


Development of Halal Food MSMEs in Purwokerto: An Analysis of Challenges and Opportunities through a Qualitative Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to analyze in-depth the development of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the halal food sector in Purwokerto, Central Java. This location was chosen strategically, considering that Purwokerto, as an educational city and economic center in the Banyumas Residency area, has great potential for the development of the halal food industry. The halal food sector has become a primary focus due to the continued growth of the global halal market and Indonesian public awareness of the importance of halal food consumption. This study used a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of halal food MSME development. The data collection method involved in-depth interviews with 15 halal food MSMEs selected purposively based on certain criteria such as business duration, product type, and operational scale. Field observations were conducted to observe daily operational practices, while a documentary study analyzed relevant documents such as business permits, halal certificates, and financial reports. The research identified three main challenges facing halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto. First, the complexity of the halal certification process, which involves high costs and complicated administrative procedures. Second, limited access to capital from formal financial institutions, which hinders business expansion. Third, low adoption of digital technology for marketing, which results in limited market reach. However, the research also identified significant opportunities in the form of increased consumer awareness of halal products and the local government's commitment to supporting the development of the sharia economy. Recommended development strategies include improving product quality through standardization, menu diversification to expand the target market, and optimizing the use of digital platforms to increase the visibility and accessibility of halal food products in Purwokerto.

Keywords: *MSMEs; halal food; Purwokerto; business development; qualitative methods*

INTRODUCTION

The halal food industry in Indonesia has experienced significant growth in recent years (Rosadi & Nursyamsiah, 2024). As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has significant potential to develop the halal food industry, including at the MSME level (Zainorrahman & Reza Zulfikri, 2023).

Purwokerto, a key city in Central Java, boasts unique characteristics with a diverse local culinary scene that has the potential to be developed into marketable halal food products (Sochimim et al., 2025). Halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto not only play a role in driving the local economy but also preserve traditional culinary culture. However, the development of halal food MSMEs faces various challenges, ranging from regulatory aspects and certification to limited market access (T. Maulida & Nawawi, 2024).

The growth of the halal food industry in Indonesia is inseparable from the increasing awareness of the Muslim community regarding the importance of consuming halal and thayyib food (Kurniadi, 2025). This trend is reinforced by government support through various policies that encourage the development of the sharia economy, including the halal food sector. Data from the Ministry of Industry shows that the halal industry's contribution to Indonesia's GDP continues to increase, with the halal food and beverage sector being a major contributor. Regionally, Purwokerto holds a strategic position as a trade and economic center in the Barlingmascakeb region (Banjarnegara, Purbalingga, Banyumas, Cilacap, and Kebumen). The presence of various educational institutions, business centers, and good transportation access make Purwokerto a potential market for the development of halal food MSMEs. The demographic characteristics of Purwokerto's predominantly Muslim population also create a conducive environment for the growth of halal food businesses.

Purwokerto's local culinary diversity is a valuable asset in the development of halal food MSMEs (Chandra, 2023). Traditional products such as mendoan, sate buntel, kupat glabed, and various types of Banyumas snacks have great potential to be developed into halal products that can be marketed more widely. This development not only has the potential to increase the economic value of local products but also contributes to the preservation of traditional culinary heritage.

The role of halal food MSMEs as drivers of the local economy is becoming increasingly important in the context of sustainable economic development (Rulita Nur Mufatikhah et al., 2025). Halal food MSMEs make a significant contribution to employment, increasing community income, and developing a community-based economy [8]. Furthermore, halal food MSMEs also play a role in maintaining and preserving local culinary traditions, which are part of the cultural identity of the Purwokerto community. However, the development of halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto has not always been smooth. Various challenges and obstacles have emerged in the process of developing the halal food business, which require serious attention from various stakeholders (Hayatul Ikhsan et al., 2024). These challenges are not only technically operational, but also include aspects of regulation, certification, market access, and human resource capacity development.

Regulatory aspects are one of the main challenges faced by halal food MSMEs (Salsabila, 2025). Complex licensing procedures, unclear operational standards, and a lack of public awareness of halal food regulations often hinder MSMEs from developing their businesses (Khoiruddin & Syahpawi, 2024). This is exacerbated by differences in interpretation and implementation of regulations at the regional level, which can create uncertainty for business actors. Halal certification is another significant challenge. Although halal certification has been mandatory for food and beverage products since 2024, many MSMEs still experience difficulties in obtaining this certification. These obstacles include perceived high certification costs, complicated procedures, a lack of understanding of certification requirements, and

limited access to information. Yet, halal certification is key to increasing product competitiveness and expanding market access.

