



MSMEs Awareness in Halal Certification from an Operations Management Perspective

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Abstract

Providing halal certification is considered as one of the tools that can strengthen the position of Indonesian MSMEs. This is due to the ability of MSME products that have halal status to become a competitive advantage for Indonesia on the international stage. This study will analyze the factors that can increase the awareness of MSMEs in Indonesia regarding the importance of obtaining halal certification. This research uses descriptive methods through survey techniques. The survey technique used is a questionnaire technique that must be filled in by the subject and also conducts opinion polls, as well as in-depth interviews with a sample of respondents selected based on the requirements for the length of time MSMEs have been established, the type of MSME business, and ownership of current halal certification. MSMEs have realized the importance of halal certification even though many of them have not processed it due to a lack of education. However, even though they are not yet halal certified, from an operations management perspective, the production process that is carried out is halal by ensuring that both the materials used and the processes carried out are in accordance with Islamic law.

Keywords: Awareness; Halal Certification; MSMEs; Operations Management

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1. Introduction

The presence of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) has a very important significance in a country's economy, so they are often considered as the engine of growth ([Devi et al., 2023](#); [Nulkar, 2014](#)). In Indonesia, focusing on the development of MSMEs has been a key agenda, not only to strengthen the national economic structure, but also to create jobs and boost the distribution of goods and services. According to information from the Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs as of

March 2021, the number of MSMEs currently reaches 64.2 million units with a contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 61.07 percent, equivalent to a value of IDR 8,573.89 trillion. Of the 64.2 million MSMEs, only around 725,000 products have halal certification, coming from around 405,000 MSMEs ([Masduki, 2023](#)).

Providing halal certification is considered as one of the tools that can strengthen the position of Indonesian MSMEs ([Muklis & Sari, 2020](#)). This is due to the ability of MSME products that have halal status to become a competitive advantage for Indonesia on the international stage. As a country with a majority Muslim population, the halal factor plays a very important role in the global market ([Fadillah et al., 2023](#)). Global trust in Indonesian products is enhanced by their halal status. According to information from the Global Islamic Economy, Indonesia ranked fifth in 2019-2020 in the Islamic economic index among 73 countries worldwide. The government is well aware of the tremendous potential of these MSMEs ([Dinar Standard et al., 2021](#)).

The Job Creation Law and Law No. 33/2014 are also directed to advance MSMEs that carry the halal principle ([Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 33 Tahun 2014 Tentang Jaminan Produk Halal, 2014](#)). The initiative to provide free halal certification to MSMEs is the first step to continue supporting MSMEs in Indonesia so that they are not only successful domestically but also on a global scale. The government hopes to revive the Indonesian economy through encouraging MSMEs, so as to build domestic and foreign consumer confidence in the production of halal products. The aspiration is to produce halal products to continue to grow and even become the largest in the world, penetrating the global market ([Puspitasari & Urumsah, 2021](#)).

Developing MSMEs that have competitiveness and become an integral part of the global halal value network is a complex challenge for the Indonesian government. The Indonesian government is continuously working to ensure that export products receive halal certification, with the hope that the country can be recognized internationally as a major producer of halal goods and services. However, in this process, there is another challenge involving the awareness of MSMEs players in submitting their products for halal certification voluntarily.

Previous studies have revealed several barriers, including the high cost of halal certification, the complexity of the paperwork, and the time required to obtain halal certification ([Alqudsi, 2014](#); [Md Nawi et al., 2022](#)). This results in the reluctance of MSME players to engage in the certification process. The government has issued various regulations to encourage the accelerated development of halal products in Indonesia, including through the Free Halal Certification that called SEHATI program.

This active effort was made by the government in an effort to realize Indonesia's vision as the main production center for halal products by 2024 ([Deputy of Economy Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning, 2019](#)). This study will analyze the factors that can increase the awareness of MSMEs in Indonesia regarding the importance of obtaining halal certification, as well as how MSMEs can apply the principles of halal compliance in their business activities. The expected result of MSMEs applying halal compliance principles in their business activities includes increased market reach among Muslim consumers, enhanced consumer trust and loyalty, opportunities for participation in global halal supply chains, and improved competitiveness and reputation. This alignment with halal standards not only ensures market relevance and competitiveness but also promotes ethical business practices, contributing to the economic development of Indonesia.

