

Halal Certification Governance in Indonesia: An Islamic Legal Appraisal Based on *Maslahah* Principles

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the contradictions between Indonesia's legal mandate for halal certification and its ineffective implementation, which contradicts the principles of *maslahah* and good governance. Using a qualitative research method with an empirical legal approach, this study draws on data from interviews with policymakers, academics, and halal industry practitioners. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that regulatory disharmony, limited budgets, and weak halal product assurance hinder effective certification and restrict MSMEs participation. These conditions reflect a gap between the normative legal framework and its practical realization. This study contributes a *maslahah* based analysis of halal certification governance, highlighting the need for regulatory harmonization, capacity-building, and cost-reduction mechanisms. This study recommends the establishment of a synergistic, multi-stakeholder halal ecosystem to accelerate the certification process and enhance the global competitiveness of Indonesia's halal industry. The scientific contribution of this study lies in offering a *maslahah*-based analytical framework for evaluating halal certification governance as an approach that integrates Islamic legal theory with contemporary public governance analysis.

Keywords: Administrative Cost, Halal Certification, Halal Governance, Halal Product Assurance Standards, Halal Regulation.

Introduction

The weak governance of halal certification in Indonesia has emerged as a critical issue, potentially hindering the national target of certifying 3.5 million MSMEs by 2025 and undermining the country's position in the global halal industry, which is projected to reach USD 7.7 trillion (Dinar Standard, 2022). Key obstacles to achieving this target include high certification costs, complex procedures, weak inter-agency coordination, and suboptimal regulatory implementation. Many MSME actors struggle to obtain halal certification due to financial constraints and bureaucratic hurdles, leading many to avoid the process entirely (Almunawar et al., 2025; Sofiana et al., 2021; Sulaiman et al., 2022; Wahyudi et al., 2020). As of now, the Halal Product Assurance Organizing Agency (BPJPH) has recorded only around 3 million halal-certified MSME products, far from the 10 million targets. Out of Indonesia's 64 million business actors, only 4.6% have obtained halal certification, while 95.4% remain uncertified (Akuhalal.com, 2024; BPJPH, 2023). This condition demonstrates that the current halal certification governance is not merely an administrative or technical challenge but a structural issue that requires an academic inquiry grounded in Islamic legal and policy improvement perspectives.

Research on halal certification in Indonesia has expanded, yet gaps remain in understanding the practical obstacles encountered by business actors, particularly MSMEs. Previous studies have predominantly concentrated on macro-level dimensions, such as the influence of halal certification on product competitiveness and consumer behavior (Fathoni et al., 2024), as well as business compliance with halal regulations (Amalia & Nur Hidayah, 2020). Other scholars have examined the policy dynamics of

Indonesia's halal certification following the enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014, highlighting institutional fragmentation and unclear authority distribution between BPJPH, MUI, and LPPOM (Sakti et al., 2021; Wahyudi et al., 2020). Likewise, studies have discussed the transformation of halal governance under the concept of halal assurance system and its implications for legal certainty and global market integration (Hudaefi & Jaswir, 2019; Ruhana, 2021; Taufiq et al., 2025).

However, structural issues, including complex bureaucracy, high certification costs, a shortage of auditors, and weak inter-agency synergy – have received limited scholarly attention (Alfayed & Faujiah, 2023; Fatonah et al., 2023). While Faisal et al., (2022) underscored the positive impact of halal certification on consumer trust, their analysis did not specifically address how business actors navigate administrative, financial, and mentoring-related challenges. More recent research by Hayat et al., (2013) and Zainuddin et al., (2019) further identified the exclusionary effects of certification costs on MSMEs, yet without connecting these findings to Islamic legal principles such as *maslahah* and *darurah* that could guide policy reform. This study, therefore, seeks to fill that gap by examining regulatory frameworks, governance structures, accessibility, and institutional collaboration, to provide more comprehensive understanding of the underlying problems entrepreneurs face in securing halal certification.

This study focusing to analyze the persistent regulatory, certification costs and governance challenges in Indonesia's halal certification system, which continue to create substantial barriers for business actors, particularly MSMEs. Although halal certification is legally mandated, its implementation remains constrained by regulatory ambiguity, overlapping institutional authority, and excessive certification costs. Previous studies have largely focused on economic or behavioral outcomes of halal certification, while limited attention has been given to its legal governance dimension from an Islamic jurisprudential standpoint. The novelty of this study lies in its approach that employs *maslahah*-based analysis to critically appraise Indonesia's halal certification governance, emphasizing inclusivity, transparency, and policy coherence. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive account of these obstacles while offering recommendations to strengthen regulations, enhance halal governance, and promote cost relief based on *maslahah* principles to ensure justice, inclusivity, and public benefit accessibility for all business actors.

