

The Mediating Effect of Cultural Adaptation on Product Authenticity, Price Fairness and Consumer Perceived Value

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Abstract

PT x. is a pioneering Indonesian halal company that markets a range of halal food products in Japan. However, the company still faces challenges in maintaining product authenticity and ensuring price fairness that aligns with Japanese consumer preferences, which affects consumers' perceived value. According to the company's data, the number of Japanese consumers who purchased Sariraya products in the past month was 4,079, averaging about 4,000 per month, indicating strong market potential but still requiring optimization of perceived value. This study aims to analyze the influence of product authenticity and price fairness on perceived value, with cultural adaptation mediating and moderating this relationship. The research uses a quantitative approach with purposive sampling, involving 278 respondents who are Indonesian diaspora consumers living in Japan and have purchased Sariraya products. The results show that product authenticity positively influences perceived value and cultural adaptation. Price fairness also positively impacts perceived value and cultural adaptation. Additionally, cultural adaptation significantly affects perceived value and strengthens the relationship between product authenticity and price fairness in shaping it. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of cultural adaptation strategies, product authenticity, and price fairness for Indonesian halal companies to enhance consumers' perceived value in the Japanese market.

Keywords: Cultural Adaptation; Halal Industry; Product Authenticity; Price Fairness; Perceived Value.

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INTRODUCTION

The global halal industry has continued to grow rapidly and has become one of the strongest economic sectors over the last two decades. (Dinar Standard, 2023). This growth is driven not only by demand from Muslim consumers but also by increasing global consumer awareness of food safety, clean production processes, and clear, trustworthy quality standards. (Alalwan, 2023; Loureiro et al., 2022). According to the Global Islamic Economy Report (2023) Total global Muslim consumer spending reached US\$ 2.29 trillion in 2022 and is projected to increase to US\$ 2.8 trillion by 2025. This data shows that the halal industry now has a significant international influence and continues to expand in various countries, including non-Muslim-majority regions.

This growth is also evident in Japan, a country that has become increasingly open to halal products and services in recent years. The growth of Muslim tourists, especially from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Middle Eastern countries, has driven an increased demand for halal food and Muslim-friendly services (Moon et al., 2022). Additionally, Japan has started offering various Muslim-friendly facilities such as halal restaurants, halal food stores, and hotels and tourist attractions that cater to Muslim needs. This shift indicates that the demand for halal products has become an integral part of the development of Japan's tourism, lifestyle, and consumption industry (H. Kim & Zhang, 2023).

This situation presents an opportunity for Indonesian halal food producers to introduce their products to the international market. One company playing an important role in this is Sariraya Co. Ltd., an Indonesian halal food company that has been operating in Japan since 2005. Sariraya produces various Indonesian foods such as rendang, bakso, and sambal, distributing them through various sales channels, including marketplaces and physical stores. Sariraya's presence demonstrates that Indonesian halal products have strong potential to be accepted in Japan, but still face various challenges in marketing and market adaptation. (Moon et al., 2022).

The first challenge faced by Sariraya is maintaining product authenticity, including taste, ingredients, processing techniques, and the identity of Indonesian products. (S. Lee & Chen, 2023; Loureiro et al., 2022). This is important because Indonesian consumers in Japan expect food that closely resembles the original taste. However, Japanese consumers have different eating habits and taste preferences. Indonesian food, rich in spices and bold flavors, may be perceived as too intense for some Japanese consumers. This requires the company to balance preserving product authenticity while adapting to market needs. (Hwang & Kandampully, 2022).

The second challenge concerns price fairness, or the perception of fair pricing. Japanese consumers are known to be very sensitive to the alignment between price and product quality. Halal products tend to be more expensive due to production processes that must meet specific standards, the use of imported ingredients, and certification costs. (Lee & Park, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2022). If the price is not perceived as reasonable compared to the benefits received, consumers may downgrade their evaluation of the product's value. This factor is especially crucial because Indonesian halal food is not yet fully recognized in the Japanese market, so price perception can directly affect market acceptance.

The next challenge is cultural adaptation, which is the ability of consumers to accept and adjust to products from different cultures. This adaptation includes taste, texture, presentation, and eating habits. Japanese consumers who are more accustomed to international food may adapt quickly to foreign dishes, while those who are more attached to local food may take longer to accept new flavors. (J. Lim & Park, 2021; Moon et al., 2022). Therefore, cultural adaptation can influence how consumers perceive product authenticity and price fairness, ultimately affecting the product's perceived value.

Although previous studies have extensively examined product authenticity (Jin & Hwang, 2024; Liu et al., 2021; Loureiro et al., 2022), price fairness (Konuk, 2021; Martins & Monroe, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2022), and perceived value (Li & Hsu, 2022; Rather et al., 2021) The majority of these investigations analyze these constructs independently or within limited relational frameworks. Authenticity research predominantly focuses on its direct influence on emotional attachment, brand trust, and loyalty. (Hwang & Kandampully, 2022), while price fairness studies primarily examine its impact on satisfaction and repurchase intention (J. Lee & Park, 2024). Similarly, perceived value has often been positioned as an outcome variable shaped by experiential and functional attributes without deeper integration of cultural mechanisms. (Kaur & So, 2022).

Empirical integration of product authenticity and price fairness within a unified structural model remains limited, particularly in the context of halal food products operating in culturally distant, non-Muslim markets. Existing halal consumption research largely concentrates on Muslim-majority countries, where religious compliance dominates purchasing decisions. (Nguyen et al., 2022). Consequently, there is limited empirical evidence on how halal products are evaluated when religious motivation is not the primary driver, as in Japan. This represents a significant contextual gap.

Furthermore, although cultural adaptation and acculturation have been discussed in cross-cultural consumption literature (H. Kim & Zhang, 2023; J. Lim & Park, 2021) These constructs are frequently treated as background moderators or descriptive contextual variables rather than as central explanatory mechanisms within structural models. Studies on ethnic food consumption in Japan, for example, emphasize cultural familiarity and perceived authenticity. (Choe & Kim, 2021; Moon et al., 2022), yet they rarely investigate how cultural adaptation functions as a mediating process that translates perceptions of authenticity and pricing into perceived value.