Limited market access is also a significant challenge for halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto. This limitation relates not only to geographic reach but also to the MSMEs' ability to access broader and more modern distribution channels. Many MSMEs still rely on direct sales or informal networks, which limits their business growth potential (Hariani, 2024). Another challenge faced is limited capital and access to financing sources. Halal food MSMEs often experience difficulties in obtaining working capital or investment for business development, both from conventional and Islamic financial institutions (Akbar, 2020). This impacts the MSMEs' limited ability to innovate products, upgrade technology, or expand their businesses. In the context of global and regional competition, halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto also face challenges in increasing the competitiveness of their products. Competition comes not only from similar local products but also from imported products and products from other regions that already have strong brand recognition (Agustina, 2018). This requires MSMEs to continuously innovate and improve their product quality and marketing strategies.

Given the complexity of the challenges faced, the development of halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto requires a comprehensive and integrated approach. Synergy is needed between the government, academics, business actors, and the community to create an ecosystem that supports the growth and development of halal food MSMEs (Hilmi, 2023). This approach should encompass policy, infrastructure, human resource development, access to financing, and marketing. An in-depth study of the condition of halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto is crucial for identifying potential, challenges, and opportunities. This study is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing condition of halal food MSMEs, analyze the factors influencing their development, and formulate appropriate and sustainable development strategies. Therefore, this research is relevant and crucial to contribute to the development of halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto in particular, and the Indonesian halal food industry in general. The results are expected to serve as a reference for the government in formulating supportive policies, for business actors in developing business strategies, and for academics in developing further studies on the halal food industry.

Literature Review

Definition UMKM Concept

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of the Indonesian economy and play a strategic role in national economic development (Fadhilasari et al., 2024). Based on Law Number 20 of 2008 concerning Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, MSMEs are defined based on the criteria of assets and turnover owned by a business. Microenterprises are productive businesses owned by individuals and/or individual business entities with a maximum net worth of IDR 50,000,000 (fifty million rupiah), excluding land and buildings where the business is located, or with annual sales of a maximum of IDR 300,000,000 (three hundred million rupiah).

Small businesses are defined as independent, productive economic enterprises, conducted by individuals or business entities that are not subsidiaries or branches of

companies owned, controlled, or directly or indirectly part of medium-sized or large businesses (Sarfiyah et al., 2019). Small businesses have net assets of more than IDR 50,000,000 up to a maximum of IDR 500,000,000, excluding land and buildings where the business is located, or have annual sales of more than IDR 300,000,000 up to a maximum of IDR 2,500,000,000. Meanwhile, (Zakiyah 2023) defines medium-sized businesses as independent, productive economic enterprises with net assets of more than IDR 500,000,000 up to a maximum of IDR 10,000,000,000, excluding land and buildings where the business is located, or have annual sales of more than IDR 2,500,000,000 up to a maximum of IDR 50,000,000,000.

MSMEs have characteristics that distinguish them from large businesses, namely, high flexibility in facing market changes, good adaptability to dynamic economic conditions, and proximity to local markets that allow for a deep understanding of local consumer needs (Sari et al., 2016). Other characteristics include a simple organizational structure, fast decision-making processes, dependence on business owners, and relatively limited capital. MSMEs also have the ability to absorb large numbers of workers, especially workers with medium to low skills, thus playing an important role in reducing the unemployment rate (Indrawan Syah & Wahyu Eko Pujianto, 2023). In the context of the Indonesian economy, MSMEs contribute significantly to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and labor absorption. Data shows that MSMEs contribute around 60% of GDP and absorb more than 97% of the workforce in Indonesia. The existence of MSMEs also plays a role in economic equality and poverty reduction, especially in areas that have not been reached by large investments. However, MSMEs face various challenges such as limited access to capital, low quality of human resources, limited access to technology and information, and weak marketing networks and business partnerships (S. Maulida & Yunani, 2017).

Halal Food Industry

The halal food industry is an economic sector that produces food and beverages that comply with Islamic law and are suitable for consumption by Muslims. The concept of halal in the food industry is not limited to the selection of halal raw materials but also encompasses the entire production process, from animal slaughter (if animal products are used), raw material processing, production, storage, distribution, and serving to the end consumer. Every stage in the production chain must be ensured to be free from elements prohibited by Islam, such as pork, alcohol, and other non-halal ingredients (Ziegler et al., 2022).

Halal principles in the food industry are governed by Islamic law derived from the Quran and Hadith (Efendi et al., 2024). Halal food must meet several criteria: free from prohibited ingredients, not mixed with prohibited ingredients, processed with clean equipment and not contaminated with prohibited ingredients, and produced in a manner that does not conflict with Islamic teachings. In addition to halal certification, the halal food industry also emphasizes hygiene (thayyib), which refers to the quality, cleanliness, and safety of food products (Sahib & Ifna, 2024).

