant (+)
NPH → MSH	0,52	7,21	0,000	Significant (+)

The influence of religious awareness on the intention to engage in halal behavior

The analysis results show that religious awareness (KK) has a significant effect on halal behavioral intention (NPH), with a coefficient of 0.21, a t-statistic of 3.12, and a p-value of 0.002, indicating a positive and significant relationship between the two variables. This means that the higher a person's level of religious awareness, the greater their intention to behave in accordance with halal principles. This result is in line with the theory. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) which states that behavioral intentions are influenced by individual attitudes and beliefs, including moral and religious awareness. Research by Hassan et al. also supports this finding, showing that religious awareness has a significant influence on halal behavioral intentions among Muslim consumers. Thus, these results strengthen existing theories and indicate that religious aspects do influence halal behavior.

The influence of institutional support on halal behavioral intentions

Institutional support (DI) has a highly significant positive effect on halal behavioral intention (NPH), with a coefficient of 0.29, a t-statistic of 4.88, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that the higher the support from institutions (e.g., religious institutions, government, or related organizations), the greater a person's intention to behave in a halal manner. This result is consistent with Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which emphasizes the importance of external factors in shaping individual behavior, such as social and institutional support. Research by Abdullah et al. corroborates these findings, stating that institutional support plays a significant role in shaping consumers' intentions to follow halal guidelines. Thus, these results support the idea that institutional support plays a strong role in driving halal behavioral intentions.

The influence of competitive advantage on halal behavioral intention

Competitive advantage (KeKo) significantly influences halal behavioral intention (NPH) with a coefficient of 0.25, a t-statistic of 3.97, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that the higher the competitive advantage a company or product possesses in the halal market, the higher the consumer's intention to behave in a halal manner. This result is in line with the theory. Competitive Advantage by Porter who emphasized that companies that are able to create competitive advantages can attract consumers' attention and influence their purchasing decisions.[32][47] Research by Mollah et al. also supports that competitive advantages in the halal industry increase consumers' intention to purchase halal products. Therefore, these results support existing theories by showing that competition in the halal industry has a significant impact on consumer behavior.

The influence of trust on halal behavioral intentions

Consumer trust (TR) significantly influences halal behavioral intention (NPH) with a coefficient of 0.23, a t-statistic of 3.45, and a p-value of 0.001. This means that the higher the level of consumer trust in a product or service that is guaranteed halal, the greater their intention to adopt halal behavior. This result is consistent with the theory. Trust Theory which states that trust in a transaction will influence consumer intention to participate in the activity.[34] Research by Suki shows that consumer trust in halal labels influences consumer decisions in purchasing halal products. Therefore, these results support existing theories and indicate that trust is a key factor in forming halal behavioral intentions.

The influence of halal behavioral intention on halal certification motivation

Halal behavioral intention (NPH) has a highly significant influence on halal certification motivation (MSH), with a coefficient of 0.52, a t-statistic of 7.21, and a p-value of 0.000. These results indicate that a person's intention to behave halal plays a significant role in motivating them to obtain halal certification. This is in line with the theory. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which states that intention is the main predictor of an individual's actions.[36] Research by Hamza et al. also supports this finding, stating that intention to behave in a halal manner encourages individuals to access halal products and support halal certification. Thus, these results strengthen existing theory, indicating that intention to behave in a halal manner directly influences motivation to obtain halal certification.

Table 6. Indirect Path.

Indirect Path	Coefficient	t-stat	p-value	Mediation
KK → NPH → MSH	0,11	2,98	0,003	Significant
Di → NPH → MSH	0,15	4,21	0,000	Significant
KeKo → NPH → MSH	0,13	3,64	0,000	Significant
TRS → NPH → MSH	0,12	3,11	0,002	Significant

The influence of religious awareness on halal certification motivation through halal behavioral intentions

Results of indirect path analysis (indirect effect) shows that all tested paths have a significant influence on halal certification motivation (MSH) through halal behavioral intention (NPH) as a mediating variable. For the path KK → NPH → MSH (Religious Awareness → Halal Behavioral Intention → Halal Certification Motivation), the coefficient of 0.11, t-statistic of 2.98, and p-value of 0.003 indicate that this path has a significant influence. These results are in accordance with Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) which states that behavioral intention can act as a mediator that connects attitudes or beliefs with actual behavior.[38] Research by Hassan et al. also supports that religious awareness has a direct and indirect influence on the intention to behave in a halal manner, which in turn influences the motivation to obtain halal certification.

The influence of institutional support on halal certification motivation through halal behavioral intentions

For the DI → NPH → MSH (Institutional Support → Halal Behavioral Intention → Halal Certification Motivation) path, a coefficient of 0.15, a t-statistic of 4.21, and a p-value of 0.000 indicate that institutional support plays a significant role in shaping halal behavioral intention, which then drives halal certification motivation. This is in line with the theory Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) which emphasizes the influence of the social environment and external support on individual behavior. [40][48] Research by Abdullah et al. also confirmed that institutional support acts as a mediator that strengthens individuals' intentions to behave in a halal manner, which ultimately influences their decision to obtain halal certification.

The influence of competitive advantage on halal certification motivation through halal behavioral intention

On the path KeKo → NPH → MSH (Competitive Advantage → Halal Behavioral Intention → Halal Certification Motivation), the coefficient of 0.13, t-statistic of 3.64, and p-value of 0.000 indicate a significant influence of competitive advantage on halal certification motivation through halal behavioral intention as a mediator. These results are consistent with Competitive Advantage Theory which states that companies that have competitive advantages can influence consumer preferences and intentions to purchase products, which in turn influence their decisions to obtain halal certification. [42] Research by Mollah et al. supports that competitive advantages in the halal industry can encourage consumer intentions to purchase halal products and strengthen their motivation to obtain halal certification.

The influence of consumer trust on halal certification motivation through halal behavioral intentions

Finally, TRS → NPH → MSH (Consumer Trust → Halal Behavioral Intention → Halal Certification Motivation) shows a coefficient of 0.12, a t-statistic of 3.11, and a p-value of 0.002, which means that consumer trust in halal products plays a significant role in shaping halal behavioral intentions, which then motivate them to obtain halal certification. This is in line with Trust Theory which emphasizes that trust is a major factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions and behavior. [44] Research by Suki also confirms that consumer trust acts as a strong mediator between consumer attitudes and their intention to purchase halal products, which then leads to motivation for halal certification.

6. Conclusions

This study uses a quantitative approach to explore how halal behavioral intention mediates the relationship between religious awareness, institutional support, competitive advantage, and consumer trust on halal certification motivation. The analysis shows that religious awareness, institutional support, competitive advantage, and consumer trust have a significant influence on halal certification motivation in MSMEs.

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