Ḥalāl Certification in Indonesia's Logistics Sector: A Phenomenological Inquiry into the Lived Experiences of Logistics Company Owners

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how logistics company owners in Indonesia experience, interpret, and negotiate the obligation of ḥalāl certification following the enactment of the ḥalāl Product Assurance Law. While previous studies have predominantly focused on consumer-oriented sectors such as food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals, the logistics sector remains underexplored despite its strategic role in safeguarding the integrity of the ḥalāl supply chain. Employing a phenomenological approach, this study draws on in-depth interviews with 21 logistics company owners to capture their lived experiences and meaning-making processes related to ḥalāl certification. The findings indicate that ḥalāl certification is primarily perceived as a regulatory requirement aimed at securing formal state legitimacy rather than as a response to market demand, as service users tend to prioritize efficiency, accuracy, and safety over certification status. Organizational adaptation to ḥalāl standards is therefore implemented selectively, mainly when serving industrial clients bound by mandatory ḥalāl supply chain regulations. Key challenges identified include financial burdens, limited human resources, procedural ambiguity, and the uneven readiness of inspection institutions. Overall, the study demonstrates that legitimacy in the logistics sector remains largely regulatory in nature, with pragmatic and cognitive legitimacy still weakly developed. These findings highlight the need for greater regulatory harmonization and institutional capacity-building to support a more proportionate and context-sensitive implementation of ḥalāl certification in logistics services.

How to cite: Awaludin, L., Sudana., Maulidizen, A., Sain, Z.H., Yusinof, E. (2025). Ḥalāl Certification in Indonesia's Logistics Sector: A Phenomenological Inquiry into the Lived Experiences of Logistics Company Owners. _JURNAL INDO-ISLAMIKA_, _15_(2), 349–364. https://doi.org/10.15408/jii.v15i2.46833

INDO-ISLAMIKA
Jurnal Kajian Interdisipliner Islam Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Ḥalāl certification policy in Indonesia has undergone important developments since the issuance of Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning *Jaminan Produk Ḥalāl* (JPH) (A. Sahhari et al., 2025). This regulation changes the *ḥalāl* status from a voluntary added value to a legal obligation for all business actors. (Purbasari et al., 2023). Initially, the certification obligation only covered food, beverage, drug, and cosmetic products (Fauzi et al., 2024). However, its scope was later expanded to various service sectors, including logistics services. This expansion has raised public debate because it is considered disproportionate, considering that the character of logistics services is different from consumer products that are directly used by humans. Logistics services generally only move goods without a production process that can change the *ḥalāl* status of the product. Therefore, some logistics business actors consider that the obligation of *ḥalāl* certification in this sector is not fully necessary.

The debate is even more interesting when viewed in terms of market acceptance. Many logistics players consider *ḥalāl* certification to have no significant impact on their business performance. In practice, general consumers do not make *ḥalāl* certification the main factor in choosing a logistics service provider; They consider price, punctuality, security, and efficiency more. Certification requests usually only come from food, beverage, and pharmaceutical companies that are required to trace the *ḥalāl* supply chain. This situation shows that there is a gap between the state's demand to build formal compliance (regulatory legitimacy) and the real benefits felt by business actors (pragmatic legitimacy).

At the same time, the issue of *ḥalāl* certification in Indonesia has a strong religious and social context. As a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, the *ḥalāl* status of products and services is not only understood as a legal provision, but also as part of a social identity and global economic strategy (Andani et al., 2024). The growth of the *ḥalāl* industry, including the increased sensitivity of Muslim consumers to *ḥalāl*, has led to certification policies having a direct impact on global supply chains, including distribution and transportation (Arifin et al., 2022). In the perspective of Suchman's legitimacy, this aspect reflects moral legitimacy, i.e. acceptance due to alignment with the values and beliefs of society (Suchman, 1995). Therefore, the discussion of *ḥalāl* certification in logistics is not just a compliance bureaucracy, but also part of the economic and religious dynamics of contemporary Muslim society.

Previous research studies have shown that most research on *ḥalāl* certification is focused on the direct consumption product sector. Research on the food and beverage industry confirms that *ḥalāl* certification increases consumer trust, strengthens product image, and helps expand the market (Arifin et al., 2022), (Silalahi, 2023). Similar research in the pharmaceutical, cosmetics, and health sectors also shows that the existence of *ḥalāl* certification is positively correlated with purchasing intent and brand competitiveness (Herdiana & Rusdiana, 2022), (Widyanto & Sitohang, 2021), (Luthviati & Jenvitchuwong, 2021). Another study highlights the dimension of *ḥalāl* governance as a state policy instrument to build a more established *ḥalāl* industry infrastructure (Jalaluddin et al., 2024). However, almost all of this research relies on the context of the end consumer as the main subject, so *ḥalāl* is positioned primarily as an instrument of pragmatic and moral legitimacy in the sense of providing business benefits and fulfilling religious values.