The challenges surrounding halal certification in Indonesia are believed to be closely linked to weak regulations, poor governance of halal assurance, and high certification costs – factors that constitute major barriers for business actors in obtaining halal certification. Regulatory ambiguity has resulted in lengthy and complex administrative procedures, while ineffective governance exacerbates inter-agency coordination problems, rendering the certification process inefficient and ultimately driving up the costs borne by businesses. The lack of clear regulatory guidance and ineffective governance often subject entrepreneurs to convoluted certification processes, increasing both the time and financial burdens involved. From an Islamic legal perspective, these shortcomings deviate from *maslahah* principles that uphold justice, ease, and public welfare. Thus, this study applies a *maslahah*-based approach to assess and reform halal certification governance, ensuring that policy improvements not only enhance administrative efficiency but also realize Sharia objectives of fairness, accessibility, and societal benefit.

Literature Review

System Weakness

System weakness refers to a condition in which an organizational or institutional structure experiences dysfunction in carrying out its roles and responsibilities effectively (Haning, 2019). These principles are primarily employed as an institutional framework for strengthening organizational autonomy. Systemic weakness can be identified through various indicators, such as procedural inefficiency, low levels of compliance, and inadequate oversight (Anggini et al., 2024; Hasaniy & Azisurrohman, 2024). Such conditions often stem from unclear delineation of authority and responsibilities among internal units (Puspita & Widyarini, 2018). Previous studies on the factors contributing to weak governance systems can be categorized into three fundamental dimensions: structural, operational, and cultural. The structural dimension encompasses issues related to organizational hierarchy, task

distribution, and coordination mechanisms (PH et al., 2023; Syarief & Prastiyo, 2018). The operational dimension pertains to inefficiencies in task execution, the absence of clear standard procedures, and weak monitoring and evaluation systems (Gustang, 2024). Meanwhile, the cultural dimension involves work culture, organizational values, and patterns of interaction among personnel (Djaenudin, 2018). Therefore, understanding and addressing these three dimensions is essential for rectifying weaknesses in governance systems and enhancing overall organizational effectiveness.

Governance System

A governance system refers to a set of mechanisms that regulate and control an organization in achieving its objectives effectively and efficiently (Suti et al., 2020). Nugraheni & Cyrillius Martono, (2020) further emphasize that a sound governance system should be characterized by transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness. Putranto, (2017) argues that an effective governance system must be capable of accommodating the dynamic changes within the organizational environment and meeting stakeholder demands. Moreover, a governance system must also incorporate an integrated risk control mechanism to ensure long-term organizational sustainability (Cahyaningtyas & Elin Erlina Sasanti, 2019). Studies on governance systems can be categorized into three main aspects: strategic, structural, and operational. The strategic aspect is concerned with long-term planning and the formulation of organizational policies (Rusniati & Haq, 2014). The structural aspect pertains to the arrangement of hierarchies, the delegation of authority, and coordination mechanisms within an organization (Nugroho & Rahmawati, 2022). The operational aspect includes policy implementation, standard procedures, and internal control systems aimed at ensuring the effectiveness of policy execution (Heriyanto, 2022). Therefore, an effective governance system must holistically address all four of these aspects to ensure organizational effectiveness and the achievement of its defined objectives.

Halal Certification

Halal certification, in principle as a process of granting a halal label to a product, ensuring that the product is genuinely halal and its nutritional content does not contain any elements prohibited by Islamic law (Ismunandar et al., 2021). Existing studies indicate that the halal certification process has a significant positive impact on consumer purchasing intent (Asrina & Bulutoding, 2016; Ginting & Khoiri, 2023; Wijaya & Padmantyo, 2023). Several previous studies on halal certification include, first, the finding that halal labeling on products such as food in Bangka Belitung actually enhances economic opportunities (Yanasari & Kusniati, 2022). Second, studies indicate that halal labeling is not limited to consumer goods but can also be applied to the tourism industry (Azali et al., 2021). For example, in Lampung, the factors influencing halal certification in tourism include the provision of food and beverages, as well as facilities for prayer. This concept is reflected in religious symbols and regulations, such as prohibiting unmarried tourists from staying, banning the possession of forbidden items, and requiring employees to cover their *awrah* (Azizah et al., 2022). Therefore, it is evident that halal certification process is becoming a new trend across various commercial industries.

