

Nexus between halal certificate, competitive advantage, and entrepreneurial orientation of SMEs in Food and Beverage industry

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ABSTRACT

Purpose — *This research aimed to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) by investigating the correlation between obtaining halal certification, adopting an entrepreneurial orientation, and gaining a competitive advantage in their respective industries.*

Method — *This study is categorized as quantitative research involving a sample size of 105 respondents who are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) owners in the food and beverages sector in Kendal Regency. The primary data used in this research was collected directly by the researchers from the respondents, focusing on aspects such as halal certification, entrepreneurial orientation, and competitive advantage. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is employed as the analytical technique in this study.*

Result — *The findings of this research indicate a positive and significant influence of the relationship between halal certification and entrepreneurial orientation on competitive advantage. Additionally, the study reveals a positive and significant impact of halal certification on entrepreneurial orientation. Furthermore, the direct mediating relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and halal certification, as well as competitive advantage, also demonstrates a positive and significant effect.*

Contribution — *This study makes a significant academic contribution by investigating the relationship between halal certification, entrepreneurial orientation, and competitive advantage in the context of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). By filling a knowledge gap in the literature, it enhances our understanding of how these variables are interconnected and their impact on SMEs' competitiveness.*

Keywords: *halal certification, entrepreneurial orientation, competitive advantage*



INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently focused on developing a sustainable economy, and one of the key strategies is to promote Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). These SMEs play a crucial role in sustainable economic development ([Suminah et al., 2020](#)). During the economic crisis in 1998, it was observed that only the SME sector managed to survive the collapse, showcasing their resilience. SMEs hold a strategic position in driving economic activities within communities and serve as a source of income, thereby contributing to the improvement of people's welfare ([Yuliana & Widowati, 2022](#)). Among the various products offered by SMEs, food and beverages stand out as one of their exceptional offerings. According to [Kemenperin \(2022\)](#), the food and beverage industry alone contributes an impressive 37.77% of the non-oil and gas processing industry's GDP in the first quarter of 2022, marking a significant achievement for SMEs operating in this sector.

In Indonesia, it is noteworthy that only approximately 10% of all micro businesses have obtained halal certification ([Sudarmiati et al., 2020](#)). Given that Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, there is a significant interest in ensuring the distribution of safe and halal products ([Warto et al., 2020](#)). However, the presence of additional ingredients derived from various sources, particularly animal-based extractions, often leads to a mixture of halal and non-halal components. This mixture of ingredients compromises the halal status of the product. Consequently, even if businesses claim their products are halal, the circulating products in the community cannot be guaranteed to be halal. This challenge arises because determining the halal and purity of processed products necessitates multidisciplinary studies and specialized knowledge encompassing fields such as food science, chemistry, biochemistry, industrial technology, biology, pharmacy, and Sharia ([Warto et al., 2020](#)).

Halal refers to a quality standard aligned with Islamic law, which applies to all Islamic practices ([Bohari et al., 2013](#)). Muslims choose halal products as an act of adherence to Islamic law ([Waharini & Purwantini, 2018](#)). To obtain a halal certificate, companies undergo a series of inspections to ensure that their raw materials, production processes, and halal assurance systems comply with the standards ([Penilaian et al., 2009](#)). Competent auditors conduct thorough assessments to determine the halal status. Upon meeting the halal requirements, producers receive a halal certificate that includes a halal label and registration number, which are displayed on the product packaging ([Rachmawati, 2005](#)).

Divergent views exist among the public and researchers regarding the presence of halal certification ([Hakim, 2022](#)). The importance of utilizing halal certification for business advancement is emphasized by [Sudarmiati et al.](#)

(2020) in the context of SMEs. [Giyanti et al. \(2020\)](#) posit that obtaining Halal certification can lead to improved business performance. In the interest of exporting halal food, [Masruroh \(2020\)](#) advocates for government participation in promoting halal food. Conversely, it is worth noting that halal certification can be perceived as a trade barrier, resulting in customer complaints, particularly in cross-border trade ([Hisham et al., 2022](#)).

