
Islamic legal review on the halal certification application procedure for Korean food products

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the halal certification application procedure for Korean cuisine products at LPPOM MUI East Java and assess its legality from the perspective of Islamic law. The research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The findings indicate that halal certification aligns with the 1945 Constitution and is supported by legal frameworks such as Law No. 8 of 1999, Law No. 18 of 2012, Law No. 33 of 2014, and Presidential Instruction No. 2 of 1991. Halal certification has become mandatory due to changes in the composition of food, medicine, and cosmetics. The application procedure includes HAS training, implementation of the halal assurance system, document preparation, registration, monitoring, field audits, and certificate issuance.

Keywords: Islamic legal review, application, halal certification.

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Introduction

In the era of globalization and increasingly fierce business competition, entrepreneurs are expected to meet consumer expectations for products that are not only safe and high-quality but also halal. Public awareness especially among Muslims of the importance of consuming halal products has significantly increased in line with a growing understanding of Islamic teachings that emphasize the halal aspect of every consumable product (Qoni'ah, 2022). In Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world approximately 207,176,162 people or around 87.18% of the total population the demand for halal products holds immense market potential. One of the most prominent phenomena is the growing popularity of Korean cuisine in Indonesia. Korean food, originally a reflection of traditional Korean culture and culinary techniques, has now become part of the urban lifestyle trend in Indonesia, particularly among youth influenced by Korean pop culture such as K-Pop and K-Dramas. Dishes like kimchi, tteokbokki, and bulgogi have gained international recognition and are now easily found in various Indonesian cities.

However, despite the appeal of Korean food in terms of taste, presentation, and cultural value, Indonesian Muslims remain concerned about the halal status of its ingredients (Zulfa et al., 2023). This concern arises from the frequent use of certain ingredients such as alcohol, non-halal meat, and specific fermented elements that may conflict with Islamic law. Therefore, halal certification becomes a crucial requirement in ensuring comfort and safety for Muslim consumers. The Indonesian government has responded to this need by enacting several regulations related to halal product assurance. These include Law No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection, Law No. 18 of 2012 on Food, Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance (UU JPH), and Presidential Instruction No. 2 of 1991 on Enhancing Supervision of Processed Food Production and Distribution. The establishment of the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) as a government body responsible for halal product assurance underscores the urgency and legal framework of halal certification in Indonesia.

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In practice, the halal certification process involves the role of the Halal Inspection Agency (LPH) and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), especially through the Institute for the Assessment of Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics LPPOM MUI. This institution holds the authority to conduct halal audits on products submitted by businesses and to provide recommendations to the MUI Fatwa Commission for the issuance of halal status. The halal audit evaluates not only the religious law compliance of the ingredients but also assesses safety and scientific clarity (Natalina et al., 2023). This integration of scientific and sharia assessments forms the foundation of halal fatwa decisions.

However, several challenges remain in the implementation of halal certification. The process involves multiple stages and institutions, making it vulnerable to bureaucratic delays and potential conflicts of interest, especially because BPJPH appoints LPHs, which can result in institutional dominance (Natalina et al., 2023). For example, LPPOM MUI, while responsible for audits, is also part of the MUI that issues halal fatwas, creating a risk of role overlap and institutional hegemony. Other challenges include the limited number of halal auditors to conduct biannual inspections and the potential for ingredient manipulation by businesses during audits (Aslan, 2023). In some cases, businesses have continued using halal registration numbers even after the certificate has expired.

Given these challenges, it is essential to understand how the halal certification process can be properly implemented according to both Indonesian positive law and Islamic law to avoid violations or misuse (Hanifasari et al., 2024). The procedure includes multiple stages: training in the Halal Assurance System (SJH), implementation of SJH, document preparation, online registration, field audits, post-audit monitoring, and issuance of the halal certificate. Each stage must be carried out with high commitment and integrity to ensure the complete halal status of the product. Therefore, this study aims to comprehensively examine the halal certification procedure, particularly for Korean cuisine, which has been gaining substantial popularity in Indonesia. Additionally, this research will explore the legal validity of halal certification from the perspective of Islamic law, which serves as the main normative foundation in the lives of Muslim communities.

