



Enhancing Halal Certification Compliance Among MSMEs Through Asset-Based Community Development: Evidence from Coastal Tourism in Indonesia

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Abstract

The implementation of mandatory halal certification policies in Indonesia presents significant challenges for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly in tourism-driven coastal areas where regulatory literacy and procedural readiness remain uneven. This study aims to examine whether an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach can enhance halal certification readiness among MSME actors operating in Pahawang Beach and Klara Beach, Lampung Province. Employing a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design combined with qualitative triangulation, data were collected from 50 MSME participants through structured surveys, focus group discussions, and field observations. The intervention focused on strengthening regulatory awareness, procedural literacy, attitudinal readiness, and behavioral commitment toward halal certification. The findings indicate substantial improvements across knowledge and compliance indicators, including increased understanding of legal obligations, certification timelines, and administrative sanctions, as well as a marked rise in certification registration interest and application behavior. The results further reveal that prior barriers were predominantly procedural rather than ideological, and that participatory mentoring effectively reduced informational asymmetry while activating community-level support networks. By integrating regulatory compliance with asset-based empowerment, this study advances halal governance scholarship and demonstrates that community-driven facilitation can function as an effective intermediary mechanism between statutory mandates and MSME institutional engagement. The implications suggest that mandatory halal certification policies should be accompanied by localized participatory capacity-building strategies to ensure inclusive compliance, particularly within emerging halal tourism ecosystems.

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has increasingly positioned itself as a strategic actor in the global halal tourism landscape, supported by its demographic advantage as the country with the largest Muslim population and its abundant natural and cultural tourism resources (Huda et al., 2022; Marlina et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2023). Over the past decade, halal tourism has evolved from a niche religious segment into a structured global industry characterized by standardized services, regulatory

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frameworks, and competitive destination branding (Bazin et al., 2025; Misbah & Johari, 2024). The rapid growth of Muslim travel mobility, increasing purchasing power, and stronger demand for Shariah-compliant services have significantly reshaped the global tourism ecosystem (Chen et al., 2024; El-Gohary, 2020; Paudel et al., 2024). Within this transformation, halal tourism is no longer limited to the provision of halal food but encompasses a comprehensive value chain integrating accommodation standards, financial transactions, ethical consumption, environmental responsibility, and regulatory assurance mechanisms (Khairuldin et al., 2024; Marlina et al., 2024; Sutainim et al., 2023). Consequently, countries seeking to compete in this sector must develop institutional infrastructures capable of ensuring both compliance and credibility.

In Indonesia, the institutionalization of halal governance has been significantly strengthened by the enactment of Law No. 33 of 2014 on Halal Product Assurance, which mandates halal certification for products circulating in the domestic market. The regulatory framework is administered through the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH), establishing a formal compliance mechanism that directly affects Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), particularly in food, beverage, and tourism-related sectors (Wardani & Wardani, 2024; Herdiana et al., 2024; Mahri et al., 2024). The mandatory deadline for halal certification implementation by October 2024 represents a structural shift from voluntary labeling toward compulsory regulatory compliance. Such a transition requires not only administrative readiness but also cognitive, procedural, and behavioral preparedness among MSMEs, which constitute the backbone of Indonesia's tourism economy (Anatan & Nur, 2023).

MSMEs play a central role in halal tourism ecosystems because they operate at the interface between destination branding and service delivery. Empirical evidence demonstrates that halal certification enhances consumer trust, strengthens product competitiveness, and increases perceived quality among Muslim consumers (Ghazali et al., 2022; Mabkhot, 2023). Furthermore, halal-certified businesses are more likely to access broader domestic and international Muslim markets, thereby contributing to inclusive economic development (Fathan et al., 2022; Hidayati et al., 2022; Mahri et al., 2024). However, despite these benefits, certification uptake among MSMEs remains uneven. Several studies have identified regulatory complexity, limited institutional literacy, financial constraints, and procedural ambiguity as major barriers hindering compliance adoption (Widigdo & Triyanto, 2024; Nofandi, 2025; Utama et al., 2025). These constraints are particularly pronounced in emerging tourism destinations where business operators often operate informally and have limited access to structured training or government facilitation.

