

EXPLORING HALAL CERTIFICATION MENTORING UNDER THE SELF-DECLARE SCHEME: A CASE STUDY OF MSMEs IN CIANJUR AND JATINANGOR

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Abstract

Indonesia holds significant potential in developing its halal industry; however, many micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have yet to obtain halal certification due to financial constraints and limited access to information. To address this issue, BPJPH launched the Self-Declare scheme and the Free Halal Certification program (SEHATI). Although the process is simplified, many business owners still struggle to understand the certification procedures through the SIHALAL platform. This study aims to examine the mentoring process for halal certification under the Self-Declare scheme for MSMEs in Cianjur and Jatinangor. Using a qualitative case study method, data were collected through observation and direct mentoring of seven MSMEs without halal certification. The mentoring process was carried out in three main stages: socialization of the free halal certification program, issuance of Business Identification Numbers (NIB) and SIHALAL account registration, and the distribution of halal certificates for MSMEs that passed verification. The results show that the mentoring successfully helped all seven MSMEs obtain halal certification and improved their understanding of the importance of halal certification in maintaining consumer trust. However, several challenges remain, such as limited understanding of the SIHALAL system, administrative difficulties with required documents, and the restricted SEHATI quota, which hampers other MSMEs from obtaining certification. In conclusion, the Self-Declare and SEHATI schemes have proven effective in assisting MSMEs to acquire halal certification. Nevertheless, broader outreach and more intensive mentoring are necessary to ensure more business owners can optimally benefit from these programs.

Keywords: Halal Certification, Self-Declare, MSMEs, Mentoring, SIHALAL

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country with a Muslim-majority population, faces an urgent need to provide halal products that are guaranteed to be safe. Halal-certified products are not only a mark of quality but also a form of adherence to sharia principles, offering peace of mind for Muslim consumers (Qodir & Muhim, 2024). According to Mardi (2023), this need is becoming increasingly relevant due to the growing global Muslim population and the rising demand for

halal products. Furthermore, the 2023 State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) report ranks Indonesia second in the halal food sector. However, many business owners have yet to register their products for halal certification. One of the main reasons is the perceived high cost of certification. Given the majority of business owners and consumers in Indonesia are Muslim, along with high demand for halal-compliant food, it is crucial for entrepreneurs to obtain halal certification to maintain consumer trust (Maulida & Nawawi, 2024).

In response to this issue, the government, through the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH), launched the Self-Declare halal certification scheme. This scheme enables MSME actors to independently apply for halal certification with the assistance of Halal Product Process (PPH) facilitators. The main difference between the Self-Declare and regular certification schemes lies in the verification process. In the regular scheme, the product's halal status must be tested by a Halal Inspection Agency (LPH), while in the Self-Declare scheme, halal assurance is based on the business owner's statement, which is then verified by PPH facilitators (N. Kasanah & M. Husain, 2022). The Self-Declare policy is grounded in Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance and reinforced by the Omnibus Law of 2020. According to Triastuti et al. (2024), the Self-Declare scheme aims to simplify the certification process, making it faster and more efficient, as the entire process is conducted online through the SIHALAL platform. This scheme targets MSMEs that meet certain criteria, namely, products with low risk and simple production processes.

The Self-Declare scheme has been further supported by the Free Halal Certification program (SEHATI), launched by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2021. This program has been implemented gradually, with a target of reaching up to 1 million MSMEs by 2024. Through SEHATI, MSME owners can obtain halal certification at no cost, thereby helping those hindered by financial barriers in the certification process (Garnis & Ratna, 2023). However, many MSMEs are still unaware of the Self-Declare scheme under the SEHATI program (Rachman et al., 2023), resulting in a relatively low number of applicants for halal certification.

