

DIAGNOSIS OF COMPLIANCE OF MICRO AND SMALL BUSINESSES IN HALAL-CERTIFIED PRODUCT ASSURANCE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the challenges and compliance of business actors in implementing halal certification, especially among SMEs in Surabaya. This study used a qualitative methodology and included direct observation and documentation analysis in addition to in-depth interviews with halal supervisors, halal inspectors, and owners of steak businesses. The study's findings highlighted some of the primary obstacles that SMEs encounter when pursuing halal certification, such as the administrative intricacy of handling NIB and documentation, restricted access to suppliers of halal-certified raw materials, and the inefficiency of halal supervisors' mentoring. The post-certification monitoring system is also not optimal, as seen from the practice of borrowing names and the absence of periodic reporting obligations. This study recommends the need to strengthen the continuous monitoring system, increase socialization and evenly distributed training, integrate halal policies with company SOPs, and adequate financial support. Effective cooperation between the government, certification organizations, and companies in establishing an environment that supports halal product assurance is crucial to the successful implementation of halal certification.

Keywords: Compliance, Processes and Challenges, Halal Certification

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tantangan dan kepatuhan pelaku usaha dalam implementasi sertifikasi halal, khususnya di kalangan UKM di Surabaya. Studi ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif dan mencakup observasi langsung serta analisis dokumentasi di samping wawancara mendalam dengan pengawas halal, inspektur halal, dan pemilik bisnis steak. Temuan studi ini menyoroti beberapa hambatan utama yang dihadapi oleh UKM ketika mengejar sertifikasi halal, seperti kerumitan administratif dalam menangani NIB dan dokumentasi, akses terbatas ke pemasok bahan baku bersertifikat halal, dan ketidakefisienan dalam pembinaan pengawas halal. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan perlunya penguatan sistem

pengawasan berkelanjutan, peningkatan sosialisasi dan pelatihan merata, integrasi kebijakan halal dengan SOP perusahaan, serta dukungan finansial yang memadai. Keberhasilan implementasi sertifikasi halal sangat bergantung pada kolaborasi efektif antara pemerintah, lembaga sertifikasi, dan pelaku usaha dalam menciptakan ekosistem yang mendukung penjaminan produk halal.

Kata Kunci: *Kepatuhan, Proses dan Tantangan, Sertifikasi Halal*

Introduction

Business actors' compliance with halal certification has an important role in ensuring product quality in accordance with Islamic sharia standards (Azlina et al., 2024; Purnomo, 2023; Salsabila et al., 2023; Sani, 2023; Türk et al., 2024; Yuanitasari et al., 2024). Halal certification signifies that the product is safe for Muslim eating and guarantees adherence to Islamic regulations throughout the production, packaging, and distribution stages (Komodromos et al., 2021; Rafiki, 2019; Salindal, 2019; Septiani & Ridlwan, 2020). Compliance with halal standards can provide great benefits for business actors, especially in building consumer confidence, increasing market share, and strengthening business competitiveness in domestic and international markets (Ramadhan et al., 2021; Salindal, 2019; Santosa et al., 2022). According to Dinar Standard's Global Islamic Economy Report 2023, indicates that the market value of the global halal industry reached USD 2.8 trillion in 2022, with expectations for continued growth. The research emphasizes the rising demand for halal items in the worldwide market, encompassing food, cosmetics, and medicines. This presents a strategic opportunity for Indonesian enterprises to engage actively in the worldwide supply chain while enhancing the home market through the provision of halal-certified products.