The underlying reasons for conducting this research stem from several factors. Firstly, the increasing global demand for halal products presents a significant economic opportunity for MSMEs in Indonesia, given the country's large Muslim population and its potential to become a global halal hub. Secondly, while there have been efforts by the government to promote halal certification through initiatives like the SEHATI program, there remains a gap in understanding the factors influencing MSMEs' awareness and adoption of halal compliance practices. Previous research has identified

barriers such as cost, paperwork complexity, and time constraints, but there is a need for a deeper understanding of these issues and potential solutions. Additionally, as Indonesia aims to become a major producer of halal goods and services by 2024, it is imperative to explore strategies to increase MSMEs' participation in the halal economy. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by examining factors influencing MSMEs' awareness of halal certification importance and exploring practical approaches for integrating halal compliance into their business activities. By doing so, it contributes to the body of knowledge on halal economy development and provides insights for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and MSMEs themselves to foster sustainable growth in this sector.

2. Literature Review

In principle, a halal certificate is a sign of recognition of the halal status of a product given by the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (HPGA) based on a written halal fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (IUC), in accordance with the provisions in Government Regulation Number 39 of 2021 ([President of The Republic of Indonesia, 2021](#)). The existence of this halal certificate has great significance, especially since the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, which prohibits the consumption of food that is considered haram in their religious teachings ([Salindal, 2019](#)). Therefore, halal certification is concrete evidence that a food product does not contain components that are prohibited in Islamic religious principles. In addition to the halal aspect, halal certificates also act as a guarantee of the quality and quality of the product.

The advantages of halal certification for consumers include providing peace of mind and precise, detailed, and honest knowledge ([Othman et al., 2016](#)). The Muslim community has the view that halal-certified products are the safest and most convenient choice for consumption or use. Therefore, with halal certification on a product, it will generate confidence and a sense of security in consumers in consuming these products.

The presence of a halal certificate will also encourage producers to put the halal logo on the product, so that people can easily identify it and get accurate and detailed information ([Akhtar et al., 2020](#)). This is in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 letter c in Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection, which stipulates that consumers have the right to obtain precise, clear, and honest information about the condition of goods or services.

For producers, halal certification marked with a halal logo on the product will give the product its own characteristics. This makes the product different from others and even superior because it has gone through a rigorous process to obtain halal certification. As a result, this product will have a unique selling point. Another advantage for manufacturers is that it strengthens consumer confidence. With halal certification, the product will be viewed by consumers as good and safe, which in turn increases the interest of the Muslim community to buy the product.

3. Methodology

This research uses descriptive methods through survey techniques where researchers will interact directly with research subjects or test subjects. The survey technique used is a questionnaire technique that must be filled in by the subject and also conducts opinion polls, as well as in-depth interviews with a sample of respondents selected based on the requirements for the length of time MSMEs have been established, the type of MSMEs business, and ownership of current halal certification. Through descriptive methods, researchers will analyze the awareness of MSMEs on halal certification which is studied based on an operations management perspective.

4. Results and Discussion

The importance of recognition of halal certification continues to grow over time and is increasingly recognized globally. This is reflected in the significant growth in the halal industry worldwide ([Othman et al., 2017](#); [Wibowo & Ahmad, 2016](#)). Its influence is not limited to countries with a

majority Muslim population, but also spreads to a global scale including in countries where the majority of the population is not Muslim (Almelaih Alfzari et al., 2020). One proof of this progress can be seen from the increasing number of requests for cooperation in recognizing halal certificates by overseas halal institutions from various countries. To date, HPGA has received nearly 97 halal certificates by overseas halal institutions from 40 countries, with the majority coming from non-Muslim countries. Despite this, the results of a survey involving 120 MSME entrepreneurs in West Java engaged in the production of food and beverages revealed that around 32% of them have obtained halal certification, while the remaining 68% do not yet have such certification (figure 1).

