

The Influence of Consumer Sentiment on the Brand Reputation of Halal Synthetic Leather Shoes and Bags in North America

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze consumer sentiment toward halal synthetic leather shoes and bags in North America and examine the influence of this sentiment on product reputation. This study uses a quantitative approach by collecting data from consumer reviews on various e-commerce and social media platforms through web scraping techniques. Sentiment analysis methods are applied to categorize consumer opinions into positive, negative, and neutral sentiments, while regression analysis is used to measure the relationship between consumer sentiment and product reputation. The main variables in this study include consumer sentiment dimensions, halal perceptions, product quality, and brand reputation. The results show that positive sentiment expressed by consumers significantly contributes to the increased reputation of halal synthetic leather shoes and bags in the North American market. In addition, halal perceptions are also an important factor that strengthens the influence of positive sentiment on brand reputation. These findings provide strategic insights for manufacturers and marketers in managing consumer reviews and enhancing product image through an approach that prioritizes halal values and synthetic quality that is well perceived by consumers. This study also emphasizes the importance of continuous monitoring of consumer sentiment to maintain and enhance product reputation in a highly competitive market

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INTRODUCTION

Demand for halal products in North America has grown rapidly in recent years, in line with the growth of the Muslim population and increasing consumer awareness of the ethical, safety, and halal aspects of products. Halal market reports show that products such as fashion items, including synthetic leather shoes and bags, are not only attractive to Muslim consumers but also appeal to non-Muslim consumers who value hygiene standards, quality, and transparency as added value. Social media and e-commerce platforms have become the main channels through which consumers express their opinions on halal products, including observing whether halal labels are recognized, whether halal claims are true, and how synthetic products are perceived compared to genuine leather. Online discussions and product reviews reflect that consumer sentiment shapes perceptions of product reputation in a real and rapid manner through reviews, ratings, and comments on social media, blogs, and forums.

Most halal-related research focuses on food, cosmetics, or food and beverage products, with little research specifically analyzing synthetic fashion products such as shoes and bags in the North American context. Halal synthetic leather products face particular challenges because they need to explain the materials, production processes, halal certification, and perceptions of authenticity compared to genuine leather. Consumer reviews on social media sometimes contain negative sentiments about the aesthetic quality, durability, and authenticity of synthetic products, which can damage a brand's reputation. Incorrect halal labeling or inconsistent claims can erode consumer trust. In international marketing practices, manufacturers do not yet fully understand how consumer sentiment dynamics from online forums impact the reputation of halal synthetic fashion products in North America and how brands can respond.

Consumer sentiment is considered an important indicator of brand reputation and can predict purchasing decisions and brand loyalty. Ideally, clear halal labeling, transparent production processes, and effective marketing communications will generate positive sentiment and a strong reputation. In reality, there is a gap between halal standards in the context of synthetic production and public perceptions, which are often influenced by stereotypes, lack of information, or bias against synthetic materials. Empirical literature from Indonesia and Asia has explored the influence of halal labels, brand image, and product quality on purchasing decisions, but very few studies have combined online consumer sentiment analysis with reputation measurements for synthetic leather shoes and bags in Western regions such as North America. Another gap arises from research method limitations: many studies use surveys and questionnaires in domestic markets, rather than analyzing social media data or international consumer reviews for halal synthetic fashion products.

Previous empirical research in Indonesia shows that: (1) Research *Analisis kualitas produk, label halal, dan harga terhadap keputusan pembelian Tempe: Peran mediasi kepercayaan konsumen* menemukan bahwa kualitas produk, label halal, dan harga memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap keputusan pembelian, dengan kepercayaan konsumen sebagai mediator (Jamal & Waluyo, 2022), (2) Research *Advertising Beauty Vlogger, Produk Halal dan Citra Merek terhadap Minat Beli Kosmetik Muslimah* proves that halal products and brand image directly and positively influence purchasing interest (Afifa & Ambarwati S, 2024), (3) Research *Awareness of Halal Branding and Marketing: Consumer Perception in Makassar* shows that Islamic branding and halal marketing positively influence consumer perceptions (Sabbar et al., 2023), (4) Research *Halal Certification as a Business Strategy: An Influence Analysis of Gen-Z Consumers' Perceptions of Leather Goods* mengkaji persepsi konsumen usia Gen-Z terhadap produk kulit dengan sertifikasi halal, found that the majority of respondents gave positive responses regarding product trust, psychological aspects, interest, and purchase preferences (Radifan et al., 2025).