On the other hand, studies on *ḥalāl* certification in the logistics sector are still limited, although the distribution chain is a critical point that can threaten the consistency of *ḥalāl* products if not managed according to standards (Al-Mahmood & Fraser, 2023). International research has found that the implementation of *ḥalāl* logistics in many countries still faces obstacles in the form of high compliance costs, low market awareness, and limited certified inspection bodies (Talib et al., 2020), (Abbas et al., 2025). However, most of these studies have not explained how logistics industry

players interpret *ḥalāl* certification in a more comprehensive legitimacy framework, as offered by Suchman who divides legitimacy into regulative, pragmatic, moral, and cognitive dimensions (Suchman, 1995). In other words, previous research has not examined how the tension between state regulations, market needs, religious values, and logical-day-to-day receipts is managed by logistics service business actors.

This is where the gap in this research lies. The expansion of *ḥalāl* certification to the logistics sector shows a gap in academic understanding. Most previous studies have highlighted the added value of *ḥalāl* certification in consumer products, but very few have addressed its implications for the distribution services sector. In addition, there is a gap between the regulatory perspective and the practical view of business actors. The government requires *ḥalāl* certification as a form of legal compliance, while many logistics company owners consider this obligation disproportionate (Isman et al., 2024). For logistics actors, *ḥalāl* certification is not a general need of all service users and is considered more of an administrative obligation than an instrument to increase service value. (Khan et al., 2023).

The gap between regulations, the readiness of business actors, and consumer perceptions has not been answered in previous research. The critical question that arises is whether *ḥalāl* certification for logistics services actually provides substantive benefits to the industry, or instead creates an additional burden for businesses that do not have adequate market support. This gap is what this research tries to fill through a phenomenological approach to understand the direct experience of logistics company owners in Indonesia.

Theoretically, this research is based on the theory of legitimacy as formulated by Suchman (Rendtorff, 2020; Suchman, 1995) which views legitimacy as the collective perception that the actions, policies, or existence of an organization are in accordance with applicable social norms, values, and beliefs. Legitimacy thus does not solely relate to administrative compliance, but also reflects the extent to which organizations gain social acceptance that allows them to continue operating in a recognized and trusted public space (Baba & Brunet, 2023). In the context of *ḥalāl* certification, legitimacy is an important instrument because *ḥalāl* policy not only demands procedural changes, but also requires social acceptance and consistent meaning from economic actors involved in the supply chain, both producers, distributors, and logistics service providers.

Within the framework of Suchman, legitimacy in Indonesia's *ḥalāl* industry works in several domains. First, regulatory legitimacy, which is the legitimacy that arises from compliance with formal rules, as manifested through the certification obligation in the *ḥalāl* Product Assurance Law (Denha et al., 2024; Rendtorff, 2020; Suchman, 1995). Second, pragmatic legitimacy, which is formed when business actors see direct economic benefits. Various studies show the positive impact of certification on brand image and market access in the food, pharmaceutical, and beauty sectors (Arifin et al., 2022; Shirley, 2023). However, in the logistics sector, business actors often do not feel these benefits so that formal obligations from the state do not automatically build a strong pragmatic legitimacy. Third, moral legitimacy, namely the conformity of business practices with the ethical and religious values of the Muslim community, especially related to the commitment to maintaining the integrity of the *ḥalāl* supply chain (Andani et al., 2024). Fourth, cognitive legitimacy, which is legitimacy when practice is considered reasonable and no longer questionable. In the *ḥalāl* logistics sector in Indonesia, this cognitive legitimacy has not been fully formed.

In addition to the theory of legitimacy, this research also borrows from the perspective of *fiqh al-muʿāmalāt* which provides a normative foundation regarding *ḥalāl-ḥarām* principles, business ethics, and moral responsibility in trade and distribution of goods. The basic principle in *fiqh al-muʿāmalāt* states that everything is basically permissible (*mubāḥ*) unless there is evidence that is clear to the adherents. This principle shows that logistics services do not automatically fall into the

category that must be certified unless there is a potential for contamination or mixing between *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* goods. (Gustanto & Mubarok, 2023). However, the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* emphasizes that the protection of religion, soul, intellect, descendants, and property requires a reliable distribution system to maintain the Tallness of products (Widyaningsih, 2023). *Fiqh al-mu'āmalāt* provides a moral framework that complements the perspective of modern organizations in understanding how logistics actors assess the urgency of *ḥalāl* certification.

Suchman's legitimacy theory framework is combined with the perspective of *mu'āmalāt fiqh* to understand how logistics actors interpret *ḥalāl* certification as a social, religious, and economic experience at the same time. This approach allows an analysis of whether compliance arises due to state legal pressures, moral awareness, market demands, or because the practice has been considered reasonable in Indonesia's logistics business ecosystem. The integration of modern organizational theory and Islamic epistemology provides a strong conceptual basis for reading the complexities of the *ḥalāl* industry. This research contributes to three areas: expanding the study of *ḥalāl* logistics from technical aspects to socio-psychological aspects; enriching the theory of legitimacy by showing how regulative legitimacy can stand without pragmatic or cognitive legitimacy; and opens up new methodological spaces through the use of phenomenology that is rarely used in logistics studies. By uncovering the essence of the experience of logistics company owners, this study shows that *ḥalāl* certification is not just an administrative obligation, but a process of establishing interrelated regulative, moral, and pragmatic legitimacy, so that it can be the basis for a more adaptive and proportionate *ḥalāl* policy.