Considering these variations, it is plausible that halal certification in food and beverage products of SMEs can serve as a competitive advantage. This competitive advantage can guide SMEs on the right path, enabling them to monitor and adapt to changes in the external and internal business environment, thereby fostering new knowledge for SME owners. However, it should be acknowledged that competitive advantage also carries the risk of incurring greater losses for halal food SMEs if they fail to select the appropriate strategies for their current operational practices ([Bohari et al., 2013](#)). The ultimate objective of competitive advantage is to emerge victorious in the business environment, utilizing it as a means to attain organizational goals ([Apriliyanto et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, [Mardiyono \(2015\)](#) defines competitive advantage as the essence of marketing activities conducted under competitive circumstances. It encompasses the adoption of profitable strategies by SMEs to collaboratively establish a more effective competitive edge within their respective markets.

In order to recognize the significance of competitive advantage for SME owners, it becomes imperative for them to possess an entrepreneurial orientation. Entrepreneurship itself represents a dynamic process involving envisioning, initiating change, and fostering the creation of new ideas and innovative solutions ([Kuratko, 2009](#)). Not everyone possesses entrepreneurial traits, as entrepreneurship requires individuals who can establish and professionally manage businesses. Entrepreneurial orientation encompasses the pursuit of opportunities, willingness to undertake risks, and the proactive decision-making exhibited by organizational leaders ([Rahmadi et al., 2020](#)). It pertains to the value system within a company that determines its strategic direction or movement. Furthermore, entrepreneurial orientation is perceived as a capability that contributes to enhancing a company's performance ([Yuliana & Widowati, 2022](#)). [Chandra \(2006\)](#) elucidates that entrepreneurial orientation encompasses processes, practices, and decision-making aimed at generating novel outcomes, and it encompasses four key entrepreneurial aspects: innovation, initiative, risk-taking, and autonomy.

The aim of this study is to examine the perspectives of SMEs actors on the significance of halal certification in attaining competitive advantage, while also investigating the potential mediating role of entrepreneurial orientation within

SMEs operating in the food and beverage sector. By doing so, it is anticipated that SMEs actors will gain awareness of the importance of obtaining halal certification to enhance their business endeavors.

METHOD

This research is classified as quantitative research. The study population consists of SMEs in Kendal, and sampling is conducted to select a subset of individuals for participation in the research study ([Sugiyono, 2017](#)). Purposive sampling is employed, where the criteria are determined by the researchers. The sample size for this study comprises 105 respondents who are SMEs actors in the food and beverage sector in Kendal district.

Primary data is collected directly by the researchers, utilizing questionnaires distributed through an online platform, specifically Google Forms ([Ghozali, 2015](#)). The questionnaire responses are then classified using a modified Likert scale to facilitate data processing and analysis. The Likert scale used in this study includes the following categories: 1) 5 points for Strongly Agree, 2) 4 points for Agree, 3) 3 points for Disagree, 4) 2 points for Strongly Disagree, and 5) 1 point for Strongly Disagree. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is employed as the analytical technique, and the SmartPLS software is utilized for data analysis.

Hypotheses development

Halal certification on competitive advantage

The food and beverage sector demonstrates substantial market potential ([Hisham et al., 2022](#)). Given that Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country, expanding the halal food industry serves two key purposes: safeguarding domestic consumers against non-halal products and generating income through the export of halal goods ([Ratanamaneichat & Rakkarn, 2015](#)). The Indonesian government has undertaken significant initiatives to establish Indonesia as the World Halal Center by 2024. Therefore, if SMEs incorporate halal principles into their products, it can lead to special advantages commonly referred to as competitive advantage. According to [Giyanti et al. \(2020\)](#), the halal certification of a product has the potential to enhance business performance. Previous research conducted by [Rachmawati \(2005\)](#) revealed that obtaining halal certification provides a crucial competitive edge over rivals, thereby advancing the product's market position. In conclusion, it can be inferred that:

H1: Halal certification has a positive and significant impact on competitive advantage

Halal certification on entrepreneurial orientation

It is crucial to address the awareness and understanding of SMEs and consumers regarding halal food products (Tren et al., 2018). Despite Indonesia being a predominantly Muslim country, it does not automatically guarantee a comprehensive awareness and understanding of the significance of highly certified halal food products. Therefore, SMEs should capitalize on halal certification to align with entrepreneurial orientation, which will ultimately lead to increased product sales (Wiklund et al., 2009). Additionally, consumer interest is likely to be heightened when a food and beverage product possesses a halal composition. While previous studies have not definitively established the relationship between these two variables, we can draw insights from the aforementioned studies. Thus, it can be stated that:

H2: Halal certification has a positive and significant impact on entrepreneurial orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation on competitive advantage

Entrepreneurial orientation can be defined as an organizational function that aims to create, communicate, and deliver value to customers, manage customer relationships, and benefit both the organization and stakeholders. It is characterized by being innovative, risk-taking, and proactive (Lestari et al., 2019). On the other hand, competitive advantage refers to a set of factors that differentiate small businesses from their competitors and grant them a unique position in the market, resulting in superiority over their rivals. Therefore, business actors who possess entrepreneurial skills and understanding can gain an edge in dealing with internal and external factors of SMEs, enabling them to effectively manage these factors and devise strategies that differentiate them from competitors. A study conducted by Lestari et al. (2019) further demonstrates that entrepreneurial orientation has the ability to influence competitive advantage. In conclusion, it can be stated that:

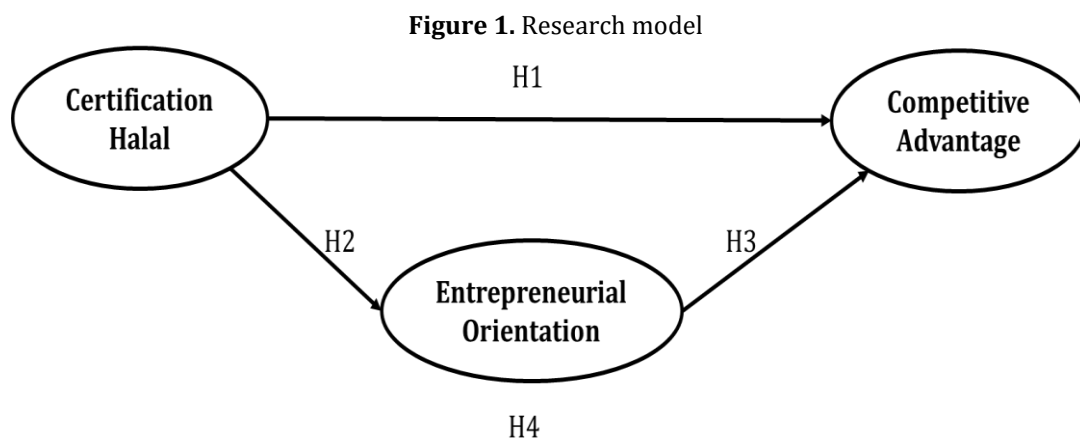
H3: Entrepreneurial orientation has a positive and significant impact on competitive advantage

Halal certification on competitive advantage with entrepreneurial orientation as the mediating variable

Consumer behavior varies among individuals, as each person has different needs, desires, and preferences when making purchasing decisions. For Muslims,

choosing halal products is a way to adhere to Islamic law and demonstrate obedience (Waharini & Purwantini, 2018). Halal certification serves as a quality standard that aligns with Islamic Sharia law and is applicable to all Islamic activities (Bohari et al, 2013). Furthermore, halal products can also be seen as a healthy choice for consumers, considering the emphasis on cleanliness and the use of permissible ingredients. The unique consumer behavior associated with halal products presents an opportunity for SMEs, as catering to these preferences can help ensure the well-being of consumers. While previous studies have not definitively established the relationship between these variables, we can draw insights from the aforementioned studies. Thus, it can be concluded that:

H4: Entrepreneurial orientation is able to mediate the effect of halal certification on competitive advantage



Source: Authors (2023)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity and reliability test

The validity test in this study is conducted through convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is assessed by examining the outer loading values, which should exceed 0.70 according to the standard set by Ghozali (2015). Additionally, convergent validity can also be assessed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, which should be above 0.50 according to the same standard.

Reliability testing in this study involves the use of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The minimum acceptable value for Cronbach's Alpha is

0.60, indicating a reliable measure, while the Composite Reliability value should exceed 0.70, as suggested by [Ghozali \(2015\)](#).

The results of the validity and reliability testing are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Validity and reliability test result

Variable	Outer Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Competitive Advantage	0.727	0.543	0.763	0.825
	0.702			
	0.731			
	0.839			
Entrepreneurial orientation	0.838	0.694	0.889	0.919
	0.877			
	0.769			
	0.872			
	0.805			
Halal Certification	0.881	0.713	0.899	0.925
	0.849			
	0.802			
	0.825			
	0.863			

Source: Data processed (2023)

The outer loadings for all indicators on the variables of competitive advantage, entrepreneurial orientation, and halal certification are above 0.70, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. Additionally, the AVE values for the competitive advantage and entrepreneurial orientation variables exceed 0.50, demonstrating adequate discriminant validity. In terms of reliability, Cronbach's alpha values for the competitive advantage and entrepreneurial orientation variables are above 0.60, indicating good internal consistency. Moreover, the composite reliability scores for these variables surpass 0.70, indicating high reliability. These results confirm that the indicators used for the competitive advantage and entrepreneurial orientation variables meet the necessary criteria for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability.

R-Squared test

R-Squared (R^2) is a statistical measure that represents the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables in a regression model. The interpretation of R^2 values can vary depending on the context and field of study. In the given context, the predetermined definition states that an R-squared value of 0.67 is considered

strong, 0.33 is considered moderate, and 0.19 is considered weak. This interpretation suggests the extent to which the independent variables explain the variation in the dependent variable.

Table 2. R-squared test result

Variabel	R-Squared
Competitive Advantage	0.372
Entrepreneurial orientation	0.216

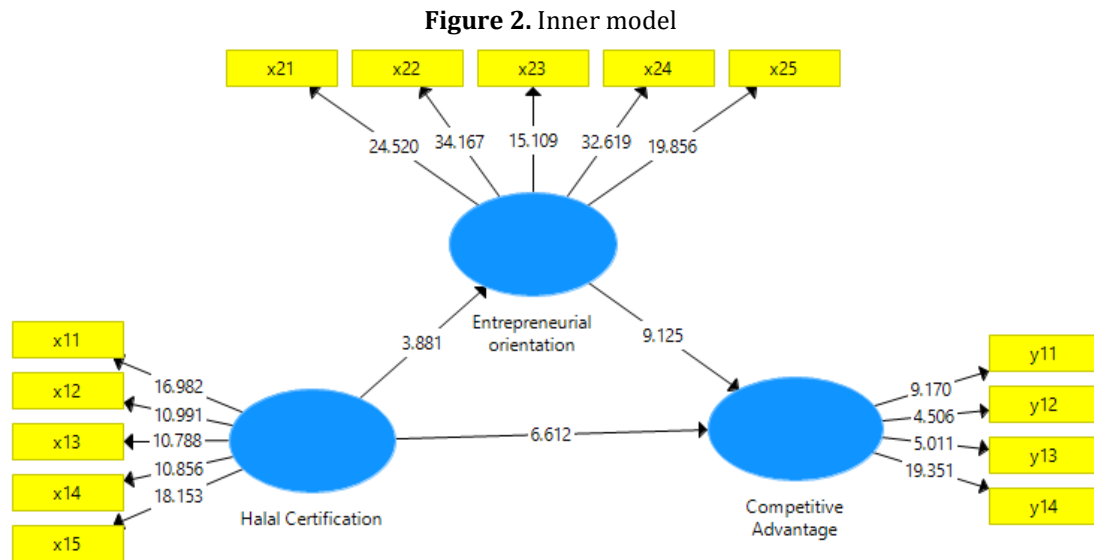
Source: Data processed (2023)

