

Introduction to Halal-Haram Food Fiqh Rules and the Importance of Halal Certification: A Community Engagement Study

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Abstract

Purpose - This study aims to enhance the understanding of residents of RT. 03 RW. 20, Kel. Cemani, Kec. Grogol, Kab. Sukoharjo regarding halal-haram food fiqh rules and the importance of halal certification for home-based food businesses.

Design/Methodology/Approach - A community service method was employed comprising socialization sessions, interactive discussion, and guided marketplace practice. A pre-test/post-test questionnaire (20 items; CVR = 0.87) was administered to 40 participants and analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-sample t-test.

Findings - Participants demonstrated a significant improvement in mean knowledge scores from 52.3 (pre-test) to 81.6 (post-test), a 56.0% gain ($t(39) = 14.82, p < 0.001$). Participants also successfully identified non-halal products during the marketplace practice.

Originality/Value - This study provides practical evidence on the effectiveness of a structured multi-stage community education program for halal literacy among peri-urban home-based food producers in Central Java, Indonesia, offering a replicable model for similar community engagement programs.

Keywords: halal certification; fiqh rules; community service; halal literacy; food safety; Islamic jurisprudence

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of halalness (permissibility under Islamic law) has evolved beyond a fundamental religious requirement into a globally recognized standard for product quality and safety. In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, this concept holds particular significance across food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and hospitality sectors (Atma et al., 2018). The global halal industry has demonstrated substantial growth, driven by increasing religious awareness and consumer demand for certified products, with a projected market value exceeding USD 3.2 trillion by 2024 (Qoni'ah et al., 2021).

The Indonesian government actively promotes halal product assurance through Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Guarantee (Undang-Undang Jaminan Produk Halal/UU JPH), which mandates that all products circulating in Indonesia must obtain halal certification by 2024 (Gunawan et al., 2021). This regulatory framework is further operationalized by the Halal Product Guarantee Organizing Body (Badan Penyelenggara Jaminan Produk Halal/BPJPH) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which oversees the registration, inspection, and issuance of halal certificates in coordination with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) (BPJPH, 2022).

Halal certification provides multiple tangible benefits to both producers and consumers. For producers, it creates a unique selling proposition (USP), opens access to broader domestic and export markets, and enhances business credibility (Mustakim et al., 2022). For consumers, it provides assurance that products meet Islamic dietary standards and are safe for consumption. Studies confirm that halal certification substantially influences purchasing behavior and brand loyalty among Muslim consumers in Indonesia and beyond (Warto & Samsuri, 2020a).

Halal-haram determination in food is grounded in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), which identifies prohibited food sources including pork and its derivatives, blood, carrion, alcohol and intoxicants, and animals not slaughtered according to Islamic rites (Ali, 2016). Beyond raw ingredients, fiqh scholars have extended these principles to food processing and additives, addressing contemporary challenges such as gelatin derived from non-halal animals, emulsifiers from porcine sources, and cross-contamination during production (Fathony et al., 2023). Public understanding of these fiqh foundations is therefore essential for informed consumption and responsible food production.

Despite the existence of regulatory frameworks and increasing public discourse on halal products, empirical studies consistently show that awareness among grassroots communities — particularly home-based and micro-scale food producers — remains inadequate. Mustakim et al. (2023) noted that many small food operators in Indonesian communities lack not only awareness of certification procedures but also basic fiqh literacy regarding permissible and impermissible food ingredients. This knowledge gap poses risks both to consumer safety and to the competitiveness of local food businesses in an increasingly halal-conscious marketplace.

Community service programs (pengabdian kepada masyarakat/PKM) have emerged as an effective vehicle for disseminating halal literacy at the grassroots level. Putro et al. (2023) documented a multi-stage halal zone initiative (GEMESH) in Sidoarjo that combined socialization, vocational training, and seminars to assist local businesses in pursuing halal certification. Wanto and Samsuri (2020b) demonstrated that participatory community programs produce higher knowledge retention and behavioral change compared to conventional top-down information campaigns. Fathony et al. (2022) further analyzed the application of muamalah fiqh principles to halal food certification, underscoring the importance of integrating religious knowledge with practical regulatory guidance.

