**Development Strategy of Halal Industry to Improve Competitiveness of MSMEs**

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**Abstract**

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have an important role in the national economic growth. West Java, as one of the provinces in Indonesia with great potential in the creative industry, especially in the East Priangan region, has a high economic potential based on knowledge and culture, and the economic growth in that region is developing rapidly. The purpose of this research is to determine the appropriate strategy in the development of the halal industry as an effort to improve the competitiveness of existing MSMEs in East Priangan. The method used is the analytic network process (ANP) approach through a structured questionnaire with 7 respondents from academics or practitioners as key persons. The respondents were selected with the purposive sampling method and are experts related to the research problem. Based on the analysis results, three criteria for strategies were obtained, which can be used to develop the halal industry as an effort to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs in East Priangan, namely education for MSMEs, integrated financing, and MSME database. In addition, the alternative strategies that can be applied based on their top priorities are strengthening human resource capacity, strengthening halal literacy, financing support strategy, followed by strengthening halal literacy, and finally halal certification. The implication of this research provides recommendations regarding the strategies that can be taken by MSMEs or regulatory agencies to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs. Furthermore, this research can also serve as a reference for the development of relevant research in the future

Keywords:

**INTRODUCTION**

The important role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for the Indonesian economy cannot be simply ignored. This makes MSMEs one of the important sectors for the Indonesian economic system (Ginting et al., 2019). According to Hubeis in Ginting et al. (2019) and Pujiyono et al. (2018), the role of MSMEs in the national economy includes accelerating the distribution of economic growth through job and business opportunities, increasing foreign exchange earnings for the country, increasing people's incomes, and strengthening the national economic structure. This is proven by data from the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs, which states that in 2019, Indonesia had the largest economic entity in the Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector with a percentage of 99.9% of the total businesses in Indonesia, and this number is increasing every year, even during the pandemic. Furthermore, MSMEs also have a significant contribution to the national economic growth, with the largest percentage in the GDP and employing up to 97% of the workforce in Indonesia (Yasin & Fisabilillah, 2020).

However, amidst the rapid development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and the significant contribution they provide to the national economy, MSMEs in Indonesia still face various problems, including capital and financial issues, declining sales, difficulties in raw materials, hampered distribution, marketing, human resources, and reduced production (Arianto, 2020; Ningsih, 2020; Suparwo et al., 2018; Hubeis et al., 2015). According to Hartono and Hartomo (2014), other issues faced by Indonesian MSMEs include low access to productive resources, low human resources, low productivity, and competitiveness. In addition, according to Hubeis et al. (2015), MSMEs also face external problems such as increasingly complex national and international competition. In the world of business competition, MSMEs are required to follow the flow of globalization and liberalization of global trade, economic relations, and trade between countries (Mulyati, 2010). Furthermore, the constraints faced by MSMEs in Indonesia, both internal and external, represent that MSMEs do not yet have high competitiveness to increase people's income and drive the national economy (Lantu et al., 2016).

Another issue faced by MSME actors related to the halal industry is the low level of public knowledge regarding the importance of halal and halal certification, which has an impact on the difficulty of expanding the market for MSME-produced products. Many business actors are still unaware of the function of the NIB and halal labeling for UMKM products, and the focus of MSME actors in developing halal products is still relatively low, as they tend to prioritize the export of plantation and mining commodities. Additionally, there are competitors from non-Muslim countries who are developing the halal industry (Anandita et al., 2022; Qoni’ah, 2022). These issues pose a particular challenge to the development of halal UMKM in Indonesia, considering that Indonesia has the potential to become a player in the halal industry through the strengthening of halal UMKM (Febriyani et al., 2022). Furthermore, Febriyani et al. (2022) suggest that in order to become a player in the halal industry, MSME needs to strengthen its position by increasing awareness of the importance of halal certification, which is a requirement for products to be marketed and accepted in the global market. This can be done by involving Islamic finance institutions in providing financing to MSME, improving the quality of human resources, particularly in managing and marketing products in the digital era, for example, by providing training to UMKM on digitalization to develop their products.

Amidst the increasingly intense global competition, MSMEs have the opportunity to develop the halal industry. This can be seen from the increasing number of Muslim populations around the world and the halal lifestyle trend, which is a global trend that will certainly affect the increasing demand for halal products (Yulia, 2015). It cannot be denied that the increasing global trend of halal lifestyle results in an increasing demand for halal products, so producers or business actors, especially MSMEs, need to understand the concept of halal (Novitasari, 2019; Pujiyono et al., 2018).

