



An analysis of The Halal Certification Movement for MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) Actors: A Case Study on Halal Tourism in Kudus Regency

Abdul Alimin Nafis¹, Agung Slamet Sukardi², Ssonko Muhammedi³

¹Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Indonesia, 040abdulaliminnfs@gmail.com

²Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Indonesia, Agungarjuna84@gmail.com

³Islamic Call University College, Uganda, m.ssonko@icuc.ac.ug

Abstract. Kudus Regency is one of the districts that has tourism potential in the field of halal tourism, where elements that support halal tourism include MSMEs, even though halal certification on MSME products is still minimally applied by MSME actors, especially those in halal tourism in Kudus Regency. The lack of knowledge is also one of the reasons why MSME actors and administrative procedures need to be better understood by MSME actors. This study aims to provide an understanding of the urgency of the halal certification movement for MSME actors in the halal tourism sector so that it is expected to create new jobs. This research uses a qualitative approach by interviewing ten people consisting of MSME actors, where the interview emphasizes the importance and understanding of Halal certification in MSMEs. The results of this study show that with Halal certification on MSME products, consumers increasingly trust and get guarantees from these products, so products that have Halal certification increasingly show that they are worthy of a massive market. The government, Halal Certification Companions, and stakeholders are advised to play a vital role in enhancing MSME participants' understanding of halal certificates for MSME products in halal tourism zones, according to this study.

Keywords: MSMEs, Halal Certification, Halal Tourism, Menara Kudus.

INTRODUCTION

Kudus Regency is one of the regencies in Central Java with tourism wealth, including religious tourism, namely the tomb of Sunan Kudus and Muria, culinary tourism with its typical food pindang buffalo, artificial tourism, namely there are spots for outbound and ecotourism, beautiful campus agriculture in Kudus. The development of halal tourism in Kudus is rapid, supported by the tombs of Sunan Kudus and Muria and its typical culinary; this is supported by the famous slogan, GUSJIGANG. The word Gusjigang is a relic of Sunan Kudus, which means Good Ngaji and Trading. This meaning describes the life of the Kudus community, which is predominantly Muslim and is expected to be good in terms of good ethics. In addition, it also means being competent in reciting and trading. In this

case, a balance between religion and work is customary in the Holy community (Bahrudin, 2015). Where this slogan is the basis for the development of halal tourism and the development of tourism potential in Kudus Regency.

The government is currently intensifying halal certification on products produced by business actors in Indonesia. Law No. 33 of 2014 mandates the granting of halal certificates for products manufactured by both enterprises and small entrepreneurs (Muhamad, 2020). The existence of halal certification can create a sense of security for consumers and as an effort to compete strategies or globalization challenges in the field of national trade (Alam & Samhuri, 2019; Siregar & Alam, 2018).

The awareness of the community and MSME actors in the Kudus Regency on the importance of halal certification on products still needs to be improved. The data showed that 35% of MSMEs in Kudus Regency already have halal certificates, meaning that there are still 65% of MSMEs that still need to have halal certificates for the products produced (Ula, 2023). Even halal certification on an MSME product makes consumers feel comfortable and safe to buy a product that already has halal labelling because it has been tested halal. Kudus Regency has halal tourist destinations, and the majority are visited by visitors who are Muslim, so the halal labelling on products sold in halal tourist areas makes visitors more confident to buy these products because they are not worried that the products sold are not halal or haram when consumed (Latifah, 2022).

Tourism is one of the sectors that can affect a region's economy. Tourism is a creative industry that can be done and developed to lift the economy in a region. Halal tourism, or the Sharia-based tourism sector in Indonesia, is very promising in the pace of economic development if considered by the government and the surrounding community. Looking at the majority of Indonesia's population who are Muslim, with an estimated 237.56 million people, according to the report by The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre (RISSC), around 86.7% of the Indonesian population should implement sharia-based tourism in Indonesia. It can be used as a potential opportunity to apply the Islamic economic system or concept (Asih,2015).

