



An Empirical Examination of the Bengkel Pematuhan Halal (BPH) by the Brunei Halal Food Control Division in Promoting Halal Certification Compliance

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Abstract: Ensuring halal compliance is crucial for consumer confidence, industry credibility, and governance. The Bengkel Pematuhan Halal (BPH), conducted by the Halal Food Control Division in Brunei Darussalam, serves as a capacity-building initiative aimed at strengthening halal regulatory and compliance. This research evaluates the effectiveness of the BPH in enhancing participants' awareness, practices, and commitment toward halal certification. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-workshop surveys administered to BPH participants ($n = 35$) to assess changes in halal knowledge and compliance readiness. Qualitative data were obtained via semi-structured interviews with selected participants and regulatory officers, providing in-depth insights into perceived challenges and outcomes. Statistical analysis was employed for quantitative findings, while thematic analysis guided the qualitative interpretation. Results indicate that the BPH significantly improves participants' understanding of halal laws, documentation processes, and operational compliance. The programme fosters a stronger commitment to regulatory adherence, though challenges persist among small and medium enterprises, particularly regarding resource limitations and sustained implementation of best practices. This research contributes to halal governance literature by empirically examining the effectiveness of a compliance workshop, which provides evidence that structured interventions like the BPH can enhance halal assurance systems and offers policy recommendations for strengthening long-term compliance through continuous monitoring, digital support tools, and post-training follow-up.

Keywords: Capacity-Building, Halal Compliance, SME Challenges, Workshop Effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the principle of halal and its application stretches across multiple dimensions of an individual's or any organisation's life, such as social, economic, and ethical, intertwining with the very essence of the Islamic religion (Ali, 2016). The Qur'an focuses on and puts emphasis on the consumption of the lawful (halal) and the pure (tayyib) (Aziz et al, 2023), which acts as the linchpin for Muslims in the metiers of food and religion and the other activities associated with it. As it is captured in one of its verses in the Qur'an,

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good, and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy” (Al-Baqarah 2:168).

This verse highlights the principle that

halal is not only about religious observance but also about health, safety, and ethical living. Today, especially in Muslim countries like Brunei Darussalam, halal is both a matter of faith and government policy as stated in Article 3 of the 1959 Constitution of Brunei. It reflects the close connection between religion, state, and everyday practice.

Through the legislative, regulatory, certifying, and enforcing frameworks and mechanisms, Brunei Darussalam has positioned itself as a nation that upholds the integrity of halal products and services. Having several regulatory frameworks in place, the Halal Certificate and Halal Label Order of 2005 and its later revisions are legally the backbone for halal assurance in the food industry. The Halal Food Control Division (HFCD) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is instrumental in the

supervision and enforcement of these standards. The HFCD has gone beyond enforcement and developed a set of organised programs, such as BPH, to assist in promotion, industry capacity building, and voluntary compliance with halal standards.

Especially, BPH is important in seeking solutions to the problems that food businesses, such as SMEs, the halal food industry operators face. As a capacity-building measure, the workshop BPH enhances halal compliance and certification processes by imparting knowledge, skills, as well as ethical training and business owners' moral responsibilities to their Muslim stakeholders. Such initiatives and training programs fit within Brunei's aspirations as articulated in the Vision 2035 plan, alongside its strategic objective of developing a Halal Economy that is vibrant and sustainable, as sought in the national development agenda.

While such programs are highly relevant, there remains scant empirical research assessing their effectiveness in promoting compliance with the halal standards. Even though the literature on halal governance recognises the importance of the certification, legal, and regulatory frameworks, relatively few studies have focused on the impact of training and awareness programs as compliance facilitators. This creates a gap in knowledge as to whether planned activities such as the BPH actually improve practices within the industry and compliance with regulations.

This is the gap the authors intend to fill by assessing the impact of the BPH conducted by the Halal Food Control Division on the participants' knowledge, attitudes, and practices. This research was conducted using a mixed-methods approach to analyse compliance readiness in pre- and post-workshop scenarios, vis-à-vis participant testimonials and identified

hurdles during the process. Structured systems were used to derive holistic reasoning to understand how ushering guided frameworks stepwise would improve halal guarantee systems.

