

# HALALSPHERE

International Islamic University Malaysia - INHART



## The urgency of halal logos for micro, small, and medium food products (MSMEs) in Indonesia

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### Abstract

The increase in demand for halal products must be accompanied by regulations that require relevant authorities to verify the halal status of products. The result of halal certification is the addition of a halal logo on product packaging. In Indonesia, the government is working to accelerate the halal certification process so that MSME products must carry a halal logo. However, this process has not been running smoothly. This study aims to provide an overview and explanation of the importance of halal logo labels for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). This study reveals that the importance of halal certification for MSMEs is significant, especially in the context of Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world. The government has played a crucial role in accelerating the halal certification process for MSMEs through a self-declaration mechanism. The addition of the halal logo is believed to have a significant impact not only on individual entrepreneurs and consumers but also on the halal industry ecosystem.

### Keywords:

MSME; Halal; Food; logo; Self declare

### 1. Introduction

Indonesia is a Muslim-majority country, estimated at around 12.7% of the global Muslim demographic (Ula, 2024; Supandi *et al.*, 2022). This demographic advantage positions Indonesia not only as a significant consumer of halal products but also as a potential exporter to the other Muslim-majority countries and regions. The halal food sector is increasingly being recognized for its economic potential, with studies showing that a 1% increase in Indonesia's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) correlates with a 0.53% increase in halal food exports (Mughtar *et al.*, 2024). This economic linkage underscores the importance of the halal food industry as a driver of national economic growth.

The halal industry is not dominated solely by big companies. MSME products also play a role in developing Indonesia's halal ecosystem. Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have

become the backbone of the national economy, contributing significantly to Indonesia's gross domestic product (GDP). According to the latest data, MSMEs account for approximately 60.5% of the national GDP, reflecting their crucial role in driving the economy (Purnamasari and Asharie, 2024). Given this significant potential, it is reasonable to expect that MSME products could become key players in the halal industry.

Halal certification provides assurance that the product meets established halal standards, which is very important to Muslim

consumers. Halal is no longer seen as a form of religious observance, but as a standard of choice for both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. The evidence of halal certification is the availability of a logo on the product packaging. The research found that consumers are more likely to choose products with halal certification because they feel safer and more confident that the products do not contain non-halal ingredients (Damayanti *et al.*, 2023). This suggests that people's awareness of the importance of halal certification contributes to consumers' purchasing decisions. Products of MSMEs are low-maintenance. This is different from products produced by large industries, which already have systems in place to ensure that all production steps comply. This is where the halal logo comes into play for MSME products. So, the halal logo is a big deal in getting people to repurchase MSME products. In addition, halal products are often perceived as high-quality, making them attractive to consumers concerned about health and food safety (Dermawan *et al.*, 2024).

Halal certification in Indonesia is regulated by Law No. 39 of 2021 concerning Halal Product Guarantee, which requires that all products have a halal certificate. By being certified halal, products may use the halal logo on their packaging. The Indonesian government has a responsibility to ensure that all products have a halal certificate, including products produced by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). This is not only important for meeting the needs of Muslim consumers but also for increasing the competitiveness of Indonesian products in the global market. The acceleration of halal certification is

intended to force Indonesia to become a major player in the halal industry, not just a user. However, the mandatory halal regulation is still at an impasse. Previously, the Indonesian government mandated that all products obtain a halal certificate by October 2024. However, the government recently postponed it. This paper aims to examine the urgency of the halal logo for MSME products, map the challenges currently faced by MSME entrepreneurs, and assess the situation following the extension of the halal deadline to October 2026.

## 2. Materials and methods

This study was conducted by thoroughly reviewing previous research and literature on halal logos for products produced by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), identifying key points and issues. The study used a literature review that carefully examined scientific journals and articles, as well as relevant Indonesian regulations regarding halal certification. Data were collected from reliable publications such as Scopus and Google Scholar, and from credible websites, within the timeframe of 2015-2025. This study aims to describe and synthesize the main points explaining the urgency of halal logos on MSME products from the perspective of consumers and entrepreneurs, complemented by the current conditions in Indonesia.

## 3. Results and discussion

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are important to the Indonesian economy. In general, MSMEs are defined as businesses run by individuals or small groups with a limited scale. According to Law No. 20 of 2008, MSMEs are companies that meet specific criteria regarding workforce size and income. Micro businesses usually have a workforce of between 1 and 4 people, small businesses have 5 to 19 people, and medium businesses have 20 to 99 people (Boyo *et al.*, 2024). The definition of MSMEs also includes an annual income limit. MSMEs are business establishments with annual profits of no more than 200 million rupiah. MSMEs operate under relatively modest financial constraints yet still have a significant impact on the local and national economy. According to Statistics Indonesia (2023), the numbers of micro and small-scale industrial companies are 4,181,128 and 319,456, respectively. The provinces with the most significant number of micro and small-scale companies are East Java, Central Java, and West Java (Figure 1). MSME businesses play a role in creating public welfare and supporting sustainable economic development. Therefore, support from the government and society is needed to empower MSMEs regarding the halal industry.

