

Research Article

From Halal Compliance to Global Competitiveness: An Integrative Literature Review and Strategic Framework

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Abstract. The global halal economy has evolved far beyond its traditional role as a religious and regulatory concern, becoming an increasingly important source of competitive advantage in international markets. Although halal certification enhances legitimacy and consumer trust, it does not necessarily enable firms to achieve sustainable global competitiveness. This review examines how halal businesses can move beyond compliance by developing strategic capabilities and leveraging ecosystem resources to strengthen their competitive position. To synthesize the previous studies on halal certification, institutional theory, strategic management, resource-based perspectives, supply chain management, business ecosystems and internationalization, an integrative literature review was undertaken. The review shows that global competitiveness is not only achieved by certification, but a dynamic process where halal-related resources are transformed into organizational capabilities and strengthened with supply chain integration, ecosystem collaboration and international market development. From this synthesis, a conceptual framework is proposed which integrates the Institutional Theory, the Resource-based view, the Dynamic capabilities theory, the business ecosystem perspective and the internationalization theory into a coherent explanation of the strategic transformation from halal compliance to global competitiveness. The framework highlights that certification is a source of legitimacy, but long-term competitiveness depends on the firms' ability to develop, modify and deploy strategic capabilities across interconnected business ecosystems and international markets. This study adds to the current halal business literature by providing this integrative perspective and provides the basis for future empirical research in halal competitiveness.

Keywords: Business Ecosystem; Global Competitiveness; Halal Compliance; Halal Industry; Strategic Capabilities.

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of the global halal economy has drastically transformed the perception of halal in international business. Traditionally, halal is viewed as a religious compliance and product assurance issue, but is increasingly perceived as a strategic asset to boost the competitiveness of firms in the global market. This transition is evident in the growth of Muslim consumer expenditure, but also in the growing development of halal value chains, certification systems and cross-border business ecosystems. The State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2025/26 estimates that the Muslim spend on halal food was around US\$1.53 trillion in 2024 and will rise to US\$2.06 trillion by 2029. These developments demonstrate that halal has become more than just a religious necessity, but an important part of international business strategy. Recent developments in the global Islamic economy point to a broader trend of strengthening halal value chains, developing trust infrastructure and building more integrated economic ecosystems, beyond simply expanding markets. These developments mean that halal is no longer merely a product attribute or a religious compliance issue but is increasingly a part of a broader global economic and competitive landscape.

The halal economy has been growing fast but the market size alone is not enough to make it competitive on the world stage. This challenge is seen in Indonesia. It has the world's largest Muslim population and a fast-growing halal market, but translating these advantages into stronger positions in the global market remains difficult. This suggests that halal certification and domestic demand are not sufficient to explain why some firms or countries are more competitive internationally than others, although they are important. This distinction has become increasingly important as halal certification regimes become more institutionalised and halal standards increasingly determine market legitimacy and access. Certification can offer product assurance, boost consumer confidence and demonstrate conformity to religious

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requirements. But certification by itself doesn't lead to differentiated value, superior organizational capabilities or a sustainable competitive advantage. Thus, the strategic challenge for halal businesses is moving from asking if firms meet halal requirements (Solehudin et al., 2024) meet halal requirements to a more complicated question of how firms can transform halal compliance and certification into resources and capabilities that allow them to generate value and compete effectively in global markets.

There are a number of important, but rather scattered, explanations for this change in the existing literature. Initial discourses located halal primarily in the domains of Islamic ethics, religious compliance, product assurance and certification. This view was extended by proposing an evolution from halal products to responsible halal products and finally to responsible halal businesses (Ismaeel & Blaim, 2012; Solehudin et al., 2024). Their framework emphasizes the extension of the scope of the Islamic ethical principles beyond product attributes and embedding in more comprehensive organizational practices, corporate responsibility, and governance. This perspective represents an important conceptual shift from product-level halal compliance to an overall business-level orientation.

Another stream of literature focuses on the institutional and regulatory basis of halal business. Halal certification is an institutional and regulatory requirement and a source of competitive benefits for businesses (Khasanah et al., 2021). However, their results also point to significant difficulties encountered by small businesses in grasping and implementing the halal rules. The findings suggest that regulatory compliance and certification can be an important platform for halal business development but it cannot solely explain how firms are able to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Similarly, studies on halal certification services emphasize the importance of institutional infrastructure and service effectiveness in facilitating business compliance, implying that the broader institutional environment is a vital bedrock for a functioning halal business ecosystem.

Other studies have moved the discussion closer to the domain of strategic management. Research on halal manufacturing SMEs demonstrates that market orientation and supply chain orientation can positively influence firm performance, indicating that competitive outcomes depend partly on how halal firms organize and deploy their strategic resources and orientations. Drawing on the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Strategic Choice Theory (Ahmad et al. 2023) provide empirical evidence that market orientation and supply chain orientation significantly contribute to the performance of halal-certified firms. This finding is important because it shifts attention from the possession of halal certification toward the strategic orientations through which firms respond to market opportunities and coordinate their supply chains. Nevertheless, the study primarily focuses on firm performance within the SME context rather than explaining how these strategic orientations contribute to broader international or global competitiveness.

This strategic perspective is consistent with the broader evolution of sustainable supply chain management. Suryani et al. (2026) demonstrate that the sustainable supply chain management literature has evolved from an operational and cost-efficiency orientation toward a strategic paradigm centered on value-based sustainability, with increasing attention to ESG disclosure, corporate governance, green innovation, and sustainable value creation. From a Resource-Based View perspective, this evolution suggests that supply chain practices can extend beyond operational efficiency to function as strategic resources that support value creation and competitive advantage. In the halal business context, this perspective raises an important strategic question: whether and how halal supply chain practices can similarly evolve beyond their traditional role of safeguarding halal integrity and compliance to become strategic capabilities that create differentiated value and strengthen firms' competitiveness in global markets.

More recent theoretical developments further reinforce the need to understand halal from a strategic perspective. Islam et al. (2023), for instance, integrate the Resource-Based View and Institutional Theory to explain how halal certification and institutional pressures can contribute to resource creation, value creation, and sustainable competitive advantage in upstream halal businesses. This represents an important advancement from compliance-oriented explanations toward a resource-based understanding of halal business. It suggests that halal certification can potentially function as more than an institutional requirement when firms are able to institutionalize and deploy halal-related resources strategically. Nevertheless, the pathway through which such resources evolve into broader organizational capabilities, international market capabilities, and ultimately global competitiveness remains insufficiently integrated across the broader halal business literature.

At the same time, the emergence of the halal business ecosystem perspective implies that competitiveness is not explained only at the firm level. Halal businesses are part of a web of interlinked systems including regulators, certification bodies, suppliers, logistics providers, financial institutions, technology providers and other market players. This wider view reflects the fast-growing global halal industry which, according to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2025/26, saw Muslim consumers spend a total of roughly US\$2.43 trillion on food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, fashion, media, travel and other halal sectors in 2024 with a steady rise expected over the coming years. The report also highlights the need for enhanced cooperation between stakeholders in order to preserve product integrity and access to global markets in light of the rising complexity of global halal value chains. The success of halal business development therefore not only depends on the internal resources of the firms but also on their capability to coordinate and utilize resources across the wider business ecosystem. This view is supported by recent studies that conceptualize the halal industry as a network of interdependent actors, rather than a set of isolated firms. In this sense, the pursuit of global competitiveness involves internal strategic capabilities of the firm, together with institutional support, collaboration with the ecosystem, integration of the supply chain and connectivity of international markets.

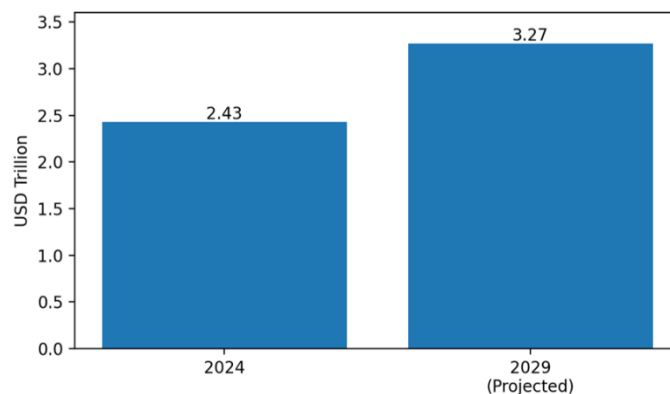


Figure 1. Growth of Global Muslim Consumer Expenditure (2024–2029 Projection).

Source: Adapted from State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2025/26 (DinarStandard).

Figure 1, The Global Halal Economy Continues to Grow Consumer spending on halal-related products was estimated at US\$2.43 trillion in 2024 and is projected to reach US\$3.27 trillion by 2029. The sustained growth indicates the growing economic significance of halal industries and the need for companies to move beyond regulatory compliance and to develop strategic capabilities that enable long-term global competitiveness.

