Consumer Preferences for Halal Food and Beverage Products
In Madura, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The awareness of the community towards halal products and services is increasing alongside a growing consciousness regarding the quality, safety, and health aspects of consumed products. In line with this, the preferences and consumer inclinations towards halal food and beverages in Madura are also changing. This research aimed to ascertain consumer preferences regarding the attributes of halal food and beverages and to determine the priority areas for improving these attributes in Madura. The study sampled 50 respondents on the island of Madura, Indonesia. The analytical method employed in this research is the service quality model (SERVQUAL). The results show that the pricing dimension aligns with consumer perceptions, whereas dimensions such as product quality, service quality, and assurance do not yet meet consumer preferences. As for the second discovery in this study, the prioritized attributes for improvement include being free from hazardous substances, meeting food safety standards, having halal certification, and maintaining product hygiene.

Keywords: Dimension, Attribute, Consumer Preference, SERVQUAL

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest consumer in the food and beverage industry, with a value of 135 billion USD (Sukoso et al., 2020; Fauziah et al., 2020; Ardiani et al., 2020). The province with the largest Muslim population is East Java, totaling 39,554,069 people (BPS, 2023). Madura, as one of the regions in East Java, certainly has the potential for the development of the halal industry, particularly in the food and beverage sector known as halal food (Rum & Burhan, 2023).

The development of the halal food and beverage industry is an integral part of the creative industry. In East Java, the creative industry is predominantly composed of the food and beverage sector at 63.9%, followed by crafts at 19.8%, and fashion at 7.5% (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, 2023). The halal food and beverage industry is a leading sector within the creative industry in Bangkalan Regency, Madura. In 2018, there were 123 food and beverage businesses in Bangkalan Regency (Ppid.bangkalan.go.id., 2021). The halal food and beverage industry holds the largest income within this sector and is predicted to continue growing in line with the increasing

Muslim population and the community's awareness of halal products consumed (KNKS, 2022). The potential for developing the halal food and beverage industry in Madura is quite high, supported by natural resource potential (Syaifiyatul, et al., 2021) and a conducive halal ecosystem for product development (KNKS, 2022; Makhtum, A., & Farabi, M.E., 2021).

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, society has become more concerned about the food they consume. People have changed their consumption behaviors to achieve nutritional balance and are choosing foods and beverages that can boost immunity (Rohmani, 2020; GDP Venture, 2020; Yolanda, et al., 2022). The shift in consumer tastes and preferences presents a new opportunity for the food and beverage industry. However, on the flip side, it also poses a threat if industry players cannot provide product attributes and service quality that align with consumer expectations. Another challenge is that certain post-Covid-19 government policies have significantly disrupted consumer behaviors (Sheth, 2020).

Consumer choices regarding halal food and beverages are influenced by variables such as halal certification and product quality (Qomaro, 2018). Product quality constitutes a set of attributes assessed by end-users to determine product performance (Widiyanto et al., 2016). When consumers are faced with several product options, they identify existing attribute dimensions and subsequently make decisions based on the alignment of these attributes with their expectations (Ajzen, 2015). The attribute concept approach is commonly used by researchers to identify consumer preferences and perceptions towards a commodity or product (Yolanda, et al., 2022).

Populix's (2023) research findings indicate that Muslim consumers have several considerations when purchasing food and beverages. These include the inclusion of halal logos, clear information about product quality, and meeting consumer needs. Muslim consumers tend to purchase halal food and beverages more frequently compared to other product categories. Consumer purchasing decisions regarding halal food and beverages are influenced by religion and product knowledge (Adriani and Ma'ruf, 2020; Firdayetti et al., 2023; Putra and Yockie, 2020). Understanding the values of Islam correlates positively with halal knowledge. Halal knowledge significantly affects attitudes toward halal products in a positive manner (Ahmad et al., 2015; Larasati et al., 2018; Rahman et al., 2015). Moreover, these decisions are influenced by other attributes such as price, brand, promotions, safety assurance, product shape, color, taste, and size (Mohayidin & Komarulzaman, 2014).

The goal of developing the halal products industry is to achieve consumer satisfaction. Parasuraman et al. (1985) developed the SERVQUAL model to measure customer satisfaction, utilizing five dimensions as its measurement tools: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The SERVQUAL model can be used to enhance the service quality of a company to meet customer expectations regarding the attributes of products offered by the company.

