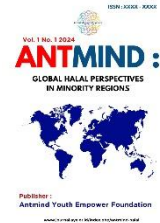


Antmind: Global Halal Perspectives in Minority Region

ISSN xxxx-xxxx (Print), ISSN xxxx-xxxx (Online)

Newspaper homepage: <https://journal.aye.or.id/index.php/antmind-halal/index>

Email: antminhalal@gmail.com



Halal Labeling and Muslim Consumer Trust in North Sulawesi Minority Regions

Muhammad Fikri Asnawir^{1*}

¹ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

*Corresponden Email: fikriasnawir@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of the inclusion of halal labels on consumers' buying interest in local coffee products called "Kopi Cap Keluarga" produced in Bilalang Satu Village, an area with a minority Muslim population in North Kotamobagu, Indonesia. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method that involves respondents from active consumers during the study period. The results of a simple linear regression test showed that halal labels contributed significantly to the increase in buying interest, with a determination coefficient of 59.7%. These findings indicate that the existence of halal labels not only serves as a guarantee of sharia, but also plays a strategic role in building consumer trust amid cultural and religious plurality. This article highlights how micro business actors, such as Kopi Cap Keluarga producers, can leverage halal certification to increase competitiveness and expand markets in minority areas. In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of packaging innovation, consumer education, and institutional support in strengthening an inclusive halal product ecosystem based on local wisdom.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received 11 January 2025

First Revised 23 March 2025

Accepted 09 May 2025

First Available online 29 June 2025

Publication Date 30 June 2025

Keywords:

Halal labels,
Buying interest,
Local products,
Minority communities,

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1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the world's growing Muslim population and the global halal market is projected to be worth more than USD 3 trillion (Azam & ABDULLAH, 2020; Wasim Akram, 2020), ironically millions of Muslims living in minority areas still face difficulties in accessing safe, standardized, and verified halal products and services (Amid, 2024). In many non-Muslim majority areas, products with halal labels are still rare, and even if they are available, their halalness is often questioned due to the lack of education, regulations, and awareness of business actors about the importance of halal labelling (Ramli et al., 2023; Silalahi, 2024). This condition creates ethical and psychological challenges for Muslim consumers in meeting their consumption needs in accordance with sharia, while opening up space for exploration of halal protection mechanisms in the context of minority communities.

Theoretically, this research refers to the framework of consumer behavior theory and signaling theory (Connelly et al., 2025; McAndrew, 2021). Halal labels serve as a trust signal indicating that the product meets religious, hygienic, and ethical criteria, which can influence consumers' perception of risk, value, and purchasing decisions (Anam et al., 2018; Ishak et al., 2016; E. W. Yusuf et al., 2019). In the context of minority communities, halal labels are also symbolic identities that provide a sense of security while building an emotional attachment between consumers and producers (Djamali et al., 2025; Halmi et al., 2024).

Various previous studies have highlighted the importance of halal labels in influencing Muslim consumers' purchasing decisions (Santoso et al., 2017; Usman et al., 2022). However, most of the research has focused on Muslim-majority areas or large-scale global halal markets (E. W. Yusuf et al., 2019; N. Yusuf, Botutihe, et al., 2023; N. Yusuf, Sarib, et al., 2023). There is still very limited research that examines the dynamics of halal labeling in the context of minority communities, especially on micro-scale local products in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia (Rofiqo, 2023). In fact, areas like Kotamobagu in North Sulawesi Province whose Muslim population is a minority present a complex and unique reality of how religious identity, consumption preferences, and halal branding strategies are run by local MSME actors.

Departing from this background, this study aims to empirically analyze the influence of halal labels on the buying interest of Muslim consumers towards *Kopi Cap Keluarga*, a local coffee product produced in Bilalang Satu Village, North Kotamobagu. The formulation of the problem raised in this study is: to what extent can halal labels influence Muslim consumers' decisions to buy local products in minority areas, and how can local producers use such labels as an instrument of competitiveness? This approach not only dissects the relationship between halal perception and purchase intention, but also examines the sociocultural context and majority-minority relationships that influence the practice and response to halal labeling.

