

Improvement and Roles of the USU Community Service Team in Educating Halal Certification to the Giat Maju Farmer Group in Parbuluan Village VI Dairi

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ABSTRACT

Currently, the need for halal products has increased rapidly. Halal food has become a profitable business with the largest market share, especially in Indonesia. To improve the quality of the coffee products of the Giat Maju farmer group in Parbuluan VI Dairi Village, the USU community service team is given to educate about halal certification and how to register it. The product certification can expand the market reach of product buyers, and buyers will feel safe and comfortable. Thus, this can increase sales of partner coffee products. Some of the activities carried out by the community service team are identify the problem, socialization and education, document creation and collection, registration and completion of facilities and infrastructure, and assistance for registration of LPPOM MUI halal certification. From the socialization, partners strongly desire to obtain halal product certification by building new production houses, participating in halal certification webinars, and preparing all required documents for registration.

Keyword: halal product, halal certification, education and socialization

ABSTRAK

Saat ini kebutuhan akan produk halal telah meningkat dengan cepat. Makanan halal sudah menjadi bisnis yang menguntungkan dengan pangsa pasar terbesar terutama di Indonesia. Untuk dapat meningkatkan kualitas dari produk kopi kelompok tani Giat Maju di Desa Parbuluan VI Dairi, tim pengabdian masyarakat USU berusaha mengedukasi sertifikasi halal dan cara mendaftarnya. Dengan tersertifikasinya produk tersebut maka dapat memperluas jangkauan pasar pembeli produk dan pembeli akan merasa aman dan nyaman. Sehingga, hal ini dapat meningkatkan penjualan produk kopi mitra. Beberapa kegiatan yang dilakukan tim pengabdian masyarakat adalah identifikasi permasalahan, sosialisasi dan edukasi, pelengkapan sarana dan prasarana, persiapan pendaftaran, dan pendampingan pendaftaran sertifikasi halal LPPOM MUI. Dari sosialisasi yang dilakukan, mitra memiliki keinginan kuat untuk mendapatkan sertifikasi halal produk dengan membangun rumah produksi baru, mengikuti kegiatan webinar sertifikasi halal serta menyiapkan segala dokumen persyaratan pendaftaran sertifikasi halal.

Keyword: produk halal, sertifikasi halal, sosialisasi dan edukasi



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1. Introduction

Currently, the halal market in the world is growing rapidly and increasing by around 25% per year [1]. Halal food has become a growing and profitable business among Muslim-majority and non-Muslim countries with the same trend. For individuals who follow the Islamic faith, the halal label holds significant importance as it serves as a critical means of verifying the lawfulness of the products. Numerous studies have focused on the purchasing behaviour of Muslim consumers, yet recent research indicates that Halal label may also appeal to non-Muslim consumers. As such, it is important to explore the potential benefits of Halal label products beyond religious and cultural contexts [2]. By doing so, businesses can tap into a broader consumer base and expand

their product offerings accordingly. Halal Product Certification guarantees all goods and services used, used, or utilized by the public following halal procedures and Islamic law. Halal Product Process (PPH) is an activity carried out to ensure the halalness of a product which includes the provision of materials, processed raw materials, processing, storage, packaging, distribution, sales, and presentation of products based on Law of Halal Product Assurance no. 33 of 2014. With the enactment of this law in 2019, every product circulating in Indonesia will be Halal certified, including MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises).

Dairi Regency, with an area of 192.780 hectares and an average altitude of 400 to 1700 m above sea level (asl), has the potential of various MSMEs by utilizing natural resources in the form of vegetables, fruits, and coffee. Two types of coffee are grown in Sidikalang: Arabica and Robusta coffee. The most widely grown in Sidikalang is Robusta coffee. Parbuluan VI Village is one of the Arabica coffee-producing villages in Dairi Regency and is 137 km from Medan City. In this village, there is the Giat Maju Farmers Group which produces Arabica coffee on its land. Apart from that, the group also processes robusta coffee collected from other village farmers.

In the previous activity, [3] carried out community service activities by providing appropriate technology in the form of a roaster. The robusta coffee product belonging to the Giat Maju Farmers Group, Jam's Coffee, also has a food from household industry (Pangan Industry Rumah Tangga/P-IRT) number with the series 2101210030073-25. However, to expand the market share of Jam's Coffee products, business owners must register their products for halal certification and distribution permits by the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM). Regarding consumer protection through regulation, Law no. 8 of 1999 on concerning consumer protection, with an explanation in article 4, states that consumers have the right to comfort, security, and safety in consuming goods and services and are entitled to correct, clear, and honest information regarding conditions and conditions guarantee of goods and services. Research [4] states that halal certification significantly influences consumer interest in halal products. According to [5], halal awareness is the knowledge Muslim consumers possess to seek and consume halal products per Islamic law. This community service aims to educate on halal certification for the Giat Maju farmer group in Parbuluan IV Dairi Village..

