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The Credibility Procedure of Halal Supervisor in Brunei Darussalam

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ABSTRACT

Inefficient and inadequate current qualification assessment for the requirements of halal supervisors has attracted more attention in the field which led to the withdrawal of the halal certificate following the discovery that the restaurant violated certification requirements. Furthermore, there is a lack of research that investigates the credibility procedure of halal supervisor in Brunei Darussalam. This research aims to identify the efficiency and adequacy of current qualification assessment for the requirements for halal supervisors in accordance with *shari'ah* principles and laws in Brunei. This research adopted a qualitative research method where semi-structured interview and library research method was conducted. The finding reveals that a halal supervisor is deemed qualified through the passing of a written and oral test prepared by Halal Food Control Division (HFCD), with supplementary talks or briefing given. However, there is no specific halal training offered for halal supervisor. This finding indicated the need for the improvement of the qualification system and can aid in suggesting the necessary ecosystem for the credibility of the qualification of a halal supervisor. This study can benefit future research, industrial players, and improve the qualification procedure for halal supervisors.

Keywords: Credibility; Qualification; Halal supervisors

1 Introduction

Brunei Darussalam is positioning itself as a halal hub, and the Brunei Halal Certification is the most authentic and stringent certification of the halal product [1]. To ensure that halal-ness is maintained and monitored by experts in the field, the Brunei Halal Certification is internationally renowned for its credibility. Business owners who wish to apply for a halal certificate or halal permit must first go through the HFDC, which has the authority to handle the certification procedure, and then through the Brunei Islamic Religious Council (BIRC) at the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Brunei (MORA) [2]. Following the commencement of the Halal Certificate and Halal Label (Amendment) Order, 2017, it is now compulsory for all businesses that produce, supply, and serve food and beverages in Brunei to obtain a halal certificate and permit [3]. According to regulations—in Chapter 4 (1) of Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order (2005), the business owner must have at least two halal supervisors who are acknowledged by the BIRC. This supervisor plays an important role and is responsible for the halal-ness of the product and all food processing at the premise [4]. A halal food supervisor is an important part of ensuring the integrity of halal certification. This is because they are responsible in making sure that the food premise aligns with the halal standard and



requirements of halal certification [5]. In addition, halal food supervisor should be honest, truthful in all of his duties and responsibilities. To support this statement, in conjunction with the *Hari Raya Aidilfitri* Celebration with *Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah* on 10th September 2011, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, Sultan and *Yang Di-Pertuan* of *Negara Brunei Darussalam*, shared his concern on ethics:

“The owner of a restaurant or any other eatery places should be responsible in ensuring all types of food are not only halal but also pure according to the shariah. Therefore, every ingredient should be from a halal source, avoiding the opposite or those that are ambiguous about their lawful or unlawful status” [6].

Furthermore, Brunei-Muara has the highest number of halal food supervisors with 3,909 people, followed by *Belait* with 862, *Tutong* with 620, and *Temburong* with 150. However, issues have been raised concerning their credibility in terms of compliance related to law, such as the withdrawal of the halal certificate because of a violation in the certification requirement [7]. This happened because of the lack of knowledge and understanding and adequate practise on *halalan toyyiban*. As a result, the halal certification has been revoked from some premises. Conducting duties ethically is an important matter that should be practiced by all halal food supervisor. Hence, this study aims to explore the expanded potential of halal supervisors, particularly in the *halalan toyyiban* aspect and to provide practical implications in improving the effectiveness of halal management systems, especially in the assessment procedures to become a qualified halal supervisor.

2 Materials and Methods

This study adopted a qualitative method where a semi-structured interview was conducted with two food officers from HFDC as primary data and government reports as secondary data. In this study, purposive or judgmental sampling was chosen, where the researcher organized and analysed the data manually from the interview results according to sub-categories to help in the interpretation of results.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Halal Certification

Brunei Halal Accreditation starts at the source and only producers that meet the halal standard and the high quality and safety would be awarded the Brunei Halal Certification. To enforce the implementation of halal certification, the Brunei Government created a committee consisting of officers from MUIB, BKMH, MOH, MORA, MPRT, State Judiciary department, Agriculture Department, and Islamic Judicial [8].

Aforementioned, the business owner must have at least two halal supervisors who are acknowledged by BIRC. The halal food supervisor must be on duty at the place of business where they applied to and they cannot be assigned to any other branches, except with

permission from BIRC, and there should always be one stationed at the premises. The officer said:

“Each business premise requires two halal food supervisors, who will account for each premise. They are not allowed to work at various branches; however, the applicant could write in a letter to BIRC requesting permission for the halal food supervisor to be allowed in rotation.”

