Increasing the Competitiveness of Soy Milk MSME Products through Halal Certification Assistance

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Article Info	ABSTRACT		
Article history: Received Nov 29, 2024 Revised Dec 27, 2024 Accepted March 10, 2025	Micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) play an important role in the Indonesian economy, but they face issues such as lack of capital, access to markets, and ignorance about halal certification. In this article, we examine the hala		
Revised Dec 27, 2024	 certification socialisation and mentoring programme in Gerem Village, Cilegon City, as a strategic step to optimise the potential of small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the region. The programme's objectives are to increase community understanding, provide technical assistance, and ensure that products meet halal standards. This research was conducted qualitatively using a case study approach. The results and discussion show that halal certification has an important role in increasing the MSME market, improving product competitiveness, and improving product quality. In addition, this article addresses issues such as complexity, perceived high costs, and lack of public understanding of the importance of halal certification. However, the programme has the potential to increase consumer confidence, expand the market, and improve the overall economy of Gerem Village. 		

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's economy has long relied on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). They play a crucial role in job creation and maintaining the sustainability of communities at the village level. The presence of small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in various areas of the economy goes a long way in building a healthy and sustainable economic ecosystem. Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)

are an important part of the Indonesian economy. In the midst of global dynamics and increasingly fierce competition, MSMEs have great potential to drive local economies, create jobs, and strengthen communities at the village level. However, MSMEs in Indonesia face a number of serious challenges amidst intensifying global competition and ever-changing market dynamics. Some of the key barriers to overcome include limited capital, access to competitive markets, and knowledge of critical elements such as halal certification. Halal certification is essential to fulfil consumer expectations and open up wider market opportunities, especially in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia.

The world's largest Muslim population resides in Indonesia. According to data in 2020 from Global Religious Future, 209.12 million Indonesians, or almost 87% of the country's total population. There is a huge potential market niche for demand for halal food products, according to data from the Indonesian populace. In practice, a country's high Muslim population does not equal the demand for halal food products. Four factors influence consumers to choose halal products, including food: Awareness; Religious Belief; Halal Certification; and Marketing Concepts (Abdul Nassir Shaari & Mohd Arifin, 2009). The concept 'halal' also associates the concept 'Toyyib' meaning good. Thus, the meaning of 'halal' is anything which is permissible in Islam and good for human being. The integration of ethical values along with religious values opens up the boundary of halal industry from 2.8 billion Muslim consumer to non-Muslim consumer as well around the world. It is well accepted by non-Muslim consumers as a life style choice because of the values promoted by halal industry such as animal welfare, social responsibility, environment friendly, stewardship to earth, economic and social justice, and ethical investment (Pacific, 2010). Islam has guidelines and principles that are regulated by religious teachings, including in the consumtion of food and beverages. In Islam halal food is food that is allowed by Muslims, while haram food is food that is forbidden. This principle based on the Quran and Hadith, records of the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.

Allah, through this universe, has provided the best food that is abundant and plentiful. Considering the importance of food in human life, the Quran regulates and explains to us all about the halal and haram foods to be consumed. Human food supplies on earth come from the land and the sea. Then from both of them must be considered between halal and haram food for consumption. Because, the provisions of Islam are only allowed to eat halal food. The word of Allah (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 172-173):

Meaning: 'O you who believe, eat of the good sustenance We have given you and give thanks to Allah, if indeed to Him alone you worship. Verily, Allah has only forbidden to you carrion, blood, swine's flesh and animals that are called by the name of other than Allah when slaughtered. But whoever is compelled to eat them and does not desire to do so, nor does he

transgress the limits, there is no sin on him. Verily, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.' (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 172-173)

Regarding eating food that is not halal, Abu Hurairah said the Prophet's words which mean: 'Verily, Allah is good and accepts nothing but what is good. And indeed Allah SWT has commanded the believers with something that Allah also commanded the messengers. So, Allah said, 'O messengers, eat from good food and do righteous deeds.' (Al-Mukminun: 51) and Allah says: 'O you who believe, eat from the good sustenance that we have given you.' (Al-Baqarah: 172). Then the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) mentioned a man who travelled for a long time while he was dishevelled and dirty, and he raised his hands to the sky and prayed: 'O my Lord, O my Lord...' but his food was haraam and he was full of haraam things, so how could his prayer be answered?"