2. Methods

The team carried out this PKM activity from May to October 2021. The procedure for implementing a resolution mechanism to address partner issues, which have been mutually agreed upon for resolution in Parbuluan VI Village, is as follows:

2.1. Identify the problem

The team starts with identifying partners' problems by using the interview method with a questionnaire. In identifying problems at the target location, the community service team gave several direct questions to the Giat Maju farmer group in Parbuluan VI Dairi Village regarding introducing and understanding halal certification for the products they produce. From the interview results, information about various approaches can be carried out further, including partner assistance in obtaining halal certification.

2.2. Socialization and education

Next, the team disseminates aluminum foil and sealer packaging to Parbuluan VI Dairi Village residents. This socialization aims to build and motivate the Giat Maju farmer group to obtain halal certification for existing products to become competitive MSME entrepreneurs.

2.3. Document collection and production

After receiving socialization and education about halal product certification and fulfilling the completeness of requirement for partners' production houses, the community service team needs to collect all documents.

2.4. Pra-registration

Then, the team prepares for halal certification registration that partners will propose as a solution to the problems faced by the Giat Maju farmer group. The USU community service team conducted education and discussions to discuss obtaining halal certification for partner products, considering the methods' limited costs, time, and effectiveness.

2.5. Post-registration

Next, the team prepares and completes facilities and infrastructure owned by partners to support the smooth process of applying for halal certification. The USU community service team assisted with aluminum foil packaging and packaging of adhesive devices automatically (continuous band sealer).

2.6. Registration assistance

Finally, the team assisted the Giat Maju farmer group in Parbuluan VI Dairi Village in carrying out the online registration process for Arabica Sidikalang coffee products to be certified and preparing outputs and activity reports.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Problems identification

The team conducted training activities on Sunday, September 5, 2021, at the house of the Giat Maju farmer group chairman, Parbuluan VI Village. Then they conducted short interviews and discussion activities before the community service implementation day and produced the data in Figure 1.

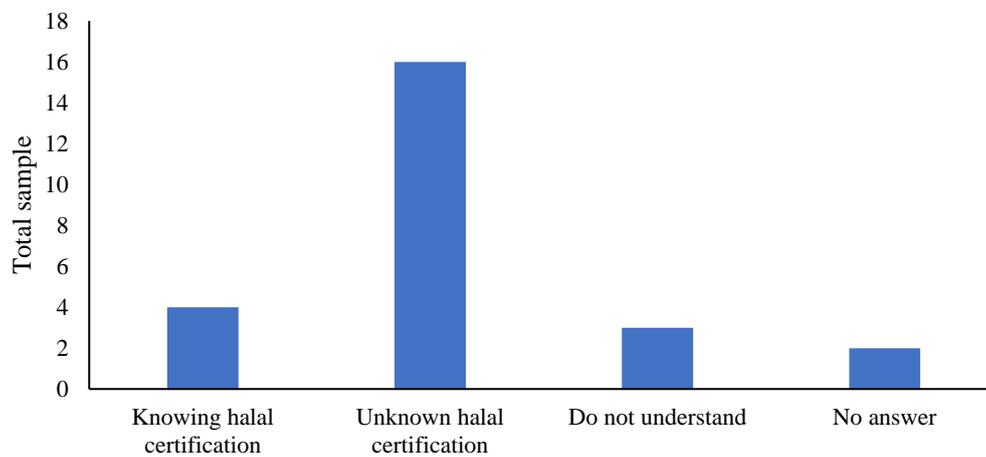


Figure 1. Pre-test interview results of Giat Maju farmer regarding halal certification.

Figure 1 shows that the Giat Maju farmer group still does not know about halal certification. Those who know about halal certification are the head of the Giat Maju farmer group, Tuppak Siboro, and several daily administrators. The rest, 64% members of the Giat Maju farmer group, did not know about halal certification, three people did not understand at all, and 2 people did not answer questions. This activity aims to determine the initial steps that provide understanding and knowledge about halal certification for finished products. Thus, partner coffee products can accept by the wider community. Awareness of halal products positively influences purchase intentions for a food and beverage product [6].

3.2. Socialization and education

To assure halal products to partners, the USU community service team provides information on halal certification and the partners' requirements (Figure 2). The participants who attended the socialization event were members of the Giat Maju Farmers Group and Parbuluan VI Dairi Village residents. Most of the agricultural commodity products were coffee.