Regarding that matter, West Java, a province of Indonesia, has great potential in the creative industry, as seen from the contribution of the creative industry in fulfilling export needs which reaches 33.56% (Purbasari et al., 2018). Furthermore, Purbasari et al. (2018) in their research also explained that the East Priangan region is one part of West Java that has a high knowledge and culture-based economic potential, which includes the City of Tasikmalaya, Tasikmalaya Regency, Banjar City, Ciamis Regency, Garut Regency, and Sumedang Regency. In addition, the economic growth in that region is also developing very rapidly.

Considering the opportunities and challenges faced by MSME, particularly in the East Priangan region, various competitive strategies are needed to develop the halal industry of MSME. Several previous studies have described various strategies that can be implemented to develop MSME, including Ginting et al. (2019), who explained strategies for developing MSME from the aspects of production, technology, and human resource quality improvement. In detail, the strategies offered by Ginting et al. (2019) are 1) maintaining product quality and preserving brand value to face competition from similar businesses, 2) using technological advancements and raw materials to increase production and expand the market, 3) enhancing human resource capabilities, utilizing associations and government support to expand product markets, 4) seeking producers to achieve raw material supply stability and improving human resource skills to create unique MSME, 5) maximizing raw materials and technological capabilities to produce unique MSME products, and 6) improving the quality and variety of products to attract new customers.

Hubeis et al (2015) stated that in order to develop competitive MSME, strategies that can be implemented include improving cooperation to maintain the continuity of the availability of raw materials between regions, developing MSME product centers or clusters, and increasing the role of regional governments, private companies or state-owned enterprises, universities, and research and development institutions. Similar suggestions were also proposed by Purbasari et al (2018), where to develop sustainable and competitive MSME, a strategy involving collaboration and cooperation from all parties involved in the entrepreneurship ecosystem in each creative industry region is needed.

The study by Pujiyono et al (2018) suggests strategies to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs, including enhancing halal certification, using modern and appropriate technology to meet halal product standards, improving the qualifications of human resources in halal MSMEs, increasing the role of religious and educational institutions to promote halal MSME products to the Muslim community, strengthening linkages with downstream industries, diversifying halal SME products, increasing the role of fintech in financing and certifying halal SME products and their marketing, enhancing halal SME product branding through technology and information media, building synergy with relevant institutions for halal MSME product innovation, and strengthening the study of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) to produce halal MSME products.

Purbasari et al (2018) conducted research on the competitive advantages of creative industry MSME in East Priangan. The results of their research explained that the sub-sectors of the creative industry based on the concept of competitive advantage with the most potential in each region were the Fragrant Root Crafts Industry (Kab. Garut), Mendong Weaving (Kota Tasikmalaya), and Coconut Leaf Crafts (Kab. Ciamis). In addition, these regions also have local resources and policy support from the government, as well as domestic and international markets. To have sustainable competitive advantages, collaboration and cooperation are needed from all parties involved in the entrepreneurship ecosystem in each creative industry region.

Lantu et al (2016) explained the development of a model for increasing the competitiveness of MSMEs in Indonesia. The results of their research concluded that there are six main variables that can form the competitiveness of MSMEs in a province, namely the availability and condition of the business environment, business capability, policy and infrastructure, research and technology, financial support and partnership, and performance variables. Furthermore, Permana (2017) also explained that the strategy for improving SMEs in Indonesia can be done by adopting existing technological advances, government support in accelerating infrastructure related to internet access, support from courier companies in distributing SME products, nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit in the community that has competence and competitiveness.

And other studies include Yulia (2015) explaining strategies for developing the halal industry. The results of the study found that to develop the halal industry, it is necessary to prioritize the domestic halal product industry and create a business network in the global market. Nasution (2020) examined the strengthening of the halal industry for regional competitiveness. And Maulana (2022) explains the potential for developing the halal industry in Indonesia amid global halal competition.

