

Islamic Branding and Product Ingredients: Non-Muslim Dilemma in Consuming Halal Meat

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ABSTRACT

Consuming halal foods is unarguably a matter of need for every Muslim. Today, the interest in eating halal cuisine is even growing not only for Muslims but also non-Muslims because the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged lately, has emphasized a lack of people's health and sanitation. This study intends to investigate how non-Muslim customers' perceptions of Islamic branding affected their purchase decisions of halal food during the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of 500 non-Muslim respondents took part in this study by answering questions for this quantitative research. The data was then analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0. The results revealed that there was a significant correlation between Islamic branding and product ingredients and non-Muslims intention of choosing halal food during COVID-19. This tendency is due to the fact that halal food is guaranteed qualified since it is delicious and prepared in clean and healthy way.

KEYWORDS

Consumer Decision Islamic Branding Product Ingredients COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

The quick spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has made it a big subject in many nations (Shrestha et al., 2020), including Indonesia. The number of cases has increased dramatically, and this highlights the need to provide people with safe and nutritious food options (Malahayati et al., 2021). In this post-COVID-19 era, consumers are more health-conscious so many are opting for foods touted for their ability to strengthen the immune system. The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for health and sanitation, which has led to a growing interest in eating halal cuisine (Newell et al., 2022). In addition, increased consumer demand for food of animal origin, especially meat, calls for more supply of such foodstuff. This is triggered by raising human awareness of the importance of nutritional needs derived from meat (Which, 2021). However, the social restriction policy imposed by the government, such as a chain of logistics activities, transportation, general activities, and

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distribution, reduces the capacity of the production and distribution processes, and this becomes a threat to the food supply (Yu et al., 2020).

Another problem arises as many cases of unhealthy meat products emerge. Lots of meat products do not meet food safety and halal requirements, both for domestic and export-import commodities (Fan et al., 2020). Even though regulations state that food delivery will not be disrupted, in practice, there are a lot of cases wherein distributors delivering food to outside cities or regions delay or refuse to do the deliveries, resulting in a decreased quality of the meat. The supplies seem to accumulate, but the goods are not distributed to the community.

The extraordinary economic turmoil during COVID-19 exacerbated volatility in meat prices and a drop in consumer demand (Rahman et al., 2022). Consumers were increasingly conscious of where their food came from and how it was prepared during the COVID-19 epidemic, leading particularly to the halal meat demand. Halal products are known for their quality since it is required that a thing must be excellent and clean to be considered halal for human consumption (MH Ali et al., 2021). Thus, most people eventually feel more comfortable consuming halal meat since it is prepared in a more sanitary way and follows stricter Islamic guidelines (Newell et al., 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore, halal meat dominated the world trade businesss Halal products and services were becoming popular, not only among Muslims but among followers of other religions as well. Non-Muslims might be persuaded to purchase and eat halal meat because of its high quality, safety, and hygiene. Global demand for halal food products continues to grow, and halal meat producers take advantage of this opportunity to expand their world trade business (Mostafa, 2020). In no time, not only halal is a set of religious guidelines, but it also drives the international economy. The halal lifestyle and the halal industry are starting to penetrate and are in demand by various groups worldwide (Jia & Chaozhi, 2021).

Decision-making, a result of mental processes, leads to choices with available alternative actions. The decision-making process is carried out to achieve certain goals through implementation, which results in the final choice (Pradana et al., 2020). A consumer's choice to buy may be seen as the chain of steps he takes to locate, acquire, utilize, assess, and ultimately act upon goods, services, and concepts with the goal of satisfying his wants and desires. In the context of halal meat, Non-Muslims need to know that their food is safe to eat (Rejeb et al., 2021) since an individual's health is vital; thus, maintaining health by taking care of daily-consumed food is very necessary. Dangerous diseases, most of which are caused by food, can appear at any time. Therefore, carefully deciding what to eat is highly imperative since bad choices of food will have a bad impact on the body (Amalia et al., 2020).

