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A Framework for Risk Mitigation in Halal Self-Declaration for SMEs and MSMEs in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the challenges and risk mitigation strategies associated with Halal self-declaration among Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the context of the forthcoming Halal certification enforcement policy in Indonesia. The study aims to enable SMEs and MSMEs to actively participate in the Halal industry, with the intent to promote economic inclusivity and ensure the accuracy, integrity, and reputation of Halal products. The research explores potential consequences such as mislabeling, cross-contamination, reputational damage, legal repercussions, negative market impact, and erosion of Halal industry credibility. In this research, a structured thematic analysis approach is conducted. The findings of the study propose risk mitigation strategies, including risk identification, framework development, education programs, accessible guidance materials, the implementation of independent verification and audits collaboration with certification bodies and regulatory agencies, awareness campaigns, and continuous improvement and evaluation. The outcomes of this research benefit SMEs, MSMEs, certification bodies, industry associations, regulatory agencies, and consumers, enhancing compliance with Halal standards, consumer confidence, and market competitiveness.

INTRODUCTION

The Halal certification industry, crucial to the global Muslim market valued in trillions, is experiencing rapid growth. This is particularly very important from an Indonesian perspective as the country is home to approximately 237.53 million Muslims. Recognizing the industry's significance, the Indonesian government has enacted policies to align products and services with Islamic principles, with the intent of enhancing consumer confidence and preventing mislabeling and false claims (Nuraini & Sucipto, 2021). Halal certification is expected to ensure compliance and consumer protection and also open doors to market access and growth. This can be achieved by meeting international standards, promoting standardization, quality assurance, and industry development (Tieman & Ghazali, 2014).

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However, historically, the rigorous and costly certification process has been a barrier for SMEs and MSMEs. This situation limits their participation in the Halal market. In response, Indonesia is enforcing Halal certification for these smaller entities by 2024 (Savitri & Putra, 2022). Since October 17, 2019, Law No. 33 of 2014 has transitioned Halal certification from voluntary to mandatory, emphasizing the Indonesian government's commitment to Muslim consumer rights and Halal industry growth. This shift necessitates businesses to comply with established Halal standards as a legal mandate (Azizah, 2022).

The concept of Halal self-declaration has been introduced to support SMEs and MSMEs and it allows them to evaluate and declare the Halal status of their products independently. This initiative is intended to promote inclusivity. However, it also presents challenges such as limited Halal expertise and resources among these businesses. These will lead to potential risks of mislabeling and Halal breaches (Jamaluddin et al., 2022). To mitigate these risks, it is imperative to develop solutions like educational programs, accessible resources, and collaborative efforts with certification bodies, ensuring the integrity and authenticity of Halal claims through independent verification and audits.

The objectives of the research on the challenges and risk mitigation of Halal self-declaration conducted by SMEs and MSMEs are as follows:

- (i) To examine the consequences and violations that may occur if SMEs and MSMEs are allowed to conduct Halal self-declaration without appropriate safeguards.
- (ii) To propose risk mitigation strategies that can address the challenges and enhance the integrity of Halal self-declaration by SMEs and MSMEs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Halal Self-declaration for SMEs and MSMEs

SMEs and MSMEs are pivotal to the Halal industry. Their presence fosters economic inclusivity by integrating businesses from economies with significant Muslim populations into the global Halal market. This integration is crucial for employment generation and income distribution (Widayat et al., 2022). These entities are instrumental in offering diverse and innovative products that cater to specific consumer preferences and cultural tastes (Hasibuan, 2015). Apart from that, they also promote localization and community integration. Their deep-rooted connections with local communities support indigenous producers and small-scale agricultural activities. This is beneficial for regional economies and social integration, as well as sustainable development.

Moreover, the agility of SMEs and MSMEs allows for rapid response to market changes. They can fill gaps in product offerings and address specific consumer needs within the Halal sector (Hamdani & Wirawan, 2012). This responsiveness is complemented by their significant contribution to job creation and entrepreneurship, particularly at the local level. By doing so, we will be fostering a conducive environment for individuals to initiate and expand their Halal businesses. Furthermore, these enterprises often prioritize sustainable and ethical practices in their operations, emphasizing local sourcing, fair trade, and environmentally friendly production methods (Salaheldeen et al., 2019).

