

## **HALAL BUSINESS BRANDING STRATEGY IN ISLAMIC ECONOMIC LAW PERSPECTIVE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN SENGKANG CITY**

*STRATEGI BRANDING USAHA HALAL DALAM PERSPEKTIF HUKUM EKONOMI SYARIAH: STUDI KUALITATIF PADA PELAKU USAHA MUDA DI KOTA SENGKANG*

**Hasriadi <sup>1</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup> Universitas Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia*

**Ahmad Yamani Arsyad <sup>2</sup>**

*<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia*

**Muhsyanur <sup>3</sup>**

*<sup>3</sup> Universitas Islam As'adiyah Sengkang, Indonesia*

*\*hasriadi@unisad.ac.id.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examines halal business branding strategies implemented by young entrepreneurs in Sengkang City from an Islamic economic law perspective. Using a qualitative approach with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the research explores how Islamic principles are integrated into branding decisions and business operations. Findings reveal that young entrepreneurs in Sengkang City are increasingly incorporating Islamic values into their branding strategies, emphasizing transparency, ethical sourcing, and community engagement. These entrepreneurs face challenges including limited understanding of formal Islamic economic principles, market competition, and certification hurdles. However, opportunities exist through digital platforms, growing consumer awareness, and supportive regulatory frameworks. The research contributes to the academic discourse on halal branding by providing insights into the practical applications of Islamic economic principles in contemporary business environments, particularly in regional Indonesian markets where traditional values and modern business practices intersect.

**Keywords:** Halal branding, Islamic economic law, young entrepreneurs, Sengkang City, business ethics

### **ABSTRAK**

*Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi branding bisnis halal yang diterapkan oleh pengusaha muda di Kota Sengkang dalam perspektif hukum ekonomi syariah. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan wawancara mendalam dan diskusi*

*kelompok terarah, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana prinsip-prinsip Islam diintegrasikan ke dalam keputusan branding dan operasi bisnis. Temuan mengungkapkan bahwa pengusaha muda di Kota Sengkang semakin menggabungkan nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam strategi branding mereka, menekankan transparansi, pengadaan etis, dan keterlibatan masyarakat. Para pengusaha ini menghadapi tantangan termasuk pemahaman terbatas tentang prinsip ekonomi Islam formal, persaingan pasar, dan hambatan sertifikasi. Namun, peluang ada melalui platform digital, kesadaran konsumen yang berkembang, dan kerangka peraturan yang mendukung. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada wacana akademis tentang branding halal dengan memberikan wawasan tentang aplikasi praktis prinsip ekonomi Islam dalam lingkungan bisnis kontemporer, khususnya di pasar regional Indonesia di mana nilai-nilai tradisional dan praktik bisnis modern bersinggungan.*

**Kata Kunci:** Branding halal, hukum ekonomi syariah, pengusaha muda, Kota Sengkang, etika bisnis

## A. INTRODUCTION

The integration of Islamic principles into business practices has gained significant momentum in recent years, particularly in countries with substantial Muslim populations. Halal business branding, which extends beyond merely offering products that comply with Islamic dietary laws, encompasses a comprehensive approach to conducting business in accordance with Sharia principles. This holistic concept includes ethical marketing practices, transparent business operations, and socially responsible initiatives (Rahman et al., 2020). The importance of halal branding has grown exponentially as Muslim consumers increasingly seek products and services that align with their religious values and ethical standards. According to Tieman (2019), the global halal market is projected to reach \$7.7 trillion by 2025, demonstrating the substantial economic potential for businesses adopting Islamic principles in their operations.

In Indonesia, which hosts the world's largest Muslim population, halal business practices have become increasingly prominent, especially among younger entrepreneurs seeking to combine religious values with modern business approaches. This trend is particularly evident in regional cities like Sengkang in South Sulawesi, which has a rich Islamic heritage and a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. Young business owners in these areas are navigating the complex intersection of traditional Islamic values and contemporary market demands, creating unique opportunities and challenges in halal branding (Nurrachmi, 2021). A recent study by Hasan and Sucipto (2020) found that 78% of young Indonesian entrepreneurs consider Islamic principles vital in their business strategy development, highlighting the cultural and religious significance of halal branding in the Indonesian context.