Not only does this research contribute to the literature on halal governance, but it also has great significance in terms of practicality and policy implications. Regulators, policymakers, and practitioners can learn from the research as it demonstrates the value of compliance workshops as a governance tool, while also revealing gaps in governance related to the need for ongoing support, monitoring, training, and digital halal management systems. This research also sheds new light on the Qur'anic teachings of consuming only good and lawful food, aligning the revelation with modern governance and industrial practices.

METHODOLOGY

Examining BPH requires the employment of a mixed method approach, which is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative approach will be in the form of an interview. An in-depth interview with the officers of HFCD, specifically officers involved in halal programs' management. On the other hand, a quantitative approach will be used in the form of a survey questionnaire distributed to the participants. This approach is more effective for this study since it integrates the advantages of adopting qualitative and quantitative research techniques, offering a more thorough and solid comprehension of the topic and obtaining insights from many viewpoints (George, 2022).

The qualitative side of the mixed-method approach would be in the form of interviews. An interview is a good tool to convey expert knowledge in the study field in question, to document and analyse the informants' subjective viewpoints, or to gather information about their biographies. semi-open-ended questions that will be used, which will be decided upon before the interview. From there,

in the case of a new possible inquiry popping up, we would proceed with asking said inquiry; in a sense, a snowball effect is taking place because the answer will bring out new questions.

The quantitative approach, which is known as the positivist approach, limits the research to what the researcher can objectively evaluate. This approach is structured and follows standard protocol, hence allowing other researchers to corroborate or refute the findings. For this approach, the author has created a survey questionnaire to be distributed to the participants of BPH. Due to the quantifying nature of quantitative approach, due to the quantification of the results, most parts of the results were based on Likert scale with strongly agrees scoring 5 and strongly disagrees scoring 1 and the mean score being derived from the survey result.



Figure 1. Research Design for this study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The table below displays the details of BPH;

Table 1. Details of BPH

Name of Program	Bengkel Pemuatan Halal
The Objectives	Provides understanding to owner, manager or operator regarding, i.e. halal standard, halal certificate and permit, safety and cleanliness
The Content	Briefings from HFCD, BDFA, MPRT & DSS

The Time	Once every three months (four times a year); on Monday and Tuesday, the third week of the month
Target Participants	Owners, managers, or operators of food and non-food business premises
The Rational	Upon inspection, there are still halal certified premises that violates the halal regulations
The Place	Brunei Muara: Multaqa Hall, MORA Other districts: Multipurpose Hall
The Duration of Program	Two days
Participation Fee	Free
How to be a Participant	Through invitation

These following tables are all related to the effectiveness of BPH in achieving the objectives that was set;

Table 2. Findings from interview sessions on effectiveness of BPH

Description	Findings				
	OF FA	OF FB	OF FC	OF FD	OF FE
Expectation for BPH					
The expected number of participants for BPH session are 30 or more	-	/	/	/	/
Participants expected to attend BPH understand halal better	-	/	/	/	/



by attending the session	
Outcome of BPH	
The objectives of BPH were achieved	- / / / /
The number of participants surpassed 30 or more participants	- / / / /
Components of BPH	
The logistics for BPH were sufficient	/ - / / /
Planning of BPH were extensive	/ / / / /
The content of BPH helped achieve the program's objective	/ / / / /

Table 3. Survey results on the effectiveness of BPH

Prompts	Mean Score	SD
The objectives of the programs are clear	4.66	0.583
Objectives of the program are achieved	4.6	0.595
After the program, I am more knowledgeable about halal	4.6	0.595
It is important that I attend this program	4.71	0.564

I would recommend people to attend this program	4.69	0.622
The program is very well handled	4.69	0.580

Table 4. Survey results on the evaluation for components of BPH

Component	Mean Score	SD	% agreed
Time of program	4.26	1.51	14.3
Program length of time	4.17	1.82	5.7
Language	4.2	1.141	17.1
Facilitator	4.26	1.51	2.9
Target audience	4.44	1.71	8.6
Attendance	4.2	1.116	11.4
Content	4.26	1.130	17.1
Location	4.34	1.120	5.7
Facilities	4.29	1.110	8.6