Despite the growing body of research, the literature on halal business remains scattered across a number of themes such as halal regulation, certification, Islamic business ethics, responsible business practices, marketing, supply chain management, strategic resources and business ecosystems. Existing review studies have successfully mapped these individual streams and introduced theoretical perspectives to explain value creation and competitive advantage in specific contexts. Nevertheless, little attention has been given to how these perspectives can be integrated into a broader explanation of the strategic transformation leading from halal compliance to global competitiveness. As a result, the connections among certification, halal-based resource development, strategic capability building, ecosystem integration, international market capabilities, and global competitiveness remain insufficiently conceptualized within a single strategic framework.

This gap is increasingly important because the contemporary global halal economy appears to be entering a stage in which certification is a necessary but potentially insufficient condition for global competitiveness. As halal markets become more sophisticated and internationally interconnected, firms are increasingly required to demonstrate not only religious compliance but also quality, traceability, innovation, sustainability, ethical responsibility, supply chain resilience, and the capacity to respond to diverse international markets. Accordingly, the strategic challenge is no longer simply whether a firm possesses halal certification, but how halal-based values, certifications, and resources can be transformed into distinctive organizational capabilities and ecosystem advantages that enable sustainable competition across global markets.

In this context, the present study takes on an integrative literature review approach to synthesize the fragmented research streams on halal business strategy and competitiveness. Instead of considering halal regulation, certification, business ethics, strategic orientation, supply chain management, and business ecosystems as distinct areas, this study combines these

perspectives to examine the strategic evolution of halal businesses. Specifically, the study aims to

(1) examine the conceptual evolution of halal business from compliance-oriented practices toward strategic competitiveness; (2) identify the institutional, organizational, strategic, and ecosystem mechanisms through which halal-based resources generate competitive value; and (3) develop an integrative strategic framework that explains the pathway from halal compliance and certification toward global competitiveness.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to conceptualize halal competitiveness as a multi-stage strategic transformation process rather than as a direct outcome of certification or compliance. Building upon prior discussions of responsible halal business, halal-based resource creation, strategic orientation, and sustainable competitive advantage, this study integrates these fragmented perspectives into a broader pathway comprising institutional and regulatory foundations, halal integrity and certification, halal resource and value creation, strategic capability development, ecosystem integration, international market capabilities, and global competitiveness. In doing so, the study extends existing halal business literature by shifting the analytical focus from the question of whether halal compliance creates competitive advantage toward explaining how and through what strategic mechanisms halal-based resources can be transformed into capabilities and ecosystem advantages that support global competitiveness.

The broad research question that this study seeks to answer is how can halal businesses transform compliance and certification into strategic capabilities and ecosystem advantages that drive global competitiveness? To answer this question, the study intends to develop an integrative strategic view that links the previously disparate streams of halal business research and provides a conceptual basis for understanding the transformation of halal businesses from compliance-oriented organizations to global competitive enterprises.

2. Literature Review

Halal Compliance, Certification, and Institutional Foundations

Halal compliance is the basis of halal business practice, which includes not only the compliance with Islamic principles in relation to products and processes of production, but also general conduct of the organization. As halal industries have grown in more and more integrated global markets, the meaning of halal has changed from a religious obligation to a formal governance mechanism of standards, certification systems, and institutional regulations. Halal certification is thus gaining acceptance as an important tool for the development of product integrity, organizational legitimacy and stakeholder confidence in domestic and international markets.

The wider understanding is reflected in the work of (Ismaeel and Blaim: 2012) who argue that halal should not be viewed as a product attribute anymore. Instead they advocate for a progression from halal products to responsible halal products and then to responsible halal businesses where Islamic ethical principles are embedded in organizational governance, managerial practices and corporate responsibility. Their framework shifts the discourse from technical compliance to a more strategic and organizational reading of halal, implying that ethical commitment can be embedded in a firm's long-term value creation.

Institutional Theory best describes this evolution as it explains how the practices within the organisation are influenced by the regulatory, normative and mimetic pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008). In the halal context, government regulation, mandatory certification, religious expectation, and competitive imitation create incentives for firms to adopt halal standards. Compliance is thus not only a matter of internal strategic considerations but also of the institutional environment in which firms operate.

Empirical evidence, however, shows that institutional pressure cannot alone explain the differences in business performance. For example, (Khasanah et al. 2021) show that, while halal certification improves legitimacy and has the potential to generate better opportunities in the market, many small businesses still find it difficult to understand and apply the regulatory requirements effectively. These findings suggest that institutional support is an enabler for compliance, but not necessarily for better organizational performance or sustainable competitive advantage.

Taken together, the literature indicates that Institutional Theory is successful in explaining why firms adopt halal practices, but offers limited explanation on how halal compliance contributes to competitive outcomes. Similar institutional pressures on firms often result in very different firm performance. This observation implies that legitimacy gained

through certification should be seen as the beginning of strategic development, not its end goal. This next theoretical perspective therefore builds on this discussion by exploring how halal compliance can be converted into valuable organizational resources that are capable of generating long-term competitive advantage.

From Halal Compliance to Strategic Resources and Value Creation

The shift from compliance to halal status to strategic competitiveness is a shift from seeing certification as an end in itself to understanding its potential contribution to value creation for the organization. Certification can enhance credibility, strengthen halal integrity, reduce perceived uncertainty and establish stakeholder trust. However, just having halal certification doesn't automatically give a sustainable competitive advantage. The strategic value of certification to a firm depends on how it is combined with knowledge, reputation, organizational routines, relationships and other complementary resources.

The Resource-Based View (RBV) offers a useful theoretical lens to make sense of this transition. RBV suggests that the differences in the performance of firms may come from differences in resources which are valuable and, in some conditions, difficult for rivals to imitate or substitute (Barney, 1991; Purwanto T., 2024; Vong et al., 2025). Applied to halal businesses, this perspective suggests that competitive advantage may not originate from the certificate itself particularly when certification becomes widely required but from the organizational resources accumulated around credible halal practices.

Such resources may include halal-related knowledge, organizational routines for maintaining integrity, reputation, stakeholder trust, specialized human capital, traceability systems, and relationships across the halal value chain. When effectively integrated, these resources may allow firms to transform religious and regulatory conformity into differentiated market value.

Islam et al. (2023) extend this discussion by combining RBV and Institutional Theory within the framework of upstream halal business. They find that halal certification and institutionalization can contribute to the development of resources and creation of value, and can potentially support sustainable competitive advantage. This perspective provides an important conceptual bridge between institutional compliance and strategic outcomes: Institutional mechanisms explain the adoption of halal practices whereas RBV helps explain how resources developed around those practices may generate economic and competitive value.

But ownership of valuable resources does not guarantee that firms can continue to exploit them in changing market conditions. The global halal market is characterized by evolving consumer expectations, technological developments, changing standards, pressures for sustainability, and differences between international markets. Therefore, to truly understand the development of global competitiveness it is necessary to consider not only the resources that firms have, but also how they continuously adapt, combine and reconfigure those resources.

Strategic Capability Development: A Dynamic Capabilities Perspective

The distinction between having strategic resources and the ability to renew them is especially important in dynamic markets. The Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2016) is an extension of the resource-based view that underlines the organizational ability to integrate, develop, and reconfigure internal and external core competencies in response to rapidly changing environments (Alqahtani et al., 2025; Dangelico et al., 2017; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Teece (2016) also further conceptualises dynamic capabilities as the processes of sensing, seizing and transforming.

In the context of halal business, sensing refers to the discovery of new opportunities and trends in global halal markets, including changes in consumer preferences, regulatory trends, sustainability expectations, digital technologies, and new geographic markets. Seizing is the ability to mobilize resources to develop business models, products, technologies, and market strategies to exploit these opportunities. Transformation involves ongoing changes to organizations' structures, supply chains, knowledge, partnerships and ways of operating to stay competitive.

This view provides an important theoretical mechanism linking halal-based resources to strategic outcomes. While firms may possess certification, reputation and halal-related knowledge, their ability to compete in international markets depends on their ability to mobilize these resources in the face of changing market conditions. The evidence from halal SMEs empirically supports the importance of strategic orientation in this process. Ahmad et al (2023) found that market orientation and supply chain orientation positively influence firm performance. Using the RBV and the Strategic Choice Theory, they found that competitive

outcomes are a function of managers' strategic deployment of resources and orientation of their organizations towards markets and supply chains.

Dynamic capabilities thus offer a possible missing theoretical mechanism between halal resources and competitiveness. This perspective suggests a transformation process rather than assuming a direct relationship between certification and competitive advantage, where resources based on halal need to be transformed into capabilities such as market responsiveness, innovation, digitization, strategic agility, and supply chain coordination. These capabilities allow firms to shift from having halal attributes to actively using them as bases of differential value.

Halal Supply Chain as a Strategic Capability

The role of supply chain management is very important in halal business because the halal integrity must be maintained in the activities of production, sourcing, processing, logistics, storage and distribution that are interconnected. Thus, the halal supply chain has historically been concerned with segregation, traceability, contamination prevention and assurance mechanisms. These functions remain very significant, but it may be a narrow perspective to view the halal supply chain only through a compliance lens.