Nevertheless, national data from the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH) indicates that the compliance rate of company operators in Indonesia regarding halal certification remains suboptimal, particularly within the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector (Z. E. Fitri et al., 2023; Iqbal et al., 2023). Among the approximately 64 million MSMEs in Indonesia, a limited percentage possesses halal certification (Sani, 2023). A survey by LPPOM MUI indicates that by 2023, hardly 10% of MSMEs in the food and beverage industry would possess halal certification, highlighting the significant obstacles encountered by entrepreneurs in fulfilling halal standards (A. Fitri et al., 2022; Masyhuri & Risdiyanti, 2022). Furthermore, the requirement for halal certification is governed by Law No. 33 of 2014 about Halal Product Assurance and Government

Regulation No. 39 of 2021, which stipulates that all products entering, circulating, and being traded in Indonesia must possess halal certification. The execution of this mandate occurs in phases, first with the food and beverage industry on October 17, 2019, and will subsequently encompass non-food industries, including cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, in the next year. This rule exerts pressure on firms, particularly MSMEs, to change to remain competitive in a progressively competitive market.

Various studies show that halal certification provides significant benefits for businesses, but also presents challenges that need to be overcome and non-compliance can damage reputation and hinder business development (Sani, 2023). Therefore, research is needed that can find out in detail about the challenges and adherence of corporate entities to halal certification research by Yusuf *et al.* (2022) found that halal certification increases business profits, because certified products are more attractive to Muslim consumers and increase national sales (Yusuf *et al.*, 2022). However, challenges such as complicated application processes and potential political interests remain. Rafiki (2019) asserts that halal certification increases consumer confidence and sales, but MSMEs often face obstacles in understanding the certification process (Rafiki, 2019). Zuhdi *et al.* (2023) emphasized that insufficient knowledge on halal certification poses a significant barrier for MSMEs, despite the introduction of a self-declaration method (Zuhdi *et al.*, 2023). Sani (2023) and Wannasupchue *et al.* (2021) found that the intricate certification procedure and elevated expenses constitute significant obstacles, particularly for MSMEs (Sani, 2023) (Wannasupchue *et al.*, 2023). Awareness and adherence of corporate entities in acquiring halal certification to enhance competitiveness (A. Fitri *et al.*, 2022).

From previous research, a research gap can be drawn with the research objective of knowing the challenges and compliance faced by business actors for halal certification opinions. This study will examine the adherence of micro and small enterprises to ensure halal goods following the acquisition of halal certification in accordance with the halal product assurance system (SJPH). Numerous problems and factors influencing the degree of adherence to SJPH following the acquisition of halal certification. The research was done at Surabaya as the site of investigation. Surabaya was selected due to its ranking as the third highest region for halal certificate issuances, as per BPJPH statistics, and its status as the capital of East Java Province, which hosts several significant commercial entities. This study seeks to assess the adherence of micro and small enterprises to ensure halal goods following the acquisition of halal certification in accordance with the halal product guarantee system (SJPH).

Methodology

This study used a qualitative methodology to investigate the attitudes, experiences, and obstacles encountered by company stakeholders, halal supervisors, and halal inspectors in acquiring and sustaining halal certification. This approach is relevant for understanding non-numerical aspects in depth, such as the perception of business compliance.

The focus of this study is on business entities within the micro and small enterprises (MSE) sector, particularly those involved in the food and beverage industry in the Surabaya region. The selection of this unit of analysis is based on the significant contribution of MSEs in the halal market and economic characteristics. Surabaya is the area with the third highest number of halal certificate issuances according to BPJPH data and Surabaya serves as the capital of East Java Province and is home to significant business entities.

The data collection methods used include: 1) In-depth interviews with business actors, halal supervisors, and halal auditors to obtain information related to experiences, views, and challenges faced in the halal certification process; 2) Observation of the production process and the implementation of the halal assurance system at the business site; 3) Documentation encompasses an analysis of halal certification regulations and policies, along with a review of secondary data pertaining to compliance levels and challenges identified in prior literature. The participants of this research include Steak business owner (RY), Halal Supervisor (P) and Halal auditor (MF).

