A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON HALAL POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to conduct a comparative study of halal policies in Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam. The focus of this research is to understand the differences and similarities in the approaches and implementation of halal policies in these countries, as well as the factors that influence the development of halal regulations at the national level. The comparative analysis method is used in this study to compare the halal policies of several countries in Southeast Asia. Data and information are obtained from various sources, including official regulations, government reports, academic publications, and other relevant documents. Each country is identified as having a halal certification body that plays a role in the process of certifying and guaranteeing product halalness. Based on the results of the author's analysis, it can be concluded that almost all member countries of Asean already have halal policy regulations which serve as guidelines for implementing halal product guarantees in their respective countries. As for countries that do not have regulations related to halal policies, such as Laos and Myanmar. However, in Myanmar, there is a halal certification service by a multinational halal certificate agency. In general, the mechanism for halal certification in ASEAN countries has the same stages, starting from registration, verification, audit, determination of halal products, issuance of halal certificates to the validity period of the halal certificate. However, each of these stages has guidelines and policies contained in each country's halal policy regulations and implemented by halal certificate institutions in each country. The validity period is also a concern because the majority of the validity period of certificates in each ASEAN country is 1 year. Indonesia is the only country in Asean that enforces halal certificates for life or for production and requires halal certificates in Indonesia.

Keywords: Comparative Study, Halal, Policy, Southeast Asian.

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INTRODUCTION

Halal lifestyles are gaining popularity worldwide, both in Muslim-majority and non-Muslim countries, driven by various factors elucidated from consumer and producer standpoints. On the consumer side, a growing awareness of the advantages associated with halal products is a pivotal factor. From the producer's perspective, the burgeoning halal trend presents lucrative opportunities, propelled by factors such as the increasing Muslim population, the gross domestic product (GDP) surge in Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries, heightened religious consciousness within Muslim communities, widespread internet and technology adoption, and a rise in ethical consumerism aligning with the principles of the halal lifestyle (ISEF, 2021).

Reports from Mastercard and Crescentrating indicate a notable rise in the Muslim population, reaching 2 billion in 2022, with a presence in 200 countries, as illustrated in Figure 1 depicting the Global Scale of Muslims. This figure is estimated to represent approximately 25% of the global

population. Notably, 67% of Muslims reside in the Asian Region, with South Asia comprising 35.6%, Southeast Asia 13.8%, West Asia 12.7%, Central Asia 3.4%, and East Asia 1.5% (Annur, 2022).

According to Rizvan Khalid, Managing Director at Euro Quality Lambs in the UK, the escalation in both the Muslim population and income levels will result in an increased demand for halal food (Dinar Standard, 2022). Consequently, numerous countries, including those with minority Muslim populations, are vying to capture a significant share of the expansive Muslim market, particularly in Southeast Asia.

While halal products are deemed obligatory for Muslims, they are considered a necessity rather than a mandate for non-Muslims. Nonetheless, the interest in halal products is not exclusive to the Muslim population; there is a growing awareness among non-Muslims regarding the consumption of halal products. This trend is underscored by Nursalikhah's analysis, which cites the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCCIM) and highlights the increasing preference among non-Muslim consumers for halal-certified products. This preference is attributed to a heightened awareness of the importance of halal certification in the context of a broader movement toward adopting healthier and safer dietary choices, especially in comparison to non-halal products (Nursalikah, 2021).

The issuance of a certificate for obtaining a halal label is under the jurisdiction of a government-appointed institution within a country. The analysis conducted by Deviana and Helitha (Yuanitasari & Muchtar, 2020) reveals that the implementation of halal certification in ASEAN countries exhibits diverse and unique characteristics. This diversity stems from the fact that the management of halal certification in these nations is directly overseen by both governmental bodies and voluntary agencies.

According to the State of Global Islamic Economy Report 2022, Malaysia continues to dominate the top position in the halal food sector, maintaining this status consistently for nine years. Following Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia occupy subsequent positions. Indonesia holds the fourth position in The Global Islamic Economy Indicator (GIEI) ranking (Dinar Standard, 2022). Given this context, the author expresses a keen interest in conducting a more comprehensive examination of the prevailing halal policy regulations in Southeast Asian countries. The objective is to derive insights that can serve as a framework for Indonesia, aiding in the expeditious development of the halal industry within the country, with the ultimate goal of establishing itself as a global hub for the halal industry.

