



**HALAL LABEL FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
(MSMS): OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES**

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Endang Kartini Panggiarti^{1✉}, Abdul Mustaqim², Enriko Teja Sukmana³

¹Universitas Tidar, ²Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, ³IAIN Palangkaraya,

✉ endangkartini2504@gmail.com

Abstract

This research aims to further study the role of halal labels on a package of food products processed by MSMEs, and explore the obstacles and challenges faced by MSMEs. The majority of Indonesians are Muslims, and of course, food choices are a top priority. The number of food choices in this market must certainly be in accordance with Islamic guidance, only halal food can be consumed. To fulfill that, of course, it is the obligation and responsibility of producers/MSMEs. This research method uses a qualitative approach with case study design from 2015 to 2020. The results revealed that, in some areas, there are still available both consumers and producers/MSMEs who are less concerned about the inclusion of halal labels in each product. In addition, there is still a high sense of consumer confidence in the production that the food served is halal because they know the natural raw materials used by producers without having halal labels. The recommendation of this study is the requirement of further socialization about the importance of halal certification in every packaged product for both consumers and manufacturers/MSMEs.

Keywords: *halal label; behavior; awareness*

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INTRODUCTION

The attachment of a halal label to a food product psychologically impacts customers regarding the quality of the designated product (Anam et al., 2017). Exclusively for Moslems, they require only halal food for consumption. It becomes a basic consideration and thoroughness for the Moslems in selecting the foods.

The different consumption pattern between one country over others depends on a country's norm and cultural value (Ackerman & Tellis, 2001). With its cultural diversity and religions, Indonesia also comes with a different perspective on consumption patterns. In Bali, it is allowed for its people to consume pork yet proscribe the cow. It is contrary to the Moslems that highly uphold halal and haram in food consumption since it impacts their religious value.

The determination of food quality depends on internal and external factors. Internal factors include taste, texture, scent, color, and appearance. At the same time, the external factors cover price, faith, label, brand, food symbol, and others (Keast, 2009). Also, according to Keast, it depends on the perspective and consumption pattern of each territory or country under different cultures.

Entrepreneurship becomes important for economic development since it creates business opportunities that reveal other monetary advantages. Halal is related not only to religious aspects, such as a halal certificate

or standard, but also as "the best value" for economic development (Zailani et al., 2015). Later, it can promote the existence of the halal industry, halal economy, and halal entrepreneurship. Halal, in general terms, is not only related to food but also non-food, such as cosmetics, composition, and pharmacy. Entrepreneurship is a business opportunity that is expanded to halal product marketing by sharing the success story of halal entrepreneurship. A person interested in developing a halal business is called a halal entrepreneur or halalpreneurs (Soltanain, 2015). Hence, a halal label must be attached to deliver trust in this halal product. Halalpreneur, as a Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise, must give confidence to consumers regarding his halal products. Without it, the customers have the right to cancel the buy due to their hesitation on halal aspects of the product.

Indonesia consists of various cultures and different social norms. In non-Moslem majority regions, the existence of a halal label will confirm the belief. On the contrary, in a Moslem-majority area, the absence of a halal label on a product will validate the belief. This study aims to explore deeper whether or not a halal label on a product can affect food selection.

In previous research studies about the halal label of a product (Huda & Muchisim, 2014; Sari & Junaidi, 2020; Siregar & Alam, 2018), one's attitude, religiosity, and norm

could affect a person's behavior towards food selection (Tuhin et al., 2020; Rahman et al., 2015), and motivation of an entrepreneur to become halalpreneur (Saltanian et al., 2016). Most of the previous studies that discussed the selection of halal food products referred to the behavior of costumers' purchasing: attitude, religiosity, and norms. Yet, fewer studies discussed the difficulties dealt with by the Moslem entrepreneurs in obtaining halal product guarantees on each product (Sotanian et al., 2016). Therefore, this study emphasizes whether or not a halal label on products produced by MSMEs still influences us in selecting the foods. There are many packed products distributed without a halal label or brand name. Generally, they are home industry-type products manufactured by undeveloped micro industries. Therefore, it can be stated whether the absence of a halal label on a product is due to a lack of understanding from both of producer that acts as the maker of food products or the consumer as the person who consumes the manufactured products made by the producer, and government as the body, which plays an important role in empowering the MSMEs. Therefore, this study accentuates the importance of identifying the obstacles dealt with by the MSMEs in materializing the foods with halal labels attached..