Islamic branding can be understood as using Islamic identities such as halal labels, Islamic names, or Sharia names in marketing to characterize certain products (in this case, food) so that they are remembered in the public's heart (Bashir, 2020). Consumers who are passionate about certain brands become a challenge for companies to serve. In light of the growing interest in Islamic branding, numerous companies have tried to implement Islamic brand campaigns in recent years. (Muslichah et al., 2020). Afrianty (2020) discovered the influence of Islamic branding on consumer choices. Khadijah & Wulandari (2020) affirmed a connection between Islamic advertising and food purchases. Then, Lim et al. (2022) provided the fact that Islamic branding has a strong relationship with non-Muslim consumers' decisions to buy halal products. Muflih & Juliana (2021) confirmed that Islamic branding is the most influential factor in consumer purchasing decisions. However, Ridwan & Nurdin (2020) provided contradicting findings, stating that customers are unaffected by Islamic branding. In addition, Ilham & Firdaus (2020) supported this by confirming that Islamic branding is not very supportive of consumer purchasing decisions. Also, Fitriyani (2021) revealed that consumers, particularly millennials, do not give much thought to Islamic branding when making

purchase choices. Finally, Life & Daughter (2021) found that Islamic branding does not affect the purchase intention to buy halal food.

Islamic branding is not the only thing to consider when choosing halal food. Another no less important element is food ingredients. Concerns regarding the quality of items center mostly on the products' materials (Machin et al., 2020). Thus, from the health perspective, product ingredients become an additional important guide for non-Muslims in evaluating food purchases, especially meat. Issues regarding product ingredients cover various aspects, including packaging, distribution, and storage as a whole (Petrescu et al., 2020). Wawan Wasik Marzuki (2021) affirmed that product ingredients have a strong impact on purchasing decisions. Jumarni (2021) also stated that food product purchases are proven to be positively correlated with ingredient lists. The findings of Latuconsina et al. (2022) provided clear evidence that product ingredients have a high influence on purchasing decisions. Najmudin et al. (2021) mentioned that food ingredients have a strong relationship with culinary purchasing decisions. However, there is a contradiction in the results of Chu (2020), which maintained that product ingredients do not have a strong relationship with purchasing decisions. Fadlullah et al. (2021) also found a negative effect of product materials on buying decisions.

Previous studies, both local and global, have provided various results regarding consumer purchase decisions. However, there is still a shortage of research that analyses the buying habits of non-Muslim groups, especially in Indonesia, regarding their purchase of food items, particularly halal meat. This requires an in-depth discussion; thus, this present study intends to examine how non-Muslim consumers' decision to buy food items, especially halal meat, is influenced by Islamic branding and product components.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Utility Theory

Utility theory, put forward by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, explains how consumers make decisions based on optimizing the satisfaction or utility they get from a product or service. Utility refers to the level of satisfaction or benefits obtained by individuals from consuming or using a product or service (Aboah & Lees, 2020). Utility theory seeks to explain how individuals make decisions in choosing between various available alternatives to achieve the best utility balance. The theory assumes that individuals make decisions based on rational choices; they prefer the alternative that provides the greatest benefit according to their preferences (Liu et al., 2021). The purchase decision is influenced by comparisons of relative utilities between various alternatives. Individuals will compare the benefits they expect from each alternative and choose the one that provides the highest utility (Nugraha et al., 2022). Referring to utility theory, this study assumes that non-Muslims buy halal products based on the utility they expect from these products, in this case, functional utilities such as taste and quality.

Purchasing Decision Theory

According to the purchasing decision theory proposed by Peter and Olson, consumers make purchases based on their expectations of the benefits they will receive from the product and their willingness to accept some degree of personal risk in exchange for those benefits. A consumer's disposition to purchase or use a product or service depends on his belief that the product will please

him and his willingness to accept any potential downsides. Thøgersen (2021) affirmed that consumers make decisions via an integration process in which they use information to weigh the pros and cons of two or more possible courses of action and then choose one based on the cognitive representation of that option as a desire to act. Purchasing decisions are consumer acts toward product selection. Referring to purchasing decision theory, this study assumes that purchasing decisions made by non-Muslims in buying halal meat products are choices with available alternative actions expected to meet a healthy life.

