

# The Strategic Role of Halal Values and Brand Image in Building Customer Trust and Satisfaction

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The growth of digital technology and rising awareness of halal values have transformed marketing strategies in the culinary industry, particularly for medium-sized businesses. These businesses, typically employing 10–50 staff or generating in annual revenue, face unique challenges in building customer trust. This study aims to evaluate how social media marketing, halal value, brand image, product innovation, and customer satisfaction contribute to trust in medium-sized culinary businesses and to develop a conceptual framework. A systematic literature review was conducted, analyzing 71 articles from 412, published between 2014 and 2024, using the PRISMA framework. The findings show that innovative products, engaging social media content, consistent brand image, and transparent halal practices enhance customer satisfaction, which strengthens trust. Satisfaction acts as a key link, connecting these factors to customer loyalty through positive experiences. The study highlights that medium-sized culinary businesses can build strong customer connections by aligning strategies with local values and consumer needs. In conclusion, this research offers a new framework for understanding trust-building in culinary businesses and provides practical strategies, such as using social media to share halal certifications and innovative menus, to foster loyalty.*

**Keywords:** *Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Trust, Halal Value, Medium Culinary Business, Social Media Marketing.*

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## ABSTRAK

Pertumbuhan teknologi digital dan meningkatnya kesadaran akan nilai-nilai halal telah mengubah strategi pemasaran dalam industri kuliner, khususnya untuk bisnis menengah. Bisnis-bisnis ini, yang biasanya mempekerjakan 10–50 staf atau menghasilkan pendapatan tahunan, menghadapi tantangan unik dalam membangun kepercayaan pelanggan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi bagaimana pemasaran media sosial, nilai halal, citra merek, inovasi produk, dan kepuasan pelanggan berkontribusi terhadap kepercayaan pada bisnis kuliner menengah dan untuk mengembangkan kerangka kerja konseptual. Tinjauan literatur sistematis dilakukan, menganalisis 71 artikel dari 412, yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2014 dan 2024, menggunakan kerangka kerja PRISMA. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa produk inovatif, konten media sosial yang menarik, citra merek yang konsisten, dan praktik halal yang transparan meningkatkan kepuasan pelanggan, yang memperkuat kepercayaan. Kepuasan bertindak sebagai penghubung utama, menghubungkan faktor-faktor ini dengan loyalitas pelanggan melalui pengalaman positif. Studi ini menyoroti bahwa bisnis kuliner menengah dapat membangun koneksi pelanggan yang kuat dengan menyelaraskan strategi dengan nilai-nilai lokal dan kebutuhan konsumen. Kesimpulannya, penelitian ini menawarkan kerangka kerja baru untuk memahami pembangunan kepercayaan dalam bisnis kuliner dan menyediakan strategi praktis, seperti penggunaan media sosial untuk membagikan sertifikasi halal dan menu inovatif, guna menumbuhkan loyalitas.

**Kata kunci:** Citra Merek, Kepuasan Pelanggan, Kepercayaan Pelanggan, Nilai Halal, Bisnis Kuliner Menengah, Pemasaran Media Sosial.

## INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive digital era, the culinary business sector faces pressure to adopt more adaptive, innovative, and valuable marketing strategies. Advances in information technology have allowed businesses to utilize social media not only as a promotional tool but also as a means of building emotional relationships and customer loyalty. On the other hand, halal values are becoming a growing concern, especially in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia. This value is a religious symbol representing the product's quality, cleanliness, and moral responsibility (Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2019; Zanon et al., 2019; Sadyk & Islam, 2022). The shift in consumer behavior from functional orientation to emotional and ideological value drives mid-sized companies to reformulate their marketing approaches. It is not enough to offer a taste or price; consumers now value the integrity and value contained in each product. Therefore, integrating social media marketing, halal value, and brand image becomes a strategic point in attracting attention and retaining customers (Raji et al., 2019; Motoki et al., 2020; Kostyk & Huhmann, 2021).

Brand image is crucial in shaping consumers' perception of quality and trust. Brands that appear consistent, communicative, and valuable are considered to be able to create psychological closeness with consumers. In the culinary world, brand image is attached to the product, and the digital narrative is built through social media. Meanwhile, product innovation acts as a differentiation trigger that creates customer satisfaction and continuous curiosity (Bushara et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2024). Amid market complexity, customer loyalty is not formed instantly. The process results from accumulating positive experiences, ongoing satisfaction, and the brand's perception of value and honesty. Various studies show customer satisfaction is a key mediator in forming long-term trust and loyalty. Therefore, understanding the factors that shape customer satisfaction is essential in designing an effective marketing strategy (Deng et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023).

