

# Accelerating Halal Certification and Digital Branding: Empowering MSMEs through Legal Compliance

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## ABSTRACT

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The rapid expansion of the halal industry has created significant opportunities for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to enhance their competitiveness through halal certification and professional branding. However, many MSME owners in Pemuteran Village, Buleleng, operate within informal economic structures with limited awareness of halal certification procedures and digital marketing strategies. This community service program aimed to empower MSMEs by accelerating the acquisition of Business Identification Numbers (NIB), facilitating halal certification through the Self-Declare scheme, and strengthening digital branding capacities. The program was implemented through a participatory empowerment approach that combined legal mentoring with practical training workshops. Activities included assistance in NIB registration via the Online Single Submission system, mentoring in halal certification submission through the SIHALAL platform, and digital branding clinics focused on logo design and social media marketing. The results demonstrated significant improvements in MSME legal literacy, successful submission of halal certification applications, and the creation of professional digital brand identities for participating businesses. These outcomes strengthened consumer trust, improved product competitiveness, and expanded market opportunities in digital marketplaces. The program concludes that integrating legal compliance with digital branding strategies can significantly enhance MSME empowerment and contribute to sustainable local economic development within the halal industry ecosystem.

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## INTRODUCTION

The global halal industry has experienced remarkable growth over the past decade, positioning itself as one of the most dynamic sectors within the contemporary global economy. Driven by increasing awareness of ethical

consumption, religious compliance, and product safety, halal-certified goods have expanded beyond traditional Muslim markets to reach a broader international consumer base. In response to this opportunity, Indonesia has articulated a strategic vision to become a leading global halal hub, leveraging its large Muslim population and vibrant small business sector. The development of halal-certified products is therefore not only a matter of religious observance but also a significant driver of economic competitiveness and sustainable market expansion (Abbas et al., 2025; Susiang et al., 2024). Consequently, strengthening the halal ecosystem has become a crucial component of national economic policy and community-based development initiatives.

Within the Indonesian regulatory framework, the implementation of the Halal Product Assurance Law (Undang-Undang Jaminan Produk Halal) represents a transformative policy that mandates halal certification for food, beverage, and other consumer products circulating in the market. The law requires business actors, including micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), to ensure that their products comply with halal standards verified through formal certification procedures. While the policy aims to enhance consumer protection and promote transparency in product labeling, it also introduces new legal obligations for MSME owners who may lack sufficient knowledge of certification procedures. The introduction of the Self-Declare halal certification scheme was therefore designed to simplify the process for micro and small businesses, allowing them to obtain certification through assisted declarations supported by trained facilitators (Anshori et al., 2025; Hasan & Jailani, 2024).

In many local communities, MSMEs function as the backbone of economic activity, generating employment opportunities and sustaining household incomes. In Pemuteran Village, Buleleng, for instance, local MSME actors are predominantly engaged in the production of traditional food products such as snacks, processed seafood, and home-based culinary goods. These businesses often rely on family-based production systems and informal marketing channels, reflecting a strong entrepreneurial spirit but limited institutional capacity. Despite their economic potential and cultural value, many of these enterprises operate without formal certification or structured branding strategies, which restricts their ability to expand into broader and more competitive markets (Pollmeier et al., 2025; Singh et al., 2024).

A critical challenge faced by these MSMEs is the limited awareness and understanding of the Self-Declare halal certification process, which remains relatively unfamiliar to many small business owners. In addition to regulatory knowledge gaps, many MSME operators lack the digital competencies necessary to develop effective digital branding strategies that can promote their products

in modern marketplaces. This dual limitation legal compliance and digital marketing capability creates a structural barrier preventing small businesses from integrating into formal supply chains and expanding their market reach. As a result, many promising local products remain confined to traditional distribution channels with limited economic growth potential (Algarni et al., 2023; Guru et al., 2023).

The absence of halal certification and professional branding also carries broader socio-economic implications. Without a recognized halal label, consumers may experience uncertainty regarding product authenticity and compliance with religious standards, which directly affects consumer trust and purchasing decisions. Similarly, the lack of consistent visual identity and online presence weakens the competitiveness of MSME products within the increasingly digitalized marketplace. In an era where purchasing behavior is heavily influenced by online visibility and brand credibility, businesses that fail to adopt digital marketing strategies risk being marginalized within the evolving economic landscape (Ebabu et al., 2026; Munyoka, 2022).