From a theoretical perspective, halal tourism should be understood not merely as a market-driven phenomenon but as a multidimensional governance framework integrating religious ethics, institutional regulation, and sustainable development principles (Bazin et al., 2025; Khairuldin et al., 2024; Marlina et al., 2024). The philosophy of halal extends beyond compliance toward maqasid-oriented value creation, emphasizing protection of faith, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth (Hassan et al., 2021; Wahyudi et al., 2021). In this sense, halal certification functions as a trust-building instrument that reduces information asymmetry between producers and consumers while reinforcing ethical accountability within supply chains. However, the operationalization of this governance model requires localized capacity-building mechanisms capable of translating macro-level policy mandates into micro-level business practices (Firmansyah et al., 2025; Lahuri et al., 2025; Septiani & Ridlwan, 2020).

Community-based empowerment approaches offer a promising framework for bridging this gap. The Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) model, in particular, emphasizes mobilizing existing community assets social capital, local knowledge, religious values, and entrepreneurial networks rather than focusing on deficiencies (Amadu et al., 2020; Maclure, 2023; Stienstra et al., 2019). Empirical applications of ABCD in tourism and rural development contexts demonstrate its effectiveness in fostering participatory engagement, strengthening collective efficacy, and enhancing sustainable economic outcomes. Unlike top-down regulatory enforcement strategies, ABCD-based interventions encourage ownership, collaboration, and context-sensitive adaptation. Such an approach is particularly relevant for halal tourism development, where compliance is intertwined with religious values and community identity (Salam et al., 2025; Wajdi et al., 2024).

Although previous studies have explored halal tourism implementation in regions such as Lombok and Aceh, and others have examined MSME readiness for halal certification in urban

contexts (Bulan et al., 2025; Mukhlishin et al., 2025; Prawiro, 2023), limited research has investigated how community-based empowerment frameworks can systematically enhance MSME readiness in emerging coastal tourism areas. Existing scholarship tends to focus either on consumer preference analysis or on strategic policy modeling at the macro level. Few empirical studies adopt a quasi-experimental design to measure pre- and post-intervention changes in regulatory literacy, certification awareness, and behavioral intention among MSMEs operating within tourism clusters. Moreover, while ABCD has been widely applied in rural poverty alleviation and ecotourism development (Aji et al., 2021; Stylidis et al., 2020; Suci & Hardi, 2019), its integration into halal certification governance remains underexplored. While prior studies have examined halal tourism competitiveness and destination development (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Henderson, 2016), the role of halal certification in shaping consumer trust (El-Gohary, 2020; Ghazali et al., 2022), and MSME readiness for certification adoption (Hidayati et al., 2022; Mahri et al., 2024), limited empirical evidence exists on how community-based empowerment approaches, particularly Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), can enhance MSME regulatory literacy and behavioral readiness for halal certification within emerging coastal tourism ecosystems (Amadu et al., 2020; Stienstra et al., 2019).

This gap is particularly evident in coastal destinations such as Pahawang and Klara Beaches in Lampung Province, which possess strong tourism potential and a high concentration of MSMEs, especially in the food and beverage sector, yet face structural challenges including limited institutional outreach, low regulatory literacy, and minimal formal certification uptake. Without targeted intervention, the mandatory halal certification policy risks becoming a compliance burden rather than a strategic driver of MSME competitiveness. Therefore, this study investigates how an ABCD-based empowerment approach can strengthen MSME capacity in halal certification. Specifically, it aims to: (1) assess changes in MSME knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions following an ABCD-based intervention; (2) evaluate the effectiveness of participatory community engagement in strengthening regulatory compliance capacity; and (3) develop a replicable model for integrating halal certification assistance into community-based tourism strategies. By doing so, this study contributes to the halal tourism governance literature by providing empirical evidence on community-driven compliance mechanisms and offers practical insights for policymakers in fostering sustainable halal ecosystems at the grassroots level.

