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Halal Critical Points and Consumer Trust in Halal Supply Chain Management: Evidence from a Traditional Tofu Factory in Indonesia

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Abstract

Although halal certification has become mandatory in Indonesia, many micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have not formally implemented Halal Supply Chain Management (HSCM), creating challenges in ensuring halal integrity throughout the supply chain. Previous studies have mainly focused on HSCM implementation, with limited attention to halal critical points and stakeholder perceptions in relation to consumer trust. This study aims to analyze the implementation of HSCM at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory in Mojokerto Regency, identify halal critical points, examine stakeholder perceptions, and assess their implications for product quality and consumer trust. A qualitative case study approach was employed using semi-structured interviews with nine purposively selected informants and direct field observations. Data were analyzed based on four HSCM dimensions: halal procurement, halal manufacturing, halal distribution, and halal logistics, using the Halal Assurance System (HAS 23000) as the analytical framework. The findings indicate that HSCM implementation remains informal and does not fully comply with formal halal assurance standards. Three halal critical points were identified: the use of homemade fermented vinegar without laboratory verification, inadequate pest control, and the use of open containers during distribution. Despite these shortcomings, consumer trust remains strong, primarily driven by consistent product quality, long-term purchasing experience, and the

factory's reputation rather than formal halal certification. This study contributes to the HSCM literature by highlighting the gap between informal halal practices and formal halal assurance while explaining how consumer trust is sustained in a community-based food MSME despite the absence of formal halal certification.

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INTRODUCTION

The halal industry encompasses business activities that not only produce halal products but also ensure that halal principles are maintained throughout the entire production and distribution process (Ruchiyani et al., 2023). In Indonesia, the enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance has strengthened the legal obligation for products circulating in the market to obtain halal certification through the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH). Since the implementation of this regulation, BPJPH has become the official government institution responsible for administering halal certification, while halal inspections are conducted by accredited Halal Inspection Bodies (LPH). Therefore, halal assurance is no longer limited to religious compliance but has become an essential component of product quality assurance, consumer protection, and business competitiveness (Rohmah et al., 2022).

From an Islamic perspective, halal refers not only to the permissibility of the final product but also to the entire process through which the product is obtained, processed, stored, transported, and distributed in accordance with Sharia principles (Azzahra et al., 2022). Consequently, maintaining halal integrity requires a comprehensive supply chain approach. Halal Supply Chain Management (HSCM) ensures that halal products remain protected from contamination by non-halal or impure substances from procurement to the point of consumption (Putri et al., 2022). Accordingly, HSCM encompasses procurement, manufacturing, logistics, and distribution activities that are managed based on Islamic principles to preserve both halal integrity and product quality (Aziz et al., 2021).

One of the food products requiring consistent halal assurance is tofu, one of Indonesia's most widely consumed soybean-based foods. Besides its affordability and nutritional value, tofu undergoes several processing stages that require strict control over raw materials, processing hygiene, storage, and distribution to maintain both halalness and product quality (Cholid & Sudrajat, 2023). Although soybeans are inherently halal, supporting materials and production practices may introduce halal risks if they are not adequately controlled. For example, the use of fermented additives, sanitation practices, pest management, and product distribution may become halal critical points that threaten halal integrity if they are not managed systematically (Arum, 2023).

This issue is evident at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory owned by Mr. Yanto, located in Rembukidul Village, Kemlagi District, Mojokerto Regency. Established in 2002, the factory

processes approximately 500 kg of soybeans daily and distributes its products throughout Kemlagi, Gedeg, and Jetis Districts. Preliminary interviews with the factory owner conducted on 17 May 2025 revealed that supplier selection had not considered BPJPH halal certification status, and the factory itself had not yet obtained halal certification from BPJPH. Field observations further showed that several production and distribution practices—including the use of homemade fermented vinegar, limited pest control, and inadequate monitoring of distribution containers—had the potential to compromise halal integrity. These findings indicate a gap between the principles of Halal Supply Chain Management and their implementation in traditional food MSMEs. This gap is particularly important because consumers continue to purchase the products despite the absence of formal halal certification/

Previous studies have primarily examined the implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management in food industries (Aziz et al., 2021, Putri et al., 2022, Rohmah et al., 2022, Ruchiyani et al., 2023). However, these studies mainly evaluated the application of halal practices without identifying halal critical points throughout the supply chain or explaining how stakeholder perceptions influence product quality and consumer trust. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to traditional food MSMEs operating without formal halal certification, where consumer trust is often established through product quality and long-term experience rather than documented halal assurance. This represents an important gap in the HSCM literature.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory, identify halal critical points throughout its supply chain, examine stakeholder perceptions regarding HSCM implementation, and assess their implications for product quality and consumer trust. By integrating halal critical point analysis with stakeholder perceptions and consumer trust, this study extends previous HSCM research and provides practical insights for strengthening halal assurance among traditional food MSMEs in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore the implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management (HSCM) in a traditional food micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME). A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and practices within their natural setting (Djamal, 2015). Specifically, this study adopted field research, which allows researchers to investigate social phenomena directly in their real-life context (Mulyana, 2004).