Halal Concept

Halal, in a general sense, can be translated as permissible, justified, approved, and legal. The concept of halal in food, especially meat, shows the role of religion (Rakhmawati et al., 2021) in deciding permissible, approved, and nutritious food to consume. A good halal product guarantees that the product is nutritious, tasty, attractive, good in condition, clean, and free from anything that harms the body (Cohen, 2021). Islamic dietary standards are based on Sharia principles to ensure customer satisfaction. Products that adhere to Sharia rules are growing in popularity, and the halal food movement, particularly the meat industry, welcomes all consumers (Izhar Ariff Mohd Kashim et al., 2022). In the case of meat products, consumers, authorities, processors, and merchants should pay attention to the quality of meat since it comprises a significant part of the human diet. The halal certification procedure for meat product should be conducted at every stage, including the cutting, packing (halal packaging), and delivering process (halal logistics) (Al-Mahmood et al., 2021). As the global demand for halal goods grows, so does the challenge of providing adequate halal services. In terms of delivery, for example, it is forbidden to combine halal and non-halal items in the same shipping process (Kohilavani, Wan Abdullah, Yang, Traits, & Zzaman, 2021).

Even as the global economy struggles due to the pandemic, halal business increases and continues to develop, helping to spur economic recovery. People from all walks of life are looking for the health benefits of a halal diet (Mohd Nawawi et al., 2020). The halal food market is becoming vast as its quality might be in tune with the practices of individuals of different faiths (Hanafiah & Hamdan, 2020). The halal food industry is considered better from ethical, health, safety, and environmentally friendly aspects. These become important factors for customers to make their decisions in choosing food products, including meat. These factors are in accordance with the increasing awareness of the global community who are increasingly concerned about where and how their food is produced (Secinaro & Calandra, 2021).

Islamic Branding

Islamic branding is a brand concept under Sharia principles, which evokes good values such as honesty, respect for accountability, and a core understanding of Sharia rules (Floren, Apostle, & Gani, 2020). Islamic-sounding names for products or services, or names that otherwise signal their halal status, is one definition of Islamic branding. Muslim consumers are likelier to purchase and eat products with an Islamic brand name because they know they can trust the halal certification (Fuseini et al., 2020). To attract customers from a wide range of demographics, Islamic brands combine empathy with Sharia principles from the very first steps of their marketing and customer service strategies (Pradana et al., 2022). However, branding a product following Islamic principles involves more than just giving it an Islamic name in the hopes that customers will be interested in buying it (Wandira & Rahman, 2021). Islamic branding promotes ideals, like integrity and fairness, to pique consumers' attention outside of the Muslim community (SNZ Bukhari & Isa, 2020).

Product Ingredients

Product ingredients are the ingredients or materials contained in a particular product. Ingredients become one of the aspects that determine quality and safety (Kurniawati & Savitri, 2020). They are seen to be another consideration for consumers to decide which product to buy (Marmaya et al., 2019). The more familiar consumers are with the product's composition, the higher their interest in buying the product. Composition information contained in product packaging is well known to consumers and is sufficient to assess product quality (SFH Bukhari et al., 2021) (Khan et al., 2020). Product ingredients in the food sector, especially meat, are important information that influences consumer decisions to buy fresh and healthy products (Hassan et al., 2022).

COVID-19 and Halal Food

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has designated the COVID-19 pandemic a global public health emergency (Dzigbede & Pathak, 2020). Not only did it have far-reaching effects on the world's mental healthcare infrastructure, but it also impacted the global economy and society at large (Dzigbede & Pathak, 2020). The government's strategy of restricting social activities froze the situation so that the food chain sector, including the supply of meat, was shocked (Osinubi & Olomola, 2021).

The halal food business entered a new era with the arrival of COVID-19. The proliferation of halal food and goods throughout the globe has given rise to a halal culture. Individuals' viewpoints, ethics, and values depicted in everyday activities play a role in shaping the halal lifestyle trend that is becoming more popular in today's culture (Azmi et al., 2020). This way of life bases its foundation on the understanding that halal refers to more than just a way of eating and living; it also refers to beneficial things that are not harmful, superior, and valuable to human beings. Thus, it should come as no surprise that halal cuisine entails making high-quality food, and its benefits may be enjoyed not only by Muslims but by all people (Abror et al., 2020).