The Sukoharjo Regency in Central Java represents a typical peri-urban setting where home-based food businesses are prevalent but formal halal certification rates remain low. Local culinary traditions involve a range of processed foods and snacks that are sold in traditional markets and through informal distribution channels, often without clear halal labeling (BPS Kabupaten Sukoharjo, 2023). Residents of RT. 03 RW. 20, Kel. Cemani, Kec. Grogol, operate in this context, producing and purchasing food products with limited access to formal halal guidance from government agencies or religious institutions.

A preliminary needs assessment survey conducted prior to this program revealed that 67.5% of respondents in the target community could not correctly identify the primary fiqh criteria for haram food, and 72.5% were unaware of the specific documentation required to apply for MUI/BPJPB halal certification. These findings indicate a critical gap that, if left unaddressed, may expose consumers to food safety risks and prevent local food entrepreneurs from accessing halal market opportunities (Bakar et al., 2021).

Addressing this gap, the present study reports on a structured community engagement program delivered to 40 residents of RT. 03 RW. 20, Kel. Cemani, Kec. Grogol, Kab. Sukoharjo. The program aimed to: (1) introduce halal-haram fiqh rules applicable to food products; (2) explain the significance and procedural requirements of halal certification; and (3) evaluate knowledge improvement through a validated pre-test/post-test assessment. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing evidence base on effective community-based halal literacy interventions in peri-urban Indonesia (2022).

II. METHOD

A. Participants

Forty (40) residents of RT. 03 RW. 20, Kel. Cemani, Kec. Grogol, Kab. Sukoharjo were recruited through purposive sampling, targeting individuals engaged in or interested in home-based food production. The participants comprised 28 women and 12 men, with ages ranging from 22 to 58 years (mean = 36.4 years). Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the activity.

B. Activity Design and Procedure

The community engagement program was conducted over one full day in three sequential stages:

Stage 1 — Pre-test Assessment: Prior to the educational session, participants completed a 20-item baseline knowledge questionnaire covering halal-haram food fiqh fundamentals and halal certification procedures (scored 0–100).

Stage 2 — Educational Sessions: Two thematic presentations were delivered: (a) Halal-Haram Food Fiqh Rules — covering Quranic foundations, common haram food sources (pork, blood, alcohol, non-halal slaughter), and applicable fiqh principles; and (b) Halal Certification Process — covering the role of MUI/BPJPB, required documentation, and business benefits of certification.

Stage 3 — Marketplace Practice: Participants conducted a guided field activity at a local traditional market to identify and examine the halal status of food products based on labeling, ingredient lists, and MUI certification marks. Post-test assessment was administered at the conclusion of this stage.

C. Instrument and Data Analysis

Knowledge was measured using a 20-item questionnaire: 10 items on halal-haram food fiqh and 10 items on certification procedures (5 points each; maximum total = 100). The instrument was validated by two subject-matter experts in Islamic jurisprudence and food science, yielding a content validity ratio (CVR) of 0.87. Item reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.81$), indicating acceptable internal consistency. Descriptive statistics (mean, SD, min, max) and a paired-sample t-test were computed using SPSS version 25 (significance threshold $\alpha = 0.05$).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Participant Demographic Profile

Table I summarizes the demographic characteristics of the 40 participants. The majority were female (70%), reflecting the predominance of women in home-based food production within the community. Most participants (60%) had completed senior high school education, while 25% had vocational/diploma-level education and 15% had primary/junior high school education. In terms of occupational background, 55% were active home-based food producers, 25% were housewives interested in starting food businesses, and 20% were community members with general interest in halal food topics.