Based on the description above, it is important to understand consumer preferences regarding halal food and beverages in Madura. This research aimed to identify consumer preferences for attributes of halal food and beverages and determine the priority areas for improving these attributes in Madura. This will serve as an effort to enhance service quality in the development of the halal products industry in Madura.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research population consisted of customers of typical food and beverages from Madura located in Bangkalan Regency, Madura. A total of 50 respondents were selected using an accidental sampling technique. The determination of the sample size in this research was based on a method developed by Sugiyono (2019), where anyone who happened to encounter the researcher at the typical souvenir center in Bangkalan City could be used as a sample, given that they had previously purchased typical halal food and beverages from Madura.

Data collection involved distributing an online questionnaire to respondents who met specific criteria. Firstly, respondents were required to reside on the island of Madura. Secondly, respondents needed to have made decisions to purchase and consume typical halal food and beverages from Madura.

The research data analysis method used the SERVQUAL model, which stands for Service Quality. This model served as a measurement to explain how well the services provided by Madura's halal food and beverage industry players meet customer expectations. The purpose of this model was to assist policymakers in analyzing the sources of quality issues and finding ways to improve service quality (Sarjono Haryadi & Natalia, 2014). If industry players could meet customer expectations regarding the offered attributes, then customers' perceptions of the quality of Madura's halal food and beverage products would be positive. Conversely, if the performance of attributes fell significantly below customer expectations, customers' perceptions of the quality of Madura's halal food and beverage products would be negative (Sinaga, Baja H.M., 2009).

Service quality is the gap between service users' expectations (denoted as E) and their perceptions of the service performance provided by the service provider (denoted as P). According to Parasuraman et al. (Passaruman et al., 1985; Sinaga, Baja H.M., 2009), the score for service quality (Q) can be obtained by subtracting the score of service users' perceptions (P) from their expectations (E), expressed in the following formula,

$$Q = P - E$$

with:

Q = Quality (quality of service for customers of the halal food and beverage industry in Madura)

E = Expectation (customers' expectations of the service quality from the halal food and beverage industry in Madura)

P = Perception (the actual service received by customers of the halal food and beverage industry in Madura)

TABLE 1. DIMENSIONS AND ATTRIBUTES OF HALAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCT QUALITY

Dimension	Attribute
Service quality (SQ)	▪ Clean products ▪ Comfortable facilities for customers ▪ Friendly service ▪ Upholding principles of honesty
Product quality (PQ)	▪ Halal products ▪ Wholesome products ▪ Hygienic products ▪ Appealing product appearance ▪ Taste meeting consumer expectations ▪ Using natural coloring
Price (P)	▪ Affordable price ▪ Price matching the quality ▪ Competitive pricing
Assurance (A)	▪ Possessing MUI halal certification ▪ Meeting food safety standards ▪ Free from harmful substances

RESULTs AND DISCUSSIONS

Priority of Services for Halal Food and Beverage Products in Madura

The analysis to determine the priority of services for halal food and beverage products was conducted using the SERVQUAL method developed by Parasuraman et al., 1995. The calculation results reveal the priority attributes that need improvement to enhance the service of halal food and beverage products in Madura. The dimensions utilized in this study include service quality, product quality, price, and assurance. From these dimensions, the gap between consumer expectations and perceptions of Madura's

halal food and beverage products was identified. After determining the gap values, the level of consumer satisfaction would be assessed, categorized as dissatisfied, moderately satisfied, and highly satisfied.

Validity and Reliability Test

A validity test was used to demonstrate the extent to which a measuring instrument can be utilized to measure the dimensions of service for halal food and beverage products. In this study, 50 respondents were involved, resulting in an r-table value of 0.2306. The decision-making criteria were based on the Corrected Item to Total Correlation value or calculated r-value above 0.2306, which indicates the question item or attribute is considered valid. Conversely, if the calculated r-value is < 0.2306, the statement item or attribute is deemed valid due to its lower relationship with other question items. Reliability testing employed Cronbach's Alpha value. For question items to be reliable, the alpha value should be ≥ 0.6 (Ghozali, I., & Laten, H., 2015). The testing was conducted using SPSS 21.0 software for Windows.