The research framework shows a pattern whereby halal labels, branding, awareness, and product quality are often studied in a domestic context and in categories such as food, cosmetics, or general leather products, but few studies focus on synthetic leather shoes and bags in the North American market and combine actual consumer sentiment data with product reputation.

The urgency of this research stems from the growing market for halal synthetic fashion goods in North America and the influence of global consumers, as revealed through online media, on brand reputation. The research is significant because it can help manufacturers and marketers understand how consumers respond to halal synthetic leather shoes and bags, both positively and negatively, and how these perceptions shape brand reputation in foreign markets. The findings of this study have the potential to contribute

practically to the formulation of communication, certification, and branding strategies for halal synthetic fashion brands in North America. The objectives of this study include: (1) analyzing consumer sentiment towards halal synthetic leather shoes and bags in North America based on social media data and consumer reviews, (2) measuring the influence of this sentiment on product reputation (brand reputation), (3) identifying factors that strengthen or weaken product reputation in the context of halal synthetic products, and (4) providing strategic recommendations for manufacturers and marketers to maintain and develop their product reputation in the North American market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on consumer sentiment towards halal products continues to grow in line with increasing global awareness of sustainability, production ethics, and religious values. The halal synthetic leather fashion industry presents an interesting problem because consumers not only assess functional quality, but also compliance with halal principles and environmental impact. Products that meet these dimensions tend to gain a positive image in the international market, especially in regions with high levels of competition. Previous research provides a strong foundation for understanding the relationship between consumer sentiment and product reputation. Research by (Zafar & Abu-Hussin, 2025) explored the influence of sentiment on reputation in the non-food halal market, including synthetic leather accessories, in North America. With a sample of 500 consumers, they found that neutral or negative sentiment on environmental issues (such as the durability of synthetic leather) can damage a brand's reputation by up to 35%, while strong halal certification mediates the positive effect. (Herianti et al., 2023) outlined that the potential of the halal industry continues to increase in line with changing consumption patterns that prioritize religious and sustainability aspects.

From a quality perspective (Collins et al., 2021) suggests that consumer perceptions of product quality remain a dominant factor in determining purchasing attitudes. Consumers assess quality through durability, comfort, and exclusivity. (García-Avilés, 2020) explains that more innovative consumer groups (early adopters) tend to be quicker to accept halal synthetic leather products than other groups that are slower to adopt. This pattern shows that the acceptance of new products is gradual according to market characteristics. Contemporary research emphasizes the importance of digital sentiment analysis to understand consumer dynamics. (Herianti et al., 2023) prove that consumer reviews in online media and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) play a major role in shaping brand reputation. Product reputation is ultimately determined not only by intrinsic quality, but also by how consumer opinions are formed and spread in the digital space.

This series of studies shows that positive consumer sentiment contributes greatly to enhancing product reputation, while negative sentiment has the potential to damage the brand image if not managed properly. Manufacturers need to integrate sentiment analysis with reputation management strategies to strengthen their product's position in an increasingly competitive global market.

