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STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HALAL FOOD

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ABSTRACT

Research on the development of halal food has not been done much in Indonesia. This study investigates the perceptions of master students of the management program concerning efforts to develop halal industries in East Java. in terms of 1) the role of government in halal certification, 2) halal food festival, and 3) promoting halal food events through social media and the internet. This study contended the value of halal recognition, halal certification, halal tourism events, and effective promotion strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the biggest majority-Muslims country on the planet. The country has 227 Muslims out of 265 million population. It is anticipated to turn into the main 10 nations with the biggest economy in 2030. Improving halal businesses is an option for the tourism industry in Indonesia as it could increase both employment and economic growth. Halal tourism recently has started to gain attention as Muslim tourists increase over the years [1,2,3,4,5].

There is a considerable amount of previous research on halal food. The availability of Halal food could attract Muslim tourists who come to Japan to enjoy the typical food of the country without having to worry about its halal legitimacy [10]. Some restaurants in Japan already had halal logos verified by the halal association in Japan despite some other restaurants without halal logos yet serving food a Muslim can eat.

Restaurant managers were assured of halal certification prevalence in the hospitality industry. It conveys the value of their understanding of Muslims' dietary restrictions, sensitivity, and religious practices [12]. Halal certification denotes the attributes that make it unique, and, at the same time, conforms to the Islamic dietary rules.

Research in New Zealand showed that a tremendous level of the respondents did not concur that the Muslim tourist market was huge for their business [21]. Many were hesitant to advance their halal sustenance or set up halal signs in front of their shops. Halal certification establishment remained moderately irrelevant in light of low exposure of halal logos and confirmation [2]. The eventual fate of halal stores appears to a flaw; however, it is highly possible to pick up momentum for Muslim stores and restaurants as expanding Muslim migrants into Canada and the distinct fascination of the legislature to make halal food.

Thailand has developed its halal tourism by providing halal hotels, halal food, and halal spas when Muslim visitors are voyaging [8]. Because of the interest of the Muslim market towards Halal administrations, there is fundamental for Thailand to build up an idea for halal tourism. Moreover, it will legitimately satisfy the Muslim needs and wind up one of the specialty items for tourism industries in Thailand.

Developed countries with fewer Muslims, like Australia, Thailand, and the United Kingdom, have a high halal food market share [17]. They could catch the chance of Halal food in the worldwide market. In this way, the greater part of halal food exporters was originating from that point. The halal food industry could be an impetus to create other potential divisions suffering negative effects from a monetary emergency in a nation with fewer Muslim populations. Those nations have connected their business ranch in their stock administration to help their halal food production. Moreover, the attention to expending halal food additionally originated from non-Muslim due to the safety and freshness of the food. Thus, it is significant to advance halal food as being safety agreeable.

Research on the development of halal food has not been considerably conducted in Indonesia. For this reason, this study seeks to uncover the perceptions of magister students of management programs concerning efforts to develop halal industry in East Java, especially in Malang and Surabaya.

Research Objectives

This study aims to explore Muslim students' perception of halal food in Indonesia in terms of 1) the role of government in halal certification, 2) halal food festival, and 3) promoting halal food events through social media and the internet.

Literature Review

Islam's teachings comprise spiritual and physical values. Every Muslim needs to rehearse the lessons and adhere to the laws characterized by the Islamic religion. Allah SWT has made us people in such a way that whatever we consume physically and profoundly influences our conduct and brain [9]. Allah SWT has made some edibles disallowed (haram) for Muslims and others are passable (halal). Muslims need to pursue these rules and consistently maintain a strategic distance from haram food over lives until and except if, it is an incomprehensibly important issue. Allah SWT demands us in the Quran to eat of the beneficial things as he has accommodated us and to express appreciation to Him.

Fundamentally, foods are halal unless the Quran or Hadith defined them to be haram [4], [19], [5]. Simultaneously, it refers to which is good to consume, as halal means well processed and excellent ingredients.

Conversely, prohibited food refers to those bad to consume based on its impurity and virulence.

METHODS

This study is case-study qualitative research. The informants are students of the Master of Management Faculty of Economics, State University of Malang. The students were in the third semester of their studies. The students were assumed capable of giving a perception of the development of halal food in Malang and Surabaya. Some of them have been preparing their research proposals on the halal industry. The study was carried out with the following steps. Firstly, the researchers browsed information from printed and digital media, and tourism works of literature about halal food development, the improvement of sharia/halal tourism around the globe, and Indonesia. Secondly, the researchers interviewed the students. Thirdly, the researchers evaluated data description and interpretation. Fourthly, the researchers concluded.

RESULT

The following are the interview results about the role of government and business owner in halal certification.

- The government must provide technical guidance assistance for each business. It is preferred to get perceptions about halal products as not all Muslims to know halal standards (MJ, female, 21 years).
- The local government can encourage entrepreneurs to have halal certification (D, male, 23 years).
- The local governments should issue regulations in terms of trade and industry, especially in the food sector, that is, restaurant owners must take care of halal certification issued by MUI representatives (AI, Male, 23 years).
- In addition to supporting halal certification for business people, the Regional Government of Malang and Surabaya City has also been intensively cooperating with several universities in Malang and Surabaya. The collaboration is intended to enable the existence of halal laboratories since the existence of halal laboratories is one of the requirements to be a halal tourism destination (AI, Male, 23 years).
- Entrepreneurs are recommended to register halal certification for their products in Indonesia since halal certification is a guarantee for entrepreneurs. Indonesia, which is predominantly Muslim, tends to consume something halal. If the company does not have this halal certification, then the company's business may experience failure related to the issue of products being sold are not halal (SKR, female, 22 years old).
- Besides providing a clean and comfortable place, food entrepreneurs are also expected to provide a mosque; this is considered important and is one of the pulling indicators for Muslim visitors, especially for those who want to visit between breaks to pray. (MJ, 21 years).