Authenticity theory highlights symbolic and indexical cues in shaping consumer evaluation. (Liu et al., 2021), while price fairness theory emphasizes cognitive justice and equity considerations (Martins & Monroe, 2023). Meanwhile, acculturation theory explains how individuals internalize foreign cultural attributes through exposure and openness. (J. Lim & Park, 2021). However, these theoretical streams have largely evolved in parallel rather than being integrated into a comprehensive framework capable of explaining cross-cultural evaluation of halal products. The absence of such integration creates both a theoretical and methodological gap in the literature.

Therefore, this study proposes a more integrative framework by positioning cultural adaptation as a mediating mechanism that connects product authenticity and price fairness to perceived value. Rather than treating

culture as a peripheral moderator, this research conceptualizes cultural adaptation as a psychological pathway through which consumers interpret authenticity cues and price fairness evaluations in a culturally distant market.

The novelty of this study lies in three principal contributions. First, it synthesizes authenticity theory, price fairness theory, and acculturation theory into a unified PLS-SEM model, offering a more comprehensive explanation of value formation in cross-cultural halal consumption. Second, it empirically repositions cultural adaptation as a central mediating construct, thereby extending previous research that has predominantly focused on direct relationships. Third, this study provides empirical evidence from Japan, a non-Muslim developed country, contributing to the limited literature on halal product acceptance in East Asian markets, where cultural distance and non-religious motivations play a significant role. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the influence of product authenticity and price fairness on perceived value while examining the mediating role of cultural adaptation among consumers of Indonesian halal products in Japan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceived Value

Perceived value, as defined in the post-2020 literature, refers to consumers' overall evaluation of the functional, emotional, social, and digital experiences they receive relative to the monetary and non-monetary sacrifices they make. Recent studies emphasize that perceived value has become increasingly multidimensional, particularly due to shifts in how consumers interact with products and services in digital environments. Research by Rather et al. (2021) and Kaur & So (2022) underscores that perceived value now encompasses experiential value, such as digital convenience, entertainment, authentic experiences, and satisfaction with online interactions. In the context of e-commerce, Zhang et al. (2023) show that perceived value is shaped not only by product quality but also by interface aesthetics, service speed, information clarity, and perceptions of digital security—moreover, studies by Loureiro et al. (2022) and Alalwan (2023) reveal that perceived value is a strong predictor of purchase intention, customer satisfaction, and loyalty intention, making it a central variable in modern consumer behavior models. Overall, research since 2020 portrays perceived value as a subjective, dynamic, and contextual construct, influenced not only by product attributes and price but also by the quality of the digital experience and the technological interactions that accompany consumption.

Product Authenticity

Product authenticity in modern marketing literature is understood as the consumer's subjective perception of a product's or brand's genuineness, integrity, and consistency, arising from the interplay among historical identity, actual quality, and brand communication transparency. Recent studies show that authenticity is not only related to material aspects or the product's origin but also encompasses emotional, symbolic, and experiential dimensions created through consumer interactions with the product or brand narrative. Recent research emphasizes that attributes such as sincerity, originality, continuity, and truthful representation are fundamental to forming brand authenticity in modern consumption environments. (Loureiro et al., 2022; Rather et al., 2021). In addition, studies in the food and service industries show that cultural experience, authentic taste, and emotional connection play a crucial role in enhancing perceived authenticity and fostering consumer loyalty. (Lee & Chen, 2023; Suhartanto et al., 2020). Other findings also reveal that brand authenticity significantly influences brand image, brand love, and purchase intention, particularly among younger generations and digital consumers who demand honesty and consistency in brand image and product reality. (Hwang & Kandampully, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). Therefore, product authenticity in the post-2020 context is understood as a multidimensional construct that combines historical, functional, and emotional elements, and is an important determinant of value, trust, and consumer purchase behavior.

Price Fairness

Price fairness in contemporary literature is understood as the consumer's perception of whether the price paid is fair, transparent, and commensurate with the benefits, quality, and experience received. Recent studies suggest that consumers evaluate price fairness not only by comparing prices to reference prices but also through psychological processes involving trust in the company, perceptions of honesty, and consistency in pricing policies. (Haws & Bearden, 2020; Martins & Monroe, 2023). In the digital context, price fairness is increasingly influenced by the wide access to price information, making consumers more sensitive to price differences across platforms and more attuned to pricing practices perceived as unethical. (Shin, 2021). Global research in the retail and food sectors shows that perceptions of price fairness significantly affect satisfaction, loyalty, and repurchase intention, especially when consumers perceive the price as transparent and reflective of the quality and effort involved in production. (Lee & Park, 2024; Nguyen & Meng, 2020). In the Japanese market, price fairness is even more critical, as consumers place a strong emphasis on the harmony among quality, portion size, service, and price. Hence, Indonesian halal products need to ensure that the premium prices resulting from certification and production processes are still perceived as fair and justified by local consumers.

Cultural Adaptation

Cultural adaptation in the context of modern consumer behavior refers to the process by which individuals adjust their values, preferences, and consumption patterns when interacting with foreign cultures, including through exposure to global media, migration, and cross-cultural consumption. Contemporary studies emphasize that cultural adaptation is driven by consumers' openness to new cultural experiences, the intensity of cross-cultural contact, and individuals' ability to interpret and integrate cultural meanings into their lifestyle. (J. Lim & Park, 2021; Moon et al., 2022). In international marketing, cultural adaptation has been shown to influence consumers' perceptions of marketing messages, product attributes, and value interpretations, particularly when cultural elements are perceived as relevant to consumers' identities (H. Kim & Zhang, 2023). Recent research in the ethnic food context shows that cultural fit between local values and foreign product characteristics can enhance perceived authenticity, perceived value, and the intention to try the product (Choe & Kim, 2021; Moon et al., 2022). In the Japanese market, the cultural adaptation process is crucial, as consumers tend to evaluate foreign foods based on the harmony among taste, quality, cultural symbolism, and value. Therefore, acceptance of Indonesian halal food is highly influenced by how well the product aligns with Japanese cultural preferences and culinary expectations.