The R-squared test conducted on the competitive advantage variable reveals a value of 0.372, indicating that 37.2% of the variance in competitive advantage can be explained by entrepreneurial orientation and halal certification in this study, while the remaining variance is attributed to other variables not included in the study. This R-squared value suggests a moderate level of explanation for competitive advantage.

On the other hand, the R-squared test conducted on the entrepreneurial orientation variable shows a value of 0.216, indicating that halal certification in this study can explain 21.6% of the variance in entrepreneurial orientation, with the remaining variance being explained by other variables not included in the study. This R-squared value suggests a relatively smaller level of explanation for entrepreneurial orientation.

Although the R-squared values are not high, they are considered sufficient for proceeding with the hypotheses testing stage.

Hypotheses test



Source: Data processed (2023)

Table 3. Hypotheses test result

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T-Statistic	P-Values
Halal Certification → Competitive Advantage	0.544	6.612	0.000
Halal Certification → Entrepreneurial orientation	0.363	3.881	0.000
Entrepreneurial orientation → Competitive Advantage	0.541	9.125	0.000
Halal Certification → Entrepreneurial orientation → Competitive Advantage	0.196	3.202	0.001

Source: Data processed (2023)

This research aimed to examine the relationship between halal certification, competitive advantage, and entrepreneurial orientation in SMEs in the food and beverage sector in Kendal district. The analysis was conducted using the SmartPLS approach. The findings obtained from the analysis are presented in the table above, and they provide valuable insights into the research hypotheses.

The initial measurement of the halal certification sample, in terms of competitive advantage, is 0.544 with a P-Value of 0.000. It is indicated by a T-statistic value of 6.612, which surpasses the T-table value of 1.96. The positive value of the original sample suggests that halal certification has a favorable impact on competitive advantage. Additionally, the significant T-statistic value supports the acceptance of H1.

The initial measurement of the halal certification sample, regarding Entrepreneurial orientation, is 0.363 with a P-Value of 0.000. It is indicated by a T-statistic value of 3.881, which exceeds the T-table value of 1.96. The positive

value of the original sample suggests that halal certification positively influences entrepreneurial orientation. Moreover, the significant T-statistic value confirms the acceptance of H2.

The original measurement of the sample for entrepreneurial orientation concerning competitive advantage is 0.541 with a P-Value of 0.000. It is indicated by a T-statistic value of 9.125, surpassing the T-table value of 1.96. The positive value of the original sample implies that entrepreneurial orientation has a beneficial effect on competitive advantage. Additionally, the significant T-statistic value supports the acceptance of H3.

The original measurement of the sample for entrepreneurial orientation, acting as a mediator between halal certification and competitive advantage, is 0.196 with P-Values of 0.001. It is demonstrated by a T-statistic value of 3.202, which exceeds the T-table value of 1.96. The positive value of the original sample indicates that Entrepreneurial orientation, as a mediator for halal certification, has a positive impact on competitive advantage. Furthermore, the significant T-statistic value confirms the acceptance of H4.

