

Enhancing Islamic Law Literacy and Digital Halal Registration Compliance among MSMEs through a Collaborative Community Engagement Program

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Abstrak. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini bertujuan meningkatkan literasi hukum Islam dan mendampingi pendaftaran sertifikasi halal digital bagi pelaku usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah (UMKM) di Sulawesi Selatan. Program dilaksanakan dengan melibatkan 40 pelaku usaha makanan dan minuman dari Makassar, Gowa, dan Maros melalui kolaborasi internasional antara Fakultas Agama Islam Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Yala Rajabhat University Thailand, dan Pusat Kajian dan Advokasi Halal Sulawesi Selatan. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan pembelajaran aksi partisipatif (*Participatory Action Learning*) yang dikombinasikan dengan pendampingan klinis secara langsung melalui tahapan pelatihan literasi, penyusunan manual Sistem Jaminan Produk Halal (SJPH), dan klinik pendaftaran portal digital SIHALAL BPJPH. Evaluasi dilakukan menggunakan desain tes awal dan tes akhir satu kelompok (*one-group pretest-posttest design*). Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan rata-rata tingkat pemahaman literasi hukum dan SJPH dari 32,00% menjadi 85,75% dengan skor *normalized gain* (*N-Gain*) sebesar 0,79 (kategori tinggi). Selain itu, sebanyak 38 dari 40 pelaku usaha (95,0%) berhasil menyelesaikan pengajuan pendaftaran digital dan memperoleh Surat Tanda Terima Dokumen (STTD) resmi secara *on-site*. Simpulan kegiatan menegaskan bahwa penggabungan edukasi hukum Islam dan pendampingan teknis digital secara klinis efektif mengatasi keterbatasan literasi serta hambatan teknologi pelaku usaha kecil.

Abstract. This community service program aimed to enhance Islamic legal literacy and assist digital halal certification registration for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in South Sulawesi. The activity was conducted involving 40 food and beverage business operators from Makassar, Gowa, and Maros through an international collaboration between the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Yala Rajabhat University Thailand, and the Center for Halal Studies and Research South Sulawesi. The method utilized a participatory action learning approach combined

with direct clinical mentoring, consisting of legal literacy workshops, manual drafting for halal product assurance systems (SJPH), and digital portal registration clinics on the BPJPH SIHALAL system. Program evaluation employed a one-group pretest-posttest design. The results demonstrated a significant increase in average understanding from 32.00% to 85.75%, achieving a normalized gain (*N-Gain*) score of 0.79 (high gain category). Furthermore, 38 out of 40 business operators (95.0%) successfully finalized their digital registration and secured official document receipt letters (STTD) on-site. The conclusion confirms that integrating Islamic legal education with clinical digital mentoring effectively overcomes literacy limitations and technological barriers faced by small enterprise operators.



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INTRODUCTION

The global expansion of the halal industry has broadened the scope of halal products beyond a strictly religious obligation for Muslim consumers (Naseri & Abdullah, 2024)(Basir, Raffi, & Mahmud, 2025). In contemporary global trade, halal operates as a complex, multidimensional construct: it remains a core religious requirement while simultaneously functioning as a regulatory mandate, a quality assurance mechanism for health and safety (*halalan thoyyiban*), and a strategic market signal for product integrity across diverse consumer segments(Mohd Salleh, Azmi, & Mohd Noor, 2026) (Osman, 2023).

In Indonesia, this transformation is legally reinforced through the mandatory halal certification mandate regulated under Act No. 33 of 2014 concerning Halal Product Assurance(Aulia & Koto, 2026) and its latest implementing framework, Government Regulation (PP) No. 42 of 2024 (Najmudin, Nazwa, & Prawiro, 2026). Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) serve as the fundamental pillar of Indonesia's national economy, particularly in South Sulawesi, accounting for a major share of regional employment and consumer goods production (Wahyudi, Yulivan, & Rahman, 2024).

However, as the national regulatory deadline for mandatory halal certification approaches, local MSMEs face significant structural and technical hurdles in meeting these legal standards, placing their market

viability and cross-border competitiveness within the ASEAN regional market at risk (Santoso & Rachman, 2023).

In the context of South Sulawesi, specifically across the primary commercial hubs of Makassar, Gowa, and Maros, the primary obstacle facing food and beverage MSMEs stems from a dual deficit: limited literacy regarding Islamic commercial law (*fiqh muamalah* and *halal-haram* jurisprudence) and severe digital technological constraints.