Halal certification for MSMEs remains the government's top priority. The government appears to be forcing MSME businesses to obtain halal certification. Therefore, the government must make halal certification mandatory so that domestic products can dominate the halal industry market. In addition, empowering MSMEs is the main target of Indonesia's halal industry. This aligns with the vision launched in 2019 (*Komite Nasional Ekonomi dan Keuangan Syariah*, 2023), which aims to make the halal industry and the *Shari'ah* economy a mainstay of the national economy (Machmud & Widuhung, 2024). In the latest citation, Machmud and Widuhung (2024) emphasised that the success of halal obligations requires full collaboration among government, industry, society, and academia. The government must also provide infrastructure that supports the halal ecosystem, including laboratories, slaughterhouses, and digital technology. The presence of Indonesian halal products in

international markets will boost national income. The government has set the target of strengthening MSME businesses as a milestone for the halal industry. Halal industry-related studies are included in the Indonesian Industrial Master Plan (MPIHI). MPIHI has the tagline "Halal Industry for a Sustainable Economy". The halal industry has four strategies, including increasing productivity and competitiveness, strengthening halal branding and awareness, strengthening finance and infrastructure, and implementing and strengthening policies and regulations. These strategic steps are a form of the government's seriousness in dominating the domestic and international halal product markets.

The outcome of halal certification is the issuance of the halal logo. The halal logo on food and beverage products indicates that the product meets the halal standards set by the competent authority. In Indonesia, the halal logo is essential and is obtained through halal certification issued by authorised institutions, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI). With this certification, manufacturers can place the halal logo on their product packaging, which serves as a guarantee to Muslim consumers that the product is safe to consume. (Harahap *et al.*, 2023). The designation of the halal label is regulated in the Decree of the Head of the Halal Product Guarantee Organising Agency No. 40 of 2022. The halal logo is printed on the packaging or on a designated area of the product. The halal logo must be easy to read and see, and not easily erased, removed, or damaged.

The halal logo can be downloaded on the SiHalal application. The halal logo is dome or mountain-shaped and has a Surjan/Lurik motif. The halal logo is composed of Arabic calligraphy: *Ha*, *Lam Alif*, and *Lam*, which form the word Halal. The halal logo has a secondary colour, purple, which signifies faith, unity of body and soul, and imagination. Meanwhile, the secondary colour is Pantone Turquoise Green to complete the visual quality. A black or white logo is allowed when technically not possible. The halal logo uses a Rodfat font. Neue Alte Grotesk is an alternative font that is allowed. The halal logo is composed of a logogram and a logotype. Both components must be present on the halal logo. The minimum size limit for a halal logo is 5 mm and 0.19 mm. The halal logo must be clearly legible. The product halal certificate number is placed under the logotype or to the right of the logogram. The inclusion of a halal logo on halal-certified products is excluded if (1) the packaging is too small, (2) the product is packaged directly in front of the buyer in small quantities, or (3) it is sold in bulk.

Halal certification is regulated in Law Number 39 of 2021 concerning Halal Product Guarantee. This law aims to ensure that all products distributed in the Indonesian market meet established halal standards and to protect consumers, especially Muslim consumers, when choosing products in accordance with sharia principles. Thus, the halal logo serves not only as a symbol but also as a tool to protect consumers especially Muslim consumers, when choosing products in accordance with sharia principles. Thus, the halal logo serves not only as a symbol but also as a tool to protect consumers from non-halal products. (Lubis *et al.*, 2022). One of the main aspects of the Halal Product Guarantee Law is the transfer of responsibility for halal certification from the Indonesian Ulema Council (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*, MUI) to the Halal Product Guarantee Organising Agency (*Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal*, BPJPH), a government agency under the Ministry of Religion. Its purpose is to increase efficiency