Product authenticity reflects the genuineness of a product's taste, ingredients, production processes, and cultural identity. According to authenticity theory, both indexical authenticity (verifiable attributes) and iconic authenticity (symbolic and cultural representations) function as quality signals that shape consumer evaluations (Liu et al., 2021). Empirical evidence suggests that greater perceived authenticity enhances emotional attachment, trust, and symbolic meaning, ultimately strengthening perceived value. (Jin & Hwang, 2024; Kang & Namkung, 2021). In cross-cultural markets such as Japan, where quality consistency and cultural coherence are highly valued, authenticity becomes a crucial determinant of value assessment. Therefore:

H₁: Product authenticity has a positive effect on perceived value.

Price fairness refers to consumers' perception that the price paid is reasonable and proportional to the quality and benefits received. (Nguyen & Meng, 2020). Fair pricing reduces perceived risk and strengthens trust, thereby enhancing overall value evaluation. (Choi & Mattila, 2020). In the Japanese market, where consumers emphasize transparency and price-quality alignment, perceived price fairness is expected to influence the perceived value of foreign halal products positively. Therefore:

H₂: Price fairness has a positive effect on perceived value.

Beyond directly influencing value, authenticity may also facilitate cultural adaptation. Authentic ethnic food provides sensory and symbolic experiences that connect consumers with foreign cultures. (Chen & Huang, 2021). Studies indicate that authentic culinary experiences increase openness toward cultural learning and engagement. (Lee & Cho, 2021; Xu & Kim, 2023). In the context of Indonesian halal products in Japan, authenticity may serve as a cultural bridge, encouraging acceptance and alignment with Indonesian culinary traditions. Therefore:

H₃: Product authenticity positively affects cultural adaptation.

Price fairness may influence consumers' willingness to engage with foreign products. Fair pricing reduces psychological resistance and enhances the perceived legitimacy of cross-cultural offerings. (Kang & Yang, 2021). When consumers perceive halal products as fairly priced relative to their quality and certification standards, they may become more open to exploring the associated culture. Therefore:

H₄: Price fairness positively affects cultural adaptation.

Cultural adaptation itself plays an important role in shaping perceptions of value. Consumers who feel culturally aligned with a product are more likely to interpret its attributes positively and perceive higher functional, emotional, and symbolic benefits. (Moon et al., 2022; Park & Lee, 2020). For Indonesian halal products marketed in Japan, greater cultural adaptation may enhance familiarity and psychological comfort, leading to a stronger perceived value. Therefore:

H₅: Cultural adaptation has a positive effect on perceived value.

From an acculturation perspective, cultural adaptation may also function as a mediating mechanism. Consumers with higher cultural openness are better able to interpret authenticity cues and internalize the cultural meaning embedded in foreign products. (Jian et al., 2019). Thus, authenticity may increase perceived value indirectly through cultural adaptation, which serves as a psychological pathway that translates authenticity into perceived value. Therefore:

H₆: Cultural adaptation mediates the effect of product authenticity on perceived value.

Cultural adaptation may mediate the relationship between price fairness and perceived value. Culturally adaptive consumers are better able to understand cross-cultural pricing structures, such as import costs and halal certification requirements. (Lim & Rosenbaum, 2020). When price fairness is interpreted within its cultural and production context, consumers are more likely to assign higher value to the product. Therefore:

H7: Cultural adaptation mediates the effect of price fairness on perceived value.

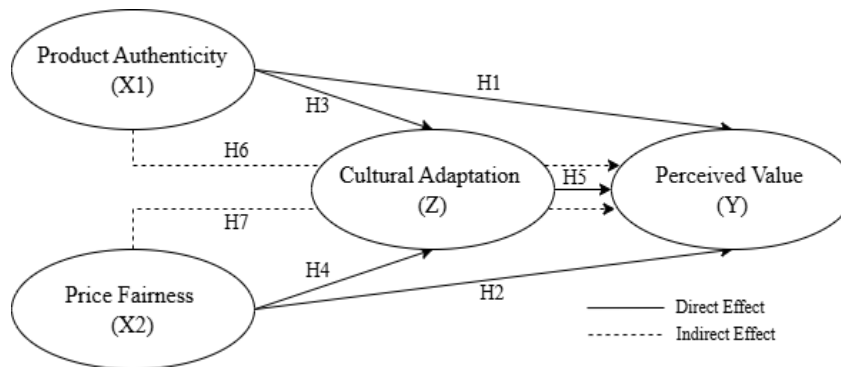


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among product authenticity, price fairness, cultural adaptation, and perceived value in the context of Indonesian halal products marketed in Japan. The analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is appropriate for testing complex structural relationships involving latent constructs and reflective indicators, particularly with moderate sample sizes and non-normally distributed survey data. (Albert et al., 2022; Artanto et al., 2021).

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to consumers who had purchased Sariraya halal products in Japan. The study employed purposive sampling with the following criteria: respondents were at least 18 years old and had purchased Sariraya products within the past 6 months. The target population included both Japanese consumers and Indonesian diaspora residing in Japan who had direct consumption experience with the products.

A total of 278 valid responses were obtained. This sample size meets the recommended minimum requirement for PLS-SEM analysis, which suggests that the number of respondents should exceed ten times the maximum number of indicators used to measure a construct. Data analysis was conducted in two stages: first, evaluation of the measurement model to assess validity and reliability; second, evaluation of the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. (Devita Sari et al., 2022; UI Haq et al., 2024).

The measurement of research variables was developed based on established theoretical frameworks and prior empirical studies to ensure content validity and construct reliability. (Hair et al., 2021). Each construct was operationalized as measurable indicators, adapted from relevant literature on authenticity, price fairness, cultural adaptation, and perceived value. The indicators and supporting references for each variable are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Questionnaire Design

Variable	Indicators	References
Product Authenticity (X1)	X1.1 The product has an authentic taste and character.	Loureiro et al., 2022;
	X1.2 The product uses ingredients considered to be original.	Lee & Chen, 2023;
	X1.3 The product aligns with the identity of Indonesian cultural cuisine.	Suhartanto et al., 2020
Price Fairness (X2)	X2.1 The price is in line with the quality of the product.	Haws & Bearden, 2020;
	X2.2 The price is considered fair compared to other products.	Shin, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022
	X2.3 The offered price is transparent and acceptable.	
Cultural Adaptation (Z)	Z1.1 I am open to trying food from other cultures.	Moon et al., 2022; Lim & Park, 2021
	Z1.2 I understand the cultural values embedded in the product.	
	Z1.3 I feel comfortable with the taste/character of Indonesian products.	
Perceived Value (Y)	Y1.1 The product provides quality as expected.	Rather et al., 2021;
	Y1.2 The product offers benefits that are worth the price.	Loureiro et al., 2022