The research was conducted at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory, owned by Mr. Y., located in Rembukidul Village, Kemlagi District, Mojokerto Regency, Indonesia. Established in 2002, the factory processes approximately 500 kg of soybeans daily and distributes its products throughout the Kemlagi, Gedeg, and Jetis districts. The factory was purposively selected because it represents a well-established traditional tofu MSME with a broad customer base

but has not yet obtained halal certification from the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH), making it relevant for examining HSCM implementation and halal critical points.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct field observations. Data collection was conducted from 17 to 23 May 2025. Production activities were observed over four days to document procurement practices, production processes, hygiene conditions, pest control, storage systems, and product distribution. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually on 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 May 2025, with each interview lasting approximately 30–60 minutes.

Nine informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in the supply chain and their ability to provide relevant information. The participants consisted of one owner (Mr. Y.), four employees responsible for different production stages—washing and grinding (Mr. D.), boiling and filtering (Mr. A.), cooking and molding (Mr. S.), and cutting and distribution (Mr. M.)—and four consumers (Mrs. V., Mrs. R., Mrs. Y., and Ms. A.). The inclusion of owners, employees, and consumers enabled triangulation of perspectives regarding HSCM implementation, halal awareness, and consumer trust.

Interview data were recorded with participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed together with field observation notes. Data analysis followed the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on four dimensions of Halal Supply Chain Management: halal procurement, halal manufacturing, halal distribution, and halal logistics. Existing practices were then compared with the Halal Assurance System (HAS 23000) as the analytical framework to identify implementation gaps and halal critical points. Stakeholder perceptions were subsequently analyzed to explain how these practices influence product quality and consumer trust.

To enhance the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from interviews, direct observations, and relevant documents. Source triangulation was also applied by comparing perspectives from the owner, employees, and consumers to ensure the consistency and trustworthiness of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management.

The implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management (HSCM) at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory has not yet been carried out formally or systematically in accordance with the Halal Assurance System (HAS 23000) required for halal certification by the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH). Although the factory has not obtained official halal certification, this study does not evaluate the certification process itself. Instead, it examines existing operational practices by comparing them with the principles of HSCM to identify implementation gaps and potential Halal Critical Points (HCPs). This approach is important because halal assurance is not merely determined by the ownership of a halal certificate but also by the consistency of halal practices throughout the entire supply chain.

Field observations indicate that halal practices at the factory are largely based on practical experience, traditional production methods, and the owner's commitment to

maintaining product cleanliness and quality. However, these practices have not yet been supported by documented standard operating procedures, formal halal assurance mechanisms, or systematic monitoring required under HAS 23000. Consequently, although several production activities reflect the principles of *thayyib* (quality and cleanliness), they cannot yet fully guarantee halal integrity according to the formal HSCM framework.

Figure 1 illustrates the implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory. The production process consists of four interrelated stages: halal procurement, halal manufacturing, halal distribution, and halal logistics. Rather than functioning as independent activities, these four stages collectively determine whether halal integrity can be maintained from the procurement of raw materials to the delivery of products to consumers. The analysis presented in this study evaluates each stage to identify operational strengths, implementation gaps, and potential halal critical points that may affect product quality and consumer trust.