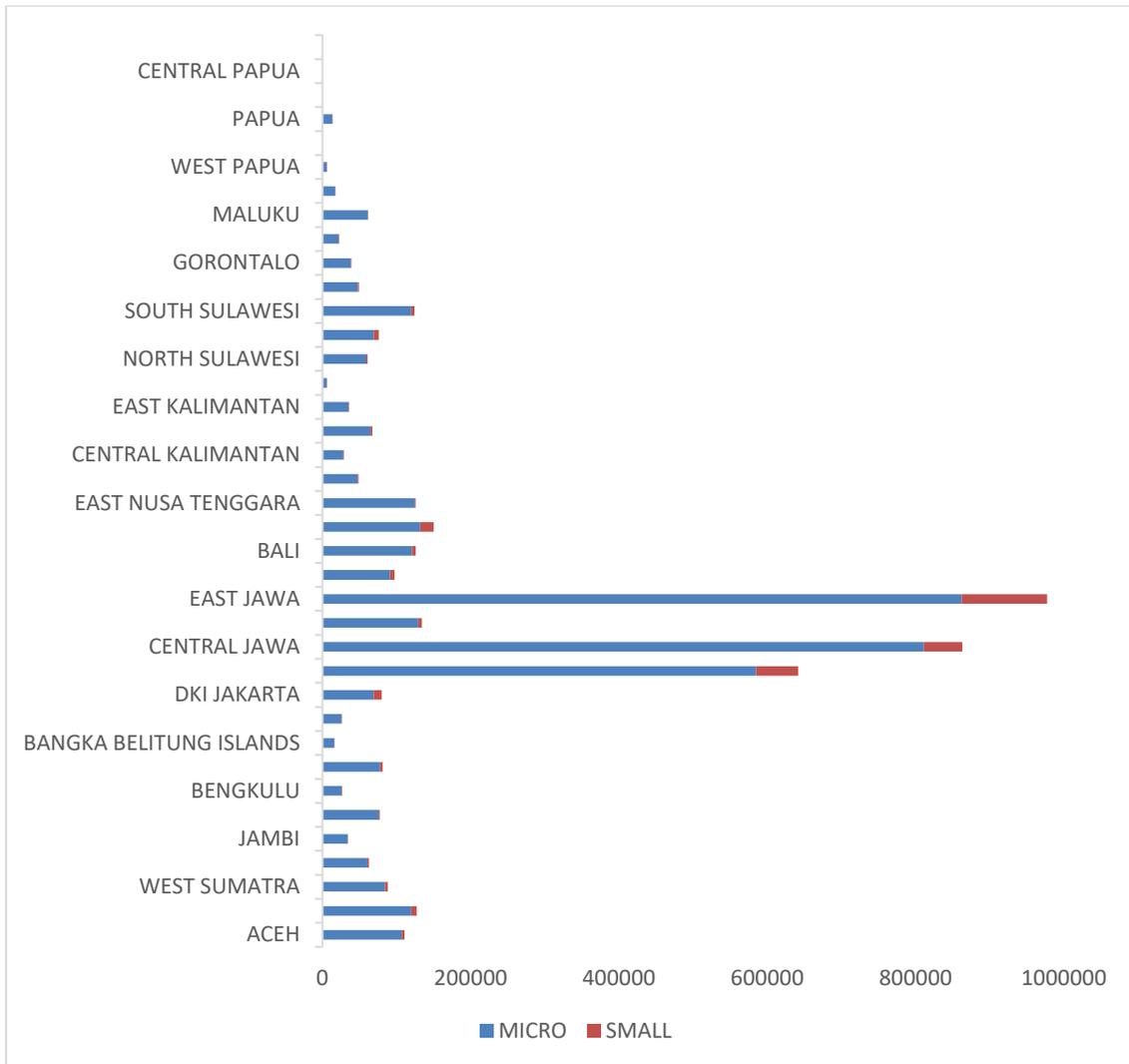


Figure 1: Proportion of micro and small-scale industrial companies by province (Units)  
 Source: (BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 2023).

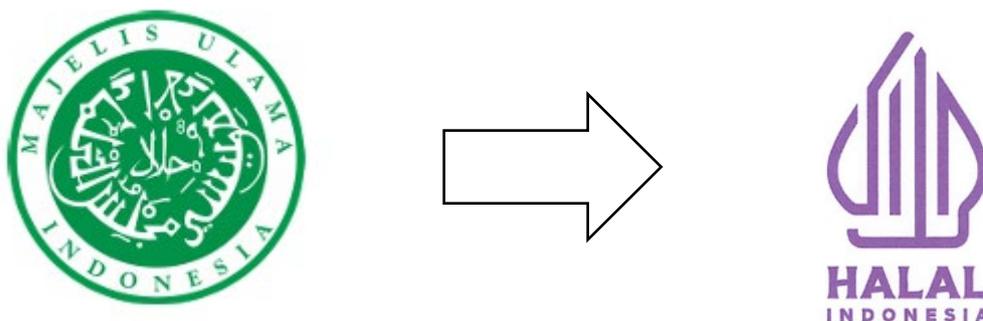


Figure 2: Halal logo design changes.

and transparency in the halal certification process and to strengthen public confidence in halal products on the market.

With the BPJPH, it is hoped that the certification process will be more standardized and accessible to entrepreneurs, including MSMEs. The transfer of the halal certification

authority to BPJPH has changed the design of the halal logo. The most striking change in the halal logo's colour is from green to purple. Figure 2 shows the changes to the halal logo. Changes to the halal logo in Indonesia mainly occurred in 2022. The new logo became effective on March 1, 2022, as stated in the Head of Halal Product Guarantee Agency Decree (*Badan*

*Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal*, BPJPH) No. 40 of 2022. One of the reasons for this change was the transfer of the halal certification authority from the MUI to the BPJP (Khotimah & Mastika, 2023).

The halal certification process involves several stages, including inspection of raw materials, the production process, and the halal assurance system (*Sistem Jaminan Halal*, SJH) implemented by the producer. The purpose of this process is to ensure that all aspects of the product comply with the established halal standards. (Faridah, 2019). Halal certification is mandatory for all businesses, especially in the food and beverage sector, as a form of responsibility towards consumers and to increase public confidence in the products they offer (Amry *et al.*, 2024).