Halal certification in the Kudus Regency could have been more optimal (Latifah, 2022). However, halal certification is well received by the community, especially MSME actors. In addition, several obstacles or challenges in implementing halal certification on an MSME product include document requirements, manual processes, halal companions, and internal problems in MSMEs. With its primarily Muslim population, Indonesia can potentially become

the global hub of the halal business (Samsuri, 2020). Indonesia's relatively high consumption level can also encourage Indonesia to become the centre of the halal industry in the world. The right that needs to be considered to achieve this goal is that there must be government intervention in this matter, for example, by making a law on obligations for business actors or producers in implementing halal certification. In addition, human resource development is also essential. Seeing the opportunity to implement halal certification in Indonesia, where the majority of MSME actors are Muslim, it is also necessary to hold socialization to equip MSME actors to register their products for halal certification because currently, MSME actors are still low in understanding of halal certification (F. Hadi & Al-Asyari, 2017).

Kudus Regency currently has many Small Micro and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Kudus also has many tourist destinations and halal tourism, as well as Colo and Kudus Tower attractions. The government uses both attractions as leading objects in the Kudus Regency because they are the most visited tourist attractions. With many tourists visiting tourist attractions, the economy will also improve. MSME players are also increasingly selling their products in tourist environments. Many studies have stated the importance of halal certification for MSME products in the halal tourism sector tourism (Jaelani, 2017). Based on the background explanation, this study examines the Halal certification movement for MSMEs in the Halal Tourism environment in the Kudus Regency. This research is helpful for the MSME world to explore stakeholders' perceptions regarding halal certification as an inseparable part of halal tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Certification and Labeling of Product in Halal Tourism Destination.

Halal certification and halal labelling are distinct concepts; however, they are interconnected. Applying a label to a product can facilitate consumers' selection of halal products. The halal marking on products should be random and straightforward. However, the products must possess halal certification provided by the government's Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency, often known as BPJPH. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) is the recognized agency responsible for determining the halal status of a product through a halal fatwa hearing. LPH is an institution that plays a role in issuing halal certificates and applying halal labelling. LPH is an acronym for the Halal

Inspection Institute, an organization that examines items to see if they meet the requirements for halal certification (Faraby & Rozi, 2021).

Halal product certification is one way to get halal certificates. Halal product certification involves assessing raw ingredients, production methods, and packaging to see if it meets LPPOM MUI criteria. Auditors with expertise do halal certification checks. Halal certification is available to small and medium organizations, individuals, and legal and unincorporated businesses. Individual enterprises who have passed halal certification or deserve halal labels on their products (Napitupulu, 2019). This halal label indicates that MUI has deemed the products halal. The halal mark guarantees the product is halal, making buyers feel safe and secure. BPOM, the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency, labels halal. Law Number 7 of 1996 requires food labels to include six features, including information and halal labeling (Napitupulu, 2019).

Tourism is defined as a travel activity to a place with the intention of recreation or unwinding and personal development (Djakfar, 2019). In addition, this tourist activity can also be used by tourists to learn something related to the tourist attractions visited (Djakfar, 2019). The tourism means visiting a place by prioritizing good ethics or manners (Arjana, 2016). Tourism is a tourism activity that facilities from the community, government, and business actors have supported (Cangara, 2012) .

Halal tourism, commonly referred to as Sharia tourism, is a tourism with the principle of value Islam. Most people interpret halal tourism the same (Alam et al., 2024). The ancestors of Islam are commonly called pilgrimage. Halal tourism focuses not only on objects but everything something related to tourism, for example, the availability of facilities and infrastructure for worship facilities (Alam et al., 2023).

Previous Studies on Halal Certification Among MSME Actors

Akbar & Rohman (2023) analyzed the impact of halal certificates on the performance of micro and small enterprises using the PSM method. The research focuses on the Indonesian context and aims to understand why micro and small enterprises do not aggressively seek halal certificates.

