

EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS IN IMPROVING MSME UNDERSTANDING OF HALAL CERTIFICATION IN PEKANBARU

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Abstract:

The implementation of halal certification is a mandatory requirement for micro and small enterprises (MSEs) as stipulated in Law Number 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation. Although the government has provided free halal certification through the self-declare scheme, many MSEs in the food and beverage sector still face obstacles in accessing information and obtaining adequate technical assistance. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of education and mentoring programs in improving the understanding of MSEs regarding the urgency of halal certification and to facilitate the certification process in Pekanbaru City. This research employs a pre-experimental design using the One-Group Pretest and Post-test Design approach, involving 15 food and beverage business owners in Binawidya Village, Pekanbaru. The intervention consisted of several activities, including a pre-test, educational sessions, discussions, a post-test, and technical assistance for obtaining a Business Identification Number (NIB) and self-declare halal certification. The results show a significant increase in participants' understanding after the intervention, with the average pre-test score of 69.33 rising to 88.67 in the post-test, representing an average improvement of 19.33 points. In addition to cognitive improvement, the program also produced practical outcomes, including the issuance of halal certificates and NIBs for the assisted MSE products. The education and mentoring programs proved effective in enhancing MSEs' comprehension of halal concepts and certification procedures, thereby promoting regulatory compliance and improving competitiveness in the market.

Keywords: *halal certification, micro and small enterprises, education, mentoring, effectiveness.*

Abstrak:

Penerapan sertifikasi halal merupakan kewajiban bagi pelaku usaha mikro dan kecil (UMK) sesuai dengan Undang-Undang Nomor 11 Tahun 2020 tentang Cipta Kerja. Meskipun telah tersedia fasilitas sertifikasi halal gratis melalui skema self-declare, banyak pelaku UMK di sektor food and beverage masih menghadapi kendala dalam akses informasi dan pendampingan teknis pendaftaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas program edukasi dan pendampingan dalam meningkatkan pemahaman pelaku UMK terhadap urgensi halal serta memfasilitasi proses pengurusan sertifikasi halal di Kota Pekanbaru. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain pre-experimental dengan pendekatan One-Group Pretest-Posttest Design yang melibatkan 15 pelaku usaha makanan dan minuman di Kelurahan Binawidya, Kota Pekanbaru. Intervensi dilakukan melalui serangkaian kegiatan berupa pre-test, pemberian edukasi, diskusi, post-test, serta pendampingan teknis pendaftaran Nomor Induk Berusaha (NIB) dan sertifikasi halal self-declare. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan dalam pemahaman peserta setelah intervensi, dengan rata-rata skor pre-test sebesar 69,33 meningkat

menjadi 88,67 pada post-test, atau peningkatan rata-rata sebesar 19,33 poin. Selain peningkatan kognitif, program ini juga menghasilkan keluaran nyata berupa diterbitkannya sertifikat halal dan NIB bagi produk UMK yang didampingi. Program edukasi dan pendampingan terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan pemahaman pelaku UMK mengenai konsep halal dan tata cara sertifikasi, serta berkontribusi dalam memperkuat kepatuhan UMK terhadap regulasi produk halal dan peningkatan daya saing di pasar.

Kata Kunci: *sertifikasi halal, usaha mikro dan kecil, edukasi, pendampingan, efektivitas*

INTRODUCTION

Halal certification for food and beverage products is a crucial issue in the development of micro and small enterprises (MSEs), especially amid growing consumer awareness of products that are safe, healthy, and compliant with Islamic principles. Halal certification serves not only as a form of religious compliance but also as a strategic instrument to strengthen consumer trust, increase product value, and expand market access for business actors. In the context of the growing global halal industry, the ability of MSEs to obtain halal certification is a key factor in maintaining business sustainability and competitiveness.

However, MSE actors in Indonesia, including those in Pekanbaru City, still face various obstacles in obtaining halal certification. Common problems include limited access to information, low halal literacy, lack of technical assistance, and insufficient understanding of the administrative procedures involved. Prior to the implementation of the latest regulations, the main challenge for MSEs in obtaining halal certification was cost. The certification process through LPPOM MUI required operational funds for halal auditors to conduct on-site inspections and product testing. However, since the enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance and Law No. 11 of 2020 on Job Creation, the government has provided a free halal certification facility through the self-declare scheme. This scheme allows MSEs to apply for halal certification independently at no cost, provided that they meet specific criteria.

Efforts to enhance MSEs' understanding of halal certification have been carried out by various parties through educational and mentoring programs. Nevertheless, cost reduction alone has not been sufficient to overcome on-site challenges. Many MSEs still struggle to navigate the online registration process for halal certification via the ptsp.halal.go.id portal, while others find it difficult to complete the required documents set by the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH). Therefore, intensive education and mentoring programs are necessary to ensure that business actors fully understand the concept of halal and the certification procedures.