Halal certification is a crucial aspect of the halal food industry, providing assurance to Muslim consumers that the products they consume meet established halal standards. In Indonesia, halal certification is regulated by the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, with technical support from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) through the Assessment

Institute for Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics (LPPOM MUI). The halal certification process includes audits of the halal assurance system, inspections of raw materials, production processes, and production facilities to ensure compliance with halal standards (Malik et al., 2025).

The global halal food industry is experiencing significant growth in line with the increasing global Muslim population and increasing awareness of the importance of halal food consumption. The global halal food market is estimated to be worth trillions of US dollars and continues to grow at a high annual growth rate. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, has significant potential to become a major producer and exporter of halal food products. The Indonesian government has designated the development of the halal economy and industry as a national economic development priority through various supporting policies and programs (Menne et al., 2023).

Development of Halal Food MSMEs

The development of halal food MSMEs requires a holistic and comprehensive approach encompassing various aspects, from production and marketing to regulation. This approach must consider the unique characteristics of MSMEs, which face limitations in capital, technology, and human resources, yet possess significant potential in developing high-quality and competitive halal food products. The development of halal food MSMEs not only contributes to economic growth but also supports Indonesia's goal of becoming a global halal food hub (Syahidin et al., 2024).

Factors influencing the development of halal food MSMEs include adequate access to capital for investment in halal technology, production equipment that meets halal standards, and working capital for daily operations. The availability of quality and guaranteed halal raw materials is another critical factor, as is access to certified and trusted halal raw material suppliers. Human resource capabilities that understand halal food principles, food production technology, and business management are essential foundations for the development of halal food MSMEs (Wijaya et al., 2023).

Government support through conducive policies, mentoring programs, training, and market access facilitation is essential to encourage the growth of halal food MSMEs (Anwar & Bin Sarip, 2024). The government also plays a role in creating a supportive halal food ecosystem through the development of halal infrastructure, halal product standardization, and the promotion of Indonesian halal products in domestic and international markets. Furthermore, partnerships between halal food MSMEs and various stakeholders such as Islamic financial institutions, educational institutions, research institutions, and large companies are key to the successful development of this sector. Halal food MSME development strategies must also consider aspects of product innovation that suit local and global market tastes, the application of modern technology in the production process, the development of attractive and informative packaging, and building a strong brand to increase product competitiveness. The use of digital technology and e-commerce presents a significant opportunity for halal food MSMEs to expand market reach and improve operational efficiency. With the right approach and adequate support, halal food MSMEs have great potential to develop into a significant economic force

and contribute to achieving Indonesia's vision as a global halal economic center (Hariani & Sutrisno, 2023).

METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative approach with descriptive analytical methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the development of halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto from the perspective of business actors. This approach was chosen because it allows for exploring the complexities and nuances associated with the dynamics of halal food businesses in the local context. The research was conducted in Purwokerto, Banyumas Regency, Central Java, from March to June 2025.

This location was selected based on strategic considerations related to the diverse local culinary potential and the significant presence of halal food MSMEs in the region, making it a representative location for the study of halal food business development. The study subjects included 15 halal food MSMEs selected through purposive sampling with strict selection criteria. These 15 MSMEs include: (1) Warung Mendoan Bu Sarmi (specializing in mendoan and fried foods typical of Banyumas), (2) Dapoer Halalan Thayyiban (home-cooked ready-to-eat food with a daily halal menu), (3) Katering Sehat Barokah (halal catering service for schools and offices), (4) Resto Ayam Kampung Pak De Waro (featured menu of halal-certified fried and grilled free-range chicken), (5) Snack Halal Bu Eni (home-based business selling typical Banyumas snacks such as lanting and tempeh chips), (6) Sambel Lethok Mbak Umi (home-made packaged chili sauce products with halal ingredients), (7) Kupat Glabed Kang Joko, (8) Kupat Glabed Kang Joko (seller of halal kupat glabed typical of Purwokerto), (9) Tahu Susu Halal "TahuQu" (locally processed tofu products with halal certification), (10) Dapur Khas Banyumasan (providing traditional menus such as sate buntel and (11) Roti Taqwa Purwokerto (halal bread and bakery for breakfast and souvenirs), (12) Nasi Lengko Mbok Darmi (traditional halal coastal food stall), (13) Halal Herbal Drinks "Sehati" (halal herbal medicine and health drinks), (14) Halal Healthy Snacks "Mak Nyus" (fruit chips, cassava, and rempeyek without MSG or haram ingredients), and (15) Halal Chicken Satay Pak Badrun (free-range chicken satay with legendary peanut sauce).

Informants must have been in business for at least 2 years to ensure sufficient experience, have halal food products as their primary business, and demonstrate a willingness to participate as research informants. These criteria ensure the quality of data obtained from subjects with relevant experience and knowledge.

