

HALAL CUISINE PREFERENCES IN URBAN AREAS WITH MUSLIM MINORITY: A CASE RESEARCH OF MANADO

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Abstract

The phenomenon of halal cuisine is gaining prominence not only within Muslim communities but also in non-Muslim region. Therefore, this research aimed to explain the phenomenon of halal cuisine in Muslim minority region of Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia. Using a qualitative research design with a case research method, interviews were conducted with five Muslim merchants to gather pertinent information. The results showed the presence of Muslim merchants selling halal cuisine in Manado, despite it being Muslim minority area. Merchants expressed confidence in the potential development of halal cuisine in the region. Additionally, the use of halal signs (logo) by Muslim merchants served to assure customers of halal status of their products. It was also observed that both Muslim and non-Muslim customers patronized the merchants, showing a broad appeal for halal cuisine. In conclusion, despite Manado being recognized as a Muslim minority region, Muslim merchants played a significant role in promoting their halal cuisine within the region.

Keywords: Halal Cuisine; Muslim Merchants; Muslim Minority Region.

A. Introduction

Significant developments are occurring in the context of halal lifestyle, leading to increased discussions and practices within the global halal market (Murti, 2017). Halal cuisine become one of the fastest-growing segments of halal market, particularly in Indonesia (Pamuji, 2022). This trend is not only limited to areas with large Muslim populations but also to regions with a non-Muslim majority, such as Manado. Data have shown a substantial increase in the development of halal cuisine in Indonesia.

According to the Indonesia Halal Market Report 2021/2022 by Dinar Standard, halal industry presents the country with an opportunity to boost its gross domestic product (GDP) by US\$5.1 billion or IDR 72.9 trillion. This economic potential arises from increased exports, import substitution, and foreign direct investment (PMA) (*Potensi Industri Halal Tembus Rp. 72,9 Triliun*, 2022). Furthermore, Islamic scholars express concerns regarding halal cuisine, showing that Muslims are becoming increasingly sensitive to consuming products and services adhering to Islamic teachings (Battour et al., 2011; Jafari & Scott, 2014).

Muslim-minority urban areas are commonly perceived as region lacking halal cuisine market to cater to the needs of the community, including both local Muslims and Muslim immigrants. However, recent evidence shows that the development of halal cuisine market is not limited to Muslim-majority populations (Addina et al., 2020; Janah & Adinugraha, 2022; Mardison et al., 2021; Mustika & Achmadi, 2019; Rosa et al., 2022). Muslim-minority regions have also begun to venture into halal cuisine business (Haque & Hindrati, 2020; Perguna et al., 2021; Tambunan et al., 2019). Previous reviews extensively discussed halal cuisine in Muslim-minority regions in Indonesia and other countries (Adel et al., 2021; Bhoola, 2020; Elfrida et al., 2020; Jia & Chaozhi, 2021; Sapian et al., 2021; Wan-Hassan & Awang, 2009).

Research on halal cuisine has examined three main aspects, firstly, it explores halal cuisine in the context of tourism, both domestically and internationally (Bhoola, 2020; Jia & Chaozhi, 2020; Yagmur & Aksu, 2020). Secondly, the investigation focuses on halal certificates (Cahyowati et al., 2020; Mohd Amin et al., 2020), and lastly, it examines halal cuisine in various Indonesian regions and abroad (Haque et al., 2022; Janah & Adinugraha, 2022; Mardison et al., 2021; Sapian et al., 2021). Halal cuisine in Manado has been largely overlooked despite being one of the Indonesian cities with Muslim-minority populations. Based on data from 2019 for Regencies-Cities in North Sulawesi Province, the region has a significant portion of religious adherents.