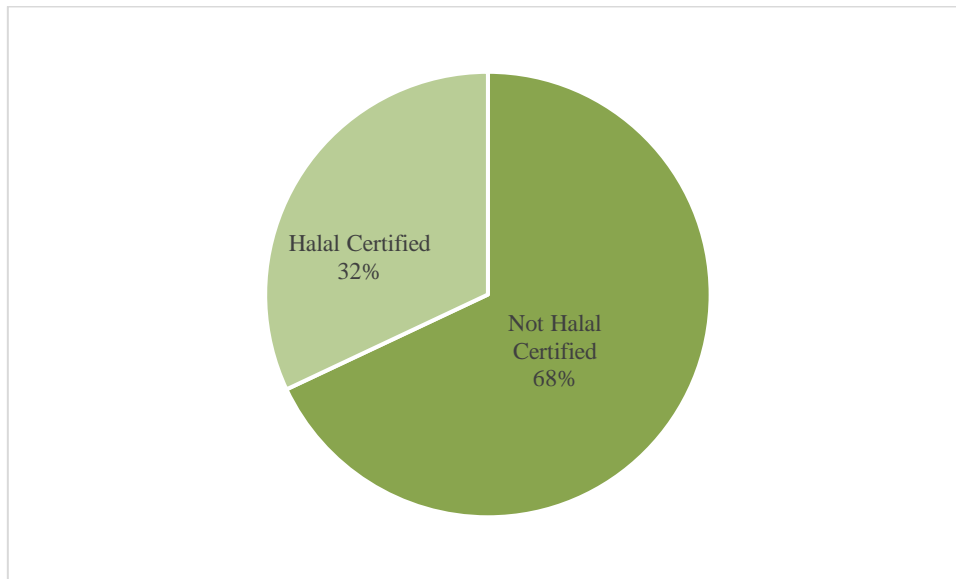


Figure 1. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Halal Certification Ownership

Of the 68% of respondents who revealed that their products have not yet received halal certification, there are a number of factors that contribute to this situation (figure 2). In fact, having a halal certificate will give MSME products a significant advantage in the market. Especially for Muslim consumers, both in domestic and international markets, products with halal certification have a higher appeal. In addition, halal certificates also have the potential to strengthen consumer confidence. This is because the certificate indicates that MSME products have undergone a rigorous testing and verification process to ensure that all ingredients used meet the established halal standards.