METHOD

This study adopted a quasi-experimental mixed-method design employing a pretest–posttest structure to evaluate the effectiveness of an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) intervention in enhancing MSME readiness for halal certification in emerging coastal tourism destinations in Lampung Province, Indonesia. The research was conducted in Pahawang Beach and Klara Beach, Pesawaran Regency, selected due to their growing tourism potential, high concentration of food and beverage MSMEs, and relatively limited formal halal certification uptake despite the approaching mandatory certification deadline under national regulation. A total of 50 MSME actors voluntarily participated in the program, meeting inclusion criteria that required active business operation within the tourism area and direct involvement in production or service processes. The intervention was structured around the five iterative stages of the ABCD framework Discovery, Dream, Design, Define, and Destiny which emphasize mobilizing existing community assets, strengthening collective vision, and facilitating sustainable action planning.



Figure 1. The 5D Cycle (Discovery–Dream–Design–Define–Destiny) in the ABCD Approach

As illustrated in Figure 1, the model follows a cyclical empowerment process in which the definition of focus and scope (Define) is followed by asset identification (Discovery), the development of shared aspirations (Dream), collaborative strategy formulation (Design), and long-term implementation and sustainability (Destiny). This cycle reflects a participatory and iterative approach to community empowerment, emphasizing the mobilization of local assets and collective action.

Data collection integrated quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure analytical robustness. Structured survey instruments were administered before and after the intervention to measure changes in four principal constructs: regulatory awareness (understanding of halal certification obligations), procedural literacy (knowledge of certification steps and ingredient compliance), attitudinal readiness (perceived importance and benefits), and behavioral intention (willingness to register and apply for certification). The survey items were adapted from established halal certification and MSME readiness literature (Ghazali et al., 2022; Mabkhot, 2023) and validated through expert review. Complementing the survey, focus group discussions and non-participant observations were conducted to capture experiential learning processes, perceived barriers, and community-level engagement dynamics.



Figure 2. Data Collection Methods

The integrated data collection framework is presented in Figure 2, which visually summarizes the four complementary techniques employed in this study: surveys to measure changes in knowledge and attitudes; focus group discussions to explore stakeholder perceptions and challenges; observations to monitor practical training implementation; and program documentation to track participation and engagement levels. This figure is inserted immediately after the paragraph explaining the data collection strategy to illustrate the methodological triangulation applied.

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and comparative statistical techniques, with percentage-point differences calculated between pretest and posttest responses to assess the magnitude of change across key indicators (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns related to regulatory comprehension, empowerment dynamics, and behavioral transformation. Triangulation across survey findings, FGD narratives, observational records, and documentation enhanced internal validity and strengthened interpretive credibility. Ethical standards were strictly maintained through informed consent procedures, voluntary participation, and anonymization of all respondent data. Overall, the methodological framework ensures both analytical rigor and contextual sensitivity, enabling a robust evaluation of how an ABCD-based empowerment intervention operationalizes halal certification readiness within grassroots tourism economies

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Research Setting and Community Engagement Context

The intervention was conducted in two coastal tourism destinations in Pesawaran Regency, namely Pahawang Beach and Klara Beach. These locations were selected due to their growing tourism activity and the concentration of food-based MSMEs that directly interact with domestic and international visitors.



Figure 2. Community Engagement Pahawang Beach

Field engagement in Pahawang Beach is illustrated in Figure 2 (Community Engagement Pahawang Beach), which documents participatory mentoring sessions and collective discussions conducted with MSME actors. The figure demonstrates active involvement of participants during the empowerment process, reflecting high engagement intensity and collaborative learning dynamics.

The broader geographical context of the first research site is presented in Figure 3 (Pahawang Island), which provides spatial orientation and highlights the strategic position of the island within Lampung’s coastal tourism network. The tourism-driven economic ecosystem observed in this setting underscores the importance of halal certification in strengthening consumer trust and service legitimacy.

