

Halal Certification Outreach to Optimize MSME Marketing in Rejosari Subdistrict, East Semarang District

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Abstrak

This community engagement program aimed to enhance the understanding and participation of residents in Rejosari Subdistrict, East Semarang District, Semarang City, regarding the importance of obtaining halal certification. Halal certification serves as a quality assurance mechanism for partner products produced by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Limited information, insufficient coaching, and the perception that halal certification procedures are overly complex remain common barriers among MSME partners, including those in Rejosari. The program therefore focused on delivering knowledge and strengthening understanding of MSME halal certification to encourage participants to pursue certification and, in turn, improve marketing performance. The results indicate that participants developed greater awareness of the importance of halal certification and improved understanding of how to obtain it. Nevertheless, continued assistance and more technical training are required to help MSME actors navigate the halal certification application procedures more effectively.

Keywords: Halal Certification; Marketing; MSMEs

1. PENDAHULUAN

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. According to World Population Review (2025), approximately 84.35% of Indonesia's population adheres to Islam. Given this demographic composition, Muslim consumers constitute a major market segment with a strong interest in the circulation of products that are safe and halal. Consequently, Muslim communities in Indonesia should receive adequate protection and legal certainty regarding product halalness, including for food, beverages, medicines, and other goods available in the marketplace.

In a country with a substantial Muslim population, halal-certified products have extensive market potential. Halal certification forms part of a structured series of assessments that business actors—both individuals and entities, incorporated or otherwise—must complete to obtain halal status (Dewi et al., 2025). This process involves audits and testing conducted by qualified auditors, leading to a formal determination of a product's halal status (Warto & Samsuri, 2020). Once a product has obtained halal certification, consumers are assured that it meets the applicable halal standards for consumption. Beyond providing quality assurance, halal certification also functions as a strategic mechanism for strengthening firms' market competitiveness (Nur & Istikomah, 2021; Rido & Sukmana, 2021).

Halal certification has a substantial impact on the marketing performance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Indonesia. This influence is largely driven by rising consumer awareness of the importance of halal compliance, which encourages MSMEs to pursue halal certification as an effective marketing strategy. Beyond serving as a credible assurance of product quality, halal certification can strengthen financial performance and enhance business attractiveness by increasing consumer trust and improving market access (Silmi & Ashlihah, 2025). For MSME producers, certification is instrumental for business continuity and MSME strengthening (Rido & Sukmana, 2021). Prior studies report that halal certification positively influences purchase intentions for MSME products (Safi & Fadhilah, 2024). A case study of MSMEs in Lamongan likewise found that certification contributed to sales growth and increased consumer trust (Kusumaningtyas et al., 2024). Beyond domestic advantages, certification may facilitate access to broader markets, including international segments that increasingly require compliance with halal standards (Aprilia, 2024; Ariska et al., 2024).

In broader terms, halal certification can become a strategic tool enabling Indonesian MSMEs to expand and compete in global markets (Resavita & Setiawan, 2024). Despite these benefits, MSMEs frequently encounter obstacles, including limited understanding of the certification process, perceived high costs, and low motivation to submit halal certification applications (Khairawati et al., 2025). Accordingly, outreach

and training on the importance of halal certification are necessary to strengthen awareness and comprehension among MSME actors (Damayanti et al., 2024). More MSMEs are likely to obtain halal certification with adequate institutional and technical support, which may improve product quality and strengthen their competitiveness in the market (Hasanah et al., 2023). Moreover, education and capacity-building on halal certification for MSME owners should be delivered systematically and continuously. Through well-targeted programs, entrepreneurs can better understand halal compliance requirements and implement certification effectively, thereby reinforcing consumer confidence and expanding the market reach of their products (Damayanti et al., 2024; Pardiansyah et al., 2022; Rido & Sukmana, 2021).

Rejosari Subdistrict, located in East Semarang District, Semarang City, is primarily a residential area. Most residents work in the private sector; however, a number of community members operate MSMEs, particularly in culinary food and beverage businesses. In practice, MSME actors in Rejosari face multifaceted challenges in improving business capacity, including limited understanding of halal certification. Most culinary MSMEs in the area have not yet obtained halal certification. Based on these conditions, the Community Service Team (PKM/*Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*) from the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Semarang, conducted outreach on halal certification for culinary MSMEs in Rejosari Subdistrict. The program aimed to increase the knowledge of culinary business actors affiliated with the local MSME association so that they would be motivated to pursue halal certification for their products.

2. METHODS

The program employed a lecture-based approach to provide MSME actors in Rejosari Subdistrict, East Semarang District, with education on the importance of halal certification and its procedures. In addition to the PKM team from the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Semarang, the activity invited a practitioner MSME owner whose products had already received halal certification. Program effectiveness was evaluated using a questionnaire assessing participants' understanding of the delivered material.

