

# Assessing the Validity and Reliability of a Halal Literacy and Certification Questionnaire for MSMEs

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## Abstract

The halal industry is experiencing rapid growth globally and nationally, driving the need to strengthen a structured halal ecosystem down to the local level. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are strategic actors in the halal value chain, but often face obstacles in the form of low literacy, limited perception of the importance of halal certification, and minimal access to assistance. Halal certification plays a crucial role in enhancing consumer confidence, competitiveness, and business sustainability, which are essential for supporting MSMEs in both local and international markets. This study aims to assess the validity and reliability of a newly designed questionnaire to evaluate halal literacy, perceptions, and enthusiasm related to halal certification among MSMEs around Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta. The questionnaire designed for this study covers three main sections: halal literacy, attitudes and requirements towards halal products, and readiness to obtain halal certification. Three certified halal auditors provided expert assessments to ensure the appropriate representation of the halal literacy construct. Construct reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, and item validity was tested based on MSME respondents. The results of the study show that the halal literacy section had an average knowledge score of 10.9 out of 13, with a correct response rate per item ranging from 45% to 100%. Of the 12 questions related to attitudes and halal requirements, 11 were declared valid with strong reliability (Cronbach's Alpha  $\geq 0.6$ ). The results also show that MSMEs consider halal certification to be essential for building trust, increasing competitiveness, and ensuring business sustainability. Despite challenges related to costs and administrative procedures, MSMEs generally show readiness to apply for halal certification.

**Keywords:** Halal Certification; Local MSMEs; Halal Literacy; Halal Perception; Interest in Halal Certification

## 1. Introduction

The halal industry has experienced significant growth worldwide, particularly in sectors such as food, beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and tourism. Muslim consumers spent USD 2.29 trillion on halal items in 2023, according to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report, and this amount is expected to continue to rise (Liaqat, 2023). The growth of the halal industry has become a national priority in Indonesia, a nation with the largest Muslim population in the world. The establishment of the National Committee for Sharia Economy and Finance, along with other measures aimed at strengthening the country's halal environment, is an example of this dedication.

The micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector is a vital component of this ecosystem. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are essential for supplying consumer items to local populations. Nonetheless, numerous MSME participants continue to possess a limited comprehension of the halal idea, the significance of halal certification, and the use of Sharia rules in their production methodologies (Qomariyah, 2023). A study conducted in Wirogunan, Yogyakarta, revealed that although there is recognition of the significance of halal certification, numerous MSMEs are inadequately prepared regarding production systems and encounter obstacles related to access, costs, and information concerning the certification process (Khairawati et al., 2024).

Data from LPPOM-MUI showed that 63% of food products in Indonesia lack halal certification (LPOM, 2021). The phenomenon is especially apparent in Yogyakarta, where numerous local food products lack official halal certification, and halal knowledge remains insufficient among both producers and consumers (Khairawati et al., 2024). The discrepancy poses a significant problem for organizations such as the Halal Centre of Universitas 'Aisyiyah (UNISA) Yogyakarta, which aspires to be a centre for halal development based on scientific knowledge and Islamic principles. UNISA has established the Halal Centre to enhance the local halal ecosystem; yet, there is an absence of baseline

data that thoroughly delineates the literacy, perceptions, and requirements of local MSMEs concerning halal products. This data is essential for formulating contextual and sustainable strategies for education, training, and capacity-building.

As of now, no thorough study has comprehensively evaluated the preparedness of the halal ecosystem among MSMEs within a university community, specifically focusing on the aspects of literacy, perception, and actual requirements for halal certification in UNISA Yogyakarta. This research gap underscores the justification for the current study, which aims to make both practical and scholarly contributions to establishing a sustainable, evidence-based local halal ecosystem.

The research aims to evaluate the preparedness of the halal ecosystem surrounding UNISA Yogyakarta by analyzing MSMEs' literacy, views, and requirements for halal products. The results will provide a crucial basis for creating efficient, demand-oriented initiatives at the Halal Centre, tailored to the actual requirements of local business stakeholders.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Respondent**

Twenty (20) respondents, as owners or managers of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with similar characteristics to MSMEs located around Universitas Aisyiyah (UNISA) Yogyakarta, were recruited using purposive sampling. Eligibility required active engagement in day-to-day business operations relevant to the study context, namely, settings in which halal literacy, perceptions, and product needs could plausibly influence business decisions.