***Maslahah* in Halal Governance Reform**

The principle of *maslahah* occupies a central place in Islamic jurisprudence as a tool for promoting public welfare, justice, and social harmony through pragmatic legal reasoning (Al-Daghistani, 2022; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). Classical jurists such as al-Ghazali and al-Shatibi emphasized *maslahah* as the realization of human well-being through the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, which collectively form the *maqashid shariah* (Al-Daghistani, 2022; Nisa et al., 2025). Within the context of halal certification governance, *maslahah* functions as a normative compass that ensures regulatory frameworks serve not only administrative efficiency but also the higher objectives of Sharia (*maqashid syariah*), notably the protection of religion, wealth, and community welfare (Al Farisi et al., 2024; Suhartini et al., 2024). Previous studies have underscored the significance of *maslahah* in guiding policy innovation and economic inclusivity (Latiff et al., 2024; Ratnawati, 2023), yet few have critically examined its application within Indonesia's halal assurance system, which remains burdened by institutional fragmentation and procedural rigidity (Nisa et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2017; Saad et al., 2016).

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design using an empirical legal approach, focusing on how halal certification governance is implemented and experienced in practice. The empirical legal approach is used to understand the interaction between regulatory instruments, implementing institutions, and the practical challenges faced by business actors, particularly MSMEs, in fulfilling halal certification requirements. Through this approach, the study explores how the principles of *maṣlahah* are reflected or neglected in current regulatory practices. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, supported by secondary legal materials such as laws, regulations, and policy documents. Primary data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews, systematically designed to allow flexibility in exploring relevant topics.

The interviews were conducted using a systematically and flexibly designed interview protocol, allowing the researcher to maintain the direction of the discussion while remaining open to new findings (Creswell, 2003). The selection of informants was conducted using purposive sampling, in which participants were deliberately chosen based on specific research questions. The number of informants was based on Morse's recommendation, which suggests six participants for qualitative studies (Morse Janice, 1994). This study specifically applied expert sampling by selecting ten informants. The data for this study were obtained from interview with three groups of stakeholders as informant who hold strategic roles in the governance of halal certification in Indonesia: regulators, academics, practitioners and business actors. The following table presents the list of informants:

Table 1. Informant Profile

Respondent Code	Institution Background	Experience
F1 Regulator	Policy Analyst, Expert in Halal Standardization at the Halal Product Assurance Agency	29 years
F2 Regulator	Director of Strategy and Operations at the Assessment Institute for Foods, Drugs and Cosmetics of the Indonesian Ulema Council (LPPOM MUI)	20 years
F3 Academician	Executive Director of the Center for Halal Product Assurance Studies and Development, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta	12 years
F4 Academician	Head of the Halal Center, Muhammadiyah University of Jakarta	10 years
F5 Practitioner	Head of the Halal Unit, Halal Inspection Agency (LPH) of PT Sucofindo	18 years
F6 Practitioner	Head of the Halal Assurance System Development Division, National Committee for Sharia Economy and Finance	15 years
F7 Practitioner	Halal Product Process Assistance (PPH) Practitioner, NU World Halal Center	25 years
F8 Business Actors	Micro Enterprise: Snack and Processed Food Producer, East Java	5 years
F9 Business Actors	Micro Enterprise: Traditional Beverage Producer, East Java	3 years
F10 Business Actors	Small-Medium Enterprise: Halal Frozen Food Distributor	8 years

This study employs qualitative data analysis using a thematic analysis approach, which allows the researcher to identify, organize, and interpret patterns or themes that emerge from the interview data (Dalkey & Helmer, 1999). The data analysis was conducted in several stages (Creswell, 2003): data

transcription, initial coding, grouping themes, thematic validity, and interpretation and thematic narrative. The data analysis process began with transcription, where interview transcripts were thoroughly reviewed to capture initial impressions and relevant points. This was followed by initial coding, in which key segments of the transcripts were labeled. These codes were then organized into broader thematic categories, including: (a) the lack of clear halal certification regulations, (b) budgetary limitations in certification management, and (c) weak standards of halal product assurance. Subsequently, thematic validity was established by identifying logical relationships among the themes, forming a coherent interpretive framework. Finally, a thematic narrative was developed not only to describe the findings but also to construct scientific arguments that explain the root causes and institutional implications of halal certification governance in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

Lack of Regulation Governing Halal Certification

Halal certification in Indonesia is supported by legal foundations in various regulations, including laws and legal rules. However, there are still several aspects that have not been regulated in a detailed and comprehensive manner. These regulations lack clear mechanisms, which hinders the effectiveness of implementing halal certification. As one interview F1 noted:

“[...] Regulations exist, but they often overlap and leave gaps in technical procedures, especially concerning cost-sharing and institutional authority” [Interview with Regulator code F1 on 13 November 2024].

