

From Halal Integrity to Halal Washing: Toward a Conceptual Framework of Ethical Deviation in the Halal Industry

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Abstract: *This study develops a diagnostic framework to explain how halal integrity degrades into halal-washing within contemporary halal governance. While existing research addresses halal compliance and supply chain practices, it remains fragmented in explaining the transition from operational failure to representational deviation. Using a conceptual research design based on theory synthesis, this study reconstructs halal integrity as a multilayer system, models the process of cumulative degradation leading to institutional decoupling, and identifies structural mediators that condition this transition. The findings show that halal-washing is not merely a communication issue, but a systemic outcome of misalignment across operational practices, governance mechanisms, and institutional legitimacy under structural pressure. The study contributes by integrating fragmented halal literature and extending washing theory within a context shaped by institutional and theological implications. It further demonstrates that preventing halal-washing requires systemic intervention to ensure alignment between symbolic claims and operational reality.*

Abstrak : *Penelitian ini mengembangkan kerangka diagnostik untuk menjelaskan bagaimana halal integrity mengalami degradasi menjadi halal-washing dalam tata kelola halal kontemporer. Meskipun penelitian sebelumnya telah membahas kepatuhan halal dan praktik rantai pasok, kajian tersebut masih terfragmentasi dalam menjelaskan transisi dari kegagalan operasional menuju deviasi representasional. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian konseptual berbasis theory synthesis, studi ini merekonstruksi halal integrity sebagai sistem berlapis (multilayer system), memodelkan proses degradasi kumulatif yang mengarah pada institutional decoupling, serta mengidentifikasi mediator struktural yang memengaruhi transisi tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa halal-washing bukan sekadar persoalan komunikasi, melainkan hasil sistemik dari ketidaksesuaian antara praktik operasional, mekanisme tata kelola, dan legitimasi kelembagaan di bawah tekanan struktural. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dengan mengintegrasikan literatur halal yang terfragmentasi serta memperluas washing theory dalam konteks yang memiliki dimensi kelembagaan dan teologis. Selain itu, studi ini menegaskan bahwa pencegahan halal-washing memerlukan intervensi sistemik untuk memastikan keselarasan antara klaim simbolik dan realitas operasional.*

Keywords : *Halal Integrity; Halal-Washing; Institutional Decoupling; Governance; Traceability*

INTRODUCTION

The halal label has undergone an ontological transformation, from a marker of theological compliance into an instrument of market legitimacy with massive economic, legal, and ethical implications. This transformation reshapes consumer trust mechanisms and industry behavior within a global ecosystem projected to reach USD 5.81 trillion by 2032 (DinarStandard, 2023). However, the expansion of the symbolic value of halal labeling is not always aligned with the strengthening of

operational integrity. When symbolic claims exceed operational reality, a structural space for halal-washing practices emerges. This phenomenon is not merely conventional corporate fraud, but a threat to the institutional legitimacy of certification systems and the religious sovereignty of consumers.

Halal integrity is not a static attribute embedded in the final product, but rather a multilayer assurance system that encompasses the entire supply chain cycle from raw material sourcing, production processes, packaging, storage, to final distribution, requiring traceability and strict physical segregation ([Zulfakar et al., 2014](#); [Ab Talib et al., 2015](#)). Recent studies emphasize that halal integrity is processual and must be continuously maintained through consistent and accountable governance ([Nugroho et al., 2024](#); [Rizki et al., 2023](#)), making it highly vulnerable to degradation under compliance cost pressures and the complexity of global supply chains. Cross jurisdictional fragmentation of standards and limited monitoring capacity create operational gaps that systematically weaken integrity from within ([Al-Mahmood & Fraser, 2023](#)). This is empirically confirmed by data from the Food Standards Agency (FSA), which reports a 100% increase in halal misrepresentation cases over the past three years (FSA, 2024), indicating that the discrepancy between claims and reality is no longer marginal, but systemic.

Conceptually, halal-washing has its theoretical genealogy in the greenwashing literature as a misleading disclosure-based communication strategy ([Lyon & Montgomery, 2015](#); [de Freitas Netto et al., 2020](#)). However, halal-washing has fundamental distinctions: a theologically binding dimension, systemic delegitimization consequences for certification institutions, and causal structures rooted in supply chain failures rather than merely creative marketing decisions.

