

Halal Certification: The Role of Religiosity and Consumer Pressure on MSMEs' Intention to Register Halal Certification in East Java

Novita Nurul Islami^{1*}

¹Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember, Indonesia

*corresponding author e-mail: novitanurulisлами@uinkhas.ac.id

Article Info	Abstract
<p>Keywords: Religiosity Halal Certification MSMEs Consumer Pressure</p>	<p>The potential for superior products owned by Indonesia is enormous, especially those produced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). One of the efforts that can be made to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs products is halal certification. This study aims to determine the perspective of the role of religiosity and consumer pressure on MSMEs' intentions in Jember Regency in registering their products in halal certification. This research is a qualitative descriptive study with MSMEs research subjects in East Java. Retrieval of data using interview techniques, observation, questionnaire, and documentation. Findings. Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that religiosity and consumer pressure have a role in the intention of MSMEs to register their products in the halal certification program. However, it was found that consumer pressure as an external factor has a more substantial role than religiosity as an internal factor. Based on the conclusions, this study recommends suggestions to encourage MSMEs in East Java to have high intentions in registering their products in halal certification. It is necessary to have an optimal role from various parties, including the government (for example, the Office of Cooperatives and MSMEs, the Office of Industry and Trade, and Local Government), Stakeholders, Banking, and communities or forums to provide training, mentoring and providing access to MSMEs mainly related to halal certification and increasing the capacity of product competitiveness.</p>
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1. Introduction

The potential for superior products owned by Indonesia is enormous, especially those produced by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). As is well known, MSMEs play an essential role in the Indonesian economy. This is to data from the Ministry of Investment/Investment Coordinating Board, which explains that MSMEs in Indonesia have a sizeable contribution to GDP, namely 61.97% of the total national GDP or equivalent to Rp. 8,500 trillion in 2020. In addition, MSMEs absorb a sizable workforce, namely 97% of the absorption capacity of the business world in 2020 (BKPM, 2021).

However, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are one of the sectors that have been hit hard amid the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a survey conducted by the International Trade Center (ITC) with a sample of 4,467 companies from 132 countries, MSMEs have a higher risk of going bankrupt than large businesses, with one-fifth (21%) of MSMEs reporting a suspension of operations in three months into the pandemic (ITC, 2020). Whereas in Indonesia, in particular, 50% of MSMEs closed their operations within one month of the Covid outbreak (ADB,

2020). MSMEs have a vital role in Indonesia's economic growth. Based on data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises in March 2021, the number of MSMEs in Indonesia has reached 64.2 million with a contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 61.07 percent or IDR 8,573.89 trillion (<https://pip.kemenkeu.go.id/>). This condition can impact stagnation in the MSME sector, which is expected to disrupt economic growth in general. Therefore, after the Covid-19 pandemic, now is the right time for MSMEs to improve themselves for the sake of their business continuity.

As the world's largest Muslim country, Indonesia is a potential market for producers. Producers are aware that Muslim consumers are potential targets for marketing their products. One of the strategies they apply is Islamic Branding, namely using Islamic identity (with the words Islam, Sharia, Islamic names, and halal labels) in marketing their products. Islamic Branding consists of 3 classifications, namely: Islamic brand by compliance, by origin, and by customer (Nasrullah, 2015). Therefore, one of the efforts that MSMEs can make for the sustainability of their business is to improve product quality by certification standards by incorporating Islamic Branding strategies, one of which is by registering their products in the halal certification program. Thus, this prompted the Indonesian government to issue regulations related to halal certification, including Law No. 33 of 2014 concerning guarantees for halal products in Article 4, which explains that products that enter, circulate, and are regulated in the territory of Indonesia must be halal certified. This is also supported by PP No. 31 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Product Halal Assurance and PP No. 39 of 2021 concerning Performance in the Field of Halal Product Verification. In addition, it is also supported by Law No. 11 of 2020, which aims to create and increase job opportunities. The government provides convenience, protection, and empowerment to cooperatives, MSMEs, and national industry and trade. This is done to absorb the broadest possible Indonesian workforce while still paying attention to the balance and progress between regions within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia for the National Economy.

Religion is an essential factor to study because it is one of the most common factors that significantly influence a person's attitudes, values, and behavior at the individual and societal levels (Mokhlis, 2009). Generally, a religion practiced in society can affect material life and attitudes toward obtaining or using goods and services. Religions may forbid the use of specific goods and services. For example, Islamic teachings prohibit their adherents from drinking and eating pork, while the cow cult among Hindus excludes them from consuming beef. Religion also influences the sanctity of various actions and rituals (Alam, 2011). Thus, religious values shape an individual's emotional experience, cognition, and psychological well-being, which in turn, influence the choice of action in producing an item made by the producer.

