

Strategic Management Analysis of the Halal Certification Program Implementation in Surabaya

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Article Info

Article History:

Received : 19 September 2025
Reviewed : 9 October 2025
Accepted : 12 November 2025
Published : 6 December 2025

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the strategic management process in implementing the halal certification program by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Surabaya City. The research specifically focuses on evaluating the alignment between policy formulation and local implementation using four analytical dimensions: consistency, consonance, advantage, and feasibility. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and document analysis involving halal facilitators (P3H), ministry officials, and MSME representatives. The findings reveal that while the Surabaya City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs has aligned its operations with the national halal certification strategy established by BPJPH, challenges persist in stakeholder participation, resource adequacy, and digital integration. The study highlights that consistency and institutional advantage are relatively strong, whereas consonance and feasibility require reinforcement through clearer coordination and performance-based incentives. Theoretically, this research contributes by integrating Islamic ethical principles—amanah (trust), ihsan (excellence), and maslahah (public welfare)—into the framework of strategic management, thus providing a holistic model for public-sector halal governance and offering practical implications for improving local policy implementation and institutional performance.

Keywords:

Management; Halal Certification Program; Strategic; Halal.

DOI: 10.28918/ijibec.v9i2.9230

JEL: L21, L31, Q18, Z12



1. Introduction

The halal industry has emerged as a major driver of global economic growth and social development, extending beyond religious compliance to become a strategic source of competitiveness in international trade. The *State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2024* estimates the global halal economy at over USD 3.2 trillion, growing annually by 8–10% (Liaqat, 2024). Consequently, many Muslim-majority countries have institutionalized halal certification as a public-policy instrument to enhance consumer trust, export performance, and economic resilience.

Within the ASEAN region, the integration of halal policy frameworks has become a strategic priority. Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore have developed certification systems reflecting different governance approaches — from Malaysia's centralized JAKIM model to Indonesia's decentralized BPJPH scheme. While Malaysia maintains uniform national standards through MS 1500 and digital monitoring (MyEHalal), Indonesia delegates authority to local religious offices and halal facilitators (Najla & Fatwa, 2025). This decentralization, while inclusive, creates administrative variations that influence certification outcomes across provinces and cities.

Indonesia's demographic profile and policy orientation provide a unique context for halal-industry development. With more than 248 million Muslims (approximately 86% of its population), Indonesia possesses the world's largest domestic halal market (Muhammad, 2024). The government, through the National Sharia Economy and Finance Committee (KNEKS), has targeted the nation to become the global halal hub by 2029, integrating halal certification, industrial clusters, and Islamic finance (KNEKS, 2023). The Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs spearheads certification implementation, supported by local offices and registered facilitators (Pendamping Proses Produk Halal – P3H). The Sehati program, introduced in 2022, provides free halal certification to MSMEs via the self-declare pathway, complemented by paid facilitation schemes (BPJPH, 2024).

Despite these efforts, national progress remains below expectations. As of mid-2024, Indonesia had certified only around 4.9 million products—less than half of its 10-million target. In Surabaya City Ministry of Religious Affairs, East Java, the situation illustrates these implementation challenges. Of approximately 150,000 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), only around 21,000 have obtained halal certificates. The disparity indicates that policy execution issues are not confined to MSMEs' readiness but also rooted in administrative management, coordination, and resource allocation within the implementing bodies (Wafiyah et al., 2024).

With the relaxation of the time period for achieving the halal certification target, the P3Hs, including those from the Ministry of Religion of Surabaya City, need to formulate strategic management, either following the strategy from BPJPH or their own strategy in order to maximize assistance to business actors in obtaining halal certification. The policy of extending the period for fulfilling the halal certification target is a new policy ahead of the

end of the initial target for halal certification in October 2024. Previous studies have mostly highlighted the response of business actors regarding the implementation of the halal certification policy. Although the research focuses on institutions such as LPOM MUI, the results of the research are in the form of public responses regarding the performance of institutions regarding the implementation of halal certification (Ilmi, 2024).