Many empirical studies have examined the influence of individual variables such as digital marketing, halal branding, product innovation, and brand image on customer satisfaction and trust. However, until now, few studies have presented a systematic synthesis of the relationships between these variables in one complete conceptual framework. This shows that gaps in the literature need to be filled with a systematic literature review approach. This article uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

approach to address this need as the primary method for identifying, evaluating, and compiling relevant literature. SLR allows researchers to objectively sift through thousands of articles and produce a complete knowledge map while avoiding subjective bias in interpreting findings. This approach is also very suitable when the studied topic involves many conceptually interrelated variables.

This systematic literature review synthesizes peer-reviewed articles from reputable international journals to explicitly examine how social media marketing, halal value perception, brand image, and product innovation collectively influence customer satisfaction and, subsequently, customer trust in medium-sized culinary businesses. The primary objective of this study is to identify the interrelationships among these variables, clarify the central mediating role of customer satisfaction, and develop an integrative conceptual framework that explains the process of trust formation in the culinary SME context. The resulting framework and strategic recommendations are designed to guide practitioners in building sustainable customer trust and loyalty through value-aligned digital marketing and authentic halal practices, while providing a solid theoretical foundation and clear directions for future empirical validation in diverse culinary markets.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Social Media Marketing**

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has emerged as a cornerstone for medium-sized culinary businesses in building customer satisfaction and trust through authentic, interactive, and responsive digital engagement. Mishra (2021) argues that SMM has evolved from a mere promotional channel into a powerful relational tool that fosters emotional closeness and a sense of community among customers. Engaging narrative content, such as behind-the-scenes stories, ingredient sourcing journeys, and authentic customer testimonials, significantly enhances perceived service quality and overall satisfaction (Vinerean & Opreana, 2021; Al-Dmour et al., 2023; Bazi et al., 2023). Quick responses to inquiries and complaints, combined with active encouragement of user-generated content (reviews, photos, and reposts), strengthen trust because consumers perceive these elements as more credible than brand-controlled messages (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023). In the highly visual culinary sector, SMM provides a cost-effective yet powerful way for medium-sized enterprises to compete with larger brands while creating memorable digital experiences (Lorenzo-Romero et al., 2019).

The effectiveness of SMM in driving satisfaction and trust hinges on consistency and authenticity. Overly promotional or inauthentic content can erode credibility and reduce trust (Sombultawee & Wattanatorn, 2022), whereas transparent, culturally resonant, and value-driven communication, including openly sharing halal certifications and daily kitchen practices, significantly boosts customer satisfaction, which then mediates the path to long-term trust and loyalty (Ramli et al., 2025; Kaur & Kathuria, 2025). By leveraging platform analytics, culinary SMEs can monitor real-time sentiment, track engagement patterns, and refine strategies accordingly, transforming SMM into a dynamic relational instrument that not only satisfies customers but also cultivates enduring trust in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace.

### **Strategic Role of Halal Value**

Halal value has evolved far beyond a mere religious compliance marker; it now functions as a powerful strategic differentiator that directly influences customer satisfaction and trust, particularly in Muslim-majority markets such as Indonesia. Ahmed et al. (2019) and Halim and Salleh (2020) emphasize that authentic halal certification and transparent production processes provide consumers with assurance of quality, cleanliness, safety, and ethical responsibility, all of which significantly elevate perceived product value and emotional satisfaction. When culinary businesses openly communicate halal practices, from raw material sourcing to final presentation, customers experience psychological comfort and spiritual fulfillment, leading to stronger emotional attachment and higher satisfaction levels (Kundu & Jyote, 2020; Sumardi et al., 2024; Rakhmani,

2024). In competitive food markets, consistent and genuine halal commitment serves as a clear point of differentiation that sets medium-sized enterprises apart from competitors while reinforcing trust through alignment with deeply held cultural and religious norms (Nasiri et al., 2023; Hariani et al., 2024).