Table 5. Results on improvements for BPH

Components	Suggested Improvement
Language	- Addition of another language in the briefings and activities - Assisting any foreigners to understand

	information conveyed
Location	• Conducting sessions at locations that has sufficient parking spaces, provide sufficient facilities and easily obtainable
Content	• Addition of contents from different organisation such as Religious Enforcement Division • Provide activities such as Kahoot! • To be more detailed
Attendance	• Reduction in number of participations, to ensure 100% participations
Program length of time	• To be extended
Facilitator	• Improve HFCD method for BPH
Facilities	• Better PA system

DISCUSSION

According to the table on the Details of BPH, BPH has a similar overarching objective as the other halal programs which is to ensure the understanding of halal matters, however, for BPH the target participants are the owner, manager or operator of halal certified businesses. The aim was to equip the participants with halal related knowledge and hopefully the participants conveyed what they gained through participating in the program. Attending a workshop can therefore be viewed as an investment in learning more about these best practices from the standpoint of human capital theory (De Grip & Pleijers, 2019). This program was held to overcome the problem of halal certified premises still violating the halal regulations, therefore, BPH is tackling the

problem through ensuring the higher-ups of the premises were knowledgeable regarding halal related matters, the violations will cease to exist.

Each session of BPH lasted for two days, which all the participants are required to attend for both days. The session consisted of briefings from multiple organisations such as HFCD, BDFA, DSS and MPRT. BPH is the only program where HFCD collaborates with other organisations for briefings. The content briefed by each organisation is different from each other. For HFCD, the briefing is halal-related, such as the concept of halal and violation related to halal regulations. For BDFA, the briefing is on food safety, such as premise maintenance and food handling. For MPRT, the briefing is on food packaging, such as safety and the material for packaging. For DSS, the briefing is on scientific services, such as tests to detect any pig DNA in ingredients.

The program was routinely held once every three months, which came to be four times a year. The four times it was held would have been for all four districts in Brunei Darussalam. In 2024, BPH was first held in Brunei Muara, on 5th February which was held at Multaqa Hall, MORA. The second session was held in Tutong on 3rd June at Dewan Serbaguna, Pejabat Hal Ehwal Ugama, Tutong. The third session was held in Belait on 9th September at Dewan Bandaran, Jabatan Bandaran Kuala Belait dan Seria, Kementerian Hal Ehwal Dalam Negeri. The final session of the year was held in Temburong on 18th November, at Dewan Serbaguna, Kompleks Bumiputera, Pekan Bangar, Temburong. BPH is the only program conducted by HFCD that was held not at the building where HFCD is in, in comparison, the other programs are held there.

The participants attending BPH become a participant via invitation from HFCD, furthermore it is free of charge for the participants to participate, this is something to highlight, no charge for the participants makes halal programs conducted in Brunei Darussalam distinctive compared to other countries' similar program, hence if the opportunity presents for joining the program, participation should not be hindered due to the cost.

Measuring the level of effectiveness of BPH, there are several parameters need to be satisfied

to

be deemed as an effective session. The parameters are as follows;

- The objective: whether it is achieved from the perspective of both HFCD and participants
- The participants: whether the attendance fulfilled the expectations and whether they are appreciative of the contents provided
- The components: whether the planning, logistics, and content contributed to the success of the session
- The points of improvement: how much of the session can be improve and which part of it can be improved

These points were investigated through interviews and surveys, the findings in the tables related to the effectiveness of BPH are the results derived from the investigation.

Every BPH session aims to give the participants information on halal; ideally, they will share what they have learnt from participating in the workshop. To determine the success of achieving the session's objective, there is a need to clarify its existence in order to ensure involvement for all those who were part of the session.

Most of the participants agree that the program's objectives were clearly known, which is in line with the HFCD officer where all the answers suggested that the objectives were clarified. It is imperative that the objectives are known by the participants as it gives them direction and an end goal by participating. Via the objective, it does not only give pertinent training to the participants, but also in a way shall provide reasonable justification for participation.