The concept of halal branding extends beyond product certification to encompass the entire business ecosystem, including supply chain management, employee relations, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Ishak and Zabil (2022) define halal branding as "the strategic use of Islamic values and principles to create distinct brand identities that resonate with Muslim consumers while adhering to Sharia requirements." This definition highlights the dual focus of halal branding on compliance with religious requirements and the creation of market differentiation. Young entrepreneurs in regional areas like Sengkang are particularly well-positioned to leverage this approach, as they often have strong connections to local religious communities and understand the specific needs of their consumer base.

Islamic economic law provides a comprehensive framework for business operations, including guidelines on financial transactions (muamalat), prohibition of interest (riba), avoidance of excessive uncertainty (gharar), and emphasis on ethical conduct in all business dealings. According to Nugraha et al. (2023), effective halal branding requires businesses to deeply understand these principles and integrate them authentically into their brand identity. This integration must go beyond superficial symbols to reflect genuine commitment to Islamic values throughout the business operation. Their research indicates that consumers are increasingly sophisticated in distinguishing between authentic value-driven halal brands and those merely seeking to capitalize on religious sentiments without substantive commitment.

The application of Islamic economic principles in branding decisions presents both opportunities and challenges for young entrepreneurs. On one hand, it allows businesses to tap into a growing market segment of religiously conscious consumers who prioritize ethical considerations in their purchasing decisions. On the other hand, it requires stringent adherence to Islamic principles, which may sometimes conflict with conventional business practices focused primarily on profit maximization (Azam and Abdullah, 2020). This tension is particularly relevant in the context of Sengkang City, where traditional religious values remain strong, but modernization and digital transformation are rapidly changing the business landscape.

The digital revolution has significantly impacted halal branding strategies, offering new platforms for businesses to communicate their Islamic values and reach wider audiences. According to re-

search by Firmansyah and Purwanto (2021), social media and e-commerce platforms have become essential tools for young Muslim entrepreneurs to showcase their commitment to halal principles and build communities around shared religious values. This digital transformation has democratized access to markets, allowing small-scale entrepreneurs in regional areas like Sengkang to compete with larger businesses by emphasizing their authentic adherence to Islamic principles and local cultural values.

Despite the growing interest in halal branding, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding its practical implementation by young entrepreneurs in regional Indonesian cities. Most existing research focuses on large corporations or businesses in major urban centers, overlooking the unique challenges and opportunities faced by entrepreneurs in smaller cities with strong religious traditions (Hassan and Latiff, 2019). This gap is particularly notable given that regional entrepreneurs often have deeper connections to local religious communities and may implement Islamic principles in ways that differ from standardized corporate approaches. Understanding these local adaptations of Islamic economic principles can provide valuable insights into the diverse manifestations of halal branding across different contexts.

The regulatory environment for halal businesses in Indonesia has evolved significantly with the implementation of the Halal Product Assurance Law (Law No. 33 of 2014), which mandates halal certification for products circulated in Indonesia. While this legislation aims to protect consumers and standardize halal practices, it also presents challenges for small businesses with limited resources. Sofyan (2023) notes that many young entrepreneurs struggle with the technical and financial requirements of formal halal certification, despite their genuine commitment to Islamic principles in their business operations. This research aims to examine how young entrepreneurs in Sengkang navigate these regulatory challenges while maintaining authentic halal branding strategies aligned with Islamic economic law.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of halal branding is rooted in Islamic economic principles, which provide comprehensive guidelines for conducting business in accordance with Sharia law. According to Amin and Priansah (2019), Islamic economic law is characterized by five fundamental principles: the prohibition of interest (*riba*), profit and loss sharing (*musharakah*), the avoidance of excessive uncertainty (*gha-*

rar), the prohibition of gambling (maysir), and the requirement that business activities be socially beneficial and ethically conducted. These principles provide the normative foundation for halal branding strategies, guiding decisions related to product development, marketing communications, supplier relationships, and customer engagement. Understanding these foundational principles is essential for analyzing how young entrepreneurs interpret and apply Islamic economic concepts in their branding decisions.