However, the positive impact of halal value is highly contingent on authenticity and transparency; any perceived discrepancy between halal claims and actual practices can severely damage trust and satisfaction (Nasir, 2022). Successful integration requires embedding halal principles into every touchpoint, product innovation, packaging, social media communication, and daily operations, so that halal becomes part of the brand identity rather than an afterthought (Nawaz et al., 2025; Kapustina, 2024). When halal value is communicated sincerely and supported by visible evidence (e.g., certification displays, supplier audits shared on social media, and kitchen transparency), it significantly strengthens customer satisfaction, which in turn acts as a critical mediator toward long-term trust and loyalty. For medium-sized culinary SMEs, treating halal not merely as a label but as a holistic value system enables the creation of deeper, more resilient customer relationships and sustainable competitive advantage in halal-conscious markets.

### **Brand Image and Product Innovation**

Brand image and product innovation operate as interconnected drivers that collectively strengthen customer trust in medium-sized culinary businesses. Helme-Guizon and Magnoni (2019) and Samarah et al. (2022) assert that a consistent, authentic, and value-aligned brand image creates psychological closeness, signals professionalism, and sets reliable expectations about quality and integrity. When consumers perceive a brand as honest, locally rooted, and committed to community values, they develop a higher tolerance for minor service flaws and become more receptive to new offerings. Product innovation, in turn, acts as tangible proof of the brand's responsiveness and creativity; innovations ranging from novel menu items and healthier options to sustainable packaging reinforce the brand image by demonstrating that the business actively listens to evolving consumer needs (Khan & Lee, 2020; Granato et al., 2022; Xiaofei Li et al., 2024). Together, a strong brand image amplifies the positive effects of innovation, while successful innovations continuously refresh and validate the brand image, creating a virtuous cycle that deepens trust (Bushara et al., 2023; Wisnawa et al., 2023; Gonera et al., 2024).

However, misalignment between brand image promises and actual innovation outcomes can rapidly erode trust. Poorly executed or irrelevant innovations confuse customers and damage perceived competence, whereas innovations that contradict the established brand identity trigger cognitive dissonance and distrust (Ruippo et al., 2023; Šerić et al., 2020). For medium-sized culinary SMEs, trust is most effectively enhanced when product innovation is framed within, and explicitly reinforces, the existing brand narrative, such as launching halal-certified fusion dishes or eco-friendly packaging under a brand known for ethical commitment (Almasarweh et al., 2024; Hallez et al., 2023). When brand image and product innovation are strategically aligned, customer satisfaction rises, forgiveness for occasional mistakes increases, and customers are more likely to engage in positive word-of-mouth and long-term loyalty. Thus, the synergistic combination of a coherent brand image and relevant, value-consistent product innovation emerges as one of the most powerful mechanisms for building and sustaining customer trust in the culinary sector.

### **Customer Satisfaction and Trust**

Customer satisfaction functions as the central mechanism that transforms positive perceptions into lasting trust in medium-sized culinary businesses. Hong et al. (2023) and Kim et al. (2021) highlight that satisfaction emerges when actual experiences consistently meet or exceed expectations across multiple dimensions: food quality, service speed, staff friendliness, atmosphere, price fairness, and alignment with personal values such as halal compliance. Satisfied customers not only exhibit higher repurchase intention but also

display greater emotional attachment, forgiveness for occasional service failures, and willingness to recommend the brand to others (Ing et al., 2019; Croitoru et al., 2024; Zanetta et al., 2024). In the culinary context, satisfaction is particularly powerful because dining is an experiential and multisensory activity; positive experiences create memorable emotional imprints that strengthen trust over time (Moreo et al., 2019; Souki et al., 2019).