The competitive nature and innovative capacity of SMEs and MSMEs invigorate the Halal industry, enhancing product quality, variety, and affordability for consumers. Their potential for exporting Halal products further underscores their role in economic growth and national economy diversification (Castro et al., 2021). Thus, SMEs and MSMEs contribute to the Halal industry's vibrancy and resilience and also play a critical role in the broader economic landscape.

Halal Self-declaration for SMEs and MSMEs

Self-declaration refers to businesses independently stating the Halal status of their products, subject to compliance with relevant regulations and conditions to ensure its validity. One requirement for businesses to engage in self-declaration is to be supervised by a trusted institution recognized by Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal (BPJPH), such as the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH) (Azizah, 2022; Khalimy et al., 2023). The regulation of MSME and SME actors involves the process of Halal self-declaration, which requires verification from the Halal Product Process Facilitator. This regulatory framework is established under various legal documents, including Law No. 33 of 2014, PP No. 39 of 2021, PMA No. 20 of 2021, Kepkaban No. 77 of 2021, Kepkaban No. 33 of 2022, and Kepkaban No. 135 of 2022. With the goals of promoting economic inclusion and facilitating the meaningful engagement of smaller enterprises in the Halal sector, Halal self-declaration initiatives are implemented with a focus on SMEs and MSMEs.

Accurate and reliable Halal self-declaration is essential for SMEs and MSMEs in the Halal industry as it ensures compliance with Halal standards. Accurate self-declaration allows businesses to access the Halal market, compete effectively, and enhance their reputation and brand. It helps SMEs and MSMEs avoid legal and regulatory issues while facilitating export opportunities (Jaswadi et al., 2015). Accurate self-declaration also encourages continuous improvement and contributes to social and economic impact (Malini, 2021).

Potential Consequences of Halal Self-declaration Violations

In the domain of the Halal industry, SMEs and MSMEs face significant risks if they fail to comply with Halal standards through proper self-evaluation. Non-compliance can lead to serious issues, such as mislabeling and false claims that can mislead consumers and damage their trust. Furthermore, Zainal Abidin and Perdana (2020) highlighted the risks of contamination and cross-contamination, which compromise the integrity of Halal products.

Moreover, the implications of non-compliance extend beyond consumer health and religious observance. Violations of Halal self-declaration can erode consumer trust and tarnish the reputation of businesses, leading to a loss of clientele and diminished brand value (Razak et al., 2022). Additionally, SMEs and MSMEs may face legal and regulatory challenges for failing to adhere to Halal certification requirements (Tarmizi et al., 2019). These legal repercussions will not only affect the businesses' financial stability but also create barriers to market entry and expansion. Such things will further be complicated by potential trade restrictions in international markets.

The cumulative effect of these challenges can significantly impact the Halal industry's credibility. Repeated self-declaration violations can cast doubt on the reliability of Halal certifications and claims and it can affect the industry's reputation on a global scale (Al-Nashmi & Almamary, 2017). This erosion of trust can hinder market growth and pose challenges for all stakeholders involved, emphasizing the critical need for SMEs and MSMEs to rigorously adhere to Halal standards to maintain the industry's integrity and ensure its sustainable development.

METHOD

This article serves as an initial proposal for future research, outlining the focus of the study and seeking early insights into the topic of Halal self-declaration among SMEs and MSMEs, particularly regarding potential consequences and risk mitigation strategies. The research methodology employed in this study involves the collection of secondary data. This approach was chosen due to its reliability, efficiency, and timeliness compared to primary data collection methods. The secondary data is sourced from a variety of

reputable platforms and databases, including Emerald, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, and ResearchGate, among others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effective risk mitigation strategies are essential to address the challenges of Halal self-declaration by SMEs and MSMEs in the Halal industry. These strategies aim to minimize potential risks and ensure accurate compliance with Halal standards. By following a step-by-step approach (Fig. 1), businesses can mitigate the risks associated with Halal self-declaration. The steps include risk identification, regulatory framework enhancement, education and training, guidance and support, independent verification and auditing, collaboration and partnerships, monitoring and enforcement, consumer awareness and empowerment, and continuous improvement and evaluation.