METHODOLOGY

Types of Research and Data

Jhonny Ibrahim defines normative legal research as a systematic scientific procedure aimed at uncovering truth based on scientific logic from the normative perspective (Prahassacitta, 2019). Soerjono Soekanto and Sri Mamudji characterize normative legal research as an investigation relying on the examination of library or secondary materials (Efendi & Ibrahim, 2018). The current study adopts a normative legal research approach, seeking to ascertain truth through scientific logic and normative analysis, particularly focusing on Regulations pertaining to Halal Policy in Southeast Asian Countries.

Qualitative data serves as the basis for this research, with Sugiyono, as cited by Nuning Indah Pratiwi (Pratiwi, 2017), defining qualitative data as information in the form of words, sentences, and visual representations. The data utilized in this study encompass Halal Policy Regulations and relevant textual or visual materials such as diagrams, contributing to the exploration of the research topic.

The research methodology employed is the Qualitative Approach, which addresses formulated research problems by drawing on data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis, subsequently presented in a narrative format. Wahid Murni (2017) emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive understanding of the chosen approach, research type, research locations, data sources, and data analysis, all contributing to the validity of research findings.

Method of Collecting Data

According to Fajri (2022), library research, or bibliographic research, constitutes a method of data collection involving the examination of books and the exploration of literature, notes, and reports relevant to the research topic. This study employs three categories of legal materials: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Primary legal materials, constituting the authoritative sources, encompass the Quran, hadith, ijma', laws governing halal policies, and legislative regulations. Secondary legal materials, on the other

hand, are documents or resources offering explanations of primary legal materials. These may include books, articles, journals, research findings, and papers pertaining to halal policy regulations in ASEAN countries.

Tertiary legal materials serve as supplementary resources providing additional guidance or explanations for both primary and secondary legal materials. Examples of tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries, extensive Indonesian language dictionaries, and dictionaries in other foreign languages.

A Comparative Study Method

Within normative research, the utilization of comparative studies is a methodology aimed at contrasting a legal institution within one legal system with a comparable legal institution in another legal system (Efendi & Ibrahim, 2018). This comparative approach facilitates the identification of both similarities and differences between the two legal systems. In the context of this study, the collected data will undergo a comparative analysis to discern elements of commonality and divergence within the halal policy regulations across ASEAN countries.

Descriptive Analysis Method

Descriptive research involves investigative approaches focused on examining circumstances, conditions, or previously mentioned factors, with the findings presented in a research report (Arikunto, 2010). The methodology employed in this study entails the description of research outcomes derived from the literature review method, drawing on relevant literature and the results of a comparative analysis of halal policy regulations. Clear and detailed sentences are utilized to address the problem formulation at the core of this research.

DISCUSSION

Indonesia

The enactment of Halal Product Assurance (JPH) in Indonesia is regarded by Indonesian Muslims as a tangible manifestation of religious adherence within the nation (Bajuri & Bijaksana, 2020). The introduction of halal policy regulations by the government in Indonesia is received as positive news for the Muslim community.

According to Article 4 of Law Number 33 of 2019 on Guarantees for Halal Products, products circulating in Indonesia must possess halal certificates issued by both Indonesian institutions and foreign institutions recognized by Indonesia. Aqil Irham, the Chair of BPJPH, emphasized (Beautiful, 2023) that food and beverage businesses, as well as slaughter products and services, must obtain halal certification by no later than October 17, 2024, after which non-compliant businesses will face sanctions.

The Indonesian government assumes direct responsibility for ensuring halal product compliance. To this end, the government established the Halal Product Guarantee Agency (BPJPH), reporting to the Ministry of Religion. BPJPH collaborates with other institutions, including the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH) (Government regulation of the Republic of Indonesia, 2014).

The enactment of Perppu Number 2 of 2022, subsequently becoming Law Number 6 of 2023, has introduced substantial changes to the implementation of halal product guarantees in Indonesia. Notable changes include the expanded authority to determine product halalness granted to MUI, Provincial MUI, Regency/City MUI, or the Aceh Ulama Consultative Council as the basis for issuing Halal Certificates by BPJPH. Another significant change is the delegation of the responsibility for determining product halalness for business actors registered through the self-declare program to a fatwa committee formed by BPJPH. This committee reports directly to the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia. Additionally, the government mandates electronic-based halal product assurance services that integrate with the halal certification processes conducted by BPJPH, LPH, MUI, Provincial MUI, Regency/City MUI, Aceh MPU, Halal Product Fatwa Committee, and PPH Assistant (Khoeron, 2023).