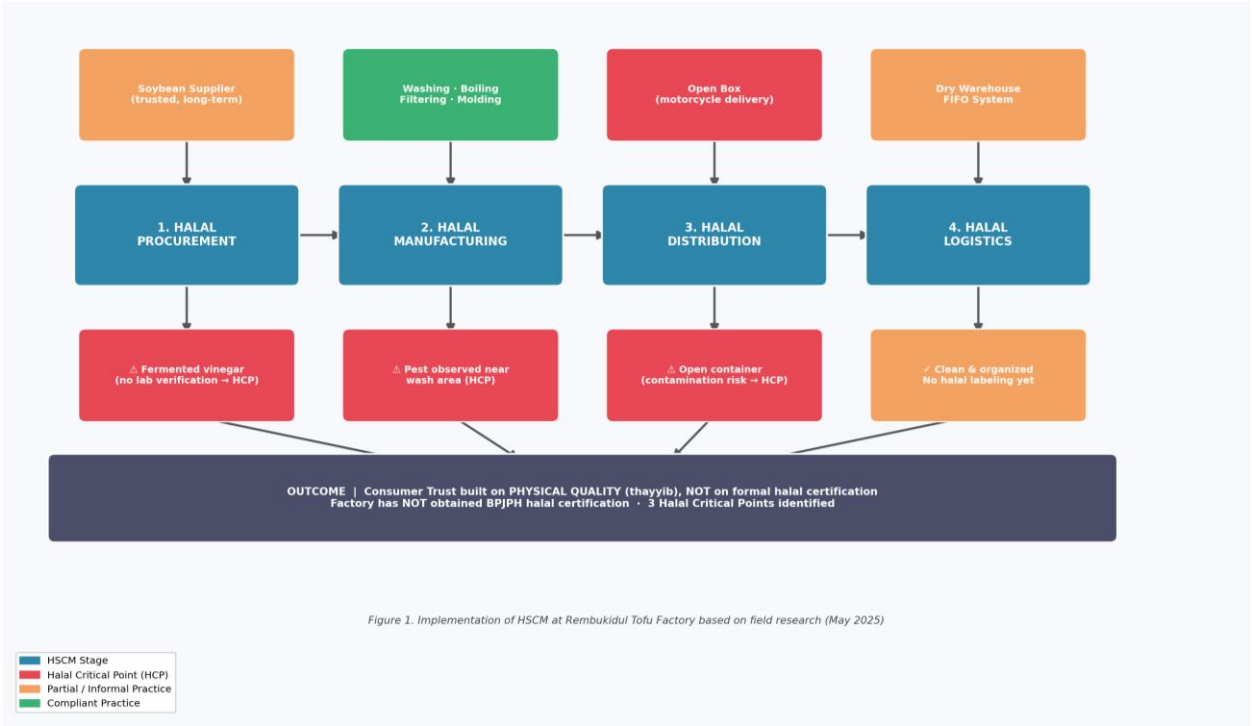

Figure 1. Implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management at Rembukidul Tofu Factory, Mojokerto Regency (Field Research, May 2025)

Based on Figure 1, the implementation of HSCM at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory can be analyzed through four main operational stages, namely halal procurement, halal manufacturing, halal distribution, and halal logistics. Each stage contributes differently to maintaining halal integrity and therefore requires separate analysis:

1. Halal Procurement

   Halal procurement is the first stage of Halal Supply Chain Management and plays a strategic role in ensuring that all raw materials entering the production process comply with halal principles. Halal procurement is not limited to ensuring that raw materials are halal in substance but also requires verification of their sources, procurement processes, transportation, storage conditions, and payment mechanisms. Therefore, procurement

serves as the first control point in preventing contamination by non-halal or doubtful (*syubhat*) materials before the production process begins (Ilyanto, 2019).

The findings reveal that the Rembukidul Tofu Factory uses soybeans as the primary raw material and homemade fermented vinegar as an auxiliary ingredient in tofu production. Soybeans are naturally halal and therefore do not present concerns regarding their intrinsic halal status. Supplier selection is primarily based on product quality, consistency of supply, and long-standing business relationships rather than formal halal verification. According to the factory owner, suppliers are considered reliable because they have consistently provided high-quality soybeans over many years. However, no assessment is conducted regarding suppliers' halal certification status or their implementation of halal assurance practices. This indicates that procurement decisions remain largely trust-based and experience-driven instead of being supported by documented verification procedures.

From the perspective of HSCM, reliance on supplier trust alone is insufficient to ensure halal integrity because the procurement process should also guarantee traceability and documented verification of raw materials. Although no evidence was found indicating that soybean procurement involves non-halal materials, the absence of supplier verification creates a potential implementation gap when compared with the preventive approach promoted by HAS 23000. This finding suggests that procurement activities currently emphasize operational efficiency and material quality rather than systematic halal assurance.

A more critical issue was identified in the use of homemade fermented vinegar as a coagulant during tofu production. Unlike soybeans, fermented vinegar undergoes a fermentation process that may temporarily produce alcohol (*khamr*) before it is completely transformed into acetic acid. In Islamic jurisprudence, vinegar produced through complete transformation (*istihalah*) is generally considered permissible. Nevertheless, the fermented vinegar used by the factory has never undergone laboratory testing or formal halal verification to confirm that the transformation process has been completed. Consequently, its halal status cannot be scientifically verified despite its long-standing use in traditional tofu production.

The use of unverified homemade fermented vinegar therefore constitutes a Halal Critical Point (HCP) within the procurement stage. It is important to emphasize that this finding does not imply that the ingredient is non-halal. Rather, it indicates that halal assurance relies primarily on traditional knowledge and practical experience instead of objective verification. Within the HSCM framework, preventive verification is essential because halal integrity should be demonstrated through documented evidence rather than assumptions based on common practice. Therefore, laboratory analysis of the fermented vinegar and the establishment of supplier verification procedures would significantly strengthen halal procurement practices and reduce potential halal risks within the factory's supply chain.

2. Halal Manufacturing

Halal manufacturing refers to the process of transforming raw materials into finished products through production procedures that comply with halal principles while maintaining product integrity throughout the manufacturing process. This stage carries the highest risk of halal contamination because it involves direct interaction among raw materials, production equipment, workers, and the production environment. Therefore, halal manufacturing requires not only the use of halal ingredients but also systematic control of sanitation, equipment hygiene, water quality, employee practices, and environmental cleanliness to prevent contamination (Ilyanto, 2019).

