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# Assistance *Halal* Certificate Management for MSMEs as a Form of Maximizing Good Governance Functions

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| **Abstract** | The implementation of Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation Number 20 of 2021 has required MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) in North Sumatra to make products that comply with Islamic law or are *halal*-certified. This research aims to make the *halal* assistance process for all MSME actors in North Sumatra take place using an ideal and standard mentoring model so that it does not only rely on work procedures and training experience from BPJPH for LP3H UMSU *Halal* Center *halal* companions. The method used in this community service is community-based Research (CBR) using a forum group discussion (FGD) approach in training and mentoring. This method is equipped with a borg and gall approach, which has been refined into five stages. The implementation of FGDs on the application of conceptual models that have produced theoretical models, the stages of applying theoretical models on small and large scales, and finally, product evaluation using the N-Gain test to see whether the resulting product is effective. The results of this study reveal that the mentoring model requires *halal* assistants to supervise MSME actors when processing *halal* certificates so that negative verbal excesses can be avoided and successful MSME actors can be monitored for business development and consistency in producing *halal* products. This research product is effective through the N-Gain test. |
| **Keywords** | |
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## 1.    Introduction

The Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, through BPJPH (*Halal* Product Guarantee Organizing Agency), Provides a paid (regular) *halal* certification process and a free *halal* certification process. Paid/regular routes are carried out by LPH (*halal* inspection agency), while free routes are carried out by LP3H (Rahmah & Barizah, 2020). This research explores the problems faced by LP3H (*Halal* Product Process Assistance Agency) in carrying out its strategic functions. LP3H in North Sumatra consists of several community organizations that have registered initially and are involved in implementing *halal* certification for MSMEs. North Sumatra has several

LP3H institutions, such as LP3H UMSU (*Halal* Center UMSU), LP3H UMA, and LP3H IAIN Padang Sidempuan. LP3H UMSU (*Halal* Center UMSU) collaborates with researchers to produce a *halal* certification assistance model for MSME players. So far, the UMSU *Halal* Center has worked based on work procedures obtained from BPJPH without a standard model for processing *halal* certificates for MSME actors and guided by LP3H personnel. According to data from the North Sumatra Province Cooperatives and SME Services, in 2021, there were 1.2 million officially registered MSMEs. However, only 4,000 MSMEs have registered for the *halal* certification program at BPJPH. So, only 0.2% of MSMEs in North Sumatra have officially registered with BPJPH. Meanwhile, for Indonesia, based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs in 2019, only 2.4% of MSMEs had *halal* certification.

The implementation of Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation Number 20 of 2021 concerning *halal* certification for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is a form of implementing good governance from the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in People's Lives (Larisu & Jopang, 2022); (Andaningsih et al., 2022). The implementation of *halal* certification for MSMEs domiciled in Indonesia, especially North Sumatra, is the responsibility of the *Halal* Task Force and LP3H under the control of the central BPJPH (Maulida, 2021); (Widayat et al., 2020). The target that has been set so far for BPJPH in producing *halal*-certified MSME business products is an effort that is in line with the activities of assisting MSME actors in processing *halal* certification (Nurohman & Qurniawati, 2021) (Moerad et al., 2023). So far, mentoring activities have been carried out by relying only on work procedures and training experience from BPJPH to the UMSU LP3H *Halal* Center. Thus, LP3H so far has yet to have an ideal model of operational assistance when helping to obtain *halal* certificates to help products issued by MSMEs based on Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation Number 20 of 2021.

The problems that often arise in the field are mostly related to verbal activities and community formation activities of similar businesses that have passed certification to maintain their sustainability and consistency in applying the Islamic Sharia system to food products, known as *halal* certification. The mentoring activities carried out so far have resulted in a few MSMEs passing *halal* certification. Certification activities carried out so far consist of program socialization, administrative fulfillment, product verification, product validation, finalization/sending of files, and status monitoring (Adzkia, 2021); (Sukmasetya et al., 2023). Efforts to foster and maintain the consistency of MSME actors so that they are consistent in implementing Islamic law have yet to be considered. This effort can be carried out by forming a similar business

community from MSMEs whose *halal* certificates have been issued (Irawan et al., 2023; Pratama et al., 2023). In addition, problems are often heard at the verification and validation stages carried out by assistants. This *halal* certification assistance model offers more complete stages and activities that are interconnected sequentially to produce a faster process and more certified products at the same time compared to stages that do not use the model.