Responses to each statement were rated on a five-point Likert scale, with a weight of 5 assigned to “strongly agree” and 1 to “strongly disagree.”

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation began with coordination between the PKM team and the coordinator of the Rejosari MSME association to determine the activity schedule. The outreach session was held at the Taqwa Nurul Huda Mosque Hall on Rejomulyo Street, Rejosari, Semarang City, and was attended by 20 association members. The event opened with remarks by the PKM team leader, Haris Murwanto, followed by a concise presentation on the importance of halal certification delivered by Rr. Lulus Prapti N. S., Nuria Universari, and Dian Indriana T. L.

To provide a more detailed and practice-oriented perspective, the PKM team invited two resource persons, Mr. Bimo and Ms. Rina, culinary MSME actors who had already secured halal certification for their products. They described the sequence of steps and the challenges encountered during the certification process. Participants were highly engaged, actively listening and discussing both with the PKM team and the invited speakers.



Figure 1. Implementation of the Community Service Activity.

Program outcomes were measured using pre-test and post-test instruments consisting of five statements administered at the beginning and end of the session. Based on Table 1, changes can be observed in the mean pre-test and post-test scores of participants in the halal certification socialization program, reflecting their levels of understanding, attitudes, and confidence following the activity. Overall, the results indicate an improvement in participants’ understanding, although the magnitude of

change varies across indicators. For the indicator measuring understanding of halal certification, the mean score increased from 78.33% in the pre-test to 79.17% in the post-test, representing a modest gain of 0.84%. This finding suggests that the socialization activity was effective in reinforcing MSME actors' basic understanding of the concept and importance of halal certification, even though most participants already possessed relatively adequate prior knowledge before the program was conducted.

A more pronounced improvement was observed in the indicator related to understanding the procedures for applying for halal certification, which increased from 74.17% to 76.67%, or by 2.50%. This result indicates that the socialization materials, which emphasized application stages, requirements, and submission mechanisms, including simplified schemes, made a tangible contribution to enhancing participants' technical understanding. Procedural complexity has previously been identified as a major barrier preventing MSMEs from pursuing halal certification, and the improvement in this indicator highlights the relevance of targeted procedural guidance.

The largest increase was found in the indicator measuring understanding of the benefits of halal certification for product marketing, which rose by 3.33%, from 77.50% in the pre-test to 80.83% in the post-test. This improvement demonstrates that MSME actors increasingly recognize halal certification not merely as a matter of regulatory or religious compliance, but also as a strategic instrument for strengthening consumer trust, enhancing competitiveness, and expanding market reach.

In contrast, no change was observed in the indicator measuring interest in applying for halal certification, which remained constant at 80.00%. This stability indicates that MSME actors had already exhibited a high level of interest prior to the socialization activity. Consequently, the program functioned primarily as a means of reinforcing existing motivation and understanding rather than initiating new interest. Meanwhile, the indicator measuring confidence that business development can be supported through halal certification showed a slight increase, from 80.00% to 80.83%, or by 0.83%. Although relatively small, this increase suggests a strengthening of positive perceptions regarding the role of halal certification in supporting business sustainability and growth.

Overall, the results presented in Table 1 demonstrate that the halal certification socialization activity had a positive impact on improving MSME actors' understanding and perceptions in Rejosari Village. Although the observed improvements are moderate, largely due to the participants' relatively high baseline knowledge, the activity remains relevant as an educational and strategic effort to support the optimization of MSME marketing through the adoption of halal certification.

Table 1. Average Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Indicator	Average Pre-Test Score	Average Post-Test Score	Increase
Understanding of halal certification	78,33 %	79,17%	0,84 %
Procedures for halal certificate application	74,17 %	76,67 %	2,50 %
Benefits of halal certification for product marketing	77,50 %	80,83 %	3,33 %
Interest in obtaining halal certification	80,00 %	80,00 %	0,00 %
Confidence that the business can grow with halal certification	80,00 %	80,83 %	0,83 %

4. CONCLUSION

The outcomes of this Community Service activity indicate a positive change among MSME owners who participated in the program, although the magnitude of improvement remains moderate. MSME actors in Rejosari Village continue to require support to enhance their skills in managing the halal certification process, particularly through technical training and hands-on assistance that can facilitate a clearer understanding of application procedures. Overall, the halal certification socialization program is considered both relevant and strategic in supporting the optimization of MSME marketing in Rejosari Village. Therefore, similar programs should be continued and further developed with more intensive mentoring to encourage MSME actors to implement halal certification applications in a concrete and sustainable manner.

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