METHOD

This study uses an interpretive phenomenological approach by referring to the Husserlian tradition of descriptive phenomenology which is then operationalized through the analytical procedure of Moustakas (1994). This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the meaning of the subjective experience of logistics business people in interpreting *ḥalāl* certification policies. Phenomenology seeks to understand reality as experienced by participants, not just as seen normatively or listed in regulatory texts (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). The main focus of this research is not only to describe the responses of business actors, but to explore the essence of their life experiences in the face of legal, market, and religious values that govern *ḥalāl* logistics practices in Indonesia.

In the phenomenological tradition, there are two major approaches, namely descriptive and interpretive phenomenology. This study chose the descriptive tradition because the focus is on revealing the essence of the experience as experienced directly by the participants without providing a hermeneutic content that can cover the original meaning. In other words, descriptive phenomenology seeks to prevent theoretical interpretation and make room for pure experience as it arises in the participant's consciousness. This choice is appropriate because the research aims to capture how logistics company owners interpret *ḥalāl* certification as a state demand, market strategy, and moral value, and how these experiences are structured in their world of life.

Primary data were collected through interviews with 21 selected logistics company owners using purposive sampling techniques, which involve deliberate selection of informants based on criteria relevant to the research objectives (Magnone & Yezierski, 2024). The criteria for participants include: (1) being an active owner or manager of a logistics company, (2) having a minimum of three years of experience in distribution service operations, and (3) being involved or knowledge related to *ḥalāl* certification issues. The informants ranged in age from 31 to 52 years old, predominantly male but still included women, with educational backgrounds ranging from high school to master's degrees and business experience between 5 and 23 years. They manage small,

medium, and large-scale businesses spread across West Java, Central Java, and East Java. According to Creswell (in Charli et al., 2022), the number of informants can range from 3-25 participants or be determined by the principle of data sufficiency until information saturation is achieved (Turner & Lopez, 2024). Interviews were conducted face-to-face and online with semi-structured guidance, so that researchers could explore the experiences, considerations, and strategies of business actors in a more in-depth and reflective manner, especially in dealing with *ḥalāl* certification issues.

Data analysis follows a descriptive phenomenological step. First, epoch or bracketing is carried out to suspend the assumptions and assessments of the researcher so that the interpretation is free from bias. Furthermore, all transcripts are read repeatedly to conduct hominization, which is to identify all potentially significant statements without initial selection. The statements are then grouped into significant statements and compiled into units of meaning through reflection on participants' experiences related to regulatory design, cost calculation, client demands, and moral beliefs. Once the unit of meaning is formed, the analysis proceeds with the drafting of a textural description (what the participant experiences) and a structural description (how the experience is shaped by social, legal, and religious contexts). Both descriptions are synthesized to obtain a phenomenological essence, namely a deep understanding of how logistics actors interpret *ḥalāl* certification as state compliance, a mechanism of social legitimacy, and a reflection of moral values. This approach refers to Moustakas' phenomenological steps and the study of contemporary applied phenomenology (Vignato et al., 2021).

The analysis process is carried out manually, with software only used to organize the data so that the purity of the phenomenological approach is maintained. The validity of the data is strengthened through source triangulation, member checks, and peer discussions to test the consistency of interpretation (Erdmann & Potthoff, 2023). Trail audits are prepared to maintain transparency from the formation of the unit of meaning to the formulation of essence. In the final stage, phenomenological findings are placed in the context of Indonesia's *ḥalāl* certification system, the dynamics of competition in the logistics industry, and the way business actors balance lawsuits, market expectations, and Islamic norms. The analysis not only presents themes, but also reveals the structure of the deepest meaning that shapes the meaning of logistics actors towards *ḥalāl* certification as an instrument of regulative, pragmatic, moral, and religious legitimacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
***Ḥalāl* Certification from the Perspective of Logistics Service Entrepreneurs**

In the experience of logistics company owners, *ḥalāl* certification comes as something that is first felt not as a value demand, nor as a response to market dynamics, but as a regulatory obligation inherent in their business. This phenomenon emerged very clearly when the participants explained how the *ḥalāl* certification discourse entered their workspaces. Almost the entire narrative shows that the certification is not something that was born naturally from the daily rhythm of the logistics world, but is present as an external process that comes from the state. Therefore, the initial meaning given by business actors to *ḥalāl* certification is the meaning of compliance, not the meaning of innovation, let alone the meaning of religious moral values that are internalized. One of the participants (P20) stated straightforwardly that, "To be honest, the *ḥalāl* certification appeared on our table not because of customer questions. But because of the rules. We are undergoing it because it is a legal requirement, not a business strategy." The statement can be seen that certification is positioned as an administrative requirement that must be met so that the business can continue to run without regulatory obstacles.