Ahmad et al. (2023) found a positive association between supply chain orientation and halal firm performance, suggesting that supply chain practices may contribute to organizational performance beyond regulatory compliance. This implies that the capability to coordinate suppliers, information, logistics, certification requirements and market demands can be an organizational capability that supports competitiveness.

This argument is in line with developments in the broader sustainable supply chain management literature. Suryani et al. (2026) point out that research in SSCM has shifted from the focus on operational efficiency and cost to a strategic paradigm oriented to value-based sustainability. Their scientometric analysis indicates that there is a growing attention to green innovation, ESG disclosure, corporate governance and sustainable value creation, which indicates that supply chain practices are becoming more strategic resources instead of operational mechanisms (Syahrudin et al., 2026).

This evolution is a good conceptual analogy for halal supply chains. Just as sustainable supply chains can progress from cost and efficiency considerations toward strategic value creation, halal supply chains may potentially evolve from a predominant focus on integrity and compliance toward strategic capability and value creation. Reliable traceability, supplier integration, halal logistics expertise, digital verification, and resilient supply networks may strengthen consumer trust, facilitate access to international markets, and differentiate firms from competitors. Thus, halal supply chain capability can be regarded as one mechanism through which firms operationalize and scale halal-based resources. However, supply chains themselves operate within broader networks of actors, institutions, technologies, and complementary services. This implies that the analysis needs to go beyond individual firms and dyadic supply chain relationships to the wider halal business ecosystem.

Halal Business Ecosystem and Ecosystem Integration

The growing complexity of the global halal economy makes it difficult to explain competitiveness by using only firm-level resources and capabilities. The functioning of halal businesses relies on the interaction of a variety of actors including regulators, accreditation/certification bodies, suppliers, logistics providers, financial institutions, technology companies, research organizations, and domestic and international market intermediaries.

The concept of business ecosystem provides a useful perspective to understand these interdependencies. Buhalis (2020); Gretzel et al. (2023); Liao et al. (2025) conceptualizes businesses as operating within evolving ecosystems in which organizations simultaneously cooperate and compete. More recently, Adner (2017) emphasizes the structural relationships and alignment among interdependent actors required to deliver a particular value proposition. From this perspective, the competitive success of an individual firm may depend partly on the effectiveness of the ecosystem surrounding it.

This perspective is especially pertinent to halal businesses as ensuring halal integrity in complex value chains requires coordination amongst multiple independent actors. Similarly, recent work on halal business ecosystems shifts attention away from isolated organizations to networks of interdependent actors involved in the creation and delivery of halal value. At the firm level, an ecosystem perspective on strategic capabilities indicates that the competitive value of those capabilities may be enhanced by the presence of effective certification systems, reliable logistics, compatible standards, digital infrastructure, financing, and institutional collaboration.

Therefore, ecosystem integration is a substantial augmentation of strategic capability development. A company may have strong internal capabilities, but still be hamstrung by fragmented certification standards, poor logistics infrastructure, lack of international recognition or limited access to global networks. Instead, firms that are able to leverage ecosystem relationships may be able to access complementary resources that are difficult to develop on their own.

This suggests that the pathway toward global competitiveness operates simultaneously at multiple levels. Institutional mechanisms establish legitimacy and compliance; firm-level resources and dynamic capabilities enable value creation and adaptation; while ecosystem integration facilitates coordination, scalability, and access to complementary resources. The interaction among these levels becomes particularly critical when halal businesses seek to expand beyond domestic markets.

International Market Capabilities and Global Competitiveness

Global competitiveness is a more difficult goal than domestic firm performance or having a competitive advantage in a local market. When firms enter international halal markets, they encounter differences in consumer preferences, regulatory regimes, certification recognition, cultural contexts, distribution networks and competitive structures. So, the ability to create value domestically is not necessarily a prerequisite for international success.

The internationalization literature stresses that firms acquire knowledge and networks in international markets gradually, through experience and interaction (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). The revised Uppsala model further emphasizes networks and the liability of outsidership indicating the importance of the firm's position in relevant business networks for internationalization (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). This perspective is especially relevant to halal businesses, for whom access to the market may depend on relationships with certification bodies, distributors, supply chain partners and other actors across national boundaries.

From the dynamic capabilities perspective, in order to be internationally competitive, firms need to look for opportunities in foreign markets, adjust value propositions, react to changing standards, and reconfigure resources in geographical contexts. International market capabilities may thus comprise international market knowledge, adaptive branding, cross-border network development, regulatory adaptability, supply chain scalability and the ability to navigate different halal assurance systems.

In this sense, global competitiveness in the halal context should be understood as the outcome of interconnected strategic processes and not a direct outcome of certification. Differentiation, trust, innovation, quality, efficiency, or reputation (Barney, 1991; Porter, 1980) can generate competitive advantage. However, to maintain these advantages in a global context, firms need to continuously adapt and coordinate resources across markets and ecosystems.

Therefore, the difference between halal market participation and global halal competitiveness is significant. Certification can offer firms access to markets and legitimacy, but sustained global competitiveness requires that they transform halal attributes into differentiated value, build adaptive organizational capabilities, leverage ecosystem relationships and navigate international market environments successfully.

Theoretical Integration: From Halal Compliance to Global Competitiveness

As shown in the literature review above, it is not possible to explain the entire journey from halal compliance to global competitiveness with only one theoretical perspective. Rather, the process involves interconnected Institutional, Resource-based, Capability-based, Ecosystem and International Market mechanisms.

Institutional Theory accounts for the early adoption and institutionalization of the practice of halal by focusing on regulatory, normative and competitive pressures. But compliance is primarily about legitimacy and market acceptance. The Resource-Based View extends this explanation by demonstrating how the knowledge, reputation, trust, organizational routines, and other resources developed around credible halal practices may generate strategic value. But resources alone aren't enough to change markets. Dynamic Capabilities Theory, therefore explains how firms sense opportunities, seize them through strategic action and transform their resource bases to respond to changing market conditions.

At the operational-strategic interface, halal supply chain capabilities translate halal integrity into coordinated value creation across organizational boundaries. The business ecosystem perspective further extends the unit of analysis by recognizing that firms depend on complementary actors and infrastructure to scale and deliver halal value. Finally, international market capabilities enable firms to deploy these resources and capabilities across diverse geographic, institutional, and competitive environments.

Based on this theoretical integration, the literature suggests the following strategic transformation pathway:



Figure 2. Strategic Transformation Pathway.

Source: Developed by the author based on the synthesis of Institutional Theory.

This integrated perspective suggests that halal compliance represents the starting point rather than the endpoint of strategic competitiveness. Institutional pressures may encourage firms to become halal-compliant, but differences in global competitive outcomes emerge from how firms transform compliance into strategic resources, dynamically develop capabilities, integrate with broader ecosystems, and deploy these advantages across international markets.

Accordingly, the theoretical contribution of this review lies in connecting theoretical perspectives that have largely been applied separately across different streams of halal business research. Rather than proposing a direct relationship between halal certification and competitive advantage, the integrated perspective highlights a multi-stage strategic transformation process. This theoretical synthesis provides the conceptual foundation for examining how halal businesses may evolve from compliance-driven organizations into strategically capable, ecosystem-integrated, and globally competitive enterprises.

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3. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts an integrative literature review approach to examine and synthesize the development of knowledge concerning halal business strategy and global competitiveness. A literature review can function as an independent research methodology when it is conducted with an explicit purpose and a rigorous process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing prior knowledge (Snyder, 2019). Unlike a conventional narrative review that may primarily summarize previous studies, an integrative literature review seeks to critically examine diverse bodies of literature, identify relationships among previously fragmented streams of research, and generate new conceptual understandings or theoretical frameworks (Torraco, 2005).

The integrative literature review was considered appropriate for this study because

research relevant to halal business competitiveness is distributed across multiple domains, including halal certification, Islamic business ethics, institutional regulation, strategic management, resource-based perspectives, supply chain management, business ecosystems, internationalization, and competitive advantage. The objective of this study is therefore not to estimate an aggregate effect size or comprehensively enumerate every publication within a narrowly defined field. Instead, it seeks to integrate theoretically relevant knowledge from heterogeneous research traditions to explain the strategic progression through which halal businesses may move from compliance and certification toward global competitiveness. This orientation is consistent with Torraco (2005) view that integrative reviews are particularly appropriate for topics that benefit from reconceptualization and synthesis across established and emerging bodies of knowledge.

To increase methodological transparency, and without suggesting that this study is a formal systematic literature review, the review process was structured and iterative and involved four broad stages: (1) identification of literature, (2) assessment and selection of relevant literature, (3) data extraction and thematic analysis, and (4) theoretical integration and framework development. This practice is consistent with the principle that literature reviews as a research methodology must explicitly describe how literature was identified, selected, analyzed and synthesized to enhance the credibility and reproducibility of the resultant conceptual contribution (Snyder, 2019).