Field observations indicate that the Rembukidul Tofu Factory implements conventional tofu production procedures, including washing and soaking soybeans, grinding, boiling, filtering, coagulating, molding, pressing, and cutting. Throughout these activities, employees routinely clean production equipment before and after use and utilize running water during the washing process. These practices demonstrate the factory's commitment to maintaining product cleanliness and quality, reflecting the concept of *thayyib* in food production. However, these hygiene practices are based primarily on practical experience and long-established production habits rather than on written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) or a structured Halal Assurance System (HAS).

Further observations revealed several conditions that require improvement from the perspective of Halal Supply Chain Management. The exterior surfaces of several washing containers were found to be less hygienic, and rats and insects were occasionally observed passing near the soybean washing area located in an open section of the production facility. Although no direct contamination of raw materials or finished products was observed, these conditions indicate that environmental sanitation and pest control have not yet been systematically managed. Under the HAS 23000 framework, effective pest management is an essential preventive measure because pests may carry impurities (*najis*) that can compromise halal integrity during production. Consequently, inadequate pest control constitutes a Halal Critical Point (HCP) within the manufacturing stage.

These findings demonstrate that the factory has successfully maintained the quality of its tofu products through good hygiene practices; however, product quality alone is insufficient to ensure formal halal assurance. From the HSCM perspective, halal manufacturing requires preventive and documented control systems capable of minimizing contamination risks throughout the production process. Therefore, strengthening sanitation procedures, implementing routine pest control, and developing documented halal manufacturing SOPs would not only improve compliance with HAS 23000 but also enhance the consistency of halal integrity within the factory's production process.

3. Halal Distribution

Halal distribution refers to the activities involved in delivering halal products from the production facility to consumers while preserving their halal integrity (Ilyanto, 2019).

Halal distribution encompasses packaging, handling, storage, and transportation that ensure products remain protected from contamination throughout the distribution process. Halal products should be transported using hygienic packaging or containers and should be protected from potential contamination by non-halal substances or other environmental hazards. Therefore, the distribution stage plays a crucial role in maintaining both product quality (*thayyib*) and halal integrity until the products reach consumers (Tieman, 2011).

Field observations show that the Rembukidul Tofu Factory distributes tofu directly to traditional markets and customers using motorcycles equipped with open plastic containers. This distribution system enables products to be delivered efficiently while maintaining their freshness due to the relatively short delivery distance. However, the use of open containers exposes tofu to external environmental factors such as dust, insects, rainwater, and other foreign materials during transportation. Although no evidence of direct contamination was found during the observation period, this practice increases the potential risk of contamination because the products are not fully protected throughout the distribution process.

From the perspective of Halal Supply Chain Management, the use of open containers constitutes a Halal Critical Point (HCP) because halal products should remain protected from physical and potential ritual contamination until they are received by consumers. This finding indicates that the factory's distribution practices prioritize operational efficiency and product freshness but have not yet incorporated preventive measures required under formal halal assurance systems. Therefore, improving packaging and transportation methods through the use of covered or sealed containers would strengthen halal integrity during distribution while minimizing contamination risks and supporting compliance with the principles of Halal Supply Chain Management.

4. Halal Logistic

Halal logistics refers to the activities of storing, handling, organizing, identifying, and transporting products in a manner that preserves halal integrity throughout the supply chain (llyanto 2019). Halal logistics extends beyond operational efficiency by ensuring that halal products are protected from contamination through appropriate segregation, identification, and handling procedures. Consequently, halal status is maintained not only during production but also throughout storage and distribution until the products reach consumers.

Field observations indicate that the Rembukidul Tofu Factory stores soybeans in a dry and well-organized warehouse to prevent moisture and maintain raw material quality. The factory also informally applies the First In First Out (FIFO) principle, allowing older stocks to be used before newly purchased materials. These practices contribute to maintaining product freshness, minimizing raw material deterioration, and supporting production continuity. From an operational perspective, the factory has demonstrated good warehouse management practices that help maintain product quality throughout the production process.

However, when evaluated using the Halal Supply Chain Management framework, the logistics system has not yet fully complied with formal halal assurance principles. The warehouse does not apply specific halal identification or segregation procedures, and no documented protocols are available to verify that storage areas and transportation facilities remain free from potential contamination. Although the factory does not store non-halal materials, halal logistics requires preventive measures that ensure halal integrity through systematic identification, segregation, and documented handling procedures. Therefore, current logistics practices remain focused on operational efficiency rather than comprehensive halal assurance.

Overall, the logistics stage indicates that the factory has successfully maintained the quality and availability of raw materials through proper storage conditions and inventory management. Nevertheless, strengthening warehouse identification, implementing documented logistics procedures, and establishing halal segregation practices would further enhance halal integrity and support the future implementation of a formal Halal Assurance System in accordance with the principles of Halal Supply Chain Management.

Perceptions of Owners, Employees, and Consumers Regarding the Importance of Implementing Halal Supply Chain Management.