### 3.1 The urgency of halal logos on MSME products from the consumer's point of view

The halal logo is a packaging attribute that every food manufacturer must own. The inclusion of a halal logo on product packaging is considered an important strategy that can attract consumer attention and increase purchase decisions. The halal logo on food packaging helps consumers easily identify the halal status of the products they buy, especially for MSME food products. MSME production is often carried out in a home-based industry with limited facilities and infrastructure. In this context, consumers need to know which products they purchase comply with halal standards by checking the halal logo on the packaging. Consumers who see the halal logo on packaging tend to feel confident that the product has undergone rigorous certification, ensuring it does not contain non-halal ingredients (Latvia *et al.*, 2022). This suggests that the halal logo is a significant consideration in choosing food products.

The halal logo is an important symbol for Muslims, especially in Muslim countries, for instance, in Malaysia, where culture and religion influence consumer consumption patterns. A survey pointed out that halal certification is the highest consideration in buying food, with 69% of respondents prioritizing the Malaysian Islamic Development Office (*Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia*, JAKIM) Halal certification (Vodus, 2024). Then, as many as 13% of respondents consider having to have Muslim employees, 9% of respondents state that they are free from pork and alcohol, 4% of respondents state that they are free from alcohol, and others have different considerations (Vodus, 2024). In this context, public confidence in JAKIM's performance is very high. JAKIM plays an important role in supervising and certifying halal products in Malaysia. JAKIM is responsible for ensuring that products on the market meet the halal standards set by Islamic law. This includes a range of products, including food, beverages, cosmetics, and medicines. Similarly, Fadholi *et al.* (2020) found that millennial consumers have good knowledge and perceptions of halal products in Indonesia. The study also found that millennial consumers are interested in buying halal products. Many young consumers prefer products that comply with halal standards as part of their healthy lifestyle. One factor driving Gen Z's interest in halal products is social media's influence. This generation actively uses digital platforms to search for information about the products they consume, including halal products.

Apart from serving as a guarantee of halal, halal logos can also influence consumer perceptions of product quality. Many consumers believe that products with a halal logo are of higher

quality, with better raw materials and production processes. This is stated by Mardhotillah *et al.* (2022) that halal certification is not only related to product hygiene but also emphasizes halal supply chain management, including the provision of raw materials, processing, packaging, and distribution. By implementing a halal assurance system, manufacturers can not only improve product quality but also build greater consumer confidence. The more consumers who believe in MSME products, the greater the desire to buy them, thereby increasing MSME product sales volume. (Fahira & Yasin, 2022).

Halal logos also play an important role in building consumer loyalty. Consumers who believe a product meets the set halal standards are more likely to make repeat purchases. Hence, the positive loyalty cycle is created. In addition, halal logos not only contribute to individual loyalty, but can also have a greater impact by recommending the product to others. Halal logos can be a tool to build an emotional connection between consumers and brands. When consumers feel the brand understands and meets their needs, their loyalty to the brand increases. Research shows that consumer trust significantly influences consumer satisfaction and loyalty. (Nuraeni *et al.*, 2020).

### 3.2 The urgency of a halal logo on products from the point of view of Entrepreneurs, MSMEs

The growth of halal products is the role of MSME entrepreneurs. According to data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, MSMEs account for 60.5% of the national GDP. MSMEs are the backbone of Indonesia's economy. In addition, it indicates that business competition among MSME entrepreneurs is very tight. To survive in an increasingly competitive market, MSME entrepreneurs must have product advantages that set their products apart from similar offerings. The halal logo can be a differentiating factor that sets MSME products apart from similar products that lack certification. The halal logo is a significant added value for products needed by Muslim consumers (Kusumahati *et al.*, 2022). In an increasingly competitive market, consumers tend to look for products that not only meet their needs but also align with their values. A study finds that halal certification not only meets consumer demand for halal but also serves as a unique selling point (USP) that can enhance a product's positive image in consumers' eyes. In addition, the presence of the halal logo on product packaging creates a competitive advantage that can attract consumer attention (Firdaus, 2023). Halal certification is one factor that can increase product appeal, especially for MSME business actors competing with similar products in broader markets. Thus, halal certification is not just a formality, but an important strategy in increasing product competitiveness.

The halal logo can also be considered an important innovation that entrepreneurs must adopt. The halal logo can be obtained through halal certification for existing or new products. The halal logo, as a symbol indicating a product's halal status, has become an important innovation in marketing and consumption in Indonesia. Attractive and informative designs can grab consumers' attention and increase buying interest. Research showed that consumer awareness of halal logos and attractive packaging designs can increase purchasing decisions (Alinda & Adinugraha, 2022). Other research confirmed that good logo design can help MSMEs build a strong brand identity and improve product image in the eyes of consumers (Widodo *et al.*, 2024). Innovation in the halal space can cover various aspects from product development that meets halal standards to effective marketing strategies. For entrepreneurs, the halal

logo can give them confidence in introducing products in a competitive market. Through a holistic approach, it is hoped that the halal logo will continue to serve as a bridge between producers and consumers and as a tool to promote halal values in society. Thus, the halal logo is not just a symbol but an innovation with broad impact across consumer behaviour, marketing strategies, and legal regulations.