This study is formulated around two key research questions: (1) What is the halal certification procedure at LPPOM MUI in East Java Province? and (2) What is the Islamic legal perspective on the validity of halal certification? The purpose of this research is to accurately understand the halal certification process and the Islamic legal standing of its legitimacy. The findings are expected to offer theoretical benefits for society and academics in understanding the legal and procedural basis of halal certification, as well as practical benefits for business actors especially MSMEs so they become more aware of the importance of halal assurance for their products, which is crucial for the sustainability and trust of the Muslim market.

Method

The author employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Descriptive-analytical research aims to provide a description of situations or events (Sudrajad, 2024). From this definition, it can be understood that descriptive research involves explaining or portraying the situation or event being studied. In this study, the researcher attempts to describe data obtained from surveys and compare it with existing literature.

The method used in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is designed to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts of individuals or groups (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The reason for using this method is to examine the issues related to the procedure of halal certification application. This research is a field study, where the main data are gathered through direct observations and data sources in the field. The research is conducted by being directly present at the object to collect data and various information regarding the procedures and challenges in implementing halal certification authority. In addition to field research, this study also

uses library research to support the investigation by utilizing relevant literature from libraries related to the research topic.

This study uses two main sources of data. First, primary data, which are data directly obtained by the researcher from the source without intermediaries. The researcher collects data through interviews and direct observation in the field. The words and actions of the observed or interviewed subjects serve as the primary data source. Specifically, data will be gathered directly from three departments responsible for halal certification procedures: the standard and management information system department, the training department, the assessment and research department, and one Korean food business actor.

Second, secondary data are used, which are indirect sources that provide additional support and strengthen the research data. In qualitative research, data sources besides words, language, and actions from informants can also be obtained through library studies using books related to the research problem and internet media to support analysis and discussion. Moreover, data will be collected from archives and photographs taken during the research. To ensure the accountability of this study, the data sources are crucial to produce detailed and accurate research results. The type of data in this study is qualitative data, presented in verbal form rather than numerical. Qualitative data in this research include a general description of the research object, such as the brief history of its establishment, organizational structure and division of work, as well as the halal certification procedure at LPPOM MUI East Java Province.

Following data collection, data analysis becomes very significant for this research. The author uses a descriptive-analytical method to analyze the data. This method involves analyzing the collected data by presenting it systematically and then drawing conclusions. The descriptive-analytical method will be used to understand the halal certification application procedure at LPPOM MUI East Java, particularly considering that business actors often lack awareness of the importance of halal certification for the benefit, safety, and well-being of the Muslim community. To analyze the data, the author applies an inductive reasoning pattern. Inductive analysis is a method that explains and analyzes data obtained from the field without starting from theoretical deduction.

Result and Discussion

The Urgency of Halal Food in Korean Cuisine with Unverified Halal Status

The issue of halal certification for a product is complex and cannot be taken lightly. It requires in-depth laboratory analysis to ensure the halal integrity of raw materials, production processes, equipment, and even packaging this includes Korean cuisine. Therefore, the implementation of halal standards is crucial. These standards serve to provide certainty, protection, and peace of mind to consumers, particularly Muslims, by preventing the consumption of prohibited (haram) products. This aligns with consumer rights protected under Law Number 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection. Article 4(a) of the law affirms that consumers have the right to comfort, safety, and security when consuming goods and services. This provision ensures that all consumers, especially Muslims who make up the majority in Indonesia, are entitled to products that are safe and permissible according to their religious beliefs namely, halal products.