Cianjur Regency, with its growing agriculture and food sectors, and Jatinangor Subdistrict, known as a student hub, both host a large number of MSMEs. In these areas, the presence of Halal Product Process (PPH) facilitators is essential in assisting MSME owners with the halal certification process. Field findings show that some MSMEs in Cianjur and Jatinangor have successfully obtained halal certification with the support of the local government and community leaders. However, many MSMEs located farther from urban centers still lack certification. Therefore, as a PPH facilitator, the author sees the need to reach a broader area within Cianjur and Jatinangor to ensure a more equitable halal certification process and assist more MSMEs.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article employs a case study approach using a descriptive qualitative research method. Case study research focuses on specific situations that require multiple data sources, as well as processes of triangulation and result verification to ensure the accuracy of findings (Prihatsanti et al., 2018). Therefore, it is essential to collect in-depth data to enable a comprehensive case analysis. The Halal Product Process (PPH) mentoring activities were carried out with seven MSMEs in Cianjur Regency and Jatinangor Subdistrict, with the following details:

Table 1. List of MSMEs Receiving Halal Certification Mentoring

No.	MSME Name	Address	Owner's Name
1	Kedai Merah Putih	Jl. Kolonel Ahmad Syam RT.02 RW.04 (Jalan Sayang), Desa Cikeruh Kec. Jatinangor	Herry Setiawan
2	Tahu Krispi Sumedang	Jl. Raya Cirebon - Bandung, Sayang, Kec. Jatinangor	Wawan Sobandi
3	Singkong Keju Barokah	Jl. Halteu Maleber, Hegarmanah, Kec. Karangtengah, Kab. Cianjur	Muhamad Ikbali
4	Es Kelapa Muda Imastuti	GG ARROHIM, Sayang, Cianjur, Kab. Cianjur	Dendi
5	Pisang Goreng Tanduk Kaka	Sayang, Kec. Cianjur, Kabupaten Cianjur	Yudi Kurniawan
6	Kedai Otentik	Jl. Aria Wiratanudatar 2, Kec. Karangtengah, Kabupaten Cianjur.	Lilis Noviawati
7	Pisang Tanduk Kang Riki	Jl. Arif Rahman Hakim No.56, Solokpandan, Kec. Cianjur, Kabupaten Cianjur	Riki Wijaya

The mentoring process was carried out gradually from November 17, 2024, to January 25, 2025, and was divided into three (3) main stages:

1. First stage: Socialization of the free halal certification program under the self-declare scheme to MSMEs.
2. Second stage: Assistance with the issuance of Business Identification Numbers (NIB) and the registration of SIHALAL accounts for MSMEs.
3. Third stage: Distribution of halal certificates and labels to MSMEs.

DISCUSSION

Socialization of the Free Halal Certification Program under the Self-Declare Scheme

Two MSMEs in Jatinangor and five MSMEs in Cianjur had not yet obtained halal certification. This was primarily due to a lack of clear information and understanding regarding the urgency of halal certification for their businesses. Additionally, the perceived high cost of obtaining the certificate discouraged them from applying. In fact, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has launched the Free Halal Certification Program (SEHATI) to assist business owners. However, due to limited socialization of this program, many MSMEs still do not have halal certification, even though they have been operating for over a year. Therefore, halal facilitators must actively disseminate information and reach out to MSMEs that are unaware of the benefits and procedures of the free halal certification program.

The socialization process with the seven MSMEs included information on how to apply for free halal certification through the self-declare scheme. The materials presented covered the registration process, required documents, eligibility criteria, and the estimated time for certificate issuance. However, the most crucial aspect of this scheme is that MSMEs wishing to apply for halal certification must use raw materials that are classified as “no risk” and supporting materials that are already confirmed to be halal. Additionally, the production process must be simple and comply with halal standards (Nour, Khalid; Nurlailiyah, 2024). Therefore, facilitators must directly monitor the production process to ensure all requirements are properly fulfilled (Azizah et al., 2023).