Halal certification serves as a guide for entrepreneurs in managing their production processes. Halal certification agencies act as partners in ensuring that every step in the production process meets halal criteria. The strict supervision of certification bodies allows companies to inspect their raw materials and production processes more easily. The supervision not only helps in maintaining product quality, but also prevents the use of ingredients that are not in accordance with halal principles, which can damage the company's reputation and consumer confidence (Admin *et al.*, 2023). Halal certification is consequently considered the best investment in terms of production costs. The company that obtains halal certification tends to experience an increase in innovative performance, which includes the use of halal raw materials, appropriate processing methods, and packaging that meets halal standards (Fitri *et al.*, 2023).

Halal certification is a crucial strategic step for businesses looking to expand into international markets. In the context of globalization, where consumers are increasingly aware of the importance of a product's halal status, halal certification is a key requirement for competing in the global market. This was revealed by Sari *et al.* (2023), who stated that halal certification has become a requirement for food producers seeking to compete on the international stage. By holding halal certification, products not only meet the halal standards expected by Muslim consumers but can also attract the attention of non-Muslim consumers who value product quality and safety. The importance of halal certification in the international market is evident in the increasing demand for halal products across various countries. Furthermore, a study stated that a partnership among various parties, including the government and certification bodies, is essential for supporting halal-certified MSMEs in addressing marketing challenges in the global market (Qadaryah & Sarkawi, 2023). Halal certification opens opportunities for MSME entrepreneurs to expand into the global market by exporting products to countries with high demand for halal products. This aligns with Mustofa and Prasetyo's (2024) finding that halal certification increases company revenue or turnover. So, the inclusion of the halal logo on packaging can be considered an important external marketing strategy for MSME entrepreneurs to gain a broader consumer segment.

Entrepreneurs can more easily access international markets and increase product competitiveness by including the halal logo. Halal certification is an important aspect of legal compliance for entrepreneurs, especially in countries with large Muslim populations such as Indonesia. Under Law Number 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Guarantee, all business owners, including MSME entrepreneurs, are required to obtain halal certification. Halal certifications aim to provide legal certainty for Muslim consumers regarding the halal status of the products they consume. Compliance with halal standards is an important factor in the food and beverage business, which is not only applied in domestic markets but also in many countries, especially Muslim-majority countries. Adherence to these regulations not only reflects entrepreneurs' commitment to sharia law but also to the country's laws that regulate halal product assurance. Halal certification provides legal protection

for entrepreneurs and consumers. By obtaining a halal certificate, entrepreneurs can ensure their products meet established halal standards, thereby increasing consumer confidence. (Priantina *et al.*, 2023).

### 3.3 Challenges in labelling products with halal logos for MSMEs

There are many challenges that MSME entrepreneurs face in obtaining a halal logo. These challenges come from internal and external sources. The main one is the administration of halal certification registration. MSME entrepreneurs must have a Business Identification Number (*Nomor Induk Berusaha*, NIB). A Business License Number (NIB) is a unique identifier issued to entrepreneurs to conduct business operations. The NIB can be issued once the MSME entrepreneur has a Taxpayer Identification Number (*Nomor Pokok Wajib Pajak*, NPWP). According to Hamida and Wijaya (2022) only 2.3 million MSMEs have an NPWP out of 64.2 million. The government has reduced the Final Income Tax rate to 0.5% from 1% for gross business not exceeding IDR 4.8 billion in one year. The policy is outlined in Government Regulation (*Peraturan Pemerintah*, PP) Number 23 of 2018. It was done in response to the low level of taxpayer awareness among MSME entrepreneurs. The policy of reducing income tax allows MSME entrepreneurs to fulfill their tax obligations in smaller amounts, enabling them to divert their economic resources to managing business operations. However, the tax reduction did not affect the attitude of the MSME entrepreneurs. MSME entrepreneurs have the mindset that a small amount of tax will not contribute anything (Meliandari & Utomo, 2022). Darmawan *et al.* (2023) stated that one of the factors influencing taxpayer non-compliance is the low level of tax awareness among MSME entrepreneurs. A sense of nationalism and concern for the country influences tax awareness. Tax awareness is a voluntary attitude toward paying taxes to the state. Taxes make a significant contribution to the National Budget (*Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Negara*, APBN).