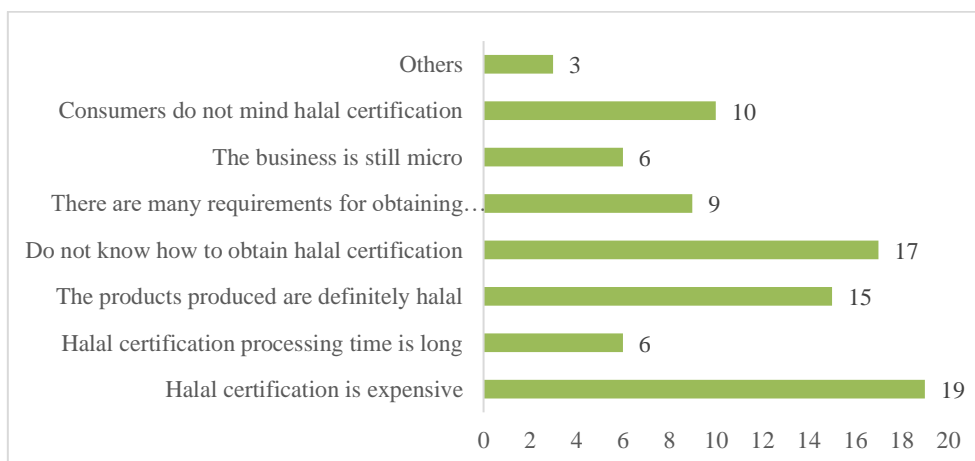


Figure 2. Factors causing MSMEs not yet Halal Certified

The factor that causes MSMEs not to be halal certified according to respondents is the assumption that processing halal certification is expensive, this assumption is supported by the factor of their ignorance of processing halal certification. They assume that processing halal certification is long, difficult, and complicated, expensive, and there are many requirements that must be met even though they still have to focus on running a business. In addition, some MSMEs believe that the products they produce are halal, use halal materials, and are processed halal, so that is enough with this belief. MSMEs also feel that not many consumers ask about the halal certification of their products because they apply the principle of mutual trust. Many of the MSMEs studied have also only been operating for around 2-5 years with a micro business scale, so their focus is still on producing goods and seeking business capital.

Currently, the Indonesian government has shown its strong commitment in encouraging MSME entrepreneurs to immediately obtain halal certification. One of the strategies implemented through HPGA is to facilitate MSMEs in obtaining halal certification more easily, in accordance with existing regulations in the Job Creation Law. This effort is implemented by dividing the halal certification scheme into two, namely through the regular process and through self-declaration by business actors. This action is carried out in conjunction with a significant reduction in the regular halal certification tariff which previously reached a figure of around IDR 3 million, now only IDR 650 thousand (Haspramudilla, 2022). The tariff for self-declare halal certification has also been adjusted to only around IDR 230 thousand (Haspramudilla, 2022). All of these steps reflect the government's determination to support MSMEs to make it easier and more affordable to obtain halal certification. Through the results of in-depth interviews with ten respondents specifically representing the micro and small business sectors that produce food and beverages, in addition to the seven main factors that cause them not to be halal certified, there are other factors including the respondents' concern that they cannot manage the production process with halal standards that are too rigid. Especially from the aspect of the production process, including the standard of the place of production, and the guarantee of suppliers who are halal certified as well. Furthermore, the researchers analyzed the actual halal production awareness of the ten respondents.

The ten MSME respondents already understand the requirements of halal certification, namely using halal materials, both main and supporting materials and processing in a halal manner. The results of research in measuring halal compliance in MSMEs, especially in halal compliance from an operations management perspective in terms of the input-process-output approach, it can be seen that all interrelated elements, especially starting from the raw materials obtained then going through the transformation process to become finished goods, are highly integrated with each other because if one of the processes is passed not in accordance with Islamic principles, then until the final process the finished goods cannot be said to be halal goods.

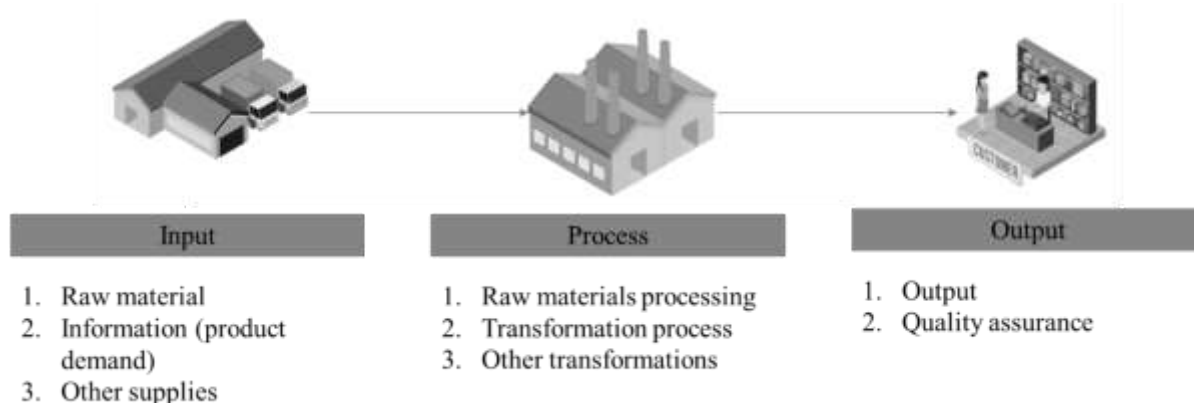


Figure 3. Operations Process Transformation

Based on the illustration in Figure 3, the initial stage involving inputs includes raw materials, information on demand specifications, and other supply support. This step has a very important role for MSME entrepreneurs in running their business, because a lack of vigilance in choosing halal suppliers or providing halal guarantees can result in a dubious transformation process.