Hypothesis Development

Islamic Branding and Purchase Decisions

An Islamic-sounding name for products or services or a name that signals halal status is one definition of Islamic branding. Branding a product following Islamic principles involves more than just giving it an Islamic name. Other factors, such as the efficiency of the manufacturing and delivery process, are just as important in shaping the customer base and encouraging them to make a purchase (Purwanto et al., 2020). Afrianty (2020) affirmed that consumers' preferences might be significantly influenced by Islamic brands. Similarly, Khadijah & Wulandari (2020) discovered a connection between Islamic advertising and food purchases. Then, Lim et al. (2022) proved a close association between Islamic branding and the buying of halal goods by non-Muslim customers. This was also confirmed by Muflih & Juliana (2021) that consumers place the greatest stock because an item has an Islamic brand name.

H1: Islamic branding had an effect on non-Muslim customers' purchase decisions for halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Product Ingredients and Purchase Decisions

The composition of food ingredients can be seen on the food label on the product packaging, and good product ingredients will be highly sought after. Apart from branding, ingredients become another important concern for customers before deciding to buy food products since ingredients have a close correlation with quality and safety (Arifin & Widayat, 2020). Suspicious and hazardous food ingredients will probably result in the refusal or cancellation of purchasing the products (Ekasari et al., 2021). Research results (Marzuki, 2021) gave the fact that product ingredients have a strong impact on purchasing decisions. Jumarni (2021) maintained that imported food product purchases are shown to be positively correlated with ingredient lists. Moreover, Latuconsina et al. (2022) provided clear evidence that product ingredients have a big influence on purchase decisions.

H2: Product ingredients had an effect on non-Muslim customers' purchase decisions for halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODS

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

No.	Social and I	Demographic Characteristics	Number of Participants	Percentage (%)
		Senior High School	93	18.6 %
	Education	Diploma	64	12.8 %
1.		Bachelor Degree (S1)	285	57 %
		Graduate (S2)	57	11.4 %
		17-20 years	85	17 %
	Ago	21-30 years	197	39.4 %
2.	Age	31-40 years	143	28.6 %
		40 > years	75	15 %
2	Gender	Male	237	47.4 %
3.	Gender	Female	263	52.6 %
		Student/college student	157	31.4%
4.	Job	Self-employed	144	28.8 %
		Government employees	81	16.2 %
		Housewife	74	14.8 %
		Other	4	o.8 %
		Rp1,500,000 - Rp2,000,000	159	31.8 %
5.	Income	Rp2,100,000 - Rp3000,000	175	35 %
		> Rp3,000,000	166	33.2 %

This study adopted a quantitative design and associative approach in looking at causal relationships (Sugiyono, 2017) between Islamic branding, product ingredients, and purchase decisions. Islamic branding and product ingredients act as independent variables while purchase decisions act as the dependent variable. This study utilized primary data collected from December 2021 to December 2022, using a purposive sampling technique on 500 non-Muslim customers of halal meat in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. Interviews were performed after respondents filled in a written approval to participate in the study. The five-point Likert scale, ranging from "1" for strongly

disagree to "5" for strongly agree, was employed as the quantitative indicator in the research questionnaire accessed through Google Forms. Respondents shared their thoughts on the impact of Islamic branding and product ingredients on their purchasing decisions for halal meat.

Table 1 reveals that the majority of respondents were women (52.6%). 18.6% of respondents were senior high school students, 12.8% were diploma graduates, 57% were bachelor's degree (S1) graduates, and 11.4% were master's degree (S2) graduates. The respondents were dominated by the age range of 21 to 30 years (39.4%). Most of them (35%) earned Rp2,100,000 – Rp3,000,000 per month.