In Indonesia, this dynamic operates within a specific institutional context. Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance and its implementation through Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021 transformed halal certification from a voluntary scheme into a legal obligation. While this policy expands coverage and increases the strategic value of halal labels, the acceleration of regulatory obligations is not always matched by the operational readiness of business actors, potentially widening the gap between substantive compliance and symbolic representation.

Although halal literature has grown rapidly, existing studies remain epistemically fragmented. Bibliometric analyses show that halal research is distributed across multiple streams such as consumer behavior, Islamic branding, marketing, supply chain, certification, and halal tourism, which tend to evolve separately ([Putera & Rakhel, 2023](#); [Donthu et al., 2021](#)). Supply chain research is often confined to technical dimensions ([Indarti et al., 2020](#)), while marketing studies focus primarily on consumer perception ([Hussain et al., 2024](#)), without a conceptual bridge linking operational failures to representational deviations. This article addresses this structural gap by developing a diagnostic framework that explains the transition from operational integrity degradation to halal-washing. To achieve this objective, the study is guided by three key research questions:

RQ1: How is halal integrity constructed as a multidimensional supply chain assurance system?

RQ2: Through what mechanisms does halal-washing emerge as a gap between substantive compliance and symbolic representation?

RQ3: What structural factors mediate or constrain the transition from halal integrity to halal-washing?

METHOD

This study employs a conceptual research approach with a systematic conceptual review and theory synthesis design to develop a diagnostic framework explaining the transition from halal integrity to halal-washing. This approach is selected because the research questions are explanatory-conceptual, requiring concept reconstruction, causal mechanism explanation, and identification of structural factors within an integrated theoretical framework.

The analysis is conducted in three main stages explicitly designed to address each research question (RQ1–RQ3):

Stage 1: Conceptual Reconstruction of Halal Integrity (RQ1)

- Input: Literature on halal integrity, halal supply chain, traceability, segregation, compliance, certification systems, and regulations.
- Process: Extraction of recurring conceptual attributes, categorization based on function and operational locus, and synthesis into a multilayer structure.
- Output: A multilayer halal integrity system consisting of operational, governance, and institutional layers.

Stage 2: Mechanism Mapping of Halal-Washing Formation (RQ2)

- Input: Halal literature and cross-domain literature (greenwashing, symbolic compliance, institutional decoupling).
- Process: Relational synthesis to analyze how operational degradation evolves into representational deviation.
- Output: A causal process model explaining the transition from operational degradation to misrepresentation.

Stage 3: Identification of Structural Mediators (RQ3)

- Input: Literature on supply chain governance, regulation, certification, and structural compliance factors.
- Process: Compilation, comparison, and classification into analytical typologies.
- Output: Structural mediator typology: enabling, triggering, and constraining factors.

The conceptual framework is developed through cross-domain theory synthesis integrating four theoretical blocks: halal integrity, halal supply chain, washing theory, and institutional perspective. The synthesis process is abductive and iterative, aiming to construct a coherent theoretical relationship explaining how halal-washing emerges and where integrity degradation begins.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reconstructing Halal Integrity as a Multilayer System (RQ1)

The first finding of this article deconstructs the most perilous assumption in commercial halal discourse: the notion that halal integrity can be reduced to a static product attribute verifiable at a single point within the supply chain. A systematic literature synthesis confirms that such a construction is conceptually flawed and operationally hazardous. Instead, halal integrity is redefined as a multilayered assurance system that is process-oriented, relational, and dynamic, an emergent property arising from the coherent interaction between three interdependent functional layers: the operational, governance, and institutional layers ([Ab Talib & Ai Chin, 2021](#); [Nugroho et al., 2024](#); [Tieman & van Nistelrooy, 2020](#)) as illustrate in Figure 1.