Religion is one of the internal dimensions of the individual (Ibrahim & Ismail, 2015). Internally, an individual may know the rules of religious values to develop religious attitudes, values, and beliefs. In order to develop its competitive advantage, a business organization must adopt an intangible asset approach in a knowledge-based economy, such as knowledge competencies and human resources. Based on the resource-based model concept, it is explained that creating corporate value through knowledge management will increase competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In this case, religion is an internal factor influencing humans' cognitive behavior. Thus, how strong the religiosity commitment of SMEs is considered in understanding the behavior of SMEs in producing goods. Thus, for Muslim SMEs, religiosity influences interest in using a product or implementing a system (Muhamad et al., 2017). Religiosity can be assessed from the following indicators: placing Islamic principles as a priority, implementing the five pillars of Islam, having the belief that Islamic rules regarding halal products are actual, deciding to produce halal-certified products following Islamic principles, having a sense of security and calm when selling Halal products (Alam et al. (2011), Nasrullah (2015), Muhamad et al. (2017), Irani (2019).

Meanwhile, from the consumer side, Vristiyana (2019) found a significant influence between religion and the development of knowledge on the buying behavior or use of halal products. Therefore, producers need to improve product quality with a halal certification program. According to institutional theory, a business organization tends to carry out normative isomorphism caused by

pressure from suppliers, consumers, trade union organizations, the media, and the social environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Latif et al. (2020) said that these pressures affect corporate social norms and responsibilities and affect corporate behavior, especially in developing countries. In addition, normative pressure also significantly affects the interest of a business organization in making a sustainability report (Wang et al., 2018) and implementing good corporate governance (Brammer et al., 2012).

In the context of MSMEs, consumers significantly influence the business decisions of MSMEs. Because MSMEs are a type of business directly related to consumers, it is essential to meet the expectations and needs of consumers. For most Muslim consumers in Indonesia, certification and logos halal are essential factors influencing purchasing decisions (Izzuddin, 2018; Zakaria et al., 2018). By seeing halal-certified products, consumers feel safe and calm to consume them because these products comply with halal standards, so the existence of consumer pressure can influence the intention of MSMEs to register their products in the halal certification system.

Consumer pressure can be assessed from several indicators as follows: consumer attention to the halal label encourages MSMEs to take care of halal certification, halal certification is a moral responsibility as an MSME, consumers prefer to buy/consume products labeled halal, products labeled halal affect consumer loyalty (Ukobitz & Faullant, 2022), (Latif et al., 2020), (Tsai et al., 2013), (Wang et al., 2018).

Based on data from the Directorate General of the Population and Civil Registration Service, Ministry of Home Affairs, the population in East Java totaled 40.994 million in June 2021. Of these, 39.85 million people (97.21%) were Muslims, or most were Muslims (databoks.katadata.co.id, 2021).

Based on the background and the results of previous research reviews, this study aims to determine the perspective of the role of religiosity and consumer pressure on MSMEs' intentions in East Java in registering their products in halal certification. The novelty of this research is to look further at the role of religiosity and consumer pressure on business actors' choices of action in using Islamic Branding through halal certification in marketing their products.

2. Research Method

This research is a qualitative descriptive study for data collection using interview techniques, observation, and documentation. The use of this technique is expected to be able to answer the problems raised in the formulation in order to be able to obtain information, answer the problems formulated, as well the goals to be achieved. Primary data were obtained from subjects or informants, namely MSMEs actors and representatives of MSMEs community administrators in East Java. At the same time, the secondary data source is obtained from documentation in the form of documents related to the submission of MSMEs halal certification that has been carried out. Data was collected on 150 East Java MSMEs that produce processed food. This research carried out concrete steps to get involved directly by doing the following: a) Conduct structured observations and interviews; b) Look for meaning in every behavior or action of the object of research so that an original understanding of contextual problems and situations is found; c) Data Triangulation. In triangulation activities, the truth of information or data obtained from certain parties is checked by gathering information or data from other sources. Triangulation aims to compare data obtained from various parties to achieve a guaranteed level of trust—for example, from second parties, third parties, and so on using different methods. Meanwhile, data analysis techniques in this study were carried out continuously from the beginning to the end of the research process, including a) data reduction, b) assessment, c) data presentation, and d) conclusions and verification.