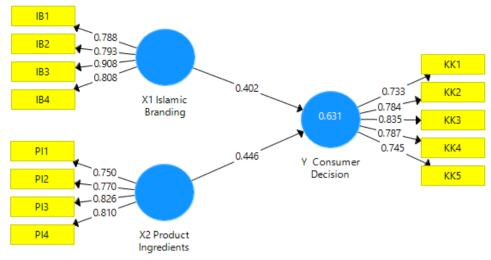
Table 2. Operational variables

Variable	Variable Indicator	
Valiable		
	Brand Importance	
Islamic Branding	Brand Familiarity	
(X1)	Consumer Trust	
	Halal Label	
	Product Information	
Product Ingredient	Foreign Terms	
(X2)	Product Quality	
	Product Safety	
	Introduction to Problems	
Develope Desiries	Information Search	
Purchase Decision	Alternative Evaluation	
(Y)	Buying Decision	
	Post Purchase Behavior	

PLS-SEM was employed in this research due to its benefits in managing data dispersion, which allows for the production of an extremely accurate analysis. In order to analyze measurement models, the SmartPLS 3 software executed the PLS algorithm technique. The data processing led to the discovery of the outer test statistic test as well as the inner model test (Hamid, 2019). Convergent validity measurement instruments were used to assess the validity of the data. These instruments compared the loading factors of latent variables to determine whether or not the data were valid (the score was bigger than 0.70). To establish the dependence of the data, either Cronbach's alpha or a composite reliability score of higher than 0.70 was employed. While the p-value and t-statistics might be used to test hypotheses, determining the appropriateness of the model was done by looking at the R-squared value (Hendriyadi, 2019).

RESULTS

An essential validity test is employed to test the precision, consistency, and reliability of the research technique or measuring equipment. Internal validity is determined by conducting construct validity tests for the route analysis. The first step is ensuring the measurement tools or equipment are reliable and accurate to measure the dependent variable. The instrument can accurately measure the targeted component, which is necessary for producing reliable results.



Source: Data processing results, 2023

Figure 2. Measurement model tests results

The implementation of the validity test has an important goal of finding out whether the questions on the questionnaire have the right indicators.

Table 3. Validity test results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Value	Information
	IB. 1	0.788	Valid
Islamic Branding	IB. 2	0.793	Valid
(X1)	IB. 3	0.908	Valid
	IB. 4	0.808	Valid
	PI.1	0.750	Valid
Product Ingredients	PI.2	0.770	Valid
(X2)	PI.3	0.826	Valid
	PI.4	0.810	Valid
	KK. 1	0.733	Valid
Durchaging Decision	KK. 2	0.784	Valid
Purchasing Decision	KK. 3	0.835	Valid
(Y)	KK. 4	0.787	Valid
	KK. 5	0.745	Valid

Source: Data processing results, 2023

Table 3 reveals that the values of each indicator of Islamic branding, product ingredients, and purchase decisions have a score greater than 0.70. The data obtained is valid and very suitable for this research. It implies that the questions asked for each variable could be understood by the respondents in the same way as intended by the researchers. The questions did not confuse the respondents.

Table 4 displays the findings of reliability analysis, which reveal a wide range of values. The Cronbach's alpha for the X1 variable (Islamic branding) is 0.843, the Composite Reliability for the X2 variable (product ingredients) is 0.869, and for the Y variable (consumer decisions) is 0.836, all are greater than or equal to 0.880. These scores are dependable and offer actual proof that the questionnaire's consistency is extremely excellent and reliable since the questions produce highly consistent responses.

Table 4. Reliability test results

Variable	Alpha Cronbach	Composite Reliability
Islamic Branding (X1)	0.843	0.895
Product Ingredients (X2)	0.801	0.869
Purchasing Decision (Y)	0.836	0.884

Source: Data processing results, 2023

The results of the structural model test, as shown in Table 5, indicate that the construction of Islamic Branding (X1) had a significant impact on purchase decisions during the COVID-19 condition. The numerical results show a coefficient of 0.402 and a t-statistic weight of 6.098, which is above the threshold of 1.96. Additionally, the p-value is 0.0000, indicating a strong statistical significance. Therefore, it can be concluded that Islamic branding strongly influenced non-Muslim consumes' purchase decisions for halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 5. Structural model test results

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Hypothesis	Original Sample	Q - Statistics	<i>p</i> -value
H1: Islamic Branding (X1) had an effect on non-			
Muslim customers' purchase decisions for halal	0.402	6,098	0.000
meat during the COVID-19 pandemic.			
H2: Product Ingredients (X2) had an effect on			
non-Muslim customers' purchase decisions for	0.446	7,837	0.000
halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic.			