The production transformation area refers to the process of converting raw materials into finished products. In this context, MSME entrepreneurs carry out a production process that converts raw materials into finished products or services. The processing of raw materials in the transformation area requires assurance in accordance with the principles of halal sharia. Considering the ethical aspects of the process (Islamic etiquette and health etiquette) need to be considered in this transformation process, such as in the food processing stage. Employees or operators involved in this process need to involve stages in accordance with Islamic principles. These steps start from Praying for the Blessings of *Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* and involve the use of hygiene attributes such as gloves, masks, headgear, and other elements that are considered important in maintaining the ethics of the production process.

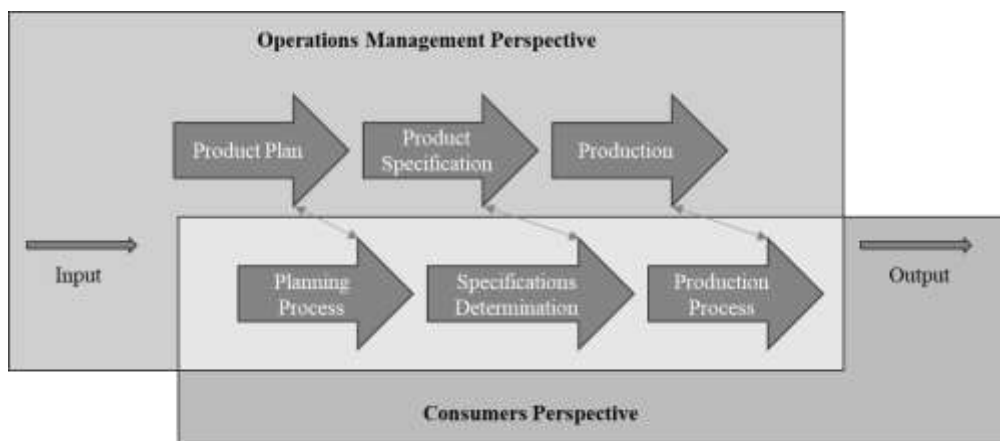


Figure 4. Operations Management and Consumers Perspective

When looking from an operations management perspective as well as a consumer perspective at the transformation stage, there are three important steps that must be implemented by MSMEs. This stage starts with product planning, which is based on the goal of creating halal products. This series of planning stages includes:

1. Selection of raw material suppliers who already have halal certificates.

The selection of raw material suppliers with halal certification ensures that the entire supply chain remains halal-compliant from the outset. This step mitigates the risk of contamination or non-compliance with halal standards at the source ([Abdullah et al., 2018](#)). Research by [Almelaih Alfzari & Omain \(2022\)](#) highlights the significance of halal certification in ensuring the integrity of the supply chain and building consumer trust.

2. Ensuring that the payment process to suppliers does not involve usury mechanisms.

Ensuring that the payment process to suppliers is free from usury mechanisms aligns with Islamic finance principles. This step not only ensures compliance with halal standards but also reflects ethical business practices, which are increasingly valued by consumers ([Ashraf, 2019](#); [Indarti et al., 2020](#)). Previous studies have indicated that consumer trust and loyalty are positively influenced by perceived ethical behavior of businesses ([Delistavrou et al., 2017](#); [Piligrimiene et al., 2020](#)).

3. Ensuring that in the sale of products to consumers, no elements related to the usury system are applied.

In the sale of products to consumers, avoiding elements related to the usury system is essential for maintaining halal integrity throughout the distribution process. Research by [Jannat & Islam \(2019\)](#)

and [Yusuf et al. \(2020\)](#) emphasizes the importance of transparency and integrity in halal transactions to uphold consumer confidence and loyalty.