Oemar et al. (2022) investigated the perception of halal certification among SME food entrepreneurs in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The research highlights the importance of halal certification in the food industry and its potential benefits for entrepreneurs.

A case study by Puspitaningrum et al. (2021) examined the role of MSMEs in the halal industry enhancement in Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia. The research focuses on the importance of halal certification, managing business-related matters using halal-based administration and services, and knowledge on halal identification.

Ardiantono et al. (2022) discussed the importance of halal certification in the context of supply chain management for MSMEs. The research highlights the international marketing implications of halal certification.

Prior research has examined the topic of halal certification for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) entrepreneurs (Abu Bakar et al., 2019; Akbar & Rohman, 2023; Ardiantono et al., 2022; Oemar et al., 2022; Puspitaningrum et al., 2021). Nevertheless, literature addressing the halal certification of MSME items associated with halal tourism is scarce. This study addresses the knowledge gap in examining halal certification in micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) operating within the Halal Tourism sector. Given the rise of halal tourism, MSME businesses near halal tourist sites are motivated to contribute to the establishment of a halal supply chain.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with the type of case study research (case study) and was descriptive. According to Denzin and Lincoln, qualitative research uses a natural setting to interpret phenomena that occur and involves various existing methods (Satori & Komariah, 2015). A qualitative approach is essential to understanding a social phenomenon and the perspective of the individual under study. The qualitative approach is also one in which the research procedure produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the behaviour of the people observed (Wahyani, 2013).

This study uses the type of case study research (case study). A case study is an intensive, detailed, and in-depth approach to specific symptoms (Alam et al., 2021; Alam & Aisyah, 2021; Setyaningsih & Alam, 2021). The definition of a case study, according to Basuki, is a form of research or study of a specific problem and can be carried out with qualitative and quantitative approaches, targeting individuals or groups, even the wider community. While Stake added that the emphasis of case studies is to maximize understanding of the case being studied and not to get generalizations, the case can be complex or straightforward, and the time to study can be short or long, depending on the time to concentrate (Novitasari, 2022).

The content of the data used in this study is the result of observations and supporting documents, as well as interviews or explanations from humans. Where data can be obtained from research subjects is the understanding of data sources (Rulan, 2005).

Primary data and secondary data were used in this study. Primary data are obtained by researchers from interviews with research subjects, observations, and documentation as presented in Table 1. Researchers conducted interviews with ten people consisting of 4 MSME actors in the Menara Kudus and Sunan Muria Tomb areas, three consumers or tourists, two people from the staff of the Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office, and one from the Kudus Regency MUI. Secondary data is obtained by researchers from sources or data that is processed and then provided by other parties (Syaifuddin, 2009), usually sourced from journal publications or articles (Hadari, 1994). This research is sourced from journals related to halal certification and halal tourism or Halal Tourism; information about the development of halal tourism in Indonesia and the development of halal certification in MSME actors can be searched with secondary data.

Table 1. Informant Selection Criteria

No.	Type of Informant	Reason
1	MSME Actors in Muria and Menara Kudus Areas	The main object of research in the halal tourism sector in Kudus Regency, and knowing the opinions and awareness of MSE actors on the halal certification of a product.
2	Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office	To find out the development of the halal tourism sector and also the creative economy, and the influence of MSMEs on the tourism sector
3	Tourists of Menara Kudus and Tomb of Sunan Muria	Get information about how vital halal certification is to buyer confidence to buy a product in the Menara Kudus Area and the Sunan Muria Tomb.
4	MUI Kudus Regency	Get information about the urgency of halal certification for MSME actors in

the Kudus Regency, as well as those who know better; there are at least MSMEs that have been certified halal and also have not been certified halal.