Korean cuisine initially fell into the category of foods with uncertain halal status. In 2007, driven by the rise of the global "Halal Trend," many Korean restaurants, eateries, and food brands even in non-Muslim countries began striving to align with this trend. While the term "trend" suggests a temporary phenomenon, halal certification has evolved into a symbol of quality assurance. As a result, in May 2015, the South Korean government, through its business and trade consultancy agencies, partnered with the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) to issue halal certifications for Korean Halal Food (KHF) products before their distribution in Indonesia.

Korean Halal Food refers to food products from South Korea that have received halal certification either directly from the Korea Muslim Federation (KMF) or through collaborations with Muslim-

majority countries such as Indonesia. Additionally, in October of the same year, South Korea held promotional events to introduce and market KHF products in Indonesia through the K-Food Fair, organized by the Korea Food Promotion Institute (KFPI) and sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) and the Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation (aT).

Despite the influx of Korean products into Indonesia, not all of them are halal-certified. Popular items such as instant noodles (e.g., Shin Ramyun and Yukgaejang), cooking seasonings, cream soups, sauces, snacks like seaweed, and even ice cream often lack halal certification. Moreover, some Korean imports with halal certification from the KMF are not recognized as halal by MUI, necessitating additional certification through cooperation with MUI before these products can be legally marketed in Indonesia (Susilawati et al., 2023).

Case Study: A Korean Cooking Ingredient and Its Critical Halal Control Point (Korean Sauces)

Korean cuisine is often inseparable from its signature sauces, which are integral to the flavor profile of many traditional dishes. Commonly used Korean sauces include Gochujang, Bulgogi sauce, Doenjang, Chunjang, and Samjang. Each of these sauces has a specific role in various recipes, as outlined below:

1. Gochujang (Korean chili paste) A staple in Korean cooking, used in nearly all dishes such as tteokbokki, bibimbap, ramyeon, and kimchi.
2. Chunjang (black soybean paste) Commonly used in the Korean-Chinese fusion dish jjajangmyeon.
3. Samjang Typically used as a marinade, especially for Korean BBQ.
4. Doenjang Often referred to as Korean soybean paste or the Korean equivalent of tauco (fermented soybean paste).

These sauces are widely available both in physical markets and online marketplaces. Therefore, it is crucial for both producers and consumers to exercise caution when selecting these products, especially if the intent is to prepare halal Korean cuisine. Always choose brands that are certified halal by credible authorities. Take Gochujang, for instance this chili paste is a key ingredient in almost every traditional Korean dish. Its halal status is critically determined by the fermentation process, which can potentially introduce alcohol. Alcohol content in food can compromise its halal integrity. According to the Indonesian Council of Ulama (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI), if the alcohol content in a product exceeds 2%, it is not considered halal.

In imported Gochujang products from Korea, the alcohol content often comes not only from the natural fermentation process but also from an added ingredient known as jujeong. This alcohol is intentionally added to halt the natural fermentation process of Gochujang, which further complicates its halal status. In Indonesia, only two Korean sauce brands are currently certified halal by the MUI: Kikkoman and Mokgofood. These certified brands offer safer alternatives for Muslim consumers who wish to enjoy Korean flavors without compromising their dietary beliefs.

Halal Certification Process by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) for Korean Cuisine in East Java Province

As Korean cuisine gains popularity across Indonesia, including in East Java, the issue of halal assurance becomes increasingly important for Muslim consumers. To ensure food safety and uphold Islamic dietary laws, the Indonesian government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, established LPPOM MUI (Institute for the Assessment of Food, Drugs and Cosmetics – Indonesian Ulama Council). This institution is responsible for managing the halal certification process, providing clarity and protection for consumers, and preventing the misuse or falsification of halal labels.

The obligation to follow halal regulations is not just legal but also religious. As mentioned in the Qur'an Surah An-Nisa (4):59: "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is best, and most suitable for final determination."

This verse emphasizes the need to adhere to rules set by both religious scholars and state authorities. Thus, halal certification is both a legal safeguard and a spiritual commitment to consuming only what is permissible and pure (halalan thayyiban).