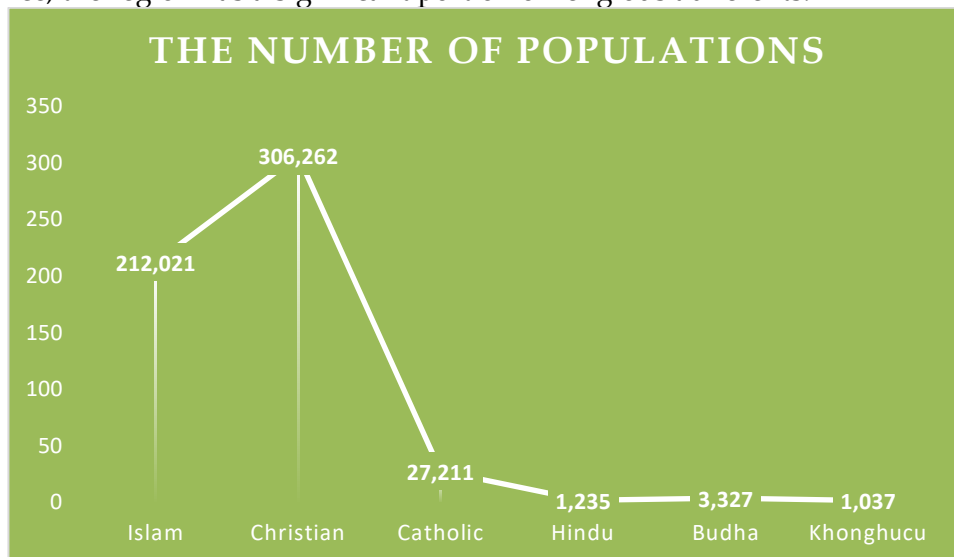


Figure 1: The Composition of Religious Population in Manado. Source: Ministry of Religion Website, 2020.

Another related research has disclosed important results showing that non-Muslim in Tana Toraja, Indonesia, particularly those at the Majelis in Nurul Falaq Mosque, face difficulty accessing halal food. This challenge arises from the rejection of halal tourism, which comprises halal food and designated places promoted by the North Toraja Government, due to insufficient community outreach, leading to a polemic (Putradan & NasriKatman, 2021). Indeed, the results prompt consideration for further

investigations regarding such issues. The purpose of this research is to contribute significantly to the science regarding the issue of halal cuisine. It presents evidence about halal cuisine in Manado, a Muslim-minority region. The topic is discussed because halal cuisine has become a significant business field worldwide, particularly in Indonesia (Kamalina, 2022; Kemenag, 2022; Mastuki, 2019).

The analysis examines the sophisticated issue of halal lifestyle, specifically in halal cuisine worldwide (Mandhai & Umutlu, 2017). The phenomenon arises from the general desire for Sharia observance among a growing Muslim population (Morlin-Yron, 2016). Therefore, this research is essential for analysts and academicians to discuss and explore further.

B. Methods

This research adopted a qualitative method with a case research method, chosen because Manado was one of the Muslim-minority regions in Indonesia and no previous reviews of such nature existed. The data were obtained from observations and in-depth interviews, and analysts directly engaged in the investigation, focusing on urban Muslim merchants in the region to describe halal culinary landscape. Interview questions were formulated based on indicators from the theoretical framework, serving as instruments during interactions with business actors. The collected data were then presented descriptively to describe the phenomenon of urban Muslim merchants in Manado, a city with Muslim-minority populations. In addition to observations and interviews, data sources included relevant books, journals, and the latest national and international news addressing the issues under investigation.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Results

The Halal Logo

The field data obtained regarding urban Muslim merchants in Manado showed interesting results. Despite the city having non-Muslim majority populations, halal cuisine was still traded there. It was found that merchants primarily used a non-MUI (Majlis Ulama Indonesia) halal logo. The following sections presented data from interviews and examples of the halal logo adopted by urban Muslim merchants.



Figure 2. Halal Logo Used by Urban Muslim Merchants in Manado. Source: Google, 2022.

Figure 2 provided the halal logo commonly used by merchants in Indonesia to signify that their products were halal and suitable for consumption by the Muslim community. Meanwhile, the logo was not officially issued by Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI). Middle and lower-class merchants, lacking significant budgets, preferred the halal logo because it was cost-effective and easy to obtain, simply by printing and affixing to stalls or carts.