This research contributes to the enrichment of the literature in two important dimensions. First, to fill the gap in the study of halal accessibility and integrity in minority areas which have been less highlighted in the global halal discourse. Second, it provides a data-driven perspective from the micro-business sector in Indonesia a country with the largest Muslim population in the world that shows how halal labeling is not only a matter of certification, but also an ethical representation, branding strategy, and economic inclusion in the context of diversity. As such, this article is relevant for international readers interested in halal studies in the framework of religious diversity, access equity, and local economic empowerment.

2. METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal explanatory research design (Thomas & Zubkov, 2023), aiming to test the influence of halal labels on the buying interest of Muslim consumers towards local *Kopi Cap Keluarga* products in minority areas, especially Bilalang Satu Village, North Kotamobagu District, North Sulawesi Province. This approach was chosen to obtain objective data that allows a statistical analysis of cause-and-effect relationships between independent and dependent variables (Wipulanusat et al., 2020).

Population and Sample

The population in this study is all Muslim consumers who have purchased or consumed *Kopi Cap Keluarga* products during the last three-month period. Given the limited time and resources, the purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents who were in accordance with the inclusion criteria (Rai & Thapa, 2015), namely: (1) Muslim, (2) domiciled in the Kotamobagu area, and (3) had purchased *Kopi Cap Keluarga* products directly. The number of samples obtained was 30 respondents, which is considered representative for micro-scale exploratory studies in minority areas.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) (Zhou et al., 2017), which consists of two main sections:

1. Independent variable (X): perception of the halal label, which includes the dimensions of belief, clarity of information, and religious perception.
2. Dependent variable (Y): consumer buying interest, which reflects repurchase intent, interest in the product, and influence on purchase decisions.

The questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability before distribution with an initial trial (pilot test) on 10 respondents. The test results showed that all items had an item-total correlation value of > 0.3 and a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.845, which means reliable.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using simple linear regression to test the influence of halal labels on buying interest (Grégoire, 2014). The analysis was carried out with the help of SPSS software version 25. Classical assumption tests (normality, linearity, homogeneity) were performed to ensure the validity of the regression model. The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to measure the extent to which independent variables are able to explain the variation of dependent variables.

Research Ethics

This research upholds the ethical principles of social research, including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality of respondent data. All participants were given an explanation of the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Statistical Analysis Results: The Effect of Halal Labels on Buying Interest

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of consumers' perception of halal labeling (independent variable/X) on their purchase intention (dependent variable/Y) toward *Kopi Cap Keluarga*, a locally produced coffee brand in a Muslim-minority region. The result of the analysis indicates a significant positive relationship, as captured by the following regression equation:

$$Y=9.960+0.775XY = 9.960 + 0.775XY=9.960+0.775X$$

This equation demonstrates that for every one-unit increase in positive perception of the halal label, consumer purchase intention increases by 0.775 units. The coefficient is positive and statistically significant, implying that halal labeling substantially affects Muslim consumers' decision to purchase. The hypothesis testing confirms this relationship, as the t-test for the regression coefficient yielded a t-value of 5.946, which exceeds the critical t-table value of 2.048 at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

The statistical details of the regression analysis are presented below:

Table 1. Simple Linear Regression Output

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard Error	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	9.960	2.153	4.626	0.000
Halal Label (X)	0.775	0.130	5.946	0.000

Source: Spss, 2024

1. R^2 (Coefficient of Determination): 0.597
2. Adjusted R^2 : 0.582
3. F-value (ANOVA): 35.36, $p < 0.001$

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.597 indicates that 59.7% of the variance in purchase intention can be explained by consumers' perception of the halal label. The remaining 40.3% is likely influenced by other variables not explored in this study, such as price sensitivity, product taste, promotional activities, packaging design, or brand familiarity.