Source: Data processing results, 2023

Moreover, the results indicate that product ingredients (X2) has a significant coefficient (0.446) and a high t-statistic value (7.837), with a weight of 1.96. The p-value is 0.0000, which is below the threshold of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that product ingredients strongly influenced non-Muslim consumes' purchase decisions for halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 6. R-Square value test results on endogenous variables

Variable	R square	Customized R Square
Purchase Decisions (Y)	0.631	0.629

Source: Data Processing Results, 2023

The r-square value test results produce a figure with an acquisition of 0.631 or 63.1%. This indicates that Islamic branding and product ingredients contributed significantly to purchase decisions for halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining 36.9% is explained by variables outside the research conducted.

DISCUSSION

Islamic Branding and Purchase Decisions

Public health and economic conditions have been profoundly affected by the advent of COVID-19. Regarding the food delivery procedure, the pandemic situation was indicated by shorter food supply chains (Brooks et al., 2021). Proper care had to be taken for the food supply since the limitations on movement increased the likelihood of travel disruptions that could threaten the products. The public's demand for food, particularly meat, showed no signs of abating, and during the pandemic

situation, people tried to satisfy their needs by prioritizing high-quality food items (Perdana et al., 2022).

Islamic branding becomes one of the considerations that influence purchase decisions. It represents product quality, especially the products from the halal meat sector. Islamic branding refers to the identity of a product that can be seen from the names, characteristics, and symbols that employ Islamic elements. This branding can be used as a differentiator between products (Vizano et al., 2021). Islamic branding is connected to the rise of the halal food movement. For Muslims throughout the globe, eating halal is not just a need but a way of life. However, they are not the only consumers, the halal food sector is also favorable for non-Muslim groups since halal food is considered safe and nutritious (Judge, Febriandika, Wijaya, & Gen-z, 2023).

The results of this present study reveal that Islamic branding had a strong influence on non-Muslim consumers' purchase decisions for halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic. This branding is able to build trust and a positive image among non-Muslim consumers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the food supply became unstable. Non-Muslim consumers might face difficulties in finding the meat products they usually buy. In this situation, halal meat products in the market were more accessible. Also, during this time, consumers preferred to consume products that could guarantee cleanliness, safety, and compliance with certain standards. Strong Islamic branding on halal meat is able to give the perception that the product meets strict and well-supervised standards. Islamic branding on halal meat can also be associated with aspects of hygiene and health. Halal standards involve the hygienic slaughtering and processing of animals, as well as the use of safe and unquestionable ingredients. In a pandemic situation, non-Muslim consumers who are more concerned about hygiene and health tend to choose halal products as a safer option since in the pandemic, hygiene and safety are more important. Islamic branding on halal meat can also reflect ethical values upheld in Islam, such as fairness, transparency, and sustainability, which attract the attention of non-Muslims who are sensitive to ethical and sustainability issues.

However, non-Muslim consumers may face a moral dilemma when deciding to purchase halal meat products. They feel that buying halal products may be seen as an act of respecting other religious beliefs, but at the same time, they may not have a religious obligation to comply with halal rules. Non-Muslim consumers feel that buying halal meat products is a way to show tolerance, understanding, and solidarity with the Muslim community during difficult times. This can be considered as an inclusive action that builds relations between religions. Ultimately, non-Muslim consumers' purchase decisions for Halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic largely depended on individual values, food preferences, and views.

The findings of this study are in line with the utility theory developed by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, explaining how consumers make decisions based on optimizing the satisfaction or utility they get from a product or service. Utility refers to the level of satisfaction or benefits derived from consuming or using a product or service (Aboah & Lees, 2020). Utility theory involves the consumer's evaluation of the expected benefits of a product in relation to the costs and risks involved in the purchase. This theory is depicted in this study by showing that Islamic branding was able to influence non-Muslim consumers' perception of the benefits of halal meat products in the pandemic condition. At the same time, it reduced the worry of contamination risks derived from non-halal products. The application of Islamic branding on halal meat products can influence consumers' perceptions of the benefits or utilities they get from the products. In the condition of COVID-19, where awareness of cleanliness and health was increasing, Islamic branding, that emphasized the quality and cleanliness of halal meat products, was able to make a positive contribution to purchase decisions (Mohamed et al., 2020).