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristic

Table 2. Demographic Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	141	50.7
	Female	137	49.3
Age	17–20 years	42	15.1
	21–25 years	128	46.0
	26–30 years	61	21.9
	31–40 years	32	11.5
	41–53 years	15	5.5
Residence	Nagoya	74	26.6
	Nara	58	20.9
	Matsuyama	49	17.6
	Other cities	97	34.9

The demographic profile of the 278 respondents indicates a relatively balanced gender composition. Male respondents account for 50.7% (n = 141) of the sample, while female respondents represent 49.3% (n = 137). This near-equal distribution suggests that Sariraya products appeal to both male and female consumers in Japan, indicating a broad, inclusive market reach rather than a gender-specific customer base.

In terms of age distribution, respondents range from 17 to 53 years old, indicating that Sariraya attracts consumers across a wide age range. However, the largest proportion of respondents falls within the 21–25 years age group (46.0%), followed by those aged 26–30 years (21.9%). The 17–20 years group accounts for 15.1%, while smaller proportions are observed among respondents aged 31–40 years (11.5%) and 41–53 years (5.5%). These findings indicate that the majority of Sariraya consumers are young adults, particularly those in their early to mid-twenties, suggesting that the brand resonates strongly with this younger demographic.

Regarding geographic distribution, respondents are spread across several cities in Japan. The largest share is in Nagoya (26.6%), followed by Nara (20.9%) and Matsuyama (17.6%), with 34.9% in other cities. This distribution demonstrates that Sariraya's consumer base is not concentrated in a single urban area but is relatively dispersed across multiple prefectures. Such a pattern suggests a wider market penetration and indicates that the brand has successfully reached consumers across different regions in Japan.

Measurement Model

The outer model test was conducted to evaluate the quality of the indicators in measuring the latent constructs used in this study. The outer model evaluation includes tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. This stage is important to ensure that all indicators forming the research variables consistently and accurately represent the constructs being studied.

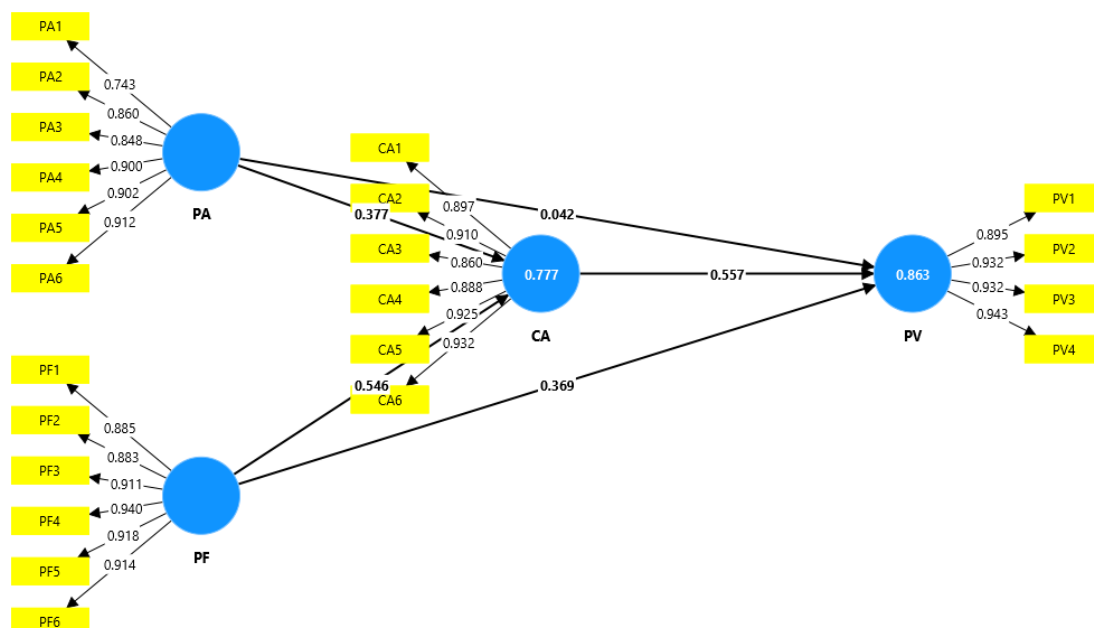


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is assessed through two main indicators: outer loading values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). An indicator is considered valid if it has an outer loading value ≥ 0.70 , and a construct is considered to meet the convergent validity criteria if the AVE is ≥ 0.50 .

Table 3. Convergent Validity

Variable	Indicator	AVE	Loading Factor	Description
Product Authenticity (X1)	PA1	0.744	0.743	Valid
	PA2		0.860	Valid
	PA3		0.848	Valid
	PA4		0.900	Valid
	PA5		0.902	Valid
	PA6		0.912	Valid
Price Fairness (X2)	PF1	0.826	0.885	Valid
	PF2		0.883	Valid
	PF3		0.911	Valid
	PF4		0.940	Valid
	PF5		0.918	Valid
	PF6		0.914	Valid
Cultural Adaptation (Z)	CA1	0.814	0.897	Valid
	CA2		0.910	Valid
	CA3		0.860	Valid
	CA4		0.888	Valid
	CA5		0.925	Valid
	CA6		0.932	Valid
Perceived Value (Y)	PV1	0.857	0.895	Valid
	PV2		0.932	Valid
	PV3		0.932	Valid
	PV4		0.943	Valid

Based on the SmartPLS results, the outer loading values for all indicators met the convergent validity standards. The Cultural Adaptation (CA) variable comprises six indicators, with outer loadings ranging from 0.860 to 0.932, indicating that all CA indicators contribute strongly to the construct. The Product Authenticity (PA) variable has six indicators with outer loading values ranging from 0.743 to 0.912, indicating adequate factor loadings, as all indicators exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70. Next, the Price Fairness (PF) variable has outer loading values ranging from 0.883 to 0.940, indicating very high and consistent indicator quality. The Perceived Value (PV) variable, comprising four indicators, also exhibits high outer loading values, ranging from 0.895 to 0.943. The AVE values for the four research variables meet the convergent validity criteria: CA = 0.814, PA = 0.744, PF = 0.820, and PV = 0.857. Therefore, all constructs in the study have met the optimal convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity testing was conducted to ensure that each construct in the model can be differentiated from the other constructs. This test used the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where a construct is considered to meet discriminant validity if the square root of its AVE is higher than the correlations of that construct with other constructs.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