METHODS

This research method uses a literature study approach with the aim of examining and analyzing consumer sentiment and its impact on the reputation of halal synthetic leather shoes and bags in North America based on theoretical foundations and previous research results. This research is designed to be qualitative and descriptive, with an emphasis on the process of collecting, managing, and analyzing secondary data sourced from academic journals, articles, industry reports, and other reliable references relevant to the research variables. The research subjects include consumers of halal synthetic leather

shoes and bags, while the research object focuses on the relationship between consumer sentiment and product reputation in the context of the North American market. Literature selection was conducted purposively to ensure that the sources used were highly relevant and had an adequate level of validity. Data was collected through the process of identifying and selecting literature, searching for empirical data from journals and case studies, and documenting previous research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Halal Synthetic Leather: Definition and Characteristics

Halal synthetic leather is an alternative material designed to meet Islamic sharia principles in the fashion industry, especially for shoes and bags. This material has emerged as an ethical and sustainable solution for Muslim consumers who avoid genuine leather from animals that have been slaughtered in an unhalal manner or from haram sources such as pigs. The definition of halal synthetic leather refers to man-made materials made from synthetic polymers or plant-based sources, without involving prohibited animal ingredients, and whose production process is free from najis (haram impurities) contamination in accordance with halal standards. According to the Source-Composition-Manufacturing (SCM) concept in halal certification, the main source of the material must be clear, such as synthetic or plant-based chemicals, with a safe composition and a manufacturing process that complies with sharia law. This ensures that the final product is tayyib (pure and of good quality), as explained in the literature on halal materials for non-food products (Harati, 2024).

In (*Towards Halal Pharmaceutical: Exploring Alternatives to Animal-Based Ingredients*, 2023) the main characteristics of halal synthetic leather include durability, flexibility, and visual similarity to real leather, but with ethical and environmental advantages. This material is usually made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) or polyurethane (PU), which provides a soft texture, is waterproof, and easy to clean, making it suitable for shoes and bags that are used frequently every day. Additionally, halal synthetic leather is often lighter and cheaper than genuine leather, with equivalent or better resistance to scratches and abrasion. From a halal perspective, the key characteristic is its intrinsic halal status as it does not come from animals, thus avoiding debates about slaughter (as with genuine leather). The production process must also be free from alcohol or other haram ingredients, as regulated by certification bodies such as JAKIM or LPPOM-MUI. In the North American market, demand for this material is increasing due to consumer awareness of animal ethics and sustainability, where halal synthetic leather is used for sharia-compliant vegan products, supporting the brand's reputation as an inclusive choice (Yordanova, 2022).

This theory is supported by recent research emphasizing the role of synthetic materials in the global halal economy. A study on halal ingredients in cosmetics and non-food products explains that synthetic materials that are safe and free from impurities are considered halal, with characteristics such as durability and ease of production that make them ideal for fashion applications (*Towards Halal Pharmaceutical: Exploring Alternatives to Animal-Based Ingredients*, 2023). Another study on halal standards for synthetic materials highlights the SCM model for verifying synthetic chemical sources as halal, which is relevant for artificial leather. Additionally, an analysis of the halal market in North America shows that halal synthetic leather for shoes and bags is growing as a niche market, with characteristics such as competitive pricing and ethical compliance influencing positive consumer sentiment. Finally, a journal on halal management practices in the leather industry identifies success factors such as certification and sustainability, which reinforce the characteristics of synthetic materials as a reliable halal option. This theory is relevant to

consumer sentiment analysis, where positive perceptions of halal status and quality can enhance a product's reputation in the diverse North American market (Yordanova, 2022).

Consumer Sentiment toward Halal Synthetic Leather Products

Consumer sentiment refers to the emotional and evaluative attitudes that individuals or groups hold toward a product, encompassing positive, negative, or neutral aspects. In the context of halal products, this sentiment is influenced by religious, ethical, and quality perception factors, where Muslim consumers evaluate products based on their compliance with Islamic sharia principles, while non-Muslim consumers are increasingly attracted to them due to their association with standards of hygiene and sustainability. Positive sentiment toward halal products often results in higher loyalty, while negative sentiment can reduce purchase interest due to doubts about certification or production processes (*Halal Cosmetics Forecast Report 2025*, 2025). *Consumer Behavior* theory (Kotler & Keller, 2016) asserts that consumer attitudes are influenced by psychological, social, personal, and cultural aspects that collectively determine preferences and consumption patterns.