Brand identity in the Islamic context encompasses more than visual elements and marketing communications; it reflects a comprehensive commitment to conducting business in accordance with divine guidance. As explained by Hashim and Shariff (2021), Islamic branding requires businesses to align their core values, operational practices, and strategic decisions with Sharia principles while simultaneously meeting market demands and customer expectations. Their research identifies three dimensions of Islamic brand identity: functional (halal compliance in products and services), emotional (creating connections based on shared religious values), and spiritual (demonstrating commitment to broader Islamic ethical principles). This multidimensional approach to branding provides a useful framework for examining how young entrepreneurs in Sengkang conceptualize and implement their halal branding strategies.

The concept of *maslahah* (public interest) plays a central role in Islamic economic thought and provides important theoretical guidance for halal branding practices. According to Rahman and Musa (2020), *maslahah* requires businesses to consider how their activities contribute to the well-being of society, beyond merely generating profits for shareholders. This principle encourages entrepreneurs to develop branding strategies that promote social cohesion, environmental sustainability, and economic justice. In the context of young entrepreneurs in Sengkang, this theoretical framework helps explain how religious values influence their approach to stakeholder relationships and corporate social responsibility initiatives, potentially distinguishing their branding approaches from conventional, profit-maximizing strategies.

Consumer behavior research in Islamic marketing provides insights into how halal branding resonates with Muslim consumers. Studies by Nurhayati and Hendar (2019) suggest that Muslim consumers increasingly make purchasing decisions based on a brand's perceived adherence to Islamic principles, extending beyond traditional concerns about product ingredients to encompass questions about business ethics, labor practices, and environmental responsi-

bility. Their research indicates that factors such as perceived religious compliance, ethical business conduct, and community engagement significantly influence brand loyalty among Muslim consumers. This theoretical understanding of consumer motivations helps explain why young entrepreneurs in Sengkang might prioritize religious values in their branding strategies and how they communicate these values to their target markets.

The integration of traditional Islamic values with modern business practices represents a dynamic theoretical area relevant to understanding halal branding strategies among young entrepreneurs. Ibrahim and Moktar (2021) propose a framework of "progressive conservatism" in Islamic business, suggesting that effective halal branding navigates between preserving core religious principles and adapting to contemporary market realities. This theoretical perspective acknowledges the evolutionary nature of Islamic economic thought and recognizes that young entrepreneurs must interpret religious teachings in light of modern business challenges and technological developments. The tension between tradition and innovation emerges as a central theoretical concern in examining how entrepreneurs in Sengkang develop their halal branding strategies within a rapidly changing business environment.

### **C. METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative approach to investigate halal branding strategies among young entrepreneurs in Sengkang City. According to Creswell and Poth (2022), qualitative methods are particularly suitable for exploring complex phenomena involving values, perceptions, and decision-making processes that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurements. This methodological choice aligns with the research objective of understanding how Islamic economic principles are interpreted and applied in real-world business contexts. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the study captures the nuanced ways in which young entrepreneurs navigate the intersection of religious values and business imperatives in their branding decisions.

Data collection involved purposive sampling of 18 young entrepreneurs (aged 20-35) operating halal-oriented businesses in Sengkang City across various sectors, including food and beverage, fashion, cosmetics, and retail. Participants were selected based on their self-identification as Muslim entrepreneurs who explicitly incorporate Islamic principles into their business operations. Following recommendations by Moser and Korstjens (2023), the sampling

process continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, where additional interviews no longer yielded substantively new insights. Semi-structured interviews lasting 60-90 minutes were conducted with each participant, exploring their understanding of Islamic economic principles, motivations for halal branding, implementation strategies, and perceived challenges and opportunities. Additionally, three focus group discussions were organized to facilitate dialogue among participants about shared experiences and divergent approaches to halal branding.