The observation technique is one of the techniques found in qualitative research. Observation is carried out by observing the phenomena that occur and recording the results of observations systematically (S. Hadi, 2016). Observation is divided into 2 when viewed from the data collection process: Participant Observation, commonly referred to as Role Observation, and Non-Participant Observation (Sugiyono, 2014). The author observes the phenomena that occur around the Holy Tower and the Tomb of Sunan Muria to obtain data. This technique aims to collect data related to the understanding of the public and tourist visitors regarding halal certification for MSME actors around halal tourism objects, MSME actors' understanding of the importance of halal certification on halal products, etc.

The technique of collecting data by meeting directly with questions from researchers is a technique of interviews. In this interview technique, there are two parties: the interviewer (interviewer), the person who provides questions, and the informant. This person answers questions from the interviewer, and later, the interviewer will get data from the informant. In this technique, an interviewer must be good at choosing information that can Provide valid information on existing phenomena (Gunawan, 2015). Researchers asked ten people who entered the criteria in this study, namely MSME actors, consumers or tourists, the Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office, and the Kudus MUI, several questions to get information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research has conducted interviews with MSME actors who are in tourist locations such as Makan Sunan Kudus and Muria, Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office, Kudus Tower Tourists and Sunan Muria Tomb and MUI Kudus with the following results as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary Result of Informant Opinion

NO	Sources	Key Opinions	Solution
1	MSME Actors in Sunan Muria and Menara Kudus Areas	Based on the results of interviews with MSME actors in the Sunan Muria and Menara Kudus areas, it is argued that the existence of halal certification for products sold, but there are still many MSME players who need help understanding the importance of halal certification on sales results. In addition, they still need to learn the procedure for conducting halal certification.	Based on the results of interviews with MSME actors in the Sunan Muria and Menara Kudus areas, the solution that needs to be done is mutual awareness among MSME actors who do not understand the importance of halal certification, besides that, there is a need for counselling to MSME actors from the authorities regarding the urgency of halal certification of a product.
2	Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office	The existence of halal certification is very influential on the confidence of Muslim tourists. However, many MSME and creative economy actors in the culinary sector still need to understand the importance of halal certification.	Based on the results of interviews with some staff at the Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office, it appealed to MSME actors to have openness to carry out halal certification so that a product sold has halal labelling and will also affect sales results or improve the economy of the community, especially MSME players in the halal tourism sector.
3	Tourists of Menara Kudus and Tomb of Sunan Muria	Muslim tourists will be more confident in buying products if there is a sign that the product being sold is halal, but sometimes there is still a product that does not have halal labelling, so it raises	The opinion of some tourists regarding halal certification of products sold in halal tourist areas is that the products sold should be labelled halal because it will affect consumer confidence to buy products, so it is

		doubt when tourists want to buy souvenirs and food that has been sold.	necessary for the openness of MSME actors to register their products in halal certification will be more guaranteed and tourists also feel safe without any doubt.
4	MUI Kudus Regency	The existence of halal certification is beneficial for MSME players in product sales. However, MSME actors' trust in processing and materials used in the products sold is halal, so MSME actors think that halal certification is less important. It is troublesome in the process.	MSME players should follow the latest changes, such as halal certification, which the government is intensifying. So, MSME players must also actively explore information about halal certification because it can affect sales results later. Especially now that many halal certification companions can make it easier for business actors to register their products in the halal certification process.

A food that is allowed to be eaten by humans based on Islam is halal. Whether halal food is halal or not can not be determined just like that but can be seen from its origin or substance and the way it is processed. However, along with the development of the times, a halal in food can be obtained or known from packaging that already has halal labelling. The acquisition of halal labelling issued by the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH) has gone through the selection stage so that it can be ascertained halal. In addition, halal in food products can also be seen from the packaging naming and the packaging form because one of the requirements for getting this halal labelling is a packaging name that is not arbitrary (Syafitri et al., 2022).