Literature Identification and Search Strategy

The literature search was designed to capture studies that address the halal business context and the strategic mechanisms associated with competitiveness. Since the research question is interdisciplinary, the search strategy combines domain-specific halal terminology with concepts from strategic management, supply chain management, business ecosystems, internationalization, and competitive advantage.

The main search terms include combinations of keywords such as “halal business,” “halal industry,” “halal certification,” “halal compliance,” “halal supply chain,” “halal business ecosystem,” “halal strategy,” “strategic management,” “strategic orientation,” “competitive advantage,” “global competitiveness,” “international competitiveness,” “internationalization,” “business ecosystem,” and “strategic capability.”

The search strategy was deliberately iterative and not limited to a single search string. At first the searches were targeted at the intersection of halal business and strategy or competitiveness. Later search efforts were progressively expanded on the basis of concepts and theoretical perspectives derived from influential studies. This process enabled the review to incorporate relevant literature on Institutional theory, Resource-Based View (RBV), Dynamic Capabilities theory, supply chain capabilities, ecosystem perspectives, and internationalization that might not specifically employ the term halal but offer theoretical mechanisms critical to elucidating the advancement toward global competitiveness.

The main literature base was peer-reviewed academic journal articles, located through major scholarly databases, especially Scopus and Web of Science, and supplemented where necessary by targeted searches of publisher databases and reference lists of highly relevant articles. Backward citation searching was used to identify the seminal theoretical works underpinning the conceptual development of the study, and forward-looking searches were used to find more recent research extending or applying these theoretical perspectives.

Special attention was given to seminal and theoretically influential studies, such as Institutional Theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008), the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991), Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2016), business ecosystem perspectives (Adner, 2017) and internationalization theory (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 2009). These theoretical sources were combined with empirical and conceptual studies specifically addressing the halal business, certification, strategic orientation, supply chains, and business ecosystems.

Literature Selection and Relevance Criteria

Literature selection was guided primarily by conceptual relevance and theoretical contribution to the research question. Consistent with the purpose of an integrative review, studies employing diverse methodological approaches including quantitative research, qualitative studies, conceptual papers, case studies, and previous literature reviews were considered eligible when they contributed substantively to understanding the transformation from halal compliance toward strategic competitiveness.

Studies were considered relevant when they addressed at least one of the following dimensions: (1) halal compliance, certification, regulation, or institutionalization; (2) Islamic business ethics and responsible halal business; (3) halal-related resources and value creation;

(4) strategic orientation and organizational capabilities; (5) halal supply chain management and integration; (6) halal business ecosystems and interorganizational relationships; (7) internationalization and international market capabilities; or (8) competitive advantage and global competitiveness.

Studies were excluded when halal was addressed solely as a religious or jurisprudential issue without meaningful implications for business or organizational strategy; when the publication did not provide sufficient conceptual or empirical relevance to the research question; or when the source lacked adequate scholarly credibility. Peer-reviewed journal articles were prioritized, but seminal books and foundational theoretical publications were included when necessary to establish the theoretical basis of the proposed framework.

This relevance-based approach differs from statistical aggregation methods and narrowly bounded systematic reviews. The purpose was to achieve conceptual coverage and theoretical depth rather than numerical comprehensiveness. Nevertheless, explicit relevance criteria were maintained throughout the selection process to reduce arbitrary inclusion and ensure that each selected study contributed directly to the emerging theoretical synthesis.

Data Extraction and Thematic Analysis

Each selected publication was examined using a structured literature matrix. The extraction process captured key information including author and publication year, research objective, theoretical foundation, methodological approach, research context, principal concepts or variables, key findings, limitations or research gaps, and relevance to the strategic transformation from halal compliance to global competitiveness.

The retrieved literature was then thematically analyzed and conceptually compared. The analysis was directed to the identification of recurring concepts, theoretical relationships, complementary explanations and conceptual discontinuities in different streams of research, rather than a simple chronological summary of individual studies. This is consistent with the goal of integrative reviews to move beyond descriptive summaries to new understanding through critical synthesis (Torraco, 2005).

Through an iterative process of comparison and refinement, the literature was organized into six interrelated thematic domains: Institutional and regulatory foundations; Halal compliance, integrity, and certification; Halal resources and value creation; Strategic capability development; Halal supply chain capability and ecosystem integration; and international market capabilities and global competitiveness.

The thematic categories were not treated as isolated clusters. Instead, the analysis focused on conceptual relationships and potential transition mechanisms across them. Special emphasis was placed on identifying the mechanisms through which institutional compliance could produce organizational resources, how these resources could be converted into strategic capabilities, and how firm-level capabilities could interact with ecosystem-level conditions to promote international competitiveness.

Theoretical Synthesis and Framework Development

The last analytical step was theoretical synthesis, where insights from the identified streams of literature were integrated into an integrated explanation of the strategic transformation from halal compliance to global competitiveness. The synthesis was abductive and iterative. The patterns that emerged from the halal business literature were continuously compared with established theoretical perspectives to find the theoretical mechanisms that could explain the relationships between the themes that were identified.

Institutional Theory was employed to explain how regulatory, normative, and competitive pressures contribute to the adoption and institutionalization of halal practices. The Resource-Based View was subsequently used to interpret how halal-related knowledge, reputation, trust, certification capabilities, and organizational routines may become strategically valuable resources. Dynamic Capabilities Theory provided the mechanism through which firms can sense market changes, seize emerging opportunities, and transform or reconfigure their halal-based resources. The business ecosystem perspective extended the analysis beyond firm boundaries by explaining the role of interdependencies among certification bodies, regulators, suppliers, logistics providers, financial institutions, technology providers, and market intermediaries. Finally, internationalization perspectives were incorporated to explain how organizational and ecosystem capabilities can support adaptation, network development, and competitive positioning across international markets.

The integration of these theoretical perspectives was not intended to combine multiple theories mechanically. Rather, each theoretical lens was applied to explain a distinct stage or mechanism within the strategic transformation process. The resulting framework was developed through continuous comparison between theoretical propositions and patterns

identified in the reviewed halal business literature. Accordingly, the proposed conceptual progression emerged as figure 1. This framework represents the primary conceptual outcome of the integrative review and provides a foundation for identifying relationships that can be empirically examined in future research.

Ensuring Review Rigor and Transparency

A number of measures were undertaken to enhance the rigour of the review. The main synthesis was preceded by an explicit definition of the research question and the conceptual scope. Second, literature identification included keyword-based database searches, backward citation searching, and theory-driven searches. Third, explicit criteria of relevance were employed to decide on the inclusion of studies. Fourth, a structured extraction matrix was used to ensure consistency in publication analysis. Finally, theoretical synthesis was carried out iteratively to differentiate between evidence directly supported by the reviewed studies and conceptual relationships suggested by integration.

These procedures are consistent with the wider argument that literature reviews as research methodologies need transparent procedures and critical synthesis to be able to generate trustworthy scholarly contributions (Snyder, 2019). They also reflect Torraco's (2005, 2016) argument that an integrative literature review of high quality should critically analyze what is known, bring together previously disparate perspectives and generate new conceptual understanding, rather than merely summarizing prior studies.

4. Findings And Discussion

The Evolution of Halal Business: From Compliance to Strategic Value Creation

The synthesis of the reviewed literature shows a considerable evolution in the conceptualization of halal business. The previous understandings were mostly about religious issue relating to halal, permissibility of the product and regulatory issues. Within this compliance-oriented logic, the main aim of the businesses was to ensure that products, ingredients and production processes were in accordance with the Sharia requirements and could be formally verified by means of certification. However, with the expansion and further institutionalization of halal markets, the literature has slowly shifted towards an understanding of halal as a broader organizational and strategic phenomenon. This evolution indicates a transition from compliance and certification to legitimacy, resource development, value creation and ultimately strategic capability.

In the first stage of this evolution, halal certification mainly functions as an institutional device for the demonstration of conformity and the building of legitimacy. An important explanation for this process is Institutional Theory, which suggests firms respond to regulatory requirements, religious norms, stakeholder expectations, and competitive pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2014). For instance, findings from Khasanah et al. (2021); Warnis et al. (2024) demonstrate that halal certification is a regulatory necessity as well as a possible source of business advantages. However, their study also shows that institutional requirements do not necessarily translate to effective organizational implementation, especially when businesses have limited knowledge and understanding of halal regulation. This means that regulatory compliance is an important starting point but does not explain differences in the competitive performance of halal businesses.

The distinction between compliance and strategic value becomes particularly important as halal certification becomes increasingly standardized or mandatory. Under such conditions, certification may function primarily as a threshold requirement for market participation rather than as a rare source of competitive differentiation. Firms may obtain legitimacy through certification, but competitors operating under similar regulatory conditions can potentially obtain the same credential. Consequently, the strategic question shifts from whether a firm possesses halal certification toward what the firm is able to develop from its halal commitment and practices.