Figure 1. Monitoring of MSME Production Processes

Source: Personal Documentation

Overall, the socialization was carried out gradually from November 17, 2024, to January 25, 2025, by visiting each MSME’s business location directly, from the first to the seventh. Survey results indicated that all visited MSMEs conducted their production processes in a clean manner and directly at their business premises. Furthermore, they used raw materials that are considered safe, consisting of simple ingredients whose halal status is already guaranteed. Thus, all seven MSMEs met the criteria to obtain halal certification through the self-declare scheme.

Assistance with SIHALAL Account Registration for Business Owners

The halal certification application process has evolved and can now be conducted online through the SIHALAL website via smartphones with an internet connection at <https://ptsp.halal.go.id/>. The Halal Information System (SIHALAL) is a web-based service platform developed by BPJPH to facilitate business owners in the halal certification registration process and improve the efficiency of halal certification services. The implementation of SIHALAL aligns with Government Regulation (PP) Number 39 of 2021 Article 148, which mandates that the halal certification services provided by BPJPH must utilize an integrated electronic system. Through this platform, the halal certification process can reach a broader and more inclusive range of the population (Soehardi et al., 2022).

Although the system simplifies and expedites the halal certification process, the seven mentored MSMEs did not yet understand how to navigate the SIHALAL platform. As a result, they struggled to input the necessary data and documents into the system. Therefore, the author

needed to assist these MSME owners with registering their accounts and submitting their data through the SIHALAL platform. The self-declare halal certification process via SIHALAL is illustrated in the following flowchart:

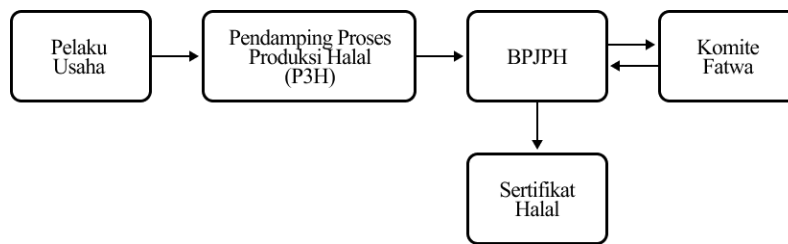


Figure 2. Flowchart of the Halal Certification Process (Self-Declare Scheme)

Source: (Fitri, 2023)

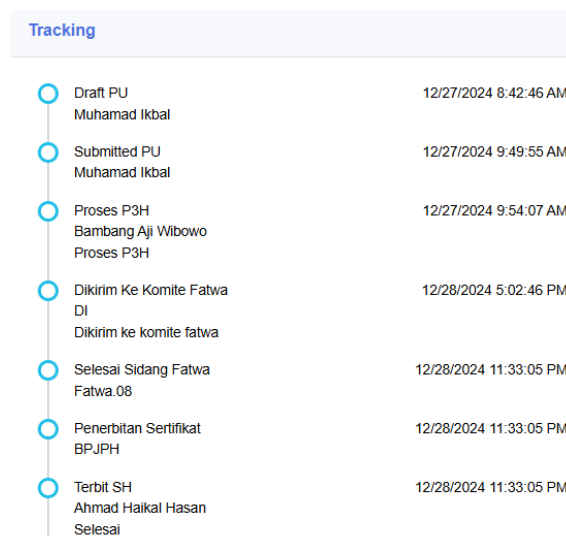


Figure 3. Halal Certification Process for One of the MSMEs

Source: Personal Documentation

The author provided assistance to business owners at every stage of the halal certification application process, starting from the issuance of a Business Identification Number (NIB) via <https://oss.go.id/>, registration of a SIHALAL account, to the completion of business identity details and the uploading of application data, including the list of raw materials and production processes. Following this, the Halal Product Process Assistance (P3H) was conducted to verify and validate the business owner's declaration regarding the materials used and the production methods employed. Subsequently, BPJPH reviews the mentoring results through the system before forwarding them to the Fatwa Committee. The Fatwa Committee then evaluates the submission and determines the halal status of the product through a fatwa session. If the product is declared halal, BPJPH issues a halal certificate, which can be downloaded directly by the business owner via the SIHALAL platform. This process can be completed in as little as two days, although in some cases, it may take up to 30 days, depending on the completeness of the documentation and the verification process required.