### **2.2 Instrument Development**

The questionnaire was developed to measure three items: halal literacy (13 dichotomous items, true/false), perceptions and needs for halal products (12 items, 5-point Likert scale), and willingness for halal certification (8 items, 5-point Likert scale). The items were adapted and developed according to the guidelines of the 2023 regulation of the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH).

### **2.3 Validity Testing**

Validity was tested using item–total correlation in SPSS version 25. Each item's correlation with the total score (excluding the item itself) was calculated. An item was considered valid if the correlation coefficient ( $r$  count) was greater than the critical value of  $r$  table. With a sample size of 20 respondents, the degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) were calculated as  $n - 2 = 18$ . Based on the  $r$  table at  $\alpha = 0.05$ , the minimum threshold was  $r$  table = 0.4438. Thus, items with  $r$  count  $> 0.4438$  were considered valid. For perception and product needs, validity testing was performed as described above. For halal literacy, expert judgment was additionally applied to determine content validity. This process involved three certified halal auditors from the Halal Center of Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta, ensuring that the retained items accurately reflect the theoretical and regulatory framework of halal product assurance.

### **2.4 Reliability Testing**

Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha for each construct (halal literacy, perceptions and needs for halal products, willingness for halal certification). Cronbach's Alpha  $\geq 0.60$  was considered acceptable. For the knowledge domain, due to the dichotomous nature of items and their factual variation, Cronbach's Alpha was interpreted with caution, and total knowledge scores were emphasized instead.

**SECTION 1 - Halal Literacy (True/False)**

1. Products used or consumed by Muslims must be halal and thayyib (good).
2. Alcohol/ethanol that does not originate from khamr can be used in certain products under certain conditions.
3. Pork and its derivatives are prohibited in all halal products.
4. Halal production processes may be mixed with non-halal production processes, as long as they are carried out in a clean place. (UNFAVORABLE)
5. The distribution, storage, and presentation of halal products must not be mixed with non-halal products.
6. The production environment must be clean and free from impurities.
7. Production and packaging equipment can affect the halal status of a product.
8. The use of chicken meat may not be halal if it does not have a halal certificate.
9. The use of gelatin may not be halal if it does not have a halal certificate.
10. Halal products do not contain prohibited ingredients such as pork, blood, carcasses, or animals slaughtered in the name of Allah.
11. Ingredients used in a food product that are not classified as hazardous and do not come into contact with haram ingredients do not require proof of halal certification.
12. Ingredients that come from nature in the form of plants without undergoing processing may not require halal certification.
13. Products that use the names/brands of haram animals, such as dogs, are classified as haram.

**Figure 1.** Questionnaire Section 1 Halal Literacy

**SECTION 2 - Perceptions and Needs Regarding Halal Products**

Fill in: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

1. Halal products increase consumer confidence in my business.
2. Having halal certification provides added value in business competition.
3. Halal products are important for maintaining the reputation of a business in the community.
4. Consumers prefer halal-labeled products over non-halal-labeled products.
5. Compliance with halal standards is a form of moral and spiritual responsibility for business operators.
6. Documentation of ingredients, processes, and supporting documents (halal certificates, NIB numbers, production flow) does not burden my business.
7. Support from BPJPH/LP3H/Halal Center/related agencies is sufficient in meeting halal certification requirements.
8. I need practical guidance in implementing the halal product assurance system (SJPH).
9. I need training or assistance in obtaining halal certification.
10. I feel that the cost of halal certification remains a major obstacle for businesses and MSMEs like mine.
11. I would like the government and universities to provide support facilities to make it easier for my business to obtain halal certification.
12. I am committed to registering my business products to obtain halal certification.