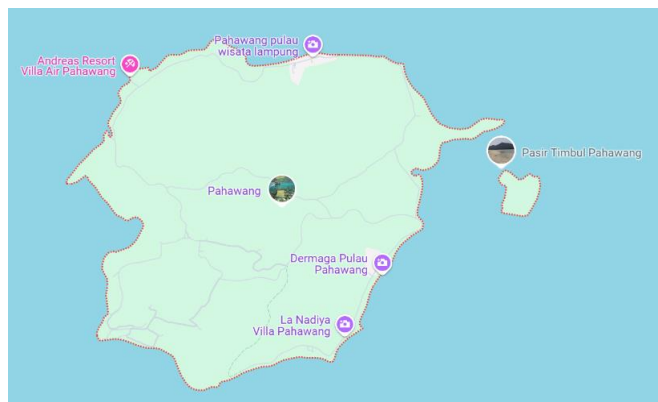


Figure 3. Pahawang Island

Similarly, the intervention in the second research site is documented in Figure 4 (Community Engagement 2 Klara Beach). The image captures the implementation of structured training and assistance sessions delivered to MSME actors operating within the Klara Beach tourism area. Comparable levels of participant interaction and knowledge-sharing behaviors were observed in this setting.



Figure 4. Community Engagement 2 Klara Beach

The geographical distribution and tourism infrastructure of the second site are illustrated in Figure 5 (Klara Beach Map), which contextualizes the MSME activities within a broader coastal

economic landscape. The spatial characteristics of both locations confirm their strategic relevance for halal certification intervention, particularly in tourism-driven microeconomic environments.



Figure 5. Klara Beach Map

Baseline Knowledge and Procedural Readiness

The baseline survey results indicate that although participants were generally familiar with the concept of halal certification, their procedural readiness remained limited. As presented in table 1, a relatively small proportion of MSMEs were able to accurately describe the formal steps required for halal certification registration, including documentation preparation, halal assurance system development, and compliance verification.

Table 1. Demographic profile of pretest participants

Category	Details	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	29.63%
	Female	70.37%
Age	20–30 years	20.37%
	30–40 years	48.15%
	40–50 years	25.93%
	>50 years	5.56%
Education	Elementary School	7.41%
	Junior High School	16.67%
	High School	70.37%
	Undergraduate Degree	3.70%
	Postgraduate Degree	1.85%
Marital Status	Single	7.41%
	Married	87.04%
	Widow/Widower	5.56%
Business Type	Services	1.85%
	Food and Beverages	83.33%
	Clothing and Accessories	14.81%

Knowledge gaps were particularly evident in administrative and regulatory aspects, suggesting that informational barriers constituted a primary obstacle to formal certification engagement. These findings indicate that awareness alone was insufficient to ensure operational compliance readiness.

Baseline Attitudes Toward Halal Awareness

Attitudinal pretest results are summarized in Table 2. While normative endorsement of halal principles was already high, formal institutional engagement was comparatively low:

Table 2. Pretest Result: Attitudes Toward Halal Awareness Among Business Operator

Survey Item	No (%)	Yes (%)
Prior to the program, were you interested in registering your business for halal certification through the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH)?	46.38%	53.62%
Before the intervention, had you ever submitted an application for halal certification?	72.14%	27.86%
Did you primarily sell products that you personally considered to be halal?	14.27%	85.73%
Did you sell products that were formally halal-certified and displayed an official halal logo?	33.91%	66.09%

Survey Item	No (%)	Yes (%)
Did your business exclusively produce products that complied with halal requirements?	15.02%	84.98%
Did you consistently recommend halal products to consumers?	9.18%	90.82%
Did you express agreement with the overall concept of halal tourism?	3.24%	96.76%
Did you believe that displaying a halal logo at your business could increase consumer interest?	2.97%	97.03%

As shown in Table 3, 53.62% of respondents expressed initial interest in registering for halal certification; however, only 27.86% had ever submitted an official application. This reveals a substantial intention action gap. Notably, 96.76% agreed with the broader concept of halal tourism, and 97.03% believed that displaying a halal logo could increase consumer interest. However, only 66.09% reported selling officially certified products, and 84.98% claimed full compliance with halal production standards. These discrepancies demonstrate that symbolic and ideological alignment with halal values exceeded formal regulatory participation prior to the intervention.