The halal certification process requires that the raw materials used be halal. In general, MSME products are produced on a home scale. Entrepreneurs in the MSME sector usually buy raw materials in small quantities from marketplaces. The sellers of raw materials do not provide halal certificates to buyers on the marketplace. In other cases, MSME entrepreneurs might buy raw materials from traditional *warungs* (small businesses, stalls, or shops usually family-owned). These sellers are also unable to provide halal certificates. Therefore, it can be said that the number of halal-certified raw material suppliers in some areas remains very low. MSME entrepreneurs also have difficulty sourcing from major raw material suppliers because the industry operates only on large-scale quantities. Usually, the big industries that hold halal certificates use the highest-quality raw materials. The absence of halal certificates also occurs in packaging. Packaging is the primary wrapping material that is in direct contact with the product. Packaging has a significant impact on a product's halal status. (Muhamedbegovića *et al.*, 2022) identified that the migration of chemical substances from packaging to products above safe limits can endanger consumer health and cause the product to be considered haram (unlawful). The risk is higher with recycled packaging due to a greater number and variety of NIAS (Non-intentionally added substances). MSME entrepreneurs still face difficulties obtaining halal-certified packaging at affordable prices and in small quantities. The obligation to obtain halal certification for food products, combined with a

lack of halal-certified suppliers of raw materials and packaging, creates a significant supply gap.

Traceability and halal certification are two key elements interrelated in the halal industry. Halal certification provides legal recognition that a product is produced in accordance with *Shari'ah* Law, while traceability enables tracking of the supply chain. Traceability focuses on the transparency of product information. Traceability covers aspects from the origin of the ingredients and the production process to logistics and distribution, comprehensively guaranteeing the product's halal status. Given consumers' growing concerns about food safety and the authenticity of halal claims, implementing a comprehensive traceability system has become an important requirement in the supply chain. Traceability is an important element in ensuring the integrity of halal products. MSME businesses often face various challenges in implementing an effective traceability system. The large budget required by MSME entrepreneurs to implement a traceability system is a significant barrier. (Kamarulzaman *et al.*, 2022). The traceability system requires software that must be operated and maintained by MSME entrepreneurs. It is difficult to do as the profit is limited and insufficient. The inability to perform traceability is also compounded by benefits that MSME entrepreneurs do not directly feel. In fact, traceability plays a role in handling recalls triggered by complaints about defective products or consumer health issues. However, the implementation of recall procedures is rare, so MSME entrepreneurs take the benefits of traceability lightly. (Sadiyah & Erawati, 2024) emphasized that traceability procedures are ineffective due to a lack of adequate supervision of the distribution of halal products. Traceability is a significant challenge and opportunity for MSME businesses in Indonesia. Along with the development of MSMEs, emphasis on traceability must remain the foundation of strategic development to ensure long-term sustainability both in local and global markets.

The production facilities used to produce MSME products are a vital component that influences the halal certification process. Specific issues often encountered include outdated processing facilities and inadequate hygiene standards, both of which are critical to meeting the prerequisites for halal certification. Indonesia faces significant infrastructure challenges that hinder the effective implementation of halal certification. The points are supported by Lestari and Mukhlis (2023), who emphasize the need for robust production facilities that uphold hygienic practices to obtain halal certification. For example, the design of the production plant must facilitate strict protocols for separating production areas to avoid contamination from non-halal materials. Production machinery must use halal lubricants. The production room must be equipped with sanitary and hygiene facilities. All equipment used to produce the product must be handled in accordance with strict sanitary procedures to avoid contamination with non-halal substances. Personal hygiene, equipment, and the production environment are crucial to product safety. The large number of MSMEs operating on tight profit margins and lacking start-up capital to invest in production facilities makes compliance with halal requirements more difficult. In this case, it should be emphasized that halal certification does not require the use of sophisticated production facilities. However, halal certification prioritizes MSMEs' ability to guarantee the halal status of products by ensuring cleanliness and hygiene at every stage of production.

Implementing a digital halal certification system for MSMEs is crucial to increasing competitiveness and meeting consumer demand, especially in halal markets. The government has carried out a digital transformation through the SiHalal application to assist in the halal certification process. The launch of the SiHalal digital system marks an important development in halal product assurance amid rapid technological progress and evolving consumer and industry needs. SiHalal is an application developed by the Indonesian National Agency for Food and Drug Control and Control of Health Products (BPJPH) to simplify halal certification procedures, making it easier for MSME entrepreneurs to obtain halal logos without compromising halal standards. However, the digitization system conflicts with the geographical location of MSME entrepreneurs. Unstable internet connectivity often hinders access to the SiHalal application, compounding existing challenges. MSME entrepreneurs, especially those from rural areas, may struggle to access the online platform reliably, exacerbating exclusivity and inequality in obtaining halal certification. (Santoso & Rachman, 2024). (Pohan *et al.*, 2024) identified that inadequate internet access prevented MSME business owners from using the SiHalal application in Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra. The SiHalal application, which requires stable internet connectivity, risks alienating the demographics of the locations where MSMEs seek halal certification. (Syukur *et al.*, 2024), added that many MSME entrepreneurs are not familiar with online applications. This is due to the lack of digital literacy among MSME entrepreneurs. (Aji & Priyono, 2021) emphasize the need for knowledge intermediaries to facilitate digital transformation and improve digital literacy in MSMEs.