1) For Food Processing Industries

- a. All products made at the same facility or under the same brand must be registered.
- b. All production locations, including outsourced processing (maklon) and packaging factories, must be included.
- c. Maklon facilities must either already be certified halal or be willing to undergo certification.

2) For Restaurants and Catering Businesses

- a. All menu items, including seasonal items and third-party products (e.g., birthday cakes), must be listed.
- b. All outlets, kitchens, and warehouses must be registered.

3) For Slaughterhouses

- a. All slaughtering facilities within the company must be included in the certification application.

Whether you're a Korean restaurant, food stall, or sauce producer, you must comply with the following halal certification steps outlined by LPPOM MUI:

- 1) Understand Halal Certification Requirements & Attend SJH Training Businesses must familiarize themselves with the halal certification standard HAS 23000 and participate in Halal Assurance System (SJH) training, which is available both offline and online via www.halalmui.com.
- 2) Implement Halal Assurance System (SJH). Before applying, businesses must already implement SJH, including: Declaring a halal policy, Conducting training for staff, Creating SOPs related to halal, Running internal audits and management reviews.
- 3) Prepare Required Documentation. Korean cuisine businesses must compile documents such as: Product and ingredient lists, Ingredient certification or documentation, Process flow diagrams, Halal Assurance Manual (SJH Manual), Proof of internal training, socialization, and audits Detailed document guidelines can be found in the User Manual Control at www.halalmui.com.
- 4) Register via Online System (CEROL). Applications are submitted online via the CEROL system at www.e-lppommui.org. SMEs are advised to read the CEROL manual before uploading their data.
- 5) Pre-Audit Monitoring & Payment. After uploading the application: Monitor pre-audit findings daily to identify and correct discrepancies. Download the akad (contract) from CEROL, sign it, and complete the payment process.
- 6) On-Site Halal Audit. Once pre-audit and akad payment are approved, LPPOM MUI will conduct an audit: An official audit notice is sent with dates and auditor details. Auditors visit the business and inspect halal practices on-site. Audits focus on: Management's halal commitment, Production observations, Sampling suspicious ingredients (e.g., pork derivatives, alcohol).
- 7) Post-Audit Monitoring. After the audit, daily monitoring is recommended to address any non-conformities. Corrections must be completed before the certification is finalized.

- 8) Receiving the Halal Certificate. If the audit is successful and all requirements are fulfilled, the halal certificate (valid for 2 years) is issued. It can be downloaded via CEROL and also sent as a hard copy from the LPPOM MUI office in Jakarta.

Legal Implications of Halal Certification by LPPOM MUI East Java on Korean Restaurant Cuisine

Halal certification is an official statement issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) at the national or provincial level regarding the halal status of food, beverages, medicines, and cosmetics produced by a company after a thorough investigation and declaration by LPPOM MUI (Hanifasari et al., 2024). The authority responsible for issuing halal product certification is the MUI, with technical execution carried out by the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Assessment Institute (LPPOM). For consumers, a halal certificate serves several key functions. First, it protects Muslim consumers from ingesting non-halal food, medicines, and cosmetics. Second, it provides psychological comfort and peace of mind. Third, it safeguards the integrity of both body and soul from the harmful effects of haram products. Fourth, it offers legal certainty and protection (Mahri et al., 2024).

For producers, the halal certificate plays several important roles. First, it demonstrates the producer's accountability to Muslim consumers, as halal compliance is a core aspect of the Islamic way of life. Second, it increases consumer trust and satisfaction. Third, it enhances the company's brand image and competitiveness. Fourth, it serves as a marketing tool to expand distribution networks. And fifth, it increases business profitability by boosting competitiveness, production, and sales (Fauzi, 2023).