	Product Authenticity	Price Fairness	Cultural Adaptation	Perceived Value
Product Authenticity	0.863			
Price Fairness	0.818	0.909		
Cultural Adaptation	0.824	0.854	0.902	
Perceived Value	0.802	0.879	0.907	0.925

Based on the SmartPLS results, the square roots of the AVEs for each construct exceeded the correlations between constructs. The square root of AVE for Cultural Adaptation (CA) is 0.902, which is higher than its correlations with PA (0.824), PF (0.854), and PV (0.907). The Product Authenticity (PA) construct has a square root of AVE of 0.863, surpassing its correlations with CA (0.824), PF (0.818), and PV (0.802). Next, Price Fairness (PF) has a square root of AVE of 0.909, which is higher than its correlations with CA (0.854), PA (0.818), and PV (0.879). Similarly, Perceived Value (PV) has a square root of AVE of 0.925, which is higher than its correlations with CA (0.907), PA (0.802), and PF (0.879). These results indicate that each construct in the Sariraya

study is unique and does not overlap with other constructs. Thus, the model has met the discriminant validity criteria very well.

Reliability Testing

The construct reliability test assesses the internal consistency of indicators used to measure a latent construct. In the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, construct reliability is commonly assessed using two measures: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Cronbach's Alpha measures internal consistency under the assumption that indicators have equal loadings. In contrast, Composite Reliability provides a more accurate estimate because it accounts for the actual contribution of each indicator in the model. (Hair et al., 2019). A construct is considered reliable if it has Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values of ≥ 0.70 .

Table 5. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability
Product Authenticity	0.930	0.936
Price Fairness	0.958	0.958
Cultural Adaptation	0.954	0.956
Perceived Value	0.944	0.946

The reliability testing results indicate that all constructs in this study meet the reliability criteria. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct are CA = 0.954, PA = 0.930, PF = 0.958, and PV = 0.944. All values are above the minimum threshold of 0.70, so the constructs can be considered reliable. Additionally, the Composite Reliability (CR) values also show excellent internal consistency, with CA = 0.963, PA = 0.946, PF = 0.966, and PV = 0.960. All CR values are well above the recommended minimum ($CR > 0.70$), indicating that the research instrument meets the composite reliability criterion.

Structural Model

The structural model evaluation was conducted to examine the causal relationships among latent constructs in the research model and to assess its overall predictive capability. Unlike the measurement model evaluation, which focuses on the validity and reliability of indicators, the structural model assesses the strength and direction of relationships among variables in accordance with the formulated hypotheses.

R-square (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) measures the extent to which independent variables explain the variance of endogenous variables in the structural model. The R^2 value indicates the proportion of variance in an endogenous construct explained by its influencing exogenous constructs. In the PLS-SEM approach, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are categorized as substantial (strong), moderate, and weak, respectively. (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 6. R-Square (R^2)

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Cultural Adaptation	0.777	0.775
Perceived Value	0.863	0.861

The R-square value for Cultural Adaptation (CA) is 0.777 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.775$), indicating that Product Authenticity (PA) and Price Fairness (PF) explain 77.7% of the variance in Cultural Adaptation. This value falls into the strong category, suggesting the model has high explanatory power. Meanwhile, Perceived Value (PV) has an R-square of 0.863 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.861$), meaning that PA, PF, and CA collectively explain 86.3% of its variance. This also indicates a strong model. Overall, the high R-square values demonstrate that the structural model has strong predictive capability in explaining cultural adaptation and perceived value among Sariraya consumers in Japan.

Goodness of Fit Model

Goodness-of-fit testing was conducted to assess how well the built structural model can represent the data overall. Based on the SmartPLS results, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.035. This value is well below the maximum limit of 0.08, indicating that the model fits the data very well. A low SRMR indicates that there is minimal difference between the covariance matrix predicted by the model and the actual covariance matrix (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 7. Model Fit Result

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.035	0.035
d_ ULS	0.318	0.318
d_ G	0.414	0.414
Chi-square	630.155	630.155
NFI	0.917	0.917

The model fit assessment indicates satisfactory results. The discrepancy values of d_ ULS (0.318) and d_ G (0.414) are within acceptable thresholds, suggesting that the difference between the empirical covariance matrix and the model-implied matrix is relatively small. These results indicate that the model does not exhibit substantial residual misfit.

The Chi-square value of 630.155 provides additional information regarding the discrepancy between the theoretical model and the observed data. Although the Chi-Square Statistic is not the primary goodness-of-fit indicator in PLS-SEM, it supports the overall assessment of model adequacy.

Furthermore, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.917 exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.90, indicating that the proposed model fits the data well relative to the null model. Overall, the model fit indicators suggest that the structural model is adequately specified and suitable for further structural analysis.

Hypothesis Test (Direct Effect)

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS. The decision to accept or reject the hypothesis was based on the t-statistic and p-value. At the 5% significance level, a hypothesis is considered significant if the t-statistic > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05. Based on the analysis results, seven relationships were tested: five direct effects and two indirect (mediated) effects. The results of each hypothesis test are explained as follows.

Table 8. Path Coefficient Result

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Product Authenticity -> Perceived Value	0.042	0.044	0.053	0.796	0.426
Price Fairness -> Perceived Value	0.369	0.379	0.081	4558	0.000
Product Authenticity -> Cultural Adaptation	0.377	0.377	0.077	4909	0.000
Price Fairness -> Cultural Adaptation	0.546	0.546	0.077	7072	0.000
Cultural Adaptation -> Perceived Value	0.557	0.546	0.089	6262	0.000

The direct effect analysis shows that Product Authenticity has a positive and significant effect on Cultural Adaptation ($\beta = 0.377$; $t = 4.909$; $p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher perceived authenticity of Sariraya's products enhances consumers' openness and adaptability to Indonesian culinary culture in Japan. Similarly, Price Fairness demonstrates a positive and significant effect on Cultural Adaptation ($\beta = 0.546$; $t = 7.072$; $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that when consumers perceive the price as fair and proportional to the product's quality and standards, they are more willing to engage with and culturally accept the product.