The most fundamental level, this system rests upon the operational layer, which encompasses absolute technical-material mechanisms (*sine qua non*), namely traceability and physical segregation. Traceability is not merely defined as procedural administrative documentation; rather, it constitutes an informational architecture and causal accountability that enables the longitudinal verification of the halal status of every input from raw material sources to the end consumer ([Ab Talib et al., 2020](#); [Zulfakar et al., 2014](#)). Complementarily, segregation serves as an absolute physical prerequisite to mitigate cross contamination risks whether physical, biological, or chemical ([Tieman & van Nistelrooy, 2020](#)). However, the analysis reveals that global supply chain fragmentation frequently undermines this segregation capacity, particularly when materials cross jurisdictional boundaries with non-uniform standards ([Al-Mahmood & Fraser, 2023](#)). The confluence of weak traceability architectures and inconsistent segregation protocols engenders fundamental operational vulnerabilities, constituting the initial entry point for the erosion of integrity.

The operational practices lack verificatory potency without the robust support of a governance stratum acting as an internal control mechanism. This second layer includes audit systems, operational documentation, halal standard operating procedures (SOPs), supplier qualifications, and human resource training. ([Nugroho et al., 2024](#); [Rizki et al., 2023](#)). Crucially, the governance layer serves as a **critical nexus** between the normative standards mandated by regulators and the technical implementation on the production floor. Within this layer, an organization's capacity is tested through its ability to consistently

integrate risk management mechanisms, ensuring that operational activities remain strictly aligned with rigorous halal compliance expectations.

At the highest level, the entirety of operations and governance is encapsulated by the **institutional layer**, which provides formal legitimacy. This institutional ecosystem involves certification authorities (such as BPJPH in Indonesia or JAKIM in Malaysia), regulatory frameworks, and independent oversight mechanisms that function as signals of credibility to the market, certifying that a product has met substantive compliance requirements (Al-Mahmood & Fraser, 2023; Hussain et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the analysis uncovers a systemic paradox: the institutional ecosystem may metamorphose into a source of vulnerability when jurisdictional standard fragmentation is compounded by the limited audit capacities of the respective authorities. Such a condition facilitates the issuance of formal certifications devoid of adequate substantive verification of the underlying operational and governance layers (Al-Mahmood & Fraser, 2023; Putri et al., 2022).

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Figure 1. Multilayer Halal Integrity System

Figure Source: illustrates the reconstructed multilayer system of halal integrity

The theoretical contribution of this three-layer reconstruction culminates in the assertion that halal integrity failures do not occur in isolation. The discrepancy between formal legitimacy at the institutional level and technical reality at the operational level demonstrates that degradation at one level causally propagates through the others. When operational vulnerabilities remain undetected by internal governance, and institutional authorities continue to grant formal labeling despite these flaws, the system as a whole will only create an illusion of compliance. This structural imbalance ultimately constitutes the fundamental prerequisite for market-driven ethical deviations, which subsequently manifest as the systemic pathology of halal-washing.

From Integrity Degradation to Halal-Washing: A Process Model (RQ2)

The second finding of this article constructs a causal process model which constructs that *halal-washing* is not a single strategic decision consciously designed from the outset as deliberative fraud, but rather the outcome of an accumulation of adaptive compromises embedded within the system. A cross-domain synthesis of halal supply chain literature, washing theory, and institutional perspectives reveals that ethical deviation in the halal context often does not originate from an explicit intent to deceive, but rather from organizational efforts to adapt to mounting pressures without losing external legitimacy (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020; Walsh et al., 2021). Therefore, *halal-washing* is more accurately understood as an escalatory process, wherein integrity degradation initially latent and pragmatic gradually evolves into a systemic gap between actual practices and external claims.



Figure 2. Causal Process Model of Halal-Washing Formation

Figure Source: illustrates the causal process of halal integrity

As illustrated in Figure 2, this initial phase is characterized by dual structural pressures operating simultaneously are economic competitive pressure and institutional regulatory pressure. The economic dimension, industry players are squeezed by the escalation of halal compliance costs, which burden up

to 3–7% of total production costs (Ab Talib & Ai Chin, 2021), compounded by shrinking profit margins and the hyper-complexity of global supply chain fragmentation. Concurrently, the regulatory dimension in Indonesia introduces disruption through the transition of the certification system from voluntary to absolute mandatory by UU No. 33 of 2014 and Government Regulation No. 39 of 2021. This structural transition triggers a *compliance surge* a massive spike in certification demand that far exceeds institutional verification capacity. This asymmetrical condition yields a regulatory paradox: when demand volume surpasses substantive audit capacity, certification is at high risk of being reduced to a mere administrative procedure (*administrative tick-box*), rather than serving as a robust integrity assurance system (Putri et al., 2022).