The data analysis technique employed is qualitative descriptive analysis, encompassing stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Any information collected will be categorized based on certain themes to facilitate understanding of the factors that influence compliance with halal certification and its impact. This research applies data source triangulation to increase data validity. Triangulation is done by comparing interview results, documentation data, and relevant secondary data. This approach ensures that the research results are an accurate representation of the reality experienced by business actors, halal supervisors, and halal auditors regarding halal certification.

Results and Discussion

Based on data taken through interviews and observations, it was found that there are challenges in the compliance of MSE business actors in guaranteeing halal-certified products. The findings of the study can be seen in the following table:

Table 1
 Research Findings On The Challenges Of MSE Business Actors' Compliance In
 Ensuring Halal-Certified Products

Category	Key Findings
Administrative Challenges	Difficulties in managing Business Identification Number (NIB) and halal documentation.
Raw Material Access	Limited availability of halal-certified raw material suppliers.
Efficiency of Halal Supervisors	Lack of effectiveness in mentoring by halal supervisors.
Post-Certification Monitoring System	Monitoring is not optimal, presence of name-borrowing practices, and no mandatory periodic reporting.
Business Awareness and Compliance	Low understanding of business actors regarding the certification process and implementation of SJPH.
Financial Support	Certification costs are considered a burden for MSMEs.
Halal Policy Implementation	Need for integration of halal SOPs into company operations and establishment of an internal supervisory team.
Consumer Trust	Consumers only look at the halal logo without understanding the certification process.

Business Actors' Compliance

Compliance in halal certification pertains to the degree to which businesses adhere to the standards and regulations established by halal certification bodies, ensuring that their products align with the requirements of Islamic sharia. (Fischer, 2016). This concept encompasses the complete production process, from raw materials to finished products, while ensuring the absence of contamination with non-halal ingredients(Fischer, 2016). Factors influencing business compliance with halal regulations encompass knowledge and attitudes towards these regulations, along with sensitivity to government policies regarding the halal certification process(Othman et al., 2017). Furthermore, external integration between suppliers and manufacturers within the supply chain is crucial for ensuring adherence to halal standards(Tan et al., 2017). The trust and reputation of halal certification bodies also influence the

extent to which businesses comply with halal regulations, especially in countries with significant Muslim populations (Sayogo, 2017).

Adherence to halal regulations significantly enhances product quality and bolsters consumer confidence. Studies show that companies that comply with halal certification tend to have better innovative performance and improve their market performance.(Salindal, 2019). Consumer trust in halal products also increases when they believe that the product has gone through a rigorous and reliable certification process.(Ismail & Hussein, 2019). Compliance with halal standards not only ensures high product quality but also increases consumer loyalty, which in turn can increase sales and company profits (Karim et al., 2018).

Adherence to halal regulations significantly impacts product quality and consumer trust. The level of compliance among business actors is significantly influenced by factors including the comprehension of halal certification's importance, financial preparedness, and support from governmental and related institutions. Studies show that MSMEs that have obtained halal certification show better business performance than those that have not been certified, because consumer confidence increases significantly(Santosa et al., 2022). Compliance with halal certification among MSMEs remains low, primarily due to the associated costs and the complexity of the certification process(Giyanti & Indriastiningsih, 2019).

The effectiveness of halal certification is evidenced by enhanced sales, improved business reputation, and broader market reach. Studies indicate that MSMEs possessing halal certification exhibit enhanced competitiveness in both domestic and international markets(Salindal, 2019). Halal certification assures consumers and enhances business operational and financial performance. (Salindal, 2019). Adherence to halal standards is crucial for the success of certification, as businesses that effectively comply with regulations generally experience improved business outcomes(Amer, 2023).

Halal Certification Success

Halal certification success is characterized by its ability to enhance business performance across financial, operational, and reputational dimensions. Success indicators encompass enhanced logistics performance, product innovation, and consumer confidence in halal-certified products(Ab Talib et al., 2017). It also includes high compliance with halal standards which affects the overall performance of the organization (Othman et al., 2017).