Similarly, a halal unit emphasized that:

“[...] the absence of detailed implementing guidelines makes field execution inconsistent across regions [...]” [Interview with Practitioners code F5 on 07 November 2024].

These findings indicate that regulatory ambiguity and fragmented governance structures continue to hinder the effective implementation of halal certification in practice. Below is a table summarizes the existing regulatory framework governing halal certification.

Table 2. Regulations Governing Halal Certification

No	Regulations	Content	Description
1	Law No. 6 of 1967 on Basic Provisions of Animal Husbandry and Animal Health.	Article 21: Supervision of animal slaughter, supervision of dairy companies, poultry and pig companies. Supervision and testing of meat, milk, and eggs. Supervision and testing of animal-based food products that are processed.	Supervision and testing of halal products.
2	Law No 7 of 1996	Chapter IV, Article 30: Obligation to Include Labels on Food Packaging, Including Halal Labels.	Halal label.
3	Law No 8 of 1999	Chapter IV, Article 8: Producers Are Prohibited from Manufacturing and Trading Products That Do Not Conform to Their Labels.	Compliance of content with the label.
4	Law No 18 of 2012	Article 69: Halal Product Assurance Article 95: The Government and Local Governments shall supervise the halal product assurance system. Article 97: Food producers are required to include labels on food packaging, including halal labels. Article 101: The entity issuing the halal label is responsible for its accuracy. Article 105: Individuals who trade products with halal labels are responsible for their accuracy.	Halal product assurance.
5	Law No. 33 of 2014	Halal Product Assurance: BPJPH collaborates with relevant institutions, Halal Inspection Bodies, and	Halal product assurance.

		MUI, procedures for obtaining halal certification, and collaboration.	
6	Government Regulation (PERPU) No. 2 of 2022	Article 30: Certainty of halal certification service time at BPJPH, LPH, and MUI, providing facilitation for business actors, ease of halal certification financing for MSMEs, and the role of the public in halal product assurance.	Halal certification services.

Sources: edited by the writer

Halal Regulation in Indonesia has evolved over time, but it still demonstrates limitations in terms of comprehensive halal certification regulations. Law No. 6 of 1967 only touches on animal health aspects and does not specifically regulate slaughtering processes following Islamic law. Law No. 7 of 1996 introduced the halal label provisions, but supervision remained weak. Law No. 8 of 1999 addressed the alignment of contents with labels, including halal labels, but did not regulate sanctions for halal violations. Only with Law No. 18 of 2012 and Law No. 33 of 2014 did halal certification become mandatory, but implementation still faces challenges, especially for MSMEs. PERPU No. 2 of 2022 includes the simplification of halal certification services, but it has not fully resolved issues related to costs and complex procedures. A more inclusive approach and real support for small businesses are still needed to ensure that halal certification requirements are applied uniformly.

Halal regulation in Indonesia still has weaknesses in ensuring the effective and equitable implementation of halal certification for all businesses. This is due to the fact that, although there have been various regulations, from Law No. 6 of 1967 to PERPU No. 2 of 2022, which govern aspects of animal health, halal labeling, consumer protection, and mandatory halal certification, its implementation still faces challenges such as high costs, complicated bureaucracy, and limited access for MSMEs. For example, Law No. 33 of 2014 mandates halal certification for all products in circulation. In practice, many MSMEs struggle to comply due to high certification fees. Based on the BLU BPJPH tariff, costs range from IDR 300,000 for Micro and Small Enterprises, IDR 5,000,000 for Medium Enterprises, and up to IDR 12,500,000 for Large and Foreign Businesses (plus IDR 800,000 for foreign applicants). These costs remain burdensome, especially for MSMEs. Therefore, although halal regulation in Indonesia continues to develop, more concrete improvements are needed to make halal certification easily accessible and affordable for all businesses, especially MSMEs.

Budget Constraints in Halal Certification Management

The lack of adequate budget allocation has become a significant barrier to optimizing halal certification in Indonesia. Insufficient funding has contributed to the persistently high fees involved in processing halal certification (Md Salleh et al., 2020; Zainuddin et al., 2019). This financial constraint is exacerbated by the limited number of qualified halal auditors, which remains disproportionate to the growing demand for certification (Suhartini et al., 2024; Sulaiman et al., 2022). Consequently, the high certification costs continue to pose a serious obstacle for small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) seeking to obtain halal certification (Almunawar et al., 2025; Sofiana et al., 2021). Below is a table showing the establishment and operational framework of the BLU (Public Service Agency) BPJPH, which plays a central role in managing halal certification funding in Indonesia.