Gap SERVQUAL Value

Here are the SERVQUAL gap values for all attributes based on the expectations and perceptions of customers regarding halal food and beverage products in Madura.

Figure 1: SERVQUAL Gap of Attributes for Halal Food and Beverage Products in Madura

TABLE 4. CUSTOMER PERCEPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS, AND GAPS REGARDING HALAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTS IN MADURA

The SERVQUAL gap values per dimension are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: SERVQUAL Gap of Service Dimensions for Halal Food and Beverage Products in Madura

As can be seen in Figure 2, the highest SERVQUAL gap value was in the price dimension, which was 0.20, while the dimension with the lowest gap value was the assurance dimension, with a value of -0.63. Among the four dimensions, three had negative gap values: product quality, service quality, and assurance. This indicates that the overall performance of Madura's halal food and beverage products is not yet satisfactory, and improvements are needed, especially in dimensions with negative values. The price dimension had a positive SERVQUAL gap value, indicating that the price of Madura's halal food and beverage products aligns with consumer expectations and perceptions.

The recommendations for service improvements that should be implemented to enhance customer satisfaction with Madura's halal food and beverage products are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5. PRIORITY SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HALAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTS IN MADURA

Attribute	Gap	Recommendation
Free from harmful substances (A3)	-0,74	The use of harmful chemicals can detrimentally affect the image of SME (small and medium enterprises) products. Harmful substances still found in some SME products in Madura include synthetic dyes, borax, and food preservatives. Therefore, halal food and beverage entrepreneurs in Madura should produce safe, high-quality, and nutritious food in accordance with the Food Law No. 18 of 2012, regulations set by the Ministry of Health, and BPPOM (Indonesian Food and Drug Agency).
Meeting food safety standards (A2)	-0,62	Food and beverage industry players in the halal sector should pay attention to product quality and food safety, both in sourcing raw materials and throughout the production process, by implementing quality assurance systems such as HACCP. The HACCP system should be applied from input companies, producers, and distributors, right up to the consumers. The aim of implementing HACCP is to identify, monitor, and control hazards within the agro-industrial system, ensuring that halal food and beverage products are safe for consumption.
Possessing MUI halal certification (A1)	-0,52	Halal food and beverage industry players should ideally possess MUI halal certification, aiming to ensure that the products produced are genuinely halal for consumption. Additionally, the halal certification can enhance consumer trust and expand market share, competitiveness, and brand awareness.
Friendly service (SQ3)	-0,44	One effort to enhance the quality of service for halal food and beverage products is by providing friendly service to consumers. This effort represents a form of responsiveness to customers, ensuring their satisfaction.
Hygienic products (PQ 3)	-0,42	To enhance the competitiveness of halal food and beverage products, cleanliness needs to be improved. Consumers desire clean and healthy products; hence, it is necessary to adhere to consumer preferences. Apart from production processes complying with HACCP standards, the implementation of safe, hygienic, and

		attractive product packaging is also essential. This is because good and appealing packaging can increase consumer purchase interest.
Appealing product appearance (PQ 4)	-0,40	Halal food and beverage industry players should enhance product designs that are more appealing to consumers, as this can boost brand awareness. Branding strategies that SMEs (small and medium enterprises) can implement include improving product and packaging designs.
Clean products (SQ 1)	-0,36	Halal food and beverage industry players should be able to create clean products, as this can enhance customer satisfaction, competitiveness, business image, and business sustainability, and attract investment or business partnerships.
Comfortable facilities for customers (SQ 2)	-0,20	Improving comfortable facilities for halal product customers is an essential step to enhance customer satisfaction and build a positive business image. Several strategies that can be implemented to create comfortable facilities for customers of halal products include obtaining halal certification, maintaining cleanliness and comfort in production and sales units, providing safe storage and distribution facilities for products, offering complaint and feedback facilities for customers, providing adequate and safe parking facilities, arranging spaces for religious practices, and ensuring clean restroom facilities for customers.
Wholesome products (PQ 2)	-0,16	Halal food and beverage industry players need to implement the concept of "Halalan Toyibah" in their businesses, one of which involves creating products that are clean and hygienic, practicing honest business management, and adhering to Islamic religious principles. Therefore, the products produced are not only halal but also good and safe for consumption. This concept, when applied, can enhance product quality and customer trust.

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2023

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