**Figure 2.** Questionnaire Section 2 Perceptions and needs for halal products

### SECTION 3 - Willingness for halal certification

Fill in with: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

1. I am aware that halal food/beverage products must have halal certification.
2. I believe that halal-certified food/beverage products are of a more guaranteed quality.
3. I will register my business products to obtain halal certification.
4. I am aware that obtaining halal certification is important for my business.
5. I understand that the halal certification registration process is quite complex, but I will still try to register my products.
6. I will use halal ingredients for my business's processed products.
7. I feel safer and more at ease using products that are halal certified.
8. The cost of halal certification affects my interest in obtaining halal certification.

**Figure 3.** Questionnaire Section 3 Willingness for Halal Certification

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Respondents Characteristics

The characteristics of the 20 respondents are shown in Table 1. Most respondents operated within the food and beverage sector (60%), 35% managed food-only enterprises, and 5% specialized in beverages. The bulk of businesses (60%) had been founded for over five years, 15% for three to four years, and 25% for less than one year. These findings illustrate the stability of established enterprises alongside the dynamic creation of newer businesses within the local food sector.

**Table 1.** Respondents characteristics.

Characteristics	N (%)
	Total N = 20
<b>Type of Culinary Business</b>	
Food & Beverages	12 (60)
Food	7 (35)
Beverages	1 (5)
<b>Duration of Business Established</b>	
Less than 1 year	5 (25)
3-4 years	3 (15)
5 years	12 (60)
<b>Halal Certification Status</b>	
No	12 (60)
Already have	8 (40)
<b>Products</b>	
Main meals	Lontong sayur, soto, nasi pecel, nasi rames, gudeg, bubur ayam, gado-gado, pecel lele, sate
Snacks/ street foods	Batagor, siomay, pentol, gorengan, jenang
Beverages	Es teh, es jeruk, es dawet, es cincau, es pleret, susu murni

According to Table 1, 60% of MSMEs have not acquired certification, whereas 40% have secured halal certification. The difference is particularly significant, considering the Muslim majority environment in Yogyakarta, where halal certification serves as both a religious mandate and a crucial

factor in customer confidence and market competitiveness (Rofiah et al., 2024). Furthermore, the government has mandated that by 2026, Micro and Small Enterprises (MSMEs) must obtain halal certification. The regulation conforms with Law Number 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Guarantee (JPH) and Government Regulation (PP) Number 42 of 2024 related to the Implementation of Halal Product Guarantee.

Traditional main courses (vegetable rice cake, rice dish with peanut sauce, gudeg, and chicken porridge) as well as well-known street foods (meatball, Indonesian steamed fish dumplings, fishcake, and jenang) and drinks (tea, fruit juices, and milk) were among the respondents' varied product offers. The variety of regional culinary traditions is reflected in this diversity, but it also presents challenges for halal assurance, as different ingredients and preparation techniques make certification more complex. The results obtained highlight the importance of enhancing halal literacy, resolving the perspectives and requirements of MSMEs about halal items, and encouraging a stronger willingness to obtain certification. Enhancing knowledge and accessibility of certification will not only meet customer expectations but also foster sustainable and inclusive company growth in Yogyakarta. The results align with previous studies, which have shown that halal literacy and attitudes toward halal significantly influence customer behavior and the adoption of halal procedures by businesses (Bhutto et al., 2023; Anggriani et al., 2024)

### 3.2. Validity and Reliability of The Questionnaire

#### 3.2.1. Halal literacy

The mean total knowledge score was 10.9 (SD = 1.25) with scores ranging from 8 to 13. At the item level, the percentage of correct responses ranged from 45% (knowledge of the permissibility of alcohol/ethanol not derived from khamr under certain conditions) to 100% (recognition that products must be halal and thayyib, and that the production environment must be clean and free from najis) (Table 2). The construct of halal literacy was further evaluated through expert judgment. Three certified halal auditors from the Halal Center, Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta, reviewed the items for content relevance, clarity, and alignment with existing halal standards and regulations. Based on their evaluation, the instrument was concluded to have adequate content validity, as the retained items sufficiently represented the intended construct of halal knowledge.