More importantly, satisfaction acts as the primary mediating variable between antecedent factors (social media marketing, halal value, brand image, and product innovation) and customer trust. Deng et al. (2023), Liu et al. (2023), and Teangsompong et al. (2024) consistently demonstrate that even strong brand images or innovative offerings fail to generate deep trust if day-to-day customer experiences fall short of expectations. Conversely, when satisfaction is repeatedly achieved through authentic interactions, transparent halal practices, engaging digital content, and relevant innovations, trust accumulates naturally and becomes more resilient to competitive threats or minor setbacks (Macias et al., 2023; Orden-Mejía & Moreno-Manzo, 2024). For medium-sized culinary SMEs operating in highly competitive and value-sensitive markets, prioritizing the delivery of consistent, satisfying experiences is therefore not optional but the most critical pathway to building and sustaining long-term customer trust and loyalty.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to identify, evaluate, and synthesize various studies relevant to digital marketing, halal value, brand image, and customer loyalty in the context of culinary medium-sized businesses. This approach was chosen because it can provide a thorough and in-depth understanding of the previous research landscape and help formulate a future research agenda and a comprehensive conceptual model (Suhartanto et al., 2019; Coombes, 2024). This SLR methodology follows systematic guidance based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, which consists of four main stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The literature search process is conducted on indexed scientific databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and Google Scholar, with a publication time range of 2014 to 2024 to maintain the information's relevance and novelty.

Keywords used in the search process include: "Halal Food Marketing", "Social Media Marketing", "Brand image", "Customer Satisfaction", "Customer Trust", and "Culinary SMEs", and boolean operators such as AND, OR, and NOT refine search results. The inclusion criteria include peer-reviewed journal articles, written in English or Indonesian, and containing conceptual or empirical discussions related to the research variables. Meanwhile, non-academic articles, editorials, and conference papers without peer review were excluded from the analysis (Górska-Warsewicz & Kulykovets, 2020; Rowley & Keegan, 2020; Hernández-Ortega et al., 2022). Four hundred twelve articles were found during the initial identification process. After the title and abstract screening process, 138 articles were declared eligible for the eligibility stage. Finally, 71 articles were selected for in-depth analysis through full-text review. Each article is extracted and categorized based on its central theme, year of publication, methodological approach, and geographical and sectoral context.

The analysis was carried out using the thematic synthesis, which allows researchers to group the study's results into key theoretical themes, identify consistency and contradictions between findings, and formulate new integrations between variables. The findings of this study were then mapped into an Integrative conceptual model, which describes the relationship between product innovation, social media marketing, brand image, halal value perception, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the context of medium-sized culinary businesses (Biemans et al., 2022; Strzelecki et al., 2024; Tuguinay et al., 2024). Using this SLR approach, this article critically summarizes the existing literature. It presents a new conceptual framework that can serve as a basis for

future empirical studies and assist practitioners in crafting value-based marketing strategies and digitalization.

## **RESULTS**

### **The Role of Product Innovation on Satisfaction and Trust**

Product innovation is a key strategy for medium-sized culinary businesses to remain competitive amid changing consumer tastes. Innovations may include new menus, packaging redesigns, taste adjustments, and alignment with health and sustainability trends (Khan & Lee, 2020; Xiaofei Li et al., 2024; Lisboa et al., 2024). Studies show that consumer-centered innovations enhance satisfaction, as customers feel recognized when brands introduce novelty while maintaining core product characteristics, creating a more engaging consumption experience (Granato et al., 2022; Hallez et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024).

Innovation signals a business's ability to adapt, shaping brand perception and competitive differentiation, particularly in homogeneous culinary markets. Unique and relevant offerings increase loyalty and brand recall (Wang & Su, 2022; Ruippo et al., 2023; Guo et al., 2024; Ketkaew et al., 2024). However, poorly communicated or mismatched innovations can confuse or disappoint consumers, highlighting the importance of inclusive, participatory approaches based on a deep understanding of customer behavior. Service innovations, such as digital ordering, efficient delivery, and appealing presentations, also enhance satisfaction and repurchase intent (Kunz et al., 2021; Gigauri et al., 2024; Spada et al., 2024). Psychologically, innovation fosters emotional involvement, as consumers feel part of the brand's evolution, strengthening loyalty and trust through consistent, relevant offerings. Sustainable and targeted innovations build a brand's reputation as visionary and customer-focused, reinforcing trust, short-term engagement, and long-term brand value (Miao Su et al., 2022; Gonera et al., 2024).

### **The Role of Social Media Marketing on Customer Satisfaction and Trust**

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has become central for medium-sized culinary businesses, shifting from a mere promotional tool to a strategic platform for direct consumer interaction and relationship-building (Mishra, 2021; Sombultawee & Wattanatorn, 2022; Shukla et al., 2023). By consistently delivering relevant and engaging content, brands can increase consumer engagement and foster emotional closeness, making customers feel part of a brand community. Quick responses to inquiries, transparent handling of complaints, and digitally friendly communication enhance perceived service quality, while narrative content about products, business activities, or staff strengthens the emotional bond and encourages consumer advocacy even when minor mistakes occur (Vinerean & Opreana, 2021; Kaur & Kathuria, 2025; Al-Dmour et al., 2023; Bazi et al., 2023).