This study is interesting to carry out to recognize the preferences of Indonesian people as a Moslem-majority country on their

behavior towards foods influenced by religiosity. The novelty of this research is the religiosity and concern for consumed foods, particularly foods manufactured by MSMEs that have limitations in obtaining the halal certification from BPOM.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As Moslem with *taqwa* that always performs their routine act as *syariat* as the form of actualization of *ibadah* towards Allah S.W.T. put halal guarantee as one of the actualizations of Allah's protection of human. Before the existence of halal food law, Allah SWT's order and the word of Prophet Muhammad SAW are revealed in Al Qur'an and Hadist. Maslul (2018) explained the consumer protection law derived from Al Qur'an and Hadist. The law formulation sourced from QS Al Baqarah verse 168 (means O people, eat permissible good things out of what lies in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of ShaiTān (Satan); indeed, he is an open enemy for you, and QS Al Baqarah verse 172 (means O who you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided you with, and give thanks to Allah if Him it is that you serve).")Then a hadist narrated by Muslims and Ahmad, the prophet, said: (a) "Eating any predatory animal that has fangs is unlawful; and (b) Two kinds of dead meat and two kinds of blood have been permitted to us. The two kinds of dead meat are fish and locusts, and the two kinds of blood are the liver and spleen."

Both sources which regulate human life are Al Qur'an and Hadist, as life's instructions and guidelines, so the people can deliberate and avoid the path of satan's misguidance. Both guidance provides us with real faith to select halal from haram. Later, the halal definition was developed that surely can guarantee health and goodness that could prolong the human's survival.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Halal entrepreneurship is a new concept related to the development of the halal business activity. Halal entrepreneurship covers the functions, activities, and actions related to a certain organization's opportunity perception and creativity to pull it off (Bustaman, 2012).

Entrepreneurship is promoted from individual action. It includes the way, attitude, and individual actions (Rahmat et al., 2015). The theory that explains this behavior is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). According to TPB, in terms of buying intensity and subjective, one of the behavior predictors is attitude (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2015; Fishbein et al., 1980), a feeling of affection and unavoidable in general, called behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). In some communities, religion plays an important role in customer selection and behavior (Dindyal and Dindyal, 2003; Musaiger, 1993). Religiosity is one's obedience to his religion that is expressed by one's attitudes (Johnson et al., 2001). Many

halal purchasing are made by religious Moslems. A person's religiosity is a strong determinant of human behavior (Abror et al., 2019; Abror et al., 2020). It impacts attitude, norms, and halal purchasing among Moslems customers (Tuhin, 2020).

Yet, delivering trust to Moslem-majority people through the attachment of a halal label needs a complicated process involving registration to the Halal Certification Body (LAM). In Indonesia, the halal certification involves two institutions which are Indonesian Ulama Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia/MUI*) and Food and Drug Monitoring Agency (*Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan/BPOM*). Under MUI authority, there are Research Agency for Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics – MUI (LPPOM-MUI). In LPPOM-MUI itself, several criteria are set.

The Role of Halal Label

Anam et al. (2017) explained in their research that a product with a halal label attached could psychologically affect quality. Therefore, the product with a halal label represents not only the halal aspect but also the quality of the product. On the other hand, religiosity represents one's attitude, perception, and action (Amine and Hendaoui Ben Tanfous, 2012) towards a product. In Islam teachings, many are forbidden to be consumed, such as pork, alcohol, and others.

(Abu-Ras et al., 2010), Hindus are restricted to cow consumption or cow-originated products (Rizai et al., 2010). Only halal foods can be consumed in Islam (Ahmat et al., 2015). As previously explained by Vitell et al. (2009) and Pandey et al. (2015), a religious symbol in terms of quality intensity is a subject of attractiveness, as the effect of religion on customers (Mathras et al., 2016).

Customer discipline also contributes to purchasing behavior (Neat et al., 2007). As in each faith, for example, the pig and its derivative are forbidden to be consumed by the Moslems and Jewish. Islam allows consuming meat as suggested. The Christians neither limit nor reject any types of foods adapted from the culture. Islam believes in five faith pillars, one of which contains a specific restriction pattern that describes the religion. Restriction law presupposes the food consumption that requires halal in terms of characteristics and is free from the forbidden material and its derivatives. (Anam et al., 2017). The popularity of halal food escalates rapidly due to obedience to religion and animal safety, health, social security issues, and quality (Bonne et al., 2006; Bergeaud-Blackler, 2007).