Data collection was conducted through a combination of three complementary methods. In-depth interviews with halal food MSMEs served as the primary source of data to obtain direct perspectives from business owners (Rizky & Sholihah, 2025). Participant observation at business locations provided a contextual understanding of business operations and dynamics in real time. Documentation studies of business documents and secondary data complemented the information obtained from the two previous methods. Data analysis employed Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which consists of three systematic stages. Data reduction involves sorting, focusing, and transforming raw data into relevant information. Data presentation then organizes the

information in a form that allows for conclusion drawing. The final stage is conclusion drawing and verification, which involves interpreting the meaning of the analyzed data. Data validity was ensured through the implementation of several comprehensive validation strategies. Triangulation of sources and methods was used to verify the consistency of information from various perspectives and data collection techniques. Member checking with informants ensured the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of the data obtained. Expert peer debriefing provided an external perspective to test the credibility and trustworthiness of the research results, resulting in valid and reliable findings (Soysal & Türkmen, 2024).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on research results, the halal food MSME sector in Purwokerto is dominated by micro-enterprises with a diverse composition. Traditional food stalls are the largest business type, accounting for 40% of the total MSMEs, followed by packaged food producers at 33%, catering at 20%, and restaurants at 7%. The leading products developed include traditional Banyumas dishes such as mendoan, sate buntel, and nasi lengko, as well as halal snacks and treats, ready-to-eat foods, and traditional beverages. The characteristics of the business actors indicate a female predominance (67%) with an age range of 35-50 years, a majority with a high school education (53%), and businesses run by generations within families.

Halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto face significant challenges in their development. Halal certification is a major challenge due to the perceived complexity and cost of the process. Of the 15 informants, only four hold official halal certification from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). These obstacles include high certification costs, a lengthy and complex process, and a lack of public awareness about the importance of halal certification. Access to capital is also a significant obstacle, with difficulties in accessing bank credit, meeting collateral requirements, and facing high interest rates. The digital era demands adaptation to online marketing platforms, but MSMEs face obstacles such as a lack of digital literacy, limited internet access, and competition from products from outside the region. The quality of human resources also poses a barrier to technological mastery, financial management, and product innovation.

Despite the challenges, halal food MSMEs have promising development opportunities. Increasing consumer awareness of halal products, not only among Muslims but also among non-Muslims who perceive halal products as healthier and of higher quality, provides a broad market opportunity. Support from the Purwokerto regional government through MSME training programs, ease of licensing, and assistance in promoting local products are supporting factors. The development of e-commerce and food delivery applications opens significant opportunities for digital market expansion, while Purwokerto's position as a culinary tourism destination provides opportunities to reach a wider market.

The development strategy for halal food MSMEs focuses on four main aspects: improving product quality through standardization of recipes and production processes, using quality raw materials, and innovative, attractive packaging. Efforts to obtain halal

certification are carried out through publicizing the importance of certification, providing assistance with the certification process, and subsidizing certification costs. Implementation of digital marketing strategies includes website and social media creation, collaboration with e-commerce platforms, and digital marketing training. Network development through strategic partnerships with halal raw material suppliers, distributors, and retailers, and the halal food MSME community is a comprehensive strategy to support the growth and sustainability of halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto are dominated by micro-enterprises with superior traditional Banyumas food products, which have significant potential for development. The main challenges faced by MSMEs include the complex halal certification process, limited access to capital, lack of digital marketing capabilities, and the need to improve the quality of human resources. However, development opportunities are wide open with increasing consumer awareness of halal products, local government support, the potential of the digital market, and Purwokerto's position as a culinary tourism destination. To optimize this potential, an effective development strategy is needed, including improving product quality, accelerating halal certification, implementing digital marketing, and developing a partnership network.

Halal food MSMEs in Purwokerto are advised to improve product and service quality to meet increasingly competitive market standards. Furthermore, entrepreneurs need to actively participate in available training and workshops to enhance their capacity and knowledge in business management. Utilizing digital technology for marketing is key to expanding market reach, especially in today's digital era. Equally important, MSMEs need to process halal certification for their flagship products to boost consumer trust and expand market access.

Local governments are expected to provide ongoing training programs tailored to the needs of halal food MSMEs. Furthermore, the government needs to facilitate access to low-interest capital to assist MSMEs in developing their businesses. A simpler and more efficient licensing process will significantly assist entrepreneurs in running their businesses. The government can also develop halal culinary centers as hubs of economic activity that can attract tourists and increase MSME revenue.

Further research is recommended to conduct quantitative research to more comprehensively measure the economic impact of halal food MSMEs. Analysis of consumer preferences for local halal food products is also necessary to understand consumer behavior and market needs. Furthermore, developing an appropriate business model for halal food MSMEs can be an important contribution in providing practical guidance for business actors in developing their businesses sustainably.

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