The findings were strengthened through the regression coefficient significance test, which showed that the t-calculated value of 5.946 far exceeded the t-table value of 2.048 at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$), with a degree of freedom (df) = $n - 2$. This condition confirms that there is a very statistically significant relationship between the variables of perception of halal labels and buying interest. This means that, probabilistically, the likelihood that this relationship occurs by chance is very small, so it can be believed that halal labels do have a real influence on Muslim consumers' purchasing decisions of local products in minority areas. These findings are important evidence that halal labels are not only additional attributes that are administrative or formal, but are a determinant factor that shapes perception, reduces the risk of perception of quality and halalness, and strengthens trust in the consumption decision-making process (Anam et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the results of the analysis also showed a determination coefficient value (R^2) of 0.597, which means that 59.7% of the variation in consumer buying interest can be explained by the perception of halal labels. This value is considerable and significant in the context of consumer

behavior research, especially in the realm of halal products in minority Muslim communities. This means that more than half of the purchasing decisions made by Muslim consumers in this study are heavily influenced by how they assess and understand the halal labels on the products they buy. This shows that the perception of halal is not only a theological consideration, but has been transformed into an indicator of quality, producer integrity, and consumer ethics guarantee (Rahman et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the remaining 40.3% were influenced by other factors that were not directly researched in this study, such as price, taste quality, packaging design, recommendations from third parties (word of mouth), and marketing strategies carried out by manufacturers or sellers.

Thus, these results make an important contribution to the scientific understanding of how halal labels function as a tool of influence in Muslim consumption behavior, particularly in the context of minority communities that face limited access to certified products. In conditions like this, the presence of halal labels on products is not only an administrative symbol, but also a representation of trust, psychological safety, and religious loyalty. Products such as *Kopi Cap Keluarga* (*Kopi Cap Keluarga* produced by MSME actors in non-Muslim-majority areas) show that halal labeling can be a strategic instrument to penetrate the Muslim market while building a solid reputation amid cultural and religious plurality. Therefore, these statistical results provide a solid basis for understanding the broader dynamics of halal integrity in the context of social and economic inclusion, which will be discussed in more depth in the next subsection.

Halal Label as a Signal of Consumer Trust

In the context of Muslim consumer behavior, the halal label not only serves as an informative instrument, but also as a very strong signal of trust. The signaling theory developed by Shahid et al. (2024) explains that in uncertain market conditions, consumers rely heavily on external signals to make decisions, especially when they do not have direct access to evaluate the internal quality of a product. In this case, the halal label is a signal that shows that the product has gone through a process of selection, supervision, and verification in accordance with Islamic sharia principles. For Muslim consumers, the existence of this label indicates that the product is not only free from haram elements, but also meets the ethical aspects of production, cleanliness, and food safety. Therefore, halal labels have layered symbolic and functional values, which affect consumer perceptions cognitively, affectively, and conactively at the same time (Anwar, 2025).

In this study, the halal label listed on *Kopi Cap Keluarga* products has been statistically proven to increase the buying interest of Muslim consumers. Psychologically, the existence of such labels reduces the perceived risk that often arises in the context of non-Muslim majority areas, where Muslim consumers often face doubts about the raw materials, processing processes, or distribution of a product (Djamali et al., 2025). With the halal label, consumers feel safer and confident that the product is suitable for consumption without causing religious doubt (Ambali & Bakar, 2014; Farah, 2021). This sense of security is not only personal but also social, as consumption decisions are often influenced by group norms and social pressures within Muslim communities (Shah & Asghar, 2024). In minority communities, halal labels are a form of symbolic protection of consumers' religious identity and integrity, as well as a representation of the producer's respect for the religious needs of certain consumer groups.

In addition, the halal label in this context can also be understood as an expression of the value of the producer's modesty that prioritizes moral and social responsibility in its business practices

(Rahman et al., 2023). This is in line with the concept of *halalan thayyiban* (great halal), which not only emphasizes the halal aspect legally, but also kindness, blessings, and honesty in the business process (Hashim & Sulaiman, 2022). When consumers see halal labels on local products produced by MSMEs such as *Kopi Cap Keluarga* (*Kopi Cap Keluarga*), they are not only looking at compliance with formal regulations, but also moral interpretations of the producer's goodwill in providing products that are useful and religiously legitimate. This is what builds consumer trust in the long run, creates brand loyalty, and strengthens the emotional connection between consumers and products. This signal becomes even more meaningful when presented in the context of a region that is not demographically predominantly Muslim, because it provides a sense of recognition and inclusion to the consumption needs of minority groups (Suhartanto et al., 2025).