This article aims to describe the halal label amidst micro business actors and

costumer's behavior regarding this halal label. The role of a halal label is debatable since it does not affect the customer's consumption behavior. Many producers have high omzet without necessarily selling the products with halal labels attached. This phenomenon emerges a big question on how the customer's behavior and business actors toward the halal label.

RESEARCH METHOD

Types of Research

This research applies study literature-based qualitative approach that studies various phenomenons about the halal logo as a brand in several areas in Indonesia, carried out by MSMEs. Moreover, the researchers review the challenges and obstacles dealt with by MSMEs while striving for the halal certification as required by LPPOM-MUI.

Duration and Location of the Research

Since this study explores the research result or findings from all over Indonesia, the researchers focus this study on articles that are published in a five years range and on Moslem-majority areas, which are Malang, Banyuwangi, Semarang, and others.

The research target/subjects are MSMEs situated all over Indonesia, particularly in Moslem-majority territories.

Procedures

The research procedure is carried out by examining and describing literature or case studies from various territories in Indonesia related to the above topic. Later, the researchers expand further studies and draw a conclusion regarding the halal label phenomenon and the exertions MSMEs should fulfill, as well as reveal the obstacles and challenges that must be confronted to get halal certification for the product.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Result of the Case Study

The attachment of the halal label on every product is important for a halal entrepreneur since it marks the responsibility actions in guaranteeing the product's halal condition. As cited in QS Al Baqarah: 168, "O people, eat permissible good things out of what lies in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of ShaiTān (Satan); indeed, he is an open enemy for you."

There are different challenges for every MSME in different areas in terms of the halal label. In Malang, several people believe as long as the materials and compositions of food they make do not go against the religious provision, it is considered halal, although the halal label is not yet attached. At the same time, many suggest that a halal label is required to sell their products that indicate the halal composition, even though the attachment of a halal label is unofficially

obtained from LPPOM-MUI. Some said that as long as a product originated from the original raw material, the product is considered halal, without an obligation to attach the halal label. Some argue it is not solely the material of the food signified by the halal label but also covers the production process, the production location, and the halal certification registered to LPPOM-MUI. Another opinion said that as long as their materials do not originate from haram material, then the products are considered halal since they originate from halal material. The absence of halal labels leads to difficulty in penetrating supermarkets or modern shops since the P-IRT and halal label are the conditions for the products that can be sold there. Yet, it is incomparable with the numbers of customers who buy the products. It means that the trust in products with halal labels attached or unattached is not comparable to the sales level (Sari dan Junaidi, 2020).

Another challenge dealt with halal label certification, as stated by Muslimah (2012), among others: 1) the process of certification, which is expensive and going through very long procedures, 2) some parties that still hesitate on the attachment of halal labels since many producers attribute the halal label without proposing the official certification to LPPOM-MUI; 3) the poor basic law since the halal characteristics for food products are accentuated voluntarily and

determined by producers; 4) the lack of consideration from producers of packed foods to the obligation of serving the community with halal products to promote legal certainty and protection to people, and 5) the lack of critics from Moslem customers as well of poor bargaining position towards the fulfillment of halal food products must be consumed, which leads to the non-halal production process that violates the Islamic teachings.

The halal product guarantee is also enclosed in the Republic of Indonesia Law No, 33 of 2014 on the Halal Product Guarantee (UUPJH) that regulates the implementation of Halal Product Guarantee (JPH). For the implementation of JPH, an agency called Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) was positioned as the subordinate and responsible to the Minister of Religion. BPJPH assigns the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH) to perform the halal assessment/test on food products. Later, LPH submits the result to MUI for halal recognition. According to Hasan (2015), several factors cause the adjournment of halal certification on products, which are 1) UUJPH hasn't been implemented as the operational standard since the Government Regulation (PP) hasn't been issued yet (later issued in 2021, called as The Republic of Indonesia Law No. 39 of 2021 on the Implementation of Halal Product Guarantee); 2) Lack of people awareness on product halal in the perspective of their religious obedience. This phenomenon happens in Palembang, South

Sumatera. This study is aligned with research conducted by Huda and Muchlisin (2015) in Surakarta, who indicated similar results, in which the MUI halal certification attached to the packed products give an insignificant influence on the costumers' decisions. Yet, in Ponorogo, only 69,3% of people care about and are aware of the halal label on the products and referred them as purchasing selection (Siregar dan Alam, 2018).