**Table 2.** Item-level % correct from Questionnaire Section 1: Halal literacy

Item	Questions	% correct
Q1	Products used or consumed by Muslims must be halal and thayyib (good)	100%
Q2	Alcohol/ethanol that does not originate from khamr can be used in certain products under certain conditions	45%
Q3	Pork and its derivatives are prohibited in all halal products	90%
Q4	Halal production processes may be mixed with non-halal production processes, as long as they are carried out in a clean place	80%
Q5	The distribution, storage, and presentation of halal products must not be mixed with non-halal products	95%
Q6	The production environment must be clean and free from impurities	100%
Q7	Production and packaging equipment can affect the halal status of a product	95%
Q8	The use of chicken meat may not be halal if it does not have a halal certificate	65%
Q9	The use of gelatin may not be halal if it does not have a halal certificate	90%
Q10	Halal products do not contain prohibited ingredients such as pork, blood, carcasses, or animals slaughtered in the name of Allah	90%

Q11	Ingredients used in a food product that are not classified as hazardous and do not come into contact with haram ingredients do not require proof of halal certification	65%
Q12	Bahan yang berasal dari alam berupa tumbuhan tanpa melalui proses pengolahan boleh tidak bersertifikat halal	80%
Q13	Ingredients that come from nature in the form of plants without undergoing processing may not require halal certification	95%

### 3.2.2. Perceptions and needs for halal products

The perception section comprised 12 Likert-type items (1–5 scale). Validity testing showed that items Q2–Q12 were valid ( $r \geq 0.4438$ ), while item Q1 did not meet the threshold and was excluded. The reliability analysis of the remaining items yielded a Cronbach’s Alpha of  $\geq 0.6$ , indicating acceptable reliability (Table 3). An indicator is considered valid if the Cronbach alpha result exceeds 0.6. In measurement models, especially in factor analysis, indicator validity refers to the extent to which an item reflects the construct intended to be measured. Results showing  $\geq 0.6$  generally indicate a strong relationship, suggesting that the item contributes significantly to the construct (Raharjanti et al., 2022; Sigudla & Maritz, 2023).

**Table 3.** Validity and Reliability Test Results of Questionnaire Section 2: Perceptions and needs for halal products”

Item	Questions	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach’s Alpha	Criteria
Q1	Halal products increase consumer confidence in my business	0.151	-	Not Valid
Q2	Having halal certification provides added value in business competition	0.717	0.926	Valid & Reliable
Q3	Halal products are important for maintaining the reputation of a business in the community	0.675	0.928	Valid & Reliable
Q4	Consumers prefer halal-labeled products over non-halal-labeled products	0.573	0.930	Valid & Reliable
Q5	Compliance with halal standards is a form of moral and spiritual responsibility for business operators	0.789	0.924	Valid & Reliable
Q6	Documentation of ingredients, processes, and supporting documents (halal certificates, NIB numbers, production flow) does not burden my business	0.485	0.933	Valid & Reliable
Q7	Support from BPJPH/LP3H/Halal Center/related agencies is sufficient in meeting halal certification requirements	0.792	0.922	Valid & Reliable
Q8	I need practical guidance in implementing the halal product assurance system (SJPH)	0.919	0.916	Valid & Reliable
Q9	I need training or assistance in obtaining halal certification	0.878	0.918	Valid & Reliable
Q10	I feel that the cost of halal certification remains a major obstacle for businesses and MSMEs like mine	0.457	0.942	Valid & Reliable
Q11	I would like the government and universities to provide support facilities to make it easier for my business to obtain halal certification	0.825	0.922	Valid & Reliable
Q12	I am committed to registering my business products to obtain halal certification	0.672	0.927	Valid & Reliable

The acceptable reliability is consistent with prior studies, which found that perception and attitude constructs measured using Likert scales typically produce stable internal consistency, provided that poorly performing items are excluded (Anggriani et al., 2024). In the context of halal products, perceptions are strongly shaped by trust, consumer demand, and market competitiveness. Recent research has shown that positive perceptions of halal certification are linked to enhanced brand credibility and consumer confidence, particularly in Muslim-majority markets (Juliana et al., 2024). Moreover, MSMEs often express a clear need for halal products and certification as a way to maintain competitiveness and align with both religious obligations and consumer expectations (Fathoni et al., 2025).