Halal certification must also cover raw materials, additives, and auxiliary ingredients that are not sold in retail packaging, especially for food, beverage, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and other consumer products (Enceng et al., 2024). This certification requirement applies not only to domestic products but also to imported goods. However, it is important to note that not all international or foreign halal standards are acceptable in Indonesia. This is due to Indonesia's strict interpretation of halal guidelines. For instance, pork derivatives that may be considered no longer haram in some countries due to molecular transformation are still considered haram under Indonesian standards, regardless of any changes they undergo (Öztürk, 2022).

Several institutions are involved in determining the halal status of a product. These include the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Indonesian Food and Drug Authority (BPOM), MUI (Fatwa Commission and LPPOM), and the Ministry of Agriculture, all of which are part of the Indonesian Halal Committee (KHI). A halal certificate is valid for two years and can be renewed for the same duration. Every business entity that has obtained halal certification must display the halal label and certificate number on each product package. During the certificate's validity period, any changes in materials, suppliers, or processing technology must be reported to and approved by the issuing LPPOM MUI (Rafiki et al., 2024). This compliance is documented through the implementation of a Halal Assurance System (HAS), which companies must develop in accordance with guidelines issued by LPPOM MUI.

In response to public demand for a state-regulated halal certification body, Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance has made halal certification mandatory for all processed and packaged food and beverage products transitioning from the previously voluntary approach (Yuliantini et al., 2022). Data from field studies show that many Korean restaurants and food outlets in East Java have already adopted halal industry principles, with several having utilized ingredients certified by LPPOM MUI (Ibnunas & Harjawati, 2021). This aligns with current legal mandates, and as outlined above, the benefits of obtaining MUI halal certification extend beyond producers and consumers. It is also a matter of fulfilling a national obligation with integrity and responsibility (Setyowati & Anwar, 2022).

Islamic Legal Review on the Legality of Halal Certification

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population, requires an institution that guarantees the halal status of food products circulating in the market. The Institute for the Assessment of Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics of the Indonesian Ulema Council (LPPOM MUI) is an institution formed by MUI with the purpose of protecting Muslim consumers in consuming food, beverages, medicines, and cosmetics through a certification process carried out by business actors in order to obtain halal certification from LPPOM MUI. This is in accordance with several Quranic verses that command the consumption of halal food. Allah Subhānahu wa Ta‘ālā states: “So let man look at his food.” (QS. ‘Abasa (80): 24)

This verse indicates that Allah commands humans to always pay attention and be cautious about the food they consume not only in terms of how it is made or produced, but also in terms of its benefits and health impacts. Moreover, Allah commands humankind to consume food that is both halal (permissible) and ṭayyib (wholesome and good). Allah has permitted all types of food on Earth for human consumption, as long as it is halal and ṭayyib. Halal food is not only about physical substance but also the lawful means by which it is obtained and processed. Ṭayyib food, on the other hand, refers to food that is not only nourishing but also beneficial and free from harm to the body and mind.

As mentioned above, it is forbidden to alter what is haram (forbidden) into halal and vice versa, as this constitutes shirk (associating partners with Allah) and wrongdoing (Deuraseh & Ali, 2019). This principle of halal is reflected in Indonesian law through the role of MUI, which is authorized to handle matters of halal certification relating to food, medicine, and cosmetics. A halal label on product packaging indicates that the product has been verified as halal by LPPOM MUI in accordance with the Islamic standard of ṭayyib. This halal labeling provides assurance and peace of mind to Muslim consumers. In the modern technological era, it is vital to assess not only the materials used in a product but also the production process. When raw materials are fresh and unprocessed, determining their halal status is straightforward. However, if processing involves additional substances or auxiliary materials, further investigation is needed to ensure the halal status. Concerns arise when these substances might originate from haram or impure sources, or when their extraction involves prohibited practices. These challenges are compounded by the rapid development of food technology, which introduces a wide range of new materials and additives.