The halal certification program in Indonesia comprises two pathways: the regular route halal certificate and the self-declare route halal certificate, commonly known as Sehati (Free Halal Certificate). According to information from the Halal Center Cendikia Muslim website (Halal Center Cendekia Muslim, 2022), the initiation of the Sehati program is grounded in the issuance of Regulation



of the Minister of Religion (PMA) number 20 of 2021 concerning Halal Certification of Micro and Small Enterprises. This initiative by the government aims to ease the burden on micro and small businesses by offering Free Halal Certificates (Sehati), enabling them to fulfill their obligations in registering products for halal certification.

The criteria for micro and small business actors are detailed in Chapter II, outlining that such actors are productive businesses with business capital or annual sales proceeds in accordance with legal provisions. The criteria also specify that the product should not pose risks and should employ materials with confirmed halal status, while the production process is straightforward and the halal status can be ascertained (Regulation of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

Article 29 of the JPH Law delineates the procedure for submitting a halal certificate application. Applicants are required to submit a written application to BPJPH through the website www.halal.go.id. The application must be accompanied by various documents. Subsequently, BPJPH will verify the documents and designate the LPH within one working day. The LPH is responsible for inspecting and testing products by appointing a halal auditor within a maximum period of 15 working days. If any materials with doubtful halal status are identified, they will undergo laboratory testing.

The Halal Auditor Report is submitted by LPH to BPJPH for further submission to MUI. The fatwa commission, consisting of MUI, Provincial MUI, Regency/City MUI, or the Aceh Deliberative Council, conducts fatwa hearings based on the halal auditor's report. The timeframe for determining halalness is set at 3 days; any duration beyond this period results in the fatwa committee taking charge of the determination. Following the MUI fatwa hearing, the results are transmitted to BPJPH. If the product passes, BPJPH promptly issues a halal certificate. For micro and small business actors who opt for the self-declare/halal statements application route, the determination of their product's halalness is undertaken by the halal product fatwa committee in adherence to halal fatwa provisions. The determination process by the fatwa committee is completed within one working day.

Concerning the validity period of halal certificates in Indonesia, Article 42 stipulates a 4-year validity from the date of issuance by BPJPH. However, the current practice dictates that a Halal Certificate remains valid as long as there are no alterations in the material composition or process of the halal product. Any changes in these aspects necessitate the renewal of the halal certificate, as outlined in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 6 of 2023 concerning the Stipulation of Government Regulation in lieu of Law Number 2 of 2022 concerning the Job Creation Act (2023).

In response to these amendments, Muti Arintawati, Main Director of the Indonesian Ulema Council (LPPOM MUI) Research Institute for Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics, expressed objection to the notion of the halal certificate remaining valid for the entire production period due to the absence of supervision for certified halal products, while quality system testing adheres to a specific validity period (Dinata, 2023).

Highlighting the advancements in halal certification from 2014 to 2018, the performance has shown consistent improvement each year. LPPOM MUI, supported by MUI, currently collaborates with 42 halal certification bodies abroad, an impressive outcome given the relatively short period of collaboration (4 years) with these 42 countries. Despite its brief duration, LPPOM MUI has demonstrated commendable performance throughout the certification process, encompassing initial registration, processing, labeling, and post-halal certification (Yarli & Wasiatul, 2019).

Malaysia

The 2011 Trade Description (Certification and Marking of Halal Order) specifies that the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) is the sole authorized agency for determining the halal status of food or goods (Warta Royal Malaysia Fellowship, 2011). JAKIM collaborates with the State Islamic Religious Office (JAIN), an integral part of JAKIM responsible for issuing domestic halal certificates (Husna et al., 2022).

The process for obtaining a halal certificate in Malaysia involves the applicant registering and creating an account on the website https://www.halal.gov.my. Subsequently, the applicant submits various supporting documents for verification by the authorities. If the documents are incomplete, the application is returned to the applicant for necessary corrections. Conversely, if the documents are deemed complete, the applicant is promptly notified of the applicable fees. Upon full payment, the initial audit schedule is promptly provided. Business actors are not informed of subsequent audit schedules to ensure their ongoing commitment to the halal system. The monitoring report is then submitted to

JAKIM for evaluation to determine the product's eligibility for a halal certificate. If approved, JAKIM issues the halal certificate.