Previous research related to this theme includes some relevant research. One of them is research conducted by Sukarma et al. (2023), which discusses the importance of assisting MSMEs in the management of *halal* certificates. This research highlights the need for collaboration between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and MSMEs to improve compliance and understanding of *halal* requirements. The results of this study show that by implementing the right mentoring model, MSMEs can more effectively manage *halal* certificates while maximizing the function of good governance by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Other research by Pratomo & and Nugrahanti (2022) also provides relevant insights into efforts to improve *halal* certification governance and the role of MSMEs in this context, which can provide a framework for further research focusing on this topic. Research by Majduddin (2022) Assessing the effectiveness of various mentoring models in helping MSMEs understand, manage, and obtain *halal* certificates. This research explores the role of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in providing guidance and assistance to MSMEs and their impact on fulfilling *halal* requirements and good governance. The government has issued an Economic Recovery Program for MSMEs, where the policies include loan interest subsidies, credit restructuring, working capital guarantees, and tax incentives (Legowo et al., 2021). Research by Mardhotillah et al. (2022) evaluates mentoring programs organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to support MSMEs in obtaining *halal* certificates. Enzovani et al. (2023) found that the study on *halal* certification is a separate perspective from the producer's point of view. The *essence of halal* certification in Indonesia can be seen from the purpose of Article 3 of the Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 33 year 2014. It requires a comprehensive understanding of *halal* certification by combining studies from the consumer, producer, and government sides to find the right pattern or concept

This research aims to make the process of *halal* mentoring for MSME players take place using a standardized ideal mentoring model and not just relying on work procedures and training experience from BPJPH to the UMSU LP3H *Halal* Center. So, LP3H has an ideal operational assistance model when assisting in obtaining *halal*

certificates to assist products issued by MSMEs based on Minister of Religion Regulation No. 20 in 2021.

## 2. Methods

The method used in this community service is community-based Research (CBR) using a forum group discussion (FGD) approach in training and mentoring. This method is equipped with a Borg and Gall approach, which has been refined into five stages (Yuliani & Banjarnahor, 2021). The CBR method is a participatory method that was developed as a way to encourage collaboration between researchers (researchers) and respondents, to receive and develop perfect findings, and to become a method for translating research findings into practical changes (Miskiyah et al., 2023). This research has carried out a preliminary research stage using in-depth questions and secondary data regarding the implementation of *halal* certification assistance, then continued with the conceptual model formation stage. This conceptual model received input and refinement through the FGD implementation stages to produce a theoretical model. After that, the theoretical model is applied on a small scale and a large scale. Meanwhile, the pretest was carried out before the small-scale implementation, and the posttest was carried out after the wide-scale theoretical model implementation. This was done because this research uses product evaluation to determine the effectiveness of its application in the field using the N-Gain test. After that, a final evaluation was carried out to finalize the *halal* assistance model for the *halal* assistants of the UMSU LP3H *Halal* Center and MSME actors in North Sumatra who are its partners in processing *halal* certification. After this service research is completed, it is hoped that LP3H can form community groups to oversee and develop similar business groups within LP3H's routine work model.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

*Halal* Certification is a procedure in several stages of inspection of a product to provide a *halal* guarantee and meet the *halal* standards determined by the *Halal* Inspection Institute (LPH) (Enzovani et al., 2023). The implementation and enforcement of *halal* certification will be influenced by the values and culture that exist in society (Karim & Syamsi, 2022). Accelerating *halal* certification can also strengthen Indonesia's role as a world *halal* producer, where business actors can declare that their products are *halal* using "self-declaration" procedures (Silajadja et al., 2023).

This research was conducted to maximize the function of good governance that intersects with the main needs of the community. The role of the Regional Office of the

Ministry of Religious Affairs of North Sumatra in governance is precisely to assist in the processing of *halal* certification for products produced by MSMEs in North Sumatra. The Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of North Sumatra, through BPJPH and LP3H, produces *halal* companions to carry out the mentoring process for MSME actors. This mentoring process still needs to have a model that becomes a permanent reference for *halal* mentors trained by LP3H. For this reason, this study used the research and development method of the Borg and Gall approach with ten steps (Maydiantoro, 2021); (Widayat et al., 2020). To fit the short research time and research goal of getting an effective model in a short time, borg and Gall's approach simplifies the process to just five steps without compromising substance and final targets.