The trust built through halal labels also has an economic dimension that cannot be ignored. In the context of microeconomics, trust is an asset that is difficult for competitors to replicate and can be a long-term competitive advantage. Therefore, halal labeling can be considered a value-based branding strategy, which not only targets financial gain but also wants to build a healthy reputation, social responsibility, and reciprocal relationship between producers and consumers. *Kopi Cap Keluarga* products have succeeded in taking advantage of this dimension by placing the halal label not just as a visual attribute on the packaging, but as a narrative of trust communicated to Muslim consumers in a geographically and demographically challenging region. Thus, the halal label becomes more than just a symbol; It is a form of cross-value communication that connects producers and consumers in a single platform of mutual trust and responsibility.

Minority Region Context: The Dynamics and Challenges of Halal Product Access

Areas with minority Muslim populations often present their own challenges in meeting consumption needs in accordance with halal principles. One of the fundamental problems faced by Muslim consumers in the region is the limited access to credible and verified halal products. In the city of Kotamobagu, especially in Bilalang Satu Village, the Muslim community coexists with the non-Muslim majority community in a relatively harmonious social order, but is not yet fully inclusive in terms of the provision of sharia-based facilities and products. In this context, the absence of halal specialty stores, weak distribution of halal-certified products, and low halal literacy among business actors are structural problems that affect the consumption patterns of the Muslim community (Fathoni et al., 2024). In contrast to big cities in Indonesia that already have a relatively established halal ecosystem, areas such as Kotamobagu still rely on the awareness of local producers to create halal guarantees voluntarily and independently, without the support of a strong regulatory system.

This makes the halal label more than just a sign of legality or administrative formality; it is a form of symbolic resistance and an expression of identity from the Muslim community seeking to maintain their religious integrity in the midst of a social environment that does not fully accommodate their needs (Ambali & Bakar, 2014; Djamali et al., 2025). Under such conditions, Muslim consumers develop stricter social control and market selection mechanisms in selecting products, and hence, the presence of halal labels is the main determinant in building trust in a product. This study found that *Kopi Cap Keluarga* despite coming from a non-Muslim majority area, was able to attract the attention and trust of Muslim consumers precisely because of the halal label that provides an explicit guarantee about the halal status of the product. This situation strengthens the position of the halal label as a tool for identity affirmation in consumption, and at the same time as a means of social integration in the structure of a pluralistic society.

In addition to access issues, another challenge faced by Muslim communities in minority areas is the lack of institutional support for the distribution and promotion of local halal products. MSME actors in areas such as Kotamobagu often do not have access to halal certification training, clean production technology, and national halal distribution networks (Trimulato et al., 2022). The success of *Kopi Cap Keluarga* in obtaining halal labels, even with limitations, is proof of the existence of grassroots initiatives that deserve appreciation as a model of community-based economic inclusion. Furthermore, this challenge indicates the importance of a decentralized approach in the development of halal ecosystems, where local communities are empowered to build halal certification capacity that is sustainable, sensitive to local culture, and integrated with microeconomic systems. In this context, the presence of halal labels on local products is a form of social innovation that bridges the inequality of access between majority and minority communities, while strengthening an equitable economic narrative (Nuryanto et al., 2025).

In the end, a reading of the context of minority areas such as Kotamobagu shows that the halal label cannot be interpreted solely in the logic of the free market or the commodification of religious products. These labels operate in a more complex realm, namely the realm of culture, identity, and the power of representation. Thus, halal certification policies and the strengthening of halal markets in minority areas need to be designed taking into account local dynamics, the needs of the Muslim community, and the local potential possessed by producers and consumers. *Kopi Cap Keluarga* products are a real example of how halal labeling strategies can be successfully implemented effectively in plural and limited social conditions, as long as there is producer awareness and symbolic support from the community. These findings provide important lessons for policymakers, halal practitioners, and academics who are concerned about the inclusivity of halal systems in a global and multicultural context.