The success of SMM depends heavily on consistency and authenticity. Brands that focus only on promotional content without meaningful interaction are less likely to build trust. Modern consumers are critical of brand intent and value transparent, honest, socially and culturally mindful messaging. User-generated content, reviews, and testimonials often influence potential customers more than brand-generated messages (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Aljuhmani et al., 2023; Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023). Additionally, digital analytics allow businesses to track preferences, evaluate campaign performance, and adjust strategies in real time, making SMM both efficient and effective in enhancing satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. For medium-sized culinary businesses, a well-executed SMM strategy focused on long-term relationships can drive natural loyalty, increase engagement, and strengthen brand presence in a competitive digital market.

### **Brand Image and Halal Value in Enhancing Customer Satisfaction and Trust**

Brand image represents the overall perception of a brand's identity and values. In the culinary industry, it extends beyond logos or slogans to encompass the complete customer experience, including food presentation, service quality, social media narratives, and

direct interactions. A strong, consistent brand image fosters trust and loyalty by signaling stability, professionalism, and commitment to quality, which reassures consumers of product and service consistency (Ting et al., 2021; Samarah et al., 2022; Tyrväinen et al., 2023). Brand image shapes consumer expectations and satisfaction. When aligned with authentic experiences, it enhances satisfaction and builds long-term trust, whereas gaps between promised and actual experiences can erode trust (Shanahan et al., 2019; Šerić et al., 2020). Elements such as honesty, simplicity, and emotional closeness are particularly important for medium-sized culinary businesses, as consumers value sincerity, local relevance, and alignment with community values (Helme-Guizon & Magnoni, 2019; Macias et al., 2023).

A positive brand image also amplifies the effects of other strategies, such as product innovation and social media marketing. Consumers with a favorable brand perception are more receptive to new offerings, more forgiving of minor mistakes, and more likely to advocate for the brand. Strong brand image moderates loyalty, maintaining consumer commitment despite fluctuations in satisfaction or price, making it a highly valuable intangible asset (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023; Wisnawa et al., 2023; Almasarweh et al., 2024). Medium-sized businesses that integrate local distinctiveness, cultural identity, and relevant social values into their brand image appeal to consumers' sense of meaningful participation. When brand promises align with consumer beliefs and are reinforced by consistent service and communication, trust develops naturally. This strong brand image forms the foundation for long-term sustainability, competitive advantage, and growth in medium-sized culinary businesses.

Halal values extend beyond religious compliance to symbolize quality, cleanliness, safety, and transparency in food production. In Muslim-majority markets like Indonesia, halal serves as a strategic factor influencing consumer choices, as purchasing decisions are guided not only by taste or price but also by confidence that products meet ethical and religious standards. Higher consumer awareness of halal values increases expectations for transparency across the entire production process, from raw material selection to presentation. Medium-sized culinary businesses that demonstrate genuine commitment to halal principles can build strong trust and loyalty (Ahmed et al., 2019; Halim & Salleh, 2020; Rakhmani, 2024). Halal also provides psychological benefits, creating emotional satisfaction and a sense of safety and spiritual fulfillment. This fosters a closer emotional connection between consumers and brands, forming loyalty that is both rational and emotional (Kundu & Jyote, 2020; Sumardi et al., 2024). Additionally, halal serves as a differentiator in homogeneous markets, particularly when communicated consistently via social media, packaging, and direct service (Nasiri et al., 2023; Nawaz et al., 2025).

However, the mere presence of halal labels is insufficient if not backed by education or proof of compliance, as discrepancies between claims and reality can erode trust. Halal values should therefore be integrated into brand identity and product innovation, ensuring new offerings comply with halal principles. When innovation aligns with halal, it strengthens market relevance and brand credibility (Nasir, 2022; Hariani et al., 2024; Kapustina, 2024). Halal-conscious consumers are more likely to repurchase and advocate for brands that consistently uphold these values, demonstrating how halal fosters trust, differentiation, and loyalty. Properly managed, halal principles become a strategic pillar for medium-sized culinary businesses, supporting sustainable competitive advantage and long-term consumer relationships.