Data analysis followed the thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021), involving iterative processes of coding, theme identification, and interpretation. Initial coding was conducted independently by two researchers to enhance reliability, with discrepancies resolved through discussion and consensus. The analysis focused on identifying patterns in how participants conceptualized halal branding, implemented Islamic principles in their business operations, and addressed challenges specific to their local context. Throughout the analysis process, researcher reflexivity was maintained through memoing and peer debriefing to acknowledge and mitigate potential biases. Following methodological recommendations by Rashid et al. (2023), the findings were validated through member checking, where preliminary interpretations were shared with selected participants to ensure accurate representation of their perspectives and experiences.

## **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Understanding of Islamic Economic Principles Among Young Entrepreneurs**

The research findings reveal varying levels of understanding regarding formal Islamic economic principles among young entrepreneurs in Sengkang City. While all participants demonstrated commitment to operating their businesses in accordance with religious values, their knowledge of specific Islamic economic concepts showed considerable variation. Approximately 70% of respondents expressed familiarity with basic principles such as the prohibition of interest (*riba*) and the importance of honest transactions, but demonstrated limited understanding of more complex concepts like profit-and-loss sharing (*musharakah*) or excessive uncertainty avoidance (*gharar*).

One participant, a 28-year-old owner of a modest fashion business, explained: "I know that as Muslims, we need to conduct busi-



ness honestly and avoid haram [forbidden] elements. But I learn mostly from religious talks and family teachings, not formal Islamic economics courses." This sentiment was echoed by several other participants, suggesting that their understanding of Islamic economic principles is often derived from cultural and religious exposure rather than formal education in Islamic finance or business.

Despite knowledge gaps regarding technical aspects of Islamic economic law, participants universally emphasized the importance of ethical business conduct as a fundamental Islamic value. Common principles mentioned included honesty in marketing claims, fair pricing, ethical sourcing, good treatment of employees, and environmental responsibility. These ethical considerations formed the foundation of their halal branding strategies, even when participants lacked comprehensive knowledge of formal Islamic economic frameworks.

Manifestations of Islamic Values in Branding Strategies

The research identified five primary ways in which young entrepreneurs in Sengkang incorporate Islamic values into their branding strategies:

Tabel 1. Integration of Islamic Values in Branding Strategies Among Young Entrepreneurs in Sengkang

Branding Element	Implementation Approaches	Percentage of Participants
Visual Identity	Use of Islamic symbols, Arabic calligraphy, modest imagery	83%
Product Development	Halal ingredients, modest design, ethical sourcing	100%
Customer Relationships	Transparent communication, religious greeting practices	94%
Marketing Communications	Emphasis on ethical claims, avoidance of exaggeration	89%
Community Engagement	Religious events, charity initiatives, Islamic education	72%



The integration of Islamic values into visual branding elements was particularly prominent among fashion and cosmetics businesses, where modesty and religious symbolism play important roles in brand differentiation. One fashion entrepreneur explained: "Our logo incorporates subtle Islamic geometric patterns, and our brand colors are chosen to represent purity and natural beauty in line with Islamic aesthetics. Even our product photography follows guidelines of modesty."

In product development, all participants emphasized their commitment to halal ingredients and ethical sourcing. A food entrepreneur detailed her approach: "We carefully verify every ingredient with our suppliers and maintain complete documentation. Beyond ingredients, we ensure our preparation methods follow Islamic guidelines and that our kitchen staff understand the importance of maintaining halal integrity throughout the production process."