Based on several previous studies, the discussion is focused on strategies to enhance the competitiveness of MSMEs, particularly in the aspects of entrepreneurship ecosystem, production, technology and human resource quality, and availability of infrastructure and facilities such as internet access and support from shipping companies. Furthermore, previous studies emphasize the importance of government support. However, there has been no specific study that discusses the strategies for developing the halal industry with a focus on enhancing the competitiveness of MSMEs, particularly in the East Priangan region, which is an area with high economic potential in West Java. This study will further discuss MSME education about the halal industry, integrated financing based on Islamic Sharia such as cooperation with Islamic financial institutions, and the importance of MSME databases. Given the gap in previous research on the topic of the halal industry, particularly in efforts to enhance the competitiveness of halal MSMEs, further research on the strategies for developing the halal industry in enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs in the East Priangan region is crucial.

The objective of this research is to analyze the strategy for developing the halal industry to enhance the competitiveness of micro small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in East Priangan and to explain the criteria and sub-criteria for the strategy that can be used to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs. From these criteria and sub-criteria, alternative solution priorities or appropriate policy strategies will be determined, so that the obtained inputs can be applied to the researched problem. The method used in this research is the Analytic Network Process (ANP) through structured questionnaires provided to research respondents who are experts in the problem being researched. This research is important considering that the halal industry is currently showing significant growth, in addition to the increasing global trend of halal lifestyle. Furthermore, MSMEs also plays an important role in the national economy, where it is important for MSMEs to maintain its existence in the current global economic era. Moreover, East Priangan as an area with high economic potential in West Java needs to be empowered. Through MSMEs or the creative industry, the economy in East Priangan can be improved by strengthening the competitiveness of halal MSMEs.

**METHOD**

This study uses the Analytic Network Process (ANP) method. ANP is a comprehensive decision-making technique that has the ability to incorporate all relevant criteria and their interrelationships in making a decision (Jharkharia & Shankar, 2007). According to Saaty & Vargas in Firdaus & Hendratmi (2019), ANP is a theory of computation that is typically used for dominance of influence, which is a concept to create a comparison between variables related to attributes or the fulfillment of a criteria.

To obtain the necessary data, a survey is conducted using a model within the framework of the ANP method through a questionnaire given to experts or specialists related to the issue being studied as research respondents. Furthermore, this ANP method is used to find the priority of alternative solutions or appropriate policy strategies, so that the input obtained can be applied to the researched problem (Ascarya & Yumanita, 2005).

The respondents in this study consisted of 7 informants who were from academic, regulatory, and MSME practitioner backgrounds in East Priangan. The method of determining respondents was through purposive sampling. Then, the respondents filled out the ANP questionnaire instrument which consisted of criteria, sub-criteria, and alternative strategies for developing the halal industry for UMKM in East Priangan.

After obtaining data results from the respondents, the ANP model was then arranged in priority based on the matrix-supermatrix framework to produce the priority order of each criterion and sub-criterion. In the end, alternative strategies that need to be implemented within the framework of developing the halal industry for MSMEs in East Priangan were obtained.

**RESULTS**

**Strategy Criteria**

Figure 1 shows the main indicators in the Strategy Criteria for developing the halal industry to enhance the competitiveness of MSMEs in East Priangan. The results indicate that education for MSMEs can be the main strategy in the development of the halal industry, as shown by the average value based on the analysis results reaching 0.351, followed by the integrated financing indicator with a value of 0.327, and the MSME database indicator with an average value of 0.322.

Figure 1. Indicators of strategy criteria

Pujiyono et al (2018) explain that halal lifestyle has become a global trend and shows an increase from year to year. Of course, this will directly impact the increase in demand for halal products, so halal awareness is also needed by producers or business actors. In Anggraeni's research (2016), it is explained that the level of literacy among MSMEs business actors is still relatively low, especially in terms of financial literacy, which greatly affects the owner's decision-making or strategy in managing their business. Therefore, in developing the halal industry in MSMEs, both of these aspects need to be improved, which is then reinforced by the existence of MSMEs databases.

*Strengthening MSME Database*

From Figure 2, there are three main indicators that influence the MSME database factor as a Halal Industry Development Strategy in an effort to increase the competitiveness of MSME in East Priangan. These are recording business actors, creating a database platform, and LKS cooperation. The results show that the indicator of recording business actors is the main indicator with an average value of 0.365, followed by the indicator of creating a database platform (0.360) and LKS cooperation with a value of 0.275. This research is supported by Gunawan et al's (2021) study which states that UMKM data collection or UMKM databases are much needed, given the importance of data for UMKM development.