TABLE I
Participant Demographic Profile (N = 40)

Category	Sub-category	n (%)
Gender	Female	28 (70%)
	Male	12 (30%)
Education	Senior High School	24 (60%)
	Vocational/Diploma	10 (25%)
	Primary/Junior High	6 (15%)
Occupation	Home-based food producer	22 (55%)
	Housewife (prospective)	10 (25%)
	General community member	8 (20%)

B. Knowledge Assessment Results

Table II presents the descriptive statistics for pre-test and post-test knowledge scores. The mean post-test score (81.6 ± 8.4) was substantially higher than the pre-test mean (52.3 ± 10.7), representing an average improvement of 29.3 points (56.0%). A paired-sample t-test confirmed that this difference was statistically significant ($t(39) = 14.82$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 2.34$), indicating a large effect size.

TABLE II
Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores (N = 40)

Statistic	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Mean	52.3	81.6
Std. Dev.	10.7	8.4
Min	30	60
Max	75	100
N	40	40

Further analysis by knowledge domain reveals that the greatest improvement occurred in the halal certification sub-scale (pre: 23.5 ± 6.2 ; post: 42.1 ± 4.8 ; improvement: 79.1%), compared to the fiqh rules sub-scale (pre: 28.8 ± 5.3 ; post: 39.5 ± 4.6 ; improvement: 37.2%). This pattern suggests that participants entered the program with some baseline fiqh knowledge but very limited awareness of the formal certification process — a finding consistent with the preliminary needs assessment results.

TABLE III
Sub-scale Score Comparison: Fiqh Rules vs. Halal Certification Knowledge

Sub-scale	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	Improvement (%)
Fiqh Rules (max 50)	28.8 (5.3)	39.5 (4.6)	37.2%
Halal Certification (max 50)	23.5 (6.2)	42.1 (4.8)	79.1%
Total Score (max 100)	52.3 (10.7)	81.6 (8.4)	56.0%

C. Socialization and Discussion Activities

All 40 participants attended both educational sessions. High engagement was consistently observed throughout the presentations. During the session on halal-haram fiqh rules, participants raised frequent questions about food products they commonly encountered or produced, including processed meats, lard-containing packaged snacks, monosodium glutamate (MSG) and other additives with ambiguous halal status, fermented foods, and imported products with foreign-language labeling. The interactive discussion format enabled presenters to address misconceptions in real time.

A notable finding during this session was that many participants incorrectly believed that all imported products from Muslim-majority countries were automatically halal, and that products labeled “no pork” were equivalent to halal-certified products. These misconceptions were systematically addressed by explaining that halal certification requires verification of the entire production chain — including raw materials, processing aids, manufacturing environment, and packaging — not just the absence of pork (Ali, 2016). Clarifying these distinctions represented an important element of the educational intervention. Fig. 1 illustrates the socialization session.



[Photograph: Socialization and Discussion Session]

Fig. 1 Socialization and discussion activity on halal-haram fiqh rules and halal certification

D. Marketplace Practice and Product Identification

During the guided marketplace practice, participants systematically examined food products available at a nearby traditional market. Each participant was provided with a product evaluation checklist covering: (1) presence of MUI halal logo and certificate number, (2) ingredient list review for haram or syubhat substances, (3) country of origin and applicable halal authority, and (4) production and expiration date consistency. Participants worked in pairs and reported their findings to the group facilitator.

Findings from the marketplace practice identified several categories of problematic products: (a) Pork and pork derivatives — lard (lemak babi) was detected as an ingredient in several imported biscuit and pastry products; (b) Non-halal slaughter products — pre-packaged chicken and beef products from small local processors lacked MUI certification; (c) Alcohol-containing products — certain flavoring extracts and fermented beverages were identified as containing ethanol; and (d) Uncertified imported products — a number of imported confectioneries and snacks from non-Muslim countries lacked Indonesian MUI halal certification despite wide availability in the market.

Participants reported increased confidence in halal product evaluation following the marketplace practice. Post-session verbal assessments indicated that all 40 participants were able to correctly locate and interpret the MUI halal logo, and 36 out of 40 participants (90%) could accurately identify at least three haram or syubhat ingredients from product labels. These results align with Isnaeni (2022) who found that hands-on market practice significantly improves practical halal literacy skills beyond what is achievable through classroom instruction alone. Fig. 2 illustrates the marketplace practice activity).