This shift is reflected in the conceptual development proposed by Ismaeel and Blaim (2012), who extend the halal discourse from halal products toward responsible halal products and ultimately responsible halal businesses. Their view suggests that halal principles become more organizationally relevant when Islamic ethics and responsibility are woven through business activities instead of being limited to technical product requirements. From this perspective, the evolution of halal business can be understood as a shift from formal conformity to organizational embeddedness, where halal values increasingly influence routines, governance, stakeholder relations and business practices.

This shift is a significant connection to the Resource-Based View (RBV). However,

while certification may become ubiquitous and consequently less likely to fulfil conditions for sustained competitive advantage, the resources built up through credible halal practices may have greater strategic significance (Barney, 1991). Such resources may comprise specialized halal knowledge, organizational routines, quality-assurance expertise, reputation, stakeholder trust, human capital, and relationships with certification bodies and supply chain partners. Hence, the competitive potential of halal lies not necessarily in the certificate as an isolated asset but in the bundle of tangible and intangible resources formed around the firm's ability to consistently deliver credible halal value.

The literature synthesis supports this interpretation. Islam et al. (2023) extend the discussion of halal certification by combining Institutional Theory and RBV and argue that institutionalization and certification may be instrumental in resource development, value creation, and sustainable competitive advantage. Their perspective is a significant theoretical advance because it links externally imposed institutional demands with internally created organizational resources. Thus, compliance may be initially driven by regulatory or normative pressures but its strategic implications depend on whether the firms can internalize halal practices and convert them into resources that generate value.

This finding highlights a major distinction between halal certification and halal strategic resources. Certification offers formal recognition and legitimacy, while strategic resources are developed through accumulated organisational experience and the consistent application of halal principles. Many competing firms might get a certificate but trust, reputation, specialized knowledge, integrated organizational routines and credible relationships across the halal value chain are built over time. These resources could thus offer more powerful bases for differentiation and value creation.

In addition, the literature review shows that this transformation is affected by the strategic orientation of firms. Ahmad et al. (2023) demonstrate a positive effect of market orientation and supply chain orientation on the performance of halal SMEs. They suggest that access to halal-related resources alone is not sufficient unless firms are strategically motivated to understand market needs and coordinate activities across their supply chains. This changes the conversation from ownership of resources to use of resources. It is up to the firms to determine how halal-related resources can be mobilized to respond to market opportunities, build relationships with interested parties, and provide differentiated value.

From a Dynamic Capabilities perspective, this process can be viewed as the conversion of relatively static resources into adaptive organizational capabilities (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2007). The halal industry is operating in an environment of changing consumer expectations, technological advances, sustainability issues, changing certification regimes and rising international competition. Hence, companies need to be able to identify the changes in the halal market, exploit the emerging opportunities, and transform or reconfigure their resources to accommodate these changes. From this perspective, the strategic value of halal is not static, but depends on the ability of firms to continuously reinterpret and redeploy halal-related resources in response to changes in the environment.

The synthesis thus points to a more general evolutionary pattern: Institutional Pressure → Halal Compliance and Certification → Legitimacy → Organizational Embeddedness → Halal Strategic Resources → Value Creation → Strategic Capability Development. Importantly, this progression should not be understood as a rigid or universal sequence. Firms may be located at different points on this continuum and the way in which the transition occurs may be influenced by institutional, sectoral and market conditions. Yet the synthesis highlights a significant move in the literature from the dominant conceptualization of halal as a condition of compliance to a conceptualization of halal as a potential basis for strategic value creation.

This evolution also helps explain why halal certification alone may produce heterogeneous competitive outcomes. Firms operating under similar certification requirements may differ substantially in their ability to internalize halal principles, develop specialized resources, build stakeholder trust, respond to market changes, and translate these advantages into distinctive customer value. The strategic transformation therefore occurs not at the point of certification itself, but through the organizational processes that follow certification.

Accordingly, the first major finding of this review is that halal compliance should be conceptualized as the starting point rather than the endpoint of halal business strategy. Institutional compliance establishes legitimacy; organizational embeddedness transforms halal practices into potentially valuable resources; and strategic capabilities determine whether these resources can be converted into differentiated and sustainable value. This finding moves the

discussion beyond the conventional assumption of a direct relationship between halal certification and competitive advantage and instead highlights an intermediate process of resource formation and capability development.

Thus, the evolution identified in the literature can be summarized as a transition from “being halal” to “creating strategic value through halal.” This distinction is central to understanding the broader pathway toward global competitiveness. However, even firms that successfully develop internal strategic capabilities remain dependent on actors and resources beyond their organizational boundaries. The next step of analysis therefore generalizes this transformation from the firm-level to the supply chain and broader halal business ecosystem and studies how internal capabilities interact with external networks to build scalable and internationally relevant competitive advantages.

From Firm-Level Capabilities to Halal Ecosystem Integration

The synthesis also shows that the transformation of halal compliance into strategic value cannot be explained by resources and capabilities found within firms alone. The creation of halal value is by nature cross-organizational, as the integrity, credibility and delivery of halal products and services rely on interconnected actors across supply chains and the wider business environment. Hence, the development of firm level strategic capabilities is only a part of halal competitiveness. These capabilities have to be integrated with suppliers, logistics providers, certification bodies, regulators, financial institutions, technology providers and market intermediaries to build a system that can consistently and at scale deliver halal value.

This interdependence is particularly manifest in halal supply chains. Unlike conventional supply chains, halal supply chains must ensure product integrity throughout various stages, including sourcing, production, processing, storage, transportation, distribution and retail. Any deviation from halal standards at any stage can jeopardise the integrity of the final product and potentially damage consumer confidence. Therefore, supply chain coordination has traditionally been regarded as an important instrument for ensuring compliance, segregation, traceability and protection against contamination. However, the literature synthesized in this review indicates that the strategic role of halal supply chains may extend beyond these assurance functions.

For instance, the findings of Ahmad et al., (2023); Junaidi et al. (2019) show that supply chain orientation positively impacts the performance of halal SMEs, implying that the ability of firms to coordinate and strategically manage supply chain relationships impacts organizational performance. This finding supports a wider view of halal supply chain management in which supply chain relationships are not simply operational arrangements for maintaining certification requirements but may also become an important source of organizational capability and value creation.

This interpretation is consistent with the wider evolution of sustainable supply chain management. Suryani et al. (2026) note a shift in the paradigm of SSCM literature from a dominant cost-and efficiency-oriented paradigm to a more holistic paradigm of value-based sustainability. Their analysis suggests a growing convergence of sustainability, governance, green innovation and value creation in the current supply chain research. While these findings are from the sustainable supply chain literature rather than the halal supply chain literature, they offer an important conceptual parallel. Both examples illustrate how supply chain management can shift from a primarily operational function to a strategic lever for creating and delivering differentiated value.

This evolution within the framework of halal businesses is a shift from compliance to capability of the halal supply chain. On the compliance front, firms are mainly concerned with protecting the integrity of halal through segregation, traceability, verification and compliance to established standards. At the capability level, these practices can be embedded in organizational routines and interorganizational relationships that improve transparency, reliability, responsiveness, and trust. When activated with technology and good coordination, such capabilities may also lead to faster responses to market needs, improved supply chain resilience, greater stakeholder confidence and penetration into more challenging markets.

The strategic value of halal supply chains therefore depends not only on the ability to avoid non-compliance but also on the ability to coordinate complementary resources across organizational boundaries. For example, digital traceability can simultaneously improve information visibility and strengthen halal assurance; strong supplier relationships can secure ingredient integrity and improve supply continuity; and integrated logistics can maintain halal requirements and improve reliability and scalability. Such dual roles demonstrate how compliance-driven activities can be converted into strategic capabilities when they serve halal integrity and larger value creation.

Thus, the synthesis implies the following transformation: Halal Supply Chain Compliance → Halal Integrity Assurance → Supply Chain Integration → Strategic Supply Chain Capability → Value Creation. However, the integration of supply chain is not the whole complexity of halal business competitiveness. The global halal economy involves actors who may not be directly involved in the physical movement of products but who nevertheless influence the ability of firms to create and capture value. Regulators establish the institutional conditions for firms to operate; certification and accreditation bodies lend credibility; financial institutions provide access to capital; technology providers support traceability and access to digital markets; research institutions provide knowledge and innovation; and international intermediaries help make connections with foreign markets. These actors interact to form a broader halal business ecosystem.

One useful lens to understand this transition is the business ecosystem perspective. Moore (1999) contends that firms are embedded in communities of interconnected organizations that both compete and cooperate at the same time and Adner (2017) states that the creation of the ecosystem value depends on the alignment and interdependence of multiple actors around a shared value proposition. When considering a halal business, this perspective implies that the competitive performance of individual firms is partly shaped by the quality and alignment of the ecosystem they operate in.