From the perspective of legitimacy theory, this experience illustrates a type of legitimacy that is regulative, namely legitimacy that is revoked on formal demands and potential sanctions if

regulations are not fulfilled (Purbasari et al., 2023). Within Suchman's framework, this type of legitimacy does not reflect the value of internal acceptance, but merely adherence to the formal structures that form the most basic layer of the relationship between the state and business actors (Rendtorff, 2020; Suchman, 1995). While within the institutional framework of DiMaggio and Powell, this kind of response can be read as a form of coercive isomorphism, that is, the tendency of organizations to conform not to their own desires, but because of normative and legal pressure from the government (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This pressure creates a pattern of uniformity of organizational actions, even though these actions do not substantively change the way they think or interpret the world of work.

When viewed from a phenomenological perspective, *ḥalāl* certification as a phenomenon that is present in the world of business actors' consciousness is not something that grows from their own practical experience (Romadhoni et al., 2025). It is present from the outside, infiltrating the structure of their activities without going through a gradual process of meaning-building. In phenomenological terms, *ḥalāl* certification is not part of the lifeworld of logistics company owners; it is something that demands to be responded to even if it is not eliminated in the structure of their daily experience (Saribanon et al., 2019). Therefore, business actors feel that there is a distance between regulation and practice. This distance is not only technical, but meaningful. They view *ḥalāl* certification as something that is outside the value system that has historically shaped the way they work.

One participant (P01) explained this very clearly when he said, "In our daily work, the most crucial thing is to be on time. *ḥalāl* certification doesn't change that. It is present as an administrative obligation, not part of our work rhythm." This narrative shows that for logistics business actors, the core of their services is efficiency, speed, and reliability. The logistics operating system is built from a value structure that places punctuality as the central meaning (Ashari, 2021). Therefore, when *ḥalāl* certification enters their world, it does not necessarily gain a position as an organizational value, but rather as an extension of state authority. In Husserlian phenomenological terms, *ḥalāl* certification does not appear as a horizon of internal meaning, but rather as an external command that must be accommodated.

This external position can be seen when business actors state that *ḥalāl* certification is not directly related to market demand. They don't see an increase in customer needs or competitive benefits. In legitimacy theory, this indicates that pragmatic legitimacy has not yet been formed because direct benefits to the organization have not yet emerged (Rendtorff, 2020; Suchman, 1995). Business actors still view the logistics market as an arena that does not assess *ḥalāl* or *ḥalāl* is still assessed through speed, safety, and effectiveness, so that *ḥalāl* certification is more seen as an administrative burden that applies to certain conditions. Company owners also feel the inner dynamics of being forced to comply with rules that they do not fully understand. Some participants described *ḥalāl* certification as something "forced in", demanding operational adjustments without adequate explanation of its urgency in the context of logistics. This disharmony shows a clash between established organizational values and new values of regulations, so that *ḥalāl* certification has not been integrated as an operational identity, but merely an obligation from outside.

However, although *ḥalāl* certification is understood primarily as a regulatory demand, the narrative of business actors also displays the existence of reflective dynamics in which they begin to see the position of *ḥalāl* in the supply chain (Halik et al., 2025). Although it is still minor, some business actors realize that the logistics world has an important role in maintaining the integrity of *ḥalāl* products. However, this reflection is still hampered by the way *ḥalāl* certification is present in their experience. It is too prominent as an administrative obligation, so that its moral meaning is not firmly rooted. In this case, the phenomenon of regulation masks the potential for moral values that

can actually develop.

If the experience of logistics actors is read more deeply, it is clear that *ḥalāl* certification has not yet entered the territory of organizational identity and has not yet become part of the structure of meaning that shapes their habits (Juliana et al., 2025). Therefore, their response is minimal and driven by the need to stay within the legal corridor. This phenomenon shows that the state is indeed able to produce satisfaction, but it is not necessarily able to produce internalized value. In phenomenological language, the world of experience of actors has not received *ḥalāl* certification as part of their living world (Wulandari, 2023). *ḥalāl* certification remains on the fringes of consciousness, not penetrating to the center of meaning that builds the way they live their logistics business.

The experience of logistics actors at this stage places *ḥalāl* certification as a phenomenon of the presence of regulations that do not yet have market value and have not yet become part of their professional morality. *ḥalāl* certification is still understood as a formal obligation that must be undertaken to avoid legal consequences, not as a practice that arises from internal encouragement. From a phenomenological perspective, the relationship between business actors and *ḥalāl* certification is still at the level of goal awareness, namely awareness of something that must be done, which has not reached the level of meaningful awareness, namely awareness of something that is considered valuable and needs to be maintained.