The first step taken in this study is to apply initial research by conducting preliminary research on three MSME actors and three *halal* companions belonging to LP3H *Halal* Centre UMSU. Based on the incoming data can be mapped in the following table:

**Table 1.** Preliminary Research Results

| Not | Description | Findings | Action |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Stages of socialization of *halal* certification program for MSME actors | This is formal and does not utilize certified MSME actors | Immediately form a community of MSME actors |
| 2. | StagesFulfillment of administrative requirements, files, and procedures for completeness | It has been done, and there needs to be a mechanism to check the escort procedure routinely. | LP3H must develop an accompanying (internal) inspection procedure |
| 3. | Stages of product verification | There is a standard procedure to follow | LP3H builds a companion checking form (internal) |
| 4. | Product validation stages | There is a standard procedure to follow | LP3H builds a companion checking form (internal) |
| 5. | File finalization/submission stages | There is a standard procedure to follow | LP3H builds a companion checking form (internal) |
| 6. | File delivery status monitoring stages | Building active communication | LP3H builds status checking system (internal) |

| 7. | Stages of forming a similar business community | All MSME actors whose certifications have been issued have never been collected, developed, and used as socialization tools. | Form communities and build them by utilizing higher education technology |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | LP3H Evaluation | No LP3H program evaluation or routine activities | Create an application system for evaluating institutional work programs |
| 9. | Salary, incentive, or work honorarium | Salary, honorarium, or long and small incentives | Create a work program with elements of higher education to become additional MSMEs |
| 10. | Information, complaints, and suggestions | Information, complaints, and suggestions are no problem, and through LP3H | Setting up internet facilities as a basis for information, complaints, and suggestions |

Source: Preliminary Research Data

After the preliminary research, a conceptual model was prepared that had been applied in the process of mentoring MSME actors. The conceptual model that has been formed is then given input through FGD, which is carried out with LP3H Facilitators and MSME Actors under the guidance of the LP3H UMSU *Halal* Center. The findings and recommendations of the FGD can be seen below:

**Table 2.** FGD Findings and Recommendations

| Not | Findings | Recommendations |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | The implementation of mentoring only relies on the results of LP3H companion training. | Use the MSME actor mentoring model for *halal* certification. |
| 2. | The number of MSMEs that have yet to be *halal*-certified is still more than what is being handled. | Carry out mentoring using a more effective and tested model. |
| 3. | The socialization of the *halal* certification program has yet to reach all levels of small businesses. | Take advantage of certified religious actors and institutions/institutions. |
| 4. | There is no official brochure to | We need to make an official |

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| | socialize the program | brochure and appoint official officials from LP3H |
| 5. | The slow process of fulfilling *halal* certification administration requirements | The need for official procedures to meet administrative requirements |
| 6. | Difficulty preparing administrative requirements files | The need for an official procedure for preparing administrative requirements files |
| 7. | The verification stage is still not standardized | It is necessary to raise the standard of work at each stage |
| 8. | The stages of validity have not been well-tested | Need proper validity test |
| 9. | Slow procedure for sending files (finalization) | The need for fixed and standard procedures for LP3H companions |
| 10. | Monitoring unclear status between companions and MSME actors | The need for cooperation and regular information within the framework of standards |
| 11. | Deployment of certified MSMEs | There is a need to form similar business communities to be directed and fostered. |
| 12. | There is no general evaluation of the mentoring process in LP3H | The evaluation needs to be done once a year |
| 13. | The cost of mentoring is still small | Need to increase rewards |
| 14. | Information channels and information are disconnected after certification is completed. | Maintain the information system after certification is complete |

Source: FGD Implementation Data

After the FGD was carried out, improvements and inputs were obtained to improve the mentoring model before it was implemented on a small and large scale. Models that have received improvements are called theoretical models. The difference between conceptual models and theoretical models is only seen at the socialization stage of the program, which must use more concrete and official SOPs and mentoring guidelines (LP3H made two new documents, namely SOPs for *halal* certificate assistance and *Halal* Certification Assistance Guidelines). Then, the community's existence is needed in the future to maintain the quality and hilarity of products. Therefore, there is a need for regular meetings of *halal* escorts, and *halal* companions need to have the ability to maintain MSME actors in similar business communities. This means that LP3H members and assistants monitor periodic meetings of assistants

and must group MSME actors based on similar businesses to maintain product *halal* consistency.

MSMEs experience losses if products for which a certificate has been issued are not included on the packaging, indicating that the logo is *halal* certified. The inclusion of an official *halal* logo can increase turnover and raise the brand of the MSMEs concerned (Yahya et al., 2020); (Khalimy, 2018). Apart from social and religious aspects, the inclusion of *halal* certificates by MSMEs can be used as a medium of da'wah to encourage other MSMEs to carry out *halal* certification and become an educational medium for other MSMEs as well as for consumers. Who is accustomed to consuming the product? MSMEs contribute to reducing the unemployment rate by providing employment and economic equity for low-income communities (Lis & Szyszka, 2020); (Pratama et al., 2023).