These structural pressures translate into the second phase, namely the degradation of operational integrity, wherein organizations begin to make latent compromises to ensure business continuity. These include the relaxation of physical segregation, the weakening of traceability systems, the utilization of raw materials with ambiguous statuses, or the reduction of internal audit intensity (Indarti et al., 2020; Rizki et al., 2023). Individually, these actions are frequently rationalized as operational adaptations necessary to maintain business viability. Collectively, however, such compromises erode the foundation of halal integrity, which ought to be consistently maintained from upstream to downstream.

The third phase is the *normalization of deviance*, which occurs when deviations that were initially minor and temporary begin to be accepted as standard practices because they do not immediately result in visible consequences (Vaughan, 1997; Walsh et al., 2021). At this point, the organization no longer perceives operational compromises as deviations, but rather as legitimate forms of efficiency or adjustment. This mechanism is crucial as it elucidates how the weakening of integrity is not always responded to as a violation; instead, it can establish new operational norms that gradually displace substantive compliance standards.

Once these operational deviations have been normalized, the organization enters a critical phase in the form of *decoupling*, which is essentially the core mechanism of *halal-washing*. In this phase, actual practices that have deviated begin to be separated from external representations, which continue to project an image of compliance (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). The organization retains the halal label, Islamic marketing narratives, and the administrative facade of compliance, even though its internal processes are no longer fully aligned with the claimed standards. Within the halal ecosystem, this decoupling strategy manifests into three forms of destructive intervention: (1) *label claim decoupling*, which involves retaining halal label attributes on process-flawed products; (2) *marketing-operations decoupling*, which amplifies Islamic marketing narratives to obscure operational compromises on the production floor; and (3) *audit-practice decoupling*, which materializes in the creation of *Potemkin compliance* an artificial compliance system designed exclusively to be activated only during inspections

by certification bodies ([de Freitas Netto et al., 2020](#); [Walsh et al., 2021](#)). Therefore, decoupling does not merely signify a discrepancy between practice and claim, but also demonstrates that formal legitimacy is maintained through symbols rather than substantive integrity.

This chain of causality ultimately crystallizes into systemic misrepresentation, marking a condition wherein *halal-washing* transcends incidental boundaries and transforms into an institutional phenomenon. At this juncture, the halal label continues to function as an instrument of market legitimacy and consumer trust, yet it no longer fully represents the operational reality. In other words, integrity has shifted from something that is executed to something that is merely communicated. It is this precise shift that marks the transformation from integrity degradation to *halal-washing*.

Table 1. Phases and Mechanism in the Formation of Halal-Washing

Fase	Fokus utama	Mekanisme kunci	Implikasi langsung
Structural pressure	Economic and regulatory pressure	Compliance demands escalate, while capacity does not always keep pace	The system begins seeking pragmatic adjustments
Operational integrity degradation	Degradation of core practice	Traceability, segregation, sourcing, and auditing are compromised	The fundamental foundation of integrity is eroded
Normalization of deviance	Normalization of Deviance	Deviations are repeated and rationalized as operational efficiency	Internal compliance standards gradually shift
Institutional decoupling	Institutional Decoupling	Symbolic compliance is maintained despite weakened actual practices	The gap between practice and representation widens
Halal-washing	Systematic Misrepresentation	The halal label is no longer fully substantiated by process integrity	Erosion of consumer trust, institutional legitimacy, and moral authority

Table source: Summarizes the main characteristics of each phase in the formation of halal-washing

This model also sheds light on the fundamental theoretical distinction between *halal-washing* and conventional *greenwashing*, as summarized in Table 1. While greenwashing is generally understood as a representational breach that undermines sustainability claims, the consequences of halal-washing are far more profound, reverberating simultaneously across theological, institutional, and market domains. This deviation does more than merely erode consumer trust; it fundamentally infringes upon the religious sovereignty of Muslim consumers, undermines the legitimacy of certification authorities, and threatens the core credibility of an entire ecosystem built on the faith that a halal claim is intimately bound to process integrity. Therefore, preventing halal-washing cannot be achieved simply by policing marketing communications or labels. True prevention must be deeply rooted in fortifying operational

and governance integrity long before a quiet operational compromise can evolve into systemic misrepresentation.