Halal certification positively impacts the performance of MSMEs, particularly in enhancing financial and operational outcomes. Research shows

that MSMEs that have halal certification have increased production capacity, product quality, and customer loyalty (Giyanti & Indriastiningsih, 2019). Halal certification serves as a marketing instrument that enhances the competitiveness of MSMEs in both domestic and international markets. (Santosa et al., 2022).

Compliance with halal standards significantly impacts the effective implementation of halal certification. High compliance guarantees adherence to halal requirements throughout the production process, thereby enhancing product quality and consumer confidence. This is empirically proven where compliance with halal standards contributes to improving the innovative and financial performance of companies (Salindal, 2019). Research also shows that companies that comply with halal standards tend to have better market performance than those that do not comply (Giyanti et al., 2021).

The Halal Product Guarantee System (HPS) in Indonesia is established under Law Number 33 of 2014, which mandates that all products available in Indonesia must possess a halal certificate. The transition from voluntary to mandatory regulations seeks to safeguard Muslim consumers and guarantee that the products they purchase adhere to the defined halal standards (Fajrin & Mohammad, 2021; Gunawan et al., 2021). The Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH) serves as the regulatory and supervisory body for the halal certification process (Faridah, 2019; Suparto et al., 2016).

The implementation of SJPH encompasses several steps, including the socialization and support of business actors, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). A significant number of MSMEs lack comprehension regarding the significance of halal certification and the procedures necessary for its acquisition (Munawar et al., 2023; Savitri & Putra, 2022). Community service activities that incorporate training and mentoring are essential for enhancing the knowledge and skills of business actors in the implementation of SJPH (Hamidatun & Pujilestari, 2022; Savitri & Putra, 2022). For example, at UD Sofia Cookies, socialization on SJPH helped overcome the knowledge constraints faced by business actors (Tandepadang, 2023).

The Halal Product Guarantee System also includes a 'self-declare' mechanism, which allows businesses to register their products independently with assistance from BPJPH. (Daud & Mahmud, 2023). This program seeks to enhance MSMEs' access to halal certification, enabling them to compete in a progressively competitive market (Rimayanti et al., 2023; Saati et al., 2023). Furthermore, halal certification is anticipated to enhance product value and broaden market share (Hasibuan, 2023).

Challenges in the implementation of SJPH include insufficient awareness among businesses regarding the advantages of halal certification and limitations in financing (Jakiyudin & Fedro, 2022; Savitri & Putra, 2022). Continuous efforts in socialization and assistance are essential for business actors to comprehend and effectively implement SJPH (Saadah & Sampoerno, 2023).

SJPH represents a significant advancement in guaranteeing the halal status of products in Indonesia, with its effective implementation dependent on cooperation among government entities, certification organizations, and business stakeholders (Hartati, 2019; Khairuddin & Zaki, 2021).

The halal certification verification and validation checklist tool is designed to guarantee that all components of the halal certification process are thoroughly completed and adhere to established requirements. This instrument includes several important components:

1. Business Actor Statement
Includes a documented pledge by commercial entities to adhere to halal standards throughout the whole production, distribution, and marketing processes of products. This declaration also encompasses the commitment of corporate entities to uphold the sustainability of the Halal Product Guarantee System (SJPH) implementation.
2. Brand or Product Name
Includes clear identification of the product being submitted for certification, including the trademark or product name used in the market. This aims to ensure that any halal-certified product is easily recognizable to consumers.
3. Material List
Includes comprehensive information on all raw materials and additives utilized in the production process, along with the provenance of the components and the halal certification for each item (where applicable). It is crucial to guarantee the absence of non-halal or questionable substance in the product.
4. Halal Product Process
Encompasses a comprehensive account of all phases of manufacturing, from the acquisition of raw materials to processing, packaging, and distribution. Every phase must be executed in compliance with halal standards to avert contamination or infringement of sharia.
5. Halal Product Assurance System Manual (SJPH)
Contains guidelines that include policies, procedures, and internal control mechanisms to maintain halal consistency in every product and process. The SJPH manual includes an organizational structure, duties and responsibilities, reporting procedures, and corrective actions if non-conformities are found.