Existing studies on halal certification have predominantly examined entrepreneurs' awareness, compliance behavior, and consumer perceptions (Tumiwa et al., 2023). While these studies provide important insights into demand-side and business-level dynamics, they offer limited understanding of the strategic-management processes underlying policy implementation. In particular, little attention has been given to the implementers' perspective—namely, how government officers at the municipal level plan, coordinate, and evaluate halal-certification programs. This gap is critical given that halal-certification policy in Indonesia requires extensive collaboration among the central Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH), regional religious offices, halal facilitators (P3H), and local communities. Moreover, the extension of the halal-certification deadline beyond October 2024 highlights the urgency for adaptive and context-sensitive management strategies at the local level. Although some institutional studies assess public satisfaction with halal-certification services (Ilmi, 2024), they rarely investigate internal managerial capacities and strategic decision-making processes. Consequently, a clear research gap remains in understanding how halal-certification policies are strategically managed and operationalized by government actors at the municipal level.

In public management theory, strategic management ensures that institutional activities align with organizational objectives while adapting to changing environments (Bryson et al., 2014). It encompasses four evaluative dimensions—consistency, consonance, advantage, and feasibility—that enable holistic assessment of policy implementation (Mulyati et al., 2022); (Nyenje et al., 2024). Applying these dimensions to Indonesia's halal-certification framework allows examination of whether local implementers execute programs consistently with national objectives, adapt effectively to stakeholder needs, build comparative advantage, and operate feasibly within resource constraints.

Beyond managerial efficiency, the evaluation of halal governance necessitates the integration of Islamic ethical principles, including *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ihsan* (excellence), and *maslahah* (public welfare). These values extend strategic management frameworks by embedding moral accountability and social benefit, thereby aligning administrative performance with the realization of *maqasid al-shariah* (Chapra, 2021; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). Within this context, Indonesia's halal-certification system provides an important empirical setting to examine how sharia-based mandates are operationalized through public policy. As one of the country's major industrial and commercial hubs, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Surabaya City offers a representative case for analyzing the interaction between national regulatory objectives and local implementation capacity. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the strategic management of the halal-certification

program at the municipal level by identifying its strengths and constraints across the dimensions of consistency, consonance, advantage, and feasibility. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the advancement of Islamic public-management discourse and practically to enhancing policy coherence and governance effectiveness within Indonesia's halal ecosystem.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the implementation of halal-certification policy at the municipal level. This approach is particularly suitable for capturing organizational processes, managerial practices, and contextual dynamics that cannot be adequately explained through quantitative measurement. Data were collected by engaging directly with halal-certification implementers to document their experiences, perceptions, and decision-making practices within the institutional setting of policy execution. By focusing on naturally occurring processes, the qualitative design enables an in-depth understanding of how halal-certification programs are planned, coordinated, and evaluated in practice.

The selection of this method is based on the study's objective to explain how and why halal-certification implementation varies across local contexts, rather than to test predefined hypotheses. It also facilitates the inclusion of implementers' perspectives, which are often underrepresented in top-down policy evaluations. Operating within an interpretive paradigm, the researcher serves as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, ensuring close engagement with the field while maintaining reflexivity and ethical rigor. This approach allows the study to produce context-sensitive insights relevant to improving local-level halal-certification governance.

2.2. Research Site and Context

The study was conducted at the Surabaya City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, East Java, one of Indonesia's largest metropolitan areas and a major industrial and commercial hub with a rapidly expanding Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. Surabaya's diverse economic landscape—encompassing traditional food production, manufacturing, modern retail, and service industries—offers a relevant and strategic setting for examining the governance of halal certification within an urban context. The city's economic dynamism, coupled with high MSME participation, makes it an appropriate case for analyzing the interaction between regulatory frameworks and local business practices.

Administratively, the Surabaya City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs plays a central role in coordinating halal certification through its Sharia Affairs Division, which oversees zakat and halal product assurance. This office supervises local halal facilitators (Pendamping Proses Produk Halal – P3H) and works in collaboration with community- and university-based Halal Product Process Assistance Institutions (Lembaga Pendamping Proses Produk Halal – LP3H), including LP3H UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. As a region with active institutional involvement yet persistent challenges in meeting halal-certification targets,

Surabaya represents a microcosm of Indonesia's broader halal economy and provides valuable insights into the practical dynamics of policy implementation at the municipal level.