The halal product process assistance activities conducted by the author successfully led to the issuance of halal certificates for seven MSMEs. In addition, the mentoring process

significantly improved the business owners' understanding and awareness of the importance of halal certification in ensuring product quality and gaining consumer trust.



Figure 4. Issuance and Handover of Halal Certificate to MSMEs

Source: Personal Documentation

Although seven MSMEs have been reached, the free halal certification mentoring program can still be extended if additional SEHATI quotas become available. At present, the author faces limitations due to the restricted quota, while many MSMEs in Cianjur and Jatinangor have yet to receive support for free halal certification. Demand for this program among business owners is relatively high, as the benefits extend beyond legal assurance of product halalness to enhanced competitiveness in the market. Therefore, if additional quotas are provided, this mentoring program can be expanded further to assist more MSMEs.

Challenges in Implementing the Free Halal Certification with the Self-Declare Scheme

The halal certification mentoring activities, carried out gradually from November 17, 2024, to January 25, 2025, successfully reached seven MSMEs in remote areas. This demonstrates that halal certification can be more widely implemented with the active involvement of university students as facilitators. However, several challenges were encountered during implementation. In addition to verifying and validating the business owners' declarations, ingredients, and production processes, facilitators faced administrative obstacles. One such challenge was the need to obtain a Business Identification Number (NIB), as none of the mentored MSMEs had one, even though it is a mandatory requirement in the SIHALAL system. Facilitators also had to assist in creating SIHALAL accounts for business owners who lacked an understanding of the online certification procedures and were unfamiliar with the necessary steps. Facilitators were responsible for entering all business owner data into the SIHALAL system, as many had difficulty navigating the process.

Beyond these technical issues, other challenges included the difficulty in identifying MSMEs that had not yet obtained halal certification, since many business owners in Cianjur and Jatinangor had already received it through local government assistance programs. Additionally, administrative issues arose, such as the loss of a national ID card (KTP) by one business owner, which resulted in the mentoring process being discontinued. Lastly, some

business owners expressed hesitation and distrust toward the facilitators, leading them to unilaterally withdraw from the certification process. In such cases, facilitators had to search for other MSMEs willing to participate in the halal certification program.

PPH facilitators are required to go beyond their primary duties, as field conditions often differ from what was initially planned. The facilitator's role is crucial in the halal certification process, not only in assisting business owners to obtain certification but also in establishing effective communication. Facilitators must be able to provide clear and detailed explanations of each stage of the process to help business owners feel confident and gain trust in the system. This ensures that they are cooperative and willing to complete the entire halal certification process from start to finish.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the halal certification mentoring using the Self-Declare scheme, it can be concluded that the program provides significant benefits for MSMEs, particularly in the Cianjur and Jatinangor regions. The mentoring not only assisted business owners in obtaining halal certificates but also enhanced their understanding of the importance of halal certification in maintaining consumer trust and product competitiveness. The mentoring process involved several stages, including the issuance of a Business Identification Number (NIB), SIHALAL account registration, data entry, and verification of product halalness.

Although the SIHALAL system was designed to simplify the certification process, many MSMEs still faced difficulties in using the platform, making the facilitator's role critical in ensuring the smooth implementation of the process. Despite successfully reaching seven MSMEs, many business owners remain uncertified due to limited SEHATI quotas and a lack of awareness about the program. Additionally, technical and administrative challenges, such as difficulties in accessing SIHALAL and incomplete documentation, have hindered the mentoring process. Therefore, further efforts are needed to expand the coverage of the free halal certification program and enhance public outreach so that more MSMEs can benefit from halal certification. Ultimately, this will help strengthen the development of the halal industry in Indonesia.

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