The successful implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management (HSCM) depends not only on operational procedures but also on how stakeholders understand and perceive halal practices throughout the supply chain. Stakeholder perceptions influence daily decision-making, production practices, and the consistency of halal assurance, particularly in food MSMEs where operational activities are often based on practical experience rather than documented management systems. HSCM is intended not only to fulfill Sharia requirements but also to maintain product quality, hygiene, and consumer confidence throughout the supply chain (Tieman et al., 2012).

This study explores the perceptions of three stakeholder groups involved in the Rembukidul Tofu Factory, namely the owner, employees, and consumers. Their perceptions were analyzed based on the four dimensions of Halal Supply Chain Management discussed in the previous section—halal procurement, halal manufacturing, halal distribution, and halal logistics—to understand how they interpret the importance of HSCM and to identify areas where their understanding aligns with or differs from the principles of formal halal assurance.

1. Perceptions of Halal Procurement

The findings indicate that both the owner and employees perceive halal procurement primarily in terms of the intrinsic halal status and quality of raw materials rather than through formal halal assurance mechanisms. For them, soybeans are naturally halal, while supplier reliability is determined by long-term business relationships and consistent product quality. As stated by Mr. Y. (owner), *"I have never asked about their certificate or origin; if the material looks good and high quality, then it is safe."* Similarly, Mr. D. (employee) explained, *"I just trust the supplier because they are already well-established and trusted by the owner."* These

statements demonstrate that procurement decisions are largely based on trust and practical experience instead of documented halal verification.

This perception reflects a limited understanding of halal procurement within the broader framework of Halal Supply Chain Management. Although the owner and employees recognize the importance of using halal ingredients, they do not consider supplier audits, traceability, or the verification of supporting materials as integral components of halal assurance. Consequently, the potential halal risk associated with the use of homemade fermented vinegar has not been recognized as a Halal Critical Point (HCP). This finding suggests that halal procurement is still interpreted as ensuring that ingredients are not explicitly haram rather than ensuring that the entire procurement process complies with formal halal assurance requirements.

Consumers demonstrate a similar pattern of perception. Rather than evaluating procurement practices directly, they infer the halalness of raw materials from the quality of the final product. Mrs. V. stated, *"I only hope that the materials used by the Rembukidul factory do come from halal and good sources,"* while Ms. A. commented, *"I don't know much, because in my opinion, if the product is good, then the materials must also be of good quality."* These responses indicate that consumer confidence in halal procurement is primarily built upon product quality and trust in the producer rather than verified information regarding the origin or halal status of raw materials. Consequently, although consumers express confidence in the products, their perceptions remain largely experience-based and may be vulnerable if information regarding potential halal risks in raw material procurement becomes publicly known.

2. Perceptions of Halal Processing

The findings indicate that both the owner and employees perceive halal manufacturing primarily as the maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene throughout the production process. For them, ensuring that production equipment, raw materials, and the working environment remain clean is considered the main indicator that the tofu produced is halal. This perception reflects their strong commitment to producing high-quality products while fulfilling their religious responsibilities during food processing.

Mr. Y. (owner) stated, *"Everything is done as carefully as possible; every day, equipment and machines are cleaned both after production ends and in the morning before starting, to ensure they are truly clean, using flowing water."* Likewise, Mr. D. (employee) explained, *"I don't fully understand how to ensure it, but I try as best I can to maintain cleanliness—whether water, the soybeans themselves, or the equipment."* These statements demonstrate that both the owner and employees associate halal manufacturing with cleanliness and good production practices. However, their understanding remains focused on visible hygiene and has not yet incorporated broader halal assurance elements, such as documented sanitation procedures, environmental monitoring, pest management, employee training, and preventive controls required under the Halal Assurance System (HAS 23000).

This finding suggests that stakeholders possess a strong understanding of the concept of *thayyib*, which emphasizes product cleanliness, safety, and quality, but have a more limited

understanding of halal manufacturing as a comprehensive management system. Within the framework of Halal Supply Chain Management, maintaining cleanliness alone is insufficient to preserve halal integrity because halal assurance also requires systematic measures to prevent cross-contamination and ensure that production facilities remain free from potential sources of *najis*. Therefore, the gap identified in this study lies not in the commitment of the owner and employees to cleanliness, but in the absence of formal halal assurance practices supporting those efforts.

Consumers expressed similar perceptions regarding halal manufacturing. Mrs. V. stated, *"If the process is good, clean, and appropriate, I believe the tofu will be of good quality. That makes me trust that the factory is professional and cares about buyers."* Similarly, Mrs. R. commented, *"Tofu that is processed well will look fresh, clean, and won't spoil quickly."* These responses indicate that consumers evaluate halal manufacturing primarily through observable product characteristics, such as cleanliness, freshness, and product appearance, rather than through knowledge of formal halal assurance procedures. Consequently, consumer trust is largely built upon tangible product quality, while aspects of halal manufacturing that are not directly visible to consumers receive relatively little attention.