By considering this perspective, MSMEs are directed to follow the series of steps that have been described to ensure that all stages of transformation run in accordance with the established halal principles. Product specifications that have been set since the planning stage are provisions that originate from the planning process. MSME actors have the responsibility to ensure that the products produced comply with these specifications, so that the halal products produced can be guaranteed. Setting these specifications is an important step in the production process, because the entire production process must comply with the principles of halal law. This includes:

1. Selection of devices that come from legal sources, in other words, are not obtained through means that violate Islamic principles such as usury, lottery, gambling, and interest payments.
2. The use of other supporting materials that do not violate Islamic principles, such as materials that do not contain haram elements such as pork or other prohibited animals, as well as ingredients that are not intoxicating. In addition, the raw materials used must also be clear in nature according to Islamic views.

The end result of the production process, namely the finished product, for MSMEs engaged in the halal food and beverage industry is a product that does not contain ingredients or elements that are haram or prohibited for consumption by Muslims. This includes both raw materials, food additives, auxiliary materials, and other supporting materials. In addition, if there are processing processes that involve genetic engineering or food irradiation, all of these processes must comply with Islamic sharia guidelines in their management.

MSMEs have realized the importance of halal certification even though many of them have not processed it due to a lack of education. However, even though they are not yet halal certified, from an operations management perspective, the production process that is carried out is halal by ensuring that both the materials used and the processes carried out are in accordance with Islamic law.

The theoretical results obtained from this discussion have several implications for the implementation of halal principles in MSMEs. Firstly, by following the series of steps outlined, MSMEs can enhance their competitiveness and market relevance within the halal industry. Adherence to halal standards not only caters to the needs of Muslim consumers but also appeals to a broader audience seeking ethical and high-quality products.

Secondly, the implementation of halal principles in operations management fosters trust and loyalty among consumers, which can lead to increased sales and brand reputation. This aligns with the findings of [Mubarok & Imam \(2020\)](#) and [Islam et al. \(2023\)](#) who suggest that halal certification positively influences consumer purchasing behavior and brand loyalty.

Lastly, the practical implications of these theoretical results lie in the potential for MSMEs to capitalize on the growing demand for halal products both domestically and internationally. By investing in halal certification and aligning their operations with halal principles, MSMEs can position themselves for sustainable growth and expansion in the halal market. Moreover, this can contribute to the overall economic development of Indonesia by tapping into the lucrative halal economy.

5. Conclusion

According to respondents, the main factor that causes MSMEs to not obtain halal certification is the view that the process of obtaining halal certification is considered expensive. This view is supported by their lack of knowledge regarding the management of halal certification. The Indonesian government has attempted to increase the number of MSMEs that have halal certification by dividing the certification scheme into two, namely through a regular process and also through self-declaration by business actors. Although there are still many MSMEs that do not have halal certification, from an operations management perspective, it is important for the production process to uphold halal

principles. This is realized through ensuring that both the materials used and the steps applied in the production process comply with the principles of Islamic law.

To address the challenges of obtaining halal certification for MSMEs, several suggestions can be proposed. Firstly, awareness and education programs should be conducted to enhance understanding of the certification process and its benefits. Secondly, streamlining the certification process, providing training on halal compliance practices, and promoting the self-declaration option can make certification more accessible. Lastly, fostering collaboration and networking among MSMEs and stakeholders can facilitate knowledge sharing and collective action. Further research could focus on evaluating the effectiveness of government initiatives and exploring innovative approaches to support halal-certified MSMEs.

Author contribution statement

The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: study conception and design: Umari Abdurrahim Abi Anwar; data collection: Haditsa Qur'ani Nurhakim; analysis and interpretation of results: Karina Hamidah, Shinta Fauziah Azzahra, Zalva Hijatul Arkani; draft manuscript preparation: Umari Abdurrahim Abi Anwar. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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