Impact of the Intervention on Knowledge

The pretest–posttest comparison indicates substantial cognitive gains following the ABCD-based empowerment intervention. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Post-Test Results: Knowledge of Halal Awareness Among Business Operators

Survey Item	No (%) Pre	Yes (%) Pre	No (%) Post	Yes (%) Post	Increase (%)
Prior to the program, were you familiar with the concept of halal certification?	38.46%	61.54%	6.92%	93.08%	31.54%
Before the intervention, had you been exposed to the concept of halal tourism?	56.92%	43.08%	9.27%	90.73%	47.65%
Were you aware that halal certification is a legal obligation under national regulations?	78.83%	21.17%	24.68%	75.32%	54.15%
Did you know that halal certification is mandatory for relevant products by October 2024?	73.65%	26.35%	15.84%	84.16%	57.81%
Were you aware that raw materials and additives must also comply with halal certification requirements?	66.98%	33.02%	19.43%	80.57%	47.55%
Did you understand that halal certification provides assurance and confidence for consumers?	49.12%	50.88%	13.96%	86.04%	35.16%
Were you aware of the administrative sanctions imposed for non-compliance with halal regulations?	71.47%	28.53%	21.38%	78.62%	50.09%
Did you understand the criminal penalties associated with violations of post-certification halal compliance?	62.84%	37.16%	23.91%	76.09%	38.93%
Had you received official information on halal certification from government authorities?	60.91%	39.09%	17.86%	82.14%	43.05%
Did you clearly understand the distinction between halal and non-halal products?	8.27%	91.73%	4.18%	95.82%	4.09%
Would you rate your overall understanding of halal products as excellent?	21.36%	78.64%	8.74%	91.26%	12.62%

Across nearly all indicators, knowledge increased significantly. Awareness that halal certification constitutes a legal obligation under national regulations rose by 54.15 percentage points. Understanding of the mandatory October 2024 certification deadline increased by 57.81 percentage points the largest improvement observed. Similarly, awareness of administrative sanctions increased by 50.09 percentage points, while knowledge of criminal penalties improved by 38.93 percentage points. Exposure to the concept of halal tourism increased by 47.65%, and understanding of raw material compliance requirements rose by 47.55%. The relatively small

increase (4.09%) in distinguishing halal from non-halal products reflects an already high baseline score. Overall, the consistent upward trend across regulatory, procedural, and institutional knowledge variables confirms that the intervention effectively reduced informational asymmetry and strengthened legal awareness.

Impact on Attitudes and Behavioral Commitment

Beyond cognitive improvement, the intervention generated measurable attitudinal and behavioral shifts. The comparative results are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Post-Test Results: Attitudes Toward Halal Awareness Among Business Operators

Survey Item	No (%) Pre	Yes (%) Pre	No (%) Post	Yes (%) Post	Increase (%)
Prior to the program, were you interested in registering your business for halal certification through BPJPH?	46.38%	53.62%	15.27%	84.73%	31.11%
Before the intervention, had you ever submitted an application for halal certification?	72.14%	27.86%	34.56%	65.44%	37.58%
Did you primarily sell products that you personally considered to be halal?	14.27%	85.73%	6.41%	93.59%	7.86%
Did you sell products that were formally halal-certified and displayed an official halal logo?	33.91%	66.09%	17.38%	82.62%	16.53%
Did your business exclusively produce products that complied with halal requirements?	15.02%	84.98%	8.19%	91.81%	6.83%
Did you consistently recommend halal products to consumers?	9.18%	90.82%	4.63%	95.37%	4.55%
Did you express agreement with the overall concept of halal tourism?	3.24%	96.76%	0.92%	99.08%	2.32%
Did you believe that displaying a halal logo at your business could increase consumer interest?	2.97%	97.03%	0.74%	99.26%	2.23%