3. Results and Discussions

Data collection provides in-depth information based on interview data regarding the perspective of the role of religiosity and consumer pressure on the intention of MSMEs in East Java

to register their products for halal certification. This research involved 150 MSMEs in East Java Province. The demographic characteristics of the informants are presented in Table 1 as follows.

Table 1. Demographic Data of Main Information

No	Characteristics		Total	Percentage
1	Religion	Islam	137	91 %
		Non-Islamic	13	9 %
2	Length of Business Operation	< 5 years	84	56 %
		5-10 years	51	34 %
		>10 years	15	10 %
4	Turnover/year	<50 million	27	18 %
		50 - 100 million	123	82 %
5	Halal Certification	Already	48	32 %
		Not yet	102	68 %

Source: data is processed, 2023

Based on Table 1 above, it can be seen that of the 150 informants, 91% were Muslims, and 9% were non-Muslims, with a business length of <5 years by 56%, 5-10 years by 34%, and >10 years by 10%. Then 18% of MSMEs have a turnover of <50 million per year, 82% have a turnover of 50-100 million per year, and 32% of MSMEs already have halal certification, while the remaining 68% still do not.

Efforts to Increase MSMEs Product Competitiveness in East Java

The growth of MSMEs in East Java shows great potential. The MSMEs population in East Java in 2022 has reached 9,782,262 units (tribunnews.com, 2022). These conditions can be a potential at the global level that can increase competitiveness. Competitiveness is comparing the ability and performance of companies, sub-sectors, or countries to sell and supply goods and services available in the market. The competitiveness of a country can be achieved from the accumulation of the strategic competitiveness of each company (Balanovska, Havrysh, & Gogulya, 2019; Pangarso, Astuti, Raharjo, & Afrianty, 2020). Rahman & Ervina (2020) shows that MSMEs are competitive because they have access to finance, innovation, intellectual property, the process of internationalization and utilization of ICT, human resources, and governance.

Increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs products in East Java was carried out in several ways and from various supporting parties, including the Industry and Trade Office, the Cooperatives and MSMEs Office, Bank Indonesia, Forums, and active communities in East Java. MSMEs that are actively involved in fostering the Office of Industry and Trade, the Office of Cooperatives and MSMEs, Bank Indonesia, Forums, or active communities in East Java (for example, East Java MSMEs Forum, Bedo, JEKA, etc.) can always participate in various capacity building programs in human resources, production management, finance, marketing. According to Suherningtyas (2018), a strategy that can be taken to improve the quality or competitiveness of MSMEs is to provide training, mentoring, and collaboration between stakeholders, for example, through product development management, leadership, managerial, mentoring, and venture capital training. Mentoring can improve the quality of business. To compete globally. Based on the explanation from the forum of MSMEs management in East Java, unfortunately, it was found that only about 35% of the total MSMEs in East Java Province were actively involved in forums or communities. On average, active MSMEs are located close to the city center, while MSMEs located

on the outskirts are unreachable, or there are only a small number of them. Thus, many MSMEs in East Java still need assistance to improve competitiveness. In addition, most MSMEs in East Java are still informal businesses that still need legality, for example, business licenses, distribution permits for PIRT products, BPPOM, and Halal certification. Business and product legality is essential to increase product competitiveness. The existence of legality is the key so that products can be widely distributed legally and can be trusted by consumers. MSMEs business legality also needs to be owned to establish cooperation with other parties locally, nationally, and internationally. Meanwhile, the focus is on training and mentoring programs carried out by stakeholders in East Java for MSMEs, namely the halal certification program, especially the self-declared program. This program is in line with the Indonesian government's target that by 2024 all products, mainly processed food products on the market, will be halal certified.

The Role of Religiosity and Consumer Pressure on MSMEs' Intentions in Registering Halal Certification for Their Products

Religiosity has a role as an internal factor that can influence the considerations of business actors in the choice of action to register their products in the halal certification program. Meanwhile, consumer pressure is an external factor influencing business actors to register their products in the halal certification program. Following are the perceptions of MSMEs actors in East Java regarding the role of religiosity and consumer pressure in bringing about their intention to register their products in halal certification. The role of religiosity can be seen in Figure 1 as follows.