Halal food guarantees hygiene, safety, and quality food (Wahyu & Sheikh,2016). Consumers often identify halal food on the market by looking for a logo or label on food packaging. They know that the logo or label results from the halal certification procedure. Halal certification in the food industry refers to inspecting food processes from preparation, slaughter, materials used, cleaning, handling, processing, storage, transportation, and distribution based on *Syariah* or Islamic law (Yunos et al., 2014). Therefore, the appearance of the halal logo on a food product's packaging indicates that it has complied with Islamic law.

The Asian population, especially Indonesians, consume significant amounts of soybeans and its by-products such as soya milk. Soy is a basic food ingredient of traditional Asian cuisine used for thousands of years. Soy proteins contain wellbalanced essential amino acids except for sulfur-containing ones like methionine. They also have desirable textures with endless possibilities to formulate various sophisticate soy-based food products. Due their high protein content and versatility in developing food products, soy proteins are the primary supply of plant-based proteins and are widely consumed by diverse populations worldwide. Halal certification has a very important role, especially in the food and beverages industry. As is well known that in Islam, eating halal food is an obligation. Therefore, halal certification is something that must be done by business actors engaged in the food industry. In the halal certification process, training and certification of halal auditor competence are also needed as an effort to ensure that the products produced are truly halal and suitable for consumption in accordance with Islamic law.

Halal certification assistance emerges as a strategic step to optimize the potential of MSMEs in Indonesia to overcome these challenges. Halal certification is essential for customer convenience and opening up more market opportunities, especially in predominantly Muslim countries like Indonesia. This programme has great potential to empower local MSME players in the middle of villages such as Gerem Village in Cilegon City. This village was chosen because it has great potential to develop local MSMEs due to its rich culture and natural resources.

In this scientific article, we will present the data, findings, and analyses that we collected from interactions with MSME actors, field observations, and related literature. We hope that the results of our research can provide valuable insights for readers on the importance of halal certification assistance programmes in optimizing MSMEs at the village level. With a deeper understanding of the potential and challenges faced, we can formulate further steps in supporting sustainable economic growth in rural communities.

METHODS

The method is Qualitative descriptive is research approach used to understand phenomena based on participant perspectives through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data (Rusandi, 2023). This study aims to describe and understand certain behaviors, experiences, or phenomena in detail and depth. Focus on context, take a flexible approach and participants as the main data source.

Then the researcher carries out several stages in conducting this descriptivequalitative research. The first is to identify the Research Problem. Determine the topic or problem to be studied. Then, data collection, conduct in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and other relevant methods to collect data. Then analyze the data coding and categorization to find the main themes of the collected data. After that, data presentation, describes the research findings in narrative form that describes the phenomenon in detail. And finally, verification of findings ensures the validity and reliability of data through triangulation, member checking, and other validation methods.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Gerem Village is one of the villages located in the middle of Cilegon City, Grogol District, Banten. Cilegon City is one of the strategic industrial cities in Banten Province. This is due to the position of this city as an industrial city with industrial centers especially in the western part of the city. Most of the people work as steel factory workers, glue making, chemical production (Rahayuningsih, 2017). The decline in environmental quality due to industrial waste pollution that exceeds the quality standards of environmental management of air pollution can affect the cardiovascular system in the body. Research Hidayat (2023) Small air pollutant particles can enter the bloodstream and cause inflammation of the blood vessels, increasing the risk of coronary heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Long-term exposure to air pollution can also cause increased blood pressure and damage to blood vessel function. Air pollution can affect the function of the immune system, making the body more susceptible to respiratory tract infections, such as pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus infections.

Assistance For NIB And Halal Certification

Business Identification Number (NIB) is an identification code given by the Indonesian government to every business that has been officially registered in Indonesia. The function of NIB is the same as KTP for MSME players. From this NIB, it can provide business information about the business name, type of business, business address, and others. NIB itself consists of 13 numbers containing the region code, business sub-sector code, sequence number code and verification code. providing halal certification assistance with business actors starting with filling out an online form that is already available. In this case, fasilitator ask for identity related to MSME actors. Furthermore, assistance is carried out by making a Business Identification Number (NIB) through OSS or Online Single Submission. OSS is an information technology-based licensing system that integrates licensing in the regions, and the centre in order to facilitate domestic business activities. In this case, OSS can be used for business licences by business actors, such as micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), business entities, and individual businesses.

Next, the program facilitator helps in recording the type of business actor, whether an individual or an organization. The next step is to fill in the business actor's information such as name, gender, date of birth and address before agreeing to the applicable terms and policies. The Population Identification Number (NIK) and the business actor's contactable telephone number are also required in filling in the data. After the recording process is complete, the data will be verified. After being verified, the Business Identification Number (NIB) can be issued and given to the business actor. The benefits of this NIB can be used in processing business. permits and become other business permit documents.