Overall, the perceptions of owners, employees, and consumers consistently demonstrate that cleanliness is regarded as the principal indicator of halal manufacturing. While this perception supports the implementation of *thayyib* principles, it also reveals that stakeholders have not yet fully internalized halal manufacturing as a preventive and documented system for maintaining halal integrity throughout the production process. This finding explains why the factory has been able to maintain consumer confidence despite not yet implementing a structured Halal Assurance System.

3. Perceptions of Halal Distribution

The findings indicate that the owner, employees, and consumers recognize the importance of the distribution stage in maintaining product quality before tofu reaches consumers. However, their understanding of halal distribution is primarily associated with preserving freshness and preventing physical damage during transportation rather than maintaining halal integrity throughout the distribution process.

Mr. Y. (owner) stated, *"Distribution is important because even if the product is good at the factory, it could get damaged before reaching consumers. This also affects the factory's image."* Likewise, Mr. M. (distribution employee) explained, *"It is very important; distribution is the final stage before the product truly reaches buyers. If the tofu is already good at the start but gets damaged en route, it is the same as nothing."* These statements demonstrate that both the owner and employees understand distribution as an essential activity for maintaining product quality and customer satisfaction. The factory also employs a reseller-based distribution system in which distribution employees personally deliver tofu to customers using motorcycles with open containers. Through their direct interaction with customers, these resellers contribute to building long-term consumer trust and maintaining the factory's reputation.

Nevertheless, their perception of halal distribution remains focused on operational efficiency and product quality rather than on the broader principles of Halal Supply Chain Management. As discussed in the previous section, the use of open containers constitutes a Halal Critical Point (HCP) because products remain exposed to dust, insects, rainwater, and other environmental contaminants during transportation. This finding suggests that stakeholders have not yet fully recognized that halal distribution also requires preventive measures to protect products from potential contamination and preserve halal integrity until they reach consumers.

Consumers expressed similar views regarding the importance of distribution. Ms. A. stated, *"Distribution must be watched and maintained so that when the product reaches consumers, its condition is still good."* This statement indicates that consumers primarily evaluate distribution based on the physical condition and freshness of the tofu upon arrival rather than on the transportation system itself. Consequently, consumer trust is built upon the quality of the received product instead of knowledge about halal distribution procedures. Overall, these findings demonstrate that stakeholders perceive halal distribution mainly from the perspective of product quality (*thayyib*), while the preventive principles of halal assurance promoted by HSCM have not yet been fully understood or implemented.

4. Perceptions of Halal Logistic

The findings indicate that both the owner and employees perceive halal logistics primarily as an activity related to inventory management and operational efficiency rather than as a mechanism for preserving halal integrity throughout the supply chain. Their understanding focuses on maintaining the quality of raw materials through proper storage, preventing spoilage, and ensuring the smooth continuity of production. This perception reflects the practical priorities of a traditional food MSME, where logistics is generally associated with production efficiency instead of formal halal assurance.

Mr. Y. (owner) acknowledged, *"It probably cannot yet be called halal logistics. But good logistics plays a fairly important role for factory continuity because the system becomes more organized, operations become efficient, the process runs smoothly, and tofu quality is good so consumers are satisfied."* Likewise, Mr. A. (employee) stated, *"If logistics is organized, the tofu won't spoil easily and won't smell bad. But unfortunately, the current attention here is still limited to 'don't let it get dirty.'"* These statements indicate that both the owner and employees recognize the importance of organized storage and inventory management but have not yet associated halal logistics with segregation, product identification, or documented procedures required to prevent potential contamination. Consequently, the concept of halal logistics has not been fully internalized as part of a comprehensive Halal Supply Chain Management system.

Consumers expressed a slightly different perspective. Mrs. V. stated, *"Halal logistics is important. If it is halal, organized, and clean, I feel not only the halalness is maintained but also the quality of the tofu itself."* However, because consumers rarely have direct access to warehouse facilities or storage activities, their perception of halal logistics is formed indirectly through the quality of the tofu they receive. As a result, they tend to associate good logistics

with fresh, clean, and high-quality products rather than with formal storage procedures or halal assurance mechanisms.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that stakeholders generally acknowledge the importance of logistics for maintaining product quality and business continuity. Nevertheless, their understanding remains centered on operational efficiency and *thayyib* principles, while the preventive aspects of halal logistics—such as segregation, identification, traceability, and documented handling procedures—have not yet been fully recognized. This finding is consistent with the implementation analysis presented in the previous section, which showed that the factory has adopted good storage practices but has not yet established a structured halal logistics system in accordance with the principles of Halal Supply Chain Management.

The Impact of Halal Supply Chain Management Implementation on Quality and Consumer Trust.

The findings indicate that the implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management (HSCM) at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory has generated both positive and potential negative impacts on product quality and consumer trust. Although the factory has not yet implemented a formal Halal Assurance System or obtained halal certification from BPJPH, consumers continue to demonstrate a high level of confidence in its products. This trust is primarily built upon consistent product quality, long-term purchasing experience, and the reputation established through direct interactions between the factory, resellers, and consumers rather than through formal halal certification.