In Malaysia, the validity period of a halal certificate depends on the classification of the business. For slaughterhouses, the validity is 1 year, for food and beverage products it is 2 years, cosmetic products have a validity of 3 years, foreign companies receive a 2-year validity, and if they meet specified terms and conditions, they can be valid for 5 years. Halal certificate renewal must be initiated by the certificate holder at least 6 months and no more than 3 months before the certificate's expiration. Certificate holders request an extension through the website www.halal.gov.my. Failure to meet the specified deadline categorizes the renewal as a new application (JAKIM, 2020).

Thailand

The enforcement of halal certification in Thailand is overseen by a non-governmental entity, specifically an Islamic organization known as The Central Islamic Council of Thailand (CICOT) under the leadership of Syaikhul Islam. Despite its non-governmental status, the legitimacy of CICOT and Syaikhul Islam is recognized by the state through Law Number 340 of 1997 concerning Islamic Organizations. In support of the halal certification process in Thailand, the government has also established several institutions, enacted regulations, and allocated funds to facilitate halal certification purposes (Yakub & Zein, 2022).

The process of obtaining halal certification in Thailand commences with employers submitting an application to CICOT. Prior to application submission, entrepreneurs must ensure their understanding of the service process aligned with Islamic provisions. In cases where employers lack comprehension of services based on Islamic provisions, training is provided by The Halal Standard Institute of Thailand. Applicants are responsible for audit fees and related costs for the halal certificate. For companies with factories in a province, halal certificate applications must be submitted to the Provincial Islamic Committee or directly to CICOT. The verification and certification process spans a duration of 60 days.

Subsequently, CICOT verifies the application, and if all requirements are met, the application advances to the next stage. The determination of the audit schedule is based on an agreement between the auditor and the applicant, with the audit conducted at the location where the production process occurs

Auditors are authorized to request samples from the applicant if deemed necessary, and these samples undergo analysis by The Halal Science Center at Chulalongkorn University. The auditor then compiles an audit report, which is submitted to the Halal Committee. If the requirements are satisfied, a halal certificate is issued. Once issued, entrepreneurs are obligated to consistently adhere to existing provisions and remit the halal certificate fee. Halal certificates are valid for 2 years and must comply with CICOT provisions. Renewal of halal certificates must be submitted at least 2 months before the expiration date (Central Islamic Council of Thailand, 2017).

Brunei Darussalam

The Government of Brunei Darussalam mandates the submission of halal certification for businesses involved in food provision, while certification for businesses outside the food and beverage sector, such as medicines, cosmetics, and services, remains optional (Hashim, 2021). The Halal Certification process in Brunei Darussalam is directly overseen by the Halal Food Control Agency (BKMH), an institution under the Department of Sharia Affairs of Brunei Darussalam. BKMH is responsible for managing all activities related to halal food products seeking approval for the official halal logo from the Islamic Ugama Majlis Brunei Darussalam, applicable for both domestic and international sales.

BKMH oversees the entire halal certification process, from application submission and on-site business location audits to certificate issuance and follow-up audits. Working in collaboration with other government agencies, the auditor conducting on-site audits is directly appointed by the Majlis Ugama Islam Brunei Darussalam, in accordance with Chapter 18 Halal Certificates and Halal Labels (Haji Sulaiman & Hashim, 2021).

The application procedure for halal certification in Brunei Darussalam involves the applicant submitting an application to the Assembly for each type of business and each business location.

Applicants must fulfill the stipulated requirements and submit an application for each registered food type.

The Assembly commissions a committee to inspect and analyze the food and establishments. Following receipt of the committee's report, the Assembly evaluates the halal status of the product. If all conditions are met, and the applicant satisfies the requirements, a certificate is issued. Before issuance, the Assembly notifies the applicant to make immediate payment. All costs associated with the halal certificate process are the responsibility of the applicant. In case of non-payment, the government temporarily bears the cost, and the applicant incurs an additional fine.

Halal certificates issued are valid for one year, and certificate holders must apply for an extension a maximum of 30 days before the certificate's expiry. Violations may result in certificate suspension, revocation, and a directive for the applicant not to display the halal certificate (The Religious Council of Brunei Darussalam, 2007).

Vietnam

The escalating demand for halal products has captured Vietnam's attention, prompting the country to seize this opportunity. Vietnam's strategy involves enhancing international collaboration to formulate a comprehensive approach to developing the halal industry. This includes aligning regulations and standards for halal products at Vietnam's halal certification bodies with those of countries importing halal products. This collaborative effort aims to facilitate global trade in halal products and foster the exchange of Vietnamese halal products and services in the global market (Oktaviani, 2021).