Table 3: Halal Certification Service

No.	Types of Service	Unit	Cost (IDR)
A	Halal Certification of Goods and Services	Per certificate	300.000 to 12.500.000
	1. Regular Process Halal Certificate		
	2. Certificate Renewal		
	3. Foreign Halal Certificate Registration		

B	Halal Inspection Agency Accreditation	Per institution	4.200.000 to 17.500.000
C	Halal Auditor Registration	Per person	300.000
D	Halal Auditor and Halal Supervisor Training	Per person	1.600.000 to 3.800.000
E	Halal Auditor and Halal Supervisor Competency Certification	Per person	1.800.000 to 3.500.000

Source: BPJPH, <https://bpjph.halal.go.id>

The table above shows that the cost of halal certification in Indonesia can be a significant financial burden, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). For Halal Certification of Goods and Services, the fees range from IDR 300,000 to IDR 12,500,000 per certificate, depending on the complexity of the process and the type of product. In addition, accreditation services for Halal Inspection Agencies (LPH) are charged from IDR 4,200,000 to IDR 17,500,000 per institution. While the registration fee for halal auditors is relatively affordable at IDR 300,000 per person, training for auditors and halal supervisors requires a fee between IDR 1,600,000 and IDR 3,800,000 per person. Furthermore, competency certification for halal auditors and supervisor costs between IDR 1,800,000 and IDR 3,500,000 per person. With such varied and often high costs, the halal certification process poses a financial challenge for small-scale businesses, raising concerns that the mandatory certification requirement might actually hinder business development.

The halal certification fees set by BPJPH indicate a potential barrier for business actors, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), in fulfilling the mandatory halal certification requirement imposed by the government. Based on interview findings, several MSME owners emphasized that certification costs are "*relatively high compared to our production scale*" [Interview with Business Actors code F9 on 10 December 2024], making it difficult for them to allocate funds for this purpose. snack producer in East Java explained that even though the base fee is only a few hundred thousand rupiahs, "[...] *additional costs for packaging adjustments, and administrative travel make the total burden exceed our monthly profit margin*" [Interview with Business Actors code F8 on 12 December 2024]. Another MSME respondent in East Java stated that "[...] *the process feels more suited for larger companies*" [Interview with Business Actors code F10 on 12 December 2024], indicating that the current fee structure and supporting costs still disproportionately affect smaller enterprises. As a result, a policy intended to guarantee the halal compliance for Muslim consumers may unintentionally create an access gap for smaller businesses. This could lead some enterprises to forgo halal certification due to financial constraints, creating a dilemma between regulatory compliance and business sustainability. Therefore, support in the form of subsidies or fee-reduction policies specifically targeting MSMEs is needed to ensure that the goal of protecting Muslim consumers is achieved without hindering the growth of small businesses.

Weakness in Halal Product Assurance Standards

Based on semi-structured interviews conducted with seven key informants—comprising government officials, representatives from halal certification bodies, academics, and halal facilitation practitioners—it was found that the weakness of halal product assurance standards in Indonesia constitutes a complex and multidimensional issue. The problem lies not only in the regulatory framework, but also in the weak implementation, poor inter-institutional coordination, and limited capacity of supporting resources and infrastructure. These findings can be categorized into four main issues: (1) the complexity of the halal certification process, (2) inadequate post-certification monitoring systems, (3) insufficient supporting infrastructure and technology, and (4) the lack of outreach and halal literacy among business actors, particularly micro-enterprises.

First, from a procedural standpoint, the halal certification process is perceived as overly complicated, inconsistent across institutions, and overly bureaucratic. As expressed by the majority of informants:

“[...] the current certification system is still in a transitional phase and must be registered electronically through the BJPH system, which many business actors find unfamiliar and overly complex.” [Interview with Regulator code F1 on 12 December 2024]

Many business actors, have complained about the complexity and institutional inconsistency of the certification process. “[...] Combined with the lack of outreach from relevant authorities, this reinforces the perception that halal certification is an administrative burden rather than a religious obligation or a value-added business asset.” [Interview with Regulator code F2 on 7 November 2024]

Second, there are notable weaknesses in the post-certification monitoring mechanism. Most informants considered post-certification oversight to be highly ineffective.