A number of studies, such as Astuti et al. (2020), Kurniawan et al. (2023), Nurwandri et al. (2023), and Allifah AF et al. (2023), emphasize the importance of halal education for MSEs, while Ulfin et al. (2022), Pardiansyah et al. (2022), Suhanah & Mardamin (2022), and Moerad et al. (2023) have implemented mentoring programs in the halal certification process. However, most of these activities remain descriptive and have not measured the effectiveness of education and mentoring in improving business actors' understanding. Thus, there is still a research gap to analyze how far educational interventions can enhance the knowledge and readiness of MSEs in managing halal certification.

This study also seeks to fill the research gap regarding the limited number of halal certification mentoring programs in Pekanbaru, Riau. The target participants of this community service project are food and beverage entrepreneurs who

produce and market their products locally and nationally. The program involved 15 food and beverage business owners in Binawidya Subdistrict, Pekanbaru City.

The context in Pekanbaru strengthens the urgency of this research. Field observations indicate that most food and beverage entrepreneurs in Binawidya Subdistrict are motivated to obtain free halal certification through the self-declare scheme but still lack technical understanding. Previous studies by Syamsuri Rahim and Tiara Halifah Puspa Sari (2023) show that halal certification has a positive impact on sales revenue, while Hasanah and Sari (2023) found a positive relationship between the presence of halal certification and consumer purchasing decisions. Moreover, Ajidin highlighted three main urgencies of halal certification: enhancing consumer trust, gaining official state recognition, and fulfilling the mission of dakwah by ensuring the availability of *halalan thayyiban* products.

Based on the above background, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of education and mentoring programs in improving the understanding of micro and small enterprise actors regarding halal certification in Pekanbaru City. The findings are expected to contribute scientifically to the development of effective mentoring models and serve as a policy reference for the government and related institutions in accelerating the implementation of the Free Halal Certification Program (SEHATI), which targets ten million halal-certified products by 2024.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted in Binawidya Subdistrict, Binawidya District, Pekanbaru City, involving 15 (fifteen) micro and small enterprises (MSEs) engaged in the food and beverage sector. The study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design of the One-Group Pretest and Post-test Design type. This design was used to measure the effectiveness of educational and mentoring interventions in improving MSEs' understanding of halal certification.

The research procedure consisted of the following stages:

1. Pre-test

The initial stage involved administering a test to business owners to assess their basic understanding of halal food according to Islamic law. This test aimed to identify the participants' baseline knowledge before the intervention was implemented.

2. Educational Session

The researchers provided educational materials to participants on the importance of halal food and the significance of halal certification for business owners. The materials covered the legal basis of halal in the Qur'an, as well as national regulations such as Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance and Law No. 11 of 2020 on Job Creation.

3. Participant Discussion and Interaction

This stage was conducted to explore the challenges and obstacles faced by business owners in obtaining halal certification. The discussion also served as a forum for participants to share experiences and receive direct solutions from Halal Product Process (PPH) mentors.

4. Post-test

After the educational and discussion sessions, participants were given the same test as in the pre-test. The post-test results were used to determine any improvement in participants' understanding of the material presented.

5. Technical Assistance for Halal Certification

In the final stage, direct mentoring was provided to participants in the halal certification registration process. This assistance included guidance on creating an OSS (Online Single Submission) account to obtain a Business Identification Number (NIB) and registering for halal certification through the ptsp.halal.go.id website using the self-declare scheme.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of education and mentoring programs in improving the understanding of micro and small business (MSB) actors regarding halal certification. The activity was conducted in Binawidya Subdistrict, Binawidya District, Pekanbaru City, involving 15 business owners in the food and beverage sector. Before the implementation, participants were given a pre-test to measure their initial understanding of the halal concept, halal product regulations, and certification procedures.

The pre-test results showed that most participants did not yet have a good understanding of the halal registration procedure through the self-declare scheme and still perceived the certification process as complicated. After receiving intensive education and mentoring, participants were re-evaluated using the same instrument through a post-test. The results indicated a significant increase in participants' understanding. The average pre-test score of 69.33 increased to 88.67 in the post-test, showing an improvement of 19.33 points.

The following table presents a comparison of participants' average pre-test and post-test scores:

Table 1: Comparison of Participants' Average Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Measurement Indicator	Average Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Improvement (Δ)
Level of Understanding of MSB Actors	69.33	88.67	+19.33

Source: Research data, 2024

This increase indicates that the education and mentoring activities were effective in improving business owners' understanding of the halal concept and certification procedures. In addition to cognitive improvement, the program also produced tangible outcomes, including the issuance of Business Identification Numbers (NIB) and halal certificates for all participants who received mentoring. Thus, this study not only had an impact on increasing knowledge but also on improving regulatory compliance and administrative independence among business owners.