Based on the analysis results, the non-MUI halal logo was predominantly adopted by Muslim merchants in Manado, particularly those from middle to lower-class backgrounds who sold their products using carts. In contrast, Figure 3 presented the halal logo officially issued by MUI. Obtaining the logo required a fee and covered several

stages, including attending halal certification training and completing documentation for certification submission. Typically, the official MUI halal logo was used by established restaurants and companies with well-known names or brands.



Figure 3. Halal Logo MUI not being used by Urban Muslim Merchants in Manado. Source: Google, 2022.

From the figures above, it was evident that there was a distinction between the halal logo used by Urban Muslim Merchants in Manado and the one issued by MUI. The arrangement and use of the MUI halal logo required specific requirements, while the standard logo did not cover such stipulations, making it easier for Urban Muslim Merchants to use. Furthermore, the interviews with five Urban Muslim Merchants in Manado were explained below.

The Results of the Interview

I sold frozen food and included the standard halal logo, to assure Muslim consumers of halal status of the food I offered. In reality, both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers purchased my products. Selling halal cuisine helped me meet my daily needs, and based on my experience, the potential for halal culinary in the city of Manado had developed well, as both Muslim consumers and non-Muslim consumers patronized my business (I. Dewi, Interview, 3 October 2022).

I specialized in selling traditional food items such as Cakalang Noodles, Nasi Campur, Nasi Kuning, and Tinutuan, and I also included the standard halal logo. The logo reassured the Muslim community about halal status of my products, although both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers purchased from me. The income from my trade supported my daily needs, and I believed that the potential for halal cuisine in Manado was promising for further development (R. Ridwan, Interview, 3 October 2022).

I sold Nasi Goreng and Lalapan Chicken, both with a halal logo. The inclusion of the logo was crucial, particularly since we operated in a non-Muslim-majority area. As Muslims, it was essential to label every food product with a halal logo to facilitate recognition for Muslim consumers. Through my merchandise, I could sustain myself and meet my daily needs. Additionally, it served as a way to promote halal food to non-Muslim consumers (E. Octavia, Interview, 3 October 2022). In my view, including the halal logo is crucial because Muslims are a minority in Manado. Therefore, the presence of a halal logo facilitates Muslim consumers in identifying halal products, thus making it more convenient for them to purchase.

I specialized in selling Padang food, featuring the standard halal logo. In my view, including the logo was crucial because Muslims were a minority in Manado. Having a halal logo enabled Muslim consumers to identify halal products, thereby enhancing their purchasing convenience. Interestingly, both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers purchased my food, showing the growing popularity of halal cuisine in the region (J. Chaniago, Interview, 3 October 2022).

The products I sold consisted of frozen food bearing halal logo and not the MUI one. The inclusion of the logo was essential to instill confidence in Muslim consumers

regarding the halal status of the food I offered. Interestingly, my customers comprised both Muslims and non-Muslims. Selling halal cuisine in Manado served as a way to sustain my daily needs, showing that halal culinary options could cater to diverse consumer preferences. I believed there was significant potential for the growth of halal culinary offerings in the region, considering the accessibility of halal products to residents (I. Dewi, Interview, 3 October 2022).

I offered a variety of dishes including Nasi Campur, Ayam Geprek, Mie Ceplok, Gorengan, and Coffee etcetera, all accompanied by the halal logo presented at my stall. I viewed the logo to be a symbolic representation of our identity as Muslim merchants. Both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers patronized my business, enabling me to meet my daily needs with the proceeds from sales. I was optimistic about the potential for the development of halal cuisine in Manado, particularly contingent upon the strategic placement of selling locations (F. Hasan, Interview, 3 October 2022).

2. Discussion

Based on the interview results, two important sub-topics, including the use of the halal logo and the potential for halal cuisine in Manado, were developed.

The Use of Halal Logo by Urban Muslim Merchants in Manado

The foundational principles of halal, such as those prohibiting the consumption of pork, blood, carrion (animals that die in a manner other than ceremonial slaughter), and alcohol, were derived from the Quran and al-hadith. Subsequently, juristic and legal authorities in the Middle Ages provided more nuanced interpretations of these canonical texts (Armanios & Ergene, 2018).