“[...] Many certified products are not monitored regularly, which fails to ensure the continued halal integrity of the products. Weak regulations and a shortage of qualified halal auditors exacerbate this issue.” [Interview with Regulator code F3 on 12 November 2024]

“Monitoring is conducted only at the initial stage of certification, with minimal follow-up thereafter. This allows for potential violations to go undetected.” [Interview with Regulator code F4 on 08 November 2024]

Third, limitations in technology and infrastructure also pose significant challenges. Dependence on manual systems, the transition to electronic platforms, and the uneven distribution of halal infrastructure have all contributed to reduced speed, efficiency, and transparency. According to PT Sucofindo, the implementation of halal audits in regional areas frequently encounters technical obstacles:

“In practice, infrastructure and supporting facilities remain severely limited, especially in rural and regional areas.” [Interview with Practitioner code F5 on 08 November 2024]

Fourth, the low level of education and awareness among business actors regarding the importance of halal assurance represents a critical issue. The Head of the Halal Assurance System Development Division at KNEKS also emphasized that weak inter-agency information integration and the lack of an effective communication strategy have limited business actors’ understanding of the Halal Assurance System:

“Many micro-business owners still lack sufficient understanding of the procedures and legal basis of halal certification. Their limited education and the absence of regular training or outreach programs make it difficult for them to comply with halal assurance requirements.” [Interview with Practitioner code F6 on 08 November 2024]

Results of interviews reveal several factors that contribute significantly to the weak standards of halal product assurance. The bureaucratic and time-consuming process presents significant challenges for business actors; weak monitoring leads to uncertainty in product halal integrity; dependence on manual systems slows service delivery; and inadequate outreach results in limited understanding of the urgency and significance of halal certification. Several informants emphasized the complexity of the certification process and the ineffectiveness of supervision, while others highlighted the limitations of manual systems and infrastructure. Most notably, the interviews indicate that limited education and insufficient outreach have contributed to a widespread lack of understanding among MSMEs regarding the legal and procedural dimensions of halal certification. These findings underscore that strengthening halal product assurance standards requires simplifying certification procedures, enhancing monitoring mechanisms, digitalizing service systems, and improving outreach efforts targeting business actors.

Interview findings (F1-F6) indicate that the weakness of halal product assurance in Indonesia stems from a complex certification process (F1-F2), weak oversight (F3-F4), limited infrastructure (F5), and low education and outreach among MSMEs (F6). These factors collectively demonstrate systemic governance challenges that impede the effectiveness and inclusivity of halal certification implementation. Lengthy procedures slow down the certification process, weak supervision reduces compliance with halal standards, manual systems hinder service efficiency, and the lack of outreach leaves many business actors unaware of their certification obligations. The assessments of the majority of respondents reinforce the prevailing weakness in halal assurance standards in Indonesia. These findings suggest that addressing these deficiencies requires comprehensive policy reform, including the simplification of certification

procedures, strengthening of monitoring systems, acceleration of halal service digitalization, and enhanced outreach and education targeting business actors.

Discussion

This study finds that the governance of the halal certification system in Indonesia has not yet functioned effectively. Multiple structural and operational challenges continue to affect the government, halal certification bodies, and business actors. One of the most pressing concerns is the increasing demand for halal certification among MSMEs, which requires a certification scheme that is more accessible, affordable, and responsive to the needs of small-scale producers. The analysis indicates that cost-related barriers remain a critical issue that limits MSMEs' participation in the halal certification process. Stakeholders involved in the implementation of halal certification consistently highlight that the current fee structure is misaligned with the financial capacity of micro and small businesses. This issue has also been observed in previous research, which notes that high certification costs frequently discourage MSMEs from entering the formal halal market and reduce the overall effectiveness of halal policy implementation (Fathoni et al., 2024).

The government has yet to provide substantial financial support for the development of the halal industry. Free halal certification programs require significant budget allocations from the state (Jakiyudin & Fedro, 2022). Moreover, state-led halal product assurance directly influences the certification process by enhancing public trust. Empirical evidence highlights the weakness of halal regulations, particularly regarding the mandatory nature of certification. Current halal regulations are perceived as lacking clear and measurable direction (Kasanah & Sajjad, 2022). In practical terms, halal standards remain ambiguous, making their effective implementation challenging (Sayekti, 2017). Effective halal governance serves as a critical gateway to the certification process and is essential for supporting the growth of the halal industry.

The failure of halal certification governance can be understood as the system's inability to translate policies into effective and operational outcomes. This issue is reflected in several dimensions, including the low number of certified business actors, complicated administrative procedures, high certification costs, limited availability of halal auditors, and insufficient support mechanisms for MSMEs (Kasanah & Sajjad, 2022). Institutional weaknesses remain central to these challenges. After the enactment of the Halal Product Assurance Law, the transition of authority from LPPO MUI to BPJPH introduced structural adjustments that have not been fully supported by adequate institutional readiness, particularly at the regional level. This condition contributes to inconsistencies in policy execution and weak coordination between central and local institutions.