An important finding of this study is that consumers, including resellers who distribute tofu directly to customers, rarely consider halal certification as the primary basis for purchasing decisions. Instead, they evaluate the products based on freshness, cleanliness, taste, and consistency of quality. As explained by Mrs. R. (consumer), *"What makes me trust and keep buying is that the tofu I receive is always in good condition—still warm sometimes, still fresh and tasty."* This finding suggests that consumer trust in traditional food MSMEs is largely experiential rather than certification-based. Nevertheless, reliance on experiential trust alone may not be sufficient to guarantee long-term consumer confidence if halal-related issues emerge in the future.

To better understand how HSCM implementation influences product quality and consumer trust, the impacts are discussed according to the four dimensions of Halal Supply Chain Management, namely halal procurement, halal manufacturing, halal distribution, and halal logistics.

1. Impact of Halal Procurement

The procurement practices implemented by the Rembukidul Tofu Factory have contributed positively to maintaining the quality of raw materials used in tofu production. The selection of high-quality soybeans from trusted suppliers and the use of clean water have enabled the factory to produce tofu with consistent texture, taste, and freshness. From the perspective of *thayyib*, these practices support product quality by ensuring that the primary production inputs meet the standards expected by both the factory and consumers.

Consequently, the consistency of raw material quality has become an important foundation for maintaining the overall quality of the final product.

However, the findings also indicate that the procurement stage has not yet provided comprehensive halal assurance. The use of homemade fermented vinegar without laboratory verification or formal halal certification creates uncertainty regarding the halal status of this auxiliary ingredient. Although no evidence suggests that the vinegar is non-halal, the absence of documented verification means that halal assurance remains based on the owner's experience and long-established production practices rather than objective evidence. From the perspective of Halal Supply Chain Management, this condition represents a potential weakness because formal halal assurance requires preventive verification of all supporting materials before they enter the production process.

Interestingly, this limitation has not significantly affected consumer trust. Most consumers continue to purchase the factory's tofu because they associate the consistent quality of the product with the quality of the raw materials used. Their confidence is therefore built on repeated positive consumption experiences rather than on verified information regarding raw material procurement or halal certification. Nevertheless, reliance on experiential trust may become vulnerable if consumers become more aware of the halal status of supporting ingredients or if future halal-related issues arise. These findings suggest that strengthening supplier verification and conducting laboratory testing of homemade fermented vinegar would not only improve halal assurance but also reinforce long-term consumer trust by providing formal evidence to support the factory's existing reputation for quality.

2. Impact of Halal Manufacturing

The implementation of hygiene and sanitation practices during the manufacturing process has had a direct positive impact on the quality and consistency of the tofu produced by the Rembukidul Tofu Factory. Regular cleaning of production equipment, the use of clean running water, and careful handling of raw materials contribute to producing tofu with a clean appearance, fresh aroma, desirable texture, and consistent quality. These practices reflect the application of the *thayyib* principle by ensuring that the products meet consumers' expectations for cleanliness, safety, and quality.

The findings also indicate that these manufacturing practices have significantly influenced consumer trust. Consumers consistently associate visible cleanliness and product freshness with both product quality and halalness. As discussed in the previous section, consumers generally evaluate the manufacturing process through observable characteristics of the final product rather than through formal halal assurance procedures. Consequently, the factory has been able to establish strong consumer confidence because repeated positive purchasing experiences reinforce perceptions that the tofu is produced in a clean, careful, and responsible manner.

Despite these positive outcomes, the manufacturing process has not yet been supported by a structured Halal Assurance System. The absence of documented sanitation procedures, systematic pest control, and formal monitoring of production facilities may

reduce the level of assurance provided by the manufacturing process from the perspective of Halal Supply Chain Management. Although these shortcomings have not yet affected consumer confidence, they represent potential vulnerabilities should consumers or regulatory authorities require evidence of formal halal compliance. Therefore, strengthening halal manufacturing through documented sanitation procedures, preventive environmental controls, and systematic halal assurance would not only improve compliance with HAS 23000 but also reinforce long-term consumer trust by complementing the factory's existing reputation for producing high-quality tofu.

3. Impact of Halal Distribution

The distribution practices implemented by the Rembukidul Tofu Factory have contributed positively to maintaining product availability and freshness. By distributing tofu directly to traditional markets and customers through a reseller-based system, the factory is able to minimize storage time and ensure that consumers receive products in good condition. This efficient distribution system supports product quality (*thayyib*) by preserving the freshness, texture, and taste of the tofu, thereby contributing to high levels of consumer satisfaction.

An important finding of this study is the role of resellers in strengthening consumer trust. In addition to delivering products, distribution employees also act as resellers who interact directly with consumers on a daily basis. Through these regular interactions, consumers develop confidence not only in the quality of the tofu but also in the reliability of the factory. Consequently, consumer trust is reinforced through consistent product quality and long-term relationships with resellers, making interpersonal trust an important component of the factory's marketing and distribution system.