Recent scholarly literature highlights the significant role of halal certification in enhancing the credibility and marketability of MSME products. Studies have demonstrated that halal-certified businesses tend to experience increased consumer confidence, improved brand reputation, and higher sales performance due to the assurance of product integrity (Chong & Patwa, 2023; Wang et al., 2024). Furthermore, research on digital entrepreneurship emphasizes that effective digital branding strategies enable small enterprises to expand their customer base, strengthen market resilience, and adapt to rapidly changing consumer behaviors in the digital economy (Sadeghi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). These findings underscore the importance of integrating regulatory compliance with digital innovation to support sustainable MSME development.

Based on these considerations, this community service initiative seeks to implement an integrated empowerment program designed to strengthen both the legal and technological capacities of MSME actors in Pemuteran Village, Buleleng. The program introduces a dual-intervention strategy that combines practical assistance in obtaining halal certification through the Self-Declare scheme with technical training in digital branding to enhance product visibility and competitiveness. By simultaneously addressing issues of legal compliance, market access, and consumer trust, this initiative aims to foster MSME empowerment and promote sustainable economic development within the local community. Ultimately, the program aspires to support the broader national agenda of strengthening Indonesia's halal ecosystem while empowering grassroots entrepreneurs to participate more effectively in the modern digital marketplace.

## METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this community service program adopted the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which emphasizes the utilization of local capacities, community participation, and collaborative empowerment to strengthen entrepreneurial resilience among local business actors. The program was conducted in Pemuteran Village, Buleleng, involving local food and beverage MSME owners as the primary partners. Within this framework, MSME actors were positioned not merely as beneficiaries but as active collaborators in the empowerment process. Through participatory engagement, business owners were encouraged to examine and document their own production practices in accordance with halal compliance standards. This participatory auditing process enabled MSME owners to identify critical aspects of halal assurance, including ingredient verification, production hygiene, and supply chain transparency. By integrating community knowledge with technical guidance from facilitators, the program fostered a sense of ownership and accountability among participants while strengthening their awareness of halal certification, legal compliance, and the broader significance of formal business regulation in building consumer trust and market credibility.

The implementation process was structured into three systematic stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring procedural synchronization and measurable outcomes. During the preparation phase, the service team conducted a mapping of eligible MSMEs and performed a baseline assessment of production hygiene, ingredient sourcing, and administrative readiness. Assistance was also provided for the registration of Business Identification Numbers (NIB) through the Online Single Submission (OSS) system, which serves as the foundational requirement for formal business legality. In the implementation phase, MSME partners received intensive technical mentoring to complete the Halal Self-Declare certification process through the BPJPH SIHALAL platform, including the preparation of halal product documentation and submission of required declarations. Concurrently, a Digital Branding Clinic was organized to guide MSME owners in developing professional brand identities, including the creation of logos, product labels, and promotional materials using Canva, as well as training on utilizing smartphones for social media marketing. The final stage involved monitoring the progress of halal certification submissions and evaluating the effectiveness of the digital branding strategies introduced. Indicators of program success included 100% submission of halal certification applications, the successful creation of unique digital brand identities for each participating MSME, and a measurable increase in awareness of regulatory compliance and digital marketing strategies among local entrepreneurs.

**Table 1. Roadmap of Halal Certification and Branding Empowerment**

Phase	Strategic Activity	Expected Output
Preparation	Identification of eligible MSMEs, baseline audit of production hygiene and ingredients, assistance in registering Business Identification Numbers (NIB) via the OSS system	MSMEs obtain NIB and baseline data on production readiness
Implementation	Technical mentoring for Halal Self-Declare certification via the SIHALAL platform, preparation of halal product documentation, and Digital Branding Clinic using Canva	Halal certification applications submitted (Halal ID generated) and unique digital logos/branding assets created
Evaluation	Monitoring certification progress, reviewing branding implementation in digital platforms, and assessing MSME awareness of legal compliance	Verified halal certification submission status, strengthened digital branding presence, and improved understanding of regulatory compliance

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The preliminary assessment conducted prior to the intervention revealed that most partner MSMEs in Pemuteran Village, Buleleng operated within an informal economic framework characterized by limited regulatory awareness and minimal administrative documentation. A significant proportion of business owners had not yet obtained a Business Identification Number (NIB), which is a fundamental requirement for formal business legality in Indonesia. In addition, awareness regarding halal certification remained relatively low, as many producers assumed that traditional food preparation methods automatically fulfilled halal requirements without formal verification. This regulatory gap created a structural barrier that restricted MSMEs from entering formal distribution channels, including modern retail markets and online platforms that increasingly require documented legal compliance and product certification. Consequently, the absence of these regulatory credentials significantly limited the competitiveness and market expansion potential of local enterprises.