Interest in registering for halal certification increased from 53.62% to 84.73%, representing a 31.11 percentage-point rise. More importantly, the proportion of participants who had submitted an official application increased by 37.58 percentage points, demonstrating movement from intention toward concrete institutional engagement. The percentage of businesses selling officially halal-certified products increased by 16.53 percentage points, indicating early-stage formal compliance transition. Improvements were also observed in exclusive halal production (6.83%), consistent recommendation of halal products (4.55%), and endorsement of halal tourism principles (2.32%). While normative agreement indicators showed modest increases due to already high baseline values, the most substantial shifts occurred in certification registration and formal compliance behavior. These results confirm that the intervention successfully narrowed the intention action gap identified in the baseline assessment.

Qualitative Reinforcement and Community-Level Effects

Qualitative findings derived from discussions and observations in both research sites provide explanatory depth to the quantitative results. Participants reported that initial reluctance was driven primarily by perceived bureaucratic complexity and lack of procedural clarity rather than ideological resistance. The engagement processes documented in Figures 2 and 4 visually support this transformation, reflecting participatory learning environments and collaborative mentoring dynamics. Following the intervention, participants expressed increased confidence in navigating certification procedures and interacting with regulatory authorities. Additionally, informal peer-support networks began to emerge. MSME actors shared documentation templates, supplier information, and compliance strategies. This indicates that the empowerment process activated internal community assets and fostered collective readiness structures rather than isolated individual compliance efforts.

Discussions

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on halal governance and MSME compliance by demonstrating that regulatory readiness is not merely a function of normative religious alignment but is fundamentally shaped by procedural literacy and institutional accessibility. While prior research has consistently shown that MSME actors often express strong support for halal principles, formal certification uptake remains comparatively low (Bashir, 2019; Sokhanvar et al., 2018; Yuanitasari et al., 2025). The present findings reinforce this distinction between symbolic endorsement and regulatory engagement, yet extend the literature by empirically showing that this gap can be substantially narrowed through structured community-based facilitation. Rather than attributing low compliance to attitudinal resistance, the evidence suggests that administrative opacity and limited legal literacy constitute the primary barriers.

This interpretation aligns with institutional theory perspectives, which argue that compliance behavior among small enterprises depends heavily on perceived clarity, legitimacy, and enforceability of regulatory frameworks. However, unlike studies that focus on macro-level regulatory structures, this research situates compliance transformation within a localized empowerment model. By embedding halal certification education within the Asset-Based Community Development framework (Balzano et al., 2025; Hauser, 2022; Sawang et al., 2024), the intervention reframed regulatory adherence as a collective capability-building process rather than an externally imposed obligation. This supports participatory governance arguments suggesting that bottom-up engagement enhances policy internalization more effectively than directive dissemination.

From a behavioral standpoint, the findings resonate with intention behavior gap theory frequently discussed in halal consumer research (Bashir et al., 2019; Han et al., 2019). Yet, while most prior studies examine this gap on the consumer side, this research shifts the analytical lens to producers. The narrowing of the intention-action divide among MSME actors suggests that when procedural complexity is reduced and institutional pathways become navigable, positive attitudes can translate into concrete compliance behavior. This reinforces the idea that structural facilitation mechanisms are critical mediators between normative belief and institutional action.

In the context of halal tourism development, existing scholarship has largely emphasized destination branding, Muslim traveler satisfaction, and service attributes. The present study expands this discourse by highlighting the microeconomic infrastructure underpinning halal tourism ecosystems. Strengthening MSME certification readiness contributes not only to regulatory compliance but also to destination-level credibility. Thus, halal tourism competitiveness should be understood not solely as a marketing construct but as an outcome of coordinated institutional readiness at the grassroots level (Bashir, 2019; Sokhanvar et al., 2018; Yuanitasari et al., 2025).