The halal certification process through the self-declare scheme using the SiHalal application remains complicated for MSME entrepreneurs. To accelerate the implementation of halal certification, halal product process assistance (*Pendamping Proses Produk Halal*, PPH) is carried out. Assistance for PPH is mandated by Regulation of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2021 to assist MSME actors in fulfilling halal certification requirements. Table 1 lists the documents that MSME entrepreneurs must complete. The PPH assistants are tasked with verifying and validating a product's halal status. The PPH assistants examine the raw materials used, the production process, and the storage and distribution of products to the location. Currently, 284 PPH Institutions are actively involved in the halal certification process. The PPH Institution comes from community organizations / Islamic religious institutions, accredited state universities / private universities, and government agencies that partner with these two institutions. The PPH assistants registered by BPJPH are 107,471, spread throughout Indonesia. The large number of PPH assistants has not been entrepreneurs in 381 villages in Sukabumi. In addition to the uneven distribution of PPH assistants, the implementation of halal certificates takes a long time. BPJPH targets 12 days, but Ermawati and Itmam (2024) found that halal certification implemented through self-declaration exceeds the specified deadline. The fact could reduce MSME entrepreneurs' desire to obtain halal certification. MSME entrepreneurs, especially those in rural areas, want a simple, easy halal certification process. Furthermore, the working period of PPH assistants is limited. PPH assistance is provided for a maximum of 10 days from the date MSME entrepreneurs submit the certificate. Therefore, PPH assistance is often not completed until the halal certificate is issued. Therefore, the timeliness of BPJPH in issuing halal certificates is critical to meet the free halal certification quota target.

Table 1. Required documents for self-declaration certification process

No.	Document Type	Description
1	Halal certificate application letter.	Available on SiHalal
2	Legal aspect: NIB	Filled in SiHalal
3	Internal Halal supervisor document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Halal Supervisor Designation</li> <li>Copy of ID card</li> <li>Curriculum vitae</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available on SiHalal</li> <li>Uploaded on SiHalal</li> <li>Filled in SiHalal</li> </ul>
4	List of Product Names	Filled in SiHalal with photos Products
5	List of Materials	Filled in SiHalal
6	Halal Product Process	Filled in SiHalal in the form of a process description Halal products
7	Circulation Permit	Uploaded on SiHalal
8	Halal Product Assurance System ( <i>Sistem Jaminan Produk Halal</i> , SJPH)	Available on SiHalal
9	<i>Akad</i> , which contains the halal product statement, is used in the halal product process.	Available on SiHalal

Halal certification through self-declaration is free of charge. Therefore, the success of the flagship Free Halal Certification (SEHATI) program depends on the level of awareness among MSME entrepreneurs. MSME entrepreneurs still need education on the obligation to obtain halal certification for all food and beverage products imported, distributed, and traded in Indonesia (Aditya & Hammam, 2024). Pujilestari and Rahmawati, (2023) classified the problems encountered in MSME entrepreneurs in halal certification through the self-declare scheme are (1) a lack of understanding of halal certification, (2) a lack of a positive attitude of partners towards halal certification. (Jefri *et al.*, 2024) added that the decision of MSME entrepreneurs to carry out halal certification is influenced by awareness and costs. Halal awareness among MSME entrepreneurs can be seen in halal knowledge, the use of halal-certified ingredients, the separation of halal and non-halal product processes, maintaining cleanliness and safety during production, and hygienic product storage. The low level of halal awareness requires regular, targeted socialization activities on halal certification for entrepreneurs, in collaboration with large industries, educational institutions, ministries of religion, and community leaders. The collaboration will strengthen the ecosystem for halal product guarantees in Indonesia. The obligation of halal certification is a strategic step by the government that not only protects Muslim consumers but also strengthens Indonesia's halal industry's position in the international market.

### 3.4 Indonesia's current situation after the extension of halal obligations

Government Regulation (PP) Number 42 of 2024 on the Implementation of halal product assurance mandates that all products produced, distributed, and traded in Indonesia must be halal-certified. This is done to increase the competitiveness of products targeting the halal market. In addition, it aims to protect MSME products from the entry of halal-certified

imported products. halal certification aligns with Indonesia's vision to become the centre of the global halal industry. Products that have mandatory halal certification include a) food and beverage products; b) raw materials, food additives, and auxiliary materials for food and beverage products; c) slaughtering products and slaughtering services. In 2021, the Ministry of Religion launched the flagship SEHATI (*Sertifikasi Halal Gratis*, SEHATI) program for Micro and Small Businesses (UMK). The development of the SEHATI program arose from the need for micro and small businesses to demonstrate the halal status of their products, a requirement increasingly demanded by consumers and regulatory bodies. The program is highly relevant to the Indonesian government's goal of ensuring that 1 million food and beverage products are halal-certified by 2024. The SEHATI Program aims to accelerate halal certification for MSMEs through free financing. The SEHATI Program benefits BPJPH by enabling it to collect data on halal-certified MSMEs and by simplifying the halal certification process for MSME entrepreneurs. Through the SEHATI Program, the certification process includes submission, examination, issuance of a halal fatwa, and digital issuance of halal certificates through the SiHalal application.