This checklist instrument is designed to help businesses, auditors and authorities ensure that every aspect of the halal certification process is fulfilled. This instrument aims to ensure that all phases of verification and validation operate efficiently, accurately, and in accordance with regulations, thereby instilling security and trust in Muslim consumers and enhancing competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

Process, Challenges and Compliance of Business Actors Post-Certification

According to interviews with informants (RY), who are steak business proprietors, the process of acquiring halal certification commences with attendance at a seminar and training program conducted by the University in partnership with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). This program is supported by CSR funds from Bank Indonesia, which aims to increase compliance and participation of MSMEs in halal certification. Business entities receive support from supervisors responsible for offering technical advice during the certification application procedure.

"...For the initial stage, it was a seminar on halal. Why should it be certified?..." (RY, October 25, 2024)

Socialization and training about halal certification methods are crucial for assisting SMEs in comprehending the halal certification requirements in Indonesia. This study shows that 32% of the surveyed SMEs are aware of the regulations related to halal certification, but only 25% have actually implemented the procedures (Sulistyaningsih et al., 2019). Technical guidance through training is very effective in increasing business actors' understanding of the halal assurance system (Siska et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the execution of socialization in the field sometimes faces challenges with adequate technical support, leading to a deficiency in corporate stakeholders' comprehension of the intricate certification procedures (Hakim & Putri, 2022; Wibowo et al., 2023). Business actors (RY) revealed that they had problems with halal supervisors who did not do their job properly, causing confusion in implementing SJPH requirements.

"...But at that time my supervisor was a bit unclear. No help at all..." (RY, October 25, 2024)

The inadequate comprehension of company stakeholders regarding certification procedures frequently results from insufficient counseling and mentoring initiatives, adversely affecting the compliance of SMEs with halal certification. While enterprises recognize the advantages of halal certification, they want more direction to adhere to the requirements accurately (Mellita et al., 2020). A critical element of the halal certification procedure is the compliance with

administrative standards, particularly with the Business Identification Number (NIB). The phenomenon of reluctance of MSE actors in taking care of NIB is often rooted in anxiety about tax implications, as expressed by (RY):

"...What are the steps that must be fulfilled to get halal certification. Starting the first time is, I really remember, NIB. That is a must. [...] MSME people rarely want to deal with the tax world..." (RY, October 25, 2024)

This observation is in line with the research results of Dartanto *et al.* (2020) who identified a correlation between perceived tax burden and resistance to business formalization through NIB (Dartanto *et al.*, 2020). (RY) explained that administrative complexity is further increased by the need for comprehensive documentation of raw material procurement transactions such as the obligation to attach purchase receipts for the last three months.

"...the filling process is what makes it long. [...] I had to bring all the notes. Yes, that's true. There is no one who keeps it for sure, if MSMEs are like this. Right? Logically, we shop at the market, where are the notes at the market..." (RY, October 25, 2024)

This remark highlights the disparity between legislative expectations and the actual realities of micro and small enterprises, particularly with transactions in conventional marketplaces. The primary obstacle in executing halal certification is the availability of certified raw materials, particularly from conventional sources. This aligns with the research findings of Budiyoko *et al.*, 2022, which indicated that the scarcity of halal material vendors complicates the acquisition of halal-certified raw materials for company operators (Budiyoko *et al.*, 2022).