Despite these positive impacts, the use of open containers during transportation remains a potential weakness from the perspective of Halal Supply Chain Management. As discussed in the implementation analysis, products transported in open containers are more vulnerable to exposure from dust, insects, rainwater, and other environmental contaminants. Although no direct contamination was observed during this study, such practices may reduce the level of formal halal assurance because product protection throughout the distribution process cannot be fully guaranteed. Therefore, while the current distribution system successfully maintains product freshness and consumer satisfaction, strengthening transportation practices through the use of covered or sealed containers would further protect product quality, preserve halal integrity, and enhance long-term consumer trust.

4. Impact of Halal Logistic

The logistics practices implemented by the Rembukidul Tofu Factory have contributed positively to maintaining raw material quality and ensuring production continuity. The storage of soybeans in a clean, dry, and well-organized warehouse, combined with the informal application of the **First In First Out (FIFO)** principle, helps minimize raw material deterioration and ensures that soybeans remain fresh before entering the production process. These practices indirectly support the consistency of tofu quality by providing stable production inputs and reducing the risk of spoilage.

From the perspective of consumer trust, effective inventory management also contributes to consumers' positive experiences because consistent raw material quality is reflected in the freshness, taste, and appearance of the final product. Although consumers rarely observe warehouse activities directly, they perceive the outcomes of good logistics through the quality of the tofu they purchase. Consequently, logistics practices strengthen consumer confidence indirectly by supporting the factory's ability to consistently deliver products that meet consumer expectations.

Nevertheless, the logistics system has not yet incorporated formal halal assurance measures such as halal segregation, product identification, traceability, and documented storage procedures. While these shortcomings have not affected current consumer trust, they limit the factory's ability to provide objective evidence that halal integrity is maintained throughout the storage process. Therefore, the current logistics system primarily supports product quality (*thayyib*) rather than comprehensive halal assurance. Strengthening halal logistics through systematic segregation, labeling, and documented storage procedures would not only improve compliance with the principles of Halal Supply Chain Management but also reinforce long-term consumer trust by complementing the factory's established reputation for consistent product quality.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management (HSCM) at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory has not yet fully complied with the formal requirements of the Halal Assurance System (HAS 23000). Nevertheless, the factory has successfully maintained product quality through consistent hygiene practices, careful raw material selection, efficient distribution, and organized logistics. These operational practices have shaped stakeholders' perceptions that halal products are primarily characterized by cleanliness, freshness, and product quality, reflecting a strong understanding of the concept of *thayyib*. Consequently, consumer trust has been developed predominantly through repeated positive purchasing experiences, long-term relationships with the factory and its resellers, and the consistent quality of the tofu rather than through formal halal certification. This finding suggests that, in traditional food MSMEs, experiential trust can coexist with informal halal practices. However, relying solely on experiential trust may not be sufficient to ensure long-term consumer confidence, particularly as public awareness of halal assurance continues to increase. Therefore, strengthening Halal Supply Chain Management through systematic halal verification, documented procedures, and a formal Halal Assurance System is essential not only to preserve halal integrity throughout the supply chain but also to sustain consumer trust in the long term.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the implementation of Halal Supply Chain Management (HSCM), stakeholder perceptions, and the impact of HSCM practices on product quality and consumer trust at the Rembukidul Tofu Factory, a traditional tofu MSME in Mojokerto Regency. The findings indicate that HSCM has been implemented through four operational stages—halal procurement, halal manufacturing, halal distribution, and halal logistics—but its

implementation remains informal and has not yet fully complied with the requirements of the Halal Assurance System (HAS 23000). Three major Halal Critical Points were identified, namely the use of homemade fermented vinegar without laboratory verification, inadequate pest management during the manufacturing process, and the use of open containers during product distribution. Although these practices have not resulted in observable quality problems, they represent important implementation gaps that should be addressed to strengthen halal assurance throughout the supply chain.

The study also found that the owner, employees, and consumers generally perceive halal practices through the concept of *thayyib*, emphasizing cleanliness, product quality, and operational efficiency rather than formal halal assurance procedures. As a result, consumer trust is primarily developed through repeated positive purchasing experiences, consistent product quality, and long-term relationships with the factory and its resellers instead of formal halal certification. These findings demonstrate that, within traditional food MSMEs, experiential trust can coexist with informal halal practices; however, such trust remains vulnerable because it is not supported by a structured halal assurance system.

This study contributes to the Halal Supply Chain Management literature by integrating implementation analysis, stakeholder perceptions, and consumer trust within a single analytical framework. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on evaluating HSCM implementation, this study identifies specific Halal Critical Points while explaining how consumer trust is maintained despite the absence of formal halal certification. These findings provide practical implications for traditional food MSMEs by highlighting the importance of strengthening supplier verification, sanitation management, transportation practices, and halal logistics as part of a comprehensive Halal Assurance System. Future research is recommended to examine similar issues in other food MSMEs with different products and business scales and to compare consumer trust between halal-certified and non-certified enterprises.

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