While most small business operators intuitively desire to sell halal products, their understanding of critical control points (*titik kritis halal*), raw material traceability, and cross-contamination prevention remains superficial(Budiyoko; Rusdah, 2025).

Furthermore, the transition of halal certification authority to the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs has introduced a fully digital submission ecosystem via the SIHALAL application system (Khayati, I., kalimah, S., & Agustin, 2024). This transition has created a noticeable digital divide. MSME actors frequently struggle with the technical complexities of drafting the mandatory Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) manual, compiling ingredient matrices, uploading verifiable purchasing receipts, and navigating the digital portal independently(Setyani & Malta Anantyasari, 2026).

Existing scholarship on halal ecosystem development and MSME

empowerment generally converges around two primary intervention models (Balikel, 2026). The first model emphasizes theoretical legal literacy and awareness workshops hosted by higher education institutions to build local capacity and regulatory understanding (Fadhilah, 2022).

The second model focuses on technological adaptation, highlighting the role of supply chain digitization and portal onboarding in accelerating market inclusion (Almunawar, Ubaedillah, Amalia, & Thoha, 2025). Despite these foundational insights, current literature exhibits two critical structural limitations. First, existing interventions suffer from functional fragmentation, operating in silos where theoretical legal education is decoupled from live, practical execution. Consequently, business operators gain conceptual awareness but remain unable to navigate complex digital submission procedures independently. Second, prior models are constrained by domestic isolation, focusing exclusively on local regulatory compliance within single jurisdictions while ignoring the international standardization, comparative regulatory insights, and cross-border market readiness required for regional enterprise scaling.

To bridge these gaps, a multi-institutional, cross-border collaborative framework offers significant conceptual and practical added value (Sanz, Ebert, Namias, & Jeraj, 2025). Integrating an international academic partner into local community service transforms halal onboarding from a passive, single-jurisdiction compliance exercise into a strategic capability-building ecosystem (Rachman & Sangare, 2023). Specifically, cross-border collaboration with an ASEAN partner bridges domestic regulatory frameworks with regional market expectations. It provides local entrepreneurs with comparative regulatory literacy and export market intelligence, thereby converting halal certification from a burdensome administrative obligation into a strategic asset for cross-border competitiveness within the ASEAN market (Setiawan et al., 2025).

To operationalize this integrative approach, an international collaborative community service initiative was executed by the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FAI) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar in

partnership with Yala Rajabhat University (YRU) Thailand, the Center for Halal Studies and Research (Pusjilal) South Sulawesi, and the Institute for Consumer and Environmental Protection (LPEU) MUI South Sulawesi.

Hosted in Makassar, this program provided an integrated solution combining legal-literacy workshops, intensive clinical coaching, and cross-border knowledge transfer. Specifically, YRU delegated a four-member expert team that actively contributed by delivering comparative perspectives on Thai halal regulatory frameworks, sharing strategic market insights regarding consumer demand for halal products in the ASEAN region (expressly Thailand), and serving as advisory consultants to mentor local MSMEs preparing for cross-border expansion into ASEAN markets.

This study aims to analyze and document the implementation and impact of this integrated cross-border intervention on 40 selected MSME partners across Makassar, Gowa, and Maros. The primary contributions of this work are fourfold:

1. **Conceptual Contribution:** Reconceptualizes MSME halal certification from a localized administrative burden into an integrated, cross-border legal-economic empowerment paradigm.
2. **Methodological Contribution:** Introduces a synchronized clinical Participatory Action Learning (PAL) framework that bridges theoretical jurisprudence (*fiqh*), manual SJPH drafting, and live digital submission on the SIHALAL portal in a unified workflow.
3. **Practical Contribution:** Demonstrates an actionable, scalable execution model resulting in verifiable, on-site acquisition of official registration receipt documents (STTD) for micro-entrepreneurs.
4. **Contextual Contribution:** Provides empirical evidence on how regional universities in developing economies can leverage international academic alliances to elevate grassroots enterprise capabilities for the broader ASEAN market.

METHODS

This study adopts an embedded mixed-methods program evaluation design, contextualized within a Participatory Action Learning (PAL) framework and complemented by direct clinical mentoring (Wood, 2019)(Odelia, 2024). PAL served as the overarching participatory intervention strategy, while quantitative and technical compliance metrics were embedded to evaluate program efficacy(Ramanadhan et al., 2024).