Integration of Local Values and Halal Branding Strategies

One of the most interesting findings from this study is how MSME actors such as *Kopi Cap Keluarga* producers are able to integrate local values in halal-based branding strategies. Branding in this context is not only about building an image or promoting products commercially, but rather becoming an arena for communicating values, social identities, and the ideological position of producers in a pluralistic society. In the case of *Kopi Cap Keluarga*, the presence of halal labels cannot be separated from the construction of local values such as simplicity, family, honesty, and authenticity. The image of home coffee that is traditionally processed and inherited from generation to generation becomes a narrative that is strongly attached to the brand. The addition of halal labels on the packaging is not only a complement to legality, but is actually a guarantee that these local values are maintained in the production process in a Sharia and responsible manner.

The halal label in this context serves a dual function: as a bridge between local wisdom and global sharia demands, as well as as a differentiator in an increasingly competitive market. In the contemporary brand management literature, this approach is known as value-based branding, which is the practice of brand building that is rooted in authentic and deep values that are believed by producers and expected by consumers (Alamin et al., 2021; Essiz & Senyuz, 2024; Huat & Rampersad, 2017). By positioning itself as a local product that is halal and *thayyib*, *Kopi Cap Keluarga* not only captivates the hearts of Muslim consumers, but also expands the resonance of its brand as a clean, responsible, and trustworthy product. This fosters emotional loyalty from consumers,

which is stronger than just price or taste preferences, because that attachment is shaped by a shared sense of values and moral vision.

Furthermore, this strategy of integrating halal and local values has become particularly relevant in the context of minority Muslim consumers, who are not only looking for products that fit their functional needs, but also products that reflect respect for their religious identity (Wilkins et al., 2019). In such conditions, the halal label becomes a symbol that producers do not only sell goods, but also recognize and appreciate the existence of Islamic values in the daily lives of consumers. This process builds a relationship between producers and consumers that is dialogical and not transactional. The halal label in the packaging of *Kopi Cap Keluarga* is a representation of care, respect, and inclusion, all of which cannot be achieved with conventional marketing approaches alone.

This strategy also proves that micro-enterprises operating in marginalized or minority areas still have great potential to grow and form a strong brand if they are able to combine local values with global narratives such as halal. Halal labels, when combined with local image, are not only a differentiation strategy, but also a tool for identity struggle, capacity building, and community economic strengthening. This practice shows that halal branding does not have to be monopolized by large corporations or the mass food industry; MSME actors can also create strong, credible, and meaningful brands, as long as they are honest in the process, consistent in value, and sensitive to consumer needs. Therefore, the integration of halal labels with local values not only boosts competitiveness, but also enriches ethics-based business practices in an increasingly standardized world.

Relevance of the Findings to Global Discourse on Halal and Minority Inclusion

The findings in this study make a significant contribution to the enrichment of the global discourse on halal, especially in the context of minority inclusion and access justice. Over the past few decades, global halal studies have tended to be dominated by certification issues, international halal supply chains, and the role of states in shaping cross-border halal standards. While important, such approaches often ignore the micro-dynamics that take place in Muslim minority communities, especially in countries with Muslim-majority populations such as Indonesia (Rahman et al., 2023, 2024; E. W. Yusuf et al., 2019). In fact, in areas such as Kotamobagu where the Muslim community is spread out in small numbers among the majority of non-Muslims, the issue of halal has become very personal, urgent, and fraught with complex identities. It is in this context that research on *Kopi Cap Keluarga* becomes relevant, because it is able to present an alternative narrative about how halal labels work concretely in overcoming social and psychological barriers to consumption in minority areas.

Theoretically, the results of this study break the boundary between halal discourse that is too institutional and structural and halal practices that are rooted in community awareness and micro-producer initiatives. Often, the global literature places halal authority on official institutions and large corporations, which indirectly downplays the role of micro-entrepreneurs and local contexts. In fact, as shown in this study, halal labeling carried out by local producers such as *Kopi Cap Keluarga* actually plays a key role in opening up access, creating a sense of security for consumers, and building bridges between producers and marginalized Muslim communities. This kind of initiative proves that halal inclusion can not only be achieved through macro policies or regulations, but also through strengthening community capacity, educating producers, and recognizing

geographical and cultural diversity in halal consumption practices (Djamali et al., 2025; Santoso et al., 2017).