The analysis results showed that Muslim merchants predominantly use the standard halal logo on their trading carts. This practice aimed to facilitate the identification of halal products by Muslim consumers. Additionally, one Muslim merchant mentioned that the halal logo symbolized their identity as Muslim merchants. A similar standard halal logo was prevalent in various locations across Indonesia, not limited to Manado. The use of such a standard logo was also perceived as more convenient by merchants compared to acquiring the MUI halal logo. However, it was acknowledged that products bearing the MUI halal logo provided greater certainty regarding their halal status compared to those with the standard logo.

Based on the field observations, it was apparent that Muslim merchants perceived the halal logo as facilitating Muslim consumers ability to identify halal products. Despite the standard logo lacking absolute certainty of the products halal status, urban Muslim merchants in Manado were still inclined to use it.

Both the official and the standard halal logos used by Muslim merchants, particularly in Manado, served to assist Muslim consumers in promptly identifying halal products or services. The halal logo implicitly signified the quality and cleanliness of the products, influencing not only Muslim consumers but also non-Muslim consumers.

The Potency of Halal Cuisine in Manado

The fundamental guidelines on halal dietary laws were presented to Muhammad (PBUH) in the Qur'an, the Divine book, by God (the creator). The Sunnah, as mentioned in the Hadith, elaborated on and enforced the food regulations, which comprised the compilation of the traditions of the prophet. According to general Quranic law, all foods were considered halal, except those expressly listed as haram. Islamic scripture affirmed the permissibility of all foods by the Sacred Qur'an (Riaz & Chaudury, 2019).

The interview results showed that every merchants interviewed perceived the potential for the development of halal culinary offerings in Manado. This perception was

rooted in their observations of the diverse consumer base, comprising both Muslim and non-Muslim consumers. The results suggested that halal cuisine in the region held promise for positive development, necessitating Muslim merchants to enhance innovation and creativity in adhering to Islamic principles. The growth of halal cuisine was not restricted to cities or countries with a Muslim majority but also existed in those with Muslim minority.

The global expansion of halal market in several non-Muslim regions was not merely theoretical. It was a tangible phenomenon evidenced by the burgeoning halal market in countries such as Korea, Thailand, Japan, and several Muslim-minority countries. This trend was mirrored in regions with Muslim-minority populations, including Indonesia, where Manado became a focal point for research into halal market. The results could support discussions surrounding the growth of the global halal market in Muslim-minority regions. Additionally, the analysis could strengthen statements regarding the growth potential of the global halal market, particularly in Indonesia.

Observing such a phenomenon instilled hope among entrepreneurs and merchants both domestically and internationally. With the undeniable expansion of the global halal market, merchants had to enhance their innovation and creativity to propel the market growth further. This trend proved the favorable reception of halal market among global consumers, irrespective of religious affiliation. Moreover, the proliferation of halal cuisine offered solace to Muslim consumers planning visits to Muslim-minority regions for work or leisure, particularly for consumption purposes. The growth of halal culinary offerings in Muslim-minority regions positively impacted other sectors and entrepreneurs focusing on various halal sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and other related markets, thereby triggering the expansion of the global halal market.

D. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results showed that Muslim merchants in Manado, despite being a minority religion, were selling their halal cuisine and were confident about the potential development of the products in the region. Merchants used halal signs (logo) to assure customers of halal status of their cuisine, catering to both Muslim and non-Muslim buyers. Despite Manado status as Muslim minority region, Muslim merchants held a significant presence in promoting halal cuisine. Therefore, Muslim analysts should examine halal market, focusing on halal cuisine, to devise strategies for its global development, extending beyond Muslim-majority countries to Muslim-minority countries.

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F. Author Contributions Statement

The authorship consisted of four analysts, each with distinct roles. Telsy Samad and Taufani, residing in Manado, were educators in Islamic Economics and Islamic Studies. Anggoro Sugeng, based in Lampung, served as a lecturer at IAIN Metro. Lastly, Talha Ayub, residing in London, United Kingdom, was a graduate student at BPP University, specializing in accounting and economics. All authors collaborated in data collection, analysis, and manuscript review to reach a consensus on the final draft.

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