



Product Improvement Strategy for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises through Halal Certification Program in Metro City

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to find out the efforts made by MSME players in the city of Metro to obtain halal certificates as their business legality. **Methodology:** This research is field research that directly obtains data from primary data sources through interviews and is supported by documentation of information related to this research. **Findings:** Most of the MSMEs in metro cities get halal certificates from the Free Halal Certification (Sehati) program whose process is guided and assisted by certified Halal Product Assistance Officers (P3H). This halal certificate is one of the efforts of MSMEs to improve their products so that they can compete in local and international markets. MSME players should maintain the halal standards of their products after obtaining halal certificates so that these products remain of high quality and have competitiveness with local and international products. The Metro City Government through related agencies plays an important role in improving MSME products by ensuring the quality, and halalness of products so that they have competitiveness with products outside the region and also international products. The strategy developed by the Metro City Government was enthusiastically welcomed by MSME players in Metro City. This strategy can improve the economy of MSME players and also plays a role in improving the economy of Metro City.

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A. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are one of the main pillars of the Indonesian economy. MSMEs have a strategic role in creating jobs, increasing community income, and driving economic growth (Dhimas & Makhtum, 2022). Metro City is one of the cities with a significant economic growth rate in Lampung province. As an economic center, Metro City has various types of businesses, with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) being one of the main pillars that drive the local economy and become one of the sectors that support national economic resilience. MSMEs in Metro City play a very important role in creating jobs, reducing poverty, and improving community welfare.

Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics sourced from the Office of Cooperatives and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises of Lampung Province, especially Metro City in 2023, there were 19,270 MSMEs divided into 18,917 micro businesses, 305 small businesses, and 48 medium-sized businesses. This number is considered to have increased when compared to 2022 which only amounted to 16,689 MSMEs (Pringsewu, 2024). This increase in number is accompanied by an increase in the demands of the Metro City government to legalize MSMEs as legal institutions and have supporting certificates that become product quality standards, one of which is a halal certificate.

The condition where 87.2% of the population is Muslim is a target market that has the potential to generate large profits (*Religion in Indonesia, 2024 - Statistical Data - BPS-Statistics Indonesia Samarinda Municipality*, 2024). No exception in the food and beverage industry, producers create products that are the preference of the Muslim community, namely halal food and beverages (Ningrum, 2022). The concept of halal is directly related to the composition, how to obtain and also how to process and distribute products until they reach consumers (Aristyanto & Edi, 2023). This is in line with QS. Almaidah (5) verse 88 reads "Allah commands humans to consume halal food and drink. The need for halal food and drink has become part of a Muslim's life (Rosita et al., 2023). The halalness of a product is legitimized through a "Halal certificate" which requires MSME players to always maintain the halalness of the products they make. This also contributes to the prevention of poisoning cases that have occurred from the results of surveys of poisoning in processed household products (265 cases), processed food for catering services (819 cases), food allergies (535 cases) (Raisqi, 2022).

Halal certificates assure the security, comfort, safety, and availability of halal products for all people, especially Muslim citizens. Products produced by producers must meet standards and comply with the provisions of Islamic law. The halal standards include halal in substance, halal in the way it is obtained, halal in processing, halal in storage, halal in transportation, and halal in presentation (Puspaningtyas et al., 2019). In line with that, MUI requested that the inclusion of a halal logo on product packaging be mandatory for food or beverage producers. Besides to satisfy the consumer, but on the other hand, it can also improve the quality of products produced in the local and international markets (Hasan, 2014). This certificate can also increase the added value for companies in selling and producing their products and getting maximum company profits (Aristyanto & Edi, 2023; Diyah et al., 2022).

Problems often faced by MSMEs as product producers include a lack of understanding of the certification process, costs that are considered high, and the lack of assistance from related parties. Therefore, an effective strategy is needed to increase the number of halal-certified MSME products in Metro City. This research is expected to provide applicable and relevant recommendations for business actors, government, and related parties in supporting the development of competitive and sustainable MSMEs.

B. Methods

This type of research is field research where the data is obtained directly from the field so that the data obtained is primary data (Zulaikha et al., 2024). Primary data sources in this research are MSME players in Metro City, IAIN Metro Halal Center, West Metro Sub-District Economic Section, and secondary data sources obtained from literature related to this research. The method used is qualitative research design. Data collection techniques are through three ways, namely: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations and interviews were conducted with MSME players in Metro City. Interviews were also conducted with the head of the Halal Center IAIN Metro Lampung. Articles from the Metro City Government website, related journals, and podcasts of the Metro City Cooperative, MSMEs, MSMEs, and Industry Office were used as documentation references to complement the data in this study. The data obtained is analyzed and then described in detail with various findings in the field.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