The initiative was executed on August 5, 2026, at the Swiss-Belinn Hotel, Makassar, involving 40 food and beverage MSMEs across Makassar, Gowa, and Maros, under an international collaboration between Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Yala Rajabhat University Thailand, Pusjilal South Sulawesi, and LPEU MUI South Sulawesi.

To achieve a comprehensive and sustainable transformation, this study adopted a clinical Participatory Action Learning (PAL) approach. The integrated methodological workflow was structured across five sequential stages:

Phase 1: Preparation and Alignment

Initial activities involved cross-border and multi-institutional partner coordination among FAI Unismuh Makassar, Yala Rajabhat University (YRU) Thailand, Pusjilal Sulsel, and LPEU MUI Sulsel. This phase focused on aligning intervention objectives, screening 40 food and beverage MSME participants from Makassar, Gowa, and Maros based on operational readiness, and validating diagnostic assessment instruments.

Phase 2: Baseline Assessment

Prior to the intervention, a baseline assessment was conducted through a structured pretest. This instrument measured participants' foundational understanding of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh al-halal*), national regulatory frameworks under BPJPH, Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) requirements, and general awareness of ASEAN halal market standards.

Phase 3: Participatory Action Learning (PAL) Intervention

This core educational phase combined theoretical legal instruction with practical document preparation. The educational

workshop incorporated a comparative legal session facilitated by a four-member expert team from Yala Rajabhat University Thailand, focusing on Thai halal standards, market entry requirements in ASEAN, and consultative guidance for export-ready MSMEs. Concurrently, local legal and halal experts led interactive modules on national halal mandates and facilitated the collaborative drafting of the standardized SJPH manual tailored to micro-scale operations.

Phase 4: Clinical Mentoring and Portal Onboarding

Transitioning from theory to practice, this phase executed intensive, one-on-one coaching clinics. Mentors provided hands-on assistance in tracing raw material halal credentials, compiling ingredient matrices, and navigating the state-level SIHALAL digital portal for live online submission. The YRU team also provided advisory consultation during this session for enterprises demonstrating immediate export potential.

Phase 5: Evaluation and Compliance Verification

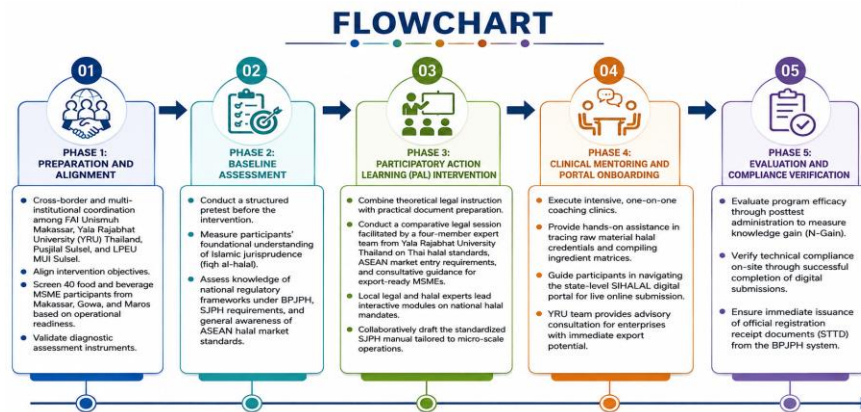
The final phase evaluated program efficacy through a posttest administration to measure knowledge gain (*N-Gain*). Technical compliance outcomes were verified on-site through the successful completion of digital submissions and the immediate issuance of official registration receipt documents (STTD) from the BPJPH system.

Data Analysis and Evaluation Metrics

Program impact on legal literacy was quantitatively evaluated through a pretest-posttest design using the normalized gain score (*N-Gain*) (Alessandri, Zuffianò, & Perinelli, 2017), calculated as:

$$N-Gain = \frac{\text{Posttest Score} - \text{Pretest Score}}{\text{Maximum Score} - \text{Pretest Score}}$$

The resulting *N-Gain* scores were categorized as high ($g \geq 0.70$), medium ($0.30 \leq g < 0.70$), or low ($g < 0.30$). Concurrently, technical empowerment was benchmarked by the proportion of MSMEs successfully completing the digital onboarding process and obtaining the official Registration Submission Letter (STTD) from the BPJPH SIHALAL portal on-site during the evaluation phase.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the international collaborative community service program yielded significant qualitative and quantitative outcomes in strengthening the halal ecosystem for MSMEs (Putri, Windiana, & Mardhiyah, 2021). By integrating theoretical legal education on Islamic commercial jurisprudence (*fiqh muamalah*) with practical clinical coaching for state-mandated digital certification, the intervention generated comprehensive empirical data across various stages of execution (Muchtar, 2025). The following subsections systematically present the baseline problem identification, quantitative literacy gains, administrative achievement rates, field implementation dynamics, and strategic impacts derived from this program.