"...the hardest thing is to find a halal-certified chicken supplier. That, that's the most difficult..." (RY, October 25, 2024)

Additionally, the findings from interviews with informants revealed that (RY) has implemented various measures to uphold the consistency of halal certification, encompassing operational procedures and collaborative strategies with suppliers to ensure product quality standards align with halal requirements. According to the findings from interviews with informants (RY), business entities uphold halal product standards by procuring raw materials from halal-certified sources and doing both internal and external audits. Continuous coordination with suppliers is an important aspect carried out by (RY) through establishing partnerships with halal-certified suppliers and conducting routine verification of raw material halal documents to ensure product quality remains according to halal standards, although there are often obstacles in the availability of certified raw materials. Internal audits serve to guarantee the constant use of halal processes, whilst external audits conducted by authorities offer further

confirmation of conformity (Giyanti et al., 2021). Periodic audits conducted by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) play a significant role as a form of external monitoring that ensures that the production process remains compliant with halal requirements (Giyanti et al., 2021).

"...Every few months or a year. Minimum maximum a year. There must be an audit... So sometimes they hold random audits to see if this is still using this..." (RY, October 25, 2024)

Maintaining consistency, apart from expanding market access even internationally, also aims to increase consumer confidence (Kristiningrum et al., 2021). RY underscored that the perspective of commercial entities regarding halal certification as a long-term investment is seen in their dedication to the continual utilization of certified raw materials:

"...we as entrepreneurs, if it is already labeled this and it is already legalized, why should we move (raw materials that have been audited)? Just for the sake of pursuing profits that might be bigger, but not necessarily..." (RY, October 25, 2024)

Business representatives (RY) indicated that despite customers' limited awareness of halal certification, this does not deter business actors from obtaining halal certification due to the reassurance it provides in sales, which is viewed as an advantage in entrepreneurship (RY). However, efforts to maintain consistency require investment in the form of time, costs and additional resources, especially in ensuring the availability of certified raw materials and conducting ongoing audits. Salindal's (2019) research supports these findings, showing that businesses that maintain halal standards consistently not only gain increased consumer loyalty but also show better market performance. This confirms that consistency in maintaining halal standards contributes positively to business competitiveness in domestic and international markets (Salindal, 2019).

Responsibility in the Execution of Halal Product Assurance by Halal Supervisors

Interviews with informants (P) suggest that accountability is a crucial component in the execution of the Halal Product Guarantee (JPH). Accountability refers to the obligation of JPH organizers to be able to account for their activities to the community, which is the highest holder of sovereignty. As a supervisor, it is important to understand that monitoring of business actors must be carried out consistently. However, often the compliance of business actors with halal certification can be doubted. (P) revealed that one of the main problems identified was the practice of borrowing names in the certification process.

"...often their compliance is a little lax because there are those who just borrow names for registration [...] sometimes they just borrow names without really understanding the process..." (P, September 25, 2024)

Compliance with halal standards is often poorly monitored so that the current supervision system has significant gaps. (P) criticized that halal certificates issued indefinitely do not ensure ongoing compliance by business operators with the established conditions, further complicated by a cumbersome and protracted reporting process that hinders operators from reporting alterations in their raw materials or production methods.

"Halal certificates are valid for life after obtaining a certificate, they feel safe and no longer monitor product consistency [...] in halal certification there is no annual reporting obligation from businesses to ensure products remain according to standards." (P, September 25, 2024)

It is important for the government and relevant institutions to conduct regular monitoring after certification is granted. This aims to ensure that halal-certified products continue to meet the stipulated requirements. If there is no ongoing supervision, there is a risk that businesses will neglect compliance after obtaining a certificate. The integrity of consumer trust is jeopardized in this matter. The interviewee (P) said that customers frequently see the halal mark on products without understanding if those products genuinely comply with halal criteria.