From a social justice and minority rights perspective, these findings are crucial. In the midst of the world's increasing attention to pluralism, religious diversity, and the protection of consumer rights, the presence of halal products created in an inclusive manner is a symbol of commitment to global ethical principles (N. Yusuf, Sarib, et al., 2023). Muslim consumers living in minority areas often not only experience limited choices of halal products, but also face social and identity pressures that require them to compromise their beliefs. Therefore, the existence of halal products such as *Kopi Cap Keluarga* which consciously and openly displays halal labels provides space for affirmation, recognition, and empowerment. This is in line with the principle of *halal justice*, which is the idea that every Muslim, wherever they are, has the right to access products that conform to their religious teachings without discrimination or structural limitations.

More than that, the results of this study also have broad policy implications. Governments, both at the national and local levels, as well as halal certification bodies need to adopt a more inclusive and decentralized approach to the development of the halal ecosystem. It is not enough just to build national standards, but it is also necessary to create a mentoring mechanism and incentives for MSMEs in minority areas so that they can obtain halal certification easily, cheaply, and affordably. This kind of support will not only expand access to halal products, but will also strengthen the local economy and social cohesion between communities. Thus, a local community-based halal approach as demonstrated by *Kopi Cap Keluarga* can be replicated as a micro model in the development of a more equitable and sustainable global halal strategy.

Finally, in the context of the development of global halal studies, this study confirms that halal is not just a technical label or certification, but a multidimensional social phenomenon, which includes issues of identity, trust, human rights, and economic sovereignty. The findings from Kotamobagu carry a strong message that minority communities should not be seen as passive entities in the global halal market, but rather as active actors who have the capacity to shape halal practices that suit their local needs and values. Thus, this study not only expands the geographical and sociological scope of the halal literature, but also paves the way for future research agendas that are more sensitive to the minority context and diversity of Muslim experiences around the world.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that halal labels play a very important role in influencing the consumption behavior of Muslims, especially in the context of minority communities who face limited access to legitimate and trusted halal products. Through simple linear regression analysis, it was found that positive perceptions of halal labels had a significant effect on the increase in Muslim consumers' buying interest in *Kopi Cap Keluarga* products, which are produced by local MSME actors in Bilalang Satu Village, North Kotamobagu. The high and statistically significant value of the regression coefficient shows that the halal label is not only a legalistic attribute, but a symbolic instrument that builds trust, strengthens identity affiliation, and fosters loyalty to brands in a plural social environment.

Beyond the statistical findings, this study also reveals that halal labels function as a signal of trust in the relationship between producers and consumers. It represents good faith, moral

responsibility, and respect for Islamic values carried out by local business actors. In minority areas such as Kotamobagu, where halal products are not massively available, the halal label has a deeper meaning: as a form of affirmation of religious identity, as a bulwark of social protection, and as a tool for cultural integration in heterogeneous markets. In addition, these labels show that local producers have the capacity to contextually manage business ethics, integrate local values, and actualize *the principles of halalan thayyiban* in their production practices.

The implications of these findings are multidimensional. From an academic perspective, this study makes a real contribution to the expansion of halal studies by presenting a perspective based on minority communities in Muslim-majority countries. This finding opens up space for reflection that halal dynamics do not only occur in centers of economic power or within the framework of large states and corporations, but also grow from below, through local initiatives and social concern of MSME actors. Thus, this study enriches the discourse on *halal justice*, economic inclusion, and access justice which is the main concern of the *Antmind* journal in building a global narrative rooted in real social contexts.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the academic community of the Faculty of Sharia, IAIN Manado, for the intellectual support and constructive feedback during the early stages of this research. Special appreciation is extended to the local producers of *Kopi Cap Keluarga* in Desa Bilalang Satu, North Kotamobagu, whose openness and commitment to halal values have enriched the empirical depth of this study. This research was conducted independently and did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. However, the moral support and encouragement from local Muslim communities in Kotamobagu have served as a meaningful inspiration in exploring the integrity of halal practices in minority regions.

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