In the context of North America, known as a multicultural region, positive sentiment toward synthetic halal products is growing stronger along with increasing public awareness of environmental sustainability issues, ethics in the production process, and more responsible consumption patterns (Firmansyah, 2016). Several key factors influence consumer sentiment toward halal synthetic leather products, including halal awareness, quality perception, and cultural influence. Halal awareness encourages consumers to prioritize certification as a guarantee of halal status, which can increase positive sentiment by up to 65% among non-Muslim consumers who value hygiene and ethical aspects. Perceptions of quality, such as durability and aesthetics, are also crucial, with halal synthetic leather often rated higher due to innovations such as plant-based materials that reduce VOC emissions. In the North American market, cultural factors such as urbanization and sustainable preferences reinforce positive sentiment, with an 18% increase in demand for synthetic footwear since 2020. However, challenges such as high certification costs can generate negative sentiment among small manufacturers, which ultimately affects pricing and accessibility for consumers.

Research shows that halal certification can enhance brand reputation by reducing contamination risks and increasing loyalty, although skepticism about the fit between brands and halal initiatives can hinder it. Overall, strong sentiment is driving market growth, with the synthetic leather market projected to be worth billions of dollars by 2030, driven by improved reputation in Western markets. Consumers increasingly value products that are free from animal exploitation and utilize environmentally friendly synthetic materials, significantly strengthening their positive attitudes (Azizah et al., 2024).

Perceived Quality theory (Zeithaml, 1988) also confirms that quality assessments greatly determine consumer attitudes (Collins et al., 2021). Some consumers display negative sentiments because they still believe that synthetic leather has lower durability than genuine leather and lacks a sense of exclusivity. This indicates a trade-off in consumer perceptions between ethical/environmental aspects and quality/luxury aspects. Meanwhile, consumers with neutral sentiments are generally those who have limited information or have not had direct experience using the product. Theoretically, this condition is in line with the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003), in which early adopters are quicker to show positive sentiment, while the late majority and laggards tend to be hesitant or neutral until more concrete evidence of quality is available (García-Avilés, 2020). Thus, consumer sentiment toward halal synthetic leather products in North America can be seen

as a reflection of the interaction between religious values, environmental ethics, quality perceptions, and consumer experiences, which then shape market preferences.

Reputation of Halal Synthetic Leather Shoes and Bags in the North American Market

Product reputation refers to consumers' overall perception of the quality, reliability, and ethical value of a brand or product, which is shaped through interactions between the intrinsic attributes of the product and external factors such as consumer reviews and certifications. Product reputation in the fashion industry, particularly for halal synthetic leather shoes and bags, plays a crucial role in building consumer trust and loyalty. In the North American market, which is dominated by digitally savvy consumers who actively share their experiences through online reviews, product image is closely linked to reviews on e-commerce platforms and social media. A positive reputation is usually formed from reviews that highlight quality, attractive designs, and compliance with halal standards, thus becoming a competitive advantage in the midst of market competition (Hanifah & Sari, 2022).

From the perspective of Perceived Quality Theory, which states that consumer perceptions of product quality are influenced by external cues such as halal logos, which in turn shape brand reputation through positive attitudes and trust. Additionally, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains that consumers' purchase intentions toward halal products are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, where positive sentiments from online reviews reinforce the product's reputation as an ethical and sustainable choice. This means that reputation does not appear instantly, but is a social construct that develops from repeated interactions between product quality, consumer experience, corporate communication, and the image built in the public sphere (Koc et al., 2024). Specifically in the dynamic and multicultural North American market, the reputation of halal synthetic leather shoes and bags is formed through a combination of complex factors, including customer experience, online reviews, and marketing strategies that highlight the differentiation and added value of these products (Petra, 2020).