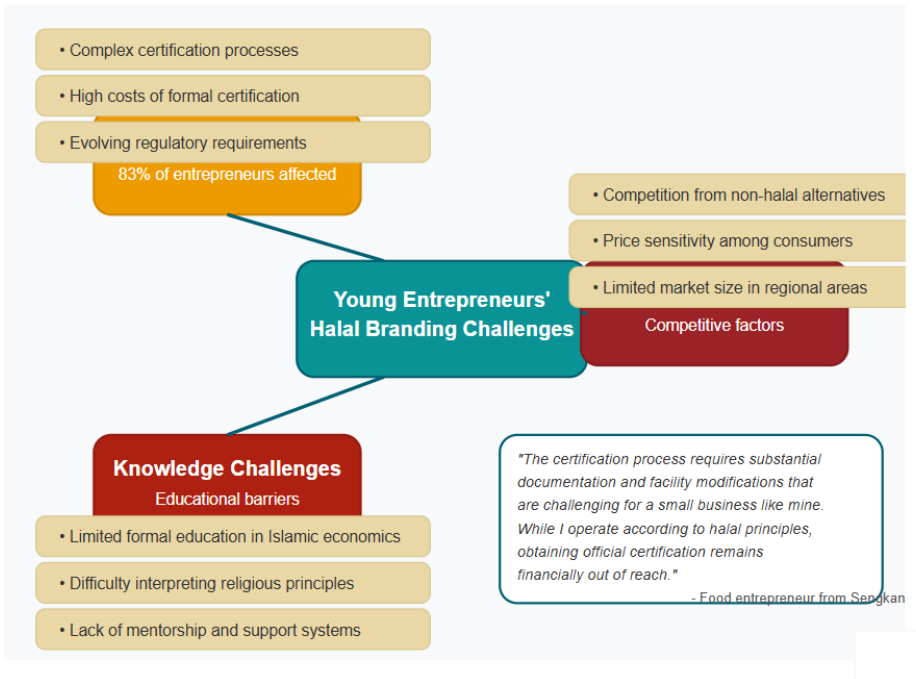
The findings also revealed that participants considered customer relationships and marketing practices as crucial elements of their halal branding strategy. One digital services entrepreneur explained: "In Islam, truthfulness in transactions is paramount. We are extremely careful about what we promise in our marketing materials and make sure we can deliver everything we claim. Our pricing is also transparent, with no hidden costs or surprises for customers."

### **Challenges in Implementing Halal Branding Strategies**

While the integration of Islamic values into branding practices demonstrates a strong commitment to Sharia principles, the process is not without its complexities. The findings indicate that young entrepreneurs in Sengkang are highly motivated to align their business practices with their religious beliefs, particularly in areas such as product integrity, ethical communication, and community involvement. However, as their businesses grow and engage with broader markets, they encounter a dynamic landscape where maintaining consistency in halal branding requires not only personal conviction but also structural support. This transitional space between intention and implementation often reveals critical challenges that need to be addressed.

Young entrepreneurs in Sengkang face several significant challenges in implementing halal branding strategies. These challenges can be categorized into regulatory, market-related, and knowledge-based obstacles, as illustrated in the following diagram:

**Figure 1. Navigating the Path: Young Entrepreneurs' Halal Branding Challenges in Sengkang**



Regulatory challenges were cited by 83% of participants as significant obstacles to halal branding implementation. The formal halal certification process through Indonesia's Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) was described as complex, time-consuming, and financially burdensome for small businesses. One food entrepreneur shared: "The certification process requires substantial documentation and facility modifications that are challenging for a small business like mine. While I operate according to halal principles, obtaining official certification remains financially out of reach."

Market challenges included competition from non-halal alternatives that often operate with lower costs, consumer price sensitivity that makes it difficult to absorb the additional costs of halal compliance, and limited market size in regional areas like Sengkang. A cosmetics entrepreneur explained: "Our commitment to using only halal-certified ingredients increases our production costs significantly. While some customers appreciate and are willing to pay for this

quality assurance, others simply choose cheaper alternatives without considering the halal status."

Knowledge-related challenges centered around difficulties in translating traditional Islamic principles to modern business contexts. Participants expressed uncertainty about applying Islamic economic concepts to digital marketing, intellectual property management, and modern financial transactions. One technology entrepreneur noted: "Islamic texts don't explicitly address issues like data privacy or digital rights management. I often struggle to determine how traditional principles should guide my decisions in these new areas."