The SEHATI Program provides certification services for MSME entrepreneurs through a self-declaration scheme. The self-declare scheme allows MSME entrepreneurs to submit an official declaration of the halal status of their products without the extensive, expensive certification procedures previously required. The self-declare scheme aims to reduce the costs of applying for halal certification and simplify the registration process, making it more accessible to small-scale entrepreneurs. (Ariska *et al.*, 2024). The success of the self-declare scheme depends heavily on the initiative and knowledge that MSME entrepreneurs need to meet halal standards independently. In addition, training programs that enhance skills in documentation, application submission, and

understanding of halal requirements are essential to enable MSMEs to participate effectively in the SEHATI Program. (Asmawati *et al.*, 2024). One significant advantage of the self-declare scheme is the accelerated certification time. Usually, halal certification takes a long time. However, the self-declare mechanism allows MSME entrepreneurs to obtain halal certification quickly. The self-declare mechanism also forces MSME entrepreneurs to be aware of digital technology. With the increasing use of digital technology, MSME entrepreneurs will find it easier to access raw materials and resources and to track the progress of their halal certification. Digital technology can also simplify communication between entrepreneurs and government agencies, facilitate a smoother certification process, and enable entrepreneurs to keep accurate records easily. This technological integration can drive greater efficiency and transparency in the halal certification landscape.

The requirements for free halal certification for MSME businesses through the self-declare mechanism include, among others:

1. Halal raw materials.
2. Halal production process.
3. The maximum turnover is Rp 500 million, and the maximum business capital is Rp 2 billion.
4. Have NIB.
5. Halal production process locations and tools.
6. Has or does not have a distribution permit (PIRT/MD/UMOT/UKOT), Certificate of Good Hygiene Sanitation (SLHS, *Sertifikat Laik Hygiene Sanitasi*) from the relevant agency for food/beverage products with a shelf life of less than seven days.
7. Has at most 1 production facility.
8. Has been in production for one year.
9. Products produced in the form of goods.
10. The ingredients used have been confirmed halal with a halal certificate.
11. There are no harmful ingredients.
12. Verified by the halal product process assistant.
13. Does not contain elements of slaughtered animals. Meat comes from slaughterhouses/poultry slaughterhouses that have halal certificates.
14. Using simple technology or done manually and/or semi-automatically (home industry scale is not an industrial business).
15. The preservation process of the products produced does not use radiation techniques, genetic engineering, the use of ozone (ozonisation), or a combination of several preservation methods (hurdle technology).
16. Apply for halal certification through a self-declaration mechanism through the SiHalal application online.

Initially, the government required halal certification by October 17, 2024. This policy was mandatory, meaning that if SME businesses do not implement it, they will be subject to sanctions. The sanctions can range from written warnings to the withdrawal of goods from circulation, and may include fines of up to IDR 2 billion. The halal certification policy has created pros and cons for SMEs. MSME entrepreneurs consider that the time given is very tight. This condition also affects the financing aspect and other technical issues. MSME entrepreneurs need to be well prepared to adopt the policy.

Finally, the government decided to postpone the obligation to obtain halal certification for MSMEs until October 2026. Some of the considerations underlying the postponement of halal certification implementation include, first, BPJPH's capacity to conduct halal certification is not proportional to the number of MSME businesses. Based on the data, it is known that BPJPH only carries out halal certification for 4.4 million products. This number is far below the BPJPH target of 10 million products. As many as 4.4 million MSME products have not been halal certified. Second, there is insufficient budget for halal certification through the self-declaration program. The self-declaration scheme is provided free of charge. However, the cost is borne by the government. Self-declaration is estimated to require a budget of IDR 3.5 trillion. The postponement of this halal obligation shows the government's partiality towards MSMEs. MSME entrepreneurs are given time to prepare for applying for halal certification, whether through regular certification or self-declaration. The goal is that MSME businesses do not have legal and administrative problems.

#### 4. Conclusion

Halal certification for MSME products is a strategic step to increase competitiveness in the global market. Halal certification is also a response to fulfil the needs of Muslim consumers. Consumers recognize the halal logo as an important attribute to consider. The halal logo can influence consumer perceptions of product quality. Consumers assume that products with a halal logo are of higher quality, with better raw materials and production processes. Meanwhile, businesspeople see the obligation to obtain halal certification as an opportunity to improve the quality of MSME products. Halal certification opens opportunities for MSME entrepreneurs to export products to countries with high demand for halal products. The halal logo can also instill confidence when introducing products in competitive markets. The government considers the inclusion of the halal logo on products an obligation, as part of its responsibility to protect consumers. The government had launched the SiHalal application to accelerate the collection of halal certification data through the SEHATI program. The SEHATI program makes it easier for MSME business actors to fulfil certification requirements digitally with PPH assistance. The halal certification obligation, which should have been effective in October 2024, has been postponed until October 2026. This aims to provide space for MSME business actors to fulfil halal certification requirements through the self-declaration mechanism. Halal certification still faces challenges from internal and external sources. In the future, it is hoped that ongoing socialization and support activities will help reduce the knowledge and implementation gaps in halal certification among MSMEs.

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