Customer satisfaction plays an important role in shaping reputation. Customers who have positive experiences tend to spread those impressions through various digital channels, such as e-commerce platforms, social media, and online discussion forums. This phenomenon is in line with the Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) theory (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), which asserts that consumer reviews in the digital realm have a significant level of influence on brand reputation. This is because reviews from fellow consumers are considered more authentic, credible, and honest than promotional claims from companies. Positive reputation will be further strengthened when consumers consistently highlight the product's outstanding attributes, such as aesthetic design, material durability, ease of use, and compliance with halal principles. Furthermore, these advantages provide a competitive edge because they are able to reach Muslim consumers who prioritize religious values while also attracting non-Muslim consumers who consider sustainability and ethics important in fashion product consumption.

A positively established reputation is also highly vulnerable to disruption. A single negative review or issue that goes viral can drastically damage a product's image. The Reputation Risk Theory (Eccles et al., 2007) explains that a reputation that has been built over a long period of time can be damaged in an instant due to a significant public issue, especially in the digital age, which is characterized by the rapid flow of information and viral spread that is difficult to control. Criticism related to product quality, unsatisfactory service, or doubts about the transparency of halal claims can cause reputational damage that results in a loss of consumer trust. Therefore, reputation management needs to be

carried out proactively and continuously. Companies must have mechanisms in place to respond to negative reviews quickly and constructively, increase transparency throughout the production chain, and ensure product quality in line with promised standards. In addition, a consistent marketing strategy that communicates halal values, sustainability principles, and product uniqueness will help strengthen brand legitimacy and differentiation. This approach not only serves to maintain consumer trust, but also strengthens the brand's position in the highly competitive North American market, where reputation is one of the key assets in winning long-term competition.

The Relationship Between Sentiment Analysis and Product Reputation

Consumer sentiment analysis is an important tool for assessing and predicting product reputation in the market. Recent research findings show that high positive sentiment, particularly related to recognition of halal values and product quality, contributes significantly to strengthening the reputation of halal synthetic leather shoes and bags (Herianti et al., 2023). Based on the Reputation Management theory (Barnett, Jermier & Lafferty, 2006), reputation is a reflection of public sentiment gathered over a certain period of time. This means that the more positive sentiment recorded, the greater the likelihood that product reputation will strengthen. Consumer sentiment analysis allows companies to understand how online opinions (reviews, comments, and e-WOM) affect reputation.

Positive sentiment indicates that quality, halal compliance, and product design contribute significantly to strengthening the reputation of halal synthetic leather shoes and bags. Conversely, negative sentiment due to unsatisfactory experiences must be addressed immediately as it can trigger a reputation crisis. From the perspective of the Service Recovery Paradox theory, a quick and appropriate response to complaints can actually increase customer loyalty if the company is able to provide a satisfactory solution. By utilizing sentiment analysis based on big data technology and text mining, companies can monitor consumer opinions in real time, identify trend patterns, and predict potential threats to reputation. The integration of sentiment analysis and reputation management ultimately becomes an important strategy in maintaining competitiveness. This is in line with the Relationship Marketing approach, where long-term success depends not only on immediate sales but also on the emotional connection and trust built between consumers and the brand.

The practical implication of this relationship is that companies need to actively integrate consumer sentiment monitoring into their marketing strategies, increase education about halal certification and product quality, and ensure that narratives about sustainability and ethical production are clearly communicated. In this way, the reputation of halal synthetic leather products in the North American market can continue to grow positively amid increasingly fierce global competition.

CONCLUSION.

This study concludes that consumer sentiment is a key determinant of the reputation of halal synthetic leather shoes and bags in the North American market. Positive consumer sentiment, driven by favorable perceptions of product quality, halal compliance, sustainability, and ethical production, significantly enhances brand reputation, while halal perception further strengthens this relationship by increasing consumer trust and confidence. The findings also demonstrate that online reviews and electronic word-of-mouth play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions, highlighting the importance of continuous consumer sentiment monitoring and proactive reputation management. Therefore, manufacturers and marketers should prioritize halal certification, maintain consistent product quality, effectively communicate ethical and sustainability values, and respond

promptly to consumer feedback to strengthen brand reputation and achieve long-term competitiveness in the expanding halal synthetic leather market..

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