Furthermore, bureaucratic complexity continues to hinder implementation at the field level. Many MSMEs lack the administrative capacity to navigate the procedural requirements, access relevant information, or complete the necessary documentation. These administrative burdens significantly affect their ability to meet certification requirements and further demonstrate the gap between regulatory expectations and the practical realities faced by small businesses. Collectively, these institutional and bureaucratic constraints illustrate the broader governance limitations that impede the effectiveness of halal certification in Indonesia.

Based on feedback from regulators, it is clear that the primary issue lies at the institutional level. Bureaucratic complexity makes it difficult for MSMEs to meet administrative requirements, while high costs represent a significant burden for small businesses (Fatonah et al., 2023). Additionally, the limited number of halal auditors and halal inspection bodies results in delays in the verification and oversight of halal products in the field (Alfayed & Faujiah, 2023). This situation is exacerbated by a lack of outreach, leading many MSMEs to remain unaware of their obligations and the benefits of halal certification (Faisal et al., 2022). Therefore, governance reform is needed through the simplification of procedures, cost reduction, increased auditor capacity, and strengthened facilitation efforts to ensure that the halal certification system operates more effectively.

The governance of halal certification in Indonesia exhibits significant weaknesses, which this study identifies as stemming from three interrelated conditions. First, the regulatory framework is fragmented

and inconsistent, generating legal ambiguity that complicates MSMEs' understanding of certification requirements and compliance obligations. Second, oversight mechanisms are insufficient, characterized by a shortage of qualified halal auditors, limited post-certification monitoring, and uneven enforcement, undermining the integrity and reliability of halal products. Third, operational implementation is slow and bureaucratically cumbersome, with procedural complexity and high costs disproportionately affecting small-scale enterprises. Collectively, these challenges demonstrate that efforts to accelerate halal certification remain uneven and ineffective. Addressing these issues requires governance reforms grounded in regulatory harmonization, strengthened supervision, procedural simplification, and consideration of *maṣlahah* principles to ensure accessibility, fairness, and the promotion of public welfare across Indonesia's halal certification system.

The findings of this study reinforce previous research highlighting that strengthening halal certification governance in Indonesia is highly dependent on policy harmonization, regulatory reinforcement, and intersectoral coordination. Research by Amalia & Nur Hidayah, (2020) asserts that the successful implementation of the Halal Product Assurance Law is influenced by the involvement of multiple stakeholders in building an integrated halal governance system. Ismail et al., (2022) emphasizes the importance of governance synchronization following the enactment of the Omnibus Law (UU Cipta Kerja) to ensure more effective synergy among stakeholders. Mujahidin, (2021) reveals that weak inter-institutional coordination remains a major barrier to the halal certification process, making the alignment of actor roles an urgent need. Alfayed & Fauziah, (2023) show that limited communication between BPJPH, LPH, and MSMEs leads to inefficiencies in the halal certification process. Meanwhile, Faisal et al., (2022) stress that without active collaboration between the government and business actors, the goal of accelerating halal certification is difficult to achieve.

***Maṣlahah* Analysis of Halal Certification Governance in Indonesia**

From an Islamic legal perspective, the weaknesses identified in the governance of halal certification in Indonesia, namely the lack of regulatory clarity, limited budgetary allocation, and weak assurance standards reflect a systemic deviation from the objectives of *maṣlahah* that underpin the *maqasid al-shari'ah*. The principle of *maṣlahah* emphasizes that all state actions and legal frameworks must serve the preservation of religion (*hifz al-din*), life (*hifz al-nafs*), and property (*hifz al-mal*), while promoting justice ('*adl*). However, this study's findings indicate that the halal certification system in Indonesia still operates in ways that impose hardship on business actors, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), thereby undermining these foundational objectives. Halal certification policy plays a crucial role in maintaining the sanctity of *hifz al-din* by ensuring product compliance with Sharia principles and reinforcing Islamic faith and identity. However, the absence of comprehensive and harmonized regulations across institutions such as BPJPH, MUI, and LPH has led to bureaucratic inconsistencies, regulatory ambiguity, and legal uncertainty that obstruct the realization of this objective. As observed by several scholars, including Nisa et al., (2025) and Suhartini et al., (2024), effective halal governance should facilitate, not complicate, religious obligations. Thus, unclear regulations that burden small business owners contradict the *maṣlahah dharuriyyat* principle, which mandates the state to remove obstacles that prevent people from practicing their faith in a manageable and equitable way.