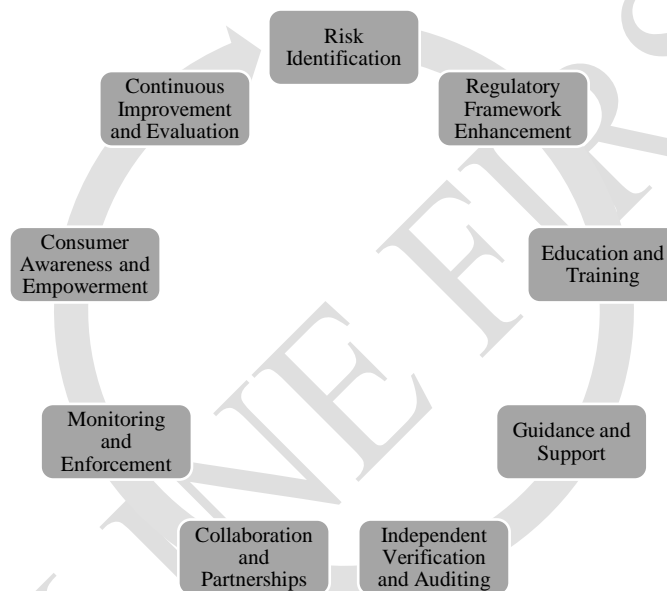


Fig. 1. Framework of Risk Mitigation Strategies for Halal Self-declaration

Source: Author's

Risk Identification

In the realm of Halal self-declaration, SMEs and MSMEs face substantial hurdles, primarily due to a lack of comprehension and proficiency in Halal prerequisites. These businesses struggle with the nuances of Halal certification, as they often lack the requisite knowledge to adhere to Halal standards and the resources to secure Halal ingredients or ensure compliant practices (Utami et al., 2022). The dynamic nature of Halal guidelines further exacerbates these challenges, compelling enterprises to remain vigilant and avert unintentional breaches of compliance (Nurhasanah et al., 2023). Constraints in resources and infrastructure also limit these firms' abilities to invest in crucial technologies and methodologies for precise Halal self-declaration, impacting their competence in documentation and adherence.

Additionally, the interpretation of Halal standards introduces further complications, with divergent understandings leading to inconsistent self-declarations among SMEs and MSMEs. Such disparities will not only result in varied Halal assertions but also impede the realization of uniform compliance within the

sector. The process is further compromised by potential conflicts of interest and bias, wherein commercial objectives may supersede the dedication to genuine Halal adherence, thus eroding the credibility of Halal declarations (Jaswadi et al., 2015). The challenges extend to the oversight, validation, and auditing of self-proclaimed Halal compliance. Those are typically hampered by insufficient mechanisms for consistent supervision. The lack of stringent enforcement by certification entities or regulatory bodies diminishes the robustness of self-declaration initiatives as it may cast doubts on the veracity of Halal assertions. The limited resources of these bodies further hinder their ability to perform independent validations and audits across a broad spectrum of small businesses. This can potentially undermine the trust in Halal certification (Yuwana et al., 2021).

Regulatory Framework Enhancement

To effectively mitigate the risks associated with Halal self-declaration by SMEs and MSMEs, it is imperative to fortify the regulatory framework overseeing Halal certification. It is important to develop clear and comprehensive guidelines that cater to the unique needs of these smaller enterprises (Hareebin, 2021). These guidelines should explain the self-declaration process and delineate criteria for Halal compliance, sourcing of ingredients, production methodologies, and handling procedures. This is done to ensure consistency across the board (JAKIM, 2014). Additionally, providing SMEs and MSMEs with requisite support through workshops, training sessions, and consultations is essential for navigating the complexities of regulatory compliance. This can be done with collaborative efforts from industry associations, certifying bodies, and domain experts to enhance the efficiency of these initiatives (Noordin et al., 2014).