The findings show that the education and mentoring approach is highly effective in enhancing the halal literacy of entrepreneurs. The intervention, conducted through lectures, discussions, and technical guidance, proved successful in bridging the knowledge gap of MSB actors in understanding the halal certification process. The average increase of 19.33 points demonstrates that participatory and interactive training is more effective than one-way socialization. Participants were able to directly practice creating accounts on oss.go.id and registering through ptsp.halal.go.id, enabling them to understand the administrative steps of halal certification in a practical way.

These results are consistent with the studies by Rahim and Sari (2023), which state that halal certification positively affects the sales of food and beverage products, and by Hasanah and Sari (2023), which show a positive relationship between halal certification and consumer purchasing decisions. The improved understanding of business owners regarding halal certification also supports Ajidin's (2023) findings that halal certification has three strategic urgencies: (1) increasing consumer trust, (2) obtaining official state recognition, and (3) fulfilling the mission of dawah by providing *halalan thayyiban* products.

Therefore, the education and mentoring program not only provides practical knowledge but also instils religious values and social responsibility among entrepreneurs. Such programs should be continuously developed and expanded to other regions so that the government's objectives through the Free Halal Certification Program (SEHATI) can be achieved, enabling more MSBs to compete in the national and global halal markets.

Furthermore, the results of this study emphasize the importance of continuous capacity building for micro and small business actors, particularly in adapting to evolving halal certification regulations. The government's policy encouraging self-declared halal certification requires business owners to possess adequate digital literacy and regulatory understanding. Through this program, participants not only gained knowledge about halal certification procedures but also improved their ability to operate online systems such as OSS and SIHALAL platforms. This improvement demonstrates that well-structured educational interventions can enhance both cognitive and technical competencies simultaneously.

The following table presents the participants' pre-test and post-test results before and after the implementation of the halal certification education and mentoring activities.

Table 2: Pre-Test and Post-Test Data of Participants

Participant Code	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Improvement (Δ)
A	90	100	+10
B	80	100	+20
C	80	100	+20
D	80	100	+20
E	80	100	+20
F	80	100	+20
G	70	90	+20
H	70	90	+20
I	70	90	+20
J	70	90	+20
K	60	80	+20
L	60	80	+20
M	60	70	+10
N	60	70	+10
O	30	70	+40
Average	69.33	88.67	+19.33

Source: Research Data, 2024

In addition, the mentoring process proved crucial in ensuring the success of the program. Many participants expressed that without direct guidance, they would have faced difficulties in completing the registration process and uploading the required documents. The mentors' assistance in verifying business data, product composition, and production processes contributed significantly to the participants' confidence in meeting halal certification requirements. This finding supports the notion that hands-on mentoring and personalized assistance are essential components of effective community empowerment programs.

Moreover, the positive outcomes of this activity have broader implications for the local economy. With the acquisition of halal certificates and business identification numbers, participants now have stronger credibility in marketing their products. This not only increases consumer trust but also opens opportunities for entering modern retail markets and digital marketplaces that require halal certification as a prerequisite. Therefore, programs like this can serve as catalysts for strengthening the competitiveness of local products, aligning with the government's vision of developing a robust halal value chain.

Finally, this study highlights the need for institutional collaboration between government agencies, universities, and business associations to ensure the sustainability of halal literacy programs. Universities can play a strategic role as facilitators in providing education and research-based mentoring, while local governments can support through policy and funding. Business associations, on the other hand, can act as intermediaries to disseminate information and encourage more entrepreneurs to participate. The synergy among these institutions will accelerate the realization of a halal ecosystem that is inclusive, sustainable, and globally competitive.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the halal certification education and mentoring program has proven effective in improving the understanding of micro and small business (MSB) actors in Pekanbaru City regarding the concept of halal and the procedures for obtaining halal certification. This is evidenced by the increase in the average pre-test score from 69.33 to 88.67 in the post-test, showing a rise of 19.33 points. In addition to the improvement in knowledge, the activity also produced tangible outcomes, namely the issuance of Business Identification Numbers (NIB) and halal certificates for all participants who received mentoring.

The findings indicate that education combined with technical mentoring can bridge information gaps and enhance the readiness of MSBs to manage halal certification through the self-declare scheme. Therefore, it is recommended that the government and relevant institutions continue and expand similar mentoring programs so that more MSB actors can fulfill halal certification requirements, increase consumer trust, and strengthen the competitiveness of halal products in both local and national markets.

Future research is suggested to involve a larger number of participants and employ a more complex experimental design to provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the success of halal certification among micro and small business actors.

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