"Accountability is closely related to consumer trust. Consumers often only see the halal logo without knowing the actual conditions in the field." (P, September 25, 2024)

Consequently, the dissemination of information concerning the significance of comprehending halal certification requires enhancement. Consumers with a comprehensive grasp of halal certification often favor halal-certified items, therefore enhancing market competitiveness (Jumiati et al., 2023). Community gatherings or social media initiatives can effectively inform the public on identifying authentic halal items. MSEs encounter significant financial obstacles. The interviewee (P) stated that

"Most business actors are not aware that the registration alone is 650 not including the audit and other files." (P, September 25, 2024)

This cost is a burden for small businesses that want to comply with regulations. Although halal certification provides added value in terms of competitiveness, especially for the global market, there are still many obstacles in its implementation. Interviewee (P) also observed that compliance with halal standards is minimal in the field.

"compliance with standards is minimal in the field; many small businesses only focus on sales without paying attention to compliance with applicable regulations." (P, September 25, 2024)

Interviewee (P) revealed that the existing training system is also uneven, resulting in gaps in the capacity development of stakeholders.

"Training is only given to assistants. There is no special training for business actors or supervisors." (P, September 25, 2024)

The success of Halal Product Guarantee (JPH) requires collaborative efforts between the government, related institutions, and businesses to strengthen accountability systems and sustainable supervision. Without consistent monitoring post-certification, the potential for violations of halal standards will remain, which in turn can undermine consumer confidence. In addition, financial challenges and lack of equitable training for business actors add to the complexity of implementing halal regulations, especially for MSEs. Therefore, strategic steps are needed such as more intensive socialization, ease of reporting, and adequate financial support so that all parties can carry out halal certification with full responsibility, to achieve products that truly meet the halal standards desired by the community.

Implementation of Halal Policy and Challenges in Certification by Halal Auditors

Interviews with informants (MF) indicate that company operators responsible for executing halal policies inside organizations must establish clear processes to guarantee the appropriate implementation of all operational aspects linked to halal goods.

"This commitment is like the establishment of a halal policy based on indicator procedures that can be seen as a form of implementation such as SOPs related to all processes in the business." (MF, September 25, 2024)

This shows that halal policies must be integrated with procedures that can be measured and followed by all lines of company operations. In other words, the successful implementation of halal policies depends not only on managerial commitment, but also on the preparation of clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) that are implemented at every stage of the production process. Research shows that well-structured SOPs can improve consistency and compliance with halal standards, which in turn will increase consumer confidence in these products.(Haryono & Handayani, 2018; Rahmanita et al., 2023). In addition, (MF) explained that it is important for businesses to implement visual supervision, such as installing banners or posters containing information about halal policies in the production area.

"With the banner, with the SOP, the commitment in the halal policy can be seen from there, at least like that." (MF, September 25, 2024)

Research indicates that while some small enterprises have acquired halal certifications, they frequently have difficulties in regularly applying the Halal Product Assurance System (HAS), resulting in possible breaches of halal principles (Tristiana & Makhtum, 2024). The placement of banners with information about the Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) in the manufacturing area exemplifies the dedication of company operators to implement halal principles at every level of the process. This serves as a reminder for employees to always pay attention to established halal standards and avoid mistakes that can damage the halalness of the product. In this context, the importance of SOPs in ensuring that every step in the production process meets halal criteria becomes very clear, because SOPs serve as a guide that directs all operational activities to comply with established regulations and standards (Wulandari, 2022). Furthermore, (MF) states that to ensure the sustainability of the halal policy implementation, business actors need to form a halal supervisory team consisting of various parties responsible for each part of the company's operations.

"This halal supervisor team contains ... business leaders or business owners, halal supervisors, who are controlling the halal product process." (MF, September 25, 2024)

This team has a very important role, not only as a supervisor, but also as a facilitator who ensures that every part of the production and distribution process complies with halal principles. This shows that implementing a halal system in a company requires a clear organizational structure, with a clear division of tasks for each party involved in monitoring and implementing halal policies. In the context of MSEs, the main challenge lies in the limited human and financial resources to form an effective team and implement the necessary procedures. The halal supervisor emphasized that,

"The formation of this halal supervisory team has been established by business actors in the company, issued a decree and so on." (MF, September 25, 2024)

However, in practice, MSEs often have difficulty involving adequate resources in this team, which can hinder the optimal implementation of halal policies. Socialization and mentorship initiatives, exemplified by the Halal Supervisor Team in MSEs, are crucial for enhancing the knowledge and comprehension of MSE stakeholders about halal certification (Asmawati et al., 2024; Pardiansyah et al., 2022). In relation to halal supporting documentation,

(MF) underscores that each raw material utilized in the production process must possess a valid halal certificate.