As of now, Vietnam lacks specific regulations governing the issuance, renewal, and revocation of halal certificates. Halal certification is not obligatory for Vietnamese entrepreneurs, and consequently, there are no stipulations for penalties against business actors who do not seek halal certification.

Several halal certification institutions in Vietnam have established collaborations with counterparts abroad, such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (Indonesia), the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Malaysia), and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In these collaborations, Vietnamese citizens seeking halal certificates must familiarize themselves with the procedures and requirements for halal certificates from the institutions of the countries to which their products are exported.

The process for halal certification in Vietnam involves submission to one of the country's halal certification institutions. Notable institutions include the Vietnam Halal Authority (HAV), Viet Nam Halal (HVN), Halal Certification Agency (HCA), International Food Services (FOSI), Vietnam National Halal (HNV), among others.

The Vietnam Halal Authority (HAV) follows a specific procedure for businesses applying for a halal certificate, which necessitates compliance with various requirements. Business actors are required to meet specific criteria, including holding a restaurant license, company registration with the Department of Planning and Investment, availability of a signed and dated halal manual approved by company management, development of a halal system based on HSHAV, and adherence to additional requirements imposed by the importing country. The implementation of the halal system must precede on-site audits by at least one month.

The application process initiates with the submission of a duly filled form to the Managing Director at 53 Hồ Hảo Hớn, Phường Cô Giang, Quận 1, Tp. Hồ Chí Minh or via email at halalvn.info@gmail.com. Upon receiving the application, a document verification process ensues. If the documents are deemed complete, the applicant is required to remit the necessary fees. Subsequently, the audit preparation phase commences, with HAV appointing two compliance auditors for the audit. The audit agreement is facilitated by the lead auditor in collaboration with the applicant. Following an Adequacy Audit, the auditor finalizes the halal manual, and the audit report is shared with the company and HAV.

The On-Site Audit involves the Lead Auditor coordinating with the company to schedule an on-site adequacy audit. The audit program, encompassing opening procedures, factory visits, documentation commentary, auditor meetings, and closing sessions, is shared with the company and the auditor's field. The auditor provides guidance on necessary adjustments, and the company is granted a two-week window to effect these changes after the field audit.

Process Evaluation entails the Halal Certificate Board convening regularly to consider recommendations from the audit team leader. The board, chaired by the Managing Director of HAV and

comprising officials from the Permanent Sharia Council and the Technical Expert Committee, approves certificates valid for one year.

For Halal Certificate System Maintenance, renewal can be pursued annually. Certificate renewal requests are submitted using the HAV 01 application form. The decision on renewal approval is contingent upon the audit team's annual report and is determined by the certification board (Vietnam Halal Authority, n.d.).

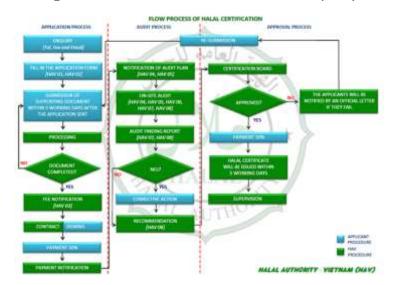


Figure 1 Flow Process of Halal Certification (HAV)

The Halal Certification Agency (HCA) follows a specific procedure for halal certification, where the applicant is generally required to complete the QF03.01 Application Form and DF03.01B List of Ingredients – additives – chemical. It is imperative that the applicant comprehends the chosen halal registration scheme aligning with the destination country for exporting the product. Following the submission of the application and requisite documents, HCA undertakes a thorough check and notifies the applicant of the applicable fees. A certificate contract is then executed by both parties as a confirmation of mutual agreement.

The subsequent stage involves an audit, which comprises two phases. The primary audit phase focuses on verifying the completeness and feasibility of implementing halal standards, with the auditor informing the applicant of any deficiencies or required improvements. The secondary audit phase aims to assess the product's conformity with the requirements for halal certificate issuance. Following the audit, the auditor compiles an audit report, which is subsequently submitted to both the applicant and HCA for review and the issuance of a halal certificate (Halal Certification Agency, 2018). The application process for obtaining a halal certificate at the Vietnam Halal institution (HVN) closely mirrors the procedure outlined by the Vietnam Halal Authority (HAV). Applicants are mandated to submit a certification registration form (Application form MF 09.01) along with pertinent documents, including company information and product details intended for halal certification.