After the Business Identification Number (NIB) is issued, business actors will then receive assistance for the halal certification process. The stages of managing halal certification are carried out through the SiHalal system, where the program facilitator assists MSME actors in creating a SiHalal account. After that, they will enter the information needed to apply for certification. The process of obtaining a halal certificate takes quite a long time until the certificate is finally issued. The following is an analysis of halal certification based on the data that has been collected. In addition, the existence of NIB and Halal Certification can also be a guideline for MSME actors in Gerem Village in maintaining the quality of their products in this increasingly developing era so that they can compete with other products.

Soymilk Packaging Assistance

Soy-based protein food manufacturers have produced a wide variety of food and drink products. summarizes the protein quality of whey, milk, and some plant protein sources, including soy, pea, and barley. Soy and pea are legumes that lack sulfur-containing amino acids (SAA), such as methionine and cysteine SAA, and grains like barley have a limited amount of lysine.

Protein	PDCAAS	Limiting Amino Acid (s)	Digestibility (%)
Soy	0.92 - 1.00	SAA	95-98%
Pea	0.66 - 0.91	SAA, Trp	83-90%
Barley	0.76 - 0.50	Lys	76-83%
Milk	1.00	None	84-94%
Whey	0.90-1.00	His	98-100%

Adapted from references Hertzler et., al (2020), Hughes et, al. (2011), Rizzo & Baroni (2018)

Soymilk has been validated as one of the most nutritious beverages due to its considerably high protein level, abundant poly-unsaturated fatty acid (PUFA) content, and various bioactive compounds. The protein content in soymilk is 2.88 g/100 g, which is comparable to that in bovine milk (3.15 g/100 g). Soymilk has a well-balanced amino acid composition with high true ileal digestibility of 92.3%, producing a digestible indispensable amino acid score (DIAAS) of 117% that can be classified as an "excellent/high" quality protein source (DIAAS \geq 100%) (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2011). The scores are greater than those of other plant-based foods, such as seitan (28%), tofu (97%), and pea emulsion (60%) (Reynaud et al., 2020). Soymilk is noted for its beneficial effects linked to bioactive compounds in soybean, which is abundant with isoflavones, soy saponins, and soy protein. Therefore, the health benefits of soymilk are enhanced by the physiological effects of the individual functional compounds in soybean. Isoflavones, one of the main bioactive components in soybean, are a type of flavonoid structurally similar to estrogen and known to exhibit estrogen-like activity (Bolca, 2014). Isoflavones in soybean exist mainly in the form of physiologically inactive glycosides (daidzin, genistin, and glycitin). Upon digestion, they are hydrolyzed to aglycones (daidzein, genistein, and glycitein) with higher bio-activities.



According to (Destrina et al., 2022), having a brand is very important because it helps businesses be able to compete. Since a logo is the first step in developing a brand, a business must design it carefully. Colour is as important in logo design as colour shape. It is another form of nonverbal communication that can be used to convey more complex messages. Combining various colour components can undoubtedly result in harmony, balance, and equilibrium, all of which impact sales. Logo development for MSMEs will have an impact on the selling point of the product itself. These components assist buyers in visualizing, describing and differentiating the goods on offer. The power of a logo is that customers will immediately associate it with the brand. There are many types of logos that can be created when the company name is presented in a unique way. One of the most important aspects of a brand to consider is colour. Businesses can thrive by using dynamic branding across a number of mediums, such as social media and packaging.



In making purchases, consumers not only pay attention to the type of product. But, also buyers pay attention to the brand of the product. Sometimes there are products with brand or without a brand. Brands provide several benefits to sellers. Brand benefits (Simamora, 2001) are:

a. Brands provide identity

Our products will be easily recognized, and sought after by buyers, because of the brand. This is the basic function of this is the basic function of the brand, namely as an identity giver for our products.

b. Differentiate with competitors

The second basic benefit of a brand is to differentiate our products from competitors' products.