Client-Based Selective Adaptation: Limited Pragmatic Legitimacy

Based on the experience of logistics company owners, adaptation to *ḥalāl* certification does not come as a sweeping change to the way they do business, but as an alternative response that only appears when the company is dealing with certain clients who do require *ḥalāl* standards. Adaptation does not arise from the internal needs of the company or from the value that grows organically in their daily world, but from external demands that come from a small number of business partners (Maulana, 2025). This adaptation pattern shows an in linear relationship between *ḥalāl* regulations, market needs, and business operational experience. One of the participants (P12) explained that "We do certification only for specific industry clients. Not all services require it. If it's a general client, they don't even ask about it." This statement represents the way business actors view *ḥalāl* not as something that forms the company's identity, but as an additional facility that is applied conditionally.

In a phenomenological framework, this adaptation pattern shows that *ḥalāl* certification is present in the structure of business actors' experiences only as situational demands, not part of the work rhythm that shapes their daily world (Muhamad, 2020). The adaptation was not born from a deep awareness of the meaning of *ḥalāl* in the logistics business, but a practical action to maintain certain business relationships. Thus, it does not become a structure of meaning that is integrated with the identity of a logistics worker but only emerges as an episode of experience when serving clients who need *ḥalāl* assurance.

The adaptive character of this adaptation shows that *ḥalāl* certification has not yet entered the realm of normative meaning that can change the way organizations understand their internal knowledge, routines, or values (Faridah, 2019). It is not understood as a basis for modifying the entire operating system, but rather as a contract reinforcement document. In many cases, *ḥalāl* certification is carried out not because businesses feel that the value is important for all their logistics services, but because some industry clients, especially food, beverage, or pharmaceutical manufacturers, require it (Khairawati et al., 2025). This makes *ḥalāl* present as a standard that is not attached to the entire business process, but is limited to certain business relationships. In this sense, *ḥalāl* certification is fragmentary: it operates in one segment, but does not permeate to another.

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In the perspective of legitimacy theory, adaptational patterns like this suggest that pragmatic legitimacy is beginning to take shape, but only in a very specific market space (Rendtorff, 2020; Suchman, 1995). When industrial clients required by *ḥalāl* supply chain regulations require certainty of *ḥalāl* logistics standards, logistics companies respond because there are pragmatic benefits that can be obtained, namely contracts can be maintained, business relationships can run, and access to certain markets can be opened (Halik et al., 2025). However, this legitimacy does not develop into normative legitimacy, which is legitimacy formed due to the acceptance of *ḥalāl* values as moral or professional principles. It also does not develop into cognitive legitimacy, which is the legitimacy that arises when something that is considered natural, natural, and automatic is integrated into all lines of business. In contrast, *ḥalāl* legitimacy is only accepted insofar as it has an instrumental function in a particular business relationship. Therefore, this pragmatic legitimacy is limited, segmental, and has no implications for changes in organizational identity.

Many business actors describe *ḥalāl* certification as a specific policy for a specific client, not as a basis for changing the operational system as a whole (Kahpi et al., 2024). One respondent even referred to it as an additional document for the tender, not part of the company's identity. From a phenomenological perspective, *ḥalāl* certification is on the fringes of consciousness: it appears when needed, it is stored when it is not, and it is never central to operational meaning. *ḥalāl* does not exist as a fixed object of consciousness, but rather a situational phenomenon that arises due to certain business interests. This dynamic is increasingly visible when business actors explain that *ḥalāl* certification is not related to the general consumer segment. Retail customers value price, speed, and safety more, so *ḥalāl* does not become a service differentiation. As a result, companies do not see a pragmatic reason to implement *ḥalāl* in all business lines. For them, *ḥalāl* certification is only relevant when dealing with large companies that are obliged to implement a *ḥalāl* supply chain; Market reality, not internal transformation, is the determinant.

This trend shows how the experience structure of logistics industry players is shaped by different client demands. The food and beverage industry brings a set of needs that other industries do not have, so two worlds of experience in logistics operations emerge (Juliana et al., 2025). The first world is the world of logistics services, which values efficiency, speed, and reliability as central values. The second world is the world of logistics services for *ḥalāl* clients, which brings additional administrative and documentary demands. These second worlds coexist, but do not coexist, because the demands of *ḥalāl* do not seep into the first world. In phenomenology, this phenomenon describes the division of the horizon of experience, where a single phenomenon is present only within a finite horizon, not in the total horizon that forms the world of consciousness of the entrepreneur.

In this context, placement adaptation practices suggest that *ḥalāl* certification has not yet shaped an epistemological transformation in organizations (Awan et al., 2020). Ḥalāl is only responded to at the procedural level, not a value system or operational identity. Complete documents and facilities stop at the client's contract limit. Even so, some business actors are starting to imagine the potential for pragmatic value in the future if *ḥalāl* demand increases in the retail market or non-food sector. Yet this imagination is still speculative and has not yet shaped the actual experience, suggesting the tension between present needs and possible future strategic value.