This observation is very important because the halal value often requires complementary contributions from various organizations. A halal certified producer, for instance, may have strong internal capabilities but remain constrained if suppliers cannot guarantee ingredient integrity, logistics providers lack appropriate handling systems, certification is not recognized in target markets or digital infrastructure cannot provide credible traceability. However, firms that are part of well-coordinated ecosystems can tap into resources that are complementary to their own and that would be difficult or expensive to build internally.

The findings thus extend the Resource-Based View beyond the traditional boundaries of the firm. While the RBV focuses on resources held or accessed by individual organizations, the ecosystem perspective focuses on the fact that strategically relevant resources may be scattered across networks of interdependent actors. Thus, the access, coordination and combination of external complementary resources can be as important as the ownership of internal resources.

From a Dynamic Capabilities perspective, ecosystem integration might also improve firms' sensing, seizing and reconfiguring capabilities to market changes. International partners, certification bodies, technology providers and market intermediaries can inform you of emerging regulations, consumer trends, technological developments and new market opportunities. Firms that can mobilize these ecosystem relationships may thus be able to adapt more effectively than firms that operate in relative isolation.

This synthesis leads us to identify a broader transition from firm-level capability to ecosystem-enabled advantage: Firm-Level Strategic Capabilities → Supply Chain Integration → Ecosystem Integration → Access to Complementary Resources → Ecosystem-Enabled Competitive Advantage. The idea of ecosystem-enabled competitive advantage is important because it does not assume that the ecosystem itself automatically creates competitive advantage. Instead, the ecosystem provides access to complementary resources, knowledge, infrastructure, legitimacy and networks that firms may utilize through their own strategic capabilities. Competitive outcomes are thus the result of the interaction between what the firm can do within itself and what the firm can access and coordinate outside itself.

This interaction also demonstrates that halal competitiveness is multi-level. Institutions. Regulations and certification systems provide legitimacy and common standards. Companies build resources and strategic capabilities at the firm level. At the supply chain level, organizations coordinate the activities needed to keep integrity and deliver value. At the ecosystem level there are several actors who provide complementary resources and infrastructure enabling firms to scale and expand their activities.

Thus, the second major finding of this review is that the strategic transformation of halal businesses cannot be pursued within the organizational boundaries. Firm-level capabilities provide the internal base for value creation, but competitive potential is now more than ever dependent on the capacity to integrate with supply chains and leverage the wider halal business ecosystem. This means that the move towards competitiveness is not only about building better internal resources, but also about developing the relational and coordinative capabilities to access complementary external resources.

The emerging pathway can be summarized as: Strategic Capabilities → Integration of

Halal Supply Chain → Integration of Halal Ecosystem → Mobilization of Complementary Resources → Ecosystem-Enabled Advantage. But ecosystem integration does not automatically mean global competitiveness. A robust domestic halal ecosystem may help firms to perform and create value, even if they have limited ability to enter, adapt to and compete across foreign markets. The critical transition, therefore, is to convert advantages at the firm level and at the ecosystem-enabled level into capabilities in the international market. The next section focuses on this last strategic pathway and explores why compliance, certification, and even a strong domestic halal ecosystem may not suffice when the capabilities to compete effectively in global markets are absent.

The Pathway to Global Competitiveness

The synthesis of literature suggests that the development of halal compliance, strategic capabilities and ecosystem integration is not necessarily leading to global competitiveness. Firms can successfully establish halal legitimacy, develop valuable resources and participate in well functioning domestic ecosystems, but may face substantial challenges when entering and competing in international markets. This distinction is particularly relevant in the halal economy, where a large domestic Muslim consumer base and broad certification coverage may provide significant market opportunities without necessarily ensuring a strong competitive position at the global level. Thus the transition from domestic capability to global competitiveness requires a further set of capabilities that enable firms to deploy and adapt their advantages across a variety of institutional and market environments.

This finding suggests an important distinction between participation in the halal market and global halal competitiveness. Halal certification may legitimize and facilitate participation in markets where halal assurance is expected or required. But, global competitiveness requires more than just the demonstration of conformity from the firms. Companies must be able to understand heterogeneous consumer preferences, adapt to heterogeneous regulatory and certification systems, manage cross-border supply chains, build internationally credible brands, build market networks, and continually respond to changes in global competitive environments. Certification can thus be seen as a kind of permission to compete, while international market capabilities influence the firm's ability to compete successfully.

This difference can be explained by the theory of internationalization. Johanson and Vahlne (1977) focus on the importance of experiential knowledge and gradual learning in international expansion of firms, while their revised model emphasizes the importance of networks and the difficulties due to the liability of outsidership (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). From this perspective, firms that want to enter foreign markets require not only internal resources, but also knowledge and relationships that allow them to embed themselves in relevant international networks. This challenge can be particularly acute for halal businesses, as entering the market may entail dealing with foreign certification bodies, distributors, logistics providers, retailers, regulators and culturally diverse consumer segments.

The reviewed literature implies that this international dimension is an important extension of existing halal competitiveness research. The increasing body of research has linked halal certification to value creation and sustainable competitive advantage, while other research has indicated the contribution of market and supply chain orientations to firm performance. But these results are not necessarily equal to global competitiveness. Firm performance may reflect success in a particular domestic market and sustainable competitive advantage may remain geographically bounded if firms lack the capabilities to transfer, adapt and deploy their advantages internationally.

Hence, this review identifies international market capabilities as an important bridge between domestic strategic strength and global competitiveness. These capabilities can be conceptualized as the firm's ability to identify international opportunities, learn and interpret foreign market knowledge, adapt value propositions, build cross-border relationships, negotiate different institutional environments, and coordinate resources across geographic boundaries. In the halal context, these capabilities may also include understanding the differences in halal standards and certification requirements, managing the international recognition of certification, adjusting branding and communication strategies, and coordinating halal integrity across the increasingly complex global supply chains.

The international market capabilities can be seen as an extension of the sensing, seizing and transforming processes discussed earlier from a Dynamic Capabilities perspective (Teece, 2007). Sensing at the international level implies that firms need to identify the potential opportunities in the emerging halal markets and understand the changes in consumer preferences, regulation, technology and competition across countries. Seizing means mobilizing resources to get into attractive markets, develop the right products and value propositions, build partnerships and choose the right market entry mechanisms. Transformation requires that firms alter organizational structures, supply chains, technologies and market strategies in response to changing international conditions.

The ability to carry out these processes is especially important as halal markets are not institutionally homogenous. The interpretation and application of halal standards can differ between jurisdictions, and the systems of certification and accreditation may vary in their requirements and recognition. So, firms may face additional transaction and adaptation costs across borders. In such circumstances, the international competitiveness of halal businesses depends, at least in part, upon their ability to manage institutional complexity rather than simple compliance to a single domestic certification system.

Ecosystem integration can be an important enabler to address these barriers. Engagement with certification and accreditation bodies can help understand foreign standards; international logistic partners can help with cross border halal integrity; financial institutions can help with resources for expansion; technology providers can improve traceability and transparency and international distributors can provide access to market knowledge and distribution channels. Thus, the relationship of firms with the local ecosystem can be a stepping stone to internationalization, by linking the firms with global networks and complementary resources.

But the synthesis suggests that the value of ecosystem integration lies in its international connectedness. A strong but limited domestic ecosystem could enable compliance and local market growth, but not necessarily international growth. This distinction means that the development of the halal ecosystem should not be measured by the number of actors or institutions but by their capacity to link firms to international standards, knowledge, technology, networks and markets.

The strategic progression can thus be extended as follows: Firm-Level Strategic Capabilities → Supply Chain Integration → Ecosystem Integration → International Connectivity → International Market Capabilities → Global Competitiveness. This pathway offers a possible explanation for what this study conceptualizes as the halal competitiveness paradox. Countries or firms may have a large halal market potential, large Muslim consumer populations, extensive certification programs and growing domestic halal ecosystems, but these advantages may not necessarily translate into leadership in the global halal markets. What is lacking is the capacity to convert institutional and domestic advantages into internationally transferable, adaptable and scalable capabilities.

This interpretation also reinforces the difference between comparative market potential and competitive capability. Demand and scale come from a large domestic consumer base, but competitive capability depends on how well firms create distinctive value and deliver that value across markets. Regulatory infrastructure can also build credibility, but its international value is partly a function of its interoperability, recognition and connectivity with global markets. Thus, the availability of halal resources at the national or organizational level is a potential global competitive advantage, not a realized one.

The synthesis further implies that global competitiveness should not be narrowly defined by export performance. Exports are an important indicator of international engagement, but global competitiveness is a broader and more fluid indicator of the ability to sustain differentiated value in international markets. It may involve the ability to develop internationally accepted brands, retain consumer confidence, innovate to satisfy worldwide demand, integrate into cross-border value chains, develop strong international networks, and

adapt constantly to changing institutional and competitive environments.