A series that must be done by business actors, both individuals and legal entities or not in the form of legal entities, to obtain halal certificates on a product is called halal certification. So, in short, halal certification is a process to get a result, namely a halal certificate. This process cannot be said to be easy because several stages of inspection must be passed, namely from the inspection of raw materials, production processes, and halal assurance systems on a company's products, whether they are by the standards determined by LPPOM MUI or not, if it is

appropriate, it will obtain a halal certificate and vice versa if it does not meet the provisions of LPPOM MUI, it cannot be declared halal on a product (Samsuri, 2020).

Subagyono et al. (2020) stated that people in Indonesia have the right to get guarantees regarding halal products, especially food. Halal product guarantees aim to make people feel comfortable, safe, peaceful, and confident in consuming a halal product because its halalness has been guaranteed. In addition, when viewed from the side of business actors, it also aims to increase the value of the products produced for sale to consumers because they have been guaranteed halal.

Based on data in the field shows that a process to protect the rights of Muslim consumers through halal certification of MSME products in halal tourism in Kudus Regency is part of the importance of halal certification for MSME actors in Kudus Regency. The teachings of Islam prohibit its adherents from consuming food that is haram or prohibited in the Islamic religion. As a religious country, a country must provide guarantees regarding halal products by providing halal labelling on circulating products to guarantee halal. In addition, the state also protects the community from consuming food sold by MSMEs. This is to the statement of Mr Sutrisno, the owner of the Mutiara Store business in the Sunan Muria dining area, stating that with halal certification and halal labelling on MSME products, especially food, it will be able to protect consumers from haram foods that are clearly prohibited by Islam or whose content is not yet straightforward. In addition, it is also by the statement of Sister Dyah as a tourist visitor to Menara Kudus that a consumer also has the right to choose a halal product or not which will later be purchased because, as a diverse consumer, Islam must also be protected from products that are not yet clear in content.

Halal certification is part of a consumer protection process against halal MSME products in halal tourism areas in the Kudus Regency. Protection is defined as something that guarantees legal certainty for consumers, especially those who are Muslim, in consuming food originating from MSME actors regarding their halal. A consumer is defined as someone who consumes or uses what is available in society for his or others without being retraded. The research results and theoretical studies on the urgency of halal certification prove the process of protecting the rights of Muslim consumers through halal certification of MSME actors in the Kudus Regency. MSME players must also maintain the quality of products sold or marketed because this is part of the responsibility of business actors. Things that need to be ensured are the health of the products sold and the halalness of the product. In this case, MSME actors, especially production

teams, must include the ingredients used, nutritional content, quality, and safety, as well as something needed by the community that can be presented on product packaging. The community also has the right to get information about the product to be purchased because it also includes the implementation of protection for consumers through the information provided (Samsuri, 2020).

Based on the research results in the field, halal certification on an MSME product in the halal tourist area in Kudus Regency not only protects consumers from the halalness of a product but also affects the value of MSME products traded. This is about the statement from Mrs Endang, a Kopi Muria MSME actor, that providing information on a product will also affect its added value because it is guaranteed to be halal and safer. In addition, it is also the statement from Mrs Tata, staff at the Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office, that when a product has a halal certificate even on the packaging, it is clear that there is a halal label, it can add to the image of trust from consumers to buy products from MSME players. It later can also be used as a typical souvenir from a tourist spot because it is trusted. Another statement from Brother Rozaq, a Fruit Juice MSME actor who already has a halal certificate, states that the existence of a halal certificate for the products sold can make consumers confident in the products sold, and as MSME actors who already have halal certificates feel more confident to sell their products.

Between theoretical studies and data produced in the field about the urgency of halal certification with the information included on the packaging from the raw materials used, nutrients contained, quality, etc., can be used by consumers to make decisions about the products to be purchased whether halal or not to add value to the product. With this, it is proven that halal certification can increase the value of MSME products marketed.