In phenomenological research, the process of revealing the meaning of such phenomena displays a deeper essence, namely *ḥalāl* certification for logistics actors is not at the heart of their professional identity. It did not specify how they view themselves as logistics business actors. The logistics identity is still built from the values of efficiency, punctuality, and clarity in the delivery of goods. *Ḥalāl* is present as an external layer, not an internal (Hamm et al., 2022). Therefore, the adaptation carried out by the company is never a cultural or value transformation, but only an alignment of procedures according to the client's needs.

This essence shows that *ḥalāl* certification for logistics actors works as an episodic administrative instrument (Abbas et al., 2025). It appears only when needed and disappears from consciousness when there are no demands. In phenomenology, this essence is referred to as a phenomenon that does not form a change in the structure of the meaning of the world of life. In other words, *ḥalāl* certification is a phenomenon that does not result in an existential experience or identity transformation for logistics actors, but only results in an administrative experience that must be handled pragmatically.

Through this analysis, client-based spectrum adaptation describes an unbalanced relationship between *ḥalāl* as a state regulation and *ḥalāl* as a value practiced in the business world. The experience of logistics actors illustrates that *ḥalāl* does not exist as an internalized value, but as an external demand that is minimally responded. Adaptations do happen, but only in the space necessary to help certain clients meet their own obligations. Therefore, the pragmatic legitimacy that emerges is limited and does not create organizational transformation. *ḥalāl* certification remains a practice of operating on the edge of the logistics company's identity, not at the centre.

Obstacles to Implementation and the Absence of Cognitive Legitimacy

The experience of logistics actors shows that *ḥalāl* certification barriers are not only a technical issue, but also related to a deeper layer of meaning about how they understand the existence of certification in the daily world of work. Phenomenologically, this technical difficulty is closely related to the lack of cognitive legitimacy, namely a situation when a practice has not been considered natural or natural in the industry (Oktaviany, 2024).

In logistics, *ḥalāl* certification is still seen as an external element that has not been integrated with the workflow and business orientation. Many participants described their initial experience as confusing: the guidelines were unclear, technical standards were difficult to understand, and the inspection agencies were not yet ready to handle the logistics sector. One participant (P21) even told that efforts to start the certification process were stopped because the auditor stated that the mechanism for logistics was still under development, so the transportation, storage, and handling procedures did not yet have a standard format.

Experiences like this form the perception that *ḥalāl* certification is not only difficult, but also lacks clarity of object (Yuniarti et al., 2024). Business actors feel that they do not know for sure what to do, what to measure, or to what extent their operations should be changed. The absence of mature standards makes them view *ḥalāl* certification as something prone to change, so they hesitate to spend time and money. The situation is different from that of the food or pharmaceutical industry, where technical standards are well established and widely understood. In logistics, interaction is the main experience that affects the way business actors interpret *ḥalāl* policies.

Phenomenology shows that the experience of confusion is not only a matter of lack of information, but part of the structure of meaning that makes *ḥalāl* certification seen as something foreign and has no clear place in their work horizons. Logistics players are used to working with the principles of efficiency, speed, and technical clarity. Any new element that enters into their operational system must have a clear position in that rhythm of work. Because *ḥalāl* certification does not have a clear concept, procedures, or stable authority, it has not been able to enter the internal meaning structure of business actors (Faridah, 2019). This is what is referred to as the absence of cognitive legitimacy where *ḥalāl* certification has not become something that is automatically understood as a natural part of the logistics industry.

In addition to confusion about the guidelines, participants also faced internal barriers such as limited human resources who understand the *ḥalāl* aspects of logistics and special training needs (Khairawati et al., 2025). For large companies, the preparation of *ḥalāl* divisions may be possible in

the long term, but for small and medium-sized businesses this becomes an additional cost burden. Participant (P07) stated, "We have to prepare special staff and training. For small companies, it's heavy. Not to mention complicated documents." This administrative burden changes the company's work rhythm and demands new capacities that were not previously considered essential, creating a dissonance between old experience and new demands. Complexity increases when the inspection body is also not fully prepared to handle the logistics sector; Auditors often do not understand technical details such as loading and unloading procedures, transit storage, or sanitation of transport spaces. In some cases, auditors actually ask for additional explanations from business actors before setting audit standards. This condition makes the perpetrator feel that the authority that is supposed to provide certainty actually shows unpreparedness, so that the distance between certification policies and practices is getting wider.

From the perspective of legitimacy theory, this attachment is related to the slow formation of cognitive legitimacy. In the food or pharmaceutical industry, consumers, manufacturers, inspection agencies, and regulators have a common understanding of what is *ḥalāl* and how to maintain it (Arifin et al., 2022; Shirley, 2023; Fauzi et al., 2024). This understanding has taken root into an ordinance that is considered reasonable. In contrast, in logistics, such an understanding has not yet been formed. The perpetrators do not view *ḥalāl* certification as something inherent in the identity of the logistics industry, but as an instruction whose foundation is not clear. They do not yet have the belief that *ḥalāl* procedures are a natural part of transportation or warehousing services. Without cognitive legitimacy, *ḥalāl* certification becomes an experience that is perceived as a burden, rather than a practice that has intrinsic value to operations.