From the competitive advantage perspective firms can choose to differentiate through halal integrity, quality, innovation, ethical positioning, sustainability or superior customer value (Porter, 1985). However, from an RBV perspective, these advantages are more sustainable when they are backed up by combinations of knowledge, reputation, routines, relationships and capabilities which are hard to imitate (Barney, 1991). The convergence of these perspectives suggests that global halal competitiveness is not driven by any single halal attribute, but by the configuration of multiple complementary resources and capabilities.

This finding contradicts a simplistic assumption that can be stated as follows: Halal Certification

→ Global Competitive Advantage. However, the literature reviewed supports a more complex strategic pathway: Halal Compliance and Certification → Strategic Resources → Dynamic Capabilities → Supply Chain Integration → Ecosystem-Enabled Advantage → International Market Capabilities → Global Competitiveness.

The relation between these elements should not necessarily be understood as deterministic or linear. Capabilities can be built simultaneously, and there are likely to be feedback effects. For example, experience in international markets may improve organizational knowledge, while participation in global networks may improve domestic capabilities and ecosystem relationships. But the pathway offers an analytical framework to explain the different competitive outcomes for similar levels of halal compliance.

Thus, the third key finding of this review is that global competitiveness is not solely a matter of regulatory compliance but a matter of strategic transformation. Certification brings legitimacy, resources bring strategic potential, dynamic capabilities bring adaptability, supply chain and ecosystem integration bring complementary advantages, and international market capabilities bring the means to deploy these advantages across borders. Weakness in any of these levels may limit moving toward global competitiveness.

So the strategic implication is significant. A certification-centric strategy is not the path for firms to become globally competitive. It is about building capabilities, engaging with ecosystems and developing international markets. While it is still important for policymakers to increase the number of halal-certified firms and products, the expansion of certification should be accompanied by efforts to enhance innovation, digital infrastructure, internationally connected supply chains, interoperability of standards, export readiness, global branding, and cross-border business networks.

In conclusion, the results of Sections 4.1-4.3 point to a broader shift in the strategic logic of the halal business: from compliance with institutional imperatives, to value creation and capability development at the firm-level, to ecosystem-enabled and internationally deployable competitive advantage. The next section brings together these findings into a single strategic framework that accounts for the entire trajectory from halal compliance to global competitiveness.

An Integrative Strategic Framework: From Halal Compliance to Global Competitiveness

The synthesis of the previous sections suggests that the transition from halal compliance to global competitiveness cannot be fully explained by a direct relationship between certification and competitive advantage. The literature reviewed indicates that rather, halal competitiveness is developed through a multi-stage transformation process which includes institutional legitimacy, resource development, strategic capability building, supply chain and ecosystem integration, and international market capabilities. The results of this study inform the creation of an integrative strategic framework that connects these fragmented mechanisms into a coherent conceptual pathway. The framework is based on institutional and regulatory conditions. Halal businesses function within a context defined by religious norms, regulatory demands, certification criteria, stakeholder expectations, and competitive pressures. According to Institutional Theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2014), these pressures push organizations to adopt halal practices and to seek formal certification. The key result at this stage is institutional legitimacy: firms show that their products, processes or practices meet recognized halal requirements.

The framework, however, distinguishes between legitimacy and competitiveness. The potential of certification to sustain differentiation is low when certification is common or institutionally required, although halal certification may help a company to enter the market and to build credibility. Therefore, strategic transformation begins when companies go beyond formal compliance to embed halal principles within organizational routines, knowledge systems, governance practices, stakeholder relationships and organizational culture.

Thus, the second mechanism is the development of halal-based strategic resources. The framework, grounded in the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991), postulates that the competitive strength of halal lies not solely in certification but within the resource bundle developed around verifiable halal practices. These could be specialized knowledge, organizational routines, reputation, stakeholders' trust, quality-assurance expertise, human capital and relationships with actors throughout the halal value chain. Organizational embeddedness allows halal to be transitioned from an externally validated credential to an internally developed resource base that can support value creation.

But strategic resources are potential competitive advantage not actual competitive advantage. The third mechanism is to develop strategic capabilities. The Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece et al., 1997; Teece, 2007) explains how firms transform their resource base by sensing changes in markets and institutions, seizing emerging opportunities and reconfiguring organizational resources. In halal market, this change can occur through market, innovation, digital, branding, strategic agility and supply chain capability development. These capabilities allow companies to turn halal integrity and credibility into differentiated products, services, experiences and value propositions.

The fourth mechanism is to extend strategic transformation beyond the boundaries of the organization through supply chain and ecosystem integration. The production of halal value cannot be created and sustained by individual firms alone as the halal integrity requires the coordination of suppliers, production systems, logistics providers, certification institutions, and distribution networks. The synthesis suggests that supply chain capabilities may evolve from mechanisms primarily oriented towards compliance and integrity assurance, to strategic mechanisms for transparency, resilience, responsiveness, and value creation. This interpretation is in line with the broader evolution of sustainable supply chain management from cost-based perspectives to value-based sustainability and strategic value creation identified by Suryani et al. (2026).

The business ecosystem perspective goes beyond supply chains to recognise the importance of complementary actors such as regulators, certification and accreditation bodies, financial institutions, technology providers, knowledge institutions and market intermediaries. Drawing on Moore (1999) and Adner (2017), the framework conceptualizes competitiveness as being partly contingent on the ability of firms to leverage and align interdependent ecosystem actors. The strategic outcome of this stage is then framed as ecosystem-enabled advantage, whereby firms may leverage complementary knowledge, infrastructure, legitimacy, technologies, and networks to augment the value of their internal capabilities.

However, firm-level capabilities and ecosystem advantages are not enough for global competitiveness if they are mainly domestic in scope. Thus, the fifth transformation mechanism is the building of international market capabilities. According to the internationalization perspective (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977, 2009), the framework proposes that firms should be able to learn in foreign markets, adapt value propositions, deal with different institutional and certification environments, develop international networks, coordinate cross-border supply chains, and develop credible market positions in different geographic contexts.

The entry point for the global deployment of domestic strategic and ecosystem advantages are thus international market capabilities. This mechanism is particularly relevant for halal markets, where companies might face differences in standards, recognition of certifications, consumer interpretations and institutional structures across countries. Thus, global competitiveness is not only a function of better domestic resources, but also of the ability to transfer, adapt and continually reconfigure these resources in international environments.

The framework identifies three core shifts. The first is the move from compliance to strategic value, where externally driven halal requirements are embedded organizational resources. The second is the conversion of firm resources to an ecosystem enabled advantage where strategic capabilities are built through supply chain integration and access to complementary ecosystem resources. The third is the transformation from domestic advantage to global competitiveness, in which firms build the international market capabilities necessary to transfer and reconfigure their advantages across national borders. Based on these mechanisms, the integrative framework proposed in this study can be represented as follows:

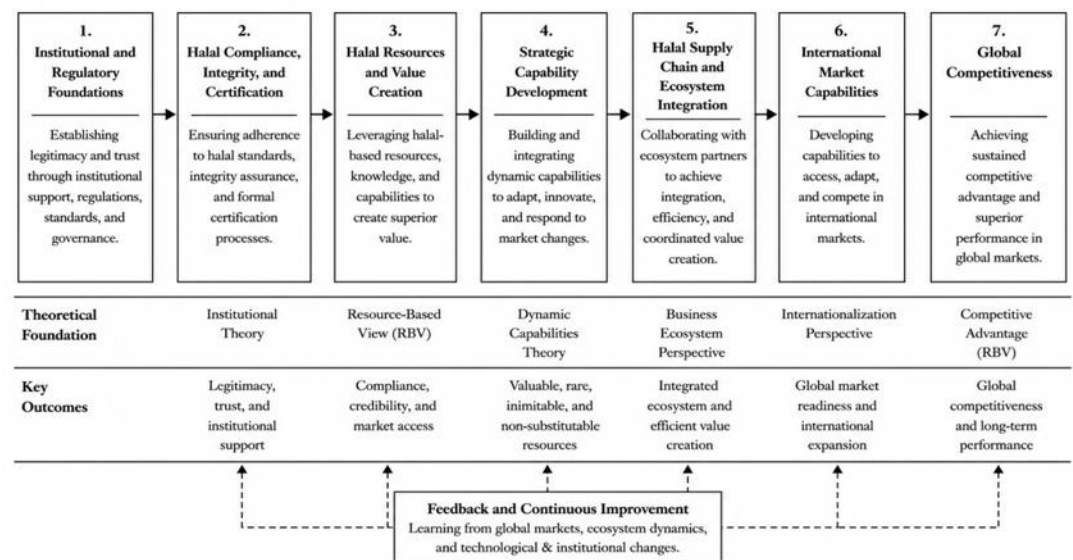


Figure 3. Integrative Strategic Framework: From Halal Compliance to Global Competitiveness.

Source: Developed by the author based on the findings of the integrative literature review (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008).