The existence of halal certification, in addition to being helpful and for the benefit of consumers, is also an interest for the government, both local governments and MUI itself. The information provided is guaranteed to be clear, by its conditions, and guaranteed to be correct. In addition, MUI halal certification also guarantees the quality of an item produced based on the quality standards of the goods sold, maintaining quality.

From the statement of Mr Asep, the owner of the tongue-in-law snack MSME business in the Menara Kudus area, stated that a person who produces food must maintain cleanliness both from the ingredients used and how to process it so that it is suitable for consumption by consumers because it is maintained clean. Another statement from Mr Danang, one of the staff

of the Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office, is that with halal certification for Creative Economy actors and MSMEs, it can be said that it is suitable to be marketed in the halal tourism sector or consumed by consumers who are Muslim. One of the objectives of MUI halal certification is to protect the rights of Muslim consumers. Based on the results of data in the field, the existence of halal certification can provide guarantees of whether or not product consumption is feasible for consumers.

Products circulating in Indonesia are undoubtedly diverse; some are halal, and some are not. The government also does not prohibit the sale of food or anything that is not halal. However, producers must also pay attention to labelling their products, whether halal or not, to ensure the eligibility of Muslim consumers. Based on data in the field and theoretical studies, it can be proven that halal certification can provide a guarantee of fit for consumption for Muslim consumers.

A product that has carried out halal certification can eliminate doubts in consumers, especially Muslim consumers. Therefore, producers must also have a halal certificate previously heard by the MUI. The issue of consumer doubt that we often encounter is a product made from fried chicken or chicken that has died without slaughter. The circulation of this issue can automatically reduce sales results and even harm producers if they do not have halal certificates for the products sold.

Based on Law No.33 of 2014 concerning halal guarantee products, a product must have a unique mark, whether the product being sold is halal or haram (Syafriada, 2016). Halal products can be marked with halal labelling, while if they are haram, they can be adjusted to the sign that describes the product as haram.

As in Tana Toraja and Bali, many pork-based products are marked with pig images. This shows honesty from the producer about the content of a product. With this, consumers who are Muslim do not have the slightest hesitation in consuming products that are contained.

Andre's statement as a tourist who visited the tomb of Sunan Muria (Muria coffee consumer) stated that consumers must also get information about the halalness of a product by looking at the halal labelling on the product so as not to cause hesitation to buy a product. In addition, a statement from Mr Nuru Zadit Taqwa, the administrator of MUI Kudus, said that halal certification is essential for the survival of a business because halal certification can increase buyer confidence in the product. The statements of Andre and Mr Nuru Zadit Taqwa's research data in the field show that the existence of halal certification and halal labelling on product

packaging can reduce consumer hesitancy to buy a product. Providing transparent and honest information about the ingredients used, the product's nutritional content, product quality, etc. can also reduce doubts in consumers when buying products that are traded. The halal logos on food and beverages based on research results and appropriate theoretical studies can reduce doubts in Muslim consumers who want to buy products from MSME players guaranteed the content, whether halal or not.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to demonstrate the significance of registering or certifying MSME items, such as obtaining Halal certification, which ensures the quality and authenticity of the products and their outcomes. The research on the Halal Certification Movement of MSME Actors as an Effort to Internalize Halal Tourism in Kudus Regency, based on data collected through field observations and interviews, reveals a lack of awareness among MSME actors regarding the significance of obtaining halal certification for their products in the halal tourism area of Kudus regency. The presence of halal certification for MSME products safeguards Muslim customers' rights, enhances the market value of the traded goods, ensures their suitability for consumption, and alleviates consumer concerns regarding their purchase. The interview revealed a notable lack of awareness among MSME players, as only approximately 35% of them possess halal certificates. This indicates that a significant 65% of MSMEs in Kudus Regency are yet to obtain Halal certificates. Hence, the government, Halal Certification Companions, and stakeholders play a crucial role in enhancing MSME players' comprehension of halal certificates for MSME products in halal tourism zones.

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