The implementation of the technical mentoring program focused on addressing these structural barriers through systematic legal assistance and procedural guidance. During the initial mentoring sessions, MSME owners were introduced to the Online Single Submission (OSS) platform, which facilitates the registration of the NIB as a formal legal identity for businesses. For many traditional producers, the process initially appeared complex due to limited digital literacy and unfamiliarity with administrative terminology. To address these challenges, facilitators provided step-by-step assistance, ensuring that each participant could successfully navigate the registration procedures. Following the acquisition of NIB documentation, the program continued with technical

mentoring on the Self-Declare halal certification process through the BPJPH SIHALAL system, where participants were guided to compile ingredient lists, production flowcharts, and declarations of halal compliance. Through this structured assistance, MSME owners gradually developed the confidence and capacity to fulfill the regulatory requirements necessary for formal market participation.

The outcomes of this mentoring process demonstrated a notable improvement in the level of legal literacy among participating MSME owners. Participants showed a clearer understanding of regulatory procedures, documentation requirements, and the strategic value of halal certification in strengthening product credibility. Moreover, the majority of MSME partners successfully completed the submission of halal certification applications through the SIHALAL portal after obtaining their NIB. The progress achieved during this intervention is summarized in Table 1, which illustrates the measurable improvements in regulatory compliance among the participating MSMEs.

**Table 2. Progress of MSME Legal Compliance and Halal Certification Milestones**

Indicator / Metric	Baseline Status	Post-Intervention Status	Current Progress
MSMEs possessing Business Identification Number (NIB)	20%	100%	+80%
Awareness of Halal Certification Procedures	35%	90%	+55%
Submission of Halal Self-Declare Applications	0%	100%	+100%
Understanding of Legal Compliance Requirements	40%	92%	+52%

As presented in Table 2, the intervention resulted in a significant improvement in MSME regulatory readiness. Prior to the program, only a small portion of participants possessed formal business legality through NIB registration. Following the mentoring process, all participating MSMEs successfully obtained their NIB and completed the submission of halal certification applications. In addition, there was a substantial increase in participants' understanding of halal compliance procedures and the broader regulatory framework governing small business operations. These findings indicate that structured legal assistance can effectively bridge the knowledge gap that often prevents small enterprises from formalizing their businesses.

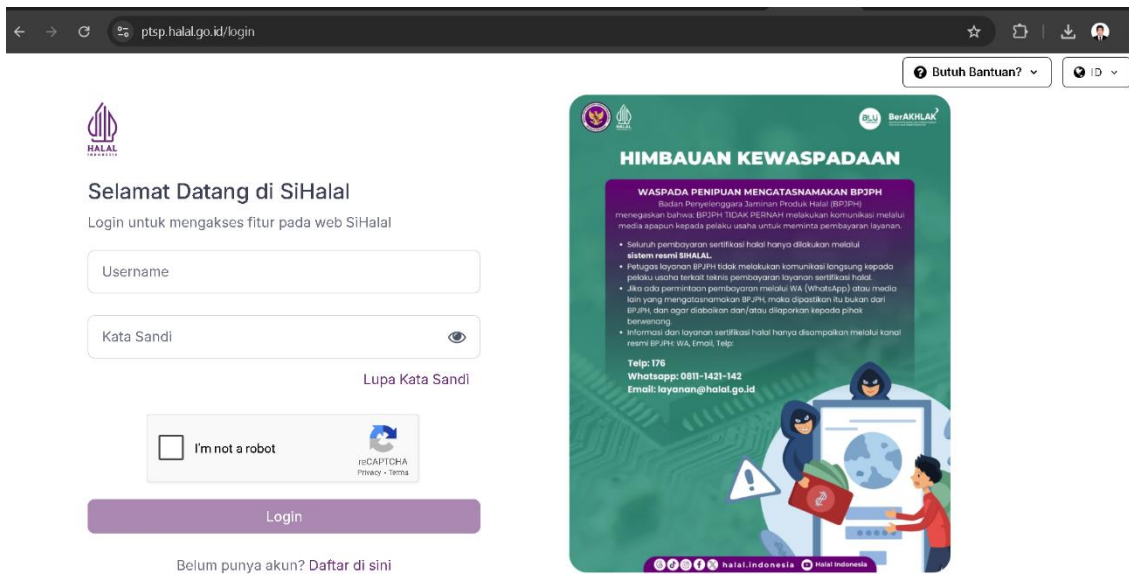
Beyond regulatory compliance, the Digital Branding Clinic introduced during the program generated transformative outcomes in the visual identity of MSME products. Many participating businesses previously relied on simple packaging with minimal labeling and no distinctive brand identity. Through