Although a product may appear clean and halal, it is possible that its processing involves substances that are haram or impure, making its halal status ambiguous. Technically, many processed food and beverage products are produced in ways where the origin of the materials and compliance with Islamic guidelines are unclear especially when the products come from countries with non-Muslim majorities. To address these concerns, the Indonesian government has enacted a specific law that embodies Islamic principles from the Qur’an and Hadith: Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance. Article 4 of this law states: “Every food and beverage product that enters, circulates, and is traded in Indonesia must be halal-certified.”

This provision makes halal certification and labeling a mandatory obligation for businesses (Aysan & Syarif, 2025). From a fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) perspective, halal certification is a normative regulation developed, proposed, and agreed upon by scholars and the government, thus becoming a form of ijmā‘ (scholarly consensus). This consensus asserts that halal certification and labeling, especially in commercial transactions involving food, must be supported by legal certification in line with the divine texts.

Allah says: “O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.” (QS. An-Nisā’ (4): 59)

The term *ulil amri* (those in authority) in this verse refers to both secular and religious leaders rulers, heads of state, and Islamic scholars (*mujtahid*). If the authorities have agreed upon a ruling, it

must be obeyed by all Muslims. In addition to *ijmāʿ*, the principle of *qiyās* (analogy) also supports the legitimacy of halal certification. Though halal certification is not explicitly mentioned in the Qurʾan, it can be analogized to the Qurʾanic command to “eat what is halal.” In *qiyās*, the source case (*aṣl*) is one that has a known ruling based on a clear text, which is then used as a comparison for a new issue lacking an explicit ruling. Thus, halal certification aligns with the legal foundations of Islamic jurisprudence.

Finally, the principle of *maṣlaḥah* (public interest) further justifies halal certification. *Maṣlaḥah mursalah* refers to benefits identified after the Prophet’s time that are not contrary to Islamic law. The aim is to ensure that food and drinks are healthy, halal, and wholesome. Halal certification and labeling are essential to achieving *maṣlaḥah*, providing comfort, safety, and legal clarity to the public. Unfortunately, many traders are unaware of the importance of halal certification. However, with its implementation, *maṣlaḥah* is upheld, bringing peace of mind and certainty to the Muslim community.

Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive discussion and analysis, it can be concluded that halal certification represents a concrete implementation of consumer protection principles under both national law and Islamic jurisprudence. This certification is particularly crucial in Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population in the world. In this context, the Assessment Institute for Foods, Drugs and Cosmetics of the Indonesian Ulema Council (LPPOM MUI) plays a pivotal role in ensuring that various products, including emerging culinary trends like Korean cuisine, comply with halal and *thayyib* standards. The halal certification process established by LPPOM MUI is not merely an administrative formality but reflects a moral and spiritual responsibility of producers toward Muslim consumers. It ensures that products are not only halal in terms of their ingredients but also *thayyib* meaning they are clean, beneficial, and processed in accordance with Islamic teachings.

From a legal standpoint, halal certification is supported by key national regulations such as Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance and Law No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection. These laws provide a solid legal foundation for Muslim communities to access products that are safe, healthy, and religiously compliant. The halal certification system developed by LPPOM MUI consists of several important stages, including: Halal training for business operators, Implementation of a Halal Assurance System (HAS), On-site audits conducted by certified halal auditors, and Continuous post-certification monitoring. However, the effectiveness of halal certification still faces several challenges in practice. These include: A shortage of qualified halal auditors, Limited understanding of halal-*thayyib* principles among business actors, and Risks of data manipulation by irresponsible parties during the certification process. Therefore, strong collaboration among business owners, the government, MUI, and the public is essential to maintaining the integrity and sustainability of the halal certification system in Indonesia. Public awareness must also be raised continuously, especially in today’s globalized culinary landscape where foreign products are more accessible than ever. In conclusion, halal certification is not only a manifestation of contemporary Islamic legal reasoning through *ijtihād*, *qiyās*, and *maṣlaḥah mursalah* but also a strategic instrument to ensure consumer trust and uphold Islamic values in everyday life.

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