MSMEs in Metro City

Micro, small, and medium enterprises, hereinafter abbreviated as MSMEs, are a form of productive business owned by individuals or business entities that are usually engaged in the scope of trade activities that have different characteristics or characteristics (Firdausya & Ompusunggu, 2023). Law No. 20 of 2008 states that a micro business is a business that produces owned by an individual or individual business entity that meets the category of micro business. Meanwhile, a small business is an independent economic activity carried out by an individual or business entity that is not a subsidiary owned, controlled, or a part either directly or indirectly of a medium or large business that meets the small category. And the last is medium-sized businesses. self-generating businesses, which are carried out by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of companies that are owned, controlled, or are part of either directly or indirectly with small businesses or large businesses with a total net asset or annual turnover (Cn & Helmita, 2023).

MSMEs in Metro City can be grouped into various sectors, which include the food and beverage sector, handicrafts, trade, and services. These sectors account for a large portion of Metro City's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) and are the main source of income for many families in the area.

- a. Food and Beverage Sector. Metro City has many MSMEs in the food and beverage sector, including traditional culinary businesses, cakes, breads, and regional specialty drinks. MSMEs in this sector are often the first choice for local communities in fulfilling their daily food needs.
- b. Handicrafts and Creative Products. Apart from food, the handicraft sector is also growing rapidly, especially those based on local products. Handicrafts such as batik, weaving, and products from natural materials are the leading products of Metro City MSMEs that have the potential to be marketed more widely, both within and outside the city.
- c. Trade and Services Sector. The trade and services sector in Metro City also shows positive growth. Many Micros, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are engaged in retail and services such as laundry, salons, and education and training businesses.

Halal Certification for MSME Products in Metro City

Every Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) in Metro City makes products or services. A product is anything that can be offered to the market to be owned and used to meet the needs and desires of consumers (Yulistria et al., 2023). One of the main values that customers expect from producers is the highest quality products and services (Shalahuddin et al., 2024). In response to the problem of the rampant circulation of non-halal products, halal standards in Indonesia are implemented in the form of a Halal Assurance System manual issued by the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Supervisory Agency of the Indonesian Ulema Council (LPPOM-MUI). Everything can be eaten, drunk, worn, used, and so on. However, there are binding religions, norms, and ethics, so that humans are bound by the rules. Therefore, in addition to the concept of halal and haram, both those that are directly stated clearly or implicitly, in Islam there is also a concept or category of halal food (Nukeriana, 2018).

In general, what is referred to as a halal product is a product that meets the halal requirements according to Islamic law. The halal food product in question is food that has met the standards and is by the provisions of Islamic law. *“Muslim consumers need to consume products and services from various, which is somehow doubtful”*. The categories that must be met by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Metro City so that food is worthy of being called halal food include:

- a. Halal Substance. The first thing that must be considered in determining the halalness of a food is its substance or basic ingredients of the food, for example, food that comes from animals or plants that are not forbidden by Allah SWT. If the food is said to contain substances or food that is not halal, then the status of the mixed food is haram and should not be consumed by Muslims.
- b. Halal How to Obtain It. Basically, all food is halal and if the substance is halal, the food can become haram depending on how it is obtained. Halal food can become haram if it is obtained through theft, committing adultery, usury corruption, and so on.
- c. Halal How to Process It. Any food and drink that is halal in content will turn into haram if the processing process is not carried out according to Islamic law. For example, beef, which is basically halal, will become haram if its management is not in accordance with Islamic law. Similarly, wine is basically halal for consumption, but can become haram if the nature of the content in the management process is contrary to Islamic provisions.

Halal certification is a business ethic that should be carried out by producers as a guarantee of halal for consumers (Rosita et al., 2023). In addition to being a guarantee of halal for consumers, halal certification and halal labels on product packaging provide economic benefits for producers, including: (1) Can increase consumer confidence because its halalness is guaranteed, (2) Has a USP (Unique Selling Point), (3) Able to penetrate the global halal market, (4) Increases product marketability in the market, (5) Cheap investment when compared to the revenue growth that can be achieved. Halal certification has several functions for consumers, namely: 1. Protecting Muslim consumers from consuming non-halal food, medicines, and cosmetics. 2. Psychologically, consumers' feelings of heart and soul will be calm. 3. Maintaining the soul and body from the downturn due to haram products. 4. Will provide consumer rights as well as legal certainty and protection for consumers.