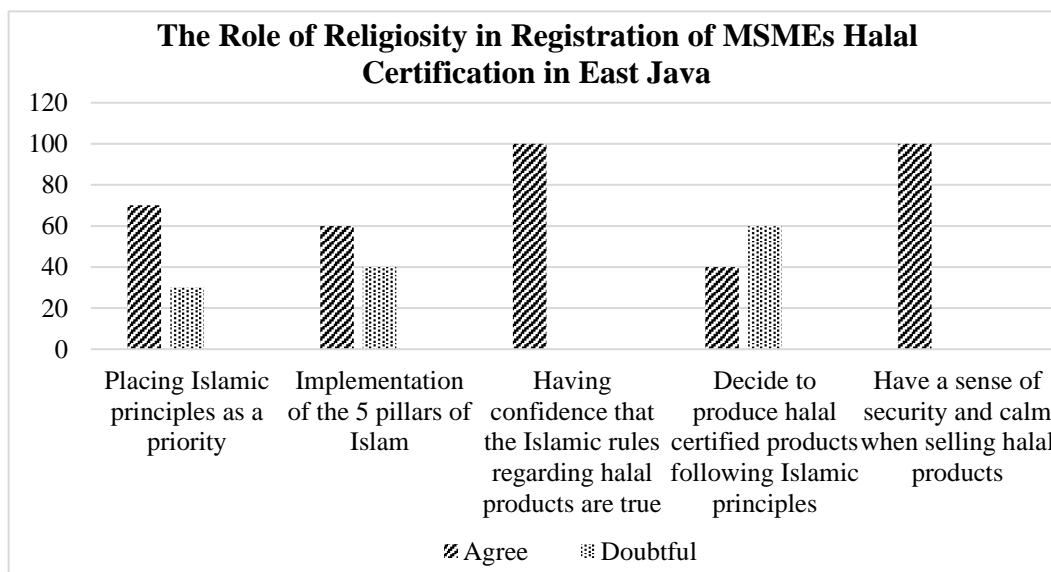


Figure 1. The Role of Religiosity in the Registration of MSMEs Halal Certification in East Java

Figure 1 shows that 70% of MSMEs prioritize Islamic principles, including in business activities, namely producing and selling products by Islamic religious principles. However, 30% of informants still expressed doubts. Regarding implementing the pillars of Islam, 60% of the informants agreed that they were sure they had implemented it, and 40% felt doubtful. 100% of MSMEs believed that Islamic rules regarding halal products are accurate and have a sense of security and calm when selling them. However, 60% still decide to produce halal-certified products whose standards follow Islamic religious principles.

Based on the results of the interviews, the feeling of doubt from business actors is not because they do not believe in the principles of the Islamic religion. However, as small business actors, they feel that standards in producing products and passing halal certification are tough challenges for

them. They feel that the process must be followed and gone through is very complicated, and MSMEs wonder whether they can meet the standards set by the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency.

Business people must apply business ethics in trading for maximum profits and blessings. Ideally, the role of religion is implemented centrally in ethical and halal business. The understanding of business people about the law in fiqh al-muamalat is fundamental. Both are the law of the products being transacted, the law of the transaction process, and the purpose of halal guarantees. Thus, compliance with Sharia represents an operational system and becomes a work culture through worship (Muhammad, 2020). From previous research, several focus indicators can measure a person's religiosity. Religious values, beliefs, and rituals are indicators of religiosity (Muhamad et al., 2017; Iriani, 2019).

According to Glock and Stark (in Nasrullah, 2015), one of the five dimensions of religiosity is the practical dimension, which is related to commitment and obedience to the religion they adhere to, manifested in rituals or worship. This dimension is divided into two: 1) Ritual refers to a set of formal religious actions and sacred practices that its adherents expect to carry out. In Islam, the ritual forms referred to include: Prayer, fasting, zakat, pilgrimage for those who can afford it, reading and practicing the Koran, making sacrifices, and others. 2) Obedience, obedience, and rituals are like fish and water. When someone already knows the rituals that must be performed, then as far as possible, the rituals are carried out as much as possible to show that "I am a person who is devout and committed to religion."

Based on the religiosity dimension above, in this study, it was found that the relationship between the religiosity factor and the intention of Muslim MSMEs to make halal certification was very close. However, MSMEs still tend to have a ritual dimension to a practical dimension related to trade. Information from informants explained that not all business actors fall into the category of fully operating due to adherence to religion, but some also consider profits in developing their products. So, from the perspective of MSMEs in East Java, religiosity influences the decision to join the product halal certification program, but not 100%.

Meanwhile, the perceptions of MSMEs actors in East Java are related to the role of consumer pressure in bringing about their intention to register their products in halal certification can be seen in Figure 2 as follows.