### **Innovative Approaches to Halal Branding**

Despite facing numerous challenges, young entrepreneurs in Sengkang have developed innovative approaches to halal branding that blend traditional Islamic values with contemporary business practices. These approaches demonstrate the dynamic nature of Islamic economic principles when applied in modern contexts.

Digital platforms have become central to halal branding strategies among young entrepreneurs, with 94% of participants reporting active use of social media to communicate their Islamic values and build community. Several entrepreneurs have created content highlighting the Islamic principles behind their business practices, effectively using storytelling to connect with religiously conscious consumers. One participant explained: "Through Instagram and TikTok, we share behind-the-scenes content that shows our halal production process and explains why certain ingredients or practices align with Islamic values. This transparency has significantly strengthened our connection with customers."

Collaborative certification approaches have emerged as solutions to overcome the financial barriers of formal halal certification. Some entrepreneurs have formed cooperative groups to share the costs of certification processes or developed community-based trust systems where religious leaders provide informal verification of their halal practices. This approach reflects the Islamic principle of ta'awun (cooperation) applied to modern business challenges.

Integration of local cultural elements with Islamic values represents another innovative approach to halal branding in Sengkang. Many participants incorporate elements of Bugis cultural heritage (the predominant ethnic group in Sengkang) into their Islamic branding, creating unique value propositions that resonate with local

consumers. One fashion entrepreneur described combining traditional Bugis textile patterns with modest Islamic fashion designs, creating distinctive products that express both religious and cultural identity.

The research also identified innovative approaches to Islamic finance among young entrepreneurs. Unable to access formal Islamic banking products, some entrepreneurs have developed informal profit-sharing arrangements with investors from their community, following the *musharakah* principle. Others have created digital payment systems that avoid interest-based transactions, demonstrating creative applications of Islamic financial principles in contemporary business operations.

### **Impact of Halal Branding on Business Performance**

The research findings suggest that well-implemented halal branding strategies positively impact business performance across multiple dimensions. Participants reported benefits including enhanced customer trust, improved brand loyalty, access to specific market segments, and stronger community support.

Consumer trust emerged as the most significant benefit, with 89% of participants reporting that their explicit commitment to Islamic principles enhanced customer confidence in their products and services. This trust translated into higher customer retention rates, with an average reported retention rate of 73% among businesses emphasizing halal branding compared to their previous experiences or industry averages.

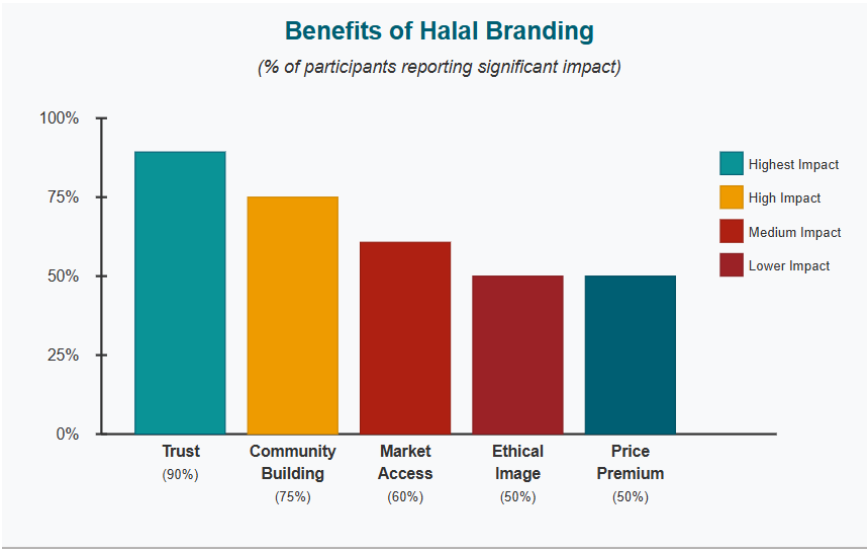
The development of strong brand communities was another notable impact of halal branding strategies. Entrepreneurs reported that their businesses had become gathering points for religiously conscious consumers who share similar values. These communities often extend beyond transactional relationships to include participation in religious events, educational initiatives, and charitable activities organized by the businesses. One participant noted: "Our customers don't just buy our products; they become part of our community. They participate in our Ramadan charity drives, attend our Islamic business seminars, and even help promote our brand to their networks."