### **The Role of Customer Satisfaction as a Mediator of Trust**

Customer satisfaction arises from evaluating the overall consumption experience against initial expectations, encompassing not only food taste but also service quality, atmosphere, speed of presentation, staff interaction, and product values such as halal compliance or social responsibility. Satisfaction reflects both functional and emotional perceptions and drives loyal behaviors, including repeat purchases, recommendations, and continued engagement even at slightly higher prices. Trust develops over time through repeated positive experiences (Kim et al., 2021; Macias et al., 2023;

Teangsompong et al., 2024). Satisfaction acts as a mediator linking variables like product innovation, social media marketing, brand image, and halal value to the formation of trust. Even strong brand images or innovative offerings cannot generate optimal trust if customer experiences are unsatisfactory. Research shows that trust is more effectively built through realized experiences rather than mere promises or marketing messages (Souki et al., 2019; Hong et al., 2023; Zanetta et al., 2024).

Psychologically, satisfaction reinforces emotional connections between customers and brands. Feeling valued and cared for fosters long-term trust, making customers more forgiving of minor mistakes and increasing tolerance toward service or product lapses. Satisfaction also encourages voluntary brand advocacy, as satisfied customers share positive experiences with others both offline and online, enhancing brand credibility more effectively than corporate advertising (Ing et al., 2019; Moreo et al., 2019; Croitoru et al., 2024; Orden-Mejía & Moreno-Manzo, 2024). Thus, satisfaction is central to converting transactional interactions into long-term relationships. In models integrating innovation, social media marketing, brand image, and halal value, it functions as the pivotal bridge, determining whether consumer engagement results in fleeting purchases or sustained trust and loyalty.

The conceptual model shown in Figure 1 is an in-depth synthesis of various findings and theoretical arguments in the systematic literature review described in the previous section. Each variable included in this model does not stand alone, but is the result of testing the validity of an idea based on logical relevance, empirical relevance, and contribution to understanding the relationship between marketing strategy, brand values, and consumer behavior. This model holistically describes how certain factors contribute to customer satisfaction, ultimately leading to trust.

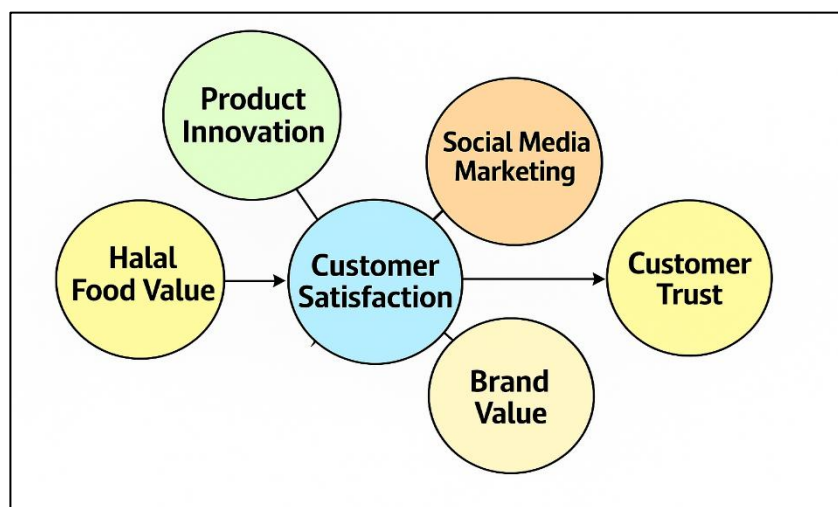


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Product innovation is a key driver in shaping customer perceptions, offering freshness and uniqueness that differentiate products from competitors. In this model, innovation encompasses not only technology but also design, functionality, and benefits relevant to market needs. Social media marketing is included for its role in creating interactive, emotional experiences between customers and brands, enhancing engagement and satisfaction. Brand image and brand values function together to strengthen consumer perception. A strong brand image sets expectations, while brand values provide emotional and functional reasons for pride and satisfaction, contributing to the overall perceived value of products or services. Halal value represents a socio-cultural and religious context for Muslim consumers, providing normative, emotional, and belief-based reassurance that increases satisfaction and trust.