Upon receipt of the application form, the Certification Board at HVN communicates the applicable fees to the applicant and provides a contract for signature. Once the contract is signed and payment is made, the applicant is required to furnish various documents, including the halal certification contract, company profile (comprising an organizational chart), business registration, operational license (if applicable), production process/flowchart, certified production test results (if any), and other certificates such as ISO, HACCP, GMP, GAP (if any), company branch address, environmental sanitation certificate, fire prevention and suppression certificate, wastewater treatment process, waste water-related documents, and a classification trial file.

The Certification Board meticulously reviews the submitted documents, and any identified deficiencies or areas for improvement are communicated to the applicant for necessary revisions. Following the document assessment and subsequent corrections, the next phase involves an on-site

review conducted by an Auditor. Prior to the on-site review, the applicant must ensure payment of the appraisal and certification fee.

The field review adheres to HVN procedures and includes interviews with company leaders and employees responsible for the production process. The auditor verifies various aspects such as material components, storage of raw materials and finished products, warehouses, processing plants, production diagrams, handling in the production process, product packaging, hygiene programs, and quality control.

In the event of discrepancies noted during the review that do not align with Sharia provisions, the Auditor engages directly with the company manager and relevant employees to address the findings. Subsequently, the auditor compiles a review report submitted to HVN for further assessment.

Upon successful completion of the halal certification stage, HVN issues halal certificates and grants permission for the use of the halal logo on certified products. The halal certificate has a validity period of one year, with monitoring occurring every six months. Renewal of the halal certificate is mandated within one month before the expiry date (Halal Viet Nam, 2020).

The process of applying for a halal certificate at the International Food Service Institute (FOSI) is unique as it caters exclusively to the preferences of Vietnamese citizens seeking to export products abroad. The certification programs offered by FOSI, including the JAKIM Malaysia Program, GCC, and MUI Indonesia, vary in standards and align with the requirements of each destination country.

FOSI's GCC program certifies only food products for the GCC Market (Dubai-UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen), with a validity period of 3 years. Under the MUI Program, only ingredients and semi-finished products, particularly flavorings, can be registered. Halal certificates from the MUI program are valid globally, excluding Malaysia and the GCC, with a one-year validity period. In contrast, the JAKIM program covers all types of products, including food, cosmetics, raw materials, and services. The halal certificates obtained through the JAKIM program are applicable for exports to all countries except Indonesia and the GCC, with a validity period of one year.

Before initiating the halal certificate process, the FOSI team provides clients with a comprehensive explanation. The client then undergoes a profile review and is required to prepare necessary documents according to the chosen program, which are subsequently submitted to the certification body. The next stage involves a direct assessment at the production facility location. It is noteworthy that the information available on the FOSI website primarily extends up to the payment and submission of halal certificates (FOSI, 2021).

Lastly, the researchers identified the Viet Nam Halal (VNH) institution, although the details on the website https://www.halal.com.vn/thay-doi-thoi-gian-hieu-luc-chung-nhan-halal-mui/ only present a chart illustrating the halal certificate process. Nevertheless, the mechanism within this institution exhibits similarities with other certification bodies.

Myanmar

Myanmar's economic reliance on export activities, particularly in the absence of a halal certification standard accepted by the Muslim community, hinders the potential for expanding economic activities into the thriving market of halal products. The country's challenges include a lack of resources, such as infrastructure, skilled manpower, and qualified experts, as a result of historical isolation, internal conflicts, and economic struggles under the military regime. The development of halal commodity products in Myanmar faces obstacles due to the unpreparedness of economic stability.

The discussion of halal products in Myanmar is inseparable from the circumstances of the Muslim population in the country. The global community was alarmed in 2017 by the severe oppression faced by Rohingya Muslims, considered the worst case of persecution against a religious minority since the Junta era in 1962. Zo Bilay's research on "The Characteristics of Violent Religious Nationalism: A Case Study of Mabatha against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar" reveals that Burmese Buddhist nationalism, embodied by MaBaTha, contributes to human rights violations against ethnic minorities, such as the Rohingya.

Despite the challenging conditions for Muslims in Myanmar, international organizations, including Factorocert, offer halal certification services in various countries, including Myanmar. Factorocert, a multinational company specializing in certification and consulting, extends its halal certification services to businesses such as eateries, food and beverage establishments, cosmetics and personal care producers, slaughterhouses, services, and pharmaceuticals.