Figure 3 illustrates the strategic transformation pathway from halal compliance to global competitiveness. The pathway begins with institutional and regulatory foundations that establish legitimacy, followed by halal compliance and certification to build credibility. Firms then transform halal-related resources into strategic value and develop dynamic capabilities to enhance innovation and adaptability. These capabilities are strengthened through supply chain and ecosystem integration, enabling firms to access complementary resources and improve operational efficiency. Subsequently, international market capabilities support global expansion and market adaptation, ultimately leading to sustainable global competitiveness. The feedback mechanism indicates that this transformation is continuous, allowing firms to refine their capabilities in response to institutional, technological, and market changes.

It is important to point out that the proposed framework is not to be considered as a strict linear sequence. Feedback processes can occur at different stages. For instance, international market experience can improve organizational knowledge and encourage innovation. Engagement with global ecosystems can expose firms to new technologies and standards that can bolster domestic capabilities. Changes in international markets may also create new institutional pressures for firms to adjust their compliance systems and resource bases. Hence the framework is a process of iterative strategic transformation and not a deterministic process.

The main theoretical contribution of the framework is in bridging theoretical perspectives that have largely treated different aspects of halal business development in isolation. Institutional Theory explains why firms adopt and institutionalize halal practices, RBV explains the mechanism by which resources developed around halal integrity may gain strategic value, Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains how firms continually transform these resources into adaptable capabilities, the business ecosystem perspective explains how firms access and coordinate complementary resources outside their organizational boundaries, and internationalization perspectives explain how these capabilities could be deployed across international markets.

This combination results in a deeper understanding of halal competitiveness. Instead of assuming: Halal Certification → Competitive Advantage The framework suggests: Compliance → Legitimacy → Strategic Resources → Dynamic Capabilities → Ecosystem-Enabled Advantage → International Market Capabilities → Global Competitiveness. This path also provides a theoretical account for the halal competitiveness paradox found in this study. A large domestic halal market, widespread certification or a growing number of halal businesses represent a large competitive potential, but these conditions do not automatically translate into global leadership. The extent to which institutional advantages can be converted into organizational resources, these resources can be dynamically converted into capabilities, firms may capitalize on complementary ecosystem resources, and these advantages can ultimately be deployed and adapted across international markets is critical to global competitiveness.

Thus, from a theoretical point of view, the framework contributes to the halal business literature in three ways. Second, it relocates the locus of halal compliance and certification from the ultimate arbiter of competitiveness to the institutional bedrock of competitiveness. The second is that it shows strategic capability development as the key transformation mechanism that links halal-based resources and competitive value. Third, it extends the analysis of firm-level competitive advantage by identifying ecosystem integration and international market capabilities as important mechanisms for achieving global competitiveness.

The framework has also important managerial and policy implications. The findings for managers suggest that halal certification should be considered the beginning, rather than the end, of a halal business strategy. Firms need to develop the organizational capabilities that enable the halal integrity to become a differentiated value such as innovation, digitalization, branding, market intelligence, strategic agility and supply chain integration. They are also required to build relationships with ecosystem partners and international networks that provide complementary resources and access to foreign markets.

The implication of this framework for policymakers and institutions is that the halal economy is not limited to the number of certified products or firms, but a larger strategic agenda. Certification is still important, but global competitiveness also means investing in innovation systems, digital traceability, supply chain infrastructure, human capital, internationally interoperable standards, institutional collaboration, export capabilities and global market connectivity. Policies that focus largely on certification coverage without simultaneously strengthening these complementary capabilities may increase formal participation in the halal economy, but not necessarily enhance international competitiveness.

Overall, the framework represents a paradigm shift in the strategic understanding of halal business. The key issue is no longer just about the ability of firms to demonstrate the halal nature of their products and processes, but about the ability of firms to transform halal integrity into distinctive resources, mobilize those resources through dynamic capabilities, leverage those resources through ecosystem integration, and deploy them successfully in international markets. In this sense, the pathway from halal compliance to global competitiveness is a progression from satisfying standards to creating value, from having resources to developing capabilities and from competing as individual firms to leveraging interconnected ecosystems in global markets. Hence, this integrative perspective provides the key answer to the research question posed in this study: halal businesses can move from compliance to global competitiveness when certification and integrity are not viewed as endpoints, but as the foundation for the continuous development of strategic resources, adaptive capabilities, ecosystem relationships and internationally deployable competitive advantages.

5. Conclusion

This study investigates the strategic transformation of halal businesses from compliance-oriented practices to global competitiveness through an integrative literature review on halal certification, institutionalization, strategic management, resource development, supply chain management, business ecosystems and internationalization. The synthesis reveals that the strategic importance of halal has gradually transformed from religious compliance and certification to a broader organizational and competitive perspective. The certification of halal products is a key factor in gaining legitimacy and entering the market, but the certification of halal products does not automatically translate into a sustainable competitive advantage and global competitiveness.

The review identifies a route of strategic transformation in multiple stages. Organizational responses to halal requirements are initially influenced through institutional and regulatory foundations that promote firms to develop compliance, integrity and certification. But the strategic value of halal is realized when these practices are embedded in organizational knowledge, routines, reputation, trust, human capital and stakeholder relationships. From the Resource-Based View perspective, these accumulated resources are the foundation of value creation but their competitive potential is conditional on firms' ability to mobilize and continuously reconfigure them.

Thus, dynamic capabilities are an important transformation mechanism in the proposed framework. Halal businesses need to be able to sense changes in consumer preferences, technology, regulation and international markets, seize emerging opportunities through innovation and strategic action and transform their resources, organizational structures and

business models in response to environmental change. The synthesis also demonstrates that these capabilities can extend beyond firm boundaries. By integrating their supply chains and participating in larger halal business ecosystems, firms can tap into complementary resources, knowledge, technology, infrastructure, legitimacy and networks that may improve their competitive position.

However, firm-level capabilities and ecosystem advantages are insufficient when they cannot be transferred and adapted across national borders. Therefore, building international market capabilities such as foreign market knowledge, regulatory adaptability, cross-border networks, international branding, supply chain scalability, and the ability to navigate heterogeneous halal assurance systems is a key gateway to global competitiveness. Thus, this study finds the pathway to global competitiveness is better described as: Institutional and Regulatory Foundations → Halal Compliance, Integrity and Certification → Halal Resources and Value Creation → Strategic Capability Development → Supply Chain and Ecosystem Integration → International Market Capabilities → Global Competitiveness.

The main theoretical contribution of this study is to integrate fragmented theoretical perspectives into a coherent strategic explanation of halal competitiveness. Institutional Theory explains the pressures and legitimacy mechanisms for halal adoption; the Resource-Based View explains how halal-related practices can evolve into strategically valuable resources; Dynamic Capabilities Theory explains how firms transform and renew these resources; the business ecosystem perspective emphasizes the importance of complementary external resources and interdependencies; and internationalization perspectives explain how these advantages can be deployed across global markets. This incorporation shifts the theoretical discussion from the simplified assumption that halal certification leads directly to competitive advantage, to a more complex view of competitiveness as the result of a multi-level and dynamic transformation process.

This study also has important implications for managers and policy makers. Halal certification for businesses should not be the end point of strategy, but a foundation. “Firms need to invest in innovation, market intelligence, digital capabilities, branding, strategic agility, supply chain integration and international market development to achieve stronger competitive positions. Firms also need to forge relationships with ecosystem partners who can provide complementary knowledge, technology, infrastructure and access to global networks. While increasing the number of companies or products that are certified as halal is still important for policymakers, policies aimed primarily at this may not be sufficient to enhance global competitiveness. A more comprehensive strategy should develop innovation ecosystems, human capital, digital traceability, internationally connected supply chains, interoperable standards, export and cross-border institutional collaboration simultaneously.

However, the study has several limitations. The proposed framework is a theoretical synthesis and an integrative literature review rather than an empirically tested causal model. The relationships between the identified stages may differ across industries, firm sizes, countries and institutional environments. Furthermore, the transformation pathway should not be considered linear in nature, as feedback effects and reciprocal relationships may occur between institutional conditions, organizational capabilities, ecosystem interactions, and international market experience.

Future research should therefore empirically test the proposed relationships in the framework across different halal sectors and national contexts. Comparative studies of countries with different levels of halal ecosystem maturity can provide useful insights into the impact of institutional and ecosystem conditions on the global competitiveness of firms. Quantitative research could operationalize the key constructs of the framework and examine the mediating roles of strategic capabilities, ecosystem integration and international market capabilities. Qualitative and longitudinal studies in the future may further examine how firms transform halal compliance into strategic resources and internationally scalable capabilities over time.

Finally, the paper argues that the future of halal business competitiveness depends upon a paradigm shift – from certifying halal products to developing strategically competent halal enterprises and globally connected ecosystems. This view retains the need for halal compliance, but global competitiveness only arises when firms are able to convert halal integrity into valuable resources, mobilize these resources through adaptive capacities, amplify them through ecosystem integration, and deploy them successfully in international markets. The strategic challenge for the halal economy is therefore no longer about ensuring that businesses are halal compliant but about enabling them to become halal driven, strategically capable, ecosystem connected and globally competitive.

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