However, Product Authenticity does not have a significant direct effect on Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.042$; $t = 0.796$; $p = 0.426$). This result indicates that authenticity alone is insufficient to increase consumers' perceived value in the Japanese market directly. In contrast, Price Fairness has a positive and significant direct effect on Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.369$; $t = 4.558$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that fair pricing plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' evaluation of product value.

Furthermore, Cultural Adaptation significantly influences Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.557$; $t = 6.262$; $p < 0.001$). This suggests that consumers who feel culturally aligned and comfortable with the product tend to perceive higher overall value. Overall, the direct-effect results indicate that Price Fairness and Cultural Adaptation are strong determinants of Perceived Value, whereas Product Authenticity influences Perceived Value indirectly.

Mediation Test (Indirect Effect)

The indirect effect analysis was conducted to determine whether the Psychological Factor mediates the relationship between the Cultural, Social, and Personal factors and the Purchase Decision. In PLS-SEM, indirect effects are obtained through the bootstrapping procedure and are considered significant when the T-statistic value exceeds 1.96, and the P-value is below 0.05 at the 5% significance level. (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 9. Specific Indirect Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Product Authenticity -> Cultural Adaptation-> Perceived Value	0.210	0.208	0.061	3439	0.001
Price Fairness -> Cultural Adaptation-> Perceived Value	0.304	0.295	0.052	5896	0.000

The indirect effect analysis shows that Cultural Adaptation significantly mediates the relationship between Product Authenticity and Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.210$; $t = 3.439$; $p = 0.001$). This result indicates that although Product Authenticity does not directly influence Perceived Value, it contributes indirectly through Cultural Adaptation. In other words, authenticity enhances perceived value only when consumers can culturally interpret and internalize the product's authenticity attributes.

Similarly, Cultural Adaptation also significantly mediates the relationship between Price Fairness and Perceived Value ($\beta = 0.304$; $t = 5.896$; $p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that fair pricing not only directly increases perceived value but also strengthens value perception by fostering greater cultural openness and acceptance of the product.

Overall, the mediation results confirm that Cultural Adaptation functions as an important explanatory mechanism linking both Product Authenticity and Price Fairness to Perceived Value. These findings indicate that, in the context of Indonesian halal products marketed in Japan, cultural alignment plays a central role in translating product attributes and pricing perceptions into consumers' value evaluations.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Product Authenticity on Perceived Value

The findings indicate that product authenticity does not directly influence perceived value for Indonesian halal products marketed in Japan. This suggests that although authenticity may be perceived through original taste, traditional ingredients, and cultural identity, these attributes alone are insufficient to enhance consumers' perceptions of value immediately. Authenticity, in this case, functions more as a product characteristic rather than as a direct determinant of overall value evaluation.

From the perspective of authenticity theory, authenticity creates value when consumers can interpret and internalize its symbolic and cultural meanings. (Liu et al., 2021). Indexical authenticity, which refers to verifiable elements such as ingredients and production techniques, and iconic authenticity, which relates to cultural narratives and symbolic representations, both contribute to consumer judgment. However, prior research suggests that authenticity tends to strengthen perceived value when accompanied by emotional attachment or cultural familiarity. (Jin & Hwang, 2024; Lu et al., 2020). Without such cultural proximity, authenticity may not translate into perceived benefits.

This finding contrasts with several studies conducted in culturally familiar contexts, where authenticity has been shown to significantly enhance perceived value and satisfaction. (Kang & Namkung, 2021; Loureiro et al., 2022). However, it aligns with cross-cultural consumption research, which indicates that authenticity does not automatically generate value when consumers lack sufficient knowledge or an experiential connection to the originating culture. (Choe & Kim, 2021). In international markets, authenticity may even be perceived as unfamiliar or difficult to interpret rather than as inherently valuable.

In the Japanese market, consumers are widely recognized for their emphasis on quality consistency, safety standards, and price-quality alignment. While authentic Indonesian flavors and culinary identity may signal originality, Japanese consumers may evaluate value more pragmatically, focusing on functional quality and fairness considerations rather than cultural symbolism alone. Therefore, authenticity may require an additional interpretive or cultural adaptation before it influences perceived value in this context.

The Effect of Price Fairness on Perceived Value

The findings indicate that price fairness positively influences perceived value for Indonesian halal products marketed in Japan. This suggests that consumers' evaluation of whether a price is reasonable, transparent, and proportional to the quality received plays a central role in shaping their overall perception of value. When consumers perceive that the price reflects the product's standards, safety, and quality attributes, they are more likely to evaluate the product as valuable.

From the perspectives of equity theory and price fairness theory, consumers assess prices not only through numerical comparisons but also through judgments of justice and proportionality (Nguyen & Meng, 2020). Fair pricing reduces perceived risk and enhances trust, thereby strengthening perceived value. Previous studies consistently demonstrate that price fairness is a key predictor of value perception, particularly in food and hospitality contexts (Konuk, 2021; Martins & Monroe, 2023). When consumers believe that the company does

not engage in opportunistic pricing and that the price aligns with the benefits offered, they tend to develop more favorable value assessments.

This finding is also consistent with research conducted in cross-cultural and international product settings. For foreign food products, consumers often rely on price as a signal of quality credibility, especially when familiarity with the product is limited. (Choi & Mattila, 2020). In such cases, fair pricing serves as a heuristic that reassures consumers about the product's reliability and worth. Thus, price fairness becomes particularly influential when cultural familiarity is still developing.

In the Japanese market, where consumers are widely recognized for their price sensitivity, quality congruence, and transparency, price fairness plays a decisive role in product evaluation. Japanese consumers tend to expect consistency between price, safety standards, and product performance. Therefore, for Sariraya's halal products, the perception that prices are justified by quality, certification processes, and ingredient standards directly strengthens consumers' perception of value. In this context, price fairness appears to function as a primary determinant of value perception.