They must carry out their tasks to protect Muslims’ interests and ensure that the premise’s products and utensils are safe, clean, pure, and in compliance with protocols established by HFDC [4, 9]. The aim of halal certification is to provide consumers with assurances about the authenticity of the halal product in terms of productions, materials, processing and preparing halal certification also can strengthen the status of halal foods as well as services in Brunei are following the halal standard as said by the officer:

“Halal certification include the aspect of halalan toyyiban, so they have to ensure the restaurant is always clean despite ensuring the food they are serving are halal.”

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Halal Food Supervisors

According to halal supervisor’s guideline book, the person who can apply as a halal food supervisor is a Muslim from *Mazhab Syafei’*. Other *Mazhabs* such as Hanafi, Maliki or Hambali are also considered with a condition that they must understand the law especially from *Mazhab Syafei’*. In addition, according to the guideline of halal food supervisor, the duties of halal food supervisor are stated below [5, 10]:

- a. The halal food supervisor must be on duty at the place of business which is applied only and cannot be assigned at other branches, except with the permission of the Majlis Ugama Islam (MUIB), and one of them must always be present at the place of business.
- b. The halal food supervisor is responsible for controlling halal food products at the place of business.
- c. The halal food supervisor is responsible for controlling matters on preparation and handling of cooked ingredients including tools and, appliances or the like used in the place the business.
- d. The halal food supervisor is responsible for ensuring the business place prepares, sells or serves halal products only.
- e. The halal food supervisor is responsible for ensuring only halal food or drink that should be brought inside place of business, including those carried by its employees.
- f. The halal food supervisor is responsible for ensuring only halal ingredients are used in the place of business.
- g. The halal food supervisor is responsible for informing any changes in food ingredients to MUIB.

- h. The halal food supervisor is responsible for ensuring all equipment and utensils used in the place of business should be pure and permitted by *hukum shara'*.
- i. It is the responsibility of the halal food supervisor if any area, place, vehicle, goods or equipment that used in preparation, storage and transportation, if ever in contact with or near faeces, it should be cleaned according to the procedures set out in the Standard Brunei Darussalam PBD 24:2007.
- j. It is the responsibility of the halal food supervisor to ensure the requirements of Brunei Darussalam standards PBD 24:2007 on Halal Food and Guideline for Halal Certification (BCG Halal 1) must be fulfilled.

3.3 The Assessment of Halal Food Supervisors

The HFDC officer said to become qualified halal supervisors, they must pass the written and oral test that is prescribed by the HFDC:

"The assessment will take place 5 days after the application has been received and processed by the examiners, the question includes their knowledge on filth, how to perform ablution and practical religious components will also be tested and the technical questions will cover hygiene, such as general cleanliness, utensils."

Furthermore, the halal supervisors only have to attend the assessment every three years following the expired date of halal certification. Hence, the tests are divided into two categories: oral and written tests. The ultimately, all halal supervisors must pass their oral and written test with a passing mark of 50% above:

"The passing mark is 50 per cent, and there are two types of tests-oral and written, however, there are no assessments levels. As long as the candidate obtain the 50 per cent, then it is considered a pass."

The supervisors are encouraged to participate in the Halal Supervision Strengthening Program Session (*Majlis Pengukuhan Penyelia Halal*) conducted by HFDC, and during this sessions the halal supervisors were briefed and guided:

"We will explain the duties and responsibilities of a halal food supervisor. We also conduct case studies, so participants can imagine what they need to do if certain situation occurred such as food contamination."

The application for a halal certificate can be rejected by BIRC if the conditions for the appointment of a supervisor are not complied with other than health and hygiene factors and employees that are found to be unwell are not allowed to work in restaurants. In addition, the principle of trust and honest is important in business transaction, it is enacted between two parties which are the one who trusts, the consumer and the one who is trusted, the halal supervisor and the applicant. The latter assures the consumer that the food serve is halal and the consumer, in turn, trusts the halal supervisor.

4 Conclusions

The halal food supervisors must have a very specialized knowledge especially on *halalan toyyiban*. By having *halalan toyyiban* knowledge, they are able to practice and improve their competency performances in the restaurants. In addition, the professional efficiency of this assessments is also an important asset that determines the success of operational performances. There has not much research that evaluates the current qualification assessment for the requirements of halal supervisors. Hence, the need for an authorised body which can provide halal- related program services such as short courses, curriculums, workshops, and training is crucial. This research can make a real contribution to marketers and policymakers to improve their service that can be gained from successful effective performances to make competent halal supervisors.

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