The literature on *ḥalāl* supply chain shows that successful *ḥalāl* implementation in the logistics sector requires three main conditions: stable technical standards, strong inspection institutions, and a harmonized understanding of the industry (Tieman, 2011; Zailani et al., 2017). This third element in the context of Indonesia has not moved at the same time. Regulations have been present in the form of laws and derivative policies, but implementing instruments, especially *ḥalāl* inspection institutions and technical guidelines, are still undergoing adjustments. This causes the intensity of the policy to run faster than the supporting ecosystem. Business actors experience these disruptions as a tension between binding normative demands and operational conditions that do not allow them to adjust stably.

The phenomenological analysis shows that the inconsistency in *ḥalāl* certification is not merely administrative but an existential obstacle for logisticians, who are asked to alter long-established work patterns without sufficient understanding of the urgency or method of change. As a result, *ḥalāl* certification is experienced more as a disruption to workflow than as a value inherent to their supply-chain role. Participants also described tension between regulatory demands and business efficiency, especially when certification procedures slow processes such as goods synchronization, sanitation, or documentation. In time-sensitive services daily delivery, express shipping, or cold-chain logistics additional inspections are even perceived as hindrances. At this point, the absence of cognitive legitimacy becomes evident: business actors still cannot see how *ḥalāl* certification fits naturally within an industry driven primarily by efficiency.

The overall experience shows that obstacles to *ḥalāl* certification in Indonesia's logistics industry arise from the intersection of technical limitations, institutional unpreparedness, and the absence of deeper meaning-making among business actors (Saribanon & Setiawan, 2023). Although regulations have provided a legal framework, institutional capacity and company readiness have not developed in parallel, while *ḥalāl* certification itself has not yet been perceived as natural or inherent to logistics operations, preventing the establishment of cognitive legitimacy. If this legitimacy is lacking, businesses tend to view *ḥalāl* certification as a forced external burden rather than part of

their operational identity. Thus, the barriers to implementation extend beyond unclear guidelines or auditor constraints and reflect how the experiential world of logistics actors has not yet accommodated *ḥalāl* certification as a meaningful practice. This indicates that effective *ḥalāl* policy in the logistics sector requires not only regulatory clarity but also a process of internalizing shared meaning among all industry actors.

The Potential for Moral Legitimacy and Religious Ethos That Begins to Grow

For the owners of logistics companies in this study, *ḥalāl* certification is not only present as a regulatory demand, but also as a space for the search for moral meaning that is slowly growing in their consciousness. Although this moral appreciation has not become mainstream more as a small stream that moves slower than the logic of regulation and the market, it is still important to understand how *ḥalāl* certification is beginning to form a new form of legitimacy. This internalization process appears to be a dynamic tension between verbally acknowledged moral will and operational constraints that make these values not yet fully the norm of work.

Some participants revealed that *ḥalāl* certification has a religious dimension related to the concept of trust. In Islamic ethics, trust is understood as a moral responsibility to take care of what is entrusted, including goods, supply chains, and information in the logistics process. One of the participants (P19) said, "If you talk about *ḥalāl* religiously, it is indeed a mandate. We understand that. It's just that the implementation is not easy, so it is done in stages." This statement shows that there is a recognition of the moral value of *ḥalāl* certification, even though it has not been fully realized in daily practice.

Suchman's moral framework of legitimacy helps explain that logistics actors respond to *ḥalāl* certification not just as an administrative obligation, but as something ethically correct (Rendtorff, 2020; Suchman, 1995). However, this moral legitimacy is still embryonic: *Ḥalāl* values are recognized as important, but they have not influenced the decision structure or organizational culture. This means that the recognition is still at the level of discourse, not yet a value that is carried out operationally. The participants' experiences showed that the process of internalizing moral values was greatly influenced by religious education backgrounds, social environment, and personal understanding of sharia obligations. Participants with religious backgrounds are more open to seeing *ḥalāl* certification as a moral contribution to the protection of Muslim consumers. However, they also emphasize that "moral commitment alone is not enough"; Its realization still requires stable organizational readiness.

This meaning has a clear resonance with the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, especially in the dimensions of *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (religious protection), *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of the soul), and *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of property) (Widyaningsih, 2023). *Ḥalāl* certification in the context of logistics can be understood as part of efforts to bring public benefits through ensuring traceability of *Ḥalāl* products throughout the distribution chain. However, in the experience of logisticians, this *maqāṣid* is more often understood as an abstract principle, rather than as an operational guideline. This can be seen from how they talk about *ḥalāl* as a virtue or moral obligation, but have difficulty translating it into a stable work procedure. This is where the gap between ideal ethics and the ability of organizations to materialize these values appears.