Figure 2. Socialization of the community service team about halal certification.

After gaining knowledge and understanding of the importance of halal certification, the community service team submitted another interview in the form of a questionnaire to evaluate it. The interview results obtained are as follows in Figure 3.

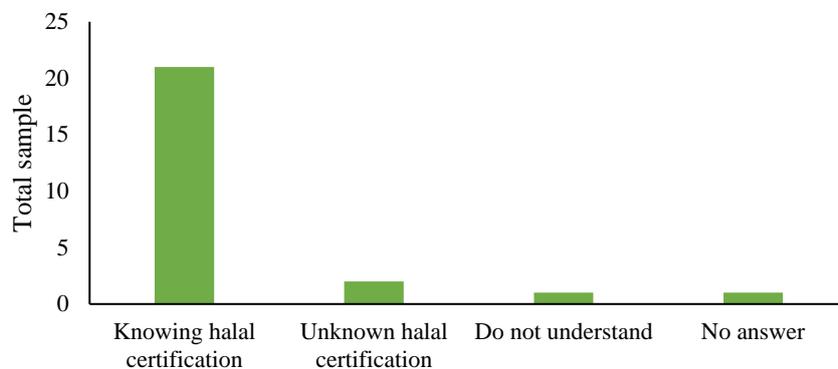


Figure 3. The results of the post-test interviews regarding halal certification.

In this socialization activity, 84% of Giat Maju farmer group members knew about halal certification. Meanwhile, there were only 16% of group members who did not know and did not understand, and did not answer the questions. This result indicates that the USU community service team's activities have positively impacted the Giat Maju farmer group in creating awareness of halal products. So that consumers feel satisfied in buying and consuming coffee products from partners. As stated by [7] states, product quality influences customer satisfaction to increase the company's sales level.

3.3. Document collection and production

Basically, partners had prepared several documents to apply for halal registration through e-registration (Figure 4). In earlier instances, partners in question had undergone training sessions conducted by district government and other relevant institutions. Consequently, they have procured certain mandatory documents to fulfill the requirements.



Figure 4. Partner documents.

3.4. Pra-registration

Before the community service activities, the team had recommended partners participate directly in the halal certification webinar held by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Food and Drug Assessment Institute (LPPOM) online. Registration for the halal certification is free of charge. Thus, partners have additional knowledge and insight into the importance of halal certification for partner products in the future. After participating in a webinar on halal product certification, partners gradually understand the flow of product registration for halal submissions. Currently, the entire socialized registration submission process is online based.

3.5. Post-registration

After getting a complete picture of the procedures for product registration for halal certification, partners are moving to fulfill the requirements and build infrastructure. At present, the partners possess their production facility situated adjacent to their residence, which has been customized to meet their specific requirements. The facility is well-equipped to meet their production needs and is situated close to their place of residence, providing them with ease of access and logistical convenience (Figure 5). This infrastructure maintains the continuity of the field inspection process if necessary. In addition to completing the facilities partner's need, the USU community service team also provided aluminum foil packaging, which has become the standard packaging for coffee products.



Figure 5. Partner's coffee house production.

This machine maintains that the quality of the coffee produced does not decrease when it is in the consumer. Based on research [8] states that aluminum foil packaging has an advantage because it is impermeable to light, gas, water, odors, and solvents which other flexible packaging materials do not have. With this ability, the hygroscopic nature of the coffee powder, which tends to adsorb moisture from the air, can be retained by aluminum foil packaging resistant to air, light, and moisture. In addition, the community service team provided a continuous band sealer tool with a semi-automatic model that can glue aluminum foil perfectly (Figure 6). This tool has a small conveyor model that can make it easier for partners to pack quickly with many sealers.



Figure 6. Continuous band sealer semi-automatic machine.

3.6. Registration assistance

Following the activity, the community service team proceeded to provide direct assistance to the partners in the execution of the online registration process for halal certification. This support was offered professionally and efficiently, ensuring seamless and timely completion of the registration process. In this case, partners have the special opportunity to obtain technical guidance on the requisite procedures for acquiring halal certification from the district government cooperated by local national bank.

4. Conclusions

This activity underscores the importance of raising awareness among coffee farmers in Giat Maju about halal certification, as it can significantly contribute to changes in their perception of halal certification. Further implementation of regular evaluations is necessary to develop strategies that can help coffee farmers obtain halal certification more easily and efficiently. By adopting a strategic and proactive approach to certification, farmers can enhance their competitiveness, improve their marketability, and contribute to the growth of the halal industry.

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