While there is no specific regulation interpreting the concepts of halal and haram, certain considerations must be taken into account, such as adhering to Quranic guidelines for animal slaughter and avoiding the use of pork and alcohol. Although specific guidelines for the halal certification mechanism are lacking, the certification process encompasses not only materials and production processes but also emphasizes the cleanliness of tools used.

Throughout the audit process, auditors send samples to laboratories to verify the absence of pork and request documentation on the chemicals used for equipment and facility cleaning. The issuance of halal certificates depends on the successful completion of the audit, confirming that the required conditions have been met. The validity of the certificate is one year, with additional audits required after its expiration (Factorocert, 2021).

Cambodia

The initiation of a halal certificate application in Cambodia involves submitting the necessary documents, including an application for the use of the halal trademark, a photocopy of the previous year's VAT, KTP/Passport, and supplementary supporting documents, to the Ministry of Commerce. Upon receipt, the Cambodian Halal Certification Institute assigns a team to assess the application's compliance with halal technical standards. The evaluation process is conducted within 3 days at the secretariat and a maximum of 3 months by a special inspection team.

The Halal Product Specialist Team provides the applicant with halal product standards and grants access for up to 5 days. If any discrepancies are identified, the applicant is notified and required to promptly address the issues (Article 3). The halal certificate is valid for 12 months, and the applicant must request an extension within 1 month before the certificate's expiration (Article 4). In case of business suspension or termination during a trip, the certificate holder must inform the Halal Product Inspection Committee Secretariat in writing within 30 days after business cessation (Article 5).

Any regulations conflicting with these provisions are considered repealed (Article 6). The Cambodian Halal Product Inspection Committee, Cabinet Director, Director General of relevant departments under the Ministry of Commerce, Cambodian Halal Product Inspection Committee Secretariat, and the Special Group for Halal Products are mandated to execute these provisions from the date of signing (Article 7).

Philippines

The issuance of halal certificates in the Philippines dates back to 1998 when halal was incorporated into the United Nations Codex Alimentarius. Despite its inclusion, the practice did not gain traction until the past two decades. Recognizing the vast opportunities and substantial profits associated with halal products, the Philippine government passed the Halal Regulation in 2003 and established the Halal Certification Body (Salindal et al., 2018).

Broadly, the halal certification process in the Philippines ensures that products are manufactured using halal materials, prepared through halal methods, and guarantees that the production process remains free from any elements prohibited under Islamic law. Each certification body imposes specific requirements, resulting in variations, but the primary objective is to ascertain the product's suitability for consumption by Muslims.

The Philippines boasts several halal certification bodies accredited by the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), mandated to ensure compliance with applicable requirements in all production activities and products (Philippine National Standard, 2015). These bodies include the Philippine Muslim Association (PMA), the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), and the Islamic Centers Division (ICD) under the Department of Religious Affairs (About Philippines, 2022).

Government regulations encompass various halal food standards, serving as guidelines for Philippine halal certification institutions. These standards are outlined in the Philippine National Standards-Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (PNS-BAFS), covering areas such as Halal Agriculture and Fisheries Products, Halal Slaughtering Practices for Ruminants and Poultry, and Halal Feeds (Republic of the Philippines, 2018).

Criteria and guidelines for halal certification agencies are delineated in the "Criteria and Guidelines for the Accreditation of Halal Certification Bodies/Entities in the Philippines for Domestic Goods," issued by the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMA), Republic of the Philippines. Qualifications for applicants include registration as an Islamic organization with the Philippine

Government Agency, articulation of the specific purpose of halal certification in the organization's articles of association, and the presence of at least one scholar responsible for providing halal decisions or assessments for products.

Laos

Laos, as a communist nation, generally places a lower emphasis on religion in the state's affairs. Despite this stance, the Lao constitution, as outlined in Decree No. 315 of 2016, explicitly grants its citizens the "Right and freedom to believe or not believe in religion." The official recognition of several religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Baha'i, reflects the nation's commitment to religious freedom, with Buddhism being prioritized due to its deep cultural roots in Lao society. However, this religious freedom, particularly for the Muslim minority, comes with limitations, such as the prohibition of preaching.

While the Lao constitution guarantees religious freedom, the Muslim community faces challenges, such as the lack of government financial support for building places of worship. Additionally, there are no national religious holidays apart from Buddhist celebrations. Despite these constraints, the Lao Muslim community appreciates the freedom to practice Islam, acknowledging the significance of this allowance within existing limitations.