It is acceptable to say that the program's objective was achieved. This is supported by the HFCD officers agreeing with the achievement of objectives and the high mean score from the survey participants on the same matter, with the mean score being 4.6. The main purpose of conducting a BPH session is to fulfill the objectives, and accordingly since the data suggested so, it can be said that BPH is effective in terms of the objectives.

It is very important to be clear about what the objective is and achieve said objective due to the impact it may have on both the HFCD and the participants. On the HFCD side, seeing the success of the session sets a precedent that can drive the narrative on the need for the session

and might incentivize the officers to be better for upcoming sessions. On the other hand, it benefits the participants in terms of what they obtained through the sessions and a favourable correlation between employment engagement and training or professional growth. Workers who participate in training or skill development have a higher chance of remaining in their current position than those who do not (Shiri et al., 2023).

Every session of BPH has participants that are made up of owner, managers (top-level and middle-level management), operators of halal certified businesses. The reasoning behind opting for owner, manager and operator, is so that after participating, the knowledge gained through the session can then be conveyed to the employees of the business to be incorporated in day-to-day operatives and becoming the standard operating procedure. The success of strategies cannot be ensured by simply assigning people to tasks and strategies; knowledge transferability, also referred to as objective knowledge, is the nature of knowledge that can be transferred between individuals or between firms; productivity is increased in firms that are innovative and adaptive, which makes the organisation's transformation process more responsive to changing environmental conditions.

Often the businesses were not represented by the owner, manager, or operator, but rather by a regular employee or part-timer, which defeated the main purpose of BPH. Nevertheless, the attendance rate reached the expectation set by HFCD. all the officers agreed that all BPH sessions were expected to be attended by 30 or more participants, therefore, according to figure the number has been achieved.

Looking into the list of companies that participated in the BPH session in Temburong, there are in total fourteen halal-certified businesses, encompassing 40 total participations. The ratio for this session is usually 1:2 meaning that per business, two employees were to be sent to participate in the session. However, the ratio is off for this session meaning there are businesses that only sent a single employee, this can be due to limited number of employees that fits the requirements to be a target participant. While some other businesses sent more than two employees, this can be due to having plethora

of employees that fits the billing. Overall, the participation proves to be effective due to fulfilling the expected number of participants.

The participations from halal-certified businesses and their employees for BPH session is significant in determining the overall outcome of the session, because the whole thing is reliant on the participants' willingness to participate. Although, there may be drawbacks due to the participants not being made up of the actual target participants, there are no indicative evidence supporting this complication, still it serves as a place where HFCD can start improving BPH overall. However, it might be accurate to state that knowledge utilisation is more complicated than just getting a message to the right person at the right time. Along with identifying the target audience and message, it's also important to know which questions need to be addressed first, which should be prioritised, and how the knowledge transfer process will be assessed until it reaches "practice" (Nedjat et al., no date).

When it comes to the components that made up BPH sessions, there were multiple to be analysed, such as the planning, the content, logistics. Along with these, there several other related components of BPH, such as time of program, program length of time, and language.

The level of planning to conduct BPH is very good. As supported by the following remark such as the planning started long before the session took place. The cooperation between different department in planning contributed to the successfulness of the session. Planning is essential for lowering uncertainty because it motivates managers to take initiative. Managers can foresee changes, assess their effects, and create reactions appropriately by planning ahead. Another benefit of planning is clarifying the effects of decisions made in response to environmental changes (Tavo and Rasmus, 2024).

The content of BPH is made up of several briefings and activities meant to help achieve the objectives of BPH. The briefings were conducted by HFCD, DSS, MPRT, and BDFA. The briefings from HFCD are on compliance and enforcement, the briefing from DSS is on the services they provide such as the test on materials or food ingredients, the briefing from MPRT is on the packaging used by the businesses to ensure compliance and lastly the

briefing from BDFA is on safety in food handling and premises upkeep. The contents provided in BPH help achieve the objectives. This is supported by the participants of BPH, with the content getting a mean score of 4.26.