Farah (2021) affirmed that Muslims' decision to purchase halal food derives from a spiritual element in which they take additional care to ensure that the product not only meets their utilitarian

and functional needs but also their spiritual and religious obligations. Another study (Ag Majid et al., 2021) provided the fact that non-Muslim consumers decide to consume halal meat because it is healthier and has a positive effect on their body weight, muscle mass, body fat, and antioxidant status, without changing the gut microbiota. Further, this present study's finding is in line with Afrianty (2020) that consumers' preferences might be significantly influenced by Islamic brands. Khadijah & Wulandari (2020) discovered a connection between Islamic advertising and food purchases. Then, Lim et al. (2022) confirmed that non-Muslim customers' interest in purchasing halal items is strongly correlated with Islamic branding. This is also confirmed by Muflih & Juliana (2021) that Islamic branding is the most influential factor in consumer purchase decisions.

A recent marketing fad has been toward halal goods. In today's world, there is a growing wave of consciousness about the need to provide access to halal food that is not limited to the Muslim population. This is related to religion, health, the economy, and safety (Md. Siddique E Azam, 2020). Because of the growing demand for halal goods among both Muslim and non-Muslim customers, therefore, Indonesia needs to be able to capitalize on the halal product development prospects, notably in the food industry (Ardiani Aniqoh & Hanastiana, 2020).

Product Ingredients and Purchase Decisions

Maintaining a healthy immune system is very important for survival in the era of the pandemic. Eating halal food particularly meat is one way of caring for the body and ensuring its continued health and vitality. The COVID-19 pandemic has catapulted halal food to the spotlight. This is primarily attributable to the fact that, in the wake of COVID-19, consumers have become more health-conscious and hygiene-conscious (Kumar, Mangla, Kumar, & Song, 2021). Therefore, one of the primary areas where consumers often have questions or concerns is with the product's components. It is crucial for them to be well-informed about the ingredients contained in the foods they purchase (Ankiel et al., 2020). Thus, consumers, both Muslims and non-Muslims, have a high demand for the growing halal food market since throughout the globe, halal has become a sign of safety and personal preference (Macall et al., 2021).

This present study reveals that product ingredients had a strong influence on non-Muslim consumers' purchase decisions for halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is due to the fact that during the pandemic, these consumers paid great attention to food safety. They wanted to make sure that the products they bought did not contain any ingredients that would potentially harm their health. Halal meat with a clear and reliable list of ingredients is able to give non-Muslim consumers confidence that the product has gone through a strict control process and is safe for consumption. Besides, halal meat products that have clear and detailed allergen information can attract the attention of non-Muslim consumers who have allergies or intolerances to some food ingredients. In short, clear information about the ingredients attached to halal meat products helps non-Muslims make safer purchase decisions that suit their dietary needs. Although halal meat is primarily intended for Muslim consumers, non-Muslims may also prefer this product as they perceive it to be of better quality and taste. The production and processing processes of halal meat can affect the quality and freshness of the product. During the pandemic, non-Muslim consumers who looked for high-quality products and wanted a satisfying dining experience might be attracted to halal meat.

In addition, non-Muslim consumers feel that purchasing halal meat products can demonstrate tolerance and understanding of other religious practices and beliefs, especially during difficult times such as the pandemic. This can be an important consideration in making a buying decision. In the end, non-Muslim consumers' purchase decisions for halal meat during the COVID-19 pandemic were

greatly influenced by some factors, such as dietary requirements, food safety, tolerance values, and available information about the product ingredients.

The findings of this study are in line with the purchasing decision theory proposed by Peter and Olson, which states that consumers' willingness to take a calculated risk in exchange for the possibility of reward makes up the bulk of their decision to buy or use a given product. Halal meat, as an option with different action pathways, is anticipated to satisfy the demands of a healthy life when used and purchased by non-Muslims (Han et al., 2021). Purchasing decision theory is depicted in this study by the contribution that information about product ingredients can influence consumer perceptions of the benefits, quality, and values of halal meat products which later impact purchase decisions. In the condition of COVID-19, where hygiene and health were the main concerns, information about product ingredients could be a determining factor in consumer decision-making. Therefore, understanding how this factor influences purchase decisions can provide a better view of consumer preferences and behaviors (Quoquab et al., 2020).