From a phenomenological point of view, moral value in the context of *ḥalāl* certification is at the level of intention or an inner tendency that leads to the recognition of the importance of *ḥalāl* but has not yet reached the level of living habitus that is manifested in routine actions and operational decisions. In Husserlian phenomenology, a change towards habitus occurs when a value is no longer presented reflexively through language or discourse, but is present as a pre-reflective structure that guides actions without having to be explicitly expressed (Husserl, 1999). In the case of this study,

the value of *ḥalāl* moral certification is still in the early stages towards this possibility, but it has not been fully realized.

The experience of business actors also shows the tension between their moral commitment and their view of the capacity of *ḥalāl* certification bodies. Some participants actually wanted to implement *ḥalāl* standards more consistently, but felt hampered by unclear procedures, auditor limitations, and immature technical guidelines for the logistics sector (Bux et al., 2022). This obstacle creates a disappointment that affects the process of internalizing moral values, so that *ḥalāl* is understood not as something they do not want yet, but as something that is difficult to realistically realize. Some participants described the experience of "wanting but not being able to": they understood that *ḥalāl* value can increase credibility, but internal readiness related to HR, infrastructure, and costs is still limited. It is in this space that moral commitment goes hand in hand with pragmatic calculations, so that moral legitimacy that begins to grow conditionally exists, but is greatly influenced by the sense of security and the ability of the organization to bear the economic and administrative consequences of the application of *ḥalāl* standards.

Moral legitimacy in logistics practice seems to be born from pragmatic legitimacy triggered by market demands. Logistics players recognize the importance of *ḥalāl* certification, but at the same time they cannot ignore that the majority of clients rate services based on speed, safety, and cost. This condition makes it difficult for moral values to develop into an established operational system. Even so, there is a small change in the way some actors view the relationship between *ḥalāl* and their profession: logistics is no longer seen simply as a technical activity of moving goods, but also as part of an ecosystem that guarantees the safety and blessing of products. This awareness, while limited, marks a shift in the horizon of experience, where *ḥalāl* begins to be seen as an opportunity to strengthen corporate governance, rather than just a regulatory burden.

This reflection shows the potential for greater transformation of meaning. Moral values that initially only appear as discourse slowly open up space for the reorientation of consciousness, as does the initial process of normative internalization in organizational theory. Logistics players are now in a transition phase: they recognize the value of *ḥalāl* and want to maintain it, but do not yet have the capacity or structural drive to make it part of the organization's culture. This potential development of moral legitimacy is also an opportunity for regulators to design more educational and participatory policies. With assistance, simplification of procedures, or certain incentives, the internalization of *ḥalāl* values can move from the realm of awareness to practice. Although not yet dominant, this shift indicates the beginning of a more harmonious integration between regulatory logic, market logic, and sharia logic in *ḥalāl* logistics practices in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that *ḥalāl* certification in Indonesia's logistics sector remains in a transitional stage, positioned between regulatory obligations and limited acceptance among business actors. For logistics company owners, *ḥalāl* certification is not seen as a competitive advantage but is largely viewed as an administrative mandate required by the *ḥalāl* Product Assurance Law. As a result, the legitimacy formed tends to be regulatory-formal rather than pragmatic or cognitive. Adaptation also occurs selectively: *Ḥalāl* standards are applied mainly when serving clients in food, beverage, pharmaceuticals, or other sensitive industries requiring *ḥalāl* -compliant supply chains, while general retail and non-sensitive deliveries do not generate market incentives for *ḥalāl* adoption. This indicates that *ḥalāl* legitimacy remains segmented and has not yet developed into an integrated organizational identity.

Despite these constraints, the study identifies emerging moral legitimacy among some business actors who view *ḥalāl* certification as an ethical and religious responsibility to protect

product integrity. However, this moral awareness has not produced substantial organizational transformation because business benefits are still perceived as limited and consumer demand remains weak. Theoretically, this research contributes by showing how state regulations, market rationality, sharia principles, and operational pragmatism interact to shape business actors' meaning-making concerning *ḥalāl* certification. These phenomenological insights enrich institutional theory by illustrating how legitimacy is negotiated in industries not historically associated with *ḥalāl* standards.

Practically, the findings highlight the need for proportionate, risk-based regulation supported by sector-specific technical guidelines, stronger capacity of *ḥalāl* inspection bodies, and targeted support for small and medium enterprises. Consumer education is also crucial to shift *ḥalāl* practices from compliance-driven obligations toward norms that are internalized and considered standard within logistics operations.

This study is limited by its focus on a specific group of logistics actors and its reliance on qualitative data, which may not represent variations across regions or business scales. Future research should compare different logistics segments, incorporate quantitative market measurements, and explore consumer perceptions to better understand the broader ecosystem shaping *ḥalāl* certification in the logistics sector.

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