2.3. Data Sources and Informants

This study employed both primary and secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of halal-certification implementation at the municipal level. Primary data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews and direct observation involving eleven purposively selected informants: five halal facilitators (P3H), three officials from the Surabaya City Ministry of Religious Affairs, two MSME owners participating in the *Sehati* program, and one representative from LP3H UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. These informants were selected based on their direct involvement and practical experience in the halal-certification process. Secondary data were obtained from institutional reports, official statistics on halal certification (2023–2024), and policy documents issued by BPJPH and KNEKS. The integration of multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Data collection was conducted from April to June 2024 using three complementary techniques. First, face-to-face in-depth interviews lasting 45–90 minutes were carried out at government offices, halal facilitation workshops, and MSME premises, focusing on coordination mechanisms, communication issues, and resource constraints. Second, non-participant observation was undertaken during facilitation activities and coordination meetings to capture operational dynamics and stakeholder interactions. Third, document review was used to examine regulations, progress reports, and internal memoranda for cross-validation. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent, and detailed field notes were maintained to ensure data accuracy and analytical rigor.

3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the field study conducted at the Surabaya Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and discusses them in relation to the theoretical framework of strategic management. The results are organized under four analytical dimensions—consistency, consonance, advantage, and feasibility—which represent the core evaluative pillars of public-sector strategy (Mulyati et al., 2022); (Nyenje et al., 2024). The findings are also interpreted through the lens of Islamic ethics, emphasizing the principles of amanah (trust), maslahah (public benefit), and ihsan (excellence) as essential values for halal governance (Beekun, 2006); (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024).

3.1. Consistency: Alignment Between Policy and Implementation

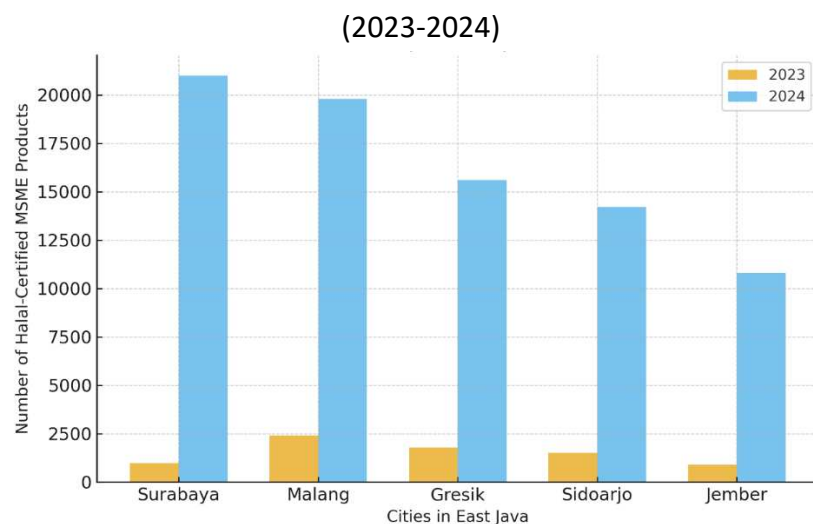
Consistency in strategic management refers to the internal alignment between institutional goals and actual practices (Bryson et al., 2014). In the case of Surabaya, this dimension reflects how effectively the local office translates the national target of halal certification into operational actions. Field findings show that the Surabaya Ministry of Religious Affairs has successfully integrated halal certification into its annual work plan, aligning with the national *Sehati* Program coordinated by BPJPH.

However, the distribution of workload and target quotas among Pendamping Proses

Produk Halal (P3H) officers remains inconsistent. Several officers reported a lack of structured coordination, leading to uneven progress across subdistricts.

“We receive the target from the central office, but the number of active P3H is not proportional to the MSME population in each district.” — Interview with P3H Officer, Surabaya, May 2024.

This indicates partial consistency between top-down policy formulation and local implementation capacity.



Source: BPJPH (2024); Ministry of Religious Affairs of East Java (2024).

Figure 1. Comparative Growth of Halal-Certified MSME Products in Major Cities of East Java

As shown, Surabaya’s certification growth lags behind Malang and Gresik despite its larger MSME base. This reflects limited managerial synchronization, particularly in resource allocation and monitoring. From an Islamic perspective, maintaining consistency aligns with the principle of *istiqamah*—steadfastness in fulfilling obligations and achieving justice in performance.

3.2. Consonance: Adaptation to Stakeholder Needs

Consonance assesses how institutions respond to stakeholder expectations and environmental challenges (Nyenje et al., 2024). In Surabaya, socialization and community engagement activities have been carried out through seminars and field mentoring. Nevertheless, the Facilitation Program (with a fee of IDR 230,000) restricts participation among micro-scale enterprises.