Education and Training

To mitigate risks associated with Halal self-declaration by SMEs and MSMEs, it is imperative to implement robust education and training programs. They must be tailored to bridge specific knowledge and skill gaps identified through a comprehensive needs assessment (Malini, 2021). Such programs are meticulously crafted and are delivered through various modalities including in-person workshops, online modules, and webinars to ensure wide accessibility and engagement. The creation of training materials, such as engaging videos and detailed handbooks, complements these efforts, enhancing the learning experience. Furthermore, the engagement of qualified trainers with profound expertise in Halal requirements and self-declaration processes ensures the delivery of high-quality education (Naquiah et al., 2022). A strategic outreach initiative is expected to ensure program awareness among target businesses.

Guidance and Support

To enable precise self-declaration by SMEs and MSMEs, it is imperative to provide them with comprehensive guidance resources (Anggarkasih & Resma, 2022). Such materials should provide clear explanations, step-by-step instructions, and practical examples, including tailored checklists and visual aids like flowcharts, to delineate the self-declaration requirements effectively. The incorporation of real-world case studies (Fawaid et al., 2023) serves as a beacon, illustrating successful practices and encouraging meticulous adherence to protocols. Accessibility is further enhanced by offering these resources in local languages. By doing so, we will be broadening their reach and ensuring inclusivity.

Independent Verification and Auditing

To ensure the integrity and compliance of Halal self-declaration by SMEs and MSMEs, the adoption of independent verification and auditing mechanisms is imperative. Yuwana et al. (2021) advocated for a structured approach, proposing the establishment of certifying bodies tasked with independent verification, complemented by the strategic use of random sampling and targeted audits. Many research studies underscored the significance of such measures in maintaining Halal standards. Most of them highlighted

the effectiveness of employing certified inspectors or third-party auditors to introduce impartiality and enhance the assessment's credibility (Azizah, 2022; Khasanah & Affa, 2022).

Collaboration and Partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships are pivotal for the efficacy of Halal self-declaration initiatives among SMEs and MSMEs (Ulfa, 2022). To augment this collaboration, the implementation of multi-stakeholder platforms is crucial. This approach is corroborated by Pardiansyah et al. (2022), who asserted that organizing workshops and conferences significantly bolsters knowledge dissemination within the sector. Moreover, fostering partnerships between academia and the business sector will not only enrich research but also enhance the practical application of Halal standards. By doing so, we will be ensuring their consistent adherence and promoting a culture of information exchange. Capacity-building programs and regulatory engagement further solidify this collaborative framework. They can create a synergistic environment conducive to the growth and compliance of SMEs and MSMEs within the Halal market.

Monitoring and Enforcement

To ensure compliance with Halal standards in self-declarations by SMEs and MSMEs, it is imperative to adopt a multifaceted approach that intertwines adequate resource allocation (Santoso et al., 2021), consistent regulatory inspections, and the institution of robust complaint handling and investigation systems (Fathoni & Zahro, 2023). Additionally, the integration of random sampling techniques serves as a critical measure for uncovering discrepancies in self-declared claims, while the establishment of clearly defined sanctions and penalties is essential for deterring non-compliance. Furthermore, fostering collaborative partnerships between certifying bodies, industry associations, regulatory agencies, and law enforcement is vital for reinforcing the efficiency of these mechanisms.

Consumer Awareness and Empowerment

To fortify market integrity within Halal self-declaration among SMEs and MSMEs, a multifaceted approach is imperative. Some of the most important aspects include focusing on bolstering consumer awareness and empowerment. Key strategies include the initiation of educational campaigns to enhance consumer understanding of Halal certification, alongside the promotion of clearly visible Halal certification marks, which have been shown to significantly influence consumer purchasing behaviors (Perdana et al., 2018, Perdana et al., 2019). Furthermore, the provision of comprehensive consumer guides aids in navigating the complexities of the Halal market. Collaborative efforts with consumer protection agencies and the implementation of reporting mechanisms are essential for enabling consumers to safeguard their rights effectively. Additionally, the development of consumer engagement initiatives and partnerships with Halal certifying bodies for extensive consumer outreach are crucial for fostering consumer trust and facilitating a deeper comprehension of Halal certification nuances. By implementing those, we will be ensuring an informed consumer base capable of actively contributing to the maintenance of market integrity.

