


Chapter 6

Implementation of Halal Certification in Brunei Darussalam's Food and Beverages Enterprises

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ABSTRACT

Brunei Darussalam has been a Malay Muslim Monarchy for six centuries and the country follows the Sunni Shafite sect of Islam as its official religion. In 2005 the government introduced the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order, which was amended and revised in 2017 making it compulsory for all food and beverages industry serving Muslim population to apply for the halal certificate. There is limited literature on how enterprises adopt and adapt to these new laws, seven years after it was made mandatory. This research aims to bridge this gap by exploring the state of halal certification, gauging businesses understanding and experiences with the certification process. The research uses qualitative, primary data collection, through semi-interviews with owners and managers of micro and small food enterprises.

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-3917-7.ch006

This research hopes to provide valuable data that can improve the development of a more streamlined and accessible halal certification process and ensure the industry continues to meet the highest standards of halal compliance in Brunei Darussalam

1. INTRODUCTION

The global halal industry has experienced substantial growth in recent years, driven by the increasing demand for halal-certified food and beverages among Muslim and non-Muslim consumers alike. Valued at over USD 2 trillion, the halal economy extends beyond religious observance to include concerns over food safety, hygiene, ethical sourcing, and quality assurance (Calder, 2020; Lever & Miele, 2012; Mukherjee, 2014). Halal has become paramount for ensuring consumer trust in majority-Muslim countries and in regions with growing Muslim populations (Aziz & Chok, 2013; Bonne & Verbeke, 2008). Consequently, governments, businesses, and certification bodies worldwide have intensified efforts to develop robust halal certification systems to meet these expectations and tap into the expanding halal market (Izberk-Bilgin & Nakata, 2016; Latif et al., 2014).

At the heart of this global expansion lies the halal certification, which stems from Islamic dietary laws and has evolved into a formalized system governed by religious authorities and national regulations. While international efforts have sought to harmonize halal standards, implementation at the national level remains varied, often shaped by local governance, market maturity, and business structures (Latif et al., 2014; Othman et al., 2016). Studies from Malaysia, Indonesia, and other Muslim-majority countries have highlighted recurring barriers such as administrative complexity, cost burdens, limited awareness, and inadequate support for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) (Haleem et al., 2019; Islam et al., 2023). Despite shared Islamic values, each country presents a distinct regulatory and socio-economic landscape. Against this backdrop, Brunei Darussalam, henceforth, Brunei, offers a unique case. The Sultanate is a wealthy Islamic state with a strong policy commitment to halal development yet facing a declining rate of halal certification uptake among its food and beverage enterprises.

Brunei is a constitutional Muslim Sultanate in Southeast Asia with a population of 450,000. Despite its small population, Brunei's gross domestic product, GDP, per capita is among the highest in the region (Department of Economic Planning and Statistics, 2024a), due to the country's primary source of revenue – the production and export of oil and natural gas (Hamdan & Hoon, 2019; Musa, 2019; Tahir et al., 2023). However, its heavy dependence on the non-renewable petroleum sector leaves the country vulnerable to unsustainable income and volatile global crude oil prices (Slesman & Hoon, 2023; Tahir et al., 2023). Therefore, the Brunei govern-

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