Structural Mediators of the Transition from Halal Integrity to Halal-Washing (RQ3)

The third stage of our findings pivots the analytical lens from merely observing *what happens* (RQ2) to understanding the deeper *why* and *under what conditions* these events unfold. A synthesis of the literature reveals that the slide from compromised integrity into outright halal-washing is rarely a straight or inevitable path. Rather, it is mediated by a complex web of structural factors working simultaneously. Consequently, halal-washing should not be viewed as a mechanical reaction to operational stress or failure; it is a contingent outcome a delicate interplay between forces that enable, trigger, and constrain ethical deviation.

Drawing from a cross-disciplinary comparison of halal supply chains, governance, and institutional theory, these forces can be classified into three analytical categories, are *enabling factors*, *triggering factors*, and *constraining factors*. Far from being a mere descriptive checklist, this typology captures the active, causal roles these factors play in modulating the stages of the halal-washing journey outlined in RQ2, as visualized in Table 2.

Table 2. Structural Mediator in the Formation of Halal Washing

Dimension	Enabling Factors (System Vulnerability)	Triggering Factors (Activation Mechanism)	Constraining Factors (Control Capacity)
Standards & Regulation	Fragmented halal standards; regulatory arbitrage (Al-Mahmood & Fraser, 2023)	Compliance surge exceeding institutional capacity (Putri et al., 2022)	Consistent enforcement and deterrent sanctions (FSA, 2024)
Information & Transparency	Credence attribute → structural information asymmetry (Hussain et al., 2024)	Traceability failure due to supply disruption (Sutan et al., 2022)	Blockchain & digital traceability (real-time verification) (Ab Talib et al., 2020)
Institutional Capacity	Limited auditor capacity vs certification demand (Putri et al., 2022)	Leadership turnover → loss of institutional memory (Walsh et al., 2021)	Shift from snapshot audit to continuous monitoring (Nugroho et al., 2024)
Economic Pressure	Compliance cost pressure (3–7%) reducing integrity investment (Ab Talib & Ai Chin, 2021)	Financial shock & profit pressure forcing compliance trade-offs (Walsh et al., 2021)	Halal integrity as strategic asset (Hussain et al., 2024)
Global Supply Chain	Multi-tier complexity reducing visibility (Zulfakar et al., 2014)	Sudden supplier substitution under disruption (Sutan et al., 2022)	Cascading compliance pressure from global buyers (Ab Talib & Ai Chin, 2020)
Consumer & Market	Low halal literacy → weak market verification (Hussain et al., 2024)	Price competition → race-to-the-bottom dynamics (Rizki et al., 2023)	Consumer activism & reputational monitoring (Hussain et al., 2024)

Dimension	Enabling Factors (System Vulnerability)	Triggering Factors (Activation Mechanism)	Constraining Factors (Control Capacity)
Internal Governance	Superficial integration of halal systems (Nugroho et al., 2024)	Normalization of deviance in daily operations (Walsh et al., 2021)	Embedded compliance culture & aligned incentives (Rizki et al., 2023)

Table Source: presents a structured typology of structural mediators across key system dimensions, highlighting their functional roles as enabling, triggering, and constraining mechanisms.

This typology presents three analytical implications (illustrated in Figure 3) that explicitly challenge conventional approaches to halal compliance management. First, *enabling factors* are quiet and deeply structural. They cannot be "fixed" through isolated interventions because they are woven into the very fabric of the system, not merely rooted in the behavior of individual actors. The fragmentation of international standards and the profound information asymmetry of credence attributes, for instance, cannot be solved by a single company; they demand a collective, systemic response at the institutional and policy levels. Second, *triggering factors* are highly dynamic and never entirely predictable. Yet, organizations can still brace for them by proactively cultivating a culture of halal resilience (Sutan et al., 2022). Third, and perhaps the most critical implication for practice is that *constraining factors* operate asymmetrically. Their effectiveness is fiercely dependent on *when* they are introduced in the transition process. Constraints activated early, during the initial wave of structural pressure (Phase I), act as a profound preventative shield. Conversely, introducing them during the decoupling stage (Phase III) is far less effective, as the ethical breach has already taken root and the cost of redemption is painfully high.