"The halal certificate issued by MUI is usually still valid and within a period of time, some are 3 years, some are 4 years, and this can still be valid," (MF, September 25, 2024).

The presence of a halal certificate is essential to verify the halal status of raw materials. The halal certification process in Indonesia encompasses many stages, including the examination of raw ingredients and the issue of a fatwa by accredited bodies, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI)(Fatmi et al., 2024). The halal supervisor (MF) added that if the raw materials do not yet have a halal certificate, businesses are required to find other supporting documents, such as Certificates of Analysis (CoA) or laboratory test results, to guarantee the halalness of the materials,

"If we make shrimp paste, for example, and there is no halal certificate, then there are indicators that we can trace through the producer or supplier." (MF, September 25, 2024)

In addition, (MF) explains that in the face of new raw materials that do not yet have a halal certificate, companies must report and verify these materials through the procedures set out in SJPH.

"In SJPH, it should already be in the attachment section, yes, there is a new material application form." (MF, September 25, 2024)

This demonstrates the importance of a clear verification and documentation process for new raw materials to ensure that they meet halal standards. To ensure the uniformity of halal products, continuous audits and monitoring of the production process are essential. (MF) underscores the significance of routinely performed audits.

"If, for example, new ingredients are used, there must be a new ingredient application form in SJPH." (MF, September 25, 2024)

This shows that the process of internal auditing and regular monitoring is an integral part of the halal assurance system. In the absence of frequent audits, firms jeopardize their oversight of halal manufacturing elements, potentially compromising the quality and integrity of the halal products manufactured (Haryono & Handayani, 2018). Furthermore, frequent audits can function as a mechanism to enhance knowledge and comprehension among businesses about the significance of halal certification, hence bolstering customer confidence in their products(Ulfin et al., 2022). The application of effective management techniques, including regular audits, may guarantee that all facets of halal product manufacturing and distribution adhere to set standards. This helps to both

corporate sustainability and general social and economic sustainability (Jumiati et al., 2023).

Conclusion

Halal certification is pivotal in enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs in Indonesia. However, its implementation is fraught with significant challenges. These include administrative complexities in acquiring NIB and other documentation, difficulties in sourcing suppliers of halal-certified raw materials, and ineffective coaching by halal supervisors. Additionally, the practice of borrowing names during the certification process and an inadequate post-certification monitoring system given that certificates are valid for life without periodic reporting obligations further complicates compliance. Certification costs remain a substantial burden for MSMEs, despite their benefits in enhancing competitiveness. To improve the effective implementation of halal certification, it is crucial to strengthen the post-certification monitoring and oversight framework, enhance outreach and training for all stakeholders, and integrate halal policies into corporate standard operating procedures. Additionally, providing sufficient financial assistance to MSMEs to help meet certification requirements is essential. The successful execution of halal certification hinges on effective coordination among the government, certification bodies, and businesses to create an ecosystem that ensures the integrity of halal products.

In this study, there are still several limitations that need to be considered. The main limitation of this study is that the informants are limited to MSE business actors in the food sector. Based on these limitations, the researcher gave recommendations to the next researcher to expand the scope of informants by examining more varied informants, not only from the MSE sector but also medium and large-scale businesses. In addition, the next researcher is also advised to expand the scope of the research by involving business actors from various other halal industry sectors such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, fashion, and halal tourism to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of halal certification in various business sectors.

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