Interviews revealed that many small entrepreneurs were unaware of the self-declare pathway or considered the process administratively complex. This finding resonates with previous studies noting that information asymmetry and limited guidance hinder MSME participation in halal certification (Wafiyah et al., 2024). Comparatively, Malaysia’s JAKIM provides full subsidy schemes and user-friendly digital systems (MyEHalal), while Brunei’s HECAS integrates government and industry actors in decision-making (Kamil & Hatta, 2025). These models highlight the importance of policy flexibility and participatory mechanisms.

In Islamic terms, consonance corresponds to *maslahah*—ensuring that governance systems serve public welfare. A responsive halal-certification policy not only supports business actors but also preserves consumer trust and community prosperity (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2020). Therefore, enhancing local consonance through inclusive facilitation and transparent communication is vital for Surabaya’s halal-governance improvement.

3.3. Advantage: Leveraging Institutional Strengths

Advantage represents the organization’s ability to generate competitive or institutional leverage (Mulyati et al., 2022). In this regional context, this advantage lies in the collaborative network among the Ministry of Religious Affairs, LP3H universities, and the regional BPJPH office. Joint training programs and public campaigns have strengthened halal awareness among MSMEs.

However, findings indicate that these initiatives remain sporadic and depend heavily on individual commitment rather than institutionalized programs. The absence of consistent funding for P3H activities reduces sustainability.

A P3H informant explained:

“Most of us volunteer without specific incentives. We do this out of amanah and dedication, but it is hard to maintain continuity without operational support.”

— Interview, May 2024.

This statement illustrates the tension between motivation (*niyyah*) and institutional support. Comparatively, studies in Malaysia and Thailand show that institutional synergy and government-backed financing substantially increase certification efficiency and trust (Najla & Fatwa, 2025). In the Islamic framework, advantage reflects *ihsan*—striving for excellence in fulfilling duties. A well-managed halal-governance system should cultivate *ihsan*-based professionalism, ensuring both procedural quality and spiritual accountability. Institutional synergy among BPJPH, P3H, and local stakeholders thus embodies *ihsan* through collective excellence.

3.4. Feasibility: Resource Adequacy and Implementation Capacity

Feasibility refers to the availability of sufficient resources, authority, and technical capability to achieve policy objectives (Bryson et al., 2014). In Surabaya, resource limitations constitute a significant challenge. The number of active P3H officers is relatively small compared to the demand from thousands of MSMEs seeking certification. Budgetary dependence on central funds also delays local initiatives.

Despite these constraints, the office has introduced several innovations, including online registration and WhatsApp-based coordination, to streamline the application process. However, data monitoring remains fragmented due to the absence of an integrated digital dashboard connecting BPJPH and local offices. Comparative evidence suggests that nations with centralized certification systems and advanced digital governance—such as Malaysia and Brunei—tend to achieve greater efficiency and institutional credibility. For instance, Brunei has been studied in its efforts to adapt certification infrastructure to local institutional constraints (Li et al., 2025).

Therefore, Surabaya's experience underscores the need for digital integration and incentive alignment across government levels. From an Islamic standpoint, feasibility aligns with *amanah*—the responsible management of entrusted duties and resources. A feasible system is not only operationally sound but also morally grounded, ensuring that responsibilities are executed with sincerity and reliability (Beekun, 2006).

3.5. Comparative and Theoretical Insights

The comparative evidence across ASEAN countries confirms that institutional integration and digitalization are critical drivers of effective halal-certification governance. Malaysia's MyEHalal and Brunei's HECAS exemplify harmonized systems, while Indonesia's decentralization creates both flexibility and fragmentation (Kamil & Hatta, 2025). From a theoretical viewpoint, this pattern reflects the logic of institutional (DiMaggio & Powell, 2000)—where local institutions emulate national norms but adapt them to contextual constraints.

Applying this to Surabaya's case, partial isomorphism occurs: the city office replicates central policy structures but lacks equivalent resource support. This explains the uneven outcomes across subdistricts and program clusters. Therefore, strengthening inter-agency coordination and digital monitoring can reduce institutional distance and improve strategic alignment.

3.6. Islamic Value Perspective

The integration of Islamic values provides deeper understanding of the managerial and ethical dimensions of halal-certification governance. In Islam, governance (*siyasaḥ syar'iyah*) emphasizes justice, trust, and benefit for society (*adl, amanah, maslahah*). Each dimension of strategic management finds its moral counterpart in these principles:

- a. Consistency → *Istiqamah* (steadfastness)
- b. Consonance → *Maslahah* (public welfare)
- c. Advantage → *Ihsan* (excellence)
- d. Feasibility → *Amanah* (trustworthiness)

These ethical imperatives transform strategic management from a technical model into a spiritually anchored practice. When P3H officers assist MSMEs with sincerity and accountability, they embody *ihsan* in public service. When the government ensures equitable access to certification, it fulfills *adl* and *maslahah*. Thus, halal-certification governance becomes not only an administrative responsibility but also a manifestation of faith-based public value creation (Chapra, 2012); (Beekun, 2006).