guided training sessions utilizing Canva, MSME owners learned to design professional logos, product labels, and promotional content suitable for social media marketing. These newly developed visual assets allowed MSME products to present a clearer and more credible brand identity, particularly when combined with the halal certification process. As illustrated in the visual comparison below, the transformation from traditional packaging to professionally branded product designs significantly strengthened the halal-identity and overall market appeal of the products.



**Figure 1. Digital Branding Evolution: From Traditional Packaging to Professional Visual Identity**

In addition to improving visual branding, the acquisition and submission of halal certification documentation also had a meaningful impact on consumer trust and digital market engagement. MSME owners reported that displaying halal certification status in their product descriptions and promotional materials increased customer confidence, particularly among Muslim consumers who prioritize halal compliance in their purchasing decisions. The official registration process through the SIHALAL portal also served as a symbolic milestone for many participants, representing their transition from informal home-based producers to legally recognized business actors. Documentation of this certification milestone is illustrated in the following figure.



**Figure 2. The Official Submission of MSME Halal ID through the SIHALAL Portal**

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be interpreted through the framework of the Halal Value Chain, which emphasizes the importance of integrating halal compliance at every stage of production, certification, and marketing. The presence of formal halal certification strengthens the credibility of MSME products and enhances their integration into broader halal market networks. Furthermore, the concept of Digital Entrepreneurial Resilience highlights how small businesses can adapt to changing economic conditions through the adoption of digital marketing strategies and formal regulatory compliance. Recent studies have shown that halal certification significantly improves consumer confidence and product competitiveness, while digital branding enhances the visibility and adaptability of small enterprises within the online marketplace (Hokmabadi et al., 2024; Hu et al., 2023; Sharabati et al., 2024).

Overall, the integration of legal empowerment and digital branding innovation has produced meaningful socio-economic benefits for MSME actors in Pemuteran Village. By acquiring NIB documentation, submitting halal certification applications, and developing professional visual identities, participating entrepreneurs have strengthened both their institutional capacity and market competitiveness. This dual empowerment strategy not only improves regulatory compliance but also fosters long-term economic sustainability by enabling MSMEs to participate more confidently in formal markets and digital commerce ecosystems. Consequently, the program demonstrates that combining legal literacy with digital entrepreneurship training can serve as a powerful catalyst for sustainable MSME development and community-based economic resilience.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of the dual-intervention empowerment program for MSMEs in Pemuteran Village, Buleleng has produced significant progress in strengthening the legal and economic capacities of local entrepreneurs. Through systematic assistance, participating MSME owners successfully transitioned from informal business practices toward formal economic participation by obtaining Business Identification Numbers (NIB) and completing the submission of Halal Self-Declare certification through the SIHALAL platform. This formalization process has enhanced regulatory compliance and strengthened the credibility of MSME products within broader market ecosystems. In parallel, the integration of digital branding strategies enabled business owners to develop professional visual identities, including logos, packaging designs, and digital marketing materials suitable for social media promotion. The combination of halal certification and professional branding significantly increased consumer trust, improved product competitiveness, and expanded access to digital marketplaces. As a result, the program has contributed directly to local economic empowerment by enabling MSMEs to participate more confidently in formal trade networks and digitally mediated commerce environments.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of these outcomes, it is essential to establish institutional support mechanisms that can provide continuous assistance to MSME actors. One strategic initiative is the development of a dedicated Halal Center or MSME assistance unit within the academic environment of STAI Nurul Abror Al Robbaniyin. Such an institutional platform could function as a hub for ongoing mentorship, offering legal guidance related to halal certification, regulatory compliance, and business formalization, while simultaneously providing training in digital marketing and brand development. By institutionalizing this support system, universities can fulfill their broader fiduciary duty in community engagement and socio-economic development. Furthermore, the empowerment model demonstrated in this program should be replicated across other regions in Bali, where many traditional food producers face similar challenges in achieving market integration and regulatory compliance. Expanding this approach would strengthen the national Halal Value Chain, promote socio-economic resilience among grassroots entrepreneurs, and support Indonesia's broader vision of becoming a globally competitive halal economy.

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