MSMEs aim to grow and develop their businesses to build a national economy based on just economic democracy (Sari et al., 2021). Historically, economic restructuring has been considered crucial to the emergence of interconnected communities (Castells, M., and Cardoso, G., 1996). Since international banking is at the very center of the global economy, the two sectors go hand in hand in the information economy brought about by globalization (Asfahani et al., 2023); (Stalder F., and Castells, M, 2006). Organizations are becoming more change- and discontinuity-tolerant to weather the storm of ever-shifting markets and governments. Organizational change is possible, but it does not arise from advances in communication technology (Agustina et al., 2023); (Patriani et al., 2023).

The theoretical immediately applies these measures to *halal* assistants and MSME actors in limited numbers (on a small scale) and on a larger number of *halal* assistants and MSME actors (on a large scale). The results of the application of theoretical accompaniment*halal* models on a small scale and a large scale showed no difference in conclusions, achieved results, and problems. The main concern in implementing this theoretical model (both in small-scale and large-scale applications) is related to the problems encountered when applying theoretical models based on the guidelines and SOPs provided. The greatest difficulty in implementing these guidelines and SOPs is in the implementation of verification and validation, as well as the formation of mentoring groups and the establishment of similar business communities (Waham et al., 2023); (Kintu et al., 2021). In the future, the implementation of verification (verification and validation) must be easy to do, controlled, and accurate. The establishment of *halal* aid groups has a less unified and emotional effect on administrative and policy issues of higher authority agencies. The formation of

communities containing similar business actors faces low carrying capacity and funding constraints, as well as facilities that have yet to be provided by LP3H and UMSU. This is an evaluation material for the application of the theoretical model of *halal* assistance. Although there are obstacles and problems in its implementation, it is recognized that mentors and MSME actors are very necessary and important to maintain. The evaluation results add to the perfection of the model so that it can become the final model. This final model has been submitted to LP3H to be used and implemented to assist in making *halal* certification to *halal* companions and MSME actors at the LP3H UMSU *Halal* Hall.

Through this research, input achievements can be proven after applying model assistance in processing *halal* certification on a small and large scale. The development of inputs obtained and outputs produced can be stated as follows: (1) the number of MSME actors who are aware of the importance of *halal* certification has begun to increase and become more and more. Many volunteers without having to visit and give more socialization. Through the application of this model, MSME actors have been produced who are aware of the importance of *halal* certification so that they can remind and inform other MSME actors; (2) the completeness of ongoing business support is limited, assisted by *halal* assistants from LP3H to complete and perfect administration starting from participation requirements, completeness of documents and procedures for MSME actors who have limitations in meeting the requirements, procedures, and conditions for managing *halal* certificates completely; (3) the mixture of understanding of *haram* and *halal* among MSME actors is a challenge that is part of the routine work of LP3H *halal* companions. The implementation of this assistance shows us that assistance with extensive knowledge of *halal-haram* and experience in managing *halal-haram* products is needed for the wider community; (4) Low internet capability is often the main obstacle in the process of obtaining this *halal* certificate. However, LP3H companions understand all of this and have been taught to assist in this. This model shows us the fundamental weaknesses of MSMEs in using the Internet. This assistance overcomes this problem by requiring supervision and assistance from MSME actors in North Sumatra; (5) the low religious knowledge of MSME actors and *halal* companions is a real aspect that cannot be denied and must be a homework that must continue to be improved. LP3H must train companions who lack religious knowledge through BPJPH assistance. Meanwhile, MSME actors must continue to improve religious understanding by *halal* companions through the formation of similar communities/business groups under the control of LP3H and the *Halal* Task Force.

At the end of this study, it also tested whether the application of the assistance model carried out by the LP3H companion of the UMSU Center was effective or not for MSME actors. For this reason, a pretest is carried out before applying a limited-scale model, and a posttest is carried out after a wide-scale model is applied. The results of applying the N-Gain test through pretest and posttest data collection obtained results in the effective category.

## 4. Conclusion

This research has produced a final model regarding assistance in obtaining certification carried out by companions from the LP3H UMSU Center for MSME actors throughout North Sumatra. This model is called the Assistance Model, which has been applied in a limited and widespread manner and tested for the effectiveness of its use when applied. The results of the N-Gain Test conducted show that this model is effective when applied. A recommended follow-up research initiative could involve conducting an in-depth assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the proposed Certificate Management Assistance Model for MSMEs, evaluating its implementation, identifying potential challenges, and suggesting refinements to optimize the support provided by the Ministry.

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