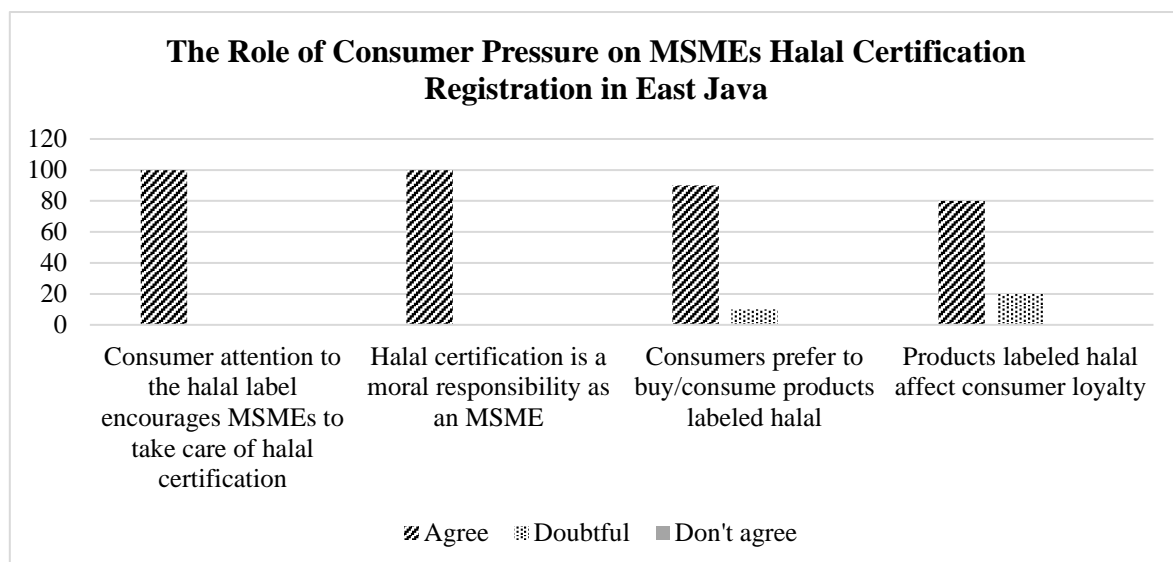


Figure 2. The Role of Consumer Pressure on MSMEs Halal Certification Registration in East Java

Figure 2 shows that 100% of the informants agreed that consumers' attention to the halal label encourages MSMEs to take care of halal certification, which is a moral responsibility for MSMEs. While 90% of informants agreed that consumers prefer to buy/consume products labeled halal, and 10% said they were unsure. Then 80% of the informants agreed that products labeled halal affected consumer loyalty, and 20% were unsure.

Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that currently, consumers have a great deal of pressure on businesses related to halal-certified products. They even feel that consumer pressure has a higher role when compared to the religiosity factor. This is motivated by the existence of an influence on the fulfillment of consumer standards in the market. Fulfilling products needed and desired by consumers will affect business development and the long-term profits of business actors.

In Indonesia, halal is an important issue and has become a business competition strategy. In mid-2021, the growth of the halal industry consisting of halal food, halal fashion, and halal tourism increased by 8.2% and placed Indonesia in fourth place in the 2020-2021 Global Economy (Wirakurnia et al., 2022). The increasing awareness of halal consumers and the demand for halal products supports this, however it should be followed by increasing of producer awareness as well (Mardoni et al., 2020). The halal lifestyle has become a trend for Muslim consumers and non-Muslim countries (Haque et al., 2015).

Halal is a way of life that has developed in food, pharmaceutical, beauty, and tourism products. Halal certificates can be an added value, influencing consumer purchasing decisions because the product guarantees safety and health (Bashir, 2019). Because the products comply with sharia, halal, and tayyib, the processing standards and distribution process are separate from non-halal products. It also meets environmentally friendly standards and labor ethics (Zakaria et al., 2018). Therefore, MSMEs can meet consumer expectations by registering for halal certification to increase their market share.

4. Conclusions

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that religiosity and consumer pressure have a role in the intention of MSMEs to register their products in the halal certification program. However, it was found that consumer pressure as an external factor has a more vital role than religiosity as an internal factor. Based on the conclusions, this study recommends suggestions to encourage MSMEs in East Java to have high intentions in registering their products in halal certification. It is necessary to have an optimal role from various parties, including the government (for example, the Office of Cooperatives and UMKM, the Office of Industry and Trade, and Local Government), Stakeholders, Banking, and communities or forums to provide training, mentoring and providing access to MSMEs mainly related to halal certification and increasing the capacity of product competitiveness.

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