What's the point of making a good product if it turns out that customers are not able to differentiate our products from competitors' products that are of lower quality. Distinguish our products from competitors' products whose quality is below our products.

c. Increase sales

If our brand is perceived well by consumers, then there is no doubt that they will tell everyone they meet about our products, they will tell anyone they meet about our products. That means increase in sales of our business.

d. Building loyalty

Customers who are satisfied with the products we sell, they will automatically put our brand not only in their heads but also in their hearts. They feel that they get many benefits from buying our products. Not only functional benefits, but also emotional benefits. They will always make repeat purchases without ever being dazzled by low prices, promotions and promises from competitor.

e. Make customers price insensitive

Just when we have fallen in love with someone, spending any amount of money is not a big problem as long as we can be with them. A big problem as long as we can be with the person we love. Likewise with brands, if customers have fallen in love with our brand, they will not care how much it costs to get our products. This means there is a bigger profit margin for our product.

f. Smooth marketing communication

Almost all marketing experts agree that the best adverts are the words that come out of the mouths of satisfied customers. out of the mouth of a satisfied customer. Indirectly, customers who are satisfied, will help promote our products and brand image. We don't have to spend a lot of money, time, and money on advertising.

Assistance Product Promotion

a. Promotion through social media

The usage of social media for branding issues was also the focus of interest for a good number of marketing. Via using social media, customers are more able to evangelize their own experience with many more customers. Accordingly, electronic word of mouth has more reach and influence relative to traditional word of mouth spreaded classical human interactions. The more capable can organizations build and sustain emotional and social ties between their customers and with their brands, the more such organizations could have a close and solid relationship with those customers. In this regard, social media applications are largely considered by firms worldwide to contribute to both customers experience and customer relationship management (Coulter and Roggeveen, 2012). By increasing the rate of content posting and sharing with customers over the social media platforms, firms are more able to foster the level of interactivity and association with their customers. the role of social media in shaping and forming customers' relationship with brands could be different according to the kind of platform used: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Line. Another content analysis study by Smith and Gallicano (2015) indicated that in comparison with YouTube, both Twitter and Facebook are more effective social media platforms that communicate with customer as well as create and present the brand stories. Nguyen et al., 2015 argued the role of social media on the brand innovation. They precisely mentioned that the knowledge created through social media platforms crucially predicts brand innovation

b. Promotion through online shops

Different electronic marketing resources for associations other than internet shopping are proposed by online organizations; the technique for expanding their business across online platforms has charmed and executed retailers to endorse brands and administrations. For the execution of improved displaying, the use of development (i.e., PC, web) in Internet shopping or ads is done. The example of web-based shopping is an effective trend that is accelerating. The opinion of the general public against web-based business is currently evolving and makes shoppers adventurous individuals in such a way.

According to Ermavianti & Suharsono (2019) promotion is advertising a product or brand, generating sales, and creating brand or brand loyalty, promotion includes communication methods used by marketing to provide information about its products, information can be verbal and visual (non-verbal).

1) Shopee

The Shopee marketplace is one of the growing marketplaces in Indonesia. The Shopee marketplace is currently being used by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for sales promotion. The use of the Shopee marketplace aims to make it easier for consumers to buy products sold at Shopee. In addition, consumers do not need to come directly to the production site. Consumers only need to place product orders through the Shopee marketplace, and the goods that have been ordered will be sent according to the address that has been given through the Shopee marketplace.

2) Tokopedia

Tokopedia was launched on 17 August 2009, the founders of Tokopedia are William Tanuwijaya and Leontinus Alpha Edison. Doing business on Tokopedia is very easy, just sell online by displaying pictures or photos to attract buyers by describing the products being bought and sold. The marketing strategy carried out by Tokopedia is through attractive advertisements by sharing promos or massive discounts with the provision of free shipping (postage) throughout Indonesia. The goal is to attract customers and increase trust for the creation of transloyalty (mutual trust) between sellers, buyers. The promotion carried out by Tokopedia is by developing interesting features, one of which is by displaying images of the desired items by photographing the image you want to sell, the feature can detect the image so that it appears on the homepage with the price variants listed by the supplier (Janah, Wahyuningsih, & Pusparini, 20119).

CONCLUSION

MSMEs play a significant role in improving the economy. However, MSME players still lack understanding of efforts that can help their business, especially not understanding the importance of digital marketing and business legality to the business being developed. It is difficult for small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to adapt to the digital changes taking place in the market because they do not understand them. Therefore, there is a need for training on the importance of digital marketing and business legality for MSME players so that they can master their use

and feel the benefits for their business. An understanding of business legality and the use of digital marketing greatly impacts the brand power of a business, leading to wider promotion of product sales.

The legality of beverage products is one of the most important reasons because:

- 1. Consumer safety: products that have met legality standards ensure that consumers will not experience health problems due to consumption of these products.
- 2. Brand trust: product legality can increase consumer trust in the brand being marketed. Consumers are more likely to buy products that have been verified by government agencies.
- 3. Effective marketing: products that already have legality are easier to market, both online and offline.

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