Across all four dimensions, the Surabaya case reveals that consistency and advantage are moderately strong, while consonance and feasibility require institutional reinforcement. The findings highlight the need for clearer target setting, incentive mechanisms for P3H officers, and digital integration across government levels.

Conceptually, aligning these strategies with Islamic values ensures that policy implementation serves both administrative efficiency and spiritual accountability. This synthesis reinforces the argument that strategic management grounded in Islamic ethics

provides a comprehensive model for public governance, especially in sectors—like halal certification—where religion, economics, and public policy intersect.

The findings indicate that the implementation of the halal certification program in Surabaya demonstrates partial effectiveness when assessed through strategic management dimensions. Consistency and institutional advantage appear relatively strong, as local implementation generally aligns with national directives issued by the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH) and is supported by collaborative arrangements involving halal facilitators (P3H) and university-based LP3H institutions. Similar patterns have been identified in previous studies highlighting the role of inter-organizational collaboration in improving halal governance outcomes (Mulyati et al., 2022; Wafiyah et al., 2024). Nevertheless, consonance and feasibility remain constrained by uneven stakeholder engagement, limited dissemination of information on the self-declare mechanism, and shortages in human and financial resources. Fragmented digital integration and the disproportion between the number of MSMEs and available facilitators further weaken implementation capacity. From an Islamic governance perspective, these limitations indicate that although values of *amanah* and *ihsan* are evident at the individual level, stronger institutional arrangements are needed to realize *maslahah* and align practice with *maqasid al-shariah* (Chapra, 2021; Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024).

Compared with other ASEAN halal-certification systems, Surabaya's experience reflects the broader structural challenges of Indonesia's decentralized halal governance. Malaysia's centralized JAKIM model, supported by the MyEHalal digital platform, and Brunei's integrated Halal Economy Certification and Advisory Services (HECAS) framework exhibit higher coordination, standardized procedures, and stronger digital monitoring, resulting in more efficient certification processes (Najla & Fatwa, 2025; Liaqat, 2024). These systems benefit from unified regulatory authority, adequate resources, and streamlined digital infrastructure. In contrast, Surabaya operates within a flexible yet resource-limited structure that allows local adaptation but produces uneven outcomes across districts. This finding is consistent with prior research emphasizing that decentralization without sufficient coordination mechanisms can reduce policy effectiveness (Bryson et al., 2014; Nyenje et al., 2024). Strengthening inter-agency coordination, digital integration, and facilitator capacity—while maintaining contextual flexibility—could enhance local halal-certification performance and better integrate administrative efficiency with Islamic ethical accountability.

4. Conclusion

This study analyzed the implementation of the halal-certification program at the Surabaya City Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs through a strategic-management lens, focusing on four evaluative dimensions: consistency, consonance, advantage, and feasibility. The findings indicate that while the institution demonstrates strong commitment and managerial effort, several structural and operational challenges continue to constrain program effectiveness. Consistency and advantage emerge as the strongest dimensions, as local policies are generally aligned with national BPJPH directives and supported by collaborative

networks involving LP3H institutions and P3H officers, which have contributed to increasing halal awareness among MSMEs. However, consonance and feasibility remain limited due to uneven stakeholder engagement, shortages in human and financial resources, and the absence of fully integrated digital systems. These constraints help explain why Surabaya's certification performance, although improving, still lags behind that of comparable cities such as Malang and Gresik.

From a theoretical perspective, this research extends the strategic-management framework into the domain of faith-based public policy by integrating Islamic ethical principles, including *amanah* (trustworthiness), *maslahah* (public welfare), *ihsan* (excellence), and *istiqamah* (steadfastness). This integration advances a holistic model of Islamic strategic management in which effectiveness is assessed not only through administrative efficiency but also through moral accountability and societal benefit. The findings suggest that successful halal governance requires both institutional coherence and ethical integrity, thereby bridging contemporary public-management theory with Islamic values. This model offers a conceptual reference for strengthening halal governance in other Muslim-majority contexts while highlighting halal certification as both an administrative responsibility and an ethical mandate in public service.

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