Problem Identification and Baseline Conditions

Baseline assessments conducted prior to the intervention revealed significant operational and legal vulnerabilities among the participating MSMEs. The primary bottleneck identified was a severe lack of structured literacy regarding Islamic commercial jurisprudence (*fiqh muamalah*) and practical halal compliance (Ririn, 2025). Although all business operators produce food and beverage items targeted at predominantly Muslim consumers, over 80% operated without formal knowledge of halal critical control points (*titik kritis halal*), such as animal-derived emulsifiers, flavor enhancers, and cross-contamination risks during storage and transport.

Furthermore, the baseline evaluation

identified a critical digital divide regarding state-mandated certification procedures. None of the participating MSMEs possessed a completed Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) manual, and 87.5% of participants were completely unfamiliar with the technical navigation of the BPJPH SIHALAL digital portal (ptsp.halal.go.id). Business owners cited complex digital registration interfaces, unstructured raw material purchasing records, and difficulty verifying supplier halal credentials as primary reasons for deferring certification.



Figure 1. Signing of Memorandum of Understanding with implementing partners of community service activities

Enhancement of Legal Literacy and SJPH Competency

To address these baseline deficits, the international collaborative team executed an intensive training program combining theoretical legal seminars with hands-on SJPH manual drafting workshops. The quantitative impact of this intervention was evaluated through a structured pre-test and post-test instrument covering four core competency indicators.

Table 1: Pre-test, Post test, Score Difference & N-Gain Scores Across Competency Indicators (N=40)

No	Competency Indicator	Pre-Test (%)	Post Test (%)	Score Difference	N-Gain Score	Category
1	Halal Critical Control Points	35.00	88.50	+53.50	0.82	High
2	ASEAN Halal Regulations & Market Standards	28.50	81.00	+52.50	0.73	High
3	SJPH Manual Compilation & Matrix Drafting	30.00	86.50	+56.50	0.81	High
4	SIHALAL Digital Portal Navigation	34.50	87.00	+52.50	0.80	High
	Overall Average	32.00	85.75	+53.75	0.79	High

As shown in Table 1, the baseline literacy level of participants was remarkably low, with an overall pre-test average of 32.00%. Following the intervention, the overall mean score increased significantly to 85.75%, representing an absolute knowledge gain of 53.75%. The average normalized gain (*N-Gain*) across all indicators reached 0.79, exceeding the standard threshold of 0.70 for high instructional effectiveness.

The highest gain was observed in the *SJPH Manual Compilation* indicator (*N-Gain*=0.81), where business operators learned to construct formal ingredient matrices and establish internal halal management structures. This significant improvement demonstrates that combining legal jurisprudence perspectives from FAI Unismuh Makassar with international market insights from Yala Rajabhat University Thailand effectively demystified complex regulatory requirements for micro-entrepreneurs.

Digital Mentoring and SIHALAL Certification Achievements

The second phase of the intervention focused on translating theoretical legal knowledge into verifiable administrative compliance via an intensive, direct digital coaching clinic. Unlike passive instructional seminars, this clinical model operated as an interactive digital laboratory where business operators were guided step-by-step through the end-to-end electronic registration workflow on the official BPJPH SIHALAL portal (ptsp.halal.go.id). Mentors assisted participants in systematically navigating complex technical prerequisites, including account creation, real-time Business Identification Number (NIB) verification via the Online Single Submission (OSS) system, structured ingredient matrix input, and document uploading for compiled Halal Product Assurance System (SJPH) manuals and product flowcharts.