The logistics refers to the program's facilities, the location where it is held. For BPH, since it is considered a bigger session in comparison to other halal programs conducted by HFCD, considerably more efforts were exhausted in terms of the logistics. According to OFFE, the head count for each session does not only include the participants but also officers in charge acting as either the facilitator or helping. According to OFFD, many facilities were not owned by HFCD but rather borrowed from other agencies. Despite that, all the HFCD officers acknowledged that the logistics of the program are sufficient. In addition, the participants of BPH are also in agreement with the effectiveness of the logistics of the program, indicated by the high mean score for location and facilities, which are 4.29 and 4.34 respectively.

As for the other listed components, all of them were given high scores by the program participants. Each of these components were well thought out during planning stages, therefore, the possibility of conducting the session with no hitch. Moreover, the maximising the quality on each of these components contributed to the ease of flow for BPH, and therefore identifying itself as one of the important aspects for BPH.

Overall, according to the responses, almost everybody was satisfied with the components of BPH. Through the interview, HFCD officers commended UTH for being excellent in their handling of BPH, especially its logistics. Through the survey, the participants have given a high mean score to all the components that are related to BPH.

This section has proven that BPH is very effective in fostering halal compliance among participants. However, BPH is do have flaws and there are still aspects of it that be improved.

The participants of the program were given liberty to respond on which aspects they think should undergo improvement to better BPH going forward. Nine related aspects are suggested as aspects that can be improved; (i) time of program, (ii) program length of time, (iii) language, (iv) facilitator, (v) target

audience, (vi) attendance, (vii) content, (viii) location, and (ix) facilities.

Out of the nine aspects language and content received the most vote, with 17.1% of the participants agreeing that it needs to be improved. However, it should be known that, though 17% might seem like a big return, since only 35 respondents participated in the survey, 17.1% only translate to 6 participants. Still, the participants deemed these two aspects as the aspects that should be improved. On the other hand, the facilitators only received 1 vote, as the aspect to be improved, yielding a 2.9% agreement.

Both the HFCD officers and survey participants agreed that aspects of BPH can be improved. The author has inquired for suggestions on improving any aspects of BPH, in the bigger picture this will help provide the blueprint for the future of BPH.

According to the table on the result of improvements for BPH above, content and language are aspects that should be improved. For language the suggestions for improving it are to add more language in the program, this can accommodate the foreigners that do not speak or barely speak the languages in which the session was conducted with, Malay and English. According to OFFA, there are plans to introduce the inclusion of other languages. Another suggestion is to assist any foreigners so that they can understand the information conveyed in the session.

For content, one of the suggestions is the addition of contents, which will be in the form of a briefing conducted by another organisation. One of the plans for BPH as disclosed by OFFB, is the addition of briefing from Religious Enforcement Division, the briefing will touch on aspects that are related to the misuse of charms to enhance sales and also the operation of food premises in the month of Ramadhan. Another suggestion is to provide content that utilise application such as Kahoot! apart from being an entertainment in the form of a quiz, it can also serve as a way to see whether the participants understood what they have learn in the session. Another suggestion is for the content to be more detailed.

Despite the shortcomings suggested by the participants in this study, they agreed that the program was very well handled, the mean score of 4.69 suggested so. In addition, participants

recognised that it is important that they attend BPH and that they recommend BPH to other people. BPH has the opportunity to continues to be conducted, and with the improvements to be had, indeed BPH has the chance to last for a very long time, this is in line with the participants agreeing that halal programs should be held continuously in the future. In conclusion, these suggestions can perhaps be taken into consideration by HFCD to improve BPH.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the BPH initiative has demonstrated efficacy in enhancing halal compliance among business operators in Brunei Darussalam. Results from questionnaires and interviews demonstrate that participants' comprehension of halal laws, certification requirements, and operational duties improved, and the program's goals were mostly met. Its success was aided by the effective cooperation between HFCD and affiliated organizations as well as well-organized logistics and content. However, there is potential for enhancement in areas like session organization, language support, and content extension. All things considered, BPH continues to be an essential governance instrument that supports national goals for a strong halal environment and improves industry readiness.

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