Research findings (Choi & Jeong, 2020) provided the fact that the purchasing of imported food by non-Muslim consumers is most affected by intrinsic factors such as nutrition, health function, and freshness. Most Muslim consumers also perceive taste as another aspect of quality related to their food lifestyle. Furthermore, Ahmadova & Aliyev (2021) affirmed that Muslim customers' purchase decisions for halal food are forms of their confidnce in the health awareness of halal products. This present study's findings are in line with Wawan Wasik Marzuki (2021), who stated that product ingredients have a strong impact on purchase decisions. Then, Jumarni (2021) maintained that there is a favorable correlation between food components and the decision to buy imported foods. Finally, Latuconsina et al. (2022) presented solid evidence that ingredients have a significant role in consumer choices to buy a product.

A contemporary and dynamic economy is a major factor in the expansion of the halal product market, which in turn influences the persistent advertising of halal food items. The use of halal goods, formerly considered a requirement exclusively by the Muslim community, has evolved into a value-driven lifestyle and has become a worldwide commerce trend, even among non-Muslims (Masruroh, 2020). Concern for human health, safety, and well-being is at the forefront of the halal food industry's current focus on product standards. This promising future holds great promise for raising living standards and expanding the halal sector's influence, particularly in Indonesia (Adekunle & Filson, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Islamic branding had a strong influence on non-Muslim purchase decisions on halal meat under the COVID-19 condition. This is due to the fact that Islamic branding is able to build trust and a positive image among non-Muslim consumers. Products that can ensure cleanliness, safety, and conformity with particular criteria were highly sought after during the COVID-19 epidemic. Strong Islamic branding on halal meat can give the perception that the product meets strict and well-supervised standards. Product ingredients also had a strong influence on the purchase decisions of non-Muslims on halal meat under the COVID-19 condition. This is due to the fact that during the pandemic, non-Muslim consumers prioritized food safety.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Theoretically and practically, the results of this study are expected to be, first, a reference for the industry in designing more effective marketing strategies to attract attention and meet the needs of non-Muslim consumers who are interested in halal meat products. Brands can use these findings to design packaging, messages, and campaigns that are relevant to their target market. The industry can better expand its market share, embracing consumer groups that may not have previously been considered as a target market for halal meat products. This can open up new opportunities for business growth and sustainability. The results of this study can help the industry understand the expectations of non-Muslim consumers for halal meat products. The industry can improve production standards, transparency, and product quality to meet these expectations, thereby building consumer trust.

Second, this research can assist the government in formulating better regulations regarding the labeling of halal meat products and providing guidelines regarding the information that must be provided for non-Muslim consumers. This can ensure that consumers receive clear and accurate information. By developing a market for halal meat products for non-Muslim consumers, the government can encourage economic growth in the food sector. This can result in increases in production, distribution, and related employment.

Third, this research can encourage inclusiveness in societies, where different groups of consumers are respected and understood in their preferences and needs. This contributes to the formation of a more harmonious and respectful society. Non-Muslim consumers interested in halal meat products have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of Islamic religious practices and values. This can result in better cultural and religious recognition, as well as reduced stereotypes and prejudice. More complete and accurate information about halal meat products can give non-Muslim consumers a wider choice in choosing food products that suit their preferences and values. Overall, the results of this study have the potential to bring about positive change in industry, government, and society, by building connectivity, economic sustainability and understanding across cultures.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies are suggested to expand on the two frameworks used in this research, Islamic branding and product ingredients, by including additional frameworks or factors that influence consumer preferences for halal goods. Researchers are encouraged to expand their studies beyond Bandar Lampung by examining non-Muslim consumers' behaviors in other cities and regions across Indonesia and the rest of the world. It is recommended to undertake research during the COVID-19 endemic phase because it gives information regarding purchase choices made during the COVID-19 pandemic shock.

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