Halal certification management is divided into two, namely: First, the regular method is intended for large-scale business actors who have products whose composition must be checked first in the laboratory. Halal certification management can be done

independently by business actors. The flow that must be passed includes business actors (1) submitting a halal certification application, (2) BPJPH verifying the documents submitted by the business actor to ensure their completeness and accuracy, (3) LPH will calculate, determining and fill the inspection costs through sihalal, (4) BPJPH issues a payment bill to the business actor, (5) Payment by the business actor, (6) Payment verification by BPJPH, (7) Examination by LPH, (8) Fatwa hearing by the MUI Fatwa Commission, (9) Issuance of a halal certificate by BPJPH. The costs required for halal management are IDR 300,000 for registration and determination of product halalness, and IDR 350,000 for the cost of inspecting product halalness by LPH. Second, halal certification can also be processed through the Free Halal Certificate (Sehati) program, which is a free halal certification program provided by BPJPH which is directly assisted by the certified Halal Product Accommodation Officer (P3H) (Saefullah et al., 2023). The process of obtaining halal certification through the Sehati program has a flow that is not much different from the regular program. What makes it different is the free cost side or no charge at all. The issuance of halal certification through the Sehati program is focused on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) products that have been guaranteed halal. The process of applying for halal certification through the Sehati program involves several stages, such as registration, inspection of raw materials, and production audits. MSMEs in Metro City who want to obtain halal certificates need to meet several technical and administrative requirements. These requirements include the use of raw materials that do not contain haram elements (for example, pork or alcohol) and ensuring that the production process is free from contamination of haram objects.

The process of obtaining halal certification generally involves the following steps:

- a. Registration. For the halal certification registration process, it is necessary to create a Halal Information System (SIHALAL) provided by the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH). Continued by completing company data, products to be certified, and other necessary information. The next step that must be taken by business actors is to upload the required documents that have been determined, such as the company's deed of establishment, NIB (Business Identification Number), and other supporting documents.
- b. Document Verification. BPJPH will conduct an initial assessment of the completeness and accuracy of the documents that have been submitted and continued with a field inspection by officers from the Halal Inspection Institution (LPH) who will conduct a field inspection to verify the information that has been provided.
- c. Halal Audit. The Halal Inspection Institution (LPH) will conduct an audit of the halal assurance system implemented by the company, including raw materials, production processes, and product storage. If necessary, LPH will take product samples for laboratory testing.
- d. Certificate Issuance. BPJPH will evaluate the audit results conducted by LPH. If the audit results meet the requirements, BPJPH will issue a halal certificate.

Facts on the ground state that most MSMEs in Metro City obtain halal certificates through the Free Halal Certification Program (Sehati). The Sehati Program is a program organized by the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH) of the Ministry of Religion to help Micro and Small Enterprises (MSMEs) obtain halal certificates for free. From the results of the interview, information was obtained that the process of submitting halal certification by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) begins with data collection of MSMEs and their products carried out by Halal Product Assistance Officers (P3H) who have been certified by coordinating with relevant stakeholders such as the Head of Government Section in the sub-district. After obtaining data on MSME actors, the

Halal Product Assistance Officers (P3H) conduct socialization regarding the Free Halal Certificate Program (Sehati) and explain halal product materials, the Halal Guarantee Product (SPJH) system and procedures for submitting halal certification for their products. The next step, P3H officers assist MSME actors in Metro City in registering and creating a sihalal account on the site www.ptps.halal.go.id and business legality in the form of NIB (Business Identification Number) on the site www.oss.go.id (Arsyad, 2023). After that, MSME actors make a list of product composition, processing methods, processing locations, and product packaging methods and document them in the form of photos. Officers then accompany the process of uploading documents in the sihalal application. The next step for business actors is to wait for the halal certificate issuance process.

After obtaining a halal certificate, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are required to maintain the halalness of their products. Efforts to maintain product halal standards require cooperation between the Government, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and the surrounding community. From the interview results, it was obtained that MSMEs always maintain the standards of the products they produce by purchasing and ensuring that the materials they buy are of the best quality. Business actors guarantee that the materials used come from halal substances, and do not contain pork, dangerous preservatives, and other substances prohibited by religion. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) also guarantee that in obtaining raw materials they always do so in a halal way, not by stealing or getting it from people who steal. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Metro City always come to the shopping center they trust where they will be given raw materials with the best goods and the best quality.

During the processing process to the finished product, business actors always maintain the cleanliness of their food products. Product cleanliness is a benchmark for the food products it produces, where cleanliness is emphasized in terms of personal body, clothing, equipment, and food manufacturing places that are free from dirt or contamination from germs that are harmful to human health. The food products produced meet the halal food requirements that have been surveyed by the halal certificate assistant. Food products in terms of the quality of production processed by MSME actors are highly considered so that consumers return to enjoy the food products made without worrying about the halalness of the product.

In its implementation, even though they have a halal certificate, it does not mean that Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can produce as they please. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) will always be monitored by assistants. Assistants will periodically check the production site to ensure that Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) continue to maintain the halalness of the products they produce even though they already have halal certification. If when going into the field it turns out that there are Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that produce not by halal standardization regulations, their halal certificates will be withdrawn. Thus, it is expected that business actors will maintain the halal standards of their products both before and after obtaining halal certification.