Moreover, budgetary constraints and high certification fees represent another layer of structural injustice within the halal certification system. Although differentiated fee structures exist, the empirical data from MSME respondents reveal that supporting expenses such as product testing and administrative processing remain financially burdensome, deterring participation in the certification process. This economic inaccessibility contradicts the principle of *raf' al-haraj* (removal of hardship) and undermines *hifz al-mal*, as small entrepreneurs face disproportionate financial strain in fulfilling their religious and legal obligations. Therefore, reducing certification costs and expanding access are essential to protect economic resources and ensure the sustainability of MSME livelihoods in alignment with Sharia objectives. Similar findings have been highlighted by Sulistyawati et al., (2024) Hayat et al., (2013) and Fadzli et al., (2021), who argue that inequitable cost structures reduce inclusivity in halal governance and reinforce systemic disparities between large enterprises and MSMEs. From the *maṣlahah* standpoint, the state has a moral and

legal duty (*mas'uliyyah al-daulah*) to ensure that public regulatory mechanisms do not privilege the economically powerful while marginalizing the poor. This responsibility aligns with the Qur'anic injunction of social justice and equitable distribution of burden, as economic obstacles in religious compliance violate the very essence of Sharia, which seeks to balance rights and responsibilities through compassion and fairness.

The weakness of halal product assurance standards, as reflected in ineffective monitoring, limited auditor capacity, and insufficient education among business actors, further illustrates the erosion of *maslahah hajiyah* the dimension of Sharia concerned with moral refinement and societal excellence. When post-certification oversight is minimal and technological infrastructure remains inadequate, the integrity of halal assurance cannot be maintained, thereby undermining both consumer trust and the moral credibility of Islamic law in the public sphere. As emphasized by Al-Daghistani, (2022); Rahman et al., (2017) and Al Farisi et al., (2024), ensuring the continuity of halal integrity is not merely an administrative task but an ethical responsibility that safeguards public welfare (*maslahah 'ammah*) and the sanctity of faith. The interview findings demonstrate that many MSMEs actors perceive certification as a bureaucratic imposition rather than a moral and religious commitment, a condition rooted in low levels of halal literacy and insufficient state-led educational outreach. In this sense, the failure to integrate capacity-building and knowledge dissemination within halal governance represents a neglect of *hifz al-'aql* (preservation of intellect), as it inhibits the formation of a conscious, informed, and ethically responsible business community.

Taken together, these findings affirm that the governance of halal certification in Indonesia requires reform grounded in the holistic application of *maslahah*. Regulatory harmonization, financial inclusivity, and educational empowerment should not merely be administrative objectives but moral imperatives anchored in the higher purposes of Sharia. Strengthening halal certification governance through the lens of *maslahah* thus entails establishing legal mechanisms that are transparent, affordable, and accessible to all stakeholders, especially MSMEs. It also demands state commitment to integrating social justice principles within halal policy design, ensuring that every aspect of regulation whether legal, financial, or procedural contributes to the realization of welfare, equity, and spiritual well-being. By aligning the halal certification framework with *maqashid syariah*, Indonesia can transform halal governance from a procedural requirement into an ethical instrument of public good, embodying the true spirit of *maslahah* in both law and practice.

Conclusion

This study shows that the weakness of the halal certification governance system in Indonesia is influenced by three main factors: the lack of regulations governing halal certification, the high cost of halal certification processes, and the weak halal product assurance standards. These factors are interrelated and create structural barriers for business actors in fulfilling halal certification obligations. Inconsistent regulations result in legal uncertainty, high certification costs burden small businesses, and halal product assurance standards are not applied consistently due to insufficient oversight and a shortage of halal auditors. Business actors face challenges with lengthy certification procedures and costs that are disproportionate to their business capacity, while weak oversight leads to varying levels of public trust in the halal status of products. Therefore, strengthening halal certification governance through regulatory harmonization, reducing certification costs, and implementing stringent halal product assurance standards are strategic steps to ensure the effectiveness of the halal certification system in Indonesia.

From a *maslahah* perspective, these weaknesses contradict the objectives of *maqasid shariah* particularly *hifz al-din*, *hifz al-mal*, and *hifz al-'aql*. Legal ambiguity undermines Muslims' ability to fulfill religious duties, high costs threaten economic welfare, and weak awareness limits intellectual and ethical understanding. Strengthening halal certification governance through regulatory harmonization, cost reduction, and improved assurance standards therefore embodies the realization of *maslahah 'ammah*, ensuring that halal certification serves not only administrative efficiency but also justice, accessibility, and the broader public good. This study strengths lie in its comprehensive approach, involving various

stakeholders such as regulators, academics, and practitioners, providing a holistic view of the weaknesses in halal certification governance in Indonesia. This study is limited by its focus on participants from formal institutional stakeholders, which may not fully capture the perspectives of MSMEs as the most affected group in the halal certification process. Future research should involve a broader range of MSME actors across regions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of halal governance implementation in Indonesia.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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