Figure 2. Indicators of strengthening MSME database

*Educating MSME Actors*

Next is related to education for MSMEs. Based on Figure 3, there are three main indicators that influence the education factor for MSMEs in the context of the development of the halal industry in East Priangan, namely research programs, stakeholder synergy, and halal lifestyle education. The results show that halal lifestyle education is the main indicator in providing education to MSMEs with an average value of 0.358. The second indicator that influences education for MSMEs is stakeholder synergy (0.330) and research programs (0.312). The increasing global trend of halal lifestyle also directly impacts the increase of halal awareness. This results in an increase in demand for halal products, so producers or business actors, especially MSMEs, need to understand the concept of halal, considering that halal lifestyle has a direct impact on the demand for halal products (Novitasari, 2019; Pujiyono et al., 2018).

Figure 3. Indicators of educating MSME actors

*Fostering Integrated Financing*

The next analysis is on the factor of Integrated Financing. As shown in Figure 4, there are three main indicators that influence the factor of integrated financing as a strategy for the development of the halal industry in East Priangan, namely financing subsidies, LKS-wakaf synergy, and P2P-based financing. Based on the analysis results, it shows that financing subsidies are the main indicator that influences the factor of integrated financing with an average value of 0.353. Furthermore, the second indicator that influences the factor of integrated financing is LKS-wakaf synergy with a value of 0.330. The last indicator that influences is P2P-based financing with an average value of 0.317.

Figure 4. Indicators of fostering integrated financing

In the study by Hartono & Hartomo (2014), it was explained that the factors influencing the development of MSMEs are the cost of raw materials, labor costs, promotional costs, and the aspect of capital. Other studies have also emphasized that the financial and capital aspects are often the problems faced by MSMEs (Suparwo et al., 2018; Ningsih, 2020). Therefore, integrated financing, especially in the form of financing subsidies, is needed by MSME actors to develop their businesses. Furthermore, to overcome financial and capital problems, MSMEs can utilize microfinance institutions or fintech, considering that one of the main roles of fintech is to provide financial services for small and medium-sized businesses (Hartono & Hartomo, 2014; Ningsih, 2020).

**Alternative Strategy of Halal Industry Development to Improve MSME Competitiveness**

Figure 5. Alternative strategies for developing MSME competitiveness

Figure 5 illustrates the strategic alternatives for developing the halal industry in East Priangan. There are at least 5 main strategies that can be implemented to develop the halal industry in East Priangan, namely strengthening human resource capacity, strengthening regulations, providing financing support, enhancing halal literacy, and halal certification. The analysis shows that the alternative of strengthening human resource capacity is the main indicator in the strategy for developing the halal industry, with an average value of 0.227, followed by enhancing halal literacy with an average value of 0.225. Then followed by the strategy of providing financing support (0.206), enhancing halal literacy (0.202), and lastly, halal certification (0.141). In the research conducted by Leiwakabessy & Lahallo (2018), it is explained that the quality of human resources in MSME is still low, especially in the fields of technology, marketing, and management. Therefore, the quality of human resources needs to be considered in developing the halal industry. This is because human resources are the main strength of a business entity, especially MSME. If the quality of human resources in MSME is good, the business will run well, so the quality of the resulting products will also be competitive and superior (Rosmadi, 2021).

**DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of the analysis, several findings were obtained regarding the criteria for the priority order of strategies, starting with Education for MSMEs, where the main priority is the indicator of halal lifestyle education, followed by stakeholder synergy and program research. Baharuddin et al. (2015) explained that halal lifestyle education is important for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) because it can help them understand the concept of halal and its implications for their business. Pujiyono et al. (2018) also emphasized that halal lifestyle has become a global trend and shows an increasing trend every year. This trend will directly impact the increase in demand for halal products, making halal awareness very important for producers or business owners and giving them the opportunity to benefit from the increasing demand for halal products. Furthermore, economic benefits can also be felt by MSME players (Margarena & Setiawan, 2022). Moreover, by increasing halal lifestyle education for MSMEs, it can help them understand the elements of Muslim intention in buying halal products (Wiyono et al., 2022) and enhance the role of MSMEs in driving the halal industry (Puspitaningrum et al., 2021).