Discussion

Halal certification on competitive advantage

Halal certification plays a significant role in enhancing competitive advantage, especially within the food and beverage industry. Products carrying the halal certification are widely preferred by Muslims both nationally and globally. Consequently, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) involved in the food and beverage sector can leverage halal certification as a vital instrument for achieving success and gaining a competitive edge. Furthermore, the presence of the halal certification label ensures convenience, security, safety, and confidence in the availability of halal products for consumers. This viewpoint aligns with the findings of [Giyanti et al. \(2020\)](#), who suggest that obtaining halal certification for a product can lead to improved business performance. These results are consistent with the research conducted by [Rachmawati \(2005\)](#).

Halal certification on entrepreneurial orientation

Halal certification not only positively influences competitive advantage but also encompasses an entrepreneurial process that involves attitude and behavior. The attitude component pertains to the willingness of individuals or organizations to embrace new opportunities and take responsibility for implementing creative changes. Business actors recognize the significance of

halal certification in increasing consumer confidence in their products. This highlights the entrepreneurial orientation of MSMEs, as they strive to provide satisfaction and security to their consumers. This perspective aligns with the findings of [Wiklund et al. \(2009\)](#), who suggest that halal certification can be leveraged to foster entrepreneurial orientation. Consequently, incorporating halal certification can lead to increased sales of products.

Entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage

Entrepreneurial orientation also plays a significant role in generating a positive impact on competitive advantage. SMEs exhibit a high level of entrepreneurial spirit by fostering innovation in developing new products, which inherently involves taking risks. The willingness to take risks is an entrepreneurial attitude that encompasses investing resources and facing challenges by implementing business strategies that entail uncertainty regarding potential outcomes. Moreover, aggression reflects the determination of entrepreneurs to surpass competitors through assertive and proactive actions. This includes anticipating future needs, introducing new products and services ahead of the competition, and actively shaping the business environment. These perspectives are consistent with the findings of [Lestari et al. \(2019\)](#), who highlight the importance of proactive behavior for the development of new processes and the significance of competitive aggressiveness in enhancing business units. By developing these aspects, businesses can effectively gain a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage refers to a unique set of factors that distinguish small businesses from their competitors, positioning them uniquely in the market and surpassing their rivals. The results of this study align with the research conducted by [Lestari et al. \(2019\)](#).

The effect of halal certification on competitive advantage with entrepreneurial orientation as the mediating variable

Entrepreneurial orientation can serve as a mediator between the impact of halal certification on competitive advantage. SMEs are driven by their ideas for business development, and halal certification plays a crucial role in shaping these ideas. The presence of halal certification for a product enhances customer expectations by ensuring product safety and security. Therefore, the entrepreneurial attitude cultivated by SMEs, stemming from the influence of halal certification, can lead to a competitive advantage for these businesses. This perspective aligns with the findings of [Sudarmiatin et al. \(2020\)](#), who emphasize

the importance of encouraging SMEs to leverage halal certification for the advancement of their business.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the significance of halal certification in empowering SMEs to enhance their competitive advantage in the realm of product offerings. The findings of this research demonstrate that both halal certification and entrepreneurial orientation contribute to an increase in competitive advantage. Additionally, the study reveals that halal certification has a positive influence on entrepreneurial orientation, and at the mediation stage, entrepreneurial orientation plays a crucial role in mediating the impact of halal certification on competitive advantage. This research contributes to the development and refinement of theories related to competitive advantage in SME products. The results can also serve as a foundation for future studies examining the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, competitive advantage, and halal certification.

The findings of this study hold practical implications for practitioners and policymakers. They can utilize this research to advocate for the importance of halal certification in enhancing entrepreneurial orientation and competitive advantage in the food and beverage products of SMEs. Furthermore, policymakers should address the issue of the high costs associated with obtaining halal certification, as this poses a significant barrier for SMEs. It is crucial to find solutions that enable SMEs to overcome this obstacle.

Future studies are encouraged to expand upon this model by including other types of businesses such as cosmetics, medicine, and other consumer goods. By doing so, a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between halal certification, entrepreneurial orientation, and competitive advantage can be developed.

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