Discussion

Based on the above discussion, it can be notified that the awareness of producers on the halal label is still weak, and they are considered market-oriented producers with ignorance of legal impact. Then, under the existing law, it only serves the customers' complaints when they suffer a loss due to non-halal products. In fact, recent customers are less aware of packed products without the halal label. It is possible due to high trust in products that are distributed in the Moslem-majority areas. Probably, when living in the non-Moslem majority areas, the results will demonstrate different information.

Actually, the existence of an unofficial halal label on the product's wrap gives disadvantages to customers. The presence of LPPOM-MUI in society is purposed to give the protection of halal guarantee over a product. In the condition of less-aware customers, the presence of LPPOM-MUI is also less concern to society and producers. It may be indirectly

related to people's religiosity. The customers are less care, and the presence of LPPOM-MUI is no longer the attention of people and producers. It may be indirectly related to people's religiosity. Since the community only cares about reading the compositions, which are unharmed, or understanding that the products originated from materials that do not violate the aqidah. Therefore, people feel tolerable consuming food without a halal label. Not only the packed foods but all non-packed products are also treated the same way.

By considering this phenomenon, two factors must be restored. From the customers' perspective, the less awareness of the halal label. It might be caused by the trust in producers in the Moslem-majority areas. Moreover, if the producers/MSMEs are also Moslems.

On the other side, since the customers are less concerned about the halal label, the producers ignore the procedures to earn the halal product certification from LPPOM MUI to obtain the halal label. Meanwhile, the customers are not well-aware, and none file reports or complaints. LPPOM only observes while the halal label is used freely, with none of those products properly registered. Besides, there are no decisive actions regarding that from the related authorities. Moreover, even the government supports the MSMEs in selling their products in modern shops or supermarkets without the permission from

Halal Certification Agency, exclusively for products manufactured by MSMEs coached by the government. It turns out dilemmatic, in which both MSMEs and customers share weaknesses. Therefore, comprehensive improvement must be addressed to the government, LPPOM, MSMEs/producers, and people as the costumers. If it is postponed, the haram food covered by the halal label can probably be distributed everywhere. The Moslems are unable to identify or are less aware of the occurrences due to experiencing the indirect effect of the absence of a halal label. Necessarily, this halal label obligation is a moral responsibility of the producers to provide proper trust in their halal product guarantee.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

As a Moslems, consuming halal food is a must that might provide comfort because the foods are healthy and maintain life sustainability. Other than that, it complies with the value of religion and culture. Ensure the halal guarantee of the product; it should be the responsibility of the producers/MSMEs to fulfill the expectation of customers. So as customers, better to select the halal label attached to the products.

Yet, based on the review of the case study, in several areas, it is still found the community that less-concern about the halal aspect of the product, solely based on the halal label attachment. Since the halal label has no

significant impact on sales, the producers/MSMEs are less enthusiastic about registering the products to earn the halal guarantee certification from LPPOM MUI. It leads to many products being circulated without the halal label, either in traditional markets or modern markets, as well as supermarkets. The halal label is considered less important, apart from the fact that it can give confidence to customers that the products manufactured originated from natural and well-processed ingredients. The presence of LPPOM MUI originated addressed as a supervision office that monitors the food products distributed in the community. Yet, this agency is difficult to access by the producers/MSMEs due to the complicated, expensive process and insignificant sales.

Suggestion

The suggestion that may benefit the next research is the people's perception as customers about products with halal labels circulated among the people and the need for socialization to promote the people's welfare.

Implication and Limitation

This study broadens the insight that many MSMEs still need support from the government in the form of policy, economy-politics, raw material, and others. The expensive cost of having BPOM-certified complicates the less fortunate MSMEs. It triggers the emergence of the product without a halal label, with less-consider customers. These

products are mostly found in small supermarkets or surrounding shops. Besides, the proper mechanism is required to make halal labels potentially beneficial for people to meet their comfort. This study is based on a case study. For example, the producers and customers are socialized on the importance of consuming the product with halal labels and improving their religiosity, so they only consume halal foods, and producers are convinced as the people responsible for providing the service. The study is a literature review, so it is limited only to studying the existing phenomenons that happen in the field, either to producers or costumers, towards halal-labeled foods products.

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