Furthermore, stakeholder synergy is also important for the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) because it helps identify and map the conditions of MSMEs in a region (Harini et al., 2019) and recommend policies that can help improve their performance (Yuningsih et al., 2022). In addition, stakeholder synergy can also help identify actions that stakeholders can take to support development (Dolmaci, 2010) and strategies for improving the performance of MSMEs through stakeholder collaboration (Yuningsih et al., 2022). Furthermore, stakeholder synergy can help understand the forms of cooperation between MSMEs so that they can benefit from sustainable economic development (Guimarães et al., 2021).

The next strategic criteria is integrated financing, with the priority strategic indicator being subsidized financing, followed by the synergy of LKS-waqf and P2P-based financing. Hartono & Hartomo (2014) explained that several factors influencing the development of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are raw material costs, labor costs, promotion costs, and from the perspective of capital, where these factors are related to financing. Integrated financing and subsidized financing are important for MSME development as they can help bridge the financing gap of MSMEs (Bruhn et al., 2017), increase financial inclusion of MSMEs (Blancher et al., 2019), and stimulate economic growth and job creation (Lin et al., 2022). Furthermore, Marlina & Rahmat's (2018) research explains the role of LKS, especially in terms of capital, which is crucial for micro-entrepreneurs, where financing from LKS can be utilized to expand the market and develop the business, contributing significantly to the national economy. In addition, LKS with ZISWAF institutions can provide a way out for fulfilling consumptive basic needs of the community and can cover the basic investment needs of MSMEs.

The next criterion is MSME database, with its main indicator being to collect data on business actors, followed by creating a database platform and collaborating with LKS. Gunawan et al. (2021) explained that collecting MSME data or MSME database is very important, considering the important role of data for the development of UMKM. Furthermore, it will also make it easier to explore opportunities and challenges for small businesses. In several other studies, it is also mentioned that collecting data on business actors is important, including to empower digital strategies for small and medium enterprises (Soegoto et al., 2022), assess the readiness of UMKM in using e-money technology (Gunawan et al., 2019), and enable owners to manage their business through an accounting bookkeeping system (Sulastri et al., 2022).

The next finding is related to alternative strategies with priority indicators being strengthening human resource capacity, followed by strengthening halal literacy, financing support strategy, further followed by strengthening halal literacy, and lastly halal certification. The importance of strengthening human resources in MSME is because it can have an impact on optimizing their performance (Hernita et al., 2021), help MSME enter the global market, positively influence MSME development (Surya et al., 2021), and increase business productivity (Hernita et al., 2021). Furthermore, Rosmadi (2021) states that if the quality of human resources for UMKM is good, then the business initiated will also run well, so that the quality of the products produced will also be competitive and superior.

**CONCLUSION**

The research findings explain that there are three aspects of halal industry development strategy criteria to improve the competitiveness of MSME in East Priangan, which are education for MSME, integrated financing, and MSME database. Overall, the description of these criteria aspects obtained priority rankings, namely: 1) Education for MSME, where the main priority is the halal lifestyle education indicator, followed by stakeholder synergy and program research. 2) Integrated financing, with the strategic priority indicator being financing subsidies, followed by LKS-wakaf synergy and P2P-based financing. 3) MSME database, with the main indicator being to collect MSME data, followed by creating a database platform and LKS collaboration.

In addition to the aforementioned strategy criteria, there are at least 5 alternative strategies offered and considered to solve the problems in the halal industry as an effort to increase the competitiveness of MSMEs in East Priangan. These alternative strategies include strengthening human resource capacity, strengthening regulations, financing support, strengthening halal literacy, and halal certification. Among these alternative strategies, the indicators that are given the highest priority in sequence are strengthening human resource capacity, followed by strengthening halal literacy, financing support strategy, followed by strengthening halal literacy, and lastly halal certification.

This study has limitations, namely the strategy criteria used only include three aspects, which are education for MSME, integrated financing, and MSME databases. This explains that there are still other aspects of MSME problems that are not included in this study, such as the aspect of utilizing technology and digitization in MSME, regulatory aspects from regulators or the government, and so on. In addition, this study only focuses on the East Priangan region, where there may be other regions that have higher economic potential and other regions also need the development of halal industry in terms of their MSME competitiveness. Therefore, it is expected that further research can develop this study, for example, by adding strategy criteria or using other relevant strategy criteria to the problems faced by MSME. Additionally, future researchers can examine other regions that also have high economic potential or regions that need the development of their halal MSME and use other relevant approaches.

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