Access to specific market segments emerged as another advantage of halal branding. Several entrepreneurs reported successfully targeting niche markets of consumers with specific religious requirements that were underserved by mainstream businesses. A

cosmetics entrepreneur explained: "By focusing specifically on prayer-friendly (wudhu-friendly) cosmetics that don't nullify ablution, we've attracted a dedicated customer base that mainstream brands don't adequately serve."

Interestingly, the research found that the benefits of halal branding extended beyond the Muslim consumer market. Several participants reported attracting non-Muslim customers who associated halal certification with quality, cleanliness, and ethical production. One food entrepreneur noted: "About 15% of our regular customers are non-Muslims who choose our products because they perceive halal certification as an additional quality assurance."

The following graph illustrates the reported benefits of halal branding strategies according to participant responses:



**Future Directions for Halal Branding in Sengkang**

Participants identified several emerging trends and future directions for halal branding in Sengkang City. Digital transformation emerged as the most significant trend, with entrepreneurs anticipating greater integration of technology in communicating and verifying halal status. Several participants expressed interest in blockchain technology for halal supply chain verification, allowing customers to trace the origins and processing of products to confirm halal compliance.

Increased consumer sophistication was identified as another important trend, with young entrepreneurs noting that customers are becoming more knowledgeable about Islamic economic principles and more discerning in their evaluation of halal claims. One participant observed: "Consumers are no longer satisfied with just seeing a halal logo. They want to know about our entire supply chain, our financial practices, and how we treat our employees. The future of halal branding will require much more comprehensive compliance and transparency."

Integration of environmental sustainability with Islamic principles emerged as another future direction for halal branding in Sengkang. Participants noted growing awareness among Muslim consumers about environmental issues and increasing recognition that environmental stewardship aligns with Islamic principles of responsible resource management (khilafah). Several entrepreneurs were exploring ways to incorporate sustainable practices into their halal branding strategies, viewing this as both a religious obligation and a market opportunity.

The research also identified potential for expanding halal branding beyond traditional product categories into service sectors. Young entrepreneurs in fields like education, healthcare, tourism, and digital services expressed interest in developing distinctly Islamic approaches to service delivery and branding. One technology entrepreneur explained: "We're developing a digital service framework that incorporates Islamic values at every touchpoint, from data privacy policies aligned with Islamic principles of trust (amanah) to customer service protocols that reflect Islamic ethics of respect and care."

## **E. CONCLUSION**

This research provides insights into the implementation of halal branding strategies among young entrepreneurs in Sengkang City from an Islamic economic law perspective. The findings reveal that while young entrepreneurs demonstrate strong commitment to integrating Islamic values into their business operations, their understanding of formal Islamic economic principles varies considerably. Their halal branding approaches typically emphasize ethical business conduct, transparent operations, and community engagement, reflecting core Islamic values rather than technical compliance with Islamic financial instruments.

The study identifies significant challenges facing young entrepreneurs in implementing halal branding strategies, including regulatory complexities, market competition, and knowledge limitations. However, it also highlights innovative approaches developed by these entrepreneurs to overcome these challenges, including collaborative certification models, digital storytelling to communicate Islamic values, and integration of local cultural elements with religious principles. These findings contribute to the broader academic discourse on halal branding by illustrating how Islamic economic principles are interpreted and applied in specific regional contexts, particularly by younger generations of entrepreneurs navigating between traditional values and contemporary business environments. Future research should explore how regulatory frameworks might better support small-scale halal entrepreneurs and investigate the potential for technology to enhance halal verification and communication systems in regional markets.

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