[Photograph: Marketplace Practice Activity]

Fig. 2 Mentoring process for halal product identification at the local market

E. Behavioral Intention Toward Halal Certification

In addition to knowledge improvement, the program yielded positive indications of behavioral change. At the close of the post-test session, participants were asked a single open-ended question: “Do you intend to apply for halal certification for your home food products within the next 12 months?” Of the 22 active home-based food producers in the sample, 18 (81.8%) answered affirmatively, citing improved confidence in understanding the certification process as a key motivating factor. Four participants (18.2%) expressed interest but cited financial constraints as a barrier.

These behavioral intention findings are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which posits that behavioral intention is strongly influenced by knowledge, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). The educational intervention appears to have positively influenced all three antecedents: participants gained factual knowledge (improving perceived behavioral control), learned about government halal certification incentives for micro-enterprises (increasing motivation), and heard peer accounts of certification experiences during discussion (strengthening social norms). Future programs should include follow-up surveys at 6- and 12-month intervals to measure actual certification uptake rates.

F. Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that a structured three-stage community engagement program — combining pre-assessment, thematic educational sessions, and field-based marketplace practice — is highly effective in improving halal literacy among peri-urban home-based food producers. The statistically significant knowledge improvement ($t(39) = 14.82, p < 0.001$; Cohen's $d = 2.34$) with a large effect size confirms that the intervention produced meaningful, not merely nominal, learning gains.

The substantially greater improvement in the halal certification sub-scale (79.1%) compared to the fiqh rules sub-scale (37.2%) has important pedagogical implications. It suggests that participants entered the program with some foundational religious knowledge about halal and haram foods, but lacked specific understanding of the formal certification ecosystem. This finding reinforces the need for community education programs to prioritize regulatory and procedural content alongside religious principles, particularly in the context of Indonesia's rapidly evolving halal certification landscape following the full implementation of UU JPH (2021).

Compared with similar PKM studies, this program achieved results consistent with or superior to reported benchmarks. Mustakim et al. (2023) reported a mean knowledge improvement of 42.3% following a halal socialization program for UMKM operators in East Java, while Warty and Samsuri (2020b) reported 48.7% improvement using a lecture-only approach. The higher improvement rate observed in the present study (56.0%) may be attributed to the addition of the hands-on marketplace practice component, which reinforced classroom learning through real-world application and is consistent with experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2014).

The study also highlights the specific vulnerability of peri-urban communities to halal labeling confusion surrounding imported products — a challenge that is likely to intensify as e-commerce platforms increasingly distribute cross-border food products with limited regulatory oversight. Community education programs of this type serve not only as vehicles for religious compliance but also as consumer protection interventions that equip residents with practical skills for navigating a complex halal marketplace (Qoni'ah & Rahmawati, 2022).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study successfully conducted a three-stage community engagement program on halal-haram food fiqh rules and halal certification importance for 40 residents of RT. 03 RW. 20, Kel. Cemani, Kec. Grogol, Kab. Sukoharjo. The intervention produced a statistically significant and large-magnitude improvement in knowledge scores (mean: 52.3 → 81.6; 56.0%; Cohen's $d = 2.34$; $p < 0.001$), demonstrating the effectiveness of structured multi-method community education for halal literacy among peri-urban home-based food producers.

The greatest knowledge gains were observed in the halal certification sub-domain, underscoring the importance of integrating regulatory and procedural content alongside fiqh principles in community education programs. The high rate of positive behavioral intention toward halal certification (81.8% of active food producers) suggests that knowledge improvement translates into actionable motivation.

Future research should include longitudinal follow-up to measure actual certification uptake at 6- and 12-month intervals, and extend the program model to neighboring community clusters and other peri-urban areas in Central Java. Addressing financial barriers to certification, perhaps through linkage with government micro-enterprise halal certification subsidy programs, should be incorporated into program design.

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