The Effect of Product Authenticity on Cultural Adaptation

The findings indicate that product authenticity positively influences cultural adaptation for Indonesian halal products marketed in Japan. This suggests that when Japanese consumers perceive Sariraya's products as genuinely representing Indonesian culinary identity, like authentic taste, traditional ingredients, and consistent preparation, they become more open to understanding and accepting the cultural values embedded in the product. Authenticity thus serves as a cultural bridge, facilitating cross-cultural engagement.

From the perspective of authenticity and acculturation theories, authentic products provide symbolic and experiential cues that help consumers interpret foreign cultural elements. (Liu et al., 2021). Indexical authenticity, reflected in tangible aspects such as ingredients and cooking techniques, enhances credibility, while iconic authenticity, expressed through cultural narratives and sensory identity, strengthens cultural meaning. These elements enable consumers to contextualize the product within its cultural origin, thereby fostering greater cultural openness.

This result is consistent with prior research in ethnic food consumption, which suggests that authenticity enhances cross-cultural acceptance and cultural learning. (J. Kim et al., 2020; K. Lee & Cho, 2021). Studies also indicate that authentic culinary experiences stimulate curiosity and cultural engagement, encouraging consumers to explore and internalize foreign cultural practices. (Xu & Kim, 2023). In cross-cultural markets, authenticity does not merely signal quality but also supports cultural interpretation and adaptation.

In the Japanese context, where consumers value culinary heritage and traditional integrity, authenticity may resonate positively when presented coherently and consistently. Japanese consumers are accustomed to strong culinary identities within their own culture and may therefore appreciate products that clearly reflect their cultural origins. Therefore, for Indonesian halal products such as Sariraya, maintaining authentic taste and ingredients may enhance consumers' willingness to engage with and adapt to Indonesian culinary culture.

The Effect of Price Fairness on Cultural Adaptation

The findings indicate that price fairness positively influences cultural adaptation in the context of Indonesian halal products marketed in Japan. This suggests that when consumers perceive the price as reasonable, transparent, and proportional to the quality offered, they become more open to engaging with and accepting the cultural elements embedded in the product. Fair pricing reduces hesitation and builds psychological comfort, which in turn facilitates cultural openness toward foreign cuisine.

From the perspective of price fairness theory and equity theory, consumers evaluate price not merely in monetary terms but also in relation to perceived justice and proportionality. (Nguyen & Meng, 2020). When prices are perceived as fair, consumers tend to develop greater trust and lower resistance toward the product. In cross-cultural consumption settings, this sense of fairness can reduce uncertainty associated with unfamiliar products and accelerate acceptance of foreign cultural attributes. (Moro et al., 2020). Thus, fair pricing functions not only as an economic signal but also as a relational cue that fosters openness.

Previous studies support the notion that fair pricing enhances consumer willingness to explore global products. El Hedhli et al. (2022) found that price fairness strengthens consumer confidence in international brands, thereby encouraging engagement with culturally diverse offerings. Similarly, Kang and Yang (2021) argue that perceptions of fairness reduce psychological barriers to cross-border consumption. These findings suggest that pricing justice can indirectly support cultural integration by lowering perceived risk.

In the Japanese market, where consumers are known for their sensitivity to transparency and price-quality alignment, fairness in pricing may serve as a prerequisite for cultural acceptance. Imported halal products often incur additional costs for logistics, certification, and ingredient sourcing. When Japanese consumers perceive these prices as justified and proportionate, they are more likely to accept the product into their consumption repertoire and become more receptive to the cultural characteristics of Indonesian cuisine.

The Effect of Cultural Adaptation on Perceived Value

The findings indicate that cultural adaptation positively influences perceived value for Indonesian halal products marketed in Japan. This suggests that when consumers feel culturally comfortable with and receptive to the characteristics of Indonesian cuisine, they are more likely to evaluate the product as valuable. Cultural adaptation enables consumers to interpret taste, ingredients, and presentation not as foreign differences, but as meaningful attributes within a broader cultural experience.

From the perspective of acculturation theory, cultural adaptation reflects an individual's openness and ability to internalize foreign cultural elements through experience and learning. (Berry, 1997; Lim & Park, 2021). When consumers develop familiarity and psychological comfort with a foreign culture, their evaluations tend to shift from uncertainty to appreciation. In consumption settings, this cultural alignment enhances perceived benefits by reducing ambiguity and increasing symbolic and emotional value.

Previous studies support the relationship between cultural adaptation and value perception. Park and Lee (2020) found that cultural fit significantly strengthens perceived quality and value when consuming ethnic foods—similarly, Moon et al. (2022) demonstrated that consumers who experience cultural closeness toward international cuisine are more likely to assign higher functional and emotional value to the product. Iklima, Yuliati, and Chawa (2021) Also emphasize that cultural adaptation facilitates the acceptance of international products, thereby enhancing overall value perception.

In the Japanese market, where culinary identity is strong and deeply rooted in tradition, cultural differences may initially create distance in how products are evaluated. However, as Japanese consumers become more familiar with Southeast Asian flavors through travel, media exposure, or repeated consumption, cultural adaptation can occur. In such cases, Indonesian halal products such as Sariraya are more likely to be perceived as relevant, understandable, and meaningful, thereby strengthening their perceived value.

The Mediating Role of Cultural Adaptation in the Effect of Product Authenticity on Perceived Value

The findings indicate that cultural adaptation plays a mediating role in the relationship between product authenticity and perceived value. Although product authenticity does not directly enhance perceived value, it indirectly contributes when consumers can culturally interpret and internalize the authenticity attributes embedded in the product. This suggests that authenticity becomes meaningful in the formation of value only after consumers achieve a certain level of cultural alignment with the product's origin.

From the perspective of acculturation theory, individuals process foreign cultural symbols through adaptation mechanisms that involve openness, learning, and psychological adjustment. (Berry, 1997). Authenticity provides symbolic and sensory cues, such as traditional ingredients, distinctive flavors, and cultural narratives, but these cues must first be cognitively and emotionally understood before they generate value. In this sense, cultural adaptation functions as a psychological pathway that translates authenticity signals into perceived benefits.