In Laos, the majority of Muslims are engaged in various business ventures, including cosmetics, halal restaurants, and the textile industry. Local Muslim groups, particularly in Vientiane, operate halal establishments, with some managing halal butcheries, distinguishable by the display of crescent moon symbols or Arabic halal signs. Some Muslims have ventured into halal food catering, earning trust from the Lao government to prepare dishes for banquets hosted by Muslim foreign embassies visiting Laos (Erasiah et al., 2022).

The strict regulations surrounding religion in Laos have led many members of the religious community to conceal their religious identity when participating in Lao politics. The dominance of the communist party in the government, where government and parliamentary members are exclusively elected from the ruling party, leaves minimal room for the formation of an Islamic party (Surya Pratama, 2022).

Singapore

The Administration of Muslim Law Act 1996 (Republic of Singapore, 2022) empowers the Majlis Ugama Islam Singapore (MUIS) to oversee and issue halal certificates in Singapore, placing the ultimate authority for regulating halal certification activities under governmental supervision.

The initial phase of the halal certification procedure involves applicants fulfilling the stipulated requirements. Subsequently, applicants initiate the registration process through the MUIS website. Following the submission of the application, applicants are guided to complete the required payment. The processing of applications is contingent upon the payment amount, with a timeframe of 14 working days for normal payments, 7 days for express payments, and 14 days for change requests from the date of submission.

Applicants are advised to consistently monitor the application status and notifications, which are communicated via email. Throughout this waiting period, applicants must refrain from publicly disclosing their halal certification application. Upon request for additional information, applicants are obliged to furnish a comprehensive company profile, business location plan, production process flow, implementation of the halal system, and any other pertinent details facilitating the halal certification process. During the audit, the company's halal team is required to be present at the specified location. Following the completion of the audit, MUIS will review the audit report and determine the halal certificate's validity period, scheme type, and other prerequisites essential for application approval. Prior to certificate issuance, an assessment is made to confirm the existence of any additional fees. In the event of supplementary fees, the applicant must fulfill the payment within 30 days from the notification date. Failure to make the required payment will result in the cancellation of the halal certification process and certificate issuance.

Payments can be processed through the application portal or other approved means by MUIS, and they must be settled before the certificate is dispatched to the designated recipient. Once payments are made, they are non-refundable.

Subsequent to certificate issuance, MUIS conducts unannounced inspections periodically and as necessary, throughout the halal certificate's validity period. Consequently, halal certificate holders are mandated to provide MUIS with accurate address information to facilitate these unannounced inspections.

For the renewal of a halal certificate, an application is automatically generated and sent to MUIS 120 days before the certificate's expiration date. Certificate holders are obligated to regularly check the application portal for notifications, adhere to required actions, prepare for on-site audits, and ensure no alterations to the application after the automatic submission for extension. The validity period for a halal certificate is either one or two years (MUIS, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Upon analyzing the findings, it can be deduced that nearly all ASEAN member countries have established regulatory frameworks for halal policies, providing a foundation for the implementation of guarantees for halal products within their jurisdictions. Notably, Laos and Myanmar are exceptions, lacking specific regulations related to halal policies. Nevertheless, Myanmar accommodates halal certification services through a multinational halal certification agency.

In a broad sense, the procedural stages of halal certification across ASEAN nations are analogous, encompassing registration, verification, audit, determination of halal products, issuance of halal certificates, and defining the validity period for these certificates. However, each stage adheres to distinct guidelines and policies specified in the halal policy regulations of individual countries, administered by respective halal certification institutions.

These certification institutions exhibit diversity in their nature. Some countries establish government-formed institutions, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and Singapore, predominantly characterized by Muslim populations. Conversely, countries like Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Vietnam feature private institutions or entities from abroad.

The duration of validity emerges as a focal point of consideration. Notably, a majority of ASEAN countries mandate a one-year validity period for halal certificates. Indonesia stands as an exception within ASEAN, compelling a lifetime validity for halal certificates tied to production, constituting a unique requirement in the region. In contrast, other ASEAN countries maintain voluntary halal certification or do not impose it as a mandatory obligation for business actors.

This research is not without its limitations and offers avenues for further enhancement in subsequent studies, including:

- 1. Timor Leste has not been incorporated into the scope of this research discussion due to time constraints faced by the researchers.
- 2. Future research endeavors could gauge the effectiveness of halal policy regulations across ASEAN nations, employing analytical methods such as the Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) to provide a more in-depth assessment of their efficiency.

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