The findings also reflect a broader trend in Indonesian MSMEs, where halal perception is not only a matter of compliance but also linked to consumer loyalty and business sustainability. As demonstrated by Surbakti et al. (2025), halal perceptions are often intertwined with literacy and lifestyle, influencing how strongly business owners prioritize halal assurance. Thus, ensuring valid and reliable measurement of perception is essential for understanding how MSMEs interpret the necessity and benefits of halal products.

### 3.2.3. Willingness for halal certification

The product needs section contained 8 Likert-type items (Table 4). Validity testing showed that only items Q1, Q2, Q4, Q5, Q6, and Q7 met the validity threshold. Items Q3 and Q8 were excluded. a Cronbach's Alpha of  $\geq 0.6$ , indicating acceptable reliability (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Validity and Reliability Test Results of Questionnaire Section 3: Willingness for halal certification

Item	Questions	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha	Criteria
Q1	I am aware that halal food/beverage products must have halal certification	0.603	0.860	Valid & Reliable
Q2	I believe that halal-certified food/beverage products are of a more guaranteed quality	0.736	0.818	Valid & Reliable
Q3	I will register my business products to obtain halal certification.	0.000	-	Not Valid
Q4	I am aware that obtaining halal certification is important for my business	0.743	0.830	Valid & Reliable
Q5	I understand that the halal certification registration process is quite complex, but I will still try to register my products	0.501	0.866	Valid & Reliable
Q6	I will use halal ingredients for my business's processed products	0.745	0.817	Valid & Reliable
Q7	I feel safer and more at ease using products that are halal certified	0.609	0.841	Valid & Reliable
Q8	The cost of halal certification affects my interest in obtaining halal certification.	0.421	-	Not Valid

This finding is particularly relevant given the Indonesian government's mandate for halal certification under the Halal Product Assurance Act. Recent studies indicate that willingness among MSMEs to pursue certification is often constrained by barriers such as cost, administrative complexity, and limited knowledge (Juliana et al., 2024; Nugraha & Pujakesuma, 2025). Nonetheless, the positive reliability of this construct in the present study suggests that willingness can be consistently measured and that MSMEs share some common attitudes toward certification.

Surbakti et al. (2025) Emphasized that halal awareness and literacy are key predictors of certification willingness. Similarly, Fathoni et al. (2025) found that when MSMEs are supported with simplified procedures and financial assistance, willingness to certify increases significantly. The current results, therefore, reinforce the importance of linking halal literacy, perception, and willingness constructs to provide a holistic view of MSMEs ' readiness.

Overall, the validated and reliable measurement of perceptions, needs, and willingness enables meaningful exploration of the relationships between these constructs. The evidence suggests that while MSMEs perceive halal certification as important and express willingness to pursue it, structural and informational barriers must be addressed to translate willingness into actual certification uptake.

#### 4. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to assess the validity and reliability of a newly designed questionnaire evaluating halal literacy, perceptions, and enthusiasm regarding halal certification among MSMEs surrounding Universitas 'Aisyiyah Yogyakarta. The halal literacy section exhibited an average total knowledge score of 10.9 out of 13, with item-level correct responses varying from 45% to 100%. Three certified halal auditors provided expert judgment affirming that the kept goods sufficiently represented the construct of halal literacy. Regarding attitudes and requirements for halal products, 11 out of 12 questions were deemed valid, and the construct exhibited robust reliability (Cronbach's Alpha  $\geq$  0.6). The results obtained indicate that MSMEs participants regard halal certification as crucial for trust, competitiveness, and business sustainability. Furthermore, the willingness construct, comprising six valid and reliable measures, indicated that MSMEs generally showed readiness to seek certification, despite obstacles associated with fees and administrative procedures. The verified questionnaire serves as a dependable instrument for evaluating halal literacy, perceptions, and certification willingness among MSMEs. The findings highlight the need to enhance knowledge and awareness through education and training, while concurrently addressing structural obstacles such as certification costs and procedural complexities. These initiatives are essential to improve MSMEs' preparedness to adhere to the Halal Product Assurance Act and to bolster their competitiveness in local and outside markets.

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