The Head of the Halal Center of IAIN Metro explained that many Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the surrounding area have applied for Halal certificates and have successfully obtained Halal certificates. There are around 5,000 MSME actors from within and outside Metro City who have obtained halal certificates. He also said that halal certificates can be revoked if there are reports from the surrounding community, halal product assistance officers, and mass organizations that identify products produced

by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that no longer meet halal standards. Halal certification is revoked after BPJPH conducts research and direct verification at the business location. If the products of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are proven not to be halal, the halal certificate will be revoked. The revocation of halal certificates on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) products hurts the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) themselves, in addition to decreasing sales due to the loss of public trust in the products of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), it also decreases the competitiveness and public interest in the products of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

2. Discussion

Strategy for Improving MSME Products

The development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in improving their products cannot be separated from the support of various parties, both government and private. The Metro City Government plays an important role in improving the products of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Metro City. The form of support provided by the Metro City Government through the Cooperatives, UMK, UM, and Industry Service of Metro City includes holding training, mentoring, basic training assistance, providing all forms of free permits (NIB, PIRT, halal), and distributing the results of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) products by holding MoUs with modern retailers in Metro City such as Candra Supermarket, Alfamart, Alfamidi, MBC, PB, Delfan Donuts, Sekam and others. The training carried out by the Metro City Government through the UMK, UM, and Industry Service is based on the needs of the lower middle-class community. In its implementation, the Cooperative, UMK, UM, and Industry Service coordinate with the Social Service to target PKH Assistance recipients as training participants. They are given knowledge, guided, and assisted directly by facilitators who are competent in their fields. After the training, the Cooperative, UMK, UM, and Industry Service also provide participants with basic equipment as provisions for them to open a business. With this strategy, UMKM actors can apply the knowledge they have gained, and practice it which then has an impact on improving their welfare.

The Metro City Government through the Investment and One-Stop Integrated Service Office (DPMPTSP) launched a program for a service system to go to the village to pick up permits. This program was created to assist UMKM actors in Metro City in managing Business Permit Numbers (NIB) as the legality of their business. The ease of managing permits that can be done online is very helpful for UMKM actors in Metro City. This program is socialized in all sub-districts and villages and involves stakeholders who play important roles such as sub-district heads, village heads, community leaders, and others. This program can increase the number of businesses that have legality in the city of Metro. This legality is needed by MSME actors to obtain or apply for assistance or other certifications.

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Bazaar every Saturday and Sunday in the yard of Bank Lampung is one of the efforts made by the Metro City government to increase the selling power and competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) products. This activity then expanded to the yard of Bank Syariah Indonesia and the terrace of the PU Service. This activity also collaborates with the Environmental Service (LH), especially the Waste Bank, to utilize waste that can then be processed into useful goods. The success of this MSME bazaar activity was able to earn a turnover of 4 million per event at the beginning of the activity and is now able to reach a turnover of 40 million per event.

The MB2 (Metro Bangga Beli) program is a buying and selling application development program to help market MSME products in the city of Metro. The Metro City Government fully supports the issuance of the Mayor's Regulation (Perwali) which requires OPD (Regional Apparatus Organizations) in Metro City to wear batik clothes made by craftsmen in Metro City. This is done to increase public love for local Metro products and to make Metro City MSMEs able to compete with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) outside the region and even at the international level. These strategies were created by the Metro City Government to increase the products of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Metro City. The participation of MSME actors in every program launched by the Metro City Government can increase the economy of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in particular and increase the economy of Metro City in general.

D. Conclusion

The halal certification program can increase the competitiveness of MSME products in Metro City, both in the local and global markets and increase consumer confidence in products, especially in the segment of society that cares about the halalness of products. Halal certification as the legitimacy of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for their products can improve the economy of MSMEs and increase product competitiveness locally and internationally. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) must continue to maintain their halal standards after obtaining a halal certificate. The role of the government and related institutions is very important in supporting the implementation of the halal certification program, including technical assistance, counseling, and certification cost subsidies. Obstacles that are often faced include a lack of understanding of business actors regarding the halal certification process, costs that are considered high, and the need to meet certain standards. Strategies that can be carried out include training and counseling, simplifying certification procedures, and strengthening collaboration between MSMEs, the government, and halal institutions.

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F. Author Contributions Statement

The author emphasizes that halal certification is very important to improve the quality and competitiveness of products and increase consumer confidence in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) products in Metro City. The author proposes a strategy that includes simplifying the certification process, increasing the capacity of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) human resources through training, and utilizing technology to facilitate access to information related to halal certification. The author emphasizes that the success of the halal certification program will have a positive impact on the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), create jobs, and increase the contribution of the MSME sector to the economy of Metro City.

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