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative analytical positioning. First, it bridges halal regulatory compliance with asset-based community empowerment, a linkage rarely explored in existing literature. Halal certification is typically framed either as a legal-administrative requirement or a market signaling tool; here, it is conceptualized as a participatory capacity-building process embedded in local economic systems. Second, the study moves beyond descriptive perception analysis by employing a structured pretest-posttest design that captures both cognitive and behavioral transformation. Third, the research contributes to regulatory implementation scholarship by demonstrating that community asset mobilization can function as an effective intermediary mechanism between statutory obligation and voluntary compliance.

The implications are multi-layered. For policymakers, the findings suggest that mandatory halal certification policies should be accompanied by structured facilitation strategies tailored to MSME capacity levels. Enforcement without empowerment risks widening disparities between large enterprises and micro-operators. For halal authorities, integrating community-based mentoring models into certification outreach programs may accelerate compliance ahead of statutory deadlines. For tourism planners, embedding certification support within destination governance frameworks can enhance systemic credibility and long-term competitiveness. More broadly, the study illustrates that regulatory transformation is most sustainable when legal literacy, procedural clarity, and collective agency develop simultaneously.

Nevertheless, several limitations warrant consideration. The absence of a control group limits causal conclusiveness, as external policy communication or parallel information flows may

have contributed to observed changes. The geographic concentration in two coastal tourism areas may restrict generalizability to non-tourism sectors or urban industrial clusters. Additionally, the study emphasizes short-term behavioral indicators, leaving long-term certification completion rates and post-certification compliance sustainability unexamined. Future research should incorporate longitudinal tracking, comparative regional samples, and inferential statistical modeling to strengthen external validity and theoretical generalization. In conclusion, this study advances halal governance literature by reframing MSME certification readiness as a community-embedded institutional learning process rather than a purely regulatory or ideological phenomenon. By empirically demonstrating the effectiveness of asset-based empowerment in facilitating compliance transformation, the research provides both theoretical enrichment and practical direction for inclusive halal ecosystem development.

LIMITATION

Although the study provides meaningful empirical insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the quasi-experimental pretest–posttest design without a control group limits the ability to attribute observed changes exclusively to the intervention. External policy dissemination, peer influence, or concurrent government campaigns may have contributed to shifts in awareness and attitudes. Second, the reliance on self-reported survey data introduces the possibility of social desirability bias, particularly in questions related to religious compliance and regulatory commitment. Participants may have provided responses aligned with perceived normative expectations rather than actual long-term behavioral practice. Third, the sample was geographically concentrated in two coastal tourism destinations, which may limit generalizability to non-tourism MSMEs or urban industrial clusters with different institutional dynamics. Fourth, the study measured short-term post-intervention outcomes, leaving the sustainability of behavioral change and long-term certification completion rates unexamined. Longitudinal research incorporating multi-site comparative designs and inferential statistical modeling would strengthen causal inference and theoretical generalization.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that halal certification readiness among MSMEs in coastal tourism destinations is fundamentally shaped by regulatory literacy, procedural accessibility, and community-based facilitation rather than solely by normative religious alignment. By integrating an Asset-Based Community Development approach into the certification socialization process, the intervention successfully transformed halal compliance from a perceived bureaucratic burden into a collectively supported institutional pathway. The findings demonstrate that structured participatory mentoring can reduce informational asymmetry, strengthen legal awareness, and narrow the intention–action gap that frequently characterizes MSME engagement with formal certification systems. Beyond individual cognitive improvement, the emergence of peer-support dynamics indicates that empowerment-based models can generate ecosystem-level readiness, reinforcing the sustainability of compliance efforts. Theoretically, this research advances halal governance scholarship by bridging regulatory compliance frameworks with community empowerment theory, positioning certification not merely as a legal instrument or market signal but as a participatory institutional learning process. Practically, the study underscores the necessity of coupling mandatory halal policies with localized facilitation mechanisms to ensure inclusive and equitable compliance, particularly within tourism-driven microeconomic environments. Overall, the results suggest that sustainable halal ecosystem development requires simultaneous strengthening of legal clarity, procedural guidance, and collective agency at the grassroots level.

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