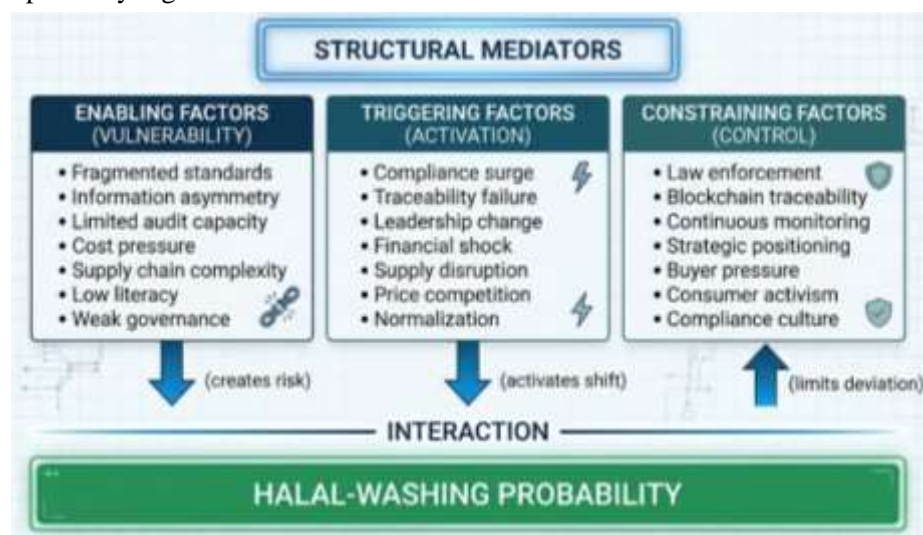


Figure 3. Structural Mediation of Halal-Washing Formation

Figure Source: illustrates how structural mediators interact across system dimensions

Integrative Discussion: Toward a Diagnostic Framework of Halal Washing

This study develops a diagnostic framework that reconceptualizes halal-washing not as a mere communication anomaly, but as a systemic outcome rooted in the erosion of halal integrity. The transition from halal integrity to halal-washing is shaped by the interaction between system architecture, cumulative degradation processes, and structural mediation within specific institutional contexts.

At a fundamental level, halal integrity is redefined as a multilayered system condition rather than a static attribute of a final product. Integrity emerges from the alignment between operational practices, governance mechanisms, and institutional legitimacy. This reconceptualization shifts the analytical focus from end-point compliance toward process-based integrity across the entire supply chain. The implication is clear: certification alone is insufficient to guarantee halal status when operational realities and control mechanisms are misaligned. Under such conditions, integrity becomes structurally vulnerable as coherence across layers weakens.

Building on this foundation, the study demonstrates that halal-washing evolves through cumulative degradation rather than instant deception. Repeated and uncorrected operational compromises gradually become normalized, ultimately resulting in a decoupling between substantive practices and symbolic claims. From this perspective, halal-washing is not merely a form of misrepresentation, but the representational endpoint of prior systemic failure. Misrepresentation, therefore, should not be understood as the root of the problem, but as its most visible manifestation.

The framework further highlights that this transition is non-linear and contingent, mediated by three structural conditions: enabling factors that create system vulnerability, triggering factors that activate compromise under pressure, and constraining factors that regulate or restrain deviation. Accordingly, halal-washing does not arise solely from organizational intent, but from an imbalance between structural exposure and the system's control capacity.

Theoretically, this study makes two key contributions. First, it integrates fragmented halal literature by linking supply chain integrity, governance failure, and representational deviation within a unified causal structure. Second, it extends washing theory by demonstrating that, in the halal context, representational deviation carries not only market consequences but also institutional and theological implications. In this sense, halal-washing is positioned as an advanced form of systemic misalignment rather than merely a contextual variation of conventional greenwashing.