Continuous Improvement and Evaluation

Continuous improvement and evaluation stand at the core of effective risk mitigation strategies for Halal self-declaration among SMEs and MSMEs. A comprehensive evaluation framework enables the systematic collection of feedback from varied stakeholders, and further analysis of this data to pinpoint areas requiring enhancement. Such stakeholder engagement significantly improves the effectiveness of risk mitigation efforts (Schmidt et al., 2019). Concurrently, the periodic review of educational initiatives facilitates the identification and fortification of essential areas. Moreover, staying abreast of evolving certification requirements and fostering collaboration with industry peers are integral to a robust risk management framework.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Halal self-declaration by SMEs and MSMEs in the Halal sector presents a dual-edged sword of opportunities and challenges. To enhance economic inclusivity and bolster the role of smaller businesses in the Halal market, it is imperative to acknowledge and skillfully address the inherent risks. These include a lack of knowledge and expertise, constrained resources and infrastructure, diverse interpretations of Halal standards, potential conflicts of interest, and the subjectivity inherent in self-assessment. Moreover, the limited capacity for monitoring and enforcement, along with the complexities surrounding verification and audit processes, further complicate matters. Policymakers are supposed to be tasked with the crucial role of revising regulatory frameworks to be in harmony with global Halal standards while considering the unique needs of SMEs and MSMEs. They should prioritize the allocation of resources and funding to aid these entities in enhancing their infrastructure and complying with Halal certification requirements. Encouraging collaboration among regulatory authorities, industry groups, certifying bodies, and SMEs/MSMEs is vital for exchanging knowledge, sharing best practices, and tackling familiar challenges. They are done to foster a supportive ecosystem for these businesses to meet certification criteria efficiently.

Halal Certification Bodies should develop specialized educational and training initiatives tailored to the specific demands and limitations of SMEs and MSMEs. Offering accessible guidance materials and streamlining the certification pathway are crucial measures. Implementing stringent monitoring frameworks, including periodic audits and inspections, is essential to uphold compliance with Halal self-declaration protocols and preserve the integrity of Halal claims. This assistance will enable businesses to more effectively navigate the certification landscape, ensuring accurate and trustworthy self-declarations. SMEs and MSMEs should focus on enhancing their understanding of Halal standards and self-declaration practices through education and training. Participation in industry networks and collaboration with certifying bodies is key to knowledge exchange and staying abreast of compliance best practices. Moreover, adopting a transparent and accountable approach to self-declaration, such as meticulous record-keeping of sourcing, production, and handling processes, is imperative. These efforts will improve their compliance with Halal standards, thereby building consumer trust and contributing to the industry's growth and integrity.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of Halal self-declaration on the expansion and sustainability of SMEs and MSMEs. Studies can also explore the interest of larger corporations in sourcing from SMEs and MSMEs involved in Halal self-declaration. The goal is to increase the economic participation of smaller enterprises, enhance the development and competitiveness of the Halal market, and safeguard the authenticity and reliability of Halal certification. Achieving these objectives through Halal self-declaration programs requires a concerted effort among regulatory bodies, industry associations, and businesses to closely monitor developments and continually refine the framework in question.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors affirm that the execution of this study was devoid of any personal, commercial, or financial gains, thereby ensuring an unbiased approach. It is further declared that there are no conflicts of interest

with the funders, a situation facilitated by the absence of external funding for this research. This establishes a clear, unencumbered foundation for the integrity of the study's findings.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Perdana spearheaded the research, crafted the manuscript, devised the core research concept, and formulated the theoretical framework. Meanwhile, Habir oversaw the research process and approved the submission of the article.

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