Table 2. Target realization and administrative output (N=40)

No	Output Category	Baseline Output	Post Mentoring Output	Achievement Rate
1	Active Business Identification Number (NIB)	22 MSMEs	40 MSMEs	100.0 %
2	Completed SJPH Manual & Ingredient Matrix	0 MSMEs	40 MSMEs	100.0 %
3	Completed SIHALAL Account Registration	5 MSMEs	40 MSMEs	100.0 %
4	Issuance of Registration Submission Letter (STTD)	0 MSMEs	38 MSMEs	95.0 %

The empirical results presented in Table 2 highlight the high operational efficiency and practical efficacy of the clinical

mentoring model. Prior to the program, baseline assessments revealed a complete absence of formal digital compliance, with

none (0.0%) of the participating enterprises possessing an official Registration Submission Letter (STTD). Through a dual-layered mentoring framework, pairing certified Halal Product Process Companions (P3H) with trained university student mentors, technical interface hurdles and compliance bottlenecks were systematically resolved on-site. Student companions provided immediate assistance with digital navigation, document scanning, and profile setup, while P3H companions conducted real-time audits of raw material purchasing records and ingredient halal status.

As a result of this direct technical coaching, 38 out of the 40 participating MSMEs (95.0%) successfully finalized their digital application files and secured their official STTD directly during the clinic session. This 95.0% completion rate represents an achievement rate of 126.6% relative to the initial target quota set for on-site submissions. The acquisition of the STTD marks a critical administrative milestone, transitioning these micro-enterprises from informal commercial practices to state-recognized halal compliance, thereby unlocking eligibility for official BPJPH verification and enhancing consumer trust (Mardianto, Parakkasi, & Muthiadin, 2025).



Figure 2. Implementation of halal certification assistance for MSME entrepreneurs

Field Challenges and Innovative Solutions

During the clinical coaching session and post-event field follow-ups, two primary technical challenges emerged:

1. Unstandardized Raw Material Documentation:

A majority of micro-enterprises purchased daily ingredients from local

traditional markets without formal receipt records or manufacturer batch numbers, creating difficulties in verifying supplier halal certificates.

2. Technical User Errors on Digital Platforms:

Older MSME owners experienced technical difficulties operating mobile interfaces, uploading multi-page PDF documents, and matching NIB data codes with SIHALAL categories.

To resolve these challenges, the team implemented a dual-action strategy. First, Pusjilal Sulsel introduced a simplified *Purchasing Log & Raw Material SOP Form*, allowing micro-entrepreneurs to systematically log local supplier data and verify ingredient status against BPJPH's master halal database. Second, a one-on-one student companion model was assigned, where university students participating in the MBKM program provided hands-on digital assistance, thereby resolving technical interface bottlenecks without disrupting the business owners' operations.

Strategic Impact and Sustainability

The collaborative initiative yielded multidimensional benefits extending beyond individual certification. For the academic institution, the program contributed directly to Higher Education Key Performance Indicators (IKU 2 and IKU 3) by engaging faculty in international community development (Haliq & Junaeny, 2024). Furthermore, the partnership with Yala Rajabhat University Thailand established a cross-border knowledge platform that positions South Sulawesi MSMEs for regional trade within the ASEAN halal corridor. By equipping local producers with both formal legal grounding and digital compliance tools, this program establishes a scalable, sustainable model for institutional collaboration in strengthening the economic resilience of the Muslim community.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The international collaborative community service program successfully enhanced the legal literacy and digital halal certification compliance of 40 MSMEs in South Sulawesi. The intervention yielded a

significant quantitative increase in participants' knowledge across four competency indicators, rising from an overall pre-test mean of 32.00% to 85.75%, with a high normalized gain score (N-Gain=0.79). Furthermore, the clinical mentoring model effectively translated theoretical understanding into administrative compliance, enabling 38 MSMEs (95.0% of participants) to successfully submit their application and obtain the official Registration Submission Letter (STTD) on the BPJPH SIHALAL portal on-site. This demonstrates that integrating international academic perspectives with local technical mentoring effectively overcomes both the legal literacy gap and digital access barriers faced by micro-entrepreneurs.

To ensure the long-term sustainability and scalability of these achievements, several strategic measures are recommended. First, local higher education institutions should establish permanent regional halal assistance clinics in collaboration with state agencies to provide continuous guidance for micro-entrepreneurs. Second, future community service initiatives should focus on training MSME operators in digital bookkeeping and standardized inventory management to effectively resolve ingredient traceability bottlenecks in traditional supply chains. Finally, cross-border university partnerships, such as the collaboration between Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar and Yala Rajabhat University Thailand, should be expanded toward cross-border product exchange and mutual halal market recognition within the broader ASEAN region.

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