This finding aligns with prior research emphasizing that authenticity enhances consumer evaluations primarily when accompanied by cultural familiarity or engagement. Kim et al. (2020) argue that authentic ethnic products create higher value when consumers possess sufficient cultural understanding to appreciate their meaning. Similarly, Xu and Kim (2023) demonstrate that cultural engagement strengthens the impact of authenticity on consumer responses in cross-cultural food consumption. These studies suggest that authenticity alone is insufficient unless consumers can contextualize it within a cultural framework.

In the Japanese context, Indonesian halal products may initially be perceived as culturally distant. While authentic taste and ingredients signal originality, they may not directly generate value without consumers first adapting to the culinary characteristics of Indonesian cuisine. Once Japanese consumers become familiar with and comfortable with these cultural elements, authenticity is more likely to be perceived as richness, uniqueness, and quality, thereby enhancing perceived value. Thus, cultural adaptation appears to be a crucial mechanism by which authenticity contributes meaningfully to consumers' value perceptions.

The Mediating Role of Cultural Adaptation in the Effect of Price Fairness on Perceived Value

The findings indicate that cultural adaptation mediates the relationship between price fairness and perceived value. This suggests that fair pricing not only directly influences consumers' value perceptions but also strengthens their value evaluation when consumers are culturally receptive to the product. In other words, the perception of price fairness becomes more meaningful when consumers are willing to interpret the product within its cultural context.

From the perspective of price fairness theory, fair pricing enhances trust and reduces perceived risk. (Konuk, 2021). However, in cross-cultural markets, consumers must also cognitively process why a foreign product may carry certain price levels, such as import costs, certification standards, or traditional production methods. Cultural adaptation enables consumers to understand and rationalize these pricing structures, thereby

transforming perceptions of fairness into stronger value judgments. In this sense, cultural adaptation serves as a contextual filter that deepens the effect of price fairness on value perception.

Previous studies support this interaction between price perception and cultural understanding. Iklima et al. (2021) emphasize that cultural alignment enhances consumers' acceptance of international products and strengthens the relationship between economic evaluation and perceived value. Similarly, Lim and Park (2021) argue that culturally adaptive consumers are better able to interpret market signals, including pricing cues, in cross-cultural consumption settings. These findings indicate that cultural adaptation facilitates a more comprehensive evaluation process.

In the Japanese context, imported halal products such as Sariraya may involve higher prices due to logistics, ingredient sourcing, and certification requirements. Consumers who have adapted to Southeast Asian culinary culture are more likely to understand these structural components and perceive the price as justified. Consequently, when cultural adaptation is present, price fairness becomes more influential in shaping perceived value. This reinforces the view that cultural adaptation acts as an essential mechanism linking economic evaluations to consumer value perception in cross-cultural markets.

Implications

This study provides several important theoretical contributions. First, it reinforces post-2020 literature on cross-cultural consumption by confirming the significant role of price fairness in shaping perceived value. The finding supports prior studies. (Konuk, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2022) that position price fairness as a central predictor of consumer value in modern and international markets. In the context of Indonesian halal products in Japan, price fairness appears to play a more dominant role than product authenticity in directly influencing value perception.

Second, the study highlights cultural adaptation as a key mediating mechanism in cross-cultural consumer behavior. By demonstrating that cultural adaptation bridges the effects of product authenticity and price fairness on perceived value, this research extends existing theories of authenticity and acculturation. Consistent with Moon et al. (2022) and Kim and Zhang (2023) The findings confirm that cultural alignment enhances consumers' ability to interpret and internalize foreign products, thereby strengthening value perception.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that Sariraya should maintain a balanced strategy that integrates authenticity, fair pricing, and cultural alignment. Authentic taste and traditional ingredients remain essential to supporting cultural adaptation, while transparent and reasonable pricing is crucial to strengthening perceived value among Japanese consumers. At the same time, efforts to align product presentation and flavor preferences with local consumption habits without compromising Indonesian culinary identity can further enhance acceptance and competitiveness in the Japanese market. Overall, the study underscores that perceived value in cross-cultural halal markets is shaped not only by product attributes but also by consumers' cultural readiness and perceptions of fairness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, Sariraya should focus on three key strategic areas to enhance perceived value in the Japanese market. First, maintaining product authenticity remains important, particularly in supporting cultural adaptation. Authentic taste, traditional ingredients, and a clear Indonesian culinary identity should be consistently preserved. Authenticity helps Japanese consumers better understand and appreciate the product's cultural background, thereby facilitating acceptance.

Second, price fairness must become a primary priority. Japanese consumers are highly sensitive to price-quality alignment; therefore, Sariraya should ensure transparent and reasonable pricing. Clear communication about ingredient quality, halal certification, and production standards can strengthen perceptions of fairness and reinforce value assessment.

Third, cultural adaptation strategies should be continuously developed. Adjusting flavor intensity, presentation style, or menu offerings to align with Japanese preferences while preserving Indonesian identity can improve product relevance. In addition, cultural storytelling through digital content and in-store communication can enhance consumer understanding and emotional connection. Overall, a balanced strategy that integrates authenticity, fair pricing, and cultural alignment will strengthen Sariraya's competitiveness and increase perceived value among Japanese consumers.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that Product Authenticity, Price Fairness, and Cultural Adaptation play distinct yet interconnected roles in shaping Perceived Value among Sariraya consumers in Japan. Price Fairness and Cultural Adaptation emerge as the primary direct determinants of perceived value, while Product Authenticity contributes indirectly through Cultural Adaptation. These findings highlight that authenticity alone is insufficient to enhance value perception in cross-cultural markets unless consumers can culturally interpret and internalize the product's identity.

The results demonstrate that the perceived value of Indonesian halal products in Japan is formed through a combination of economic evaluation and cultural alignment. Price fairness strengthens consumers' confidence and evaluation of product worth, whereas cultural adaptation facilitates understanding and acceptance of Indonesian culinary characteristics. Thus, value formation in cross-border halal markets is not solely driven by product attributes, but also by consumers' cultural readiness and interpretive processes.

Overall, this study emphasizes that the successful positioning of Indonesian halal products in non-Muslim developed markets requires an integrated approach that balances authenticity, fair pricing, and cultural alignment. These elements collectively shape consumers' perceptions of value and contribute to the sustainability of the international expansion of halal products.

Declaration of generative AI in scientific writing

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT to enhance the clarity of the writing. After using ChatGPT, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the publication's content.

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