At the core of the model is customer satisfaction, which mediates the relationship between these variables and trust. Satisfaction reflects the fulfillment of expectations through innovation, social media, brand image, and halal value, bridging customer experience with loyal and trusting behavior. Customer trust, the primary output, emerges from accumulated positive experiences, consistent service, emotional and functional value, and belief in the company's integrity. This conceptual model offers strategic guidance for businesses to enhance satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term consumer trust.

## **DISCUSSION**

Product innovation is often interpreted as an indicator of a business's capacity to evolve and adapt to changing market needs. Customers assess not only taste or price but also the business's ability to address emerging lifestyle, health, and sustainability trends. Innovation, therefore, becomes key to shaping a positive brand perception and strengthening competitive differentiation. If innovations are communicated effectively and match customer expectations, they create engagement, emotional involvement, and higher trust in the brand (Miao Su et al., 2022; Gonera et al., 2024). Conversely, poorly implemented innovations may confuse or disappoint customers, highlighting the need for consumer-centered approaches.

SMM is more than a communication channel; it is a relational platform that builds emotional connections, loyalty, and trust. Consistent, authentic, and responsive social media practices amplify customer satisfaction and encourage peer advocacy. Additionally, digital analytics allows businesses to adapt strategies dynamically, ensuring SMM delivers both efficiency and meaningful consumer engagement. Social media, therefore, is strategically necessary for medium-sized culinary businesses (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Sombultawee & Wattanatorn, 2022; Aljuhmani et al., 2023).

A strong brand image enhances the impact of other marketing strategies, including product innovation and social media engagement. When consumers perceive a brand positively, they are more receptive to new offerings and more tolerant of minor errors. Brand image thus functions as an intangible asset that underpins long-term trust, loyalty, and sustainability of medium-sized culinary businesses (Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023; Wisnawa et al., 2023; Almasarweh et al., 2024).

Halal value integrates normative, emotional, and belief aspects, creating trust and differentiation. When businesses align innovation with halal principles, they meet consumer expectations and strengthen loyalty. Misalignment between claims and practices can damage trust, demonstrating the need for authenticity in halal certification and communication (Nasir, 2022; Hariani et al., 2024; Kapustina, 2024).

Satisfaction serves as a mediator between brand strategies (innovation, social media, brand image, halal value) and trust. Positive experiences reinforce emotional connections and foster long-term trust. Satisfied customers are more forgiving, engaged, and likely to advocate for the brand, highlighting the central role of satisfaction in converting transactional interactions into lasting relationships (Souki et al., 2019; Hong et al., 2023; Ing et al., 2019). The conceptual framework integrates innovation, SMM, brand image, and halal value to explain how these factors collectively contribute to satisfaction, which in turn builds trust. Managing these elements holistically strengthens consumer relationships and enhances brand equity over time. The practical implication is that medium-sized culinary businesses can prioritize these strategies to foster sustainable customer loyalty, optimize marketing efficiency, and gain a competitive advantage, while theoretically contributing to the understanding of how integrated marketing and brand values drive trust and long-term consumer engagement.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that product innovation, social media marketing, brand image, and halal value play significant roles in building customer trust in medium-sized culinary businesses, with customer satisfaction serving as a key mediator. The review of 71 articles from 2014 to 2024 shows that innovative products, engaging social media strategies,

consistent branding, and transparent halal practices create positive customer experiences that foster loyalty. These findings highlight the importance of aligning business strategies with consumer expectations to enhance trust. The conceptual framework developed from this study integrates these factors into a cohesive model, offering a clear guide for understanding how culinary SMEs can strengthen customer relationships. The study contributes to marketing knowledge by providing a systematic synthesis of how these variables interact in the culinary sector.

For medium-sized culinary businesses, these findings suggest practical steps to build trust, such as developing innovative menus that reflect local tastes, using social media to share authentic stories and halal certifications, and maintaining a consistent brand image. However, the study is limited by its focus on medium-sized culinary businesses, which may not fully apply to other sectors or larger firms. The reliance on literature from 2014 to 2024 also means newer trends may not be fully captured. Future research should test the proposed conceptual framework empirically, using surveys or experiments in diverse markets, to validate its applicability. Exploring other sectors, such as retail or hospitality, could further expand the model's relevance. These steps will help refine strategies for building sustainable customer trust in competitive markets.

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