Halal Food Festival

- Organizing halal food events as well as inviting relevant stakeholders are beneficial (D, male, 23 years).
- Another way is through halal food festivals. Even though Malang City has never organized it, this is an appropriate step of cooperation for food entrepreneurs and local governments in attracting Muslim tourists who want to visit Malang. This festival should be held to coincide with religious events. This event is usually attended by many people from various regions and this is a potential for the development of halal food (MFA, male, 24 years).

Promoting Halal Food through Social Media and Internet

- Malang City is expected to become a product destination through a website or setting up e-commerce for business owners in halal malls. It is expected that this website could be like the Yiwu market in China which sells products for foreign consumers with the English version, while for local consumers, the Indonesian version is provided. (SKR, female, 22 years old).
- Promoting halal food events through social media and the internet is another strategy (D, male, 23 years).
- E-marketing strategy should be carried out by business owners when they want to promote their halal products by adding the tagline "*halalan thoyibban*" (AI, male, 23 years).

As those students stated, the government needs to encourage halal efforts by providing socialization and benefits of halal cuisine in collaboration with the Indonesian Ulama Council. This is an effort to convince Muslim buyers that the goods purchased are halal and "*thoyyiban*" (worthy). By doing this, the company highly will run well and generate a lot of profit.

The results of this study are consistent with several previous studies. The assistance of halal accreditation for SME's from the Department of Industry and Commerce in East Java brings an enormous advantage, both for the SMEs themselves and buyers [20], [3]. For food SMEs, this strategy may improve the nature of their food items, particularly. This makes them ready to compete with large businesses, which freely apply a halal assurance framework for their items through halal certification. As to buyers, particularly Muslim customers, it carries comfort and serenity for them to buy SMEs' products.

The importance of halal certification to attract Muslim tourists which are recommended by the informants is also highlighted by other researchers. Halal certification in Thailand is held by the Halal Standard Institute of Thailand, under the auspices of the Central Islamic Committee of Thailand [16]. Restaurants and hotels were declared 'Halal' will display the certification, as well as packaged food halal widely available in supermarkets and minimarkets displaying halal logos. Hotels and restaurants need to provide halal meals to arouse Muslim tourist attention, while managers have to take halal certification into their consideration, as this could create increased confidence among Muslim tourists [14].

In sharia/halal tourism industry improvement, the Ministry of Tourism cooperated with the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), Institute of Business Certification (LSU), and National Sharia Council (Dewan Syari'ah Nasional) in developing the industry [11], [13]. These institutions will cooperate to build up the potentials of tourism industries and maintain cultural norms, and Islamic qualities. Halal tourism industry guidelines were regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy No. 2/2014 on Guidelines for Implementation of Sharia Hotel Business - This guideline was canceled by the guideline of the Minister of Tourism Number 11 of 2016. Concerning food and drinks prerequisites, extra Halal eateries should be accessible in the tourism objects with the guaranteed halal food logos [7]. Certified halal food is a requirement for the Muslim as part of religious obligation [6].

Halal food festivals have been conducted in Malaysia in Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS), a street food festival introducing enjoyable halal local foods to international potential buyers, and tourists. Additionally, Malaysia International Gourmet Festivals represent a perfect blend of local and international food. Those are a few examples of gastronomic events and festivals. Setting up Malaysia as a Worldwide Halal Hub was a noteworthy need for the administration of subterranean insects that MIHAS was the biggest halal exchange reasonable to organize anywhere around the globe. Halal products are progressively perceived by Muslims just as non-Muslims as worthy and safe to consume and free from "undesirable practices".

Halal food could be advertised on social media and the internet. Also, Corporate Social Responsibility initiation as well as correcting Islam misconception are some roles of public relation practitioners should occupy for global promotion of Islamic products [1]. Furthermore, thoughtful information on halal food fraud is necessary to disseminate on social media, and other relevant platforms to increase consumers' knowledge and awareness [18].

Besides, the exceptionally noticeable correspondence advancement by the South Korean government through KTO utilized images [15]. One of them is halal logos. Halal logos are one of the fundamental correspondence procedures embraced in the structure of Islamic marking. Students' perceptions about the development of the halal food industry are simply observable in social media and the internet, in line with several other research results. This leads to the conclusion that the internet and social media play a significant role in this development.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The local government needs to demand business owners to have halal certification by giving clear direction since halal recognition is beneficial for all Muslims. They should give guidelines for the food and beverage industries. Business owners are necessary to apply halal certification for their products in Indonesia since it is an assurance for business people.

Organizing halal food events and celebrations are welcoming applicable partners. Although Malang City has never organized it, this is a suitable opportunity for the food business and the local government in attracting Muslim travelers to visit Malang. This celebration should be held to harmonize with religious events. This normally collects people from different areas, implying potentials for the improvement of halal food.

Another strategy to develop halal food industries is advertisements in social media and the internet as several previous research contended its benefits. Business owners in halal food sectors in Malang and Surabaya are necessary to apply for a halal certificate to MUI. Through halal certificates, Muslim buyers will no longer hesitate to buy the food offered. The local government should provide information and technical guidance on the handling of this certificate in an easy and understandable. The government and halal food business owners could cooperate to organize halal food festivals to get the attention of the public. Furthermore, social media and the internet could be used to introduce and develop business in halal food.

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