Analytically, the framework identifies a critical threshold at which operational weaknesses are no longer corrected by governance mechanisms but continue to be institutionally legitimized. At this point, integrity ceases to function as a substantive condition and persists only as a symbolic claim. This marks the pivotal transition from compliance to misrepresentation.

From a practical standpoint, the findings challenge approaches that focus solely on representation. Preventing halal-washing requires systemic intervention, including strengthening traceability and segregation, enforcing governance discipline, enhancing institutional verification capacity, and realigning incentives that currently encourage symbolic compliance. The credibility of halal systems can only be sustained when formal legitimacy remains grounded in operational reality.

Ultimately, this study affirms that halal-washing is not a peripheral anomaly, but a systemic risk within contemporary halal governance. This phenomenon reflects a structural disjunction between certification, practice, and representation. The proposed framework provides a stronger conceptual foundation for identifying this disjunction, while repositioning halal integrity as a matter of systemic alignment rather than merely declarative compliance, as illustrated in Figure 4.

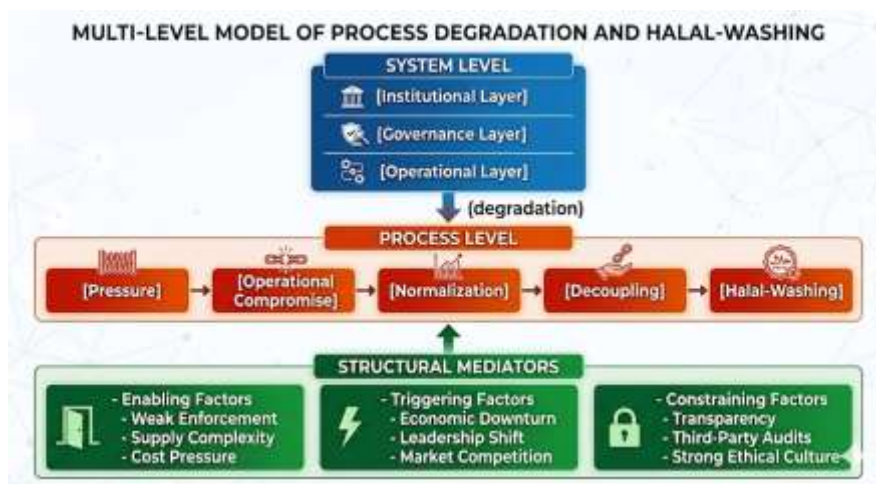


Figure 4. Kerangka diagnostic terintegrasi

Figure Source: sintesis penulis

Figure 4 presents the integrative diagnostic framework of halal-washing developed in this study. The framework illustrates how halal-washing emerges from the interaction between the multilayer structure of halal integrity (RQ1), the process of integrity degradation (RQ2), and structural mediators that condition the transition (RQ3). The model demonstrates that halal-washing is not an isolated representational issue, but a systemic outcome resulting from misalignment across operational practices, governance mechanisms, and institutional legitimacy under structural pressures.

CONCLUSION

This study develops a diagnostic framework that explains the transition from halal integrity to halal-washing as a systemic process rather than an isolated act of misrepresentation. By integrating a multilayer system perspective, a process-based model of integrity degradation, and a structural typology

of mediating factors, the study demonstrates that halal-washing emerges from misalignment across operational practices, governance mechanisms, and institutional legitimacy under structural pressures.

The findings reposition halal integrity as a dynamic system condition that depends on coherence across layers, rather than a static outcome verified at the end of production. Accordingly, halal-washing is not the origin of the problem but the visible manifestation of prior system failure, reinforced by structural vulnerabilities and insufficient control capacity. This reframing extends existing washing theory and provides a unified explanation that bridges fragmented halal literature.

Practically, the study shows that preventing halal-washing requires systemic intervention rather than representational correction. Strengthening traceability, governance discipline, institutional verification, and incentive alignment is essential to ensure that symbolic legitimacy remains grounded in operational reality.

Future research should empirically test the proposed framework across different sectors and institutional contexts, particularly by